

Alfred & Cecilia Crump: two “British Home” children from Walthamstow.

By Bill Bayliss

In 2009 the following message was posted on the Walthamstow Memories site....

“**CRUMP: I am looking for any information on the Crump family of Walthamstow. George (packing case maker) & Charlotte Crump (nee White) lived in Cranbrook Road & South Grove and had several children one of them Henry Thomas Crump being my husband’s Grandad. Some of their other children were put into Barnardos Homes and sent to Canada. I think that both George & Charlotte were married before. Would love to know if anybody has any information on the Crumps please. email**”

As I have a particular interest in the history of child care in Walthamstow, I was intrigued by the reference to the possibility that some of the children had been sent to Dr Barnardo Homes, so I decided to research the family history to investigate the situation. This is what I found.

The Search Begins

In 1901 George and Charlotte Crump were living in Chingford Road, Walthamstow with their six children; Reuben (15), Elizabeth (12), Alfred (10), Maria (8), Cecilia (6) and Henry (2)

In 1911, Charlotte is described as a Widow and is living with her youngest son - Henry - at 17, Brunner Road, Walthamstow, where she works as a Housekeeper.

If the family story about children going to Barnardo’s was correct, then they had to be among the children listed in the 1901 Census. So, I set out to track them down. I was also interested to know when her husband George had died and also looked for him. My first surprise was to find that George wasn’t dead. In fact, he was living as an Inmate at the West Ham Union Infirmary. This was originally the hospital built for the West Ham Union Workhouse and is better known to us today as Whipps Cross Hospital.

I was able to track down the whereabouts of three of the children. The three that I couldn’t find were: Elizabeth, Alfred and Cecilia. Although I couldn’t identify the exact one, there were a number of possible marriages for Elizabeth between 1905 and 1911. However, I couldn’t find Alfred or Cecilia alive or dead.

British Home Children

On the basis that they may have been the children who were sent to Barnardo’s. I looked at the British Home Children registry. This has a list of the over fifty seven thousand children who were known to have been sent from the UK to Canada. This number is only some of the plus 100,000 children who were sent by over fifty British child care organisations to British colonies. Predominantly, the children were sent from Workhouses and Child Care charity organisations and very many were sent without the knowledge or consent of their parents. Of the apparent exiled children who were sent to Canada, only some 5000 of them have been ‘claimed’ by their descendants.

I Find Them

To my great surprise, I found both Alfred and Cecilia’s name on the lists. I knew that I had the ‘right’ children because their dates of birth matched. I learned that they had been sent separately on different ships in different years as part of Barnardo groups.

Alfred Walter Crump born in 1890 and, aged 13 years, was part of a group of 57 children from Barnados that left Liverpool on the 20th March 1903 as a passenger on the SS Canada and reached Halifax, Canada on 28th March 1903.

Cecilia Crump born in 1895 and, aged 11 years, was part of a group of 216 children from Barnados that left Liverpool on the 11th October 1906 as a passenger on the SS Dominion in 1906 and reached Quebec, Canada on 21st October 1906.

The Great War – Canadian Expeditionary Force

Alfred joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915 and I have a copy of his enlistment record that names his next of kin as his sister Cecelia Crump. . The document provided further confirmation that I had found the right people. Along with this, I also have another copy document that gives a physical description of him. The enlistment document states that Alfred had previously served with the South Alberta Light Horse Regiment. This was a Unit that contributed recruits to the Canadian Expeditionary Force and in 1915 served in Belgian near Ypres.

Alfred Comes Home

From his enlistment form I was able to ascertain that he died in 1916 and did come home to be buried in England. Like many thousands of Canadian soldiers who volunteered to serve in WWI, he was sent to fight in Europe. Almost unbelievably he is buried in a cemetery at Shorncliffe in Kent, where many other Canadian soldiers lie. A photo of the grave is (Courtesy of the The War Grave Photographic Project) is below. Intriguingly, in the information alongside the photo of his grave is the information that his mother was Charlotte E Crump of 37, Grange Road, St James St, Walthamstow.

The Grave Of Alfred Walter Crump



Cemetery: Shorncliffe Military Cemetery

Country: England . **Area:** Kent .**Rank:** Driver .**Official Number:** 2051

Unit: Training Depot Canadian Engineers/ **Force:** Army .**Nationality:** Canadian

Details: Died of heart failure 17th February 1916 Age 25 Son of Mrs Charlotte E Crump of 37 Grange rd st James's st Walthamstow Essex England OÂ 385

Post Script.

Although Alfred and Cecilia went to different parts of Canada (The distance between Halifax and Quebec is nearly 600 miles) at a three year gap, they must have been able to keep in contact with each other because Alfred listed a Canadian address for Cecilia when he enlisted. We know from the address that he gives for Cecilia that she lives in Eastern Canada. However, in order to join the South Alberta Light Horse Regiment he must have travelled nearly 2000 miles to Edmonton in Western Canada.

Gone But Not Forgotten

In order to ensure that the sacrifice that the Canadian soldiers made in giving their lives on foreign soil in the 'Great War', the nearby town of Folkestone has adopted the cemetery. Every year children from one of the local schools places a posy of flowers at each of the graves.

Bill Bayliss

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