

World War II Unaccompanied British Child Evacuees to Canada

In 1940, with Britain under attack, certain more affluent parents concerned about the safety of their children decided to evacuate them to Canada. Some were sent to relatives; others arrived in organized parties from companies and schools. Unlike the boys and girls of the earlier home children program, evacuee children were deemed “guests” rather than “immigrants.” The intention was that they would return to Britain when the danger had passed. Most did, but many eventually decided to make Canada their home—including Nobel Prize winner John Polanyi.

This database is a transcription derived from a 20-page document held at Library and Archives Canada (Reference RG7 G26, file 2085-C-2 sub.1). It includes each unaccompanied child’s first and last name, host organization and province where hosted. The document is included at the end of a PDF file released by LAC in May 2019, which can be viewed and searched [here](#). Be aware that some names may not be found: a) due to quality of the scan of the original document and b) since ditto (" ") marks are frequently used.

The source document was originally compiled in 1943 by the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General. It contains responses to a letter from the secretary, who in turn was acting pursuant to a request from Queen Elizabeth, spouse of King George VI. She wished to send a thank-you letter to those who had hosted evacuee children.

A separate governmental evacuation program was started under the direction of the Children's Overseas Reception Board (CORB). Canada received 1,532 of these children. Their story is told in *The Absurd and the Brave: C.O.R.B. - The True Account of the British Government's World War II Evacuation of Children Overseas*, by Michael Fethney, which includes a list of those evacuees.

Other recommended references:

- Claire L. Halstead, "[From Lion to Leaf: The Evacuation of British Children to Canada During the Second World War](#)" (dissertation, 2015). *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository* 3329
- Amy Schaffman, "[Keep Calm and Carry On?: Examining WWII Great Britain through the Lens of Overseas Evacuation](#)" (thesis, 2014). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*, Paper 4.