

BUILDING THE 'BRIDGE OF HOPE':
THE DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE OF ASSISTED EMIGRATION OF THE
LABOURING POOR FROM EAST LONDON TO CANADA, 1857-1913

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By

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ABSTRACT

Between 1857 and 1913 approximately 120,000 of the labouring poor from the East End of London were assisted to emigrate to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and sometimes South Africa in order to transplant surplus urban labour to emerging colonial markets and to provide the poor with a means of personal and financial improvement. These charities described the work they did as building “The Bridge of Hope for East London.” By the end of the nineteenth century, Eastenders had long been plagued by poverty, dependency on the Poor Law, and periods of unemployment. Typecast as morally, socially, economically, and racially degenerate in an emerging slum discourse, Eastenders were rarely considered ideal colonial emigrants. For Canada, these emigrants made poor prospects for the westward-expanding nation intent on recruiting agricultural immigrants. At times over the course of these six decades, the Canadian government grew so concerned about their migrations that it took legal measures to bar their entry. By 1910, Canada effectively banned charitably assisted emigration from East London in an attempt to control its borders and dictate the kinds of immigrants it desired even when they were English. Despite these shortcomings and obstacles, assisted emigrants from East London made new lives for themselves and their families in Canada most often in cities. We know something about their experiences from letters some of them wrote to the emigration charities that sponsored them. As a migrant group, they present a unique type of English settler in Canada. Forever failing, despite their many successes and their integration, to meet the ideal imperial British standard, Eastenders were considered undesirable on both sides of the Atlantic – a blight on British prosperity at home and unsuitable representatives abroad. Eastenders occupied an uneasy “third space” struggling to fit in somewhere between home and empire.

This dissertation, employing analytical models and methodologies inspired by the ‘New Imperial History,’ the ‘British World’ model, post-colonial theory, and transnationalism seeks to understand why and under what circumstances Canada restricted charitable emigration from East London by 1910. It examines how British charities, politicians, commentators, and, above all, emigrants developed and experienced an imperial discourse and practice of assisted emigration over the course of six decades under ever-changing economic circumstances at home. Overall, it argues that British emigration charities, under the mounting pressures of poverty at home and spurred on by liberal and imperial reformist attitudes, rarely heeded Canadian warnings about the

sending out of poor urban emigrants from East London even though they were English. Instead, these emigrationists developed a system of assisted emigration that largely suited their own objectives of poverty management. East End emigrants experienced this system with varying degrees of success, failure, benefit, and harm. The dissertation explores their experiences in two case studies in addition to three chapters on the evolution of assisted emigration discourses and practices in the East End. In placing assisted emigration of the urban poor from East London at the centre of a discussion of late nineteenth and early twentieth century intra-imperial responses to poverty, the dissertation reveals a complex interplay between social welfare, liberalism, and migration in two disparate but connected parts of the 'British World,' home and abroad. In doing so it fosters a deeper understanding of the evolution of colonial immigration policy and complicates the limits of race and class for studies of English emigration.

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The research for this dissertation was conducted mostly in England but also in Saskatoon. In London I would like to thank the many archivists and librarians who fetched sources for me and introduced me to ones I would never have found on my own. In particular I would like to

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The dissertation was written during a time of extreme ups and downs for my family. In 2011, my father Peter Scott was diagnosed with terminal kidney cancer. We enjoyed the two years he survived it, talking often about East London, our family's history and his lament for England as an ex-pat of almost forty years in Canada. He did not see the completion of my degree but I know he knows I will have finished it and that he would be so very proud. Thank you to my mom Barbara Robbins Scott for her infectious love of history, for dragging me to historical sites when I was a kid, for her infectious love of England, for her unwavering support of my academic pursuits, and for all the beautiful gifts of jewelry along the way. Thank you to my brother James Scott, for putting me up in Brighton sometimes, I expect, for longer than he anticipated, for all those dinners out after long research trips up to London, for good but cheap red wine from Waitrose, and for all the brilliant company. In October 2013, I welcomed my son Hoxton James into our lives and a new era of sleepless nights and incredible joy began. He would not have joined us had I not met the love of my life Hernard Chan in late 2008. I could not have imagined then the love and support I would gain from him. All my successes are due to them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| PERMISSION TO USE | i |
| ABSTRACT | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS | iv |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | vii |
| ABBREVIATIONS | viii |
| LIST OF FIGURES | ix |
| PREFACE | xi |
| INTRODUCTION: Frames, Methods, and Historiography | 1 |
| PART ONE: The Emigration Movement in East London – Organizational Histories | |
| CHAPTER ONE ‘Like a Spell Upon Them’: Building the Foundation for Emigration Philanthropy in East London, 1857-82 | 41 |
| CHAPTER TWO Quelling ‘The Bitter Cry’: The Emigration Program in Practice, 1882-1905 | 93 |
| CHAPTER THREE Emigration in a Mature Bureaucracy: Poor Law Reform, Unemployment, and New Directions for East London Emigration, 1890-1913 | 142 |
| PART TWO: ‘Town Birds’ – The East London Emigrant Experience | |
| CHAPTER FOUR ‘On the Whole I like Canada Very Much Indeed’: Retrieving the East London Emigrant’s Voice Through Letters Home, 1884-94 | 197 |
| CHAPTER FIVE ‘A Remarkable Experiment’: Rethinking the ‘Failed’ East London Artizans’ Colony at Moosomin, North West Territory in 1884 | 234 |
| CONCLUSION | 280 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 290 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--|
| BCES | British Colonial Emigration Society |
| BWES | British Workman's Emigration Society |
| COS | Charity Organisation Society |
| CPR | Canadian Pacific Railway |
| CUBL | Central (Unemployed) Body for London |
| EEEC | East End Emigration Club |
| EEEF | East End Emigration Fund |
| EIO | Emigrants' Information Office |
| ELWAA | East London Weavers' Aid Association |
| ILP | Independent Labour Party |
| LAC | Library and Archives Canada |
| LCAS | London Colonization Aid Society |
| LCC | London County Council |
| LGB | Local Government Board |
| LMA | London Metropolitan Archives |
| MLA | Member of the Legislative Assembly |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NEAS | National Emigration Aid Society |
| NEL | National Emigration League |
| SAB | Saskatchewan Archives Board |
| SDF | Social Democratic Federation |
| SHES | Self-Help Emigration Fund |
| UWES | Unemployed Weavers' Emigration Society |
| WEL | Workmen's Emigration League |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|-----|
| Fig. 1.1: British Workman’s Free Emigration Association “Free Emigration” advertisement, <i>East London Observer</i> , November 21, 1857 | 54 |
| Fig. 1.2: Reverend John Fenwick Kitto, Chairman of the East End Emigration Fund, 1867-1902, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archive | 72 |
| Fig. 2.1: Cover of the East End Emigration Fund’s 1894 Annual Report, British Library | 104 |
| Fig. 3.1: Colonists from Hollesley Bay Farm Colony, PRO /30/69/1824, National Archives ... | 172 |
| Fig. 4.1: Front cover of the East End Emigration Fund’s Annual Report for 1884-85, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives | 207 |
| Fig. 5.1: Homestead at East London Settlement near Moosomin, Assiniboia, Unknown Colonists, c. 189-?, Photographer: Norman Caple, Reference Code AM54-S4-: SGN 1511, Vancouver City Archives | 259 |

“If we were prone to weep, our eyes would often be dim – for we behold much quiet heroism in those who have, perhaps, never gazed upon the mighty ocean, and we do not ignore the terror awakened in the mind of some poor mother who, for the first time in her life, sets out from her dismal room in some back street to cross the sea, and seek for a home which, however bright in prospect, will be new and amongst strangers.”

- *East End Emigration Fund Annual Report 1884-85*

PREFACE

On April 25, 1888, the day before she left her home at 7 Castle Street in Hackney, East London for Canada, my great-great-grandmother Jane Scavington's elderly neighbour gave her a going-away present. It was a small gold charm in the shape of a delicate but sturdy Victorian boot. How she afforded this generosity I do not know. Castle Street was a 'light red' street in Charles Booth's 1889 poverty maps of London which housed working-class families of mixed but steady incomes. Around the corner, however, was a 'dark blue' street where prostitutes and thieves, beggars and vagrants wandered. Jane's husband Walter Cooksley, a Wesleyan self-improver, took the initiative to get out of East London with their five children. Jane worked as a silk-flower maker and Walter as a ship's engineer in London. Jane descended from the French Huguenots who had long lived in the East End of London and Walter moved to Hackney from the equally impoverished Somerton/St. Pancras area after their marriage. Walter secured their passages with the assistance of the Self-Help Emigration Society (SHES) and the family set sail from Liverpool to Montreal on the Beaver Line's *Lake Ontario* steamer on April 27, 1888. The SHES helped Walter secure work at a local flour mill in Birtle, Manitoba where he and Jane would settle and raise a large family. Their possessions were few, the contents of their suitcases minimal. The little gold boot was almost certainly Jane's only piece of jewelry other than her wedding band and she kept it her whole life. It was passed on to her daughter, my great-grandmother Florence Cooksley (the first child born to the family in Canada), and then to my grandmother and now to my mother. Embedded in that small unassuming piece of jewelry was a former life of hardship, memories of old friends and neighborhoods, and the symbol of hope for a better life in Canada. The boot embodied her journey – where she came from, what she envisioned for herself, what others hoped for her, and where she ended up. I am not an historian of material culture but I can at least suggest that this little object, one that symbolized a person's ability to move from one place to another by way of their well-shod feet, saw an East End emigrant through her journey from relative poverty to prosperity and held all of her stories in between. It is through this little gold charm and the story of my ancestors' choices that I came to think there was something significant to be said about emigration from East London to Canada from the mid-nineteenth century to just before the First World War. I could not have been more right. Poring over local, metropolitan, national, and international archives over the last five years,

I have found hundreds of rich and compelling stories like Jane and Walter's in newspapers, emigration charity records, emigrants' letters, and government documents; Eastenders, down on their luck and looking for new lives in Britain's vast overseas empire, were aided in their journeys by local philanthropists concerned about their life chances at home. For my family, the migration was a positive experience; for many others it was not. One hundred and twenty-five years later, I am fairly sure that little gold boot has somehow passed on its good luck to me in this endeavor and I could not be more grateful. This dissertation is dedicated to my ancestors Jane and Walter and their children, to the family, the neighbours and the friends they left behind, and to all of the other East Londoners who left home in search of something different.

INTRODUCTION

Frames, Methods, and Historiography

In 1909, Joseph Hall Richardson, London journalist, asked the following question in the *Fortnightly Review*: “Why has Canada, an integral part of the British Empire, practically shut its doors to the Englishman without means?”¹ Richardson was referring to recently enacted changes to Canada’s immigration laws designed to significantly reduce the number of assisted emigrants sent out through charities from the East End of London – even though they were English. The context for these restrictions was rooted in both immediate and long-standing anxieties about the inability of assisted emigrants to find work in Canada and an overriding sense that working-class urban dwellers from the old country made unsuitable immigrants. Canada had long felt put upon by British charities unloading on them these “social problems” of English cities.² Since the late 1850s, London-based charities and philanthropists had steadily developed a system of assisted emigration to British colonies for the city’s poor; at various moments they worked together with Poor Law boards of guardians, trade unions, and unemployment agencies on this system. They often referred to this work as building “The Bridge of Hope for East London.”³ While it is impossible to calculate precisely how many people were helped in this manner, an estimated 120,000 East Londoners emigrated to British colonies, primarily to Canada, under the auspices of these charities between 1857 and 1913.⁴ If the absence of a definitive number of assisted

¹ J. Hall Richardson, “The Canadian Emigration Problem,” *Fortnightly Review* (May 1909), 948. In a letter to the editor of the *Times* on August 12, 1905, Richardson identifies himself as the “special commissioner charged with the administration of the Daily Telegraph West Ham Fund,” an emigration fund examined in chapter three. He also wrote an extensive piece on the West Ham fund, see: J. Hall Richardson, “An Emigration Experiment,” *Monthly Review* (19) (June 1905): 78-91. Joseph Hall Richardson was later the general manager of the *Daily Telegraph* from 1923 to 1928 for which he had started writing in 1881. In 1906 he was appointed assistant editor. For these and other life details see his obituary in the *Times*, March 22, 1945.

² Richardson, “The Canadian Emigration Problem,” 950.

³ *East London Observer*, June 7, 1884.

⁴ 120,000 is an estimate as there are no official statistics that definitively tally the number of assisted emigrants. My number of 120,000 includes emigrants sponsored to British colonies between 1857 and 1913 under the auspices of primarily the East End Emigration Fund, the Self-Help Emigration Fund, the Salvation Army, the London Samaritan Society, the Church Emigration Society, Lady Hobart’s Emigration Fund, The Daily Telegraph Shilling Fund, The British Workmen’s Emigration Fund, the East London Weavers’ Aid Association, the London Colonization Aid Society, East London boards of guardians, and the Central (Unemployed) Body for London. More specific numbers by year and charity can be found in chapters one through three. The numbers reflect not just emigration to Canada but also to Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. However, the numbers for those countries are significantly lower than those for Canada. The majority of this number was destined for Canada. The number does not include female emigrants sent out under female-oriented emigration charities, nor does it include children sent out under child-oriented emigration charities from East London. The number reflects mostly adult male assisted emigrants and

emigrants from East London is a limitation of this study, the estimated number of 120,000 represents a significant number of persons large enough to have made impacts on immigration policy and on the history of the social integration of English emigrants in Canada. For most of this period, Canada deemed these emigrants to be unfit for both urban and rural Canadian life and tried on numerous occasions and in numerous ways to stop more of them being sent out. Canadian immigration agents in the 1860s expressed their concerns about East End emigrants to senior officials and politicians attempting to prompt changes in legislation and policy. Near the end of the century, Canadian trades councils lobbied against East End men flooding urban labour markets. Social commentators like J.S. Woodsworth in the early twentieth century argued that East End emigrants were not the kind of emigrants suitable for Canada as they were the “failures” of Britain’s capital city.⁵ Canadian Conservative opposition Members of Parliament in 1907-08 pressured Laurier’s Liberal government to enact changes to restrict the flow of assisted London emigrants.⁶ These are but a few examples of the temper of Canadian attitudes towards assisted East London emigrants during the period studied here.

Between 1906 and 1910 the Canadian government passed increasingly restrictive controls in all parts of its immigration system, barring certain races and classes from landing and thus formally and legally dictating the type of new citizens it deemed desirable. The 1906 Immigration Act allowed for the refusal of landing or the deportation of destitute emigrants and other “undesirables,” but this was mostly an extension of older policies developed between 1869 and 1889.⁷ More substantial change can be noted in the 1910 Immigration Act in subsection 3(h) which formally prohibited charitably assisted emigrants to Canada:

their wives and children. The numbers are derived from the annual reports of the charities, from newspaper accounts, and from some secondary sources; see in particular: W.A. Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles: With Special Reference to the Development of the Overseas Dominions* (1929; repr., London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965); Stanley C. Johnson, *A History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to North America, 1763-1912* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1913); and Desmond Glynn “Exporting Outcast London’: Assisted Emigration to Canada, 1886-1914,” *Histoire social/Social History* 15, no. 29 (1982): 209-38. Note that Glynn’s tables on pages 237-38 are incomplete and begin only in 1905. In his study of assisted Irish emigration, Gerard Moran discovered the same problem with estimating how many emigrants were sponsored by charities and Poor Law boards to move to North America in the nineteenth century. He estimates that approximately 300,000 of the eight million Irish emigrants who left Ireland between 1800 and 1914 were assisted in ways similar to the Eastenders considered in this study, see: Gerard Moran, *Sending Out Ireland’s Poor: Assisted Emigration to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2004), 14.

⁵ James S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1909; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 46-62.

⁶ See Canada House of Commons debates for December 17, 1907, April 2, 1908, and April 10, 1908.

⁷ Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada 1900-1935* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 12.

immigrants to whom money has been given or loaned by any charitable organization for the purpose of enabling them to qualify for landing in Canada under this Act, or whose passage to Canada has been paid wholly or in part by any charitable organization, or out of public moneys, unless it is shown that the authority in writing of the Superintendent of Immigration, or in the case of persons coming from Europe, the authority in writing of the assistant Superintendent of Immigration for Canada, in London, has been obtained for the landing in Canada of such persons, and that such authority has been acted upon within a period of sixty days thereafter;⁸

Other undesirables in subsection 3 included prostitutes, criminals, and vagrants. Some charities like the Salvation Army came to agreements with the Canadian government to allow their emigrants to be approved for landing.⁹ Others ceased their operations or merged with similar charities shortly after the passing of the 1910 Act. Like Joseph Richardson, most British-based emigration charities were baffled by Canada's reluctance to accept English emigrants given the presumed strong imperial ties between the homeland and the dominion. By 1913, the East End Emigration Fund (EEEF), a leading emigration charity in East London and the focus of much of this dissertation, went so far as to change its name to the British Dominions Emigration Society, attempting to allay Canadian concerns about the quality of its emigrants by erasing the negative reference to London's impoverished East End.¹⁰ Despite the inevitable decline of charitable emigration after the passing of the 1910 Act, the social, political, and economic changes emerging from the First World War would bring an abrupt end to the assisted intra-imperial migration of the London poor.

⁸ *An Act Respecting Immigration, Statutes of Canada 1910, 9-10 Edward VII, c. 27*, Early Canadiana Online Database, accessed August 7, 2013, http://eco.canadiana.ca.cyber.usask.ca/view/oocihm.9_07184/2?r=0&s=3.

⁹ Myra Rutherford argues that this special arrangement was due in part to the "distinct advantage" the Salvation Army enjoyed on both sides of the Atlantic being well-established in Britain and Canada. However, there was still Canadian anxiety over and opposition to Salvation Army emigrants in 1906-7; they were often categorized with the majority of assisted emigrants from East London as problematic for Canada. Yet, while the other London-based emigration charities would be subject to the new restrictions, the Salvation Army was exempt even though its selections were technically also supposed to be approved prior to departure. The Salvation Army maintained its special position in the Canadian immigration system despite the fact that it drew its selections from the same stock as the other charities. Rutherford argues this special treatment stemmed from the "extensive organization" the Salvation Army had established in Canada, see: Myra Rutherford, "Scrutinizing the "Submerged Tenth": Salvation Army Immigrants and their Reception in Canada," in *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, eds. Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 179.

¹⁰ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1913. The annual reports for the East End Emigration Fund are available for 1884-85, 1894, 1900 to 1910 (inclusive), and 1913. They were self-published and are available for consultation in the British Library and the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives in London. Because these are very short documents I have sometimes elected not to use page numbers in my citations. I have also not listed them separately in the bibliography as they are easily accessible in the archives mentioned above. The same is the case for the annual reports of the Self-Help Emigration Society which are available at the British Library.

This dissertation seeks to understand why and under what circumstances Canada restricted charitable emigration from East London. It examines how British charities, politicians, commentators, and, above all, emigrants developed and experienced an imperial discourse and practice of assisted emigration between 1857 and 1913. Overall, it argues that British emigration charities, under the mounting pressures of poverty at home and spurred on by liberal, imperial, and reformist attitudes, rarely heeded Canadian warnings about the sending out of poor urban emigrants from East London. Instead, they developed a system of assisted emigration that suited their own needs in the six decades under study here. This system evolved and changed each time there was a new economic or social crisis in London. East End emigrants experienced this system through varying degrees of success, failure, benefit, and harm; this dissertation explores their experiences in part two. In placing assisted emigration of the London poor at the centre of a discussion of late nineteenth and early twentieth century intra-imperial responses to poverty, the dissertation reveals a complex interplay between social welfare, liberalism, and migration in two disparate but connected parts of the British Empire. It achieves this primarily within the methodological framework of the ‘New Imperial History’ which considers the relationship between Britain and Canada as one set in an interconnected and interdependent context and system of imperialism rather than one between two separate nations. Assisted emigration of Eastenders from London to Canada tested the boundaries and fluidity of the colonial relationship, revealing British assumptions about a shared responsibility towards the English poor and Canadian resistance to these presumed imperial obligations. The study is original because it is the first to set the history of assisted emigration from East London to Canada within this analytical frame.

I have been writing this dissertation in my mind for a long time. As a child I understood that a branch of my maternal family had emigrated from Hackney in East London to Manitoba in the late 1880s. They are the subject of this dissertation’s preface. I did not, however, learn that they were assisted emigrants until my mother found my great-great-grandfather’s diary amongst my great-aunt’s belongings near the beginning of my research for this project. Once I learned that I descended from the very people I wished to examine I felt immediately uniquely-equipped to tell this story; I was the product of charitable emigration and I had not failed Canada. Indeed, before I began my doctoral work I worked as a citizenship officer for Citizenship and Immigration Canada granting newcomers formal admittance to the national family. It seemed my

family's desire to be Canadian had come full circle in my own career. I also maintain a strong personal connection to East London from my dad's side of the family. My dad was born and raised in Walthamstow in North-East London to a fiercely-proud East End mother, my grandmother, who hailed from Hoxton. I grew up understanding that the culture, language, and spatiality of East London was unique in the capital and certainly did not match the degraded depictions of it I had often read about as a student. The East End has since been the focus of my intellectual life and I aim to represent it with all the respect, sensitivity, and complexity that I can. Trained as a Canadian and British social historian with post-colonial, feminist, and social-justice leanings, I have combined these orientations and interests in the framework, scope, and content of this dissertation.

I first encountered a vibrant historiography on assisted emigration from East London as an undergraduate studying the history of the home children with the late Professor Dave De Brou at the University of Saskatchewan. I was fascinated by the hostile reception of these poor, often orphaned, children in Canada in the late nineteenth century because of their supposed degeneracy. British philanthropists had promised the thousands of children under their care wonderful new lives in Canada. Yet, for about two-thirds of these children life in Canada was often fraught with abuse, neglect, and loneliness.¹¹ Before their departure these children's lives had already been difficult and varied. Most home children were actually not street dwellers as philanthropists had billed them, pointing to a discourse constructed around them that was highly sensationalized. Rather, at least half had one or both parents still living, which made the trip overseas, for many, a particularly painful journey.¹² Indeed, children's homes purposely separated children from their perceived undesirable families, and often sent their charges to Canada without parental or familial consent, an endeavor historians refer to as "imperial

¹¹ Mary Ashworth, *Children of the Canadian Mosaic: A Brief History to 1950* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1993), 128; Kenneth Bagnell, *The Little Immigrants: The Orphans Who Came to Canada* (Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2001), 34; Dave DeBrou, "Home Truth: A Transatlantic Journey into Family History," *The Beaver* 82, no.2 (2002), 20; Frederick J. McEvoy, "These Treasures of the Church of God': Catholic Child Immigration to Canada," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association* 65 (1999), 64; Phyllis Harrison, *The Home Children* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1979), 21; Patricia T. Rooke and Schnell, R. L., "The "King's Children" in English Canada: A Psychohistorical Study of Abandonment, Rejection, and Colonial Response (1869-1930)," *Journal of Psychohistory* 8, no. 4 (1981), 389.

¹² Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 64; Rooke and Schnell, 390; Lynn Abrams, *The Orphan Country: Children of Scotland's Broken Homes from 1845 to the Present Day* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1998), 139.

philanthropy.”¹³ Most home children recalled feeling anxious, withdrawn, heartbroken, abandoned, and unworthy, amidst a host of other emotions. Home children expressed these and other psychological injuries in a variety of different ways but of the almost 100,000 of them who came to Canada between 1869 and 1930 few displayed the criminal tendencies they were accused of in the Canadian press. In this early work, I argued that while a minute number of home children committed serious crimes, the vast majority became good Canadian citizens showing their strength, determination, and intelligence in the face of tremendous opposition. I was compelled to argue on their behalf in part because Eastenders had long been misrepresented in the vast voyeuristic and reformist literature written about them in the second half of the nineteenth century. It seemed impossible to me that all of these children were degenerate or problematic given what I knew of East End culture and family life. As I left that project behind for another on allotment gardening and grassroots politics in East London in my Masters work, I always wondered about what else I might be able to say about assisted emigration from East London but could see that the historiography on the home children was becoming saturated.¹⁴ It dawned on me that I had read very little on assisted adult emigration and that the sources on child emigration rarely mentioned this other branch of London charity; I had seen enough though to know it existed.

After an initial reading of the historiography on assisted adult emigration it quickly became clear there was a contribution to be made that I in particular might be able to fill, especially with respect to male assisted emigrants.¹⁵ There is a well-developed historiography on assisted female emigration but much less so on assisted male emigration or assisted family emigration. This is in part due to recent interest in the study of gender and empire which has focused on women and migration. There are also very few studies of assisted emigration generally for the later part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Most works have concentrated on either the first half of the nineteenth century when assisted emigration was firmly located within Malthusian anxieties and discourse about population growth and when

¹³ Wagner, Gillian, *Children of the Empire* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1982), xv.

¹⁴ See for example: Marjorie Kohli, *The Golden Bridge: Young Immigrants to Canada, 1833-1939* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2003) and Roy Parker, *Uprooted: The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867-1917* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2008).

¹⁵ For an excellent overview of the historiography on assisted female emigration within the British Empire, see: Lisa Chilton, *Agents of Empire: British Female Emigration to Canada and Australia, 1860s-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). In particular see Chilton's footnotes for the introduction wherein she cites the major contributions to this field of study in recent years.

British workers were being displaced by rapid industrialization and mechanization, or on the interwar and postwar periods in the twentieth century when Britain developed policies aimed to strengthen imperial ties through the Empire Settlement Act of 1922.¹⁶ In part, historical interest in these areas has been based on more readily available primary sources. It was clear that research on assisted male emigration had not, in most cases, been undertaken directly in East London and certainly that little to no research had been conducted at the local level.

Since at least the seventeenth century, the East End of London has been an immigration hub, a destination for incoming migrants from all over the world. There is a rich historiography on the area's diverse immigrant communities, particularly French Huguenot, Irish, Jewish, and Bangladeshi newcomers.¹⁷ Likewise, we know much about the thousands of British rural agricultural labourers who migrated into British cities in search of work as industrialization upset the balance between rural and urban work between about 1760 and 1830 and again as the

¹⁶ For works on the first half of the nineteenth century see in particular: H.J.M. Johnston, *British Emigration Policy 1815-1830: 'Shoveling Out Paupers'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Robin F. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor: Australian Recruitment in Britain and Ireland, 1831-60* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Gary Howells, "For I was tired of England Sir": English Pauper Emigrant Strategies, 1834-60," *Social History* 23, no. 2 (May 1998): 181-94; Wendy Cameron, Sheila Haines, and Mary McDougall Maude, eds., *English Immigrant Voices: Labourers' Letters from Upper Canada in the 1830s* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Gary Howells, "'On Account of their Disreputable Characters': Parish-Assisted Emigration from Rural England, 1834-1860," *History* 88, no. 292 (2003): 587-605; and Robert D. Grant, *Representations of British Emigration, Colonisation and Settlement: Imagining Empire, 1800-1860* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). For works on the twentieth century see in particular: Stephen Constantine, ed., *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); Myra Rutherdale, "Canada Is No Dumping Ground": Public Discourse and Salvation Army Immigrant Women and Children, 1900-1930," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 40, no. 79 (May 2007): 115-42; A. James Hammerton and Alistair Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's Invisible Migrants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); and Janice Cavell, "The Imperial Race and the Immigration Sieve: The Canadian Debate on Assisted British Migration and Empire Settlement, 1900-30," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34, no. 3 (September 2006): 345-67. The most notable exceptions that deal primarily with the late nineteenth century and assisted emigration are: Howard L. Malchow, *Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Palo Alto, California: The Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship Inc., 1979); and Dudley Baines, *Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁷ In particular, see: David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones, *Metropolis London: Histories and Representations Since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1989); David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); Anne J. Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields 1660-2000* (London: Routledge, 2005); Anne J. Kershen, "The Migrant at Home in Spitalfields: Memory, Myth and Reality," in *Histories and Memories: Migrants and Their History in Britain*, eds., Kathy Burrell and Panikos Panayi (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 96-113; and Geoff Dench, Kate Gavron, and Michael Young, *The New East End: Kinship, Race, and Conflict* (London: Profile Books, 2006). Also, throughout John Marriott's new survey of East End there are numerous sections on immigrants in the area from the seventeenth century to the present day, see: John Marriott, *Beyond the Tower: A History of East London* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).

profitability of British agriculture began to decline in the mid-1870s.¹⁸ Since at least the second half of the nineteenth century, East London has been a transient place. Yet, little historical work has been done on the out-migration of adult East Londoners or their experience of empire.¹⁹ Some journalistic and sociological interest in what has been termed the “cockney diaspora” has emerged but it generally lacks historical context and is present-minded.²⁰ Works on British emigration in the modern period have not focused on East London in particular but have taken a wider view which encourages more concentrated localized studies as well as studies that differentiate between the four British ethnicities of English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish. The historiography of Scottish and Irish migrants is vast while that of the English and the Welsh is more limited even though the English made up the largest migrating group.²¹

Historians of British emigration are currently interested in studying English emigrants and the ways in which their ethnicity affected their migration experiences. In part this has been inspired by the “four nations” approach to studying the British Empire in recent years which

¹⁸ Jeremy Burchardt, *Paradise Lost: Rural Idyll and Social Change Since 1800* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 16, 79.

¹⁹ Some work has been done on Empire and the East End but not with particular reference to emigration. These studies have focused more on the relationship between the East End and the docks, see: John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India and Progress in the Colonial Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

²⁰ See: Peter Watts, “Death of the Cockney,” *Time Out* (London), July 2, 2007, accessed August 27, 2013, <http://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/death-of-the-cockney-1>; Paul Watt, “From the Centre to the Margins of the Nation: Mobilities, Whiteness and the Cockney Diaspora in Essex” (paper presented at the Diaspora Cities: Urban Mobility and Dwelling Conference, Queen Mary, University of London, September 16, 2009); Jack Fawbert, “Wot, No Asians?” West Ham United Fandom, the Cockney Diaspora and the New East Enders,’ in *Race, Ethnicity and Football: Persisting Debates and Emergent Issues*, ed., D. Burdsey (New York: Routledge, 2011); and Mark Easton, “Why Have the White British Left London?” *BBC news*, February 19, 2013, accessed August 27, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21511904>. Also see work on the Becontree housing project developed between the 1920s and 1950s to rehouse tens of thousands of Eastenders in Dagenham creating there a diaspora community such as: Jerry White, *London in the 20th Century* (London: Vintage Books, 2001), 28, 35; and Andrzej Olechnowicz, *Working-Class Housing in England Between the Wars: The Becontree Estate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

²¹ Marjory Harper at the University of Aberdeen has done extensive work on Scottish emigration and her numerous works are the best place to start, see in particular: Marjory Harper, *Emigration from Scotland Between the Wars: Opportunity or Exile?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998). The historiography on the Irish diaspora is far too vast to list here, especially to the United States and with reference to the exodus during and after the famine in the 1840s. On the Welsh in Canada see, Wayne K. Davies, “Welsh Americans in Rural Alberta: Origin and Development of the Wood River Welsh Settlement Area,” in *Immigration and Settlement, 1870-1939*, ed. Gregory P. Marchildon (Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2009): 373-410. Davies published other works on the Welsh in Canada between 1986 and 1999 in addition to this article. Also see, W. Ross Johnston, “The Welsh Diaspora: Emigrating Around the World in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Welsh Labour History* 6, no. 2 (1993): 50-74. It should be noted as well that there are hundreds of titles on British immigration more generally to the United States, in addition to those on imperial migration, which consider all four ethnicities sometimes together and sometimes separately. Charlotte Erickson’s work (discussed and cited below) stands out as the most significant in encouraging a turn towards the English emigrant and identity beginning in the 1970s. One important contribution to note with reference to this dissertation and which is still used widely is Ross McCormack, “Cloth Caps and Jobs: The Ethnicity of English Immigrants in Canada 1900-1914,” in *Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada*, eds. Jorgen Dahlie and Tissa Fernando, (Toronto: Methuen, 1981), 38-55.

recognizes differences in historical experience amongst Britain's four ethnicities.²² A recent collection of essays on the English ethnicity of emigrants, *Locating the English Diaspora, 1550-2000*, edited by Tanja Bueltmann, David T. Gleeson, and Donald M. MacRaild, is an example of this turn towards the English as a distinct ethnic category of British emigrant.²³ Bueltmann, Gleeson, and MacRaild build on Charlotte Erickson's idea of the "invisible" English immigrant ('immigrant' because Erickson was writing from an American point of view and 'invisible' because they did not "qualify as marginal" in the Anglosphere).²⁴ This invisibility led historians of British ethnicity to neglect the English emigrant's experience and identity. Bueltmann, Gleeson, and MacRaild suggest attention to the English, their ethnicity, and migration may reveal a "hidden diaspora" and promote further scholarly discussion of the claim that the English experienced their own ethnic diaspora.²⁵ This dissertation contributes to that emerging discussion by profiling a particular type of English emigrant, the assisted male emigrant and his family from East London. My work shows that ethnicity and class mattered, shaping how poor English emigrants were selected for emigration and how they were received in Canada. Moreover, assisted emigrants from East London were expected to perform and behave in ways that were contingent on a working-class version of Englishness.

The primary focus of the dissertation will be East London not as a destination for, but as a source of migrants, revealing a more complete picture of the area's historical migration experience. Charities, such as the EEEF and the Self-Help Emigration Fund (SHES), actively recruited prospective emigrants in East London and invited them to apply for emigration. While these organizations are mentioned in passing in many works on English emigration, there is no synthesized historical treatment of their objectives and efforts.²⁶ Filling this gap is one of the

²² Kent Fedorowich and Andrew S. Thompson, eds., *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), xv; and John MacKenzie, "Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English Worlds? A Four-Nation Approach to the History of the British Empire," *History Compass* 6, no. 5 (2008), 1244.

²³ Tanja Bueltmann, David T. Gleeson, and Donald M. MacRaild, *Locating the English Diaspora, 1550-2000* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶ Glynn's and Malchow's provide the broadest basic histories of the emigration charities considered in this dissertation but they are both very brief, see: Malchow, 18, 23, 96; and Glynn, 211-14. Other brief mentions include: Johnson, 76-82; Carrothers, 251-54; Kohli, 205-06, 354; Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 95; Marjory Harper, "Rhetoric and Reality: British Migration to Canada, 1867-1967," in *Canada and the British Empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series, edited by Philip Buckner, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 167; and Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 282-84.

most significant contributions of this dissertation. In the late nineteenth century, emigration of the labouring poor functioned, in theory, to relieve poverty, to rid Britain of undesirables, and to ease overcrowding; these were some of the motivations driving emigrationists. Indeed, emigration, poverty, the decline in rural population, Malthusianism, Christian duty, voluntary action, and concern over the state of the British race, were all part of the same social and political discussion in Victorian London. In the early twentieth century, emigration was employed as an experimental form of unemployment relief designed to move surplus labour at home to another part of the British Empire. These debates expose much about the development of the modern welfare state in Britain, the struggle for political autonomy in the colonies, and the entangled relationships between Britain and its colonies in the last third of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. Overall, the East End is examined here as the topographical Metropolitan site wherein these debates largely took shape and from which large numbers of assisted emigrants destined for British colonies were drawn.

Historiography and Historical Significance

This dissertation is in conversation with a number of interrelated but often separate historiographies. These include histories of emigration from the United Kingdom to the white settler colonies; histories of East London, poverty, philanthropy, and ‘Outcast London;’ histories of empire, colonialism and representation; and the growing historiography of the ‘British World.’ I will engage in a full overview of the emigration historiography below but will say a few words about the others first. It should be noted that the wider historiography on the British Empire is so extensive that only the more recent and relevant contributions can be examined here, in particular those that speak to the turn towards post-colonialism, the subaltern, transnationalism, and the ‘New Imperial History.’ In chapters four and five I connect with historiographies on letter-writing, micro-history, settlement in the Canadian west, and British perceptions of Canada. Overall, the study contributes most significantly to the growing historiography of migration, poverty, and empire within both the ‘British World’ model and the ‘New Imperial History.’²⁷

²⁷ For example, Elizabeth Harvey’s study of philanthropic programs for destitute women and children in two sites of empire, one at home (Birmingham) and one abroad (Sydney). Harvey also employs the framework of the ‘New Imperial History’ in this work, see: Elizabeth Harvey, “Philanthropy in Birmingham and Sydney, 1860-1914: Class, Gender, and Race,” (PhD diss., University College London, 2011). Another example is Graham Baker’s recent study which explores eugenics, emigration, empire, and the Salvation Army, see: Graham Baker, “Eugenics and Christian Mission. Charitable Welfare in Transition: London and New York, 1865–1940,” (D.Phil. thesis, University of

Since the 1850s, the East End of London has been the site of sociological, literary, historical, and journalistic interest over other parts of the capital. This is in large part due to the visible poverty the area has almost constantly suffered since the mid-nineteenth century at the heart of one of the world's richest cities. Commentators have long sought to understand the roots of this poverty and to find remedies to correct it. The discourse of assisted emigration that evolved from the mid-nineteenth century – one that in basic terms espoused the view that poor urban dwellers would fare better in work, life, and morality if transplanted to British colonies – was deeply rooted in a wider slum narrative that emerged in the 1850s and persists to the present day.²⁸ After the printing of Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* in 1851, a work which revealed to a wide audience the poverty that was perceived to be teeming at the East End, a proliferation of social investigative texts followed especially through the 1880s and 1890s.²⁹ These included Andrew Mearns's *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883), W.T. Stead's *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* (1885), Arnold White's *The Problems of a Great City* (1886), Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London* (first two volume edition, 1889-91), George Sims's *How the Poor Live and Horrible London* (1889), William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), and Jack London's *The People of the*

Oxford, 2011). An earlier example of the use of these lenses in doctoral work (although not overtly stated as such in the work) is Alison Pion, "Exporting 'Race' to the Colonies: British Emigration Initiatives in the Late-Nineteenth Century (Canada, Australia, South Africa)," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 2004). Pion introduces the term 'bio-colonization' in this work, inspired by Foucault's notions of biopower, to suggest that British emigrationists sought to repopulate the colonial world with persons of the British races through assisted emigration schemes.

²⁸ Since the emergence of the slum narrative in the 1850s, East London and its people (as much as those people are now derived from very different ethnic backgrounds from those in the 1850s) have struggled to shed the stigma of poverty, depravity, criminality, and dirtiness associated with the area. In the late twentieth and now early twenty-first century, East London has been subject to numerous regeneration projects aimed to pull the area into prosperity. These projects have often, however, simply moved the poor around, dislocating communities and gentrifying neighborhoods. The building projects for the 2012 Olympic Games are a prime example of the current ways in which East London has been subject to the operation of the slum narrative. For some recent scholarly works on these developments see, Janet Foster, "Living with the Docklands' Redevelopment: Community View from the Isle of Dogs," *London Journal* 17, no. 2 (1992): 170-83; Paul Newland, *The Cultural Construction of London's East End* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), chapter six in particular; and Iain Macrury and Gavin Poynter, "The Regeneration Games: Commodities, Gifts and the Economics of London 2012," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no. 14 (2008): 2072-90. In the mid-twentieth century, East London was subject to similar regeneration efforts around working-class housing improvements after the area had been devastated by Nazi bombing in the Second World War. Many of these housing estates became 'ghettos in the sky,' depressing places where the bonds of community were severed, see: Patricia Garside, "The Significance and Post-War London Reconstruction Plans for East End Industry," *Planning Perspectives* 12 (1997): 19-36; and Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 322-30.

²⁹ Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor: The Condition of Earnings of Those That Will Work, Cannot Work, and Will Not Work*, volumes 1, 2, and 3 (London: C. Griffin, 1866).

Abyss (1902).³⁰ Novelists like George Gissing and Walter Besant wrote fictional and semi-fictional accounts of East London in the same period, fascinated by the ways in which ordinary people coped with poverty.³¹ The periodical press, especially after the Jack the Ripper murders in 1888, also contributed to this growing literature on poverty and crime in East London.³² Mearns's *Bitter Cry* is often thought to be the origin text from which the rest stemmed in part because while Mearns's content was not necessarily new its sensational tone was.³³ What tied all of this literature together was essentially the creation of a new genre – the slum narrative. Characterized by a combination of sensationalism, pity, contempt, and blame the characters at the centre of the slum narrative who lived and worked in East London became increasingly subject to Victorian middle-class voyeurs, philanthropists, clergymen, and politicians intent on rescuing them from their perceived depravity in the name of Christianity, Britishness, imperialism, capitalism, and, perhaps above all, liberalism. Not only were the people who lived in poor London districts a problem but the city itself was, as Robert Haggard notes, “widely assumed not only to harbor but also to nurture criminality, disease, immorality, and pauperism.”³⁴ These texts supported and justified the need for charity and moral reform in the East End and were usually taken at face value or believed to be scientific and thus true accounts of the harm poverty inflicted on the individual human body and spirit and on the national health.³⁵

Historians in the second half of the twentieth century and now in the early twenty-first century, myself included, have pushed against the slum narrative, deconstructing it as literary

³⁰ Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883; repr., Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1970); W.T. Stead, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* (1885; repr., Lambertville, NJ: The True Bill Press, 2007); Arnold White, *The Problems of a Great City* (London: Remington & Co., 1886); Charles Booth, ed., *Labour and Life of the People*, volume 1-2 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1889-91); George Sims, *How the Poor Live and Horrible London* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889); William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: The Salvation Army, 1890), and Jack London's *The People of the Abyss* (Toronto: G.N. Morang, 1903). For a good basic overview of the impact of these works, see: Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (London: Vintage, 2000), 678-79.

³¹ In particular, see: George Gissing, *The Nether World* (1890; repr. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1974); and Walter Besant, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men: An Impossible Story* (1910; repr. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2008).

³² Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 151; and Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis, eds., *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

³³ Robert F. Haggard, *The Persistence of Victorian Liberalism: The Politics of Social Reform in Britain, 1870-1900* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 28.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁵ Charles Booth for example is hailed as an early sociologist, see: Jose Harris, 'Booth, Charles,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, 2008), accessed August 28, 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31966>.

genre, and have searched for more authentic complex accounts of historical life in East London. Raphael Samuel was perhaps the most vocal scholarly critic of the slum narrative in the 1960s. A Marxist social historian, Samuel reconfigured working-class history in Britain alongside his colleague and friend E.P. Thompson. Samuel was foundational to the New Left in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, founded *History Workshop Journal* in 1976, and wrote extensively about East London, poverty, the left, and industrial problems in Britain throughout his career.³⁶ He was a proponent of oral history and adult education amongst the working-class; his legacy archive which now rests in the Bishopsgate Institute in Spitalfields, East London includes hours of taped interviews with East Londoners.³⁷ In the 1970s and 1980s, Samuel inspired a generation of young scholars of East London, usually those with social history interests and leftist political leanings who recognized the problems of the slum narrative and the Victorian liberal-moral complex that had created it. The genre's primary deficiencies were its assumption of a lack of agency amongst the poor and its lack of criticism of the capitalist system of wage-labour, which resulted in its blaming the poor for their poverty, homogenizing the working-class as degenerate, and overall misrepresenting the complexity of working-class life, culture, and identity. I seek in my work on East London to push against the slum narrative by showing the diversity, vibrancy, and agency that its residents have expressed in multiple and intricate ways since the 1850s.

In 1971, Gareth Stedman Jones, Samuel's close friend, published *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society*, a detailed and frequently-cited Marxist study of the problem of the casual labourer. Stedman Jones argues that concern about the poor, unemployment, and social and industrial development fixated particularly on East London in the last half to last quarter of the nineteenth century due to the area's high concentration of casual labour. Stedman Jones's central argument is that Victorian "civilization" increasingly felt threatened by "outcast London."³⁸ Its fears emerged in part because London was the economic and political epicenter of not only its own empire but also the global economy. The poverty in the East End challenged that power and position and generated massive anxieties about the state of British society. His book explores the fears of the middling and upper classes and the

³⁶ In particular: Arthur Harding, *East End Underworld: Chapters in the Life of Arthur Harding*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1981); and Raphael Samuel, "The Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain," *History Workshop Journal* 3, no.1 (1977): 6-72.

³⁷ Ellen Ross and Judith Walkowitz, "Raphael Samuel (1934-1966): An Appreciation," *Radical History Review* 69 (1997): 274-79.

³⁸ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between the Classes in Victorian Society* (1971; repr. London: Penguin Books, 1984), 1.

economic and social reality of that fear – the “problem” – and also attempts to answer questions about how the ruling classes sought to deal with it. His 1983 *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* is also useful for understanding expressions of working-class culture in the same period.³⁹ Both of these works set a standard for understanding how the poor had been misrepresented in the slum narrative and the consequences that narrative has had on them economically, socially, and politically. I draw much of my foundational knowledge and point of view about East London from these two historians – as much as we’ve moved on from Marxist analyses of class struggle.

I have also been influenced by two feminist scholars, Judith Walkowitz and Ellen Ross. Through the 1990s, Walkowitz and Ross were instrumental in reconfiguring our understanding of the interplay between gender, poverty, the state, and the slum narrative in East London.⁴⁰ More recently, Seth Koven has analyzed the nineteenth and early twentieth century middle- and upper-class preoccupation with “slumming,” or voyeuristic visiting in East London, examining why the area was such a fascination to them and provided some of them with a tasteless kind of entertainment.⁴¹ Walkowitz, Ross, and Koven have inspired me to think more deeply about the ways in which the poor in East London were constantly monitored, studied, feared, and viewed as a collective threat to presumed British racial and cultural superiority in the imperial world. In the spirit of Michel Foucault, this dissertation takes the view that emigration was but one of the remedies employed to assimilate, reform, inspect, and control the working-class population in the East End and that the colonies acted as places, structures, and repositories wherein to implement and achieve these policies. My work is situated in a historiographical tradition of deconstructing the slum narrative presenting instead an East End population that rallied in favour of its own needs and dictated the boundaries of its own migrations, yet remained subject to the power and structures of the slum narrative operating and hovering above it in the form of formalized philanthropy, economy, and politics.

³⁹ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁴⁰ Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Ellen Ross, *Slum Travelers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

⁴¹ Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

As much as this dissertation might be considered a localized study, it fully engages with current imperial and transnational perspectives. In particular, the work is situated within the historiography of the ‘British World.’ The ‘British World’ idea emerged in 1998 amongst a group of historians mostly from the former white settler colonies interested in exploring shared expressions and representations of Britishness within the British world system of empire.⁴² John Darwin notes that

‘British World’ history has begun to reverse the long neglect suffered by the settler societies in the wider history of empire. It has also helped to restore the long-forgotten perspective of vital importance: the passionate identification of Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, Newfoundlanders and South African ‘English’ with idealized ‘Britishness;’ and their common devotion to ‘Empire’ as its political form.⁴³

The scholarly output and result of ‘British World’ conferences and conversations has been a recent proliferation of books, articles, and edited collections.⁴⁴ The idea’s basic purpose is to provide “a framework for those connections among economic and social, religious and intellectual, environmental and cultural histories that became part of the historians’ quest from the 1980s onwards.”⁴⁵ The “connections” to which John McKenzie refers here assume that the ‘British World’ was connected by a shared, albeit locally different, system of intra-imperial migration and settlement that operated within a specific set of webs, networks, chains, pluralisms, and transnationalisms.⁴⁶ It should be noted, that the term ‘British World’ is not, however, new and was used from the late nineteenth century until the 1950s in scholarly work.⁴⁷ Since the first conference in 1998, the ‘British World’ idea has reshaped imperial history in tandem with the ‘New Imperial History,’ post-colonial theory, and a wider rejection of insular national studies in favour of transnational ones.⁴⁸ As with any new analytical tool or framework, time is needed to realize the idea’s full potential and test for its usefulness; the ‘British World’

⁴² Fedorowich and Thompson, 2.

⁴³ John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xii.

⁴⁴ The edited collections of essay stemming from the conferences have been particularly good. In addition to the most recent collection edited by Fedorowich and Thompson in 2013, see: Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2003); Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005); Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006). The *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies* has also featured a few special issues on the British World since the first conference in 1998.

⁴⁵ Fedorowich and Thompson, xv.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Buckner and Francis, eds., *Rediscovering the British World*, 13.

⁴⁸ Fedorowich and Thompson, 2.

idea is certainly still in its formative stage. In a review of Philip Buckner and R.D. Francis' *Canada and British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, Amy Lloyd has clarified the newly re-minted term and explained some of the challenges in using it:

it is to be hoped that, in the future, a broader focus will be taken in more work regarding 'Canada and the British World.' It is perhaps this narrow, unilateral focus that also accounts for how tentatively the term and concept 'British World' is used in the essays in this volume, with almost half of the essays not even employing it. This hesitancy may have also been due to the fact that its meaning is still uncertain, imprecise, and even contested. There is, for example, still vigorous debate even over when the British World existed and especially over which areas of the world and peoples should be included Therefore, while work is moving forward with regards to determining the defining features of the British World and how it was held together, it would seem necessary that some resolution should soon be found to these fundamental debates over the definition and boundaries of the British World and British World studies.⁴⁹

In 2013, historians have continued to push the boundaries of the 'British World' idea, working beyond the unidirectional linear binary of 'Metropole (or core) and periphery' giving primacy to more circular, webbed, and entangled patterns of movement of people, ideas, and institutions across the old and now largely decolonized empire.⁵⁰ New standards have been set within the model that now demand the historian's attention to transnationalism, interconnectedness, the subaltern, and complex "overlapping migrations" within and outside of the empire as ill-defined some of those perspectives continue to be.⁵¹

I use the 'British World' model in this dissertation to consider the interrelated histories of emigration and immigration law and policy in Britain and Canada and the ways in which the two nations managed assisted emigration within both imperial and local contexts. Much of what I demonstrate in the dissertation revolves around London emigration charities rarely heeding the needs and demands of Canadian immigration officials and lawmakers. In part, this was due to the severe conditions of poverty, unemployment, and overcrowding with which the London charities were faced at home. Meanwhile, Canada expressed its autonomy and nativism through continual

⁴⁹ Amy Lloyd, "Untitled," review of *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, edited by Philipp Buckner and R.D. Francis, *The Historical Journal* 51 (2008), 1128.

⁵⁰ Fedorowich and Thompson, 4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5. Transnationalism in particular is a difficult term to define. Some scholars worry that it, like post-colonialism, is becoming a buzz-word, misapplied to all histories of empire. In particular, Christopher Bayly worries that the use of transnational frameworks is being applied to periods in history where 'nations' had not developed as the units of collective organization they would come to be by the early twentieth century, see: C.A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed, "AHR Conversations: One Transnational History," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006), 1442.

changes to its immigration system. So, while the pressures on either side of the Atlantic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were more often singular than common, British emigrationists wrongly assumed the two nations always operated within a homogenous 'British World' system. These individuals and charities felt that Canada was obliged, and indeed surely motivated, as an imperial space to accept English immigrants even if they were poor. The dissertation raises some questions about the appropriateness of the 'British World' concept to this study in that for most of the history of assisted emigration the Canadian government and British philanthropists were working at odds. However, for the emigrants at the centre of these movements, the 'British World' concept is particularly useful. Their experiences of emigration, which were defined by their class, ethnicity, and identity, certainly occurred within this complex imperial world system. In other words, the emigrants themselves were pushed and pulled along a complex transnational axis where they negotiated a space for themselves in the imperial project. Ultimately, the 'British World' idea provides a useful framework for situating both emigrants' and emigrationists' experiences of empire within a contested, negotiated, and renegotiated terrain of policy, law, discourse, and practice on both sides of the Atlantic.

In her reflective collection of two decades of work on British imperialism *Empire in Question: Reading, Writing, and Teaching British Imperialism*, Antoinette Burton defines the imperial turn in British history as "the accelerated attention to the impact of histories of imperialism on metropolitan societies that has occurred in the wake of decolonization, pre- and post-1968 racial struggle and feminism in the past quarter of the twentieth century."⁵² During that time and since, historians of the British Empire who recognize how the forces of class, race, gender, colonialism, language, and representation have flowed, operated, and continually been constructed and reconstructed interdependently between Metropole and Colony, have created a body of scholarship known as the 'New Imperial History.' For British historians in the 1980s, this revisionist scholarship was largely informed by decolonization, post-colonial theory, and a growing sense that insular national histories, which neglected the role of empire at home, had ignored the ways imperialism reflected back on the home society. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) evoked a European past that happened not just at home but out in the empire and, in

⁵² Antoinette Burton, *Empire in Question: Reading, Writing, and Teaching British imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 2.

doing so, laid the foundation for post-colonial studies.⁵³ In it, Said, an Arab Palestinian literary critic, presents a discursive examination of the process of ‘Orientalism,’ which he defines as the Western study of the Orient used to dominate, restructure and have authority over it and its peoples. Said’s primary goal was to demonstrate that the European ability to manage and produce an idea of the Orient as a place in opposition to the Occident in turn gave European culture strength and identity by comparison. Modern “Orientalism” can be understood not as a currently inspired body of knowledge but as a long inherited set of structures from the past. This set of structures has dominated a now global understanding of the Orient as a place of danger, inferiority, exoticism, unrest, and chaos in relation to a “civilized” West. The Saidian turn led historians of the British Empire towards the largely unexplored field of empire at home, a turn that, twenty-five years later, has in many ways become the new orthodoxy and more traditional studies like Bernard Porter’s *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (2004), which argues as the title suggests that Britons were not overly affected by empire, are now regarded as revisionist to the new school.

What is ‘new’ in the ‘New Imperial History,’ manifold but central to its foundation, is a rejection of celebratory, unapologetic, nationalistic histories of imperialism (what we might call the traditional British and Imperial History), a critical condemnation of colonialism in relation to its effects on colonized people globally, a realization that gender was central to the formation of empire, a retrieval of the subaltern voice of the colonized, decentralization from the Metropole to the peripheries in topic choice and archival use, and a certain skepticism about the usefulness and veracity of ‘nation’ as an organizing unit for historical study. Within this tradition, the works of Catherine Hall, Sonya Rose, Mrinalini Sinha, Anne McClintock, and Philippa Levine, to name a few, have reconfigured the history of Britain and its empire.⁵⁴ Over the last fifteen years, these scholars have pushed historians of the British Empire to think about the ways imperialism constantly permeated ‘home,’ to own the devastating effects of colonization on indigenous

⁵³ Said has also been key in developing our understanding of “othering,” see: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), in particular see 40, 206-7.

⁵⁴ The most influential of the works are: Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, eds., *At Home with Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The ‘Manly Englishman’ and the ‘Effeminate Bengali’ in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

peoples under British rule, and to recognize the role of gender in the formation of imperial spaces and the civilizing mission. Yet, perhaps most destabilizing to traditional British historiography has been the power of the ‘New Imperial History’ to question the actual concept of nation and national formation as absolute and independent of empire, making it now impossible to write British history without, at the very least, a nod to empire. This impact has in turn spawned a new reactionary counter-history that reasserts the primacy and axiom of ‘nation’ and delimits the strength of this postcolonial, postmodern moment on British history.⁵⁵ This dissertation rests somewhere, and somewhat uncomfortably, in the middle of this paradigm shift. I rely on, and accept, the concept of two nations (Britain – England, really – and Canada) but I am drawn to position them within a circular and interdependent nexus of empire accepting that one could not exist or perform (socially, politically, culturally, or economically) without the other because of my close reading of the ‘New Imperial History.’ This is also why I find using a transnational lens in my analysis to be useful even though I am dealing with only two nations. I am not alone in my caution; indeed, other historian of the ‘New Imperial History’ struggle to let go of nation while at the same time recognize the need to challenge it.⁵⁶

Influenced by this school of thinking about empire and representation I employ a critical post-colonial perspective in my analysis of the primary sources used in this dissertation. At a basic level post-colonial theories argue that representations of colonized populations were manipulated to suit the needs of the colonizer. The assumption that indigenous peoples were inferior in culture, government, language, moral code, and work, positioned imperialists as superior and therefore able and obligated to rule, conquer, and transmit British hegemony outside of the Metropole. The Victorian British civilizing mission extended to include governing other presumed ungoverned people even within its own ethnicities, particularly women and the poor. I apply this idea to a class of people within the same ethnic group as the colonizer – the impoverished male Eastenders who form the basis of this study. I argue that because of their subaltern class, a class that rested uncomfortably within a presumed superior ethnic identity as Englishmen, East End men, and by extension their wives and children, were subject to imperial ideas about the rehabilitative powers of the colonial world that could raise them up to acceptable

⁵⁵ Antoinette Burton, “Introduction: On the Inadequacy and Indispensability of the Nation,” in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*, edited by Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 1-23. Bernard Porter is perhaps the leading proponent of the more traditional position, see: Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

racial standards of whiteness and gendered standards of respectable working-class masculinity. Their English ethnicity, which should have granted them easy access to the colonies, was rendered problematic and restrictive because of its entrenchment within the limits of their class. In other words, class trumped ethnicity in their ability to succeed within the empire without assistance and intervention. I argue that East End assisted emigrants were treated in much the same manner as indigenous peoples in the British Empire because they were believed to be deficient of the character expected of them as English people; emigration charities often distrusted, infantilized, protected, observed, and controlled assisted emigrants in an effort to reform both their moral character and their physical bodies. I argue this through an examination of emigration charities and their relationships with emigrants showing that emigrationists operated from a place of privilege and dominance, as much as their motivations might have been honourable or based in Christian duty. Assisted emigrants were always at the mercy of the intentions, motivations, and connections of the philanthropic emigrationists in charge of their movements. East London assisted emigrants were never on equal footing with those supporting them, opposing them, or benefitting from their emigration and labour on either side of the Atlantic.

A central aim of this dissertation is simply to write an unwritten history. Thus, the dissertation is neither wholly revisionist or engaged in a particular historiographical debate. Rather, its position in the literature is more formative and helps us better understand how English emigration functioned as a whole in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and how assisted emigrants within that wider mass migration experienced their movements around the empire. The dissertation works to reposition the history of colonial emigration to not only an East London perspective by tightening the focus on a small but important segment of the emigrating population, but pull back the lens to capture a wider and more complex web of interactions between Metropole and colony, in this case Canada. I have also tried to determine to what degree ‘imperial philanthropy’ was a success (or, alternatively, a failure) for those involved in its project as emigrants, sponsors, philanthropists, commentators, receivers, and opponents and to define what success and failure meant to these various stakeholders.

The foundational historiographical base of the dissertation rests on a hundred-year tradition of studies in British emigration to the white settler colonies. The standard foundational text in this history is Stanley C. Johnson’s *A History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to*

North America (1913), now essentially a primary source. Together with W.A. Carrothers' *Emigration from the British Isles: With Special Reference to the Development of the Overseas Dominions* (1929) the early history of British emigration tended to focus on determining the causes and consequences of mass emigration from Britain, a process that was still on-going when these authors were published. Johnson covered most facets of emigration in the nineteenth century (and the first twelve years of the twentieth), even dedicating a whole chapter to women's emigration. His book contains valuable information on emigration charities and estimates of emigration numbers. Johnson's main argument was simple and Malthusian: the main cause for emigration was the "phenomenal increase in population which overtook the nation in the early years of the last century" and the desire to find the "certainty of constant employment."⁵⁷ He also held that agricultural crises, industrial improvements (which rendered people unemployed), the Irish famine, foreign market competition, and propaganda by colonial nations caused emigration.⁵⁸ Johnson's sympathies with imperialism resound throughout the book; he argues in favour of emigration to the colonies to bolster the empire as well as advocating a "definite arrangement between the various units of the Empire that all will band together in times of stress," a chilling prediction on the eve of world war.⁵⁹ Praising the work of emigration charities and the Emigrants' Information Office, and frustrated by Canada's immigration bans on 'undesirables,' Johnson failed to see all sides of the emigration experience in his imperial bias. But his book prompted historical interest in emigration that continues to flourish; historians are still attempting to define the causes, motivations, and consequences of emigration among Britons.

In 1929, W.A. Carrothers argued little differently than Johnson. He set out to write an economic history of emigration at the juncture of what he called "the end of an epoch in the migration of the British people," which, it should be noted, he deeply lamented.⁶⁰ In the book he argues that emigration was caused by distress or the fear of distress.⁶¹ Carrothers, though later to be proven wrong, maintained that agricultural crises in the late nineteenth century prompted

⁵⁷ Johnson, 38, 67.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 66.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 328.

⁶⁰ Carrothers, vii.

⁶¹ Ibid, 1.

mass emigration.⁶² This could hardly have been the case since the majority of emigrants in the second half of the nineteenth century originated from cities.⁶³ Like Johnson, Carrothers was an imperial supporter. He talks with delight about “empire-builders” and “faith in the unity of the British Empire,” and with sorrow about the loss of imperial life in the First World War.⁶⁴ His work is as distinctively dated as Johnson’s, referring to the ‘problem’ of female emigration and lamenting the lapse in British-born emigrants moving to the dominions. As Dudley Baines notes, before the 1960s most of the historical treatments concerning emigration provided views from the colonies. Certainly, these historians were more concerned with settlement and assimilation than with social and economic conditions in the home countries. Baines goes on to say that these histories often viewed emigration as a single event caused by population pressures, rural decline and deprivation, and improvements in transportation. It was not until the 1970s that interest in the history of emigration flows and chains, emigrant background, and the emigration information revolution, gained momentum. Baines also explains why most early studies, which relied chiefly on government records, focused on the period before 1850 which encompassed the history of rural emigration and the Irish famine. Governments, he argues, left few records between the 1850s and the 1880s because they became less interested in emigration.⁶⁵ It was not until the next historiographical swing that more varied sources enabled the study of urban migration in the second half of the nineteenth century.

H.J. M. Johnston’s *British Emigration Policy 1815-30: ‘Shoveling Out Paupers’* (1972), Charlotte Erickson’s *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America* (1972) and *Emigration from Europe 1815-1914* (1976), and Howard L. Malchow’s *Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in Late Nineteenth Britain* (1979) marked a renewed interest in the history of emigration from the United Kingdom and in particular English emigrants.⁶⁶ Historians in the 1970s influenced by the social sciences

⁶² This was also one of Johnson’s arguments but Johnson at least held a variety of factors responsible for emigration (as noted above) even if he was preoccupied with population and unemployment.

⁶³ Dudley Baines reveals this error quite plainly, see: Baines, 205. I would argue though that Carrothers may not have had it all wrong. No doubt, agricultural crises affected Britain’s urban areas. Unemployed agricultural labourers flocked to London seeking work and many of these people ended up emigrating to the colonies which made agricultural crises an urban, as much as a rural, problem.

⁶⁴ Carrothers, 242-43, 255.

⁶⁵ Baines, 1, 3.

⁶⁶ Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1972); and Charlotte Erickson, *Emigration from*

sought answers to historical questions through systematic data collection. Johnston argues that British emigration, like the Corn Law debates and parliamentary reform, developed from moments of distress.⁶⁷ Dudley Baines suggested that Charlotte Erickson's work presented the most significant step forward in emigration history as she was the first to examine and define the character and origin of British emigrants, shifting away from the traditional economic and political narratives.⁶⁸ In her later work this move is even more evident: her 1994 book *Leaving England: Essays on British Emigration in the Nineteenth Century* marked a significant departure for emigration history as Erickson expanded her use of emigrants' letters home in an effort to retrieve the long-absent emigrant voice in the history of emigration. Howard Malchow recounted the history of the National Emigration League in the 1870s and its failed attempts to win government support for assisted emigration. While the work is important, it is quite narrow in scope, dealing primarily with the lobby for state-aided emigration. Malchow's work is certainly foundational but this dissertation fills in many of the gaps he left open.

Throughout the 1980s the history of emigration and empire began to flourish, most noticeably with the advent of the Manchester University Press Studies in Imperialism series that was sympathetic to works on representations of imperialism in the popular mind.⁶⁹ Many important titles on emigration have since formed part of that series which has recently published its 100th title.⁷⁰ The series' main concern has been to explore topics in empire that suggest that imperialism had "as significant an effect on the dominant as the subordinate societies."⁷¹ The single most important contribution to the historiography on assisted emigration from East London was published in 1982. This was Desmond Glynn's article in the journal *Histoire sociale: Social History*, "Exporting Outcast London: Assisted Emigration to Canada, 1886-1914." In it, Glynn argues that emigration charities in East London failed to fully realize their

Europe, 1815-1914 (London: A. and C. Black, 1976). Full citations for Johnston and Malchow are found in earlier footnotes.

⁶⁷ Johnston, 2.

⁶⁸ Baines, 3.

⁶⁹ The first of these publications were: John Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); and John Mackenzie, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

⁷⁰ In particular, see: Marjory Harper, *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movements of Emigrants, 1600-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Harper, *Emigration from Scotland*; and Hammerton and Taylor, *Ten Pound Poms*. The series has recently published a reflective volume to celebrate its 100th title: Andrew S. Thompson, ed., *Writing Imperial Histories* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2013).

⁷¹ Andrew S. Thompson, "Introduction," in *Writing Imperial Histories*, edited by Andrew S. Thompson (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2013), 1.

potential, being blocked in their efforts by the Canadian government's lack of interest in increasing migration from the area. While the article has helped point me in the direction of numerous primary sources, Glynn did not have enough space to fully articulate this history. The article does a good job of surveying the struggles between the charities and the Canadian government and opens a basic discussion on emigration charities in East London; he does this mostly, however, from the point of view of Canada rather than Britain. I would take his argument several steps further and suggest that this history tells us much about transnationalism, the relationship between colony and Metropole, colonial autonomy, emigrant selection and eugenic tendencies in the contemporary immigration policy, among other nuances. The last time many of the sources I consulted were used appears to have been when Glynn wrote the article over thirty years ago; Glynn is often casual in his referencing and did not consult all of the available sources. Canadian historians have relied on Glynn because his is the only work that has thus far tackled the history of assisted emigration from East London as a whole.⁷² This is all the more reason my work is long overdue. Barbara Roberts's *Whence they Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935* (1988) is another important contribution in the history of immigration to Canada published in the 1980s and answers many questions about early twentieth century Canadian immigration restrictions.⁷³

In the 1990s the history of British emigration began to change dramatically as the imperial turn in British history became firmly cemented. Charlotte Erickson's work on emigrant letters was instrumental in defining the need for works about the emigrants themselves. As noted above, in 1998 the first of seven 'British World' conferences was held and important post-colonial, literary contributions began to emerge from authors like Anne McClintock and Rita Kranidis.⁷⁴ Emigration history became increasingly influenced by feminist and subaltern studies as well as the linguistic turn and post-colonial perspectives. In the 1990 edited volume *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*, historian Stephen Constantine called for the following new directions in British emigration history:

There is much we still do not know about Empire migrants. Questions remain about their social and occupational background, about their motives for migration and about their

⁷² Myra Rutherdale, Ross McCormack, and Janice Cavell all rely heavily on Glynn for example.

⁷³ Roberts, Barbara, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988).

⁷⁴ McClintock is referenced above; and Rita Kranidis, ed., *Imperial Objects: Essays on Victorian Women's Emigration and the Unauthorized Imperial Experience* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998).

choice of destination. There is room for study of the unofficial agencies often involved in their transfer, for example the charitable organizations like the Salvation Army and the Child Emigration Society. Shipping companies, whose interest in the migrant trade was often second to none, also deserve examination. In addition, we need some consideration of reception arrangements in the dominions, whether run by the state or voluntary bodies, and about the problems of assimilation and the impact of these newcomers on their host society. Most of all, perhaps, we need to hear the voices of the Empire migrants. The oral records and personal letters used by some of the contributors to this book indicate how further research may enable us to comprehend better the life experiences of those who settled and stayed, and of those who remained restless and returned. Such a programme of research suggests the value in the former dominions and those in once Imperial Britain.⁷⁵

Few such treatments have materialized in the last twenty years until recently.⁷⁶ This study fills a number of those gaps including the histories of the emigration charities, an exploration of the emigrant experience and voice, and reception mechanisms.

In the last decade, historians have in large part left behind the more traditional economic histories of emigration in favour of studies of empire, culture, transnationalism, and the gendered experience of colonization. I have been influenced by Lisa Chilton's work on women's emigration charities and followed her methodological lead in my own work. This does not mean, however, I neglect the economic foundations of assisted emigration in this dissertation, as the reality of the need for such schemes was usually based in economic problems. Chilton's 2007 book *Agents of Empire: British Female Migration to Canada and Australia, 1860s-1930* employs both gendered and transnational lenses to examine assisted emigration for women. In it,

⁷⁵ Stephen Constantine, ed., *Emigrants and Empire*, 16.

⁷⁶ Amy Lloyd, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Edinburgh, has recently completed her PhD dissertation at Cambridge in which she dissects eleven lower middle- and working-class periodicals, see: Amy Lloyd, *Popular Perceptions of Emigration in Britain, 1870-1914* (PhD diss., Cambridge University, 2009). In it, Lloyd argues that popular perceptions informed decisions to leave and return and coloured emigrants' aspirations. She also argues that even though imperialists sought to convey notions of Empire through the magazines, those sentiments rarely translated into significant influence. This is a considerable departure from some of the work on imperial representation and infusion at home. Lloyd has opened a discussion about the degree of influence imperial propaganda actually had on British emigration choices. Lloyd is currently working on a project that profiles English emigrants in Canada in the early twentieth century using census records, see her blog at <http://englishemigrationtocanada.blogspot.co.uk/>. Lisa Chilton has also recently examined some of these themes in addition to her major contribution *Agents of Empire*. She has examined reception mechanisms for incoming migrants in Canada: Lisa Chilton, "Managing Migrants: Toronto, 1820-1880," *Canadian Historical Review* 92, no. 2 (June 2011): 231-62. Chilton has also used emigrant letters in her work in order for us to better understand their experience, see chapter four in Chilton, *Agents of Empire*, 97-117. Most recently, Chilton examines the travel experiences of British emigrants and travelers within Canada raising questions about British privilege overseas, white settler hegemony, and British superiority in the early twentieth century: Lisa Chilton, "Travelling Colonist: British Emigration and the Construction of Anglo-Canadian Privilege," in *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World*, eds., Kent Fedorowich and Andrew S. Thompson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 169-91.

she takes the multiple viewpoints of emigrationists and emigrants to examine the motivations, identities, and management of those involved at every stage of female emigration from Britain to its colonies and the fight for control over that system. I have tried to do the same here employing both top down and bottom up perspectives. Other noteworthy work in the last decade includes James Belich's *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (2009) which takes a wide long-term and cross-colony view arguing that there was a shared sentiment of 'Britishness' in the colonies that contributed to their ultimate success. Belich suggests we must find ways to understand the massive undertaking that was Empire without being too celebratory.⁷⁷ Because Belich deals with the entire English-speaking world, and pays significant attention to the United States, the scope of his work reaches beyond that of this dissertation. More immediately useful are Stephen Constantine and Marjorie Harper's volume *Migration and Empire* (2010) and Robert Bickers's edited volume *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons Over the Seas* (2010) both of which were published in the Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series.⁷⁸ Harper and Constantine synthesize the history of British emigration over a long period of time from 1815 to the 1960s taking up the themes of assisted emigration, child emigration, national experiences of emigration in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, female emigration, the business of emigration, return migration, and immigration to the United Kingdom. *Settlers and Expatriates* contains articles on the formation of British identity and communities outside the empire in South, East and Southeast Asia, Egypt, and East and Southern Africa. These two books are important recent contributions to the impressive series which has firmly anchored the critical history of British emigration in the contemporary historical imagination.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁷⁸ Robert Bickers, *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons Over the Seas*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁷⁹ There are currently twenty titles in the companion series. They deal with both national experiences and thematic problems like gender, race, environment, missionaries, and migration in the British Empire. The books complement the broader chronological series published between 1998 and 1999 taking up themes too large to be dealt with in the broader narrative. The anchor series was published in response to the need to revise the increasingly outdated Cambridge History of the British Empire which was published between 1929 and 1940. The three anchor volumes that pertain to this dissertation are: Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century*, Oxford History of the British Empire Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, eds., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century*, Oxford History of the British Empire Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Robin W. Winks, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V: Historiography*, Oxford History of the British Empire Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). For an excellent analysis of the

At present, the history of the ‘British World’ is still being tested for British emigration history and historians have begun answering Constantine’s and Baines’ calls for histories of regional specificity, emigrant origins, and emigrant voice moving beyond the standard models of motivations for emigration like population pressure, unemployment, and new opportunities. Current trends in the history of transnationalism, migration, identity, globalism, and emotions may help. The most recent contribution to the scholarship is a new collection of essays published in the Manchester University Press Studies in Imperialism series and edited by Kent Fedorowich and Andrew Thompson entitled *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World* (2013). The volume weaves together the ‘New Imperial History’ and transnational perspectives and includes essays by senior scholars on migrants’ letters, settler decisions around staying and leaving, global/imperial identities, and emigrant perceptions of racial dynamics in the colonies. This dissertation connects to these new trends in that it examines emigrants’ voices through their letters home, analyzes their settlement experiences in Canada, and their involvement in setting up emigration charities. It will better contextualize the process by which Canada and Britain engaged in a dialogue about suitable emigrants and who would and would not best form the citizenry of their societies. These debates were ongoing but intensified at three junctures in the late 1860s, the early 1880s, and the period 1906-10; the first three chapters examine these moments in detail. The East London emigrants will also function as the subjects through which to discern and clarify the colonial relationship and formation of national identities. Theirs is not only a story about desperation, choice, tension, resistance, and perseverance, but also about the modernization of the state in the United Kingdom – such as Poor Law reform, parliamentary reform, the formation of the welfare state – and the development of the autonomous Canadian state. These two histories were intimately connected but have not always been historicized as such; employing the ‘British World’ and ‘New Imperial History’ models are two ways in which we can see their unique but reciprocal development.

Scope and Arguments

usefulness, purpose, and outlook of the series from a Canadian scholar’s point of view, see: Phillip Buckner, “Was there a ‘British’ Empire? *The Oxford History of the British Empire* from a Canadian Perspective,” *Acadiensis* 32, no. 1 (Autumn 2002), 110-28. Of particular use to this study is the Canada volume: Philip Buckner, ed., *Canada and the British Empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

One of the overarching research questions of this dissertation is to answer how emigration to the white settler colonies was different and unique for East Londoners. In the century between 1815 and 1914 an estimated sixteen million Britons left their homeland for a variety of complex reasons.⁸⁰ It is impossible to determine exactly how many of those were East Londoners as neither British or colonial governments kept track of origin information specific to neighborhood. Baines suggests as many as one in five emigrants had been born in London in the second half of the nineteenth century, totaling over 419,000 people by 1900.⁸¹ But no matter the number of emigrants who left the East End through assisted means, it is the context, discourse, and anxiety around their migrations that is most interesting. Even if none of the emigration programs attempted had actually succeeded in sending a single emigrant to a British colony, plans to use emigration as a solution to poverty in East London would still reveal a deep-seated belief in the inadequacies of the domestic Poor Law amongst proponents and the reforming potential of liberal imperialism. London was perceived to have a particular tendency towards poverty in the nineteenth century in large part because of its size and casual labour problem. At various moments and crises these tendencies placed unmanageable pressure on the Poor Law's ability to remedy poverty in the capital and in particular in East London.⁸²

Part of my central argument hinges on the idea that East Londoners themselves had considerable influence on the shape and outcome of their emigration experience and the production of a discourse on assisted emigration. Their participation as emigrants to the white settler colonies shaped the lively debate and legislative developments surrounding immigration policy and emigrant suitability. Their engagement with emigration altered the ways in which the Canadian state accepted or declined British emigrants, effected deportation policies, and dealt with incoming poverty. Moreover, I dispute some of the commentary and historical interpretations that have argued emigration was a last resort to chronic poverty for Eastenders. The sources suggest more convincingly that East Londoners understood emigration as a personal choice, which they saved some of their own money to effect. For many of the assisted emigrants considered here, England remained a viable home should their experience in the colonies not work out, although most approached their emigration with the intention of permanency. Assisted

⁸⁰ Constantine, 1. It should be noted that Johnson estimated 12 million had left by 1913, see: Johnson, 38. Carrothers cites over 21 million between 1815 and 1912, Carrothers, 305-6.

⁸¹ Baines, 144.

⁸² David R. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 34-35.

emigrants' letters reveal a disconnect between the emigrants' understanding of their own migration as optional and the philanthropists' assertion that emigration was the only, final, and irreversible way out of poverty. Assisted emigrants from East London also made choices about the expression of their behavior, character, and identity; emigration charities selected only certain types of Eastenders and prospective candidates performed in a specific manner in order to be chosen. In this way, emigration was not for everyone but only a certain segment of the working-class population.

This dissertation examines the ways in which East Londoners helped to shape, resist, alter, and accept colonial conceptions in different ways than their philanthropists intended. Considerable resistance to the assisted emigration movement came from commentators in the white settler colonies and at home who questioned the quality of emigrants that were sent out, whether or not there would be enough work for them abroad, and what their leaving would do to the metropolitan labour supply if all the best workers fled. East Londoners' high rates of participation in emigration fueled a lively discourse about the British race, colonial autonomy, poverty, and overpopulation in the six decades under study here. This research reveals who had control over the production of colonial language and the dissemination of emigration propaganda in East London. I argue that East Londoners directly and indirectly shaped emigration discourse by their perceived chronic unemployment, their perceived tendency to drink and gamble, the condition of their physical health and bodies, the desire among some of them to leave London, and the nature of their citizenship at home and abroad.

I also examine how East Londoners coped with and shaped new settler identities and new realities by retrieving their 'voice' in the second part of the dissertation. I explore how working-class culture operated abroad and how it responded to new landscapes, aboriginal peoples, and contact with emigrants from different countries. I also investigate what kinds of anxieties East Londoners faced upon leaving home and the apparatuses they developed overseas to help them cope with change. East Londoners were often chaperoned abroad by committee members of the emigration charities. They were closely guarded (especially the women), heavily scrutinized for their dress and manner, and constantly observed and analyzed for the quality of their character. The immense pressure that was put on East London migrants was different than for other English emigrants; this is an overriding theme in the dissertation. In many ways, East Londoners had more to lose. If they failed the tests of their character or their emigration they seemed destined to

a life of casual employment, low wages, and impoverished living and would likely never again be chosen for emigration. Despite their spatial and cultural connections and attachments in East London, this generally meant life would be hard. Part of the impetus to leave England, especially for East Londoners, was the hope of escaping poverty. This dissertation seeks to determine whether emigration fulfilled that hope and to examine how the colonies allowed the emigrants and their families to move socially upward, if at all.

Chapter Structure, Methods, and Lenses

The primary purpose of the dissertation is to construct a full picture of East End emigration. This is achieved in several ways. The dissertation is divided into two parts. In the first part, I offer a comprehensive analysis of three periods of emigration programming and discourse in East London. In chapter one, I analyze the building of a philanthropic emigration program to treat occasional economic and social distress in East London between 1857 and 1882. In chapter two, I explore the resurgence and maturation of emigration programming designed to deal with chronic poverty in East London between 1882 and 1905 after a hiatus in the 1870s. In chapter three, I turn my attention to the realignment of emigration programming to suit the modern bureaucratic management of unemployment in East London between 1905 and 1913. The second part of the dissertation profiles assisted emigrants from East London in two case studies in the nineteenth century. Chapter four uses emigrant letters home to retrieve their voice and map their experience of assisted emigration to Canada between 1884 and 1894. Chapter five examines a ‘failed’ colonial settlement experiment for Eastenders in 1884 in the North-West Territory in Canada. I have not set out to write an economic or demographic history of East End emigration; one of the limitations of this work is that I have not been able to produce an accurate set of statistics. Instead, this study will be as much a social and cultural history of East End emigration as a philanthropic and political one. I am more interested in the idea, experience, discourse, and practice of assisted emigration than in raw statistical data but I have tried to be as accurate as possible with the statistical data I do use in the absence of official statistical sources.

The research for this study was conducted in Britain and in Canada between 2009 and 2013. Besides the more traditional archival research, it is also very much a twenty-first century study employing numerous digital databases and websites. The archival research revealed a number of useful sources related to emigration charities and agencies, government

correspondence and reports, religious authorities, newspaper and periodical articles, books and tracts, and photographs. In Britain, research on the emigration charities was conducted at the local and national level. In this way the study contributes to local, regional, national, and imperial history. The annual reports of the emigration charities were collected in a number of places; the British Library, the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives in London, the Lambeth Palace Archives (Church of England Archives), the London Hospital Archives, and online from Library and Archives Canada. British government records on assisted emigration from the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, the Local Government Board, and the Central (Unemployed) Body for London were collected at the UK National Archives. Records from London boards of guardians, the Central (Unemployed) Body for London, and the Charity Organisation Society were consulted at the London Metropolitan Archives. Newspaper articles are relied on quite heavily in the dissertation. While the records of emigration charities are quite extensive they were not sufficient to form the basis of the research for a study of this size and scope. British and Canadian newspapers, particularly useful for exploring the history of opposition to assisted emigration, were consulted at the British Newspaper Library in Colindale, London, the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, and through several online databases which have digitized full runs of daily newspapers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Chapter four uses letters written by assisted emigrants back to emigration charities. These letters are found in the annual reports of the charities. Additional research for chapter five was conducted at the Saskatchewan Archives Board where homestead records revealed the history of the London Colonization Aid Society's East End emigration scheme at Moosomin in 1884. Chapter five also employs significant census research. This research was conducted using the world subscription service through the website ancestry.ca. I hope to have demonstrated the usefulness of using historical research methods used traditionally for genealogy such as census data in a scholarly framework. Overall, the study is highly original in that it incorporates transnational research on assisted emigration from East London in both Britain and Canada and makes extensive use of sources that have not hitherto been used together in one study.

In attempting to move beyond a solely social historical framework, my work incorporates and relies on various literary and critical theories, considering how representations of emigration, the emigrant, and the structures of empire were created and promulgated throughout the period. The emigrants' letters, records of the emigration charities, and newspaper accounts are ripe with

literary representation and expectations about life in the colonies; the most common of these representations are utopian and idyllic visions of Canadian landscapes contrasted to dystopian visions of life in the East End. The dissertation dissects this utopian/dystopian dichotomy to reveal a more complex colonial experience for East Londoners. The myth of leaving the slums for a new life was wrapped in a colonial discourse that was neither accurate nor reflective of the many tragedies and difficulties of emigration. Underlying the work is an acceptance of Foucauldian theories of biopower and biopolitics in relation to the ways in which the poor emigrant body was constructed, prodded, fumigated, criticized and feared.⁸³ Foucault's "disciplinary subject" is too limiting, however, as it fails to account for what Elaine Hadley has recently called "the complexities and difficulties of a lived abstract embodiment that is intrinsic to the form of the mid-Victorian liberal subject," a subject I take up in further detail below.⁸⁴ I also push against the idea that assisted emigrants had no agency in their migrations and were merely puppets of a larger structure above them arguing instead that they frequently, often in subtle ways, resisted many of the expectations and controls put upon them.

The application of 'histoire croisée,' cross-national, and transnational histories has been helpful in framing the history of East End emigration. First employed in a rejection of the limitations of national histories for their narrow focus, their inattention to empire, and their lack of regional specificity, cross-national histories took a wider intra-national view.⁸⁵ In this historical approach, the historian attempts to cross freely over imagined national borders preoccupying themselves with transplantation and the effects of 'crossing' the spaces between to understand the history of nations and identity from a variety of intertwined and interdependent angles. This can sometimes be achieved through comparison of nations and nationalities or through cultural studies that search for interpretation and meaning in identity formation and expression. Maura O'Connor suggests it might be better to invoke all three of these methods to make a more convincing argument.⁸⁶ Cross-national or transnational history attempts to discern

⁸³ Michel Foucault, *Religion and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999) and Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁸⁴ Elaine Hadley, *Living Liberalism: Practical Citizenship in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 23.

⁸⁵ Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor, eds., *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2004), ix.

⁸⁶ Maura O'Connor, "Cross-national Travelers: Rethinking Comparisons and Representations," in *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective*, eds., Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor (New York: Routledge, 2004), 133-34.

representation from various observers, viewpoints, and nations – in my case, Britain and its settler colonies on a macro level, and the emigrants, the philanthropists, the governments, the receiving publics, and the publics left behind on a micro level.⁸⁷ The result is a set of late nineteenth and early twentieth century interpretations that were highly different from one another depending on the commentator’s point of view, where values have been unevenly distributed on a particular topic dependent upon background, perspective, purpose, and objectivity. Essentially, the emigrant’s ‘Canada’ was not the same as the immigration official’s ‘Canada,’ and each would have had something different to say about Canada’s relationship to Britain for example. This dissertation addresses an ideal subject for the application of this theory as I examine how East Londoners shaped the discourse and practice of assisted emigration in their highly divergent experiences of movement – from acceptance and welcome on one hand to anxiety and deportation on the other. In other words, their experiences along national lines were extremely complex. Additionally, transnational history can alert us to the different ways the colonies asserted their autonomy from Britain or remained its faithful and obedient dependents in the intricate relationship between them. Within these entanglements between Metropole and periphery a more persuasive interpretation of the imperial project of emigration for the poor is constructed.

The lenses of race, class, and gender are fundamental to constructing a narrative on assisted emigration from East London. The emigrant at the centre of this story was (most of the time) white, English, male, and working-class. The virtues and values of his dependents were also weighed alongside his own character, the family being selected as a whole for emigration, or rejected because of its inability to fit the desired mold of respectable, sober, industrious working-class Britons. Many of the questions in this dissertation revolve around the intersections of race,

⁸⁷ Cohen and O’Connor define cross-national history as follows: “Cross-national history, by contrast, has largely been defined by the researcher’s range of inquiry. Whether the subject is the culture of celebrity or the transatlantic slave trade, cross-national histories follow topics beyond national boundaries. They seek to understand reciprocal influences, as well as the ways in which the act of transplantation itself changes the topic under study. As a consequence, scholars who work cross-nationally are often more interested in crossings—whether real or imaginary—than they are in the specific national settings. Their focus is upon the historical contingency that movement itself introduces; the subjects of their studies can be as influenced by events abroad as they are by those at home. Understood broadly, cross-national history includes the history of colonialism and imperialism, which have illuminated both the crucial importance of empire to the European nations, and the European states’ often malevolent influences abroad. It also encompasses what American historians have called the “new transnational history,” a historiographical project that seeks to transcend a narrow focus upon the nation-state in the pursuit of (to quote Ian Tyrrell) “the international context of national action in all of its manifestations,” Cohen and O’Connor, eds., xii.

class, Britishness, and masculinity. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, East Londoners (whether male or female, adult or child) were caricatured as degraded outcasts, slum-dwellers, and criminals. National consciousness suggested they were a formidable threat to the nation's imperial prowess. The men disappointed in wartime and both men and women occupied an urban landscape that was increasingly overcrowded, dirty, and unhealthy. For decades, as noted above, these concerns prompted a philanthropic obsession with the impoverished East End. Yet, the East End was a far more complex place ripe with political activism and grassroots public health initiatives.⁸⁸ The colonies were conversely understood as spaces wherein these problems might be fixed, where the degraded masculinity of the unemployed Londoner might be swapped for the self-sufficient independent farmer or skilled worker able to support his family. If East Londoners were considered at once possible emigrants and threats to British racial vigour, then what does that tell us about the value of the colonies at home? In other words, which territorial spaces were of more urgent value, home or abroad? A different set of answers lies on either side of the Atlantic. For Britain, the respectable urban poor would make good colonial citizens because they were believed to be hampered only by a deficient labour market at home not by their characters. If they could prove themselves moral, upright, and hard-working then it was assumed Canada could absorb them and they would regain their respectability and self-sufficiency. The unrespectable were chosen much less often but when they were it was because emigrationists believed they could be rehabilitated in Canada. From the Canadian perspective, the urban slum dweller from London was neither an ideal agricultural immigrant nor urban tradesman having been too damaged by his long-time unemployment in the city; he was also perceived to be morally and physically lacking. For these reasons, Canada felt undervalued by, and pushed against, British assisted emigration.

Emigration charities worked tirelessly to choose the right kind of emigrant and encouraged only 'suitable' East Londoners to apply in both the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Central (Unemployed) Body for London (CUBL) published a poster in

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Scott, "Cockney Plots: Working-Class Politics and Garden Allotments, 1890-1918" (M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2005); and Elizabeth Scott, "Cockney Plots: Allotments and Grassroots Political Activism," in *Gardening Philosophy for Everyone: Cultivating Wisdom*, ed. Dan O'Brien (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 106-18. Also see Marc Brodie for an analysis of the ways in which Eastenders were politicized people: Marc Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor: The East End of London, 1885-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004). Brodie revises the classic histories of the failure of working-class politics in East London by Henry Pelling, Gareth Stedman Jones, and Paul Thompson using instead non-traditional sources favouring the primacy of the "personal" in understanding the politics of the poor, see: Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor*, 5, 12-13.

1905, for example, in which the distress committee laid out its criteria for selectable emigrants. In bold letters, the CUBL sought only workers who “THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN” found themselves out of work in London.⁸⁹ Many of the charities specified that those with no particular skill or trade were unsuitable for emigration. This suggests that emigration charities had considerable control and power over who left and who stayed. Based on these criteria, many of the casual dock workers would automatically have been disqualified. Yet, for decades these were exactly the kind of emigrants the charities sent to Canada. Not only did emigration charities send thousands of general labourers to Canada, but East Londoners, both men and women, often contradicted the ideals of Britishness espoused by the upper and middle classes who sought to reform them. The sources used in this dissertation are full of references to expectations of emigrant sobriety, righteous living, Christian duty and obligation, and indebtedness to emigration sponsors. It is also clear from the sources that East Londoners were at least trying to live, if not fully espouse, many of the values hoped of them by philanthropists. It is particularly interesting that despite the difficulties with which East Londoners tried to meet these middle-class expectations of decorum and character, the charities concerned themselves so enthusiastically with the emigration and promotion of such stigmatized people. The questions here aim to address why the emigration charities undertook the work in the first place, why they believed they could re-train East Londoners to become better citizens, how they went about doing that, and how successful they were in their efforts.

That gender is central to the history of empire is now an accepted maxim within the new imperial historical practice.⁹⁰ Adele Perry notes that, “the processes of colonization cannot be understood without attention to gender, and that gender, similarly cannot be adequately comprehended outside the politics of race and colonization.”⁹¹ This is also true for the history of class. “Gender is deeply imbricated in the very nature of class identity,” remarks James Epstein, and “the notion of working-class ‘independence’ was constructed in masculine terms, as defining

⁸⁹ Emigration Poster, *Emigration Sub-Committee Minutes for 1905*, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, microfilm reel number X071/113, LMA.

⁹⁰ There is an extensive historiography on gender and empire. I accept though the basic tenet of that literature – that we cannot understand empire without gender. Adele Perry first brought this to my attention in her historiographical discussion of gender, colonization, and empire that cited the works of Catherine Hall, Anne McClintock, Mrinalini Sinha, and Ann Laura Stoler: Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-71* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 7-8. I would add to that list Philippa Levine’s work which has been instrumental in my developing my understanding of the interplay between race, class, and gender in the peripheries of Empire. In particular, see: Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics*.

⁹¹ Perry, 8.

the male worker's capacity to maintain himself and his family without recourse to poor relief or philanthropic largesse, and in turn became central to conceptions of male citizenship."⁹² East London men and women experienced emigration and empire differently and this has not been fully developed. I have chosen not to write a fully gendered history as I would argue this merits a separate study and approach; the sources do show, however, tremendous potential for studies of gender and I do make certain assumptions about gender throughout the dissertation. Married men were particularly vulnerable to pressure to uphold masculine ideals of working-class respectability especially, if not more so, upon leaving as representatives of the old country for the new. Moreover, male sobriety was always under scrutiny from emigration sponsors. The emigrants' letters reveal much about women's and men's work upon arrival as well as the distinction between the experience for young single migrants like female domestic servants and male indentured farm labourers. There was definite interest in the migration of East End girls and considerable attention paid to their safe journeys abroad.⁹³ Other indications suggest emigration put considerable pressure on emigrating wives to restrict the size of their families. The CUBL, for example, rejected families they considered too large in 1905 (more than four people in one family was considered too high to ensure success in the colonies), and wives were told to have "no increase in family size before or soon after departure."⁹⁴ Gender, then is an integral part of constructing this narrative and as such the dissertation discusses gender at various points in the text.

As much as this dissertation is influenced by scholars interested in literary theory, language, and meaning, especially in my analyses of the construction of an assisted emigration discourse, I am sensitive to the limitations for cultural and imperial history of too heavy a reliance on the importance of language. I am inspired by James Epstein's cautionary suggestion that we must still consider ordinary people's experiences and social actions in our analyses of language. Experience as historical category, Epstein argues, transcends language and brings us closer to the foundations of ordinary human action. He explains we must "remain mindful of how people have negotiated the complex relationships

⁹² James Epstein, *In Practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 7.

⁹³ See for example, Adelaide Ross, *Manual for Workers of the East London Association for the Care of Friendless Girls* (London: 1888). Ross outlines the care with which her charity treats its female charges highlighting morality, safety, temperance, and prevention.

⁹⁴ *Emigration Sub-Committee Minutes 1905*, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, microfilm reel number X071/113, LMA.

between discursive representation and social practice in their own political engagement, moving against the odds as they pursued desires for better worlds.”⁹⁵ Throughout the dissertation I demonstrate my adherence to this principle in my use of sources that explore emigrant agency and experience throughout their migration processes. Experience, as a lens through which to understand East End emigration from the emigrant perspective, should be particularly apparent in the second part of the dissertation.

Finally, the dissertation seeks to understand the assisted emigrant as “liberal subject.”⁹⁶ The origins of assisted emigration in East London were firmly located within the symbiotic contours of Victorian liberalism and imperialism. Scholars of nineteenth-century British liberalism have long equated liberal ideology with the imperial project of civilizing, modernizing, reforming, improving, and exploiting the colonial world.⁹⁷ These ideas extended to emigrant suitability, selection, and promotion in the assisted emigration project at home. Emigrationists in East London envisioned that colonial migration would raise the impoverished unemployed, or at best underemployed, Eastender into the trajectory of liberal economic progress they believed still characterized Britain and its overseas empire despite moments of economic crisis through to the outbreak of the First World War. The assisted emigrant, especially the male assisted emigrant, was to embody all of the characteristics of the ideal liberal subject – self-reliance, independence, sobriety, morality, industriousness, and physical well-being. He would eventually think for himself and possess the full rights of citizenship embodied in the vote, two traits he was believed incapable of expressing in his degraded state in East London. As liberal subject he would be both self-regulating and regulated by state-directed and socially-managed liberal norms. The possession of these liberal ideals would allow the male assisted emigrant to perform expected modes of respectable working-class masculinity that would trickle

⁹⁵ Epstein, 12.

⁹⁶ Elaine Hadley explains that the term “liberal subject” has been badly historicized and remains ubiquitous, see: Hadley, 3. Chris Otter is more accepting of the term, see: Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Otter accepts Peter Mandler’s definition of the liberal subject as “something recognizable” and “widespread in stabilizing urban communities across Britain.” Otter, 11. I would sooner follow Otter and accept that the “liberal subject” was as much an imagined character as a lived one and that many working-class men (I note men in particular because liberalism was understood to be a masculine and moreover, white, set of political beliefs and practices) were attracted to expressing themselves as liberal subjects as much as reformers were intent on creating liberal subjects.

⁹⁷ James Vernon, “What Was Liberalism, and Who Was its Subject?; or, Will the Real Liberal Subject Please Stand Up?,” *Victorian Studies* 53, no. 2 (2011), 303; Hadley, 15; James Epstein, “Taking Class Notes on Empire,” in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, eds., Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 272.

down to his wife and children thus ensuring the family unit was self-sufficient and able to fully participate in the liberal political economy. This would be a family that was not reliant on the Poor Law, did not belong to an impoverished collective of urban poor, and was not attracted to socialism. British emigrationists argued that emigration to supposedly clean and prosperous colonies would facilitate this transformation. Throughout this dissertation runs the idea that emigrationists were motivated to move poor urban emigrants from one part of the empire to another in pursuit of transforming them into good liberal subjects and citizens. In large part the emigrants would realize this transformation themselves by saving money for their migrations, connecting to imperial labour markets, remaining teetotal, and performing other expected modes of respectable working-class identities after their arrival in British colonies. In this way, both emigrationists and emigrants engaged in the formation of the liberal subject in a period some scholars have dubbed “mid-Victorian liberalism” until British liberalism as a dominant social, political, and economic ideology began its eventual decline after the First World War.⁹⁸

Note on Terminology

I have chosen to use the terms ‘East Londoner’ and ‘Eastender’ interchangeably to encompass those London residents who lived primarily on the Eastern flank of the city in what are now the boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, and Newham. The labouring poor actually lived all over London not just the East End proper and often self-identified or were identified by commentators as ‘Cockneys’ or ‘Eastenders.’ The literature on East Londoners has tended to employ a variety of different terms to describe or define the people who lived in what came to be referred to as the ‘East End’ such as ‘Cockney,’ ‘Eastender,’ ‘working-class,’ and ‘labouring poor.’ There are numerous problems with how historians have categorized the area’s residents and indeed there are equally as many debates about where the boundaries of the East End begin and end; John Marriott calls this “geographical uncertainty.”⁹⁹ From Charles Booth’s adherence to London County Council boundaries in the 1880s and 1890s, to Walter Besant’s spreading of those boundaries outwards to the suburbs in the early twentieth century, to Millicent Rose’s insistence on revisiting the ancient borders of the river Thames, the Roman City wall, the river Lea, and Aldgate in the 1950s, Marriott addresses this long-reaching historical problem of

⁹⁸ Hadley, 2.

⁹⁹ Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 4.

definition by defining his East End to include only what is now Tower Hamlets and Newham.¹⁰⁰ I also adhere to this definition but would add the current borough of Hackney as the northern line between Tower Hamlets and Hackney was as blurred as that between Tower Hamlets and Newham. Some of the old neighborhoods mentioned frequently in this dissertation include Bethnal Green, Stepney, Whitechapel, Spitalfields, Poplar, and West Ham. The issue of race compounds the problem of defining the ‘Cockney’ as the term today includes African-British and Bangladeshi-British people who self-identify with the culture and the language. While most of the emigrants who were assisted out of East London to Canada were of English ethnicity, some had Irish, Jewish, or Continental European surnames. The term ‘Cockney’ was likely a catch-all term for defining the labouring poor who lived East and South of the city in the nineteenth-century press and public discourses and so we can also look to the southern boroughs for similar experiences of emigration. In many of the emigrants’ letters the emigrants use the term ‘Londoner’ or ‘poor people’ to define themselves which suggests even they did not always use the term ‘Cockney’ or ‘Eastender.’

I use the term ‘emigrant’ and specifically ‘assisted emigrant’ for several reasons. ‘Emigrant’ was the term emigrationists and the Canadian government used to describe persons leaving England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To be more specific, I have chosen to add the word ‘assisted’ to describe these emigrants as they were much different than other emigrants who moved around the empire with self-sufficient means and motivations. ‘Emigrant’ also implies leaving or moving out from the hub of empire outwards towards the colonies. It is the most appropriate term to describe the movement of migrants leaving East London for Canada.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 6.

PART ONE

**The Emigration Movement in East London –
Organizational Histories**

CHAPTER ONE

‘Like a Spell Upon Them’:¹Building the Foundation for Emigration Philanthropy in East London, 1857-82

“They seemed full of hope and gladness as they crowded the foredeck of the spacious steamer, from which the empty and desolate houses of Cubitt-town were clearly visible.”
- *Daily News*, August 8, 1868²

Introduction

Mid-nineteenth century Canada and the East End of London were antithetical elements in a common imperial sum. Observers in Britain, like the *Daily News* reporter quoted above, held Canada in stark contrast to the impoverished East End as the shining beacon of a British Empire ready and able to absorb the city’s poor. The sixty-four young Eastenders described above departed on board the steamer *St. Lawrence* from the Millwall Docks on August 7, 1868 for Canada. They were leaving behind the East End of a city they had come to experience as the source of their poverty and economic stagnation.³ They were a few of the thousands of poor emigrants who left East London for Canada between 1857 and 1882. They left in part because East London in the 1850s and 1860s was a place of multiple hardships. By the late 1860s, emigration had become such a golden ticket for the poor in Millwall and Cubitt Town in East London that the mere mention of the word was said to act “like a spell upon them.”⁴ Cholera outbreaks in 1848-49 had killed 14,601 Londoners and another in 1853-54 killed some 11,000 more. In 1866, yet another cholera outbreak claimed 5,973 lives across London but hit the East

¹ *East London Observer*, April 18, 1868. The full run of the *East London Observer* newspaper is available on microfilm at the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archive in London. Usually the articles used in this dissertation from this newspaper are anonymous and often have no title. Each edition of the newspaper ranges from six to eight pages in length. I have chosen to reference only the date of the newspaper in most cases as the articles referred to are easy to identify upon browsing through the issue. The same is true in most cases for references to other newspapers. Most of the other newspapers used in the dissertation are fully searchable through online databases and easy to access.

² “The Exodus from Millwall,” *Daily News*, August 8, 1868. This voyage is also reported on in the *East London Observer* on August 15, 1868.

³ See *Daily News*, August 8, 1868; *East London Observer*, August 15, 1868; and the *Times*, August 8, 1868 for reporting on the departure of this ship. The *Times* states none of the adults were over middle age and that there were children and babies. For specific lists of passengers on this ship see the searchable Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1922 database located at: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passenger/index-e.html>.

⁴ *East London Observer*, April 18, 1868.

End hardest of all.⁵ Unemployment ran high from the late 1850s due in part to the decline of the shipbuilding industry on the river Thames, which employed thousands of East End men.⁶ By 1867, the trade had collapsed leaving about half the working men in East London jobless.⁷ Meanwhile, when the 1860 Cobden-Chevalier Treaty between England and France cut international silk prices by opening up free trade it devastated a silk industry that had flourished in East London since the late seventeenth century.⁸ A hard frost in the winter of 1867 caused the river Thames to freeze and riverside works to shut down early resulting in significant hours of lost wages.⁹ These economic and environmental blows crippled the manufacturing economy at the East End and the people who depended on its waged-labour in the mid-nineteenth century. The difficulty of making a decent living for shipbuilders, silk weavers, dockers, and labourers in almost every other trade, especially casual workers, intensified to unprecedented levels in the 1860s East End.

East London's population boomed between 1841 and 1881 pushing the limits of available housing and work. The population for what is now the Borough of Tower Hamlets (which includes the old neighborhoods of Bethnal Green, Bow, Bromley-by-Bow, Docklands, Isle of Dogs, Cubitt Town, Millwall, Limehouse, Mile End, Poplar, Ratcliff, Spitalfields, Stepney, Whitechapel, and a few others) grew from 310,000 in 1841 to 566,000 in 1881.¹⁰ Poplar's growth was especially rapid, increasing fivefold in those forty years from 31,000 to 156,500. Between 1859 and 1867, Cubitt Town built most of its housing stock. These population booms caused housing shortages which pushed people out to suburbs like West Ham further from their work.¹¹ David Green has recently argued that the pressure these crises placed on Poor Law

⁵ For an excellent overview of cholera outbreaks in East London see John Marriott, *Beyond the Tower: A History of East London* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2012), 122-49. Also see Jerry White, *London in the 19th Century* (London: Vintage, 2007), 460-62.

⁶ By 1865, 27,000 East End men worked in the shipbuilding trade. See Sidney Pollard, "The Decline of Shipbuilding on the Thames," *The Economic History Review* 3, no. 1 (new series) (1950): 72-89; and Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 104.

⁷ David Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 206.

⁸ C.M. Weekley, *The Spitalfields Silkweavers* (London: Butler and Tanner, Ltd., 1950), 288; and Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 109-15.

⁹ *Lloyd's Weekly*, January 27, 1867; *Daily News*, November 11, 1867; *East London Observer*, August 21, 1869; and William Fishman, *East End 1888: A Year in a London Borough Among the Labouring Poor* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 75.

¹⁰ Population data derived from the online database: Greater London Authority, *Historic Census Population*, accessed September 6, 2013, <http://data.london.gov.uk/datastore/package/historic-census-population>.

¹¹ White, *London in the 19th Century*, 83.

provision in the 1850s and 1860s was a particularly metropolitan problem.¹² I would further suggest that problem was particularly severe in East London.¹³ Poor Law boards of guardians in the East End were unable to cope with the demand for relief during these two decades. The rate of pauperism in London overall steadily increased from the early 1850s with significant spikes from 1866 through 1868. As much as Poor Law commissioners sought to reduce the numbers of paupers on outdoor relief and to enforce indoor relief, they could not afford to relieve such high numbers of cases in the workhouse. Thus more people received outdoor relief in this period than was desired, which created anxiety about dependency and lack of discipline amongst the poor in London.¹⁴ Fueled by the employment and Poor Law crises that plagued East London assisted emigration for the urban poor was experimented with as a remedy for the acute poverty that characterized the period. From the late 1850s to the early 1880s, assisted emigration from East London to British colonies would become central to discourses and practices of poverty lasting until just before the First World War.

This chapter explores an emerging discourse and practice of emigration in East London during the years 1857-82. In 1882, the piecemeal emigration efforts of a small group of philanthropists and activist workers developed into a full-scale social, economic, and imperial movement. I do not suggest that there was no emigration from East London prior to 1857. Rather, 1857 marks a defining year in the evolution of an ‘emigration movement’ in East London with the creation of the first emigration charities and the emergence of a more widespread interest in emigration as a tool for poverty reduction and easing the Poor Law rates. Beginning with 1857 is somewhat at odds with historians of assisted emigration from East London who have tended to ignore this foundational period.¹⁵ East End Emigration in the early period was

¹² Green, *Pauper Capital*, 194.

¹³ Green hints at this suggesting that between 1865 and 1867 the eastern districts saw the steepest rises in Poor Law expenditure, see: *Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 193-94. For a good general overview of the problems with expenditure see: *Ibid.*, 234-39.

¹⁵ Johnson does not discuss the origin of the EEEF or the Self-Help Emigration Society focusing instead on the period after the mid-1880s, see: Stanley Johnson, *A History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to North America, 1763-1912* (London: Routledge, 1913), 65, 76-77, and 324. Carrothers deems the period 1850-78 to have been a “lull” in emigration from Britain to the colonies focusing on the late 1860s as a time of renewed debate about the assisted emigration of the poor. Carrothers does not discuss emigration charities like those in East London until the mid-1880s, see: W.A. Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles: With Special Reference to the Development of the Overseas Dominions* (1929; repr., London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), 218, and 228. My research contradicts Carrothers’s assertion that the 1850s and 1860s was a relatively quiet time for emigration arguing instead that for the East End at least it was the foundational period. Malchow does not discuss emigration charities in East London until 1867, see: Howard L. Malchow, *Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Palo Alto, California: The Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship Inc.,

certainly most active between 1867 and 1871 but that is not reason enough to ignore the proto-emigration movement in the decade prior. Examining the decade before 1867 better explains the emergence of a full-scale movement as well as illuminating points of connection and disjuncture along the way. Did emigrationists simply give up on emigration in periods of calm and return to it when convenient? Were only certain Eastenders interested in emigration? Was the early experimentation with emigration indicative of imperial and modern ways of dealing with an increasingly inefficient and expensive Poor Law, especially as it related to London? Or, was emigration simply an extension of Malthusian fears leftover from the 1830s and 1840s? How did the multiple crises of the 1860s bring together narratives of liberalism, the new political economy, the Poor Law, and colonialism in East London? These are the questions taken up in this chapter.

The standard explanation for why emigration became an alternative provision of welfare to the Poor Law in the 1850s and 1860s in East London will not be reinvented here. Clearly, the origins and development of an emigration movement in the East End are directly attributable to the acute economic crises of the late 1850s and 1860s as this chapter demonstrates. Conversely, emigration through the 1880s and 1890s was more conspicuously situated within a Christian imperial philanthropic discourse and practice that aimed to improve the working classes by removing them from chronic poverty and transplanting them to the colonies. Taking cues from the trade unionists who initiated modest programs of emigration throughout England in the 1850s, and from labouring men and unemployed silk weavers in East London who considered such programs between 1857 and 1863, several factions of emigration philanthropists together launched a comprehensive charitable emigration movement targeting the distressed East End labourer and his family. This chapter considers in particular the history of the East End Emigration Fund (EEEF) focusing on its inception in 1867 since historians have neglected this foundational period.¹⁶

1979), 18, and 23. Glynn incorrectly traces the origins of the EEEF to 1882 and does not discuss the earlier decades of assisted emigration in East London, see: Desmond Glynn, "Exporting Outcast London": Assisted Emigration to Canada, 1886-1914," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 15, no. 29 (May 1982), 211. Kohli also makes this error about the origins of the EEEF, see: Marjorie Kohli, *The Golden Bridge: Young Immigrants to Canada, 1833-1939* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2003), 203.

¹⁶ The digital revolution in archival studies, especially online open access to newspapers, books, and tracts, has helped me conduct research on the early EEEF that was not previously possible. I do not explicitly suggest the older histories actively neglected this early period of emigration in East London. Rather, I would suggest that in the early twenty-first century this period is more easily researchable and now cannot be ignored.

Economic and Political Conditions for Emigration in Mid-Century Victorian Britain

Britain by the 1850s had become a predominantly industrial, urban, and capitalist society. More people lived in towns and cities than ever before; attitudes were increasingly secular, and liberalism had arguably become central to the national ethos. The forward march of progress was paramount to individual, collective, national, and imperial identities. By 1851, 2.65 million people lived in Greater London. By 1881, London would swell to 4.7 million as unemployed agricultural labourers from all parts of Britain and immigrants from all over the world flooded into the city in search of work. In the late 1850s, the first symptoms of a serious economic depression were felt throughout East London. This stood in contrast to the relative prosperity experienced earlier in the decade. The economic decline in mid-nineteenth-century East London is somewhat anomalous given that Britain had entered a period commonly referred to by historians as the ‘Great Victorian Boom.’¹⁷ The boom lasted from the early 1850s to the early 1870s when the Victorian ‘Great Depression’ took hold. Overall, the standard of living of the working poor improved over the period 1860 to 1914: real wages increased, the birth-rate fell, more leisure time was enjoyed, trade union membership grew, and for the majority of labouring men the vote was gained.¹⁸ Despite these gains, the English poor remained hostage to the fluctuations in the market and perhaps nowhere was that more evident, in the south of England at least, than in East London between the mid-1850s and the early 1870s.¹⁹

In January of 1859, *Reynold’s* was one of several newspapers that commented on high levels of starvation in 1858 in the East End, pointing to an overcrowded labour market as the cause.²⁰ John Marriott has recently argued that this contributed to an overall increase in the number of working poor experiencing decreased prosperity. As the plight of the poor steadily

¹⁷ See, Roy Church, *The Great Victorian Boom, 1850-1873*, Studies in economic and social history series (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1975).

¹⁸ H.C.G. Matthew, “The Liberal Age, 1851-1914,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain*, ed., Kenneth O. Morgan (1984; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 481-87.

¹⁹ Michael Ball and David Sunderland explain the crisis in labour in the 1860s East End thus: “by the 1860s, manufacturing was in crisis and much of what was left was ‘sweated’ industry organised in a system of sub-contracting and casual labour to ‘exploit’ the mass of London poor. This claimed transformation explains the scale of poverty in the capital believed to exist in the latter part of the nineteenth century, with the switch to exploitation creating thousands of low-paid workers trapped in the East End and other inner industrial districts. A significant part of the labour force was, thereby, forced into greater poverty,” see: Michael Ball and David Sunderland, *An Economic History of London, 1800-1914* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 35-36. In Marxist theory, this phenomenon exemplifies the “immiseration thesis.” The north experienced severe moments of decline as well, such as the Lancashire cotton famine of the 1860s, see Green, *Pauper Capital*, 4.

²⁰ *Reynolds’*, January 30, 1859.

worsened through the second half of the nineteenth century, observers and reformers began to notice it with increasing concern.²¹ After the passing of the Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867, local districts became wholly responsible for relief provision. This change created a gulf of inequality in rate distribution between rich and poor districts. With their increasing tendency to provide only expensive indoor institutional relief, Poor Law boards of guardians in the city's poorest districts simply could not cope.²² Anxiety about the depraved social and moral conditions of the poor would reach unparalleled heights in the 1880s after the publications of slum narratives like Andrew Mearns' *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* and the horrific Jack the Ripper murders. However, reformers had been interested in the case of the East End poor since at least the 1830s.²³ By the 1860s, the East End garnered considerable attention from observers concerned with the worsening condition of the working classes in such texts as Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*, written in the 1840s and first published as a book in 1851.²⁴ While the East End as the site of England's darkest and most shameful "abyss" was a literary and political construction still in its infancy in the 1850s, philanthropists in the 1840s and 1850s at least "took up the task of knowing the poor" as Marriott puts it.²⁵ Knowledge of the poor became an increasingly important social preoccupation for middle-class reformers attempting to repair the damage the poor were believed to cause to the liberal machinery of the Victorian political economy.

If Britain was to flourish both at home and abroad in its growing empire, the problem of the poor would require political and charitable intervention. It was within this spirit that those persons concerned with upholding the liberal, and increasingly imperial, political economy set about trying to do something in aid of both the poor and their nation. In the 1850s, those people included trade unionists, clergymen, colonial administrators, and the poor themselves who turned to emigration as a remedy for the homegrown poverty they sought to eradicate. They believed that emigration would simply transfer the unemployed despondent labourer to another liberal capitalist society where there was work. The labourer-emigrant would set out armed with British values and a renewed desire to participate in his or her own re-integration into a similar liberal-

²¹ Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 104.

²² Green, *Pauper Capital*, 23.

²³ Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 150, 158.

²⁴ Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor: The Condition of Earnings of Those That Will Work, Cannot Work, and Will Not Work*, volumes 1, 2, and 3 (London: C. Griffin, 1866).

²⁵ Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 158.

capitalist political economy and culture abroad. Early emigrationists seldom questioned the existing economic system and thus did not seek to dismantle liberal or capitalist structures. Moreover, they believed colonial emigration would bolster the British Empire from multiple angles. Emigrants would filter money back to the United Kingdom from abroad while relieving the burden of Poor Law boards at home by buying British goods in their new-found prosperity.²⁶ Emigrationists also held well-entrenched ideas about overpopulation and the threat to well-being if a glut in the labour market was tolerated. J.S. Mill himself, having formulated what would become the hegemonic discourse of mid-Victorian political economy in *Principles of Political Economy*, maintained as late as in the 1871 edition that emigration offered the best solution to labour surpluses, food shortages, and population pressures in the market.²⁷ Emigration at its core assumed that the down-trodden labourer in England was motivated to seek similar work in colonial or American wage-labour economies or try his luck at farming in an attempt to regain his lost independence.

For the poor, emigration promised a way to regain status and make a living; for emigrationists, the process of transplanting the needy fulfilled multiple obligations of citizenship on political, imperial, and moral levels. In other words, emigration served to create model liberal subjects in a transnational and imperial context. Both assisted emigrants and emigrationists played an active role in this project. Emigrationists were highly dependent on the poor for the continuation of their work as philanthropists, a central hallmark of their middle-class identity that helped bolster their social and political status. Assisted emigrants – at least ideal assisted emigrants – were to reintegrate into the capitalist economy upon arrival in the colonies and work towards becoming self-regulating liberal subjects. Thus assisted emigration of the poor cut across class lines in a complex web of interactions between emigrants and emigrationists with supposed benefits for both parties. It is important to understand that these class-dependent

²⁶ *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 4, 1868; *Times*, January 27, 1857.

²⁷ J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy* (1848, repr., London: Longmans, 1871), Book I, Chap. XIII, I.13.8. Here Mill wrote: “When the growth of numbers outstrips the progress of improvement, and a country is driven to obtain the means of subsistence on terms more and more unfavourable, by the inability of its land to meet additional demands except on more onerous conditions; there are two expedients by which it may hope to mitigate that disagreeable necessity, even though no change should take place in the habits of the people with respect to their rate of increase. One of these expedients is the importation of food from abroad. The other is emigration.” Also see, R.V. Clements, “Trade Unions and Emigration, 1840-80,” *Population Studies* 9, no. 2 (November 1955), 167; and Matthew, “The Liberal Age,” 466.

motivations led to differences in the way emigration was experienced, recorded, and discussed in the foundational period of the 1850s and 1860s.

Trade unions became interested in emigration as a mechanism to relieve distress in the 1850s. It remains debatable to what extent trade unions were followers of the theories of political economists most closely associated with population and emigration in the first half of the nineteenth century – Ricardo, Malthus, Mill and Fawcett.²⁸ R.V. Clements argued in 1955, for example, that political economists in the 1860s and 1870s maintained the efficacy of emigration in curbing overpopulation and overcrowded labour markets. He contended that trade unions, however, were seldom motivated by these assumptions, turning to emigration instead for their own internal reasons; emigration served a wide range of union purposes from being a bargaining tool in industrial disputes to providing new opportunities for technologically redundant workers. Even when trade unions were interested in emigration, Clements argued that interest was “slight and infrequent.”²⁹ Clements’s arguments were largely a response to Sidney and Beatrice Webb who maintained in *The History of Trade Unionism, 1666-1920* (1919) that between 1850 and 1860 emigration was an “integral part of trade-union policy” but that after 1860 it lost steam.³⁰ In 1949, Charlotte Erickson countered parts of the Webbs’ assumption that after 1860 trade unions used emigration only in times of distress. Erickson argued instead that British trade unions did not view emigration as a mere ‘safety valve’ in times of economic hardship. Rather, they kept abreast of labour conditions in the United States in particular in planning their emigration programs and remained attracted to the principles of emigration until the depression of the 1880s.³¹ Erickson argued that until the depression trade unions were active agents as the push factors in the emigration of Britain’s labouring population.³² The debate continued in 1976 when Howard Malchow suggested that not only did British trade unions remain interested in emigration into the 1880s but they took up the cause of state-aided emigration with particular

²⁸ For the full debate on British trade union emigration in this period see: Clements, “Trade Unions and Emigration, 1840-80;” Charlotte Erickson, “The Encouragement of Emigration by British Trade Unions, 1850-1900,” *Population Studies* 3, no. 3 (December 1949): 248-73; Howard L. Malchow, “Trade Unions and Emigration in Late Victorian England: A National Lobby for State Aid,” *Journal of British Studies* 15, no. 2 (1976): 92-116; and William E. Van Vugt, “Prosperity and Industrial Emigration from Britain during the Early 1850s,” *Journal of Social History* 22, no.2 (1988): 339-54.

²⁹ Clements, “Trade Unions and Emigration, 1840-80,” 168-69, 174.

³⁰ Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism, 1666-1920* (London: The Trade Unionists of the United Kingdom, 1919), 202.

³¹ Erickson, “The Encouragement of Emigration by British Trade Unions,” 249-50.

³² *Ibid.*, 273.

enthusiasm.³³ However, it should be remembered that the majority of casual labourers in East London were not unionized until after the Great Dock Strike of 1889.³⁴ During the Thames shipbuilding decline of the late 1860s, trade unions did, however, encourage and support the emigration of unskilled labourers in order to improve the lot of their skilled tradesmen members who would remain at home.³⁵ It was in this way that trade unions helped support the grassroots emigration movements among the casual and unskilled labourers in East London believing emigration would help both home and colony remain economically viable.

Local Anglican clergymen provided significant leadership to the early philanthropic emigration movement in the East End.³⁶ On a daily basis they witnessed both acute and chronic distress amongst their underemployed parishioners and they believed it was their Christian duty to do something about it. Many clergymen were also likely to be active in Poor Law administration in this period acting as agents of the state. Clergymen worried about local authorities' abilities to deal with impending crises under the Poor Law and turned to emigration as a solution to the poverty that was about to erupt into wide-scale destitution in the East End in the early 1860s. Not only were these leaders interested in promoting emigration but they were also especially concerned with the spiritual well-being of the emigrants; they worried about low church attendance, maintaining congregational numbers, and building a Christian empire. To this end, they sought the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury from the late 1850s on emigration matters.³⁷ A letter from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts to the Archbishop written in 1871 claims that "The desire of the Society is to secure a brotherly welcome and a spiritual benefit to emigrant members of our communion and to strengthen the Church."³⁸ Reverend William Panckridge, Vicar of St. Matthew's, City Road, London which

³³ Malchow, "Trade Unions and Emigration in Late Victorian England," 94.

³⁴ A good general history of the Great Dock Strike of 1889 is Terry McCarthy, *The Great Dock Strike, 1889* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988). Also see: Joan Ballhatchet, "The Police and the London Dock Strike of 1889," *History Workshop Journal* 32 (1991): 54-68.

³⁵ Clements, 171.

³⁶ For a good overview of the Church and emigration starting in the 1840s, see: Howard Malchow, "The Church and Emigration in Late Victorian London," *Journal of Church and State* 24, no.1 (1982): 119-38. In this article Malchow focuses mostly on the Church's involvement with and interest in emigration in the 1870s and 1880s but also provides some brief information about earlier periods. Church emigrationists were interested in emigration for a variety of reasons from relieving poverty to strengthening the Church abroad in the empire.

³⁷ The records of the Church's involvement with emigration are available for consultation in the Lambeth Palace Library, the archives of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in London. These sources are strongest for the 1880s but there are some fonds that refer to the late 1850s and 1870s.

³⁸ *Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, Tait papers 178, ff. 1-4, Emigration 1871, Lambeth Palace Library, London.

was in St. Luke Old Street Parish, bounded by Clerkenwell to the West, St. Leonard Shoreditch in the east, and St. Pancras, Islington, and Hackney to the north, was a central figure in the Society and representative for the people living in the peripheral neighborhoods of the traditionally-defined East End.³⁹ In an 1881 pamphlet entitled “The Church and Emigration,” Panckridge argued in favour of church-sponsored emigration as a counter to for-profit emigration, claiming it would be in the better interest of the emigrant:

I would, in short, advocate the formation of a Church of England Emigration Society, which should find out full and correct particulars of those countries in our own empire which offer inducements to the emigrant. There will be a tremendous tide of emigration this year, and this being well known, England abounds at the present time with land agents, who are paid a commission They care not about the emigrant, they only want to sell their land, and the consequence is that many of our own people are led away by coloured reports and exaggerated statements of the country in which these agents are interested.⁴⁰

Panckridge, like many other church emigrationists, had witnessed the impact of declining local industries. In his case, the watch-making industry, a “once important trade” in Clerkenwell, had all but collapsed in the late 1870s, unable to compete with American manufacturers and leaving “literally hundreds of good workmen hereabouts who have not been in full work for the last three or four years.”⁴¹ In the late 1850s and through the 1860s, East End Church leaders like the Reverend R.H. Atherton (Stepney), Reverend W.W. Champneys (St. Mary’s Whitechapel), Reverend Hugh Allen (St. Jude’s Whitechapel), Reverend J. Pattison (sometimes spelled Patterson) (Spitalfields), Reverend C.H. Carr (St. John, Limehouse), and most notably Reverend J.F. Kitto (Poplar), founder of the EEEF, worked in intermediary capacities as advocates between poor emigrants, wealthy philanthropists, Poor Law commissioners, and elected politicians. Their unique social position and local knowledge allowed these leaders to facilitate emigration out of East London in the first two decades of the movement. Their efforts and techniques would be duplicated in the 1880s and 1890s especially by the Salvation Army’s emigration program. It should be noted that notwithstanding their unique middlemen positions

³⁹ Letters, tracts, and other papers related to emigration especially in correspondence with the Society for the Promotion of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Tait papers 270, ff. 217-355, Emigration 1881, Lambeth Palace Library, London. For more on Panckridge see: Malchow, “The Church and Emigration,” 124. Malchow also used the Tait papers at Lambeth Palace Library in his analysis.

⁴⁰ Reverend William Panckridge, “The Church and Emigration,” pamphlet, Tait 270, ff. 217-355, Emigration 1881, Lambeth Palace Library, London.

⁴¹ Ibid.

they often held considerable influence and power in the direction of the emigration movement in East London.

Interest in emigration in the East End of London was also fueled by mid-century settler colonialism in Canada, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa as well as – the fastest growing of all – the United States of America. Considerable investment was channeled into emigration recruitment in the United Kingdom, especially in London after 1867.⁴² Emigration from East London to South Africa was minimal and ineffectual although there were rare cases of emigrants from East London who chose South Africa as their destination. Canada emerged after Confederation in 1867 as the colony best primed to welcome emigrants from East London. Geographically closest in proximity to Britain it was cheaper to ship emigrants to Canada than the Australasian colonies.⁴³ The attractiveness of the shorter distance was compounded by London newspaper accounts in the 1860s of East End emigrants in Canada that abounded with stories of success, albeit with somewhat vague details. Even more influential to the growth of an East End emigration movement were reports about the large number of people who could be helped by emigration, as if Canada was an empty vessel waiting to be filled:

The funds for the east-end of London, which have already been collected, have been enough to send three hundred souls to Canada, and to effect the migration of four hundred plus creatures from an over-crowded to a less crowded labour market; but this is the collection of a few stray drops from a vast slough of despond. Three hundred who are prospering in Canada have left ten thousand unfortunates behind them.⁴⁴

This “vast slough” of Eastenders left behind implied that the problem at home was far from sorted. Likewise, emigrationists believed the Canadian industrial economy required and desired British labour. They also maintained that Canada possessed “better organization for disposing of the emigrants there than at other colonies.”⁴⁵ Post-Confederation Canada seemed to offer the best

⁴² Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 69-70. Knowles notes that by 1868 William Dixon was installed in London as Canadian Assistant Superintendent of Immigration and that Canada had a wide network of emigration agents abroad.

⁴³ “Emigration for the East of London,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 4, 1868.

⁴⁴ “Emigration and Migration,” *Lloyd’s Weekly*, November 17, 1867.

⁴⁵ “Emigration for the East of London,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 4, 1868. In 1871, the first post-Confederation census of Canada showed that of the sixteen percent of the population born outside of Canada, eighty-four percent had come from Britain. As time went on, the number of English-born immigrants in Canada also rose – twenty-nine percent of all immigrants in 1871, thirty-five percent in 1881, forty-five percent in 1891, and forty-eight percent in 1901: Marjory Harper, “Rhetoric and Reality: British Migration to Canada, 1867-1967,” in *Canada and the British*

geopolitical and geosocial space wherein to build a new modern British society in North America. The problem with East End emigrants was that they could not be trusted to perform the duties of colonial nation-building and imperial citizenship without first returning to employment, bettering their circumstances, and exhibiting the hallmarks of liberal middle-class propriety, gender roles, and culture. Emigrationists, and probably emigrants themselves to some degree, believed they could achieve this liberal transformation in Canada.

The Early Years and the British Workman's Emigration Society, 1857-59

In his 1913 book *A History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to North America, 1763-1912*, Stanley Johnson indicated that between 1854 and 1861 emigration numbers to North America from the United Kingdom decreased because of the need for young men in the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny.⁴⁶ While this may certainly have been the case, the acceptance of an undifferentiated decrease fails to account for regional or localized spikes in emigration activity. In East London, this period saw emigration blossom as a social movement, albeit modestly, but enough that we can assume any emigration activity in the area marked a significant increase compared to earlier periods. The Crimean War uniquely affected East London, demanding from its shipbuilding industry unprecedented increases in output in the mid-1850s.⁴⁷ These booms in East End business and labour, though significant, were short lived, plummeting into two acute economic crises in 1857 and 1866.⁴⁸ In 1851, 6,000 men are estimated to have been working in the shipbuilding trades on the Thames; five years later, in 1856, there were 16,000.⁴⁹ Workers in the East End prospered until 1857 when the industry saw its first collapse. So, while Johnson may point to the Crimean War in particular as a reason for decreased emigration from the United Kingdom overall, in East London the war brought about a “temporary surge in demand” in shipbuilding.⁵⁰ This prompted too heavy a reliance on a single-industry war-dependent labour pool leaving thousands of Eastenders out of work at war's end and searching for solutions to their impending poverty.

Empire, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series, edited by Philip Buckner, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 160, 163. These high numbers made Canada a good choice for British emigrants.

⁴⁶ Johnson, 14-15.

⁴⁷ Pollard, 77. For another excellent overview of the collapse of shipbuilding on the Thames, and one that is more current, see: A. J. Arnold, *Iron Shipbuilding on the Thames, 1832-1915: An Economic and Business History* (Aldershot, Surrey: Ashgate, 2000).

⁴⁸ Pollard, 78.

⁴⁹ Ball and Sunderland, 313.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 314.

There were other more philosophical reasons East End working men and their families turned to emigration in the late 1850s. In the years leading up to the second Reform Act (1867) many British working men, especially those who did not meet the tenurial requirements for enfranchisement, were searching for alternatives to lives of poverty, homelessness (or at least compromised housing), and disenfranchisement in England.⁵¹ The British colonies and the United States were believed to be places where the labouring poor could be relatively free of class restrictions and their labour would be in high demand. These sentiments were further justified by global economic downturns of the late 1850s. By about 1855, labourers in the other satellite building and manufacturing trades in London began to suffer a steady slackness of trade due in part to the ‘Panic of 1857’ in American markets and the wider Atlantic economy as well as the initial decline in the shipbuilding industry on the Thames.⁵² During this uneasy economic time, workers in many areas of trade began to organize, taking action, for example, in the London Builders’ Strikes of 1859-61 the outcome of which was the London Trades Council and other trade unions. For the purposes of this dissertation the causes of these economic slumps are less important than acknowledging and discussing the consequences for emigration. Clearly, social commentators, philanthropists, trade unionists, and workers together believed the conditions of employment in the late 1850s were depressed and prolonged enough to warrant looking outside the British Isles for work. Furthermore, colonial emigration had become commonplace in London with the colonies actively and visibly recruiting prospective emigrants from all classes. In this nervous climate of trade and labour, a group of East London labourers formed the British Workman’s Emigration Society (BWES) in early 1857.⁵³

⁵¹ Although, the 1867 Reform Act was still exclusionary; it did not extend the vote to approximately forty percent of adult males, the majority of whom can be assumed to be working-class. Moreover, a clear line was drawn between “intelligent workmen” and the “residuum” who were deemed unready for the vote. Working people without a clear household, (i.e. those in lodging houses), were a particular problem for the 1867 franchise and this left many working-men disenfranchised: John Davis, “Slums and the Vote, 1867-90,” *Historical Research* 64, no. 155 (1991), 375-76.

⁵² An article in the *Times* on February 25, 1857 mentions the building trades and other trades suffering lack of employment and that this was a “long and continuing stagnation.”

⁵³ The British Workman’s Emigration Society (BWES) appears to have been referred to by a number of different names between 1857 and 1869 in newspapers and in the records of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace Library in London (specifically the Tait papers 115, ff. 1-4). Variations include British Workmen’s Free Emigration Association; British Workman’s Society for purpose of facilitating free emigration; British Workman’s Emigration Society; British Working Man’s Emigration Society; British Workmen’s Emigration Association; Workman’s Emigration Association (or Society); British Workmen’s Emigration Association for Facilitating Emigration; British Workmen’s Emigration Society for Promoting Emigration to the Colonies; and the British Workmen’s Emigration Society for Facilitating Emigration to the Colonies. There is a possibility that all of these variations were essentially the same society functioning in the East End of London but this remains somewhat unclear. For clarity, the society



Fig. 1.1: British Workman's Free Emigration Association "Free Emigration" advertisement, *East London Observer*, November 21, 1857.

In response to a letter to the editor of the *Times* by "N.P.," dated January 27, 1857 on the benefits of emigration and a plea for a penny-rate to fund a large-scale emigration scheme, thirty-one working men from East London held a meeting on January 28, 1857 "and formed the British Workman's Society, for the purpose of facilitating free emigration."⁵⁴ The group's secretary, Mr. W.H. Hockley, brass-finisher, wished to thank the editor for calling attention to the issue of a saturated metropolitan labour market and emigration as a solution to the current distress. Hockley stated that the group was keen to "receive any information your correspondent can give us, and likewise any other gentlemen willing to assist us in our sole object."⁵⁵ At the end of his letter Hockley lists the other thirty members of the group and their occupations perhaps to call attention to the variety of work in which the men were engaged (these were not all shipbuilders) and the distress being felt in all London trades. Their diverse lines of work included: decorator, baker, printer, pressman, labourer, cabinet-maker, woolcomber, "dealer," engineer, bricklayer, carpenter, carman, "practical farmer," plumber, painter, brushmaker, mason, blacksmith, currier, farrier, and one schoolmaster. These men would meet at 1 Cobham-row, Clerkenwell until they found a permanent office.⁵⁶ Armed with the notion that emigration would be "the means of improving the condition of the working classes of this country," the men set about holding numerous meetings throughout the first half of 1857 seeking information, support, and funding.

will be referred to here as the British Workman's Emigration Society (BWES) both before and after 1857 when it was co-opted by philanthropists.

⁵⁴ *Times*, January 28, 1857. The BWES may have been formed on the evening of the 27th depending on when the paper went to print.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

The *Times* reported eagerly on the early meetings of the BWES and the men seem to have been taken quite seriously from the outset. In a letter to the *Times* the day following their inaugural meeting, the BWES thanked the editor for publishing their first letter and reported that they had already received a number of responses from “gentlemen willing to assist us; among the latter was your correspondent “N.P.,” who spent nearly four hours in conversation with our committee, for which we feel most grateful.”⁵⁷ That morning twelve members of the committee met with the Lord Mayor of London and secured a permanent office at 42 Clerkenwell-Green, easily located for any working man next to the Crown Tavern.⁵⁸ On January 30th, “N.P.” submitted a lengthy letter to the editor of the *Times* describing those four hours spent with the men of the BWES. The letter praises the efforts of the men and the almost anonymous “N.P.” marked himself as an obvious supporter of working-class emigration. He writes:

Would that you could have witnessed the grateful emotion with which the little band of honest and sober, yet almost destitute working men whom I met last night at No. 42, Clerkenwell-green, spoke of your masterly article of yesterday, and of my far less valuable letter which you were so good to have published in your issue of Tuesday, in favour of a free passage to the colonies for those who are starving and perishing in this country for want of employment, although in character neither idle nor criminal! They were also much encouraged by the manner of their reception with the Lord Mayor, and their wan cheeks flushed they told me of his kindness and sympathy and his promise to do everything in his power, publicly and privately, to further their cause.⁵⁹

In his letters, “N.P.” emerges as an outspoken, passionate, and deferential supporter of emigration for the working-classes. He tells the editor he had considerable experience working with members of the working class, was an employer, and an officer of the militia. He retains his anonymity expressing “no desire to parade my name in your paper, but you are at liberty to give it to anyone asking for it.”⁶⁰ Despite “N.P.’s” anonymity, he serves as the voice of middle-class support for improving the condition of the working classes in the economic downturns of the 1850s. He upholds many of the middle-class and elite assumptions about the tenets of a proper working-class character: honest, sober, hard-working, and self-improving. This stock stereotypical character would become the standard desirable working-class urban assisted

⁵⁷ Ibid., January 29, 1857.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Their meeting place is sometimes listed as 44 Clerkenwell-Green. The Crown Tavern is still in operation (as of 2014). It is located at 43 Clerkenwell-Green.

⁵⁹ Ibid., January 30, 1857.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

emigrant throughout the emigration movement of late nineteenth-century East London. The good character of the BWES members aside, opinions on metropolitan emigration remained split.

Those who opposed what they deemed to be ‘pauper emigration’ held the view that pauperism should be dealt with at home and that only certain workers were worthy of emigration assistance. George Jacob Holyoake wrote to the *Times* in 1857 about the problems he noted with the emigration of the unemployed. Holyoake was a secularist Owenite well-connected in London liberal intellectual and political circles; he was an acquaintance of J.S. Mill, Harriet Martineau, and many Liberal party leaders in London even letting his name stand for Tower Hamlets in the general election of 1858 (although he withdrew before the polling). Holyoake promoted self-help and co-operation and spent most of his career lecturing and writing about these topics.⁶¹ He asked emigrationists if they were prepared to allow “Great Britain now to be discredited in the eyes of all the nations by the confession in 1857 that the foremost people of the world cannot take care of themselves?”⁶² Why not attempt to eradicate poverty at home was his question, the Dutch (he believed) had done it after all, so surely the English could too. Holyoake believed ‘home colonies’ would be the best solution to restoring the pauper to independence. General Booth’s Salvation Army would argue similarly in 1890 over three decades later. According to Holyoake and others, Poor Law work, much of which was done in the workhouse, like oakum picking and stone breaking, was demoralizing for the unemployed skilled operative. Alternatively, within a system of home colonies the distressed worker could be rehabilitated and made robust enough to eventually emigrate to the colonies should he still wish to do so:

This [home colonies] would arise a class of men fit to man our colonies and go out in the true spirit of enterprise, and not as now, as men despondent, beaten down, and driven from the labour market. Are you not ashamed to send off our present labourers? Should not England blush when her shambling and feeble sons sail out before the nations?⁶³

This early preoccupation with racial fitness is interesting but perhaps not surprising. Ideas about national and imperial vigour would later abound when it was discovered upon enlistment to serve in the Boer War that male working-class physicality was severely deficient.⁶⁴ Emigration

⁶¹ Edward Royle, “Holyoake, George Jacob,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed July 18, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33964>.

⁶² *Times*, March 5, 1857.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ David Silbey has evaluated these ideas later with reference to the Boer War and the First World War where medical examinations of prospective working-class soldiers revealed physical deficiencies believed to be caused by

rhetoric in the late 1850s and 1860s reveals that these ideas had a longer pedigree and that some Britons were as concerned about the state of the working-class body in migration as in war service. A clearly proud nationalist, Holyoake was most ashamed of the “thin calves” and “flacid muscles” of the British agricultural labourer.⁶⁵ These early connections between emigration and racial fitness are significant as they may have guided restrictive colonial immigration policies later in the nineteenth century or at least contributed to a growing eugenic anxiety about unfit immigrants moving around the British Empire as a blight on both home and receiving nations.⁶⁶

W. Patterson (assistant to the Archbishop of Canterbury), in a November 1859 letter to the BWES, made clear that men striking in the London Builders Strike would not be helped to emigrate: “I think this ‘sad strike’ seriously alters the case. We will not help the strikers to emigrate, and if they do not return to their work, there will be less need, perhaps none, for others who are willing to work, to think of emigrating among the class of mechanics.”⁶⁷ These voices of opposition are not overly surprising within the economic and political context of the late 1850s. Given that the earlier part of the decade had witnessed overall prosperity, perhaps the downturn in the late 1850s economy seemed temporary to some observers. Holyoake’s comments reflect an understanding of economic downturns as fleeting: he worried about what would happen when labour was again required and England was left with no manpower having drained it all to the colonies. He called emigration a “short and easy” method of dealing with what he believed was an industrial glitch. Significantly, he did not oppose assisted emigration outright. Rather, Holyoake opposed the emigration of the disillusioned, the decrepit, and the degraded. For the Archbishop’s part, striking rendered the labourer unworthy of emigration assistance because it demonstrated that he refused to accept the work he had secured in England. To strike in times of

poverty, see: David Silbey, “Bodies and Cultures Collide: Enlistment, the Medical Exam, and the British Working Class, 1914-1916,” *Social History of Medicine* 17, no. 1 (2004): 61-76.

⁶⁵ *Times*, March 5, 1857.

⁶⁶ Maree Dawson for example finds a connection between eugenic rhetoric and concern about unfit immigrants in New Zealand as far back as the 1850s that extended into the late nineteenth century, see: Maree Dawson, “Halting the ‘Sad Degenerationist Parade’: Medical Concerns About Heredity and Racial Degeneracy in New Zealand Psychiatry, 1853-99,” *Health & History* 14, no.1 (2012): 38-55. On Canadian immigration policy, the unfit, and eugenics, see: Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990). For the Australian case, a good place to start is Alison Bashford, *Imperial Hygiene: A Critical History of Colonialism, Nationalism and Public Health* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), particularly chapter six, “Foreign Bodies: Immigration, International Hygiene and White Australia.”

⁶⁷ *Letter from W. Patterson to Chairman of British Workmen’s Emigration Society*, November 10, 1859, Tait papers 115, ff. 1-4, British Workman’s Emigration Society 1859, Lambeth Palace Library, London.

distress was simply unacceptable to most non-trade union emigrationists. They simply failed to understand how impoverished workers could refuse to work.

Within about three weeks of its inauguration, the BWES found widespread support among working-class ranks at a large meeting on February 18, 1857 in Whitechapel and another on February 24, 1857 in Westminster which was said to be “crowded to suffocation by working men of the locality.”⁶⁸ Upwards of 5,000 working people attended a meeting on March 2, 1857 in Bethnal Green to hear about emigration from the BWES and adopt petitions to Parliament on emigration.⁶⁹ Signatures had also been collected at the February meeting which may well have contained thousands of names. Working-class men chaired and ran the meeting, passing resolutions that aimed to raise awareness of both the government and the general public of the “severe, widespread, and alarming distress” in East London and the solution of emigration.⁷⁰ Mr. Robinson, an out-of-work plumber whose family was said to be starving, moved a particularly emotional resolution on the subject of unemployment asking why men who were willing to work should have to endure the “most acute and intolerable privations.”⁷¹ Robinson did not, however, take the topic of emigration lightly. He had obviously spent a great deal of time thinking about the permanency of emigration, warning that working men who chose to go should “seriously consider whether they are fit for it, as once it is done it could not be reversed.”⁷² The men played up their respectability by suggesting they would rather starve than become criminals. Overall, these men wished to be sponsored by the government in their passage to the colonies. They held quite strong feelings about not going out as paupers but felt instead that monetary advances should be considered loans to be repaid upon resettlement. Mr. Bowen, a stone mason, was even prepared to pay five percent interest on his loan.⁷³ In attendance at the February meeting was Mr. H. Drummond, M.P. for Surrey West who, impressed by the men, felt that the government would be open to assisting them but that funds would be hard to come by. Drummond suggested the men also seek philanthropic assistance.

The BWES’s activities in 1857 reveal considerable interest in emigration amongst workers in the East End and particularly in Whitechapel and Bethnal Green. Labouring families

⁶⁸ *Times*, February 25, 1857.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, March 3, 1857.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, February 25, 1857.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

who lived in Whitechapel and Bethnal Green in the late 1850s worked largely in the sweated trades and lived overwhelmingly in abject poverty. In Whitechapel, people worked in metal trades, low-quality clothing manufacturing, and general dealing.⁷⁴ In Bethnal Green, the steady decline of the silkweaving trade from the 1840s onwards created a glut of available labour which facilitated an expansion of the sweated unskilled trades. Impoverished silk weavers and their descendants who had once prospered in Bethnal Green, now worked for low wages in terrible conditions in furniture and footwear manufacturing.⁷⁵ Likewise, a housing crisis in Bethnal Green and Whitechapel was brewing in the late 1850s. Railway expansion, and related demolition of housing in the 1850s and early 1860s, had led to overcrowding.⁷⁶ Similarly, the problem of the common lodging house would become a defining feature of housing reform in East London from the 1850s well into the 1890s.⁷⁷ An estimated 100,000 people were displaced by street improvement clearances alone between 1830 and 1880.⁷⁸ Whitechapel would gain a reputation after the Jack the Ripper murders in the late 1880s as London's den of vice and crime but, as early as the 1830s, parts of Whitechapel were already considered to be among the "poorest and most densely populated" areas of the city "the foci of cholera, crime, and Chartism."⁷⁹ In her book *The Worst Street in London*, an account of Dorset Street in Spitalfields, part of Whitechapel, Fiona Rule describes the state of housing there: "In 1857 *The Builder* magazine reported on the collapse of a house in Dorset Street, which resulted in the death of a child and warned that virtually every house in the street was in a similarly dangerous state of decay."⁸⁰ Severe neglect of the old seventeenth and eighteenth century weavers' houses in the district, the rise of the unregulated common lodging house, and the influx of tens of thousands of

⁷⁴ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between the Classes in Victorian Society* (1971; repr. London: Penguin Books, 1984), 142.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 107-8. Frank Warner suggests though that after 1860, sweating amongst these people declined as masters could no longer acquire silk, see: Frank Warner, *The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom: Its Origin and Development*, (London: Drane's, 1921), 89.

⁷⁶ Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, 162. Also see: John Kellett, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* (London: Routledge, 1969).

⁷⁷ White, *London in the 19th Century*, 116-17; Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920* (1980; repr., London: Pimlico, 2003), 7-8.

⁷⁸ Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, 169. For more on slum clearances, see: James Yelling, *Slums and Slum Clearance in Victorian London* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986). Slum clearances in East London continued until the Second World War when housing projects were transformed from purely reformist projects to those of more pressing need after Nazi bomb raids had flattened large sections of East London. Another excellent description of life in East London's slums, especially the Flower and Dean Street rookery, can be found in White, *Rothschild Buildings*, 6-9.

⁷⁹ Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, 167.

⁸⁰ Fiona Rule, *The Worst Street in London* (London: Ian Allan Publishing, 2008), 72.

Irish migrants in the 1850s after the famine made the daily struggle for well-paid work and decent housing doubly challenging.⁸¹ Marriott argues that Bethnal Green was thus a prime space for the growth of “radical artisan culture.”⁸² Silk weavers, shoemakers, shipwrights, and tailors in once elite trades were threatened by the continual reductions of both skill and wages coupled with increased competition from outside of London.⁸³ In this spirit of activism, co-operation, and organization it is not surprising to find residents of Bethnal Green attend a public meeting on emigration in 1857. An advertisement in the *East London Observer* in November 1857 indicates the BWES was trying to reach exactly these “thousands of unemployed” by attracting them with a free emigration lecture given by “several eminent gentlemen connected with the colonies” in their own neighborhoods.⁸⁴ Apparently, many were at least interested enough to attend.

The local clergy also emerged in the first few months as supporters of the scheme; their observations help us to confirm the grassroots origins of the emigration movement in East London. The then incumbent of St. Jude’s Parish, Whitechapel, the Reverend Hugh Allen, reported to the *Times* on the early BWES meetings. Of particular note, was Allen’s contention that the working men of the East End were steadfastly committed to implementing an emigration scheme to remedy their own distress:

For a considerable time I have noticed the growing convictions [sic] of the working classes that emigration must be looked to by them as the soundest and most permanent mode of relief to their own position. The several causes, which must permanently exist, and rather increase than otherwise, of augmenting the already fearful disparity in the labour-market between the supply and demand, appear to them to be such as cannot be contravened and ameliorated by any other certain or probable arrangement of circumstances.⁸⁵

Allen’s observation suggests that the working men in East London who formed the BWES had been building towards a grassroots movement for some time. Others had been discussing emigration for London’s working-classes as early as 1856 and Allen himself appears to have taken up the cause of a penny emigration rate, the discussions of which had been ongoing for “years” amongst poor ratepayers at meetings in the East End.⁸⁶ The ratepayers’ efforts to raise a

⁸¹ For more on the Irish, see: Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979).

⁸² Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 181.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *East London Observer*, November 21, 1857.

⁸⁵ *Times*, February 19, 1857.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, August 15, 1856 and May 11, 1857.

penny-rate enjoyed practical results. This unnamed group collected signatures on a petition that circulated in the local workhouses amongst “the poor incarcerated people” who wished to be “assisted to emigrate.”⁸⁷ That year, fifty-eight of these were helped to emigrate to South Australia and were “found to be precisely the kind of people the colony was so much in want of.”⁸⁸ The writer of the letter to the editor of the *Times* detailing these local efforts in the East End noted that this kind of emigration would help reduce crime, remove the causes of pauperism, keep men employed, and permanently relieve the ratepayers of excessively high rates in London’s poor neighborhoods. Indeed, emigration in his estimation would eradicate “many of the social evils under which society has long laboured.”⁸⁹

Perhaps more importantly, emigration solved the complex problem of the equalization of the poor rates which figured large in political discourse in London from 1857 to the passing of the Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867. The Metropolitan Poor Act brought many changes to East End social welfare policy including how the poor were paid for. In order to fund these new initiatives, reformers looked to the West End to pay for the East as the rates in wealthy London areas resulted in higher collections and less distribution.⁹⁰ It made far more sense to redistribute the poor rates to where they were most needed. It did not require a complex calculation to see that if the casual poor emigrated to the colonies there would be significant reductions in the poor rates back home. Resistance on the issue of equalization from the other London boroughs was intense and often seemed insurmountable to reformers. Emigration thus became a rather permanent fixture in the Poor Law and rate-paying reform discourse in the East End into the 1860s.

By early 1857, the working men in East London who supported emigration had come to believe it was the only permanent and viable solution to a labour market they determined was beyond amelioration. Information about emigration was just as important to these prospective emigrants as was actual funding. Lectures from colonial experts and attendance by MPs featured prominently at BWES meetings. This production of colonial knowledge formed an essential part of the working-class emigration movement in East London. From this education the opinion was formed that emigration was the best solution to their distress. The society also aimed to provide

⁸⁷ Ibid., May 11, 1857.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Pauline Ashbridge, “Paying for the Poor: A Middle-Class Metropolitan Movement for Rate Equalisation 1857-67,” *London Journal* 22, no.2 (1997), 107.

prospective emigrants with “the most recent information with respect to the various colonies” as it moved forward.⁹¹ Allen noted the men were “now under sound and intelligent impressions” that emigration was the best option.⁹² Armed himself with this same belief, Allen called on philanthropists to help these working people find new futures in what he and others believed to be a vast and open land in “British America.”

As our country is in possession of such valuable and suitable colonies, and as British America is so accessible, and now so well developed, as to afford an ample and comfortable home to the surplus population of our nation, especially those connected with the building trades and agricultural pursuits, and as the people of our large towns, and especially London and its neighborhood, have suffered so much and so patiently, and are willing by weekly contributions to what in them lies to provide a fund for their own emigration, it would be most desirable that those of the upper classes who may be philanthropically disposed would lend the aid of their advice and support, thereby encouraging the praiseworthy efforts of the working people.⁹³

Professing their attachment to Englishness and English institutions in their resolutions, working men themselves made it plain they were only interested in emigration to a British colony.⁹⁴ There does not appear to be any mention at this stage of mass emigration to the United States. Allen proposed that the men raise a weekly savings benefit to partly fund their outward journeys. This did not happen immediately but the following year the men seem to have taken up the idea of an emigration club as an ideal future practice.⁹⁵ In 1857-58, their distress was probably too acute to consider raising enough funds for a benefit club so the men sought subscriptions and government support instead. Most men concerned with working-class respectability would have been more interested in paying part of their journey through a benefit club than what they might have seen as all-out charity. The idea of self-help was deeply entrenched in the working-class psyche as well as the underpinnings of liberal Victorian philanthropy and the New Poor Law especially as concerned the deterrent aims of the law.⁹⁶ For the poor, self-help was a way to avoid entering the

⁹¹ *The Standard*, July 15, 1859.

⁹² *Times*, February 19, 1857.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, March 3, 1857.

⁹⁵ *Daily News*, March 31, 1858.

⁹⁶ Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help; with Illustrations of Character and Conduct* (London: John Murray, 1859) was an influential text in this period and reveals the Christian underpinnings of self-help from the outset of the book. Self-help discourse, which in basic terms favoured the poor who helped themselves rise out of poverty through saving, behaviour modification, and morality, was directly related to ideas about the deserving and undeserving poor which is explored in more detail in chapter two of this dissertation with particular reference to the policies and practices of the Charity Organisation Society from 1869. Asa Briggs succinctly sums up the Victorian self-help ethos thus: “Self-help was one of the favourite mid-Victorian virtues. Relying on yourself was preferred morally – and

workhouse which was certainly the most feared prong of the Poor Law amendments symbolizing the loss of independence and respectability.

The BWES quite quickly attracted the attention of philanthropists and clergymen who set to work infiltrating and essentially annexing the grassroots club in its first year. It cannot be assumed that the working men, however, were frustrated by this involvement. Indeed, they may have invited and welcomed the attention and experience of seasoned philanthropists. Their plea for information and donations in their first letter to the editor of the *Times* illustrates their desire for assistance. As early as February 1857, it is clear there was interest amongst the local clergy in East London in becoming involved in the BWES. Allen refers to “our committee” when explaining to the attendees of the February meeting how a benefit club would work.⁹⁷ Whether or not this is an indication that the clergy had begun to take over the club is not clear, although a takeover did occur by early 1858. Newspaper reports on the BWES do not appear again until March of 1858 when local clergy and prominent gentlemen took a more profound interest in the emerging emigration movement after which the balance between the workers’ sovereignty and the philanthropic agenda shifted.

In March 1858, the *Daily News* reported on a public meeting in Whitechapel recently chaired by the Evangelical Reverend William Champneys, Rector of St. Mary’s Whitechapel and Canon of St. Paul’s.⁹⁸ Champneys had been the Rector of St. Mary’s since 1837. He had significant knowledge of the plight of the community and demonstrated a considerable commitment to improving the lives of people of Whitechapel. Low rates of attendance at St. Mary’s in the 1830s (only 100 parishioners out of 36,000 attended regularly) prompted Champneys to tailor his services to the special needs of the impoverished community. He was the first in London to offer a simplified liturgy and evening services to encourage church attendance, for instance. He was “instrumental” in setting up schools for poor children, campaigned against the hiring of coal whippers, “formed unemployed boys into a shoe black

economically – to depending on others. It was an expression of character even when it did not ensure – even, indeed, when it did not offer – a means of success. It also had social implications of a general kind. The progressive development of society ultimately depended, it was argued, not on collective action or on parliamentary legislation but on the prevalence of practices of self-help.” See: Asa Briggs, “Samuel Smiles: The Gospel of Self-Help,” *History Today* 37, no. 5 (May 1987), 37.

⁹⁷ *Times*, February 19, 1857.

⁹⁸ H.E.C. Stapleton, “William Weldon Champneys, dean of Lichfield,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed December 14, 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.cyber.usask.ca/view/article/5098?docPos=5>. Also see: *Daily News*, March 31, 1858.

brigade, and started a penny bank, maternity society, coal club, and young men's institute.”⁹⁹ Champneys’s goal in chairing the above meeting was to form a committee to raise and manage subscriptions for assisting working-class men who belonged to the BWES to emigrate to British colonies.¹⁰⁰ It was announced at the meeting that the members of the BWES would “rejoice to hear” that the Right Honourable Lord Ebury, Mr. John Labouchere, Esq., Mr. Robert Hanbury, Esq., MP, and Champneys would act in the capacity of initial trustees.¹⁰¹ After this meeting, the BWES would take on the role of selecting men (and presumably their families) to emigrate rather than raise its own funds.

It is unclear how many men emigrated, if any, under the initial BWES impetus before March of 1858 when Champneys annexed the society or whether the working-class founders would have been able to have effected a large-scale emigration movement on their own. If they had only just begun in November of 1857, the number would have been quite low as the emigration season had not yet opened. In 1858, the BWES was said to have helped 158 to emigrate with partial funding and another thirty to emigrate with full funding.¹⁰² In its 1859 prospectus, the society claims to have helped “nearly 200 persons” emigrate in the first eighteen months of its existence.¹⁰³ Champneys had ambitions of sending 9,000 emigrants out under the auspices of the society if £50,000 could be raised by a large government-sponsored emigration scheme.¹⁰⁴ It is clear that goal was never reached. It is likewise doubtful the inaugural thirty-one men who founded the society in early 1857 maintained much connection with their society after 1857. Their names, except for a Mr. Gibbs, do not appear again in reports of meetings in 1858 or in the prospectus for 1859. There are numerous possibilities why this might have been the case, not the least of which is that they may have actually emigrated. High turnover of working people in the BWES aside, the working-class roots of the organization remained crucial to its success.

⁹⁹ Stapleton, n.p.

¹⁰⁰ *Daily News*, March 31, 1858.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* Robert Grosvenor, also known as First Baron Ebury, sat as a Liberal MP for Middlesex in the 1840s and 1850s. He was an evangelical interested in social reform and had visited Africa. In the 1850s, he was involved with several sanitation and other working-class improvement projects. For more see: Leonard W. Cowie, “Grosvenor, Robert, first Baron Ebury,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, January 2008), accessed September 12, 2103, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11673>. John Labouchere was a Banker and active philanthropist. Robert Culling Hanbury, Esq was the second MP for Middlesex in 1857.

¹⁰² *Standard*, July 15, 1859.

¹⁰³ Prospectus of the British Workmen’s Emigration Society for Facilitating Emigration to the British Colonies, item 1-2, Tait papers 115, ff. 1-4, British Workman’s Emigration Society, 1859, Lambeth Palace Library, London.

¹⁰⁴ *Standard*, July 15, 1859.

Reynold's newspaper felt that “nothing was so likely to promote the interest of the working men, the ratepayers, and society in general, as such societies as the British Workmen’s Emigration Society.”¹⁰⁵ Operating as a benefit club into which members paid 6s. 4d. per week, the BWES seemed by 1859 to have found its footing and was aiming to send 500 persons out in 1860.¹⁰⁶ To all appearances the BWES continued to recruit and send emigrants to British colonies with the help of its trustee committee until at least the end of 1859. After that, the society appears to have all but disappeared, perhaps morphing into one of the numerous charities that emerged again in the late 1860s and early 1880s.

East End Silk Weavers and Emigration, 1861-63

After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, French Protestant Huguenots fleeing persecution arrived in East London mostly from Lyon and Tours bringing with them a silk weaving trade that would come to characterize the East End neighborhoods of Spitalfields, Bethnal Green, and Bishopsgate.¹⁰⁷ Seventeenth-century silk weavers and their descendants left indelible marks on the East End with their idyllic street names like Fleur de Lys Street and Sweet Apple Court, their modest gardens, their attractive two-story houses, and the little songbirds they raised.¹⁰⁸ They were considered excellent citizens and good immigrants in part because they practiced a respectable Protestant and refined lifestyle.¹⁰⁹ Their trade flourished until the end of the eighteenth century when it began to show signs of decline never to recover.¹¹⁰ By the early nineteenth century, poverty characterized the condition of the underemployed weaver evermore impacted by changes in fashion, trade, and mechanization. Parliamentary reports in the early nineteenth century lamented the once independent weavers commenting that they had been reduced to “a physical condition marked by general feebleness and liability to disease.”¹¹¹ Between the passing of the Spitalfields Act in 1773, which aimed to provide stability to weavers’ wages, and the evolution of a wide-scale system of charity and benefit clubs throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the plight of the weaver failed to improve. As one early historian

¹⁰⁵ *Reynolds*, January 30, 1859.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Weekley, 285; and Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 59.

¹⁰⁸ Weekley, 286.

¹⁰⁹ Warner, 57.

¹¹⁰ A.K. Sabin, *The Silk Weavers of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green* (London: Board of Education, 1921), 13; Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 109.

¹¹¹ Warner, 59.

said, “the impoverished weavers plunged into the direst distress.”¹¹² All of the typical charitable remedies were attempted during these decades, including benefit clubs which the weavers preferred to the Poor Law.¹¹³ Emigration was one of those remedies.

Between 1861 and 1863, emigration was broached as a solution to the steadily declining silk weaving trade impacting weavers in Bethnal Green, Spitalfields, Mile End Old Town, and Shoreditch. Philanthropists attempted to apply emigration to the economic and social problems the weavers faced particularly after 1860 when silks could be freely traded between England and the continent. Emigration was not, however, taken up with much interest by the weaving population in East London and failed to generate what might be called a movement. After 1863, the *East London Observer* made no mention of the emigration of silk weavers even though their plight worsened as their trade disappeared. In 1921, Frank Warner, of Warner and Sons silk weavers, one of the only weaving firms to survive the nineteenth century, offered this explanation for why unemployed weavers showed little interest in emigration in the 1860s: “The weavers, however, who were distinguished by neatness and dexterity of hand and love of home, rather than muscular strength and adventurous character, were not as a rule either willing or hopeful emigrants.”¹¹⁴ In a 2003 article in *History Workshop Journal*, Hilda Kean and Bruce Wheeler use census records to track decades of weaving families in Bethnal Green to confirm Warner’s claim, stating that:

there was no simple exodus of silk weavers from the area in the second half of the nineteenth century. Not only did the weaving community display a remarkable degree of permanence in the area, with individuals and families continuing to live and work in the same streets they had grown up in, the silk industry itself appears to have been a far more entrenched and durable feature of the culture of the local area than has conventionally been supposed.¹¹⁵

Similarly, in a 1931 history of the silk weavers, A.K. Sabin mentions that only “a few” distressed weavers emigrated but that most relied on local charity to survive.¹¹⁶ Yet, while it cannot be argued that the silk weavers in East London emigrated in significant numbers, a closer reading of local newspapers reveals their interest did in fact grow after the first year of discussions about

¹¹² Sabin, 18.

¹¹³ Hilda Kean and Bruce Wheeler, “Making History in Bethnal Green: Different Stories of Nineteenth-Century Silk Weavers,” *History Workshop Journal* 56 (2003), 222.

¹¹⁴ Warner, 89-90.

¹¹⁵ Kean and Wheeler, 218.

¹¹⁶ Sabin, 18.

emigration. Between 1861 and 1863, it is reasonable to suggest that at least a small section of their population did consider emigrating and that the East End silk weaver was not a homogenous single type. We know that within their craft they stratified their work roles though the nineteenth century between master weaver and dependent weaver and that their work became increasingly gendered. Likewise, it cannot be assumed that they were all equally attached to their transplanted culture and its location or were collectively resistant to emigration. We know that some migrated internally to the North of England in search of textile work for example.¹¹⁷ A small group of weavers exhibited signs of interest in colonial emigration until 1863 when their interest in emigration can no longer be traced as a definable group.

On September 17, 1861, the *East London Observer* reported on a large meeting of the newly-formed Unemployed Weavers' Emigration Society (UWES) at the Swan Tavern in Shoreditch. The UWES would be composed of weavers themselves who were interested in emigration. The UWES had taken up the idea of emigration from a similar one the Weavers' Aid Committee had entertained earlier, the main difference being that, like the BWES, the weavers had themselves formed this new society. The Weavers' Aid Committee expressed their support stating they had never given up on the idea of emigration but that the weavers had been "repudiated" by the idea of it and so the committee did not pursue an emigration agenda.¹¹⁸ It is difficult to determine to what extent silk weavers discussed emigration before 1861 as there is no reporting on the topic in the newspapers until September of 1861 and there are no other surviving records. It was agreed at this first meeting that a joint committee would be struck to manage the program. Having organized a successful concert at their first meeting and set about the task of securing philanthropic support, the UWES held another "crowded" meeting four days later on September 21st where they expressed their "satisfaction at the manner in which the movement was proceeding."¹¹⁹ That they considered themselves to be fostering a 'movement' is indicative of the vision they had for a long-term emigration scheme for unemployed weavers and also that the distress they were encountering was permanent. Interest in emigration amongst weavers was, however, still patchy. One benefit event the UWES sponsored at Hackney Wick was poorly

¹¹⁷ Warner, 88-90.

¹¹⁸ *East London Observer*, September 17, 1861.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, September 21, 1861.

attended (perhaps because of a “sudden change in the weather”) but another, a concert, was well-attended. Other meetings varied from being “thinly” to numerous attended.¹²⁰

By 1862, any mention of the UWES had ceased in local newspapers. The group now most active in promoting the emigration of silk weavers was the East London Weavers’ Aid Association (ELWAA) which was formed in May of 1861 before the UWES and perhaps in connection with the Weavers’ Aid Committee.¹²¹ Believing the weaving trade was beyond repair, the ELWAA helped 115 unemployed weavers and their dependents emigrate to Queensland where they found work as labourers and domestics by March of 1862.¹²² One year later, the *East London Observer* reported that the ELWAA continued to run a successful scheme of emigration for unemployed weavers from Bethnal Green who were apparently faring well in the colony.¹²³ The ELWAA was run by such philanthropists Angela Burdett-Coutts, Mr. Robert Hanbury, MP, Mr. Philip Cazenove, and Reverend J. Patterson, rector of Spitalfields, as well as other clergymen and gentlemen who took up the cause of raising funds and facilitating emigration for the weavers. These influential emigrationists would be involved in various emigration schemes throughout East London in the coming decades and exercised a firm grip on the management of emigration in the early period.¹²⁴ Robert Hanbury, MP had been involved with the BWES as a trustee. Philip Cazenove, a stockbroker of Huguenot descent, was a philanthropist involved in numerous charities in London including the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. His brother John was a friend of Thomas Malthus and may have been the posthumous editor of the second edition of the *Principles of Political Economy* in 1836. This was a family interested then in population, charity, and emigration.¹²⁵ The influence of these philanthropists cannot be overlooked. I suspect they either took over the UWES or simply encouraged donors to target funds through their own organization

¹²⁰ Ibid., September 28, 1861.

¹²¹ Remains uncertain who formed the Weavers’ Aid Committee or what their mandate was but likely they assisted unemployed weavers in various capacities outside the Poor Law. The contingent who operated the ELWAA mention their connection to a “Weavers’ Aid Association” which may have been the same organization, see: Ibid., March 8, 1862.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., March 7, 1863.

¹²⁴ The Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts was one of the most influential emigrationists in East London in the late nineteenth century. Her biographical details are provided in chapter five where her involvement in East End emigration is examined in closer detail.

¹²⁵ J. M. Pullen, “Cazenove, John,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online edition, May 2008, accessed July 24, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48875>; and Judy Slinn, “Cazenove, Philip,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed July 24, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47717>.

instead. At the very least, it would have been difficult for other groups to raise money for weavers' emigration outside of this philanthropic powerhouse. Subscribers were familiar with these wealthy people, trusted them, and were likely less inclined to give money directly to the poor weavers.

This pattern of usurping or eclipsing grassroots organizations emerges as a common theme throughout the early history of the emigration movement in East London. It points to a number of challenges related to working-class agency for those fostering an emigration movement in the late 1850s and early 1860s. I would suggest that the UWES and the BWES failed to retain autonomy not because of lack of interest in emigration amongst their fellow neighbors but rather because they were stifled in their efforts by philanthropists who held more monetary influence, social esteem, and political power than they did. These organizations could not perform the functions of emigration without first securing funds. Earning 10s. a week as an impoverished weaver made saving money for emigration impossible.¹²⁶ The only way weavers could emigrate was through the generosity of philanthropists. Second to raising awareness about poverty, and short of begging, fundraising was a fundamental concern of both the BWES and the UWES. The resolutions passed at both of these organizations' early meetings were generally intended first, to inform the public that people in the East End were suffering; second, to suggest that emigration was the only permanent option to relieving this distress; and third to seek donations to facilitate emigration. Without philanthropic support these organizations could only ever function as awareness campaigns and that is perhaps, in the end, all they ever were. They did, however, spark an interest in emigration amongst their fellow workers and neighbours.

Once philanthropists began to take notice of the emigration question and provide the required funding, they appear to have taken over the operations of the schemes themselves. Working people were left with very little space in which to voice their concerns, dictate the parameters of their emigration, or move forward with their own agendas of poverty reduction other than to attend meetings and show interest or disinterest in emigration. This lack of agency and participation in their own social movements may point to part of the reason why many of the unemployed in the late 1850s and early 1860s did not take up the emigration cause with much vigour. For weavers in particular, we know that they preferred to receive aid from their own organizations. For the highly independent skilled operatives who started the BWES, the

¹²⁶ *East London Observer*, September 28, 1861.

usurpation of their organization by local clergymen may provide clues to their disappearance from key positions in that emigration scheme. Yet, the agency the labouring poor performed simply shifted; it was displayed, especially amongst weavers, in their choice to stay or to emigrate as well as to draw on other sources of relief and income outside the Poor Law in what historians Steve King and Alannah Tomkins dub an “economy of makeshifts.”¹²⁷ While many of the unemployed weavers in East London, like their counterparts in the shipbuilding and other building trades, chose to leave England for British colonies in the late 1850s and early 1860s, most stayed behind perhaps truly “repudiated” by what they may have perceived to have been yet another charitable intervention in their already heavily managed lives of dependency. What these early developments did achieve, however, was to initiate interest in assisted emigration amongst Eastenders and philanthropists alike.

Cholera, the Shipbuilding Crisis, Frosts and the First East End Emigration Fund, 1866-68

If the early 1860s had not been difficult enough for Eastenders, the summer of 1866 marked the beginning of several years of heightened crisis on multiple fronts. The spectacular collapse of the London financial firm Overend Gurney that summer had consequences not just for the City but also for East London. The firm’s crash created a ripple effect for companies invested in East End industry especially in the shipbuilding and dock economies.¹²⁸ Marriott argues, however, that the crashes in 1866 need to be understood as part of longer term decline in the area.¹²⁹ By December of 1866, between 10,000 and 30,000 men and women were out of work in the East End, the riverside neighborhoods being the most affected.¹³⁰ In Limehouse, for example, 3,983 people were out of work most of whom had been reliant on the shipbuilding and ironworking trades close to their homes.¹³¹ Distress in Poplar reached intolerable levels that winter with reports of 7,000 unemployed who relied on relief from the already overstretched

¹²⁷ An “economy of makeshifts” was one in which the poor supplemented insufficient Poor Law relief with other means; this was necessary because the relief given under the Poor Law was never enough for survival. Recipients were thus forced to find other means in order to feed and house themselves. For more on the idea of the economy of makeshifts in England, and its inheritance from Olwen Hufton’s histories of poverty in early modern France, see: Steve King and Alannah Tomkins, eds., “Introduction,” in *The Poor in England, 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003): 1-38.

¹²⁸ Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 212; and Pollard, 79.

¹²⁹ Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 213.

¹³⁰ *East London Observer*, December 8, 1866.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, December 29, 1866.

board of guardians.¹³² Not only did industry fail to provide enough work for the labouring population in the East End but the weather compounded an already fragile labour market. 1866-67 was an especially cold winter with early frosts which led to disruptions in work in Bethnal Green, Poplar, Bromley, Bow, Limehouse, Canning Town, Cubitt Town, Millwall, and Deptford.¹³³ These blows were doubly crushing to neighborhoods still recovering from severe cholera outbreaks in the summer of 1866. One week in early August 1866, 1,253 people died from cholera or diarrhea in London, 924 of whom lived in Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, St. George's in the East, Stepney, Mile End Old Town, and Poplar.¹³⁴ Under these conditions, local boards of guardians were unable to manage the demand for relief, to make space in the packed workhouses, or keep track of who needed relief. Some trade unions stepped in like the Dock and Wharf Labourer's Association asking the Lord Mayor of London for assistance and other grassroots committees sprung up by the spring of 1867.¹³⁵ Distress workers and advocates in East London tried first to solve the problems of destitution at home suggesting they seek relief funding and clothing donations, set up soup kitchens, or give out food tickets.¹³⁶ Interestingly, emigration was not revisited as a solution in the press until August of 1867 when the Reverend John Fenwick Kitto reported for the first time to the *Times* on the activities of a local organization that would come to dominate the discourse and practice of emigration in East London well into the twentieth century – the East End Emigration Fund (EEEF).

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ *Lloyd's Weekly*, January 27, 1867; Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, 51; and *East London Observer*, December 8, 1866.

¹³⁴ *East London Observer*, August 4, 1866.

¹³⁵ *Lloyd's Weekly*, January 27, 1867.

¹³⁶ *East London Observer*, April 6, 1867.

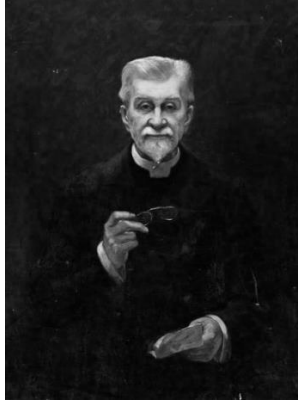


Fig. 1.2: Reverend John Fenwick Kitto, Chairman of the East End Emigration Fund, 1867-1902, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archive.

Kitto remained the chairman of the EEEF from its first composition in 1867 to its reinstatement in 1882 and through to his death in 1902.¹³⁷ Ordained in 1862, Kitto began his career with the church under the tutelage of the Reverend Canon Champneys in 1866 as the curate of St. Pancras.¹³⁸ It might have been this relationship with Champneys that brought emigration to Kitto's attention. Kitto served as rector in three different East End parishes: St. Matthias (Poplar) from 1866 to 1875, St. Mary's (Whitechapel) from 1875 to 1880, and St. Dunstan (Stepney) from 1880 until an unknown date when he moved to St. Martin in the Fields (Charing Cross).¹³⁹ Kitto was flung into the St. Matthias parish in Poplar in the wake of cholera and financial uncertainty in 1866. *The Church-Worker: A Magazine for Sunday School Teachers and Workers* described the evolution of Kitto's turn to emigration as a solution to distress in Poplar as greatly influenced by his local experience there:

the new vicar's zeal, perseverance, and powers of organisation became strikingly evident. At a time when ship-building yards, iron works, and large factories were being closed, and men were walking the streets in a state of actual starvation, Mr. Kitto came forward with a scheme of emigration, and with the co-operation of others, whose services were enlisted by him, established the 'East End Emigration Relief Fund,' which accomplished a great work in rescuing families from pauperism, and placing them in good circumstances abroad.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1903.

¹³⁸ Unknown, "The Church-worker's portrait gallery, IV. – The Rev. John Fenwick Kitto," in *The Church-Worker: A Magazine for Sunday School Teachers and Church-Workers Generally*, volume II, (London: Church of England Sunday School Institute, 1883), 87, accessed September 12, 2013, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=UQQFAAAAQAAJ&>; and *East London Observer*, March 27, 1886.

¹³⁹ Unknown, "The Church-Worker's Portrait Gallery, IV. – The Rev. John Fenwick Kitto," 87.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

While emigration formed the cornerstone of Kitto's East End philanthropy it functioned as only one part of a spectrum of charitable work he was involved in. Kitto was responsible for setting up numerous other charities including ones that helped the invalid, the convalescent, the senior, and the junior members of his parishes.¹⁴¹ For the man who could easily be called the founder of the emigration movement in East London, Kitto's wide-ranging charitable work suggests emigration was not the only option available in helping the poor as even his own rhetoric asserted. Rather, emigration was one item on a long menu of options charitable workers could prescribe in times of distress.

Several historians have ignored the earliest efforts of the EEEF from 1867 to 1869 emphasizing instead its reinstitution in 1882. Ignoring the importance of this earlier period has led to other historiographical deficiencies in our understanding of the evolution of an emigration movement in East London. The oft-quoted Stanley Johnson makes no mention of the activities of the EEEF before 1869 stating that assisted emigration during that period was "spasmodic and disorganized."¹⁴² Howard Malchow recognized that the late 1860s was a "lively" period for assisted emigration in London with the creation of the EEEF and briefly discusses the formation of the EEEF in 1867.¹⁴³ However, he pegs these developments to private interest ignoring the ways in which the EEEF worked with local boards of guardians before 1869. More generally, both Johnson and Malchow date 1869 as the "turning point" in assisted charitable emigration as a definable movement thus paying little to no attention to the decade prior.¹⁴⁴ Johnson offers little explanation why 1869 was a watershed year for assisted emigration other than suggesting that there was a marked shift from commercially-driven emigration to charitably-drive emigration.¹⁴⁵ Malchow suggests the "turning point" reveals "a public psychology of uncertainty" brought on by the challenges of 1866-67 rather than an indication of "real distress."¹⁴⁶ I would suggest instead that the emigration in East London had been building from 1857 onwards and showed signs of maturation by 1869. I also demonstrate that the early emigration societies and charities in East London developed working relationships with boards of guardians from the outset complicating Malchow's arguments about the reluctance of Poor

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Johnson, 72, 76.

¹⁴³ Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 18, 23.

¹⁴⁴ Johnson, 72; Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 19.

¹⁴⁵ Johnson, 72.

¹⁴⁶ Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 18-19.

Law officials to engage in emigration at this earliest stage even though the New Poor Law had given them “considerable powers to assist emigration.”¹⁴⁷ As early as August, 1867 the Poplar Board of Guardians and the EEEF together began sending out emigrants from East London to Canada. Had Johnson and Malchow had access to Canadian passenger lists and consulted local newspapers in East London they may have realized this connection.

The EEEF, under the advice of William Dixon, Canadian Government emigration agent in London, sent 170 poor emigrants from the East End to Canada and South Australia sometime before August 14, 1867 when Kitto reported to the *Times* on this first batch of assisted emigrants.¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately, a thorough survey of passenger lists from London to Canada in 1866 and 1867 has not been able to specifically locate these passengers. It is likewise unknown how many went to Canada and how many went to Australia. However, two other ships carrying EEEF passengers can be verified for that summer. “Besieged by eager applicants,” the EEEF selected a further 147 emigrants in July of 1867 and ninety-one emigrants in August of 1867 for paid passage to Canada.¹⁴⁹ Upon examining the passenger list for the first group of 147, a number of important distinctions can be made about how and why these emigrants left East London. First, and most significantly, they appear to have been assisted by the Poplar Board of Guardians. In fact, there is no mention of the EEEF whatsoever on the manifest, which suggests they were identified by ship and immigration officials firstly as Poor Law passengers not as recipients of private philanthropy. The only indication the EEEF had been involved in sending these emigrants is found in the *East London Observer* indicating the charity had received news of the safe arrival of its passengers on board the *S.S. Thames* which had departed “but a few weeks ago;” their departure is also confirmed in Kitto’s August 26th report in the *Times* of 168 persons having been sent out since August 22, 1867.¹⁵⁰ The *S.S. Thames* made only one trip that summer and thus we can assume that the Poplar Poor Law passengers were also the EEEF passengers.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁴⁸ *Times*, August 14, 1867.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Also see *Ibid.*, August 26, 1867; and *East London Observer*, September 21, 1867 for details on these journeys. In the *Times* for September 30, 1867, the total is said to be 360 emigrants to date.

¹⁵⁰ *East London Observer*, September 21, 1867; and in the *Times* for August 26, 1867, Kitto reports that 168 emigrants had been sent out to Quebec, the last batch having left “last Thursday” which was August 22, 1867. I calculate 186 emigrants between these two ships if we calculate 147 total passengers from the first ship and thirty-nine heads of families from the second for a combined total of all family members of 238 emigrants that summer. While these numbers do not align precisely, they are close enough to confirm these are the same batches of people.

This early co-operation between the EEEF and the Poplar Board of Guardians has hitherto gone unrecognized. It is clear that in this, their second or third dispatch of emigrants, the two were working together to send out mostly unemployed shipbuilders. Information on the passenger lists for the *S.S. Thames* (departed July 25, 1867) and *S.S. St. Lawrence* (departed August 22, 1867) giving the emigrants' names, ages, occupations, and ethnicities reveals characteristics consistent with a late-1860s standard emigrant profile from East London. On board were many riveters, boilermakers, labourers, engine workers, turners, hammermen, and one cooper. Some were of Irish descent, but most were English. In both cases, these groups of men and their families are listed on the ships' manifests as well as on separate lists, one marked "Account of Poor Law Passengers from the Poplar Union," the other simply marked "List of Tradesmen."¹⁵¹ These designations of group identification served a practical purpose at landing. First, the Poor Law passengers received landing money in the sum of £1 for each adult and 10s. for each child. Second, East End emigrants arrived destitute, aside from their landing money, without friends to receive them, and without security of work in Canada.¹⁵² The EEEF mistakenly believed Canadian officials would assist them in finding work upon landing; keeping the emigrants grouped together made bureaucratic sense both upon departure and arrival. However, being lumped together as an impoverished collective deprived East End emigrants of the chance to be assessed on their own merit as individuals. Indeed, the choices the EEEF and the Poor Law boards made in 1867 would have severe consequences for their future operations.

Other philanthropic distress committees supported the EEEF in its early years. Emigration, charitable out-relief, and efforts to keep the unemployed off the Poor Law rates went hand-in-hand in the late 1860s. In the first months of 1868, a distress committee was formed under the direction of the Lord Mayor of London. This committee included as its secretary J. Standish Haly who was also secretary of the EEEF. Six philanthropic committees dealing with distress in East London gathered together to form one united executive relief committee. It was decided at their first meeting that the funds this new united committee raised and distributed for relief would be clearly differentiated from Poor Law relief. Specifically, this committee's objective would be to provide supplementary relief to unemployed artisans in the hope that the

¹⁵¹ The sum can be found recorded on the passenger lists.

¹⁵² The St. George's Society in Toronto reported to the Minister of Agriculture that these emigrants were destitute, see: *Letter from John Crickmore, President of the St. George's Society of Toronto to the Honourable the Minister of Agriculture, Government Immigration Department*, March 21, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

aid would prevent them from crossing the fine line between “independent poverty and pauperism.”¹⁵³ The committee members stressed that they planned on assisting only “high class labourers,” and not “a single shipwright,” insinuating that the shipwright held a lower social position than the former.¹⁵⁴ According to the *Standard*, the united committee failed to make much of a difference in East London. The newspaper absolved the committee somewhat for this failure by emphasizing the sheer extent of local distress in the East End. Either the Poor Law or charity would have to keep people on relief until trade conditions picked up which seemed unlikely. Increasingly, emigration appeared to be the only option.¹⁵⁵ By March, the united committee had raised over £5,000 much of which Angela Burdett-Coutts donated. It was decided that it would be impossible to distribute these funds throughout all of the East End districts to any real effect. So, the money was funneled to the EEEF. Interestingly, the united committee had hurt the EEEF by its own fundraising.¹⁵⁶ This transfer of money to the fund is significant. It indicates the end of reluctance to support emigration on the part of local philanthropists who wished to relieve distress at home and a shift towards a more serious consideration of an emigration scheme in the East End. Burdett-Coutts and Philip Cazenove were both involved with the united committee and, given their earlier interest in emigration in East London, I would suggest they had considerable influence in directing these funds towards emigration and away from locally-dispensed relief. In the context of this shift, the members began to discuss the dissolution of the united committee. They agreed that district sub-committees be formed instead along the same boundary lines of the Poor Law boards of guardians in order for the boards to supervise the distribution of relief. This partnership between philanthropists and boards of guardians would be applied not just to the provision of domestic relief but to programs of emigration as well.

As much as the Poor Law boards of guardians supported emigration and engaged in it to some extent in the 1860s, it was difficult for them to simultaneously manage both acute distress and an emigration program. This inability to juggle multiple strands of relief in the crises of the late 1860s may have led to Malchow’s view that Poor Law boards were reluctant to turn to emigration as an option to distress. *Lloyd’s Weekly* took a view probably very similar to that of

¹⁵³ *Lloyd’s Weekly*, November 17, 1867.

¹⁵⁴ *Daily News*, February 4, 1868.

¹⁵⁵ Article from *The Standard* reprinted in the *East London Observer*, March 21, 1868.

¹⁵⁶ *East London Observer*, March 28, 1868.

many Poor Law boards – that in the distress of 1867, “it was too late for emigration or migration when the hungry wolf is at the door.”¹⁵⁷ It is likely Poor Law boards simply lacked the resources to launch emigration programs. Moreover, the *Pall Mall Gazette* reported in April of 1868 that many Poor Law boards did not have a sound working knowledge of their powers to apply emigration as a tool of relief and that indeed some boards were not “inclined to use them” in any case.¹⁵⁸ Supporters of emigration worried that Poor Law boards would take too long to decide whether or not to apply portions of their rates to emigration but that in doing so the local rates would be significantly reduced.¹⁵⁹ Allowed under the law to spend up to £10 on each recipient of emigration sponsorship, the Poor Law boards in the distressed East End gave the EEEF £1,000 in 1867, starting a relationship that would last through the rest of the century.¹⁶⁰

East End Emigration Fund Emigrants in Canada

The EEEF’s and Poplar Board of Guardians’ first batches of unemployed shipbuilders and ironworkers were not at all well-received in Canada in 1867. Indeed, they caused so many problems for Canadian immigration agents that pleas were quickly sent out to William Dixon and J. Standish Haly, Esq. to immediately cease any further sending out of unemployed Eastenders. L. Stafford, assistant immigration agent in Canada reflected this official sentiment:

I had already, prior to the receipt of Mr. Haly’s letter, in consequence of hearing through the English papers that an emigration of this kind was contemplated, written to our agent, Mr. Dixon, begging of him to discountenance the scheme by every effort in his power, as the demand for iron-workers in this country is, at present, extremely limited, so that I think there need be no fear of our being troubled with another batch of emigrants of a similar character again this season.¹⁶¹

Part of the problem can be attributed to Canada’s lack of preparedness for the arrival of poor emigrants. These reception and arrival problems have largely, until recently, escaped historians’ interest. Little was known about the landing reception mechanisms for English emigrants in Canada until Lisa Chilton’s recent research on Toronto for the period 1820 to 1880. Chilton argues that this period was crucial in the development of more efficient reception and arrival systems in Canada and that the state operated on multiple levels to deliver these managements

¹⁵⁷ *Lloyd’s Weekly*, November 17, 1867.

¹⁵⁸ *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 4, 1868.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* However, it is unknown which parishes the *Pall Mall Gazette* is referring to.

¹⁶¹ *Letter from L. Stafford, Assistant Agent to J. C. Taché, Deputy Minister of Agriculture*, April 24, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

often competing with each other internally, internationally, and across the charitable sector.¹⁶² East End emigrants influenced part of that bureaucratic change in 1867-68. By April 1868, the Canadian Government had adopted new policies that disallowed the giving out of landing money, making it a requirement that immigrants land with enough resources to be able to reach their final destination on their own.¹⁶³ This decision was reached in large part after the first two batches of East End emigrants in 1867 were unable to find employment in Canada and wound up destitute in Canadian cities relying on local charity.

The Canadian Deputy Minister of Agriculture, J.C. Taché wrote to William Dixon in London in 1868 after receiving complaints from the St. George's Society in Toronto that they had been overly burdened by the East End emigrants who had been sent to Canada virtually destitute in 1867:

you should take care not to induce such immigration, which may prove to result in hardship for the immigrants and serious embarrassment for the people of this country. It has been repeatedly said in documents from this office that the main object of our immigration agents is to bring forth a current of such immigration as can be furnished by agricultural populations.¹⁶⁴

The St. George's Society, whose responsibility it was to care for "English emigrants" in need, had been overwhelmed with the demand for relief from the 1867 East End migrants.¹⁶⁵

According to Taché, the EEEF had overestimated the demands of the Canadian labour market for unemployed shipbuilders and ironworkers, having relied on an inaccurate edition of the *Canadian Emigration Gazette*.¹⁶⁶ In addition, the severe destitution in the East End prompted a kind of quiet panic at the EEEF, determined to forge ahead with its emigration program despite disapproval from Canada. In writing to the Canadian Department of Agriculture, the Department then responsible for immigration, the St. George's Society was looking to recover funds expended on taking care of the destitute migrants who were said to be starving, the immigration

¹⁶² Lisa Chilton, "Managing Migrants: Toronto 1820-1880," *Canadian Historical Review* 92, no. 2 (2011): 231-62.

¹⁶³ *Letter from J. C. Taché, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, to William Dixon, Assistant Superintendent of Immigration in London*, April 25, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

¹⁶⁴ *Letter from J. C. Taché, Deputy Minister of Agriculture to William Dixon, Assistant Superintendent of Immigration in London*, April 9, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

¹⁶⁵ *Letter from John Crickmore, President of the St. George's Society of Toronto to the Honourable the Minister of Agriculture, Government Immigration Department*, March 21, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

¹⁶⁶ *Letter from J. C. Taché, Deputy Minister of Agriculture to L. Stafford, Assistant Agent*, April 29, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

agents having given them only loaves of bread. The society reported that the Eastenders had pawned their clothing and bedding in an effort to feed themselves, but that the last of their defenses were spent.¹⁶⁷ As much as the St. George's Society had an obligation to help English emigrants they sought reimbursement from the Government because they felt that responsibility should lay with the officials who allowed such troublesome people to come to Canada in the first place.

William Dixon believed the emigrants he had approved from the EEEF were generally wanted in Canada. Dixon clarified in letters to the Canadian Government that he had expressly told Haly that ironworkers would not find work in Canada. With respect to the 1867 emigrants, Haly sent Dixon an incomplete list of selected migrants. For those who were listed, Dixon gave approval. Yet, Dixon was quick to lay the blame for the choice of emigrants on the EEEF in his correspondence to Taché. He noted that he had recommended to the EEEF that they send out female domestics and people who could do agricultural work but that the EEEF had clearly declined sending instead the very people Dixon had explained would not find work. From examining the passenger lists it is clear the EEEF chose instead to send mostly unemployed operatives and their families, some of whom were doubly problematic being of Irish descent. Dixon made clear that these people would thus have no claim on the St. George's Society.

This Irish/English distinction amongst Eastenders is an interesting one. Around the same time as this correspondence, the *Standard* reported on a group of emigrants headed to Canada from Poplar some of whom were Irish. The newspaper made sure to point out on behalf of the EEEF that most of these people had lived at least seven years in the East End.¹⁶⁸ While the EEEF promised that only good characters were chosen, it also claimed that it only wished to help long-time residents of East London.¹⁶⁹ Part of the concern with residency was tied to the requirements of settlement in the New Poor Law which dictated (according to amendments made in 1865) that only before one year's residence could poor relief applicants be removed to their home parish. As Poor Law board of guardians worked in tandem with the EEEF, the long-time residency distinction became more important. Emigrationists working with Poor Law boards needed to

¹⁶⁷ *Letter from John Crickmore, President of the St. George's Society of Toronto to the Honourable the Minister of Agriculture, Government Immigration Department, March 21, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.*

¹⁶⁸ *The Standard*, April 16, 1868.

¹⁶⁹ The EEEF was likely influenced by the Poplar Board of Guardians on this point as the board held a clear preference for helping long-time residents of the borough over those who had recently arrived, see: *East London Observer*, May 2, 1868.

conform to settlement laws so that some districts would not be flooded with applicants over others. Emigrationists attempted to downplay concerns about Irish ancestry by claiming long-time residency in England and strong attachments to the East End, being aware that the Irish problem was as much one at home as it was in the colonies. This implied that the East End Irish had assimilated enough to pass as English.

In April 1868, the EEEF, adhering to its own agenda of reducing destitution at home, chose to send another batch of unemployed shipbuilders from Poplar to Canada. The frontline immigration agents in Canada prepared for their arrival in the usual manner and tried to find work for the emigrants. The agents were, however, anxious about how they would feed and transport the emigrants upon arrival.¹⁷⁰ In light of the arrival of another batch of now clearly unwanted East End emigrants, Deputy Minister Taché presented his agents with an Order-in-Council that would prevent the paying of landing money and require the emigrants to have proof of their ability to pay for their onward journey.¹⁷¹ I would suggest this measure was introduced for several reasons – to make it more difficult for the EEEF and similar charities to send more of this type of emigrant, and to reduce Canadian costs at the port. The EEEF was so offended by this new policy that they sought the assistance of Sir John Rose, the Canadian Finance Minister, on a visit to London in August of 1868. Maintaining that their emigrants had generally been received with favourable accounts, the EEEF asked Rose to have the Order withdrawn on account of their high quality selection of emigrants. They went on to further state that their arrangements with the Government emigration agent at Quebec were sufficient both in finding work for their emigrants and paying for the necessary expenses. Wishing to return to the old arrangement, the EEEF hoped Rose would make good on his promise to alert his government colleagues to these problems and allow the committee to continue its work.¹⁷²

Taché was so unimpressed with the quality of the East End emigrants that he wrote directly to Haly to stop sending anymore of them alluding to the strong distaste for such people in Canada:

The immigrants of last year have been unable either to reach any destination in Canada without being conveyed at the public expense, nor to earn their support where they had

¹⁷⁰ *Letter from John A. Donaldson, Government Immigration Agent to J. C. Taché, Deputy Minister of Agriculture*, April 26, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

¹⁷¹ *Letter from J. C. Taché, Deputy Minister of Agriculture to L. Stafford, Assistant Agent*, April 28, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868. Also see: *Times*, August 8, 1868.

¹⁷² *Times*, August 8, 1868; and *Manchester Times*, August 1, 1868.

been so transported: they are not at all the class of people to succeed in Canada and their coming to our shores cannot fail to be a cause of hardship for these unfortunates and great discomfort to our own population. We are receiving complaints every day on that account.¹⁷³

If Taché was harsh in his judgment of East End emigrants, the immigration agents on the ground at least tried to do their best for them even though they did not hide their own displeasure about quality. Morality and destitution were both problematic for the Canadian admitting agents. John A. Donaldson lamented about the class of arrivals expected in a few days from East London: “I must say I think it unfortunate this class of people should come at all ... as it will be likely to create a bad impression. However, we will do the best for them and only hope they will be a more moral lot than we had last season.”¹⁷⁴ Amidst the frustrations of the Canadian Government, the EEEF continued to maintain that the people it had chosen to emigrate were not paupers and had been well-selected, that they were “a very credible body of people” whom they hoped would “prove useful to Canada.”¹⁷⁵ As an imperial administrator caught between the needs of the British poor and the Canadian state, William Dixon even published a letter in *Lloyd’s Weekly* on the most desirable kinds of emigrants wanted Canada to encourage emigration amongst certain types of Eastenders.¹⁷⁶ These types did not include urban ironworkers or shipbuilders.

By April 1868, the EEEF had “disposed” of 1,200 people, 440 of whom went to Canada.¹⁷⁷ Much misunderstanding and misinformation on both sides of the Atlantic surrounded this migration channeling Eastenders into the middle of an experiment. The issues raised by the migration of destitute urban workers to Canada demonstrated both a lack of knowledge about Canada amongst British emigrationists and the high level of desperation in London. In the first decade of the twentieth century, East End emigrants caused similar high levels of concern which resulted in changes to Canadian immigration legislation. At this stage, what can be garnered from the 1860s migrations is that Canadian concerns about poor English emigrants had a longer history. The roots of these problems likely extended further back into the nineteenth century

¹⁷³ Letter from J. C. Taché, Deputy Minister of Agriculture to J. Standish Haly, Secretary East End Emigration Fund, April 29, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

¹⁷⁴ Letter from John A. Donaldson, Government Immigration Agent to J. C. Taché, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, April 26, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

¹⁷⁵ Copy of letter sent from J. Standish Haly, Secretary East End Emigration Fund to William Dixon, Assistant Superintendent of Immigration, London, April 9, 1868, in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 31 Vic, no. 33, 1868.

¹⁷⁶ *Lloyd’s Weekly*, April 19, 1868. For a more extensive picture of the desirable emigrant in the 1860s, see: *Canada Emigration Gazette* (March 1866), no.1, British Library Newspaper Library.

¹⁷⁷ *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 4, 1868.

when high numbers of rural English paupers were sent to British colonies and especially to the influx of destitute and diseased Irish peasants during and after the famine in the 1830s and 1840s.¹⁷⁸

Banking on the assurance from the Canadian Finance Minister, the EEEF continued to send distressed operatives from the shipbuilding trade to Canada in the summer of 1868. From an examination of the passenger list for the *S.S. St. Lawrence* that departed London from the Millwall Docks on August 7, 1868, the Eastenders on board were from a slightly more diverse working population than the previous loads of unemployed shipbuilders and ironworkers. This batch of emigrants was made up of selections not just from the EEEF but also from another philanthropist's emigrants, Lady Hobart and other ladies. The *Times* confirmed in a letter from F.J. Hobart, that this group of benevolent ladies had sponsored non-shipbuilding families to emigrate to Canada.¹⁷⁹ These emigrants' occupations are reflected in the passenger list; on board were a costermonger, a bricklayer, a carpenter, a sawyer, an engine driver, a sugar boiler, and a weaver for example. However, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the others on board, those sent out by the EEEF, were still being drawn from the shipbuilding operatives. There were a number of skilled tradesmen on board who may have worked in the shipbuilding industry like the mechanic, the wheelwright, the carpenters, the engine driver, the engine fitter, the ropemaker, and the smiths.¹⁸⁰ This would suggest that the EEEF had not taken heed of the Canadian Government's displeasure with their selections. It is likely the EEEF continued to help the most distressed operatives in Poplar in part because they were working with the Poplar Board of Guardians whose main objective was to deal with distributing relief to those most in need. Given that the emigrants were drawn from Millwall and Cubitt Town, it is highly probable they had lost their jobs in the shipbuilding crisis of 1866-67. Defiant in its objectives, the EEEF simply ignored the problems their emigrants faced upon arrival in Canada blindly believing the matter would be sorted out by Canadian officials and failing to understand the limits of both the

¹⁷⁸ For more on early nineteenth-century assisted emigration see H.J.M. Johnston, *British Emigration Policy, 1815-30: 'Shovelling Out Paupers'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972); Gary Howells, "For I was Tired of England Sir": English Pauper Emigration Strategies, 1834-60," *Social History* 23, no. 2 (1998): 181-94; and Gary Howells, "On Account of Their Disreputable Characters": Parish-Assisted Emigration from Rural England, 1834-1860," *History* 88, no. 292 (2003): 587-605; and Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 50-56. On the Irish in Canada, see: Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 66.

¹⁷⁹ *Times*, August 10, 1868.

¹⁸⁰ Details for this ship are retrievable through the Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1922 database located at: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passenger/index-e.html>.

Canadian labour market and acceptance of poor urban emigrants even when they were English. They held similarly haughty views about the manner in which the Poplar Board of Guardians managed its emigration program.

The General Purposes Committee of the Poplar Board of Guardians took on the responsibility of selecting suitable persons in its Poor Law union to emigrate to Canada. Yet, the committee recommended only a few candidates for emigration each time it met. In May of 1868, for example, the committee was only able to recommend two persons for emigration. Given its limited resources, the committee suggested that a grant be sought from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to manage the board's emigration program. The committee reported that the board had "negatived" its request to spend £500 of its rates on emigration, stifling any efforts the committee could exert on emigration.¹⁸¹ Present at the meeting, Kitto took issue with this decision and moved an amendment to reverse the decision. As much as the Poplar Board of Guardians and the EEEF were working together on emigration it is clear the relationship was at times tense. Kitto believed the committee, as an extension of the board, should be allowed to operate a full-scale emigration program. In his opinion, there was no need to involve upper levels of government. The board had the power to use its emigration powers and, given the distress in the district, Kitto felt the decision to do so would be an easy one. He was supported by some committee members but opposed by others who worried there were too many people in need of help and that upon emigrating some residents, the district would simply fill up with others seeking relief.¹⁸²

The Poplar Board of Guardians frustrated Kitto in other ways in these early years, namely in their methods of selecting prospective emigrants for the committee's consideration. The *Daily News* reported that the first batches of emigrants for Canada in 1867 had been chosen in haste not by the EEEF but by the guardians.¹⁸³ In the press's view then, it was the guardians, not the EEEF, who were to blame for the increasing Canadian restrictions on assisted migrants from East London. Kitto and the EEEF had to go on the defensive in light of these first selections in order to carry on their emigration business, a trend that would continue throughout their future operations. This defense was forever compounded by increasing levels of negative stereotypes and slum narratives of Eastenders. In the 1867-68 case, the most common concern for the EEEF

¹⁸¹ *East London Observer*, May 2, 1868.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Daily News*, August 8, 1868.

was that the selected emigrants would not find work in Canada and thus become dependent on charity and appear to be idle loafers.¹⁸⁴ In Canada's view, the East End emigrant's inability to find work justified the persistence of negative stereotypes about the undesirability of slum dwellers, low-skilled working-class labourers, and assisted emigrants. This discrimination formed part of a wider discourse in Canada on the perceived difficulty European urban migrants experienced integrating into Canadian society that would pervade the rest of the century and continue into the twentieth.¹⁸⁵

By late summer of 1868, almost 7,000 of Poplar's 90,000 residents were on out-relief. This was a considerable number for a summer month and was costing the guardians £650 per week. Of these 7,000 recipients most were able-bodied workers willing but unable to find work.¹⁸⁶ It was at this juncture that a shift can be noted in the level of support for emigration schemes in the East End in the press. Heading into 1869, the press became generally in favour of emigration, covering it widely with enthusiasm. The departure of the sixty-four EEEF emigrants from the Millwall docks on August 7, 1868, amidst the controversy over the Canadian Order-in-Council potentially preventing their landing, was widely reported in the London press. The *Times*, the *East London Observer*, the *Daily News*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Morning Post*, *Lloyd's Weekly*, *Reynold's*, and the *Standard*, all reported sympathetically on the Millwall emigration despite their representing a range of political orientations from radical to conservative.¹⁸⁷ They all worried about the great difficulty the Poor Law unions were about to face heading in the winter months and generally supported the work of the EEEF and the idea of

¹⁸⁴ *East London Observer*, May 2, 1868.

¹⁸⁵ After Confederation, settling the Canadian West became the government's greatest concern and British, American, and Northern European immigrants were preferred. To achieve the most desirable immigration, Canada began to formalize its immigration policy in the first Immigration Act of 1869, see: Knowles, 68-83. For evidence of the development of Canadian racist attitudes towards Eastern Europeans by the early twentieth century see in particular Woodsworth's chapters on "Southeastern Europe," "Austria-Hungary," and "The Balkan States": J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates, or Coming Canadians* (1909; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 91-104, 105-18, and 119-22.

¹⁸⁶ *Times*, August 8, 1868.

¹⁸⁷ *Times*, *East London Observer*, *Daily News*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Morning Post*, *Lloyd's Weekly*, and *The Standard*, all for August 8, 1868; and *Reynold's*, August 16, 1868. *Reynold's* was slightly more cautious about the prospects of the emigrants worrying they would still have to pass "through an intermediate stage of pauperism" to get their independence in Canada. Ultimately though, even *Reynold's* displays overall support for the work of the EEEF. The political orientations of these newspapers was as follows: The *Daily News* was Liberal, the *Times* was Liberal-Conservative under John Delane (editor), *The Standard* was Conservative under Thomas Hamber (editor), *The Morning Post* was Conservative, the *Pall Mall Gazette* was Liberal, *Lloyd's Weekly* was Liberal/Radical, and *Reynold's* was Radical. For more on these orientations, see: The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800-1900 at <http://www.victorianperiodicals.com/series2/PurchaseInformation.asp>.

emigration as an alternative. These shared sentiments are captured in the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s praise for the work of the EEEF:

Yesterday the last batch of emigrants for this season was despatched from Millwall, bound for Canada. The party numbered 138, and the only thing to be regretted is that it could not have been made larger. It is one thing to give money knowing well it can only last a certain time, and that when it is gone more will be asked for, and quite a different thing to give it to assist the distressed and miserable to find permanent employment and comfortable homes. The East London Emigration Fund is deserving of every support, for it affords relief of the very best kind, and those who benefit by it are raised at once and for ever out of the slough of poverty, or they have only their own folly and laziness to blame.¹⁸⁸

The heightened visibility of the Millwall departure can also be attributed to a marked increase in the local interest in emigration. Word was starting to spread about the benefits of emigration for Eastenders despite the setbacks in their Canadian reception. The *Standard* noticed "a strong feeling among the industrial classes at the East-end in favour of emigration."¹⁸⁹ The devastating effects of 1866 to 1868 aside, Eastenders in Poplar in particular may have been impelled to take a stronger interest in emigration with the knowledge that the board of guardians was planning a new workhouse for the able-bodied as well as revamping the existing institutional arm of relief provision.¹⁹⁰ A stronger emphasis on adherence to the deterrent aims of the New Poor Law would mean decreases in out-relief for the unemployed in Poplar, exposing more people to the highly-stigmatized disciplinary indoor relief. This prospect would have surely provoked those looking to avoid the stigma of the workhouse to look to emigration as an alternative. By 1869, the seeds of a full-scale emigration movement in East London were thus deeply planted.

Generating a Full-Scale Emigration Movement in East London, 1869-82

By the close of 1868, the EEEF had sent 1,772 emigrants mostly to Canada, the majority of whom were from Poplar.¹⁹¹ The EEEF continued to work through 1869-70, changing its name for a short time to the British and Colonial Emigration Society (BCES).¹⁹² It was joined in its efforts by a growing number of other philanthropic organizations interested in East End emigration, like the newly-formed East London Family Emigration Fund under the patronage of

¹⁸⁸ *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 8, 1868; 138 included Lady Hobart's emigrants.

¹⁸⁹ *The Standard*, August 8, 1868.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 23.

¹⁹² *East London Observer*, March 29, 1869. They would change it back to the EEEF in 1882.

Lady Hobart and the National Emigration League (NEL) of which the EEEF became a part.¹⁹³ Howard Malchow has done valuable work on the National Emigration League (also known as the National Emigration Aid Society or NEAS) and the mobilization of a movement dedicated to lobbying for a state-aided emigration program in the 1860s.¹⁹⁴ I will not repeat that history here. Rather, to conclude this chapter, I will focus on how the emigration movement was solidified in East London between 1869 and 1882.

On May 29, 1869, the *East London Observer* ran its first article with the words ‘emigration movement’ in the title. A change can be noted in the middle of 1869 in East London from the use of emigration to treat an acute problem to a more sustained social, political, and economic movement that showed signs of lasting beyond the problems of distress in 1866-67. However, it would take until the early 1880s for assisted emigration to firmly cement itself as a viable poverty reduction scheme in East London; the 1870s were exceptionally quiet the reasons for which will be explained below. From 1869, this new emigration movement was complete with energetic agitators for state-aided emigration as well as those in favour of continued charitable and Poor Law-related assisted emigration. Malchow includes in this group of agitators philanthropists, trade unionists, and promoters of colonization schemes.¹⁹⁵ These years also witnessed the resurgence of grassroots activity amongst working-class men and women on the subject of East End emigration. Emigration to Canada in particular became more visible in London with the installation of William Dixon in 1868 as Assistant Superintendent of Immigration, and an increase in Canada’s advertising efforts overseas.

A close reading of the local newspapers exposes an emigration craze in East London in 1869-70 as reflected in lengthy weekly columns like “Emigration Fields of the World,” and frequent reports on emigration from East London to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and even Venezuela and Guyana.¹⁹⁶ Numerous emigration events, talks, and meetings sprung up throughout the East End in 1869 in Mile End, Bow, Spitalfields, and Poplar that did

¹⁹³ Malchow, “Trade Unions and Emigration,” 95; and *East London Observer*, May 29, 1869.

¹⁹⁴ Malchow pegged the origins of this movement on the “heels of economic difficulties of the 1860s and the Second Reform Act.” He also suggests the NEL was formed amidst “a growing imperialist sentiment.” The state-aid lobby was quite radical and argued in favour of government-run assisted emigration as a relief mechanism for poverty, unemployment, and distress, see: Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 13-53.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹⁶ *East London Observer*, September 11, 1869, for example. These articles support Johnson’s and Malchow’s claims that 1869 was a watershed year for assisted emigration but I would still contend that 1869 represents a maturation of existing interest in emigration in East London rather than a specific, definable, or pivotal moment of change that was dependent on some external factor.

not discuss the state-aid question.¹⁹⁷ Instead, these events served other purposes: for prospective emigrants they provided information, hope, and testimonials from those already resettled, and for emigrationists they provided occasions to boast about successful transplantations, solicit subscriptions, and seek new candidates for emigration. While the state-aid agitation was certainly the most prominent emigration question of the day in 1869-70, other players in East London challenged the EEEF's monopoly over emigration.

Throughout 1869, the resurgence in workmen's grassroots involvement can be noted in large part because the Poor Law boards of guardians had been notably inefficient on emigration. There were rumors of delegations of working men descending on Downing Street to press their cause for emigration to show the government their willingness to relocate to any part of the British Empire that would take them.¹⁹⁸ Working men interested in emigration now had better access to information; they could collect it from the offices of the EEEF and they could attend various lectures at their local halls and meeting places.¹⁹⁹ One supporter of greater grassroots involvement was W. Frank Lynn who felt that if working men could only take "matters into their own hands," the emigration movement in East London would become stronger and more regular.²⁰⁰ Lynn was working for the Canadian Land and Emigration Company in London in the late 1860s, having become interested in emigration after traveling to North America in 1861. He even accompanied families from England to Canada in 1868 and reported frequently on emigration conditions in that part of the empire.²⁰¹ Lynn envisioned a workmen's emigration society that would be run like a friendly society or benefit club so that reliance on the haphazardness of charity or philanthropic inclination was reduced. He consequently invited "all working men" to a meeting in Kennington in June of 1869 to form a working men's emigration club. Lynn appears to have successfully helped working men form the Working Men's National Emigration Association in Clerkenwell sometime between July 1868 and March 1870.²⁰² In March of 1870, that association sent its first batch of sixty emigrants to Canada. The *Times*

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., November 20, 1869, reports on two such talks. Also see: Ibid., August 7, 1869, June 5, 1869, and July 31, 1869.

¹⁹⁸ *Reynold's*, January 3, 1869.

¹⁹⁹ *Lloyd's Weekly*, February 7, 1869.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., June 6, 1869.

²⁰¹ Virginia G. Berry, "Washington Frank Lynn," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, accessed August 1, 2012, <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?BioId=40985>.

²⁰² *Times*, March 29, 1870. The dates are unclear because there is no record of this association except for the newspaper reports which allude to an eighteen-month old society in March 1870. This does not, however, correspond to Lynn's post in June of 1869 calling for a working men's emigration association.

mentioned that other such associations had formed between 1868 and 1870, one of which was a collection of societies that formed an association in July 1868. This was probably the Workmen's Emigration League (WEL), sometimes known as the Workmen's Emigration Society, formed sometime after February 1868 by George Potter, prominent London trade unionist and founder of *The Bee-Hive* journal.²⁰³

Pinpointing the origin of a renewed workmen's emigration society in East London is somewhat tricky as many of these organizations used essentially the same name (i.e. some variation of Working Men's Emigration Association) but had different gentlemen patrons and subscribers. There was another meeting in North Bow, for example, of "intelligent workmen" and members of the Dockyard Labourers Society in July of 1869 but it remains unclear to which group they belonged.²⁰⁴ Malchow gave prominence to the WEL which was composed of working men and led by trade unionists. Later in 1869, the WEL would agitate unsuccessfully for amalgamation with the EEEF/BCES and the NEAS.²⁰⁵ Regardless of their confusing origins, what is most significant about this renewed interest in grassroots-managed emigration in 1869 is that working men expressed discontentment with the philanthropic monopoly of the EEEF/BCES and the inefficiency of the Poor Law boards of guardians in promoting emigration in East London. They must have also keenly felt the disapproval of both government and emigration philanthropists concerning their trade union ties and might have had trouble raising subscriptions. Indeed, the EEEF/BCES was not interested in amalgamating with the WEL for precisely this reason.²⁰⁶

Public acceptance was foundational to the success of any emigration society or charity that relied on public subscriptions either in full or in part. The EEEF/BCES felt this pressure intensely as it ran out of funds each emigration season. In order to secure funding for the next year, the EEEF/BCES spent a great deal of time promoting both its own expertise and

²⁰³ Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 20. Malchow was unsure of the origin date of the WEL but narrows it to sometime after February 22, 1868 when Potter led a deputation to press Gladstone on trade union matters. In December of 1869, the group, consisting of Potter and Edward Beales, leader of the Reform League (an important working-class suffrage league), was still referred to as the Workmen's Emigration Society indicating that any reference to either the society or the league denoted one in the same. See also: *Daily News*, December 30, 1869; and *Morning Post*, November 30, 1869. It is worth noting the link between the work Potter and Beales were doing on extending the franchise leading up to the 1867 Reform Act and their agitation around emigration; the legacy of working-class organization and agitation around the vote extended to the interest in late-1860s grassroots assisted emigration clubs.

²⁰⁴ *East London Observer*, July 31, 1869.

²⁰⁵ *Daily News*, December 30, 1869; and see Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 29.

²⁰⁶ *Daily News*, December 30, 1869.

commitment to emigration in East London in 1869. The need for this publicity was amplified in part because of new competition and because of the fallout from the problems East End emigrants had caused in 1867. Riding on the relative success of the Millwall emigrants of August 1868, the EEEF/BCES organized a large conference in February of 1869 to solidify its position as the organization best suited to manage an East End emigration program.²⁰⁷ Facing serious competition from Hobart's East London Family Emigration Fund, which in April 1869 had already secured 608 emigrants from Whitechapel, Bethnal Green, Shadwell, and Poplar, the EEEF/BCES hosted a special meeting on emigration featuring several colonial emigration commissioners, Poor Law commissioners, Sir George Grey, late Governor of New Zealand, and the Lord Mayor of London.²⁰⁸ Having recently returned from a trip to Canada, Sir E.H. Currie, philanthropist and wealthy East End distiller, reported at the meeting on his visits to East End emigrants in Canada. While the EEEF/BCES never overtly denounced the work of other emigration agencies, the work it did in bolstering its own image, knowledge, and experience is clearly evident. Having sent 4,056 emigrants out of East London by the close of 1869, the charity was justified in such self-publicizing. Kitto proudly noted the EEEF had been the first to take up the question of emigration in 1866-67, and in 1869 the most experienced outfit in the field.²⁰⁹ He was instrumental in fostering an emigration movement in the district, creating the momentum to send a significant number of Eastenders abroad, and pressing the Poplar Board of Guardians to engage in emigration.

Other emigration organizations often tried to work with the powerhouse EEEF/BCES in 1869-70.²¹⁰ The EEEF/BCES also had the support of both the Tories and the Liberals.²¹¹ When the EEEF/BCES refused to amalgamate with the WEL and the NEAS in late 1869 it did so in part because it was protective of its own interests as Malchow suggests.²¹² Additionally though, I would contend that it was protective because it had worked hard to secure a fairly non-partisan political position, had worked relatively well with the Poplar Board of Guardians, and was reluctant to align itself with radical trade unionists. Interestingly, the EEEF/BCES was not opposed to working with organizations it deemed compatible with its own program. For

²⁰⁷ *East London Observer*, February 13, 1869; *Daily News*, February 11, 1869; and *Reynolds*, February 14, 1869.

²⁰⁸ *East London Observer*, April 17, 1869 and July 24, 1869.

²⁰⁹ *Daily News*, December 30, 1869.

²¹⁰ *East London Observer*, January 15, 1870; the Islington Workman's Emigration Association for example.

²¹¹ *Daily News*, December 30, 1869.

²¹² Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 29.

example, it worked very closely with the East End Emigration Club (EEEC), a self-help benefit society formed in December 1869 by some members of the EEEF/BCES including Kitto and E.H. Currie as well as Frederick Young who was involved with the NEAS.²¹³ These organizations, however, were not one and the same. The EEEC made very clear that it worked with, and not for, the EEEF/BCES and that its primary function was to help working men save for their own emigration. The EEEC believed that working men should have access to any funds raised either from public or private coffers as well as have control over the selection of emigrants.²¹⁴ This approach was significantly different than the EEEF/BCES's more paternal selection methods. It is not known what Kitto made of this part of the EEEC's platform but he must have accepted it enough as the two bodies continued to cooperate into 1870.

The culmination of co-operative emigration efforts amongst the EEEF/BCES, the EEEC representing working men, East End boards of guardians, wealthy philanthropists, and even trade union groups, can be illustrated in the shipment of the largest number of emigrants from the East End to Canada on April 27, 1870 on the Nourse line sailing ship the *Ganges*.²¹⁵ Together, these organizations sent 761 Eastenders to Canada which, combined with the Hobart selections for that week alone, totaled over 1,000 leaving the East End. By mid-summer 1870, the EEEF/BCES had sent over 5,000 Eastenders to British colonies since their first batch in 1867. As emigration organizations matured and co-operated they tended to select more suitable emigrants; suitable, that is, in terms of the kinds of people Canada would happily accept – sober, hard-working, respectable, and motivated working men and their families who might be interested in agriculture. Part of the way in which this better selection method was achieved was to require intending emigrants to pay for part of their journey. Self-help became the dominant theme in the way emigration organizations ultimately chose their candidates for departure and would continue through the rest of the nineteenth century; of course, this was not a fool-proof system and some undesirable individuals made it through the selection process only to be denied entry to Canada upon arrival. The emigrants on board the *Ganges* were instructed not to use profane language

²¹³ *East London Observer*, December 18, 1869; *Illustrated London News*, May 7, 1870; *East London Observer*, January 22, 1870; and *Penny Illustrated Paper*, December 4, 1869. Frederick Young (later Sir) was an imperial advocate, writer, and active member of the Royal Colonial Institute. He often gave papers through the institute and advocated state-aided emigration, see: Frederick Young, "Emigration to the Colonies," in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, volume 17 (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1886): 368-89.

²¹⁴ *East London Observer*, January 8, 1870.

²¹⁵ This departure was widely reported on. For the best accounts, see: *Illustrated London News*, May 7, 1870; and *East London Observer*, April 30, 1870.

and were congratulated for their neat appearance. Self-help also reduced the stigma of the ‘pauperized emigrant,’ ever the scorn of both sending and receiving nations, absolving the emigration charity of accusations of careless selection. Yet, this requirement was not always upheld; many Eastenders on poor relief were still selected to depart. For example, forty-three persons on board the *Ganges* on April 27, 1870 were on full parochial relief and had not been able to contribute to their journey.²¹⁶ Emigrationists believed that even the poorest of the poor should contribute to their journeys. When a man by the last name of Northcote stood up at an EEEC meeting and asked if there could be any emigration funding provided to those who were “moneyless,” E.H. Currie responded that “it was only the saving and industrious man who was wanted to emigrate – the drinker and the idle could remain in England.”²¹⁷ This implied that those who were undesirable were also incapable of saving. From the outset then, it was not the most desperate Eastenders who were selected for emigration but those who were still independent enough to provide at least part for their own journey. In addition to private subscriptions, these contributions would be required to enable emigration in 1870 as the Poor Law boards of guardians did not always authorize the full £10 from the rates be spent on emigration as the law allowed. The Poplar Board of Guardians, for example, was allowed to spend £2 per adult on an emigration scheme which did not cover the entire cost of the journey and outfitting.²¹⁸ The guardians did, however, at least take an active interest in emigration in the 1867-70 period – more so than has previously been acknowledged.

Conclusion

By 1871-72, the flurry of emigration attention and activity in East London had virtually ceased. Indeed, a scan of articles on emigration in the *Times* between 1870 and 1881 revealed that of the 343 articles on the subject, only about ninety (of which almost all are concentrated in 1870), discuss emigration and East London. This downward trend would continue until the emigration movement in East London was revived in 1882. A number of factors point to why emigration declined in the 1870s. The British ‘Great Depression’ of the 1870s, like any economic crisis, affected the city’s parts in different ways. East London’s overall population decreased between 1871 and 1881 due to emigration, slum clearances, and the introduction of the

²¹⁶ *East London Observer*, April 30, 1870.

²¹⁷ *Reynold’s*, January 9, 1870; and *Times*, January, 4, 1870.

²¹⁸ *East London Observer*, March 26, 1870.

Cross Act of 1870 and Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act of 1875 which shifted the poor to new housing projects. These acts changed the face of poor housing demolishing unsafe dwellings, building new social housing, and dislocating communities.²¹⁹ Pressures on some Poor Law unions decreased and on others increased as a result. Moreover, the overall standard of living for all Britons was said to have generally increased from 1868 to 1874.²²⁰ Changes in the Poor Law after the passing of the Metropolitan Poor Act in 1867 significantly impacted these levels for East Londoners in particular. The Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, set up to channel a portion of the rates from all London boroughs into a common fund to alleviate distress in the most needed areas, injected new relief money into the East End. Changes to medical care for the poor under the new Act also helped remedy, at least in part, what Francis Sheppard calls the "worst severities of the poor law."²²¹ These changes did not, of course, eliminate poverty in East London but alleviated it somewhat in the early 1870s. Meanwhile, changes in Canadian law at this time may also have reduced emigration from East London. Most notably, the Quarantine Act of 1872 was applied at Canadian ports of entry to reduce the number of incoming emigrants exhibiting medical deficiencies. As a consequence of these developments, emigration from East London slowed significantly. However, growing unemployment from about 1878, combined with increased overcrowding and chronic poverty in the East End, resulted in the resurfacing of emigration as a possible solution to that community's endemic problems.²²² The discourse and practice of assisted emigration that trade unionists, clergy, Poor Law boards, philanthropists, and emigrants themselves had developed since the late 1850s during times of acute economic crises would carry over to the early 1880s where they would undergo yet another set of transformations.

²¹⁹ Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 244.

²²⁰ Matthew, "The Liberal Age," 481.

²²¹ Francis Sheppard, *London, 1808-1870: The Infernal Wen* (London: Sacker & Warburg, 1971), 382. Also see Green, *Pauper Capital*, 239.

²²² Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 244; and Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 63.

CHAPTER TWO

Quelling ‘The Bitter Cry’: The Emigration Program in Practice, 1882-1905

“Canada is near at hand, and seems as willing and able as it was twelve years ago to welcome any fit persons whom we may be able to send.”
- Rev. J.F. Kitto, *East End Emigration Fund*.¹

Introduction

By the early 1880s, the East End of London had become a site of intense social inquiry and critique in British reform circles. In the decades following the 1851 publication of Henry Mayhew’s exposé of East End poverty *London Labour and the London Poor*, slum writers like Andrew Mearns, W.T. Stead, and George Sims demonized and lamented over the East End as London’s ugly and shameful sewer of human filth and vice.² This pervasive slum narrative suggested that social and moral problems in East London corresponded to physical urban decay and squalor. These notions led to the numerous government commissions and reports on the condition of the working classes that characterized the period. This far-reaching rhetoric of East End social, moral, and economic desperation also drove emigration philanthropists into a frenzied almost desperate activism through the 1880s and 1890s, apexing in the doctrine and efforts of the Salvation Army, the East End Emigration Fund (EEEF), the Self-Help Emigration Society (SHES), and dozens of other smaller emigration charities in the early 1890s in London.³ This explosion in emigration programming in the 1880s and 1890s, demonstrates the malleability of the program to meet the changing needs and motivations of Eastenders, emigration philanthropists, local Poor Law boards, national government, and colonial partners abroad within a wider context of empire expansion, capitalism, and social reform. By the turn of the century, emigration from East London was frequently used to deal with the modern problem of

¹ *East London Observer*, July 1, 1882.

² Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor: The Condition of Earnings of Those that Will Work, Cannot Work, and Will Not Work*, volumes 1, 2, and 3 (London: C. Griffin, 1866); Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883; repr., Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1970); W.T. Stead, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* (1885; repr., Lambertville, NJ: The True Bill Press, 2007); and George Sims, *How the Poor Live and Horrible London* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889) to name a few.

³ W.A. Carrothers notes there were over sixty such organization operating in 1886 although he does not specify where in Britain, see: W.A. Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles: With Special Reference to the Development of the Overseas Dominions* (1929; repr., London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), 228.

unemployment and increasingly attempted to improve the physical and moral condition of the evermore visibly underprivileged working class by transplantation to imperial colonies. In these ways, assisted emigration became a catch-all adjustable valve to periodically cleanse Britain of the surplus labour and perceived overpopulation in its cities.⁴ But emigration was more than simply a practical albeit often misguided and unsuccessful solution to unemployment, reform, and social engineering. Emigration of the poor also operated on ideological levels that functioned to assuage middle- and upper-class guilt through the perpetuation of an imperial discourse of salvation, hope, and renewal; philanthropists thrived on emigration programs that were branded as altruistic. This discourse simultaneously played on the sympathies of wealthy reformers and on the daily hardships of the poor, propelling their combined but distinct interests in assisted emigration towards the white settler communities of the British Empire and, in particular, towards Canada.

The explosion of emigration philanthropy in East London in this period makes this part of its history more complex and difficult to deal with in a single chapter. The sources for this period are plentiful and include the annual reports of emigration societies, newspaper articles, Poor Law records, government reports and laws, and emigration pamphlets, tracts, and advice books. What follows here is a selective study of the period that aims to answer broad questions about the revival of an emigration movement in East London after the relatively quiet decade of the 1870s. Where almost all parts of the movement were considered in the previous chapter, this chapter will focus on select organizations, movements, and oppositions by choosing the moments that are most representative of the overall schematic and least written about by historians. For example, there will be a lengthy discussion on the less-studied SHES and only brief mentions of the widely-studied Salvation Army.⁵ These choices are intended to provide a contribution where

⁴ John Stuart Mill made popular the idea of emigration as a “safety valve” in times of overpopulation and I borrow it here as have other historians of emigration in this period. For example, see: Charlotte Erickson, “The Encouragement of Emigration by British Trade Unions, 1850-1900,” *Population Studies* 3, no. 3 (1949), 249; and Eric Richards, *Britannia’s Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland Since 1600* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 159. For the views of emigration charities on the evils of overpopulation see in particular the comments of the executive of the SHES in the *Times*, March 11, 1889. These were commonly held views, however, and are abundant in charities’ annual reports and in newspaper editorials and letters.

⁵ The Salvation Army emigration scheme is well-studied particularly in Canadian immigration historiography. For example, in *Forging Our Legacy*, the official government-published history of the Department of Immigration, the Salvation Army is given prominence in the history of assisted emigration from London from the 1880s to 1914, see: Valerie Knowles, *Forging Our Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900–1977* (Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2000), chapter two “British Immigration.” Also see Myra Rutherford, “Scrutinizing the “Submerged Tenth”: Salvation Army Immigrants and their Reception in Canada,” in *Canada and the British*

it most needed rather than repetition and revision of existing studies. It should not, however, signal a suggestion that the Salvation Army was somehow less important to this narrative than the other societies. Rather, I would suggest that there is less historiographical need to deal with societies about which historians have already written extensively. The chapter will also explore opposition towards assisted emigration of the poor in both Britain and Canada in the 1880s and 1890s.

East London Life in the 1880s and the Promise of Imperialism

There was no singular acute crisis in 1881-82 that led to the re-formation of the EEEF and a proliferation of new emigration societies in East London thereafter. Rather, chronic East End poverty, believed to be locally-produced and reproduced, widespread, and difficult to remedy, was the primary justification for removing the poor to the colonies on a larger scale between 1882 and 1905 the year in which new unemployment legislation formalized assisted emigration in Britain. Emigration from East London in this period did not occur in a vacuum; it was intimately and dependently connected to metropolitan, national, imperial, and transnational migration chains, networks, and interconnected economies. In seeking to explain this shift, I will begin by employing Gareth Stedman Jones' "four elements" of the social and political anxiety that surrounded poverty in the early 1880s. Stedman Jones suggests that the middle-class crisis over the condition of the working classes "deepened" and became "more comprehensive" in this decade due to the convergence of the following four social, political, and economic elements:

a severe cyclical depression as the culmination of six or seven years of indifferent trade; the structural decline of certain of the older central industries; the chronic shortage of working-class housing in the inner industrial perimeter; and the emergence of socialism and various forms of 'collectivism' as a challenge to traditional liberal ideology.⁶

World: Culture, Migration, and Identity, eds. Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006): 174-97; Myra Rutherdale, "Canada Is No Dumping Ground": Public Discourse and Salvation Army Immigrant Women and Children, 1900-1930," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 40, no. 79 (May 2007): 115-42; and Desmond Glynn, "Exporting Outcast London: Assisted Emigration to Canada, 1886-1914," *Histoire sociale: Social History* 15, no. 29 (1982): 209-38. Also Graham Baker has recently completed a Ph.D. dissertation on the Salvation Army, emigration, and eugenics at Oxford University: Graham Baker, "Eugenics and Christian Mission. Charitable Welfare in Transition: London and New York, 1865-1940," (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2011).

⁶ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between the Classes in Victorian Society* (1971; repr., London: Penguin Books, 1984), 281.

Stedman Jones further suggests the 1880s marked the “rediscovery of poverty and a decline of individualism.”⁷ In *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society*, he suggests that this attention did not originate from middle-class guilt, but rather from an increasing fear of the poor. This fear led to the spread of settlement houses in East London and the “slumming” practices that aimed to study them. In other words, the poor had become what Stedman Jones called “an ominous threat to civilization.”⁸ That fear was transmitted and perpetuated through the slum narrative accounts of East London that painted it a dangerous place for the more refined visitor. Take Margaret Harkness, for example, dubbed a “chronicler of the dispossessed,” who, in 1889, wrote *In Darkest London: Captain Lobo, Salvation Army* to express her fascination with the newly formed organization. In the following passage she captures not just the naïveté of the Salvation Army visitors but also perpetuates the slum narrative of Eastenders as scary, wild, rough, uncivilized, exotic, and un-individuated:

[Captain Lobo] turned into the familiar Whitechapel Road, and walked on past the flaming gaslights of the costermongers, the public houses and the street hawkers. An old woman offered him pig’s feet; a newspaper man shouted the last ghastly details of a murder, tipsy men and women rolled past him singing East End songs set to Salvation music. He caught sight of the slum lassies in a public house, and listened at the door while one of them argued with an infidel ... Turning away he stumbled over two half naked children who were waiting for their drunken parents. A woman with a sickly infant on her breast asked him for money to find a night’s lodging. A small boy tried to trip him up, and ran to join some gutter children.⁹

Captured above is a sense that the East End lacked a civilizing influence. The civilizing influences of the colonies were increasingly believed to offer a viable remedy to the crisis of poverty at home.

In the 1880s, the poverty the poor endured was still understood to have been characterized by drink, idleness, secularism, and dirtiness but these factors were now believed not necessarily to have been self-inflicted by individual choice but rather symptomatic of deeper underlying problems in the spatial, social, and political inadequacies of poor urban districts. This

⁷ Ibid., 285.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ For more on this book see the introduction to the reprinted version of the book in the Victorian Series by Black Apollo Press: Margaret Harkness, *In Darkest London*, Victorian Series, ed., R.A. Biderman (1889; repr., London: Black Apollo Press, 2009), 7, accessed September 20, 2013, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=4ln7k5V9L6oC&> . This particular version of the passage is quoted from William Fishman, *East End 1888: A Year in a London Borough Among the Labouring Poor* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 13-14. Fishman references a version of the book Harkness published under the pseudonym John Law.

was a change from the 1850s and 1860s when, as historian Francis Sheppard explains, “there was still little realization of the full magnitude of the social problems engendered by the nineteenth-century urban explosion; and private charity ... could therefore still be regarded as the principal means for their remedy.”¹⁰ By the 1880s, the city itself had come to be regarded as the root of social ill – filth, poor housing, overcrowding, noise, and disease caused the poor to slip into pauperized states which formerly were seen to have been self-induced. As Stedman Jones puts it, “Poverty was no longer pauperism in disguise; the savage and brutalized condition of the casual poor was the result of long exposure to the degenerating conditions of city life.”¹¹ That did not mean, however, that the distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor disappeared. On the contrary, that line was consistently applied in decisions surrounding poor relief and emigrant selection throughout the period. Together, these perspectives offer the best explanation for why emigration philanthropists, workers, and local government turned once again to emigration to relieve what they now perceived to be permanent deprivation in East London.¹² But more specifically, a set of local circumstances had a major impact on the resurgence and expansion of emigration as a solution to poverty in the 1880s East End.

Living in East London in the 1880s was challenging. Good housing was difficult to secure, work was often casual and unpredictable, violence and crime were believed to be increasing, and philanthropists descended on the district to observe and reform the poor in droves. Charles Booth conducted the first part of his sociological survey of the East End in 1886 examining the extent and causes of poverty. In 1889, Booth concluded that 30.7 percent of London’s population lived in poverty, in constant want of employment, food, and lodgings; this figure was significantly higher in certain sections of the East End where unemployment in the tailoring trades was high like Bethnal Green at 47 percent and Shoreditch at 47.7 percent.¹³ Booth’s findings bolstered a slum narrative that suggested the area had veered terribly off the course of liberal progress. East End historian and resident William Fishman dubs the East End in 1888 as an “empire of hunger,” contrasting the area’s poverty to the wealth of the wider British

¹⁰ Francis Sheppard, *London, 1808-1870: The Infernal Wen* (London: Sacker & Warburg, 1971), 384.

¹¹ Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, 286.

¹² Howard Malchow argued a similar point in *Population Pressures: Howard L. Malchow, Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Palo Alto, California: The Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship Inc., 1979), 85-86.

¹³ Jerry White, *London in the 19th Century* (London: Vintage, 2007), 110.

Empire to which it belonged.¹⁴ Riots in 1886, horrific murders in 1888, and strikes in 1889 did little help the image of the East End in the 1880s.¹⁵ But East London was also a radical place, a diverse place, and a vibrant place to live in the 1880s; casual labourers became politicized in the Great Dock Strike of 1889, immigrants from all corners of the globe could be seen in the district, socialists held talks and meetings for interested workmen, and entertainment like the music hall and working-class theater provided an escape from the monotonies of daily life. There was, however, little protection in times of unemployment, and unemployment, sometimes brief and sometimes prolonged, was extremely common. In times of unemployment, the choices for relief were the workhouse, street begging, or charity. Casual labour became the chief employment question in East London in the 1880s.

Faced with the uncertainty of a casual labour market in East London, it is not surprising that some Eastenders and, in particular the emigrationists who would facilitate their journeys, turned to assisted emigration to the colonies just as they had in the employment crises of the late 1860s. As much as Eastenders may have been interested in emigration due to distress at home, their actual ability to emigrate rested on the massive machinery of the British Empire at home and abroad. In 1886, the Colonial Office opened the Emigrants' Information Office in London to provide prospective emigrants with information about life in Britain's colonies, how to emigrate, and who to contact to make arrangements. Four years earlier, emigration charities in East London had once again taken up the work of assisted emigration. So, now there were more ample opportunities for working class prospective emigrants to seek out imperial assisted emigration. In other words, emigration to British colonies, assisted or otherwise, was more commonplace in the early 1880s than it had been in the 1850s and 1860s.¹⁶

¹⁴ Fishman, 13. Fishman was not the first to use the term "empire of hunger." Its origins are likely attributable to John Henry Mackay who, after visiting the East End in 1887, described the area as "the hell of poverty" in a chapter entitled "The Empire of Hunger" in his book *The Anarchists*, see: John Henry Mackay, *The Anarchists: A Picture of Civilization at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (Boston, Mass.: Tucker, 1891), accessed January 27, 2014, <https://archive.org/details/anarchistspictur00mackiala>.

¹⁵ On the 1886 riots of unemployed Eastenders in Trafalgar Square, see: Marc Brodie, "Artisans and Dossers: The 1886 West End Riots and the East End Casual Poor," *London Journal* 24, no. 2 (1999): 34-50. For a good basic academic study of the Jack the Ripper murders, see: Peter Ackroyd, *Jack the Ripper and the East End* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2008). For two feminist studies on the Ripper murders, see: Judith Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence," *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 3 (1982): 543-75; and Elyssa Warkentin, "Jack the Ripper Strikes Again," *Feminist Media Studies* 10, no. 10 (2010): 35-49. On the Great Dock Strike of 1889, see: Terry McCarthy, *The Great Dock Strike, 1889* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988).

¹⁶ Emigration statistics from Britain before 1870 are patchy and unreliable. Between 1870 and 1913, 6,200,072 mainly British subjects left British ports to all territories. Thirty-two percent of British passengers who left Britain

1882: The (Re)-Establishment of Emigration Philanthropy in East London

In *Population Pressures: Emigration and Government in Late Nineteenth Britain*, Howard Malchow focuses on the reinvigoration of the state-aided emigration movement in 1882-83 with particular emphasis on the efforts of J.H. Boyd and the Central Emigration Society.¹⁷ While the state-aid issue was certainly an important one for East London and saw many of its philanthropists engage with that lobby through 1883, I will focus here on other more immediate concerns in 1882 that relate directly to non-state-aided programming. While Malchow's *Population Pressures* remains the essential study on state-aided emigration in the late nineteenth century, this focus gave little attention to the parallel efforts of private emigrationists and to working-class agitation amongst other emigration players in the same period. This section will position those efforts as fundamental to the history of emigration in East London and accord them the same primacy as Malchow gives the state-aid movement.

In much the same way they had done in 1857, a group of working men from the East End sought the assistance of wealthier members of society to help facilitate their emigration to Canada in the spring of 1882. These men began their agitation with a visit to the Lord Mayor of London in April of that year expressing to him their "real desire ... to try their fortunes in Canada."¹⁸ That month the men met a number of times in East London, stirring up local interest in emigration. At their meetings they passed resolutions that expressed their desire to seek help specifically from the Lord Mayor who, in their view, had "from time immemorial" been "the

between 1881 and 1890 went to British holdings compared to twenty-five percent between 1861 and 1870. Between 1891 and 1900, twenty-eight percent did the same and between 1901 and 1913 this number increased dramatically to sixty-four percent, see: Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2-3. For Canada specifically, immigration rose overall by the turn of the century from a low in 1896 of 16,835 new immigrants (from all parts of the world) to 138,660 in 1903 for example, see: Barbara J. Messamore, ed., *Canadian Migration Patterns from Britain and North America* (Ottawa: Ottawa University Press, 2002), 3. Furthermore, Canada had less demand for immigrants in the 1850s and 1860s before Confederation due to economic depression, see: Carrothers, 211. Carrothers also notes there was an increase in emigration from 1879 after a period of decline that saw a change from 31,305 emigrants leaving Britain in 1877 to 246,341 leaving in 1883. These higher levels mostly (except for 1884-85) continued until 1894 when North American depressions restricted immigration and there was again a decrease, Carrothers, 227-8. Overall, however, emigration from Britain can be said to have generally increased from the early 1880s to the 1913 in comparison to the 1850s and 1860s and certainly the 1870s when emigration was relatively low.

¹⁷ Malchow, *Population Pressures*, 86. John Boyd was an emigrationist also interested in children's emigration, see: Roy Parker, *Uprooted: The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867-1917* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2008), 105-6.

¹⁸ *Times*, April 6, 1882.

source looked to for assistance in exceptional cases of need.”¹⁹ Their movement focused on seeking support, financing, and information from the Lord Mayor who they believed might be able to set up a new Mansion House committee of philanthropists to send a few hundred of them and their families to Canada that season.²⁰ This Lord Mayor, Sir John Ellis Whittaker, was well-connected to philanthropic circles, was mandated to serve the best interests of all of London’s citizens, and had long organized charitable schemes; he was thus a logical place to start. Moreover, Whittaker had a particular interest in assisted emigration. He would be one of the principal trustees and philanthropists involved in the East London Artizans Colony in 1884 which is the subject of chapter five. While the working men who spearheaded a renewed emigration movement in East London were most interested in emigrating and pressed Whittaker to help them to this end, they were also willing to stay home and receive whatever relief his lordship deemed suitable. That said the men hoped Whittaker would agree to assist with emigration as this was without doubt their most preferred outcome:

We pray that the Lord Mayor may see his way clear to at once send a considerable number of single and married men to Canada or elsewhere, and that he may also be able to render some immediate assistance to those who, we trust, may be only temporarily left behind, they have struggled so long with abject poverty without seeking relief from the charitable, and would not do so now if any other course could be found upright and honourable to meet their extreme cases.²¹

Whittaker having heard a deputation of these working men report their “sad condition” to him, organized meetings with many of the same philanthropists and clergymen who had been involved in emigration in East London in the late 1860s. These people included Angela Burdett-Coutts, Edward H. Currie, the Reverend J.F. Kitto, J. Standish Haly, Cardinal Manning, and the new High Commissioner for Canada, Sir Alexander Galt.²² Almost at once, the movement was up and running again.

The arguments in favour of emigration in 1882 were still very much rooted in fears of overpopulation in England and the belief that Canada could act as a permanent repository for that surplus. In his opening comments to emigration philanthropists at the first Mansion House meeting in April 1882, Whittaker suggested it was government’s responsibility to find an outlet

¹⁹ *East London Observer*, April 22, 1882.

²⁰ *Ibid.*; and *Times*, April 14, 1882.

²¹ *East London Observer*, April 22, 1882.

²² *Times*, April 6, 1882 and April 14, 1882.

for its surplus population.²³ Ideally, for England's imperialists, the nation possessed and managed a vast empire within which it was believed poor or distressed British subjects could fairly easily be moved around during times of crisis either temporarily or permanently. The Lord Mayor equally believed that such migrations would benefit both home and colony as the emigrant's earnings would flow back and forth between their old and new homes as both producers and consumers of imperial goods and wealth.

If the uncertainty of success in the colonies was a fairly major concern in the 1860s, the situation in 1882 was rather more promising. The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) needed labour to build 600 miles of rail line out of Winnipeg; this was exactly the kind of manual unskilled labour Eastenders could provide. Sir Alexander Galt presented a proposition to the Mansion House philanthropic delegation that guaranteed work along the CPR line for the entire emigrant family; the men could work on the railway construction, while women could work in the supporting local economies doing laundry or other domestic work.²⁴ Part of the attractiveness of this plan lay in the apparent readiness of the Canadian government to receive emigrants of this type; it would even go so far as to put up £1 per head in support of the scheme which had been unheard of in the 1860s. Galt also intimated that ridding London of its surplus was a worthy enterprise in itself, one that would allow Eastenders to become "influential members of society" in Canada.²⁵

The CPR arrangement points to the belief in shared imperial and cultural connections between Britain and Canada within the context of a 'British World'; Eastenders could become good citizens of a larger common society connected through empire, language, religion, ethnicity, and history. Not only could they do so within their own class but the opportunity for improvement and movement above that class was also made possible by way of their emigration. Promoters of emigration defined ordinary citizenship (or perhaps more accurately, subjecthood) as imperial rather than national and did not distinguish much between emigrants destined to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, or other colonies; all English emigrants were believed to be part of the same society and 'British World' system no matter where they settled in the Empire. Other visions of a renewed emigration program emerged at the meeting that would set the standard for the next three decades. These visions included how much government intervention

²³ Ibid., April 6, 1882.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

there might be in emigration matters: how much emigrants might pay back on their advances; how a central office would work to disseminate information; how colonial prospectors would be carefully scrutinized; and how a balance would be struck between the labour needs of home and colony.

The 'Second' East End Emigration Fund

In July of 1882, the EEEF's chairman Reverend John Kitto asked "why do the unemployed come to London?"²⁶ To be sure, there was "no harder place in the world to find work."²⁷ Kitto's solution to this problem was the same as it had been in the late 1860s – send London's surplus labouring population away to British colonies, and in particular send them to Canada. 1882 marked the regeneration of the EEEF and the beginning of its leading position in East End emigration programming in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁸ The EEEF got to work quite quickly. By 1883, it was operating a weekly evening information session at the Great Assembly Hall in Mile End Road from 7:30pm to midnight for those interested in either seeking or providing emigration assistance. During these evening sessions, interviews were held with prospective emigrants, small loans were arranged, colonial information was dispersed, and final arrangements were made for approval by colonial agents.²⁹ Philanthropists and subscribers could also attend the evenings to learn about the program and make donations. The entire business of emigration was conducted in this hall in East London, making it an accessible one-stop point of access for the intending East End emigrant. The location of this weekly event is important because prospective East End emigrants did not have to travel into the City to access emigration information, present themselves as candidates, or make final

²⁶ *East London Observer*, July 1, 1882.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ A letter from Andrew Hamilton, the secretary of the EEEF on September 8, 1883 in the *East London Observer*, says the EEEF had been "working quietly" for two years on emigration which would put their re-inauguration date at 1881. It remains unclear as to when exactly they resumed their emigration work in East London. 1882, however, marks the year the organization entered the public eye. Also see *East London Observer*, June 7, 1884 which indicates that 1000 emigrants had been sent out since 1882. The composition of the EEEF was somewhat different in 1882-83 than it was in the 1860s but Kitto remained its chairman. He was joined by the Duke of Manchester as president, the Bishop of Bedford and Alderman Sir J.E. Lawrence, MP as vice-presidents, and Frederick Charrington, of Charrington brewers, as treasurer. Mrs. Sydney Vatcher, wife of the vicar of St. Philip's, Stepney, took on the work of collecting clothing for female emigrants and providing them with emigration information and advice. Mrs. Vatcher would remain a pillar in the work in the EEEF until the end of the nineteenth century.

²⁹ *East London Observer*, September 8, 1883.

arrangements for departure. Rather, the business of emigration was brought to them in their own environs.

During the first years of its renaissance, the EEEF continued to emphasize its long service to the emigration cause in East London in its messaging, reminding future patrons that it was more experienced and better equipped than any other emigration society:

a most vigorous regard has to be maintained as to character and health, as we must satisfy the various agent generals of the colonies the would-be emigrants are suited in every way for colonial life; but as Mr. Kitto and other members of the committee are not novices at this work, neither the colonial or home authorities need suspect us of careless or reckless conduct in our selection.³⁰

This continual reminder of its legitimacy was closely linked to the memory of problems with selection that had arisen in the sending of the first EEEF emigrants to Canada in 1867. The EEEF remained sensitive to this episode and subsequently tightened its regulations for acceptance (in theory) for the rest of its time as an organization. The EEEF's belief in this more rigorous standard opened the door for other emigration philanthropists less worried about stringent selection but also for those who would follow the EEEF's model such as the SHES and the Church Emigration Society.

In 1882, the EEEF refined and standardized the emigration rhetoric it had helped shape in the 1860s. This rhetoric would become the foundation of a dominant discourse of assisted emigration thereafter. Borrowing from pre-existing discourses of population and poverty, the rhetoric had five thematic prongs aimed to promote, encourage, and facilitate emigration from East London to the colonies: Overcrowding, unemployment, public sympathy, self-help, and education or information.³¹ These five prongs consistently appeared in official reporting, correspondence, and newspaper accounts of EEEF operations and were deployed at lectures and events. An analysis of the EEEF's annual reports between 1884 and 1913 reveals the evolution of the process of and the language around emigration in East London over time. In the section that follows, reports for 1884-85, 1894, and 1904-5 will be compared to establish how three of these prongs in particular – overcrowding, unemployment, and education or information – were foundational to EEEF rhetoric and practice. Self-help and public sympathy tended to be the more constant of the themes. The analysis will also reveal how the EEEF responded to internal and

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ See *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85 for initial evidence of these prongs. This language becomes the standard rhetoric for the EEEF.

external social, economic, and political change at home and abroad over three ten-year periods. What can be noted overall is a shift in focus from panicked Malthusian assumptions and fears about overpopulation to a calmer more optimistic focus on the mutual benefits of imperial migration within the context of a shared empire.

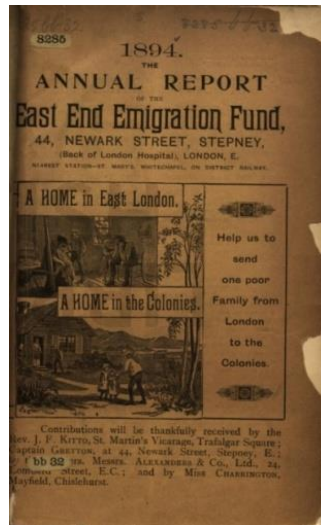


Fig. 2.1: Cover of the East End Emigration Fund's 1894 Annual Report, *The British Library*.

In its 1884-85 annual report the EEEF exaggerated the urgency of the need for emigration in East London. It opened with a biblical quote “Why sit here until we die,” that set the tone for the rest of the document.³² In 1884-85, the EEEF asserted that the “distressed humanity” suffering the “horrors of poverty” in London was in desperate and immediate need of assistance to move to the colonies.³³ According to the EEEF, the distressed worker and his family would face a life of unending crises in London if they did not emigrate to the colonies; that life would look something like this:

The Workhouse, or starvation, and perhaps, the premature death of those he loves, stare him in the face; and his grief and anxiety are intensified, as messages from over the sea tell him of homes to be had in the colonies, for every working sober man, who, with the blessing of Heaven, can reach their shores.³⁴

Embedded in this threat was that idea that with God on his side the emigrant could make a new, more honourable life in the colonies for himself and his family. This implies a number of assumptions about East London that the EEEF was propagating rather than discouraging in the

³² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, inset, n.p.

³³ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

1880s: that East London was godless (or at least that God could not help Eastenders who stayed in East London); that East London was deprived and lacking in opportunity; and that if something was not done to remedy this despair Britain as a whole would be worse off for it. Such alarmist rhetoric targeted donations from philanthropists interested in rescue charity. In these early re-inauguration years, the EEEF touted “Emigration as a panacea for the ills which afflict so many of our countrymen at home” suggesting there were far more problems at home than in the colonies and that transplantation was the permanent cure.³⁵ Contextualized within revelations about the condition of the working class in the 1880s, the EEEF can be seen to be responding to intensely localized fears about the state of East Londoners. This expression of fear, panic, and urgency subsided by 1894 but remained a latent underlying current implied in EEEF discourse that year.

In its 1894 annual report, the EEEF began to focus on the imperial benefits of pulling emigrants out of the “hopeless conditions” it saw in London.³⁶ The society believed there was a “surplus population” in England that was disposable and that the empire should retain that population by moving them about it.³⁷ The panicked tone was now absent, with no mention of workhouses, starvation, or death; it was replaced by a lingering uneasiness about the availability of work. Ironically, unfavourable trade conditions in Canada had reduced the number of emigrants the EEEF had been able to send in 1893-94. The EEEF now focused on sending emigrants only out to friends and relatives who could help them resettle in Canada in the event they were unable to secure employment. Making the best of this difficult situation, the EEEF boasted about the imperial links it had been able to forge through networks of friends and family: “it is obvious that year by year this adding of new links to the chain ... connects us with happy homes all over the world.”³⁸ Even though trade conditions had declined in Canada and some of its emigrants had returned to England, the EEEF still believed the prospective emigrant was better off in the colonies than at home in London: “In the overcrowded centres of the old country, there are no doubt many who are worsted in the struggle for existence through no fault of their own, and our Committee feel that for such there is a chance in the Colonies.”³⁹

³⁵ Ibid., 5.

³⁶ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 4.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 2.

³⁹ Ibid., 5. The EEEF reported on drops in the price of wheat and uncertainty in the American tariff question as being part of this problem.

By 1904-5, the panic had further evolved into more hopeful and cheery discourse about the benefits of imperial migration: “The contrast between the condition of the out-of-work general labourer in overcrowded East London, and the happier and healthier surroundings of his friends, who have already gone out to Canada is amazing.”⁴⁰ The rhetoric represented London as overcrowded and the colonies as under-populated but the sense of urgency prevalent in the early 1880s had subsided largely because economic conditions in Canada had improved and emigration seemed a more sustainable project. In the emigrationists’ view, Canada was a stable new country open, hospitable, and familiar to the English emigrant. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Canada was also in a better position than it had been in the early 1890s to promote a growth agenda and accept new immigrants; for a short period of time, this even included an ability and willingness to accept townspeople like those from East London. In 1905, the EEEF reported it had sent out the most emigrants in its history, 1,718, which was more than double that of the previous year.⁴¹ The society believed this had been possible because of contrasting imperial economic conditions: “the continued depression of trade in this country, and consequent distress among the labouring classes, together with a spreading perception among our Town population that Canada is a good place for a fresh start.”⁴² Thus, the EEEF’s rhetoric of overcrowding in 1904-5, while it was still important, began to show signs of a shift from anxiety about overcrowding to concern about unemployment due to slackness of trade in Britain after the Boer War.

In the 1884-85 EEEF report, unemployment was believed to be a pressing social matter: “The increasing need of effort to cope with the terrible state of undeserved poverty that slackness of trade and consequent want of work has produced in our large cities, is manifest.”⁴³ The EEEF repetitively reminded its subscribers that there were thousands of working men “anxious to escape enforced idleness” in 1884-85.⁴⁴ Through the 1880s and 1890s, the EEEF emphasized that it strove to help those persons out of work by “no fault of their own” who had been victimized by problems in the labour market rather than overcrowding alone.⁴⁵ In 1884-85, the EEEF viewed Canada as willing to absorb these surplus populations of East London. However,

⁴⁰ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1904, 2.

⁴¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1905, 1.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2; and *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 5.

this would change in 1894 because of bad trade conditions. For those who did make it past the gates in the 1890s, the EEEF reminded them that they would have to work hard to make it in Canada:

We have all heard reports of men walking about the colonial cities unemployed, and there is no doubt that many are doing so, and even refusing to do work when it is offered to them, except on their own terms. This will probably always be the case. As the Canadians say, some men seem to be “born tired,” and therefore we find that we must exercise the greatest care in the selection of emigrants, in order to avoid the reproach of transferring those who don’t work in England to swell the ranks of those who won’t work in the colonies.⁴⁶

These warnings echoed the EEEF’s need to redeem itself from the failures of the late 1860s. It needed to show Canada that it had explained to its emigrants the dangers of idleness and fussiness. This discourse also reveals continued Canadian anxiety about assisted urban emigrants from London. Despite these warnings, the EEEF resolutely continued to believe that the colonies could provide the best chance for steady employment and cheaper housing costs for Londoners than at home.⁴⁷ Indeed, the EEEF believed this would always be the case: “Emigration will always remain the one practical solution of our national difficulty in dealing with surplus labour.”⁴⁸ The colonies could provide the working class with unparalleled prospects for upward social mobility impossible to achieve in urban Britain.

When trade conditions improved in Canada in the first decade of the twentieth century, the EEEF harnessed the opportunity to send out more unemployed Eastenders stressing their inability to find work at home. Unemployment was now recognized as a distinct social and economic problem requiring specific interventions and remedies with less frequent mention of overcrowding or overpopulation. Indeed in its 1905 annual report, the EEEF contrasted sending out “uninitiated crowds” of unemployed Londoners with the “painstaking” selection methods it designed and practiced to find the best suited individuals for emigration.⁴⁹ Canada’s economy was presented in annual reports for these years as more prosperous, productive, and expansionist than Great Britain’s: “The development of the Dominion of Canada during the past few years has been unprecedented. Business, both in agriculture and manufactures, is increasing

⁴⁶ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 2.

⁴⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1903, 3.

⁴⁸ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 4. Working with the same sources, Desmond Glynn came to the same conclusion, stating that to the EEEF, other unemployment remedies were “transitory and unworkable.” See, Glynn, 213.

⁴⁹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1905, 2.

enormously.”⁵⁰ The EEEF believed the Canadian North-West was particularly well-positioned to receive East London emigrants; the region was said to be, after “a sleep of centuries,” now suddenly awake and in need of labour.⁵¹ The opening of western Canada may have contributed to the reduction of panic rhetoric in EEEF publications because it signaled a more sustained window of opportunity for overseas migration. Where eastern Canada was well-populated, the West became the top destination given its size and scope for colonial development which rejuvenated emigrationists’ motivation for transplantation of the poor. The EEEF reminded subscribers and prospective emigrants that western Canada was the new field for employment opportunities including typical East End work that had hitherto been unwanted in Canada, like that for navvies and bricklayers. It also found promising the fact that about one third of people flooding to these areas were British.⁵²

The best way in which to enact this transatlantic transplantation was to provide the overcrowded and unemployed districts of London with emigration information, one of the central prongs of the EEEF’s program. From the outset, the EEEF concentrated its educational efforts on “intelligent and anxious workmen.”⁵³ By 1894, it had extended its reach to districts outside of East London and even into the countryside.⁵⁴ This was probably spurred on by a lack of opportunity for urban workers in Canada in the 1890s and the desire of the Canadian government to recruit and retain agricultural workers. The society informed subscribers that while it was the ‘East End Emigration Fund’ by name, it provided information and assistance to “all classes of people from all parts who are thinking of emigrating.”⁵⁵ In both 1884 and 1894, the EEEF prided itself on the quality and accuracy of its colonial information and its ability to give good advice. By 1904-5, this prong of the society’s work was no longer being overtly specified, probably because it had garnered a fairly good reputation in England more widely for facilitating emigration. It is also likely that the launch of the Emigrants Information Office in 1886 had cornered much of the market on information in London and the countryside through its

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid. There was no mention of the Aboriginal peoples who lived there or any indication that the land had previously been inhabited and used. Indeed, the EEEF and other emigration charities in London rarely discussed Aboriginal peoples. When they did, the mentioned only in passing that the areas previously inhabited by them were now ‘safe’ for white settlement and that British emigrants should not fear them.

⁵² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1905, 2.

⁵³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 4; also see the *British Emigration Journal* 1, no. 1 (December 15, 1879), 1, British Library Newspapers Library.

⁵⁴ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 3.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

use of libraries.⁵⁶ The EEEF now spent more time in its reports boasting about its assistance services than its information services but it still reported that “an increasing portion” of its work involved the dissemination of emigration information.⁵⁷

Several consistent overarching themes persisted in the annual reports of the EEEF over this thirty year period. Perhaps the most influential of these themes was hope. Before releasing its annual report for 1884-85, the EEEF wrote to the *East London Observer* outlining the work it had carried out since reinstating itself as a philanthropic organization. Having released a report entitled “Building the Bridge of Hope for East London”, the society’s Honorary Secretary Andrew Hamilton explained to readers how the EEEF was helping the suffering people of the East End realize their hope for better lives.⁵⁸ The EEEF sensationalized the poverty Eastenders endured, claiming that some of them were so desperate to leave London they saved what little extra money they had for their emigration instead of spending it on food.⁵⁹ In these accounts, Eastenders, described by Hamilton as “distracted and perplexed mortals,” were searching for hope and finding it in the EEEF’s emigration program.⁶⁰ The sentiment of hope was an underlying current in almost every year of the EEEF’s annual reports. It was sometimes explicit and other times implied but there can be little doubt the society fueled a lingering sense of hope for prosperity amongst the London labouring poor. This sentiment was further bolstered by religious references in the early years:

We humbly thank God for His mercy in preserving so many of our emigrants while on their way to fairer scenes and brighter prospects, and we pray that His Almighty influence will prevail in getting us the means more effectually to continue our useful work, which we believe He has so far blessed.⁶¹

In the later years, the religious rhetoric was completely absent from EEEF reports. This shift is perhaps not surprising given Britain’s increased secularization in this period and related modernization. It was, however, a swift change within a much slower process of secularization.⁶²

⁵⁶ Kenneth Whittaker, “British Public Libraries and the Emigrants’ Information Office, 1886-1918,” *Library History* 8, no. 2 (1988): 31-34.

⁵⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1905, 5.

⁵⁸ *East London Observer*, June 7, 1884. I have been unable to locate a copy of the original report.

⁵⁹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 5.

⁶⁰ *East London Observer*, June 7, 1884.

⁶¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 9.

⁶² On the links between modernization and secularization and the historiographical debate on those links see: Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularization, 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Jeremy Morris, “The Strange Death of Christian Britain: Another Look at the Secularization Debate,” *The Historical Journal* 46, no. 4 (2003): 963-76.

Another overarching theme in the EEEF annual reports was empire. Subscribers were reassured from the 1880s onwards that their donations would be applied only to colonial emigration within the British World. In the 1884-85 report, however, anxiety about the quality of emigrants being sent to the colonies illustrates a tension around the transplantation of the poor within the Empire. The EEEF stated that “unsuitable persons find nothing to encourage them in their manner of life in any of the colonies;” these persons were classified as drunk and idle.⁶³ In the same report, in a section on Australian emigration, the EEEF warned that prospective emigrants who drank were not welcome there, that the native Australians (presumably meaning Australian-born whites) were “smart” and took up all of the clerical positions.⁶⁴ The EEEF’s writings on empire in the early years reveal an internal anxiety about sending the right kind of people to the colonies. To ease Canadian anxiety about urban emigrants, for example, the EEEF went out of its way to suggest to Canadians that it did not think of England or the English as superior and that it encouraged its emigrants to “become Canadians heart and soul.”⁶⁵ Perhaps it was just paying lip service to sentiments in emerging nations that were increasingly advocating their own demands and identities but the EEEF clearly worried about maintaining good imperial relations in order to carry on its programs.

Even though it was not able to send as many emigrants to Canada in the early 1890s, the EEEF began to strengthen its imperial rhetoric. Demonstrating an acute awareness that Britain’s interconnected Empire was expanding the EEEF can be seen here harnessing the spirit of imperialism more overtly: “It is hardly necessary to remind our readers that the world is opening up rapidly in all directions, and the Colonial expansion of our Empire is going on with marvelous rapidity.”⁶⁶ By the early twentieth century, the EEEF was much more openly imperialist in its aims asserting that emigration “helps retain within the British Empire a hardworking, desirable class of loyal citizens; families who will not forget their country or their sovereign, and whose pride will remain that they are of British blood.”⁶⁷ Similarly, in 1905, the EEEF sent out the Reverend E.C. Carter, the Vicar of Whitechapel, to Canada to examine the conditions there and

⁶³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁶⁵ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1905, 7.

⁶⁶ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 4.

⁶⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1903, 3. There is an almost identical quote in *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1905, 4.

visit some of the EEEF emigrants. Carter spoke to the delicateness of the relationship between Canada and Britain on the issue of emigrant suitability:

I feel most strongly that we must only send out those who will strengthen the bonds which would unite the Old Country with the new. I had not before realised how closely the Canadians watch for indications of England's goodwill and power; and I am sure that we must be most careful that not even the smallest part of Immigrants should contain any 'undesirables,' nor consist of elements of certain to destroy the esteem and respect of Canada for Britain.⁶⁸

Assisted intra-imperial emigration continued through the early twentieth century to be a source of contention between Britain and its colonies despite this optimistic discourse; Britain viewed the colonies as an outlet for surplus populations and the colonies stood guard over their borders, dictating the kinds of people they most desired as expressed formally in ever-evolving legislation and policy. The EEEF's legacy of deferential, respectful, and praiseful interpretations of the Canadian people, landscape, and economy in its official rhetoric illustrates its tremendous motivation to maintain good relations with the officials who managed the national gate. By 1910, however, this relationship had deteriorated so severely through restrictive legislation that the EEEF was forced to seriously alter its program. Allusions to this more restrictive policy can be noted in the EEEF's 1904-5 annual reports; those reports reveal that Canada was increasingly unprepared to act as a dumping ground for "lazy and costly undesirables."⁶⁹ Before this difficult period, however, the EEEF faced significant challenges at home through direct competition from other philanthropic organizations in the 1880s and 1890s. The grip the EEEF held on assisted emigration in the 1860s and again in the early 1880s slowly loosened as many other charities emerged with similar programs. The EEEF would remain, however, the most important emigration charity in the East End.

The Monopoly Ends: Other Emigration Charities in East London

After 1882, several new emigration societies began to pop up in East London challenging the EEEF's monopoly.⁷⁰ One of the earliest of these groups was the London Samaritan Society based in Homerton, Hackney. This charity ran a soup kitchen in Homerton, offering free breakfasts on Sunday mornings, a convalescent home at Dover for London patients, and no fewer

⁶⁸ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1905, 7.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁰ Carrothers provides a list of charities in 1886, see: Carrothers, 319.

than nine satellite missions in the East End.⁷¹ Mr. John James Jones was the director of the Samaritans and together with the Reverend A. Styleman Herring, the treasurer of the long-standing Clerkenwell Emigration Society, the two began a modest program of emigration in East London in the spring of 1882.⁷² Jones' scheme was a self-help one; intending emigrants contributed between £3 and £4 towards their emigration. This sum would have eliminated the poorest emigrants so we can assume most would have been underemployed, casually employed, or temporarily unemployed artisans and mechanics. The first party left sometime before June of the same year but details of this migration are presently unknown. The second party left London on the new Allan line steamer the *Parisian* via Liverpool in late June 1882 and consisted of 250 artisans, mechanics, labourers, and servants from East London.⁷³ In 1882, Jones and the Samaritans sponsored a total of 1,500 emigrants which was a significant number for the time.⁷⁴ This high number immediately raises questions about emigrant selection, quality, and suitability for life in Canada and suggests a frenzied indiscriminate collection of hundreds of Eastenders leaving England en masse under the auspices of an immature emigration charity.

Jones advertised his services in religious periodicals like *The Christian* and *The Spectator* and was supported in his work by The British and Foreign Bible Society who provided 400 of the Samaritans' emigrants with bibles in 1884.⁷⁵ Jones offered a 'full' emigration service in an attempt to set himself apart from the EEEF. His aim was to provide safe and comfortable passage for his emigrants from beginning to end. A lady would accompany the girls going out as servants and Jones accompanied all parties to Canada personally, making the trip out six times in 1882 alone.⁷⁶ Jones also provided reduced rail fares and assistance in the procurement of employment upon landing. The society produced an 'Emigrant's Guide' outlining prospects and employment conditions in Canada. The guide stressed that the intending emigrant should possess of a good set of "moral qualifications" that demonstrated "cheerful industry," patience, courage, perseverance,

⁷¹ This was formerly the Homerton Mission and was also known as the London Samaritan Mission, see: *The Christian*, December 17, 1879, accessed August 21, 2012, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=86MOAAAAQAAJ&>.

⁷² *East London Observer*, July 8, 1882; and *The Christian*, June 15, 1882, accessed August 21, 2012, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=TqQOAAAAQAAJ&>. For more on the Clerkenwell Emigration Society and Herring, see: Marjorie Kohli, "Emigration Societies," Immigrants to Canada, last modified February 15, 2007, accessed November 13, 2013, <http://jubilation.uwaterloo.ca/~marj/genealogy/reports/emigrationsoc.html>.

⁷³ *East London Observer*, July 8, 1882. A review of the passenger lists for the *Parisian* departing Liverpool on June 29, 1882 does not identify the group as travelling together.

⁷⁴ *The Spectator*, March 31, 1883, accessed August 21, 2012, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=qb0-AQAAIAAJ&>.

⁷⁵ British and Foreign Bible Society, *Bible Work at Home and Abroad*, January 1884, accessed August 21, 2012, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=WUEEAAAAQAAJ&>.

⁷⁶ *The Spectator*, March 31, 1883, accessed August 21, 2012, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=qb0-AQAAIAAJ&>.

temperance, sobriety, frugality, and self-dependence.⁷⁷ Most telling of their intentions, the Samaritans highlighted that they protected emigrants from the ‘sharks’ who might try to take advantage of them. This would suggest that the explosion in emigration purveyors in London in the 1880s was already showing symptoms of exploitation in 1882, or at least of perceived exploitation. Unbeknownst to them, the Samaritans were part of the problem of indiscriminate emigration agencies. Most charitable emigration societies dwelt on this point at some time in their literature even in the 1860s. Part of the reason for this paternal and protective stance was embedded in attitudes about the labouring poor: philanthropists and clergymen tended to assign themselves the duty of care and protection of those persons they believed to be most vulnerable. These attitudes were merely extended to emigration. Competition for emigrants was also becoming quite fierce and evidence of societies undercutting and slandering each other became more obvious. Each society also claimed its services were superior to others because of variations in their experience and personnel.

In July of 1884, Jones and the Samaritans suffered what was probably the terminal blow to their emigration program. There is no record of emigration work amongst the Samaritans after 1884. A group of about fifty of Jones’s emigrants was reported to be wandering the streets of Montreal out of work and destitute.⁷⁸ In addition, the emigrants complained to the St. George’s Society about the failure of their emigration experience and that they had been badly treated by the London Samaritan Society. The St. George’s Society of Montreal and the Canadian press called on the Samaritans to address these accusations and their “misdirected efforts” which had caused “a great deal of injury.”⁷⁹ The Mayor of Montreal echoed these sentiments and called “a mass meeting to protest against immigrants who sail from England upon the advice of fashionable visitors to the slums and by the aid of the London Samaritan Association.”⁸⁰ The debacle of the Samaritans’ emigration program pointed to larger questions about the ways in which these migrations could negatively impact relations between Britain and Canada and prevent the sending of other emigrants out of East London. These episodes also point to the ignorance of some donors and philanthropists on colonial matters and the power of the slum narrative in charitable action during the 1880s.

⁷⁷ *East London Observer*, January 27, 1883.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, July 12, 1884.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Long before the 1880s Canada had already begun restricting the entry of paupers and had tightened regulations around the landing of assisted emigrants. These restrictions were first enshrined in the 1869 Canadian Immigration Act.⁸¹ Pauper immigrants, defined by the Act as those who could not pay for their onward journeys or provisions, were assumed to be closely linked with the spread of disease. Measures were enacted in this legislation to make ship masters responsible for these costs and allow for medical inspection on board before landing. While it is possible that Jones' emigrants landed destitute, they more likely fell on hard times after having been in Canada for some time or were provided with insufficient assistance to make their way in Canada. Despite their failure as emigrationists, the Samaritans' engagement with emigration illustrates a broadened interest in assisted emigration amongst other London-based charities and missions in the 1880s. Another such scheme, evolved out of the Medland Hall mission for homeless men in the 1890s.

Founded in 1891, Medland Hall was a free casual ward or hostel for men owned and run by the London Congregational Union and administered by the Reverend Wilson Gates.⁸² In most of the accounts about it Medland Hall is described as a sad and desperate place where homeless men could sleep for the night for free unlike the workhouse where they spent the day working off the privilege. Getting out of the cycle of living at Medland Hall was crucial to maintaining any level of independence. Charles Booth described Medland as a demoralizing and degrading place where men slept semi- and fully-naked, crammed 300 deep into rows of bed boxes that upon first site looked like rows of corpses.⁸³ Interestingly, Medland Hall facilitated the emigration of about 100 to British colonies each year.⁸⁴ They did so exclusively with the assistance of the SHES of which Gates was a committee member.⁸⁵ Not surprisingly, the emigration program at Medland Hall would come to cause problems for the SHES which will be examined in more detail below.

⁸¹ *An Act Respecting Immigration and Immigrants, Statutes of Canada 1869, 32-33 Victoria, Chap. 10*, accessed November 13, 2013, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=I-gDAAAAQAAJ&>.

⁸² *New York Times*, October 16, 1910, accessed August 21, 2012, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F20A13FB345D16738DDDAF0994D8415B808DF1D3>. Also see Montagu Williams, *Round London: Down East and Up West* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1894), 56-62 for a full account of life at Medland Hall. 1891 is also confirmed as the opening year in the *Daily News*, January 29, 1891. The location listed as Wapping, London and sometimes also listed as Stepney or Ratcliff see: *Daily News*, June 11, 1891. The original location was lost to fire, see: *Reynold's*, November 22, 1891.

⁸³ Charles Booth notebook B346, 115-117, Charles Booth Online Archive, London School of Economics, accessed August 21, 2012, <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/>.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 118-19.

⁸⁵ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1894, 11.

The Self-Help Emigration Society was founded in June of 1884 in London.⁸⁶ Its first committees were comprised of the usual wealthy philanthropists, interested gentlemen, and local clergymen in East London. While the SHES was not a “distinctly local” enterprise, its work was chiefly located in East London.⁸⁷ Some of those involved in its first years included: the Reverend Wilson Gates, director of Medland Hall; Walter Hazell, author of *The Australasian Colonies: Emigration and Colonisation* (1887) and member of the committee that managed the Emigrant’s Information Office; and the Reverend Andrew Mearns, author of the influential inquiry on poor housing *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883). By 1893, Gates had become the Secretary, the Earl of Aberdeen (John Hamilton-Gordon), who was the Governor-General of Canada, had become the president, and Irish emigrationist James H. Tuke had joined the committee.⁸⁸ The SHES’s mission was to assist the “unemployed or under-paid” labouring poor to emigrate to British colonies by providing them with information, employment advice, grants, a savings depository, character letters and introductions, and by hosting meetings and events.⁸⁹ Burdett’s *Year Book of Philanthropy* for 1894 distinguished the SHES as an organization that “Helps deserving and suitable emigrants in various ways,” as opposed to the EEEF which it described as an organization that sent “poor families from London to the colonies, principally Canada.”⁹⁰ The SHES consistently highlighted this distinction in its correspondence with newspapers and in its official reports, stressing the self-help component of its program. Mearns had a profound influence on the development of the SHES’s guiding principles.⁹¹ Having published the widely-read *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* in 1883, Mearns’s work on poor housing catapulted the East End’s problems onto the national stage. Indeed, the SHES wrote in its first annual report that its formation was largely the “result of the interest recently aroused as to the condition of the poor of London” and that it had “brought into existence the “Bitter cry of outcast London.”⁹² More broadly, the influence of Mearns’s book was described in the *East London Observer* as

⁸⁶ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 3; and Stanley Johnson, *A History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to North America, 1763-1912* (London: Routledge, 1913), 77.

⁸⁷ *East London Observer*, April 20, 1895.

⁸⁸ For more on James Tuke see Carrothers, 230-32. For lists of the committee members see the Self-Help Emigration Society’s annual reports for 1886 and 1893.

⁸⁹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 2.

⁹⁰ Henry Burdett, *Burdett’s Hospitals and Charities 1894: The Year Book of Philanthropy* (London: The Scientific Press, 1894), 474, 498, 780.

⁹¹ Also see Glynn, 212 on the SHES origins.

⁹² *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, inside cover, 3. The *East London Observer*, January 12, 1884, says Mearns’s book was widely read and was causing quite a stir; it also spawned other slum narrative publications on the East End.

having “sounded a bugle-note of alarm which has aroused sleeping society from its pleasant dreams.”⁹³ Chronic poverty, and the revolution in charity that grew up around it in the 1880s in East London, was now unquestionably tied to emigration.

Arnold White’s writings, which condemned foreign immigration on one hand and supported imperial English emigration schemes on the other, also influenced early SHES ideology.⁹⁴ White was a vehement critic of ‘alien immigration’ in East London and an anti-Semitic agitator against the Jewish influxes of the 1870s and 1880s when persecuted Jews fled pogroms in Russia by the tens of thousands.⁹⁵ He was involved with emigration in East London in the 1880s as an advocate of colonial emigration schemes for the working classes alongside the Baron de Rothschild (even though, ironically, he was Jewish), the Princess Louise, Mrs. Gladstone, and E.H. Currie. Together this group called for an amalgamation of the twenty-five most important emigration societies in England to standardize their work; this never happened.⁹⁶ In an appeal to the public in the *Times* in 1885, Mearns and White raised the large sum of £360 9s. 10d. for the SHES. Without this money, the SHES could not have carried on its emigration efforts in its first year.⁹⁷ Part of the reason why subscribers may have donated to White’s campaign was that they increasingly accepted the connection between recently-arrived Jewish immigrants and unemployment in East London. By the time he published *The Problems of a Great City* in 1886, White was overtly blaming Jewish immigration for exacerbating the casual labour problem in East London.⁹⁸ Historian Seth Koven explains that for White and others

⁹³ *East London Observer*, January 12, 1884.

⁹⁴ Arnold White, *The Problems of a Great City* (London: Remington, 1886). There is ample evidence in SHES annual report for 1885 that the executive was reading Mearns’ writings in the *Times* and that White was raising funds for emigration with Mearns.

⁹⁵ G. R. Searle, “White, Arnold Henry,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, October 2009), accessed September 20, 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39919>. Sam Johnson has recently suggested, however, that White’s anti-Semitism was complicated and that he often worked with elite Jews, contradicting his own rhetoric, see: Sam Johnson, “‘A Veritable Janus at the Gates of Jewry’: British Jews and Mr. Arnold White,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 47, no. 1 (2013), 41-68. For more on Mearns’ influence on White’s interest in the East End and for more on White’s influence on British anti-Semitism more generally, see: Seth Koven, “The Jewish Question and the Social Question in Late Victorian London: The Fictions and Investigative Journalism of Margaret Harkness,” in *Imagination and Commitment. Representations of the Social Question*, eds. I.M. van den Broek, C.A.L. Smit and D.J. Wolfram, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 45-48.

⁹⁶ These elite individuals were active in promoting emigration as a solution to unemployment in 1885 and organized meetings of working-class men in East London that spring, see: *East London Observer*, March 28, 1885 and May 9, 1885. Also see White’s letter to the *Times*, March 25, 1885 about a conference on the feasibility of “Federated Emigration.”

⁹⁷ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885; also see the *Times*, February 3, 1885.

⁹⁸ White, *Problems of a Great City*, 144-46.

concern over Jewish migration became unequivocally connected to the pressing social question in the 1880s East End:

At the very moment that philanthropic, educational, and missionary efforts converged on East London and made it the *locus classicus* for debates about English social questions, several East London districts were ceasing to be ‘English’ Whitechapel became the Jewish East End in the 1880s, the Social Question came to be ever more closely bound to the Jewish Question. Parliamentary inquiries about Jewish immigrants in East London masqueraded as investigations into the broader problem of sweated labour, while debates about the metropolitan poor were haunted by the specter of the alien Jew as both cause and symptom of pauperisation.⁹⁹

These connections and assessments relating to unemployment, foreign immigration, and colonial emigration point to increased action on poverty in East London in the early 1880s. These actions also raise interesting questions about how emigration was used in response to internal Jewish immigration into East London, about the ownership of place and belonging, and in which spaces, domestic or colonial, ideas and expressions of ‘Britishness’ best operated.

Those involved with the SHES in the early years contributed to the development of a discourse around emigration that often centered around emigrant suitability and selection. The SHES prided itself on the care it took in selecting and looking after its emigrants. However, this was not a unique claim amongst emigration charities: almost all of them promised to do the same. The founding principle of the SHES was located directly in its organizational name – self-help. Stanley Johnson claimed that the SHES “only helps those who can provide part of their own expenses,” but closer review of their annual reports suggests that this was not actually the case from the outset.¹⁰⁰ The society also provided selected emigrants with fully-funded, non-repayable passages; these were its “special cases.”¹⁰¹ Some of these special cases were referrals from local boards of guardians who had the power to provide up to £10 of assistance in cases it deemed suitable for emigration.¹⁰² In 1884, the Holborn Board of Guardians, for instance, paid for one family to emigrate under the auspices of the SHES at the expense of £50.¹⁰³ However, in the majority of cases, the SHES required emigrants pay back the sums loaned by them; where

⁹⁹ Koven, “The Jewish Question,” 39.

¹⁰⁰ Johnson, 77.

¹⁰¹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 4.

¹⁰² Johnson, 77. Also see the *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 10. The SHES, however, was not the sole provider of emigration services to boards of guardians in East London; the involvement of other emigration organizations with the Poor Law will be taken up later in the chapter.

¹⁰³ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, financial statement.

this was not possible boards of guardians would step in and pay the SHES for the expense.¹⁰⁴ That the SHES worked closely with Poor Law boards of guardians reveals a disconnect with its rhetorical insistence on self-help. In reality, the SHES functioned in much the same way as the EEEF. These similarities in practice point to the dominant and workable character of the EEEF's program; others copied its methods while attempting to set themselves apart as somehow different.

According to Stanley Johnson, the SHES facilitated the emigration of about 400 people a year from its inception.¹⁰⁵ This seems to be fairly accurate for the early years when the numbers given in the annual report for 1886 are reviewed – 214 emigrants to Canada and 150 to Australia and South Africa.¹⁰⁶ 550 emigrants was the total number for 1887.¹⁰⁷ In 1888, however, its numbers increased to 862 emigrants in the first six months alone, 843 of which went to Canada, 19 to Australia.¹⁰⁸ In its annual report for 1893, the SHES claimed it had sent 4,551 emigrants out since 1884 at a total cost of £23,707 19s. 4d., the bulk of which the emigrants themselves had contributed to the tune of £17,445 0s. 3d.¹⁰⁹ By 1898, the SHES had sent out 5,842 emigrants to British colonies and by 1903 approximately 7,000.¹¹⁰ By 1905, their lifetime expenditures had increased to £47,000 overall with £37,000 coming from the emigrants themselves.¹¹¹ These numbers make the SHES one of the more important emigration societies operating in East London even though it was a self-professed “small society.”¹¹² The SHES's emigration activities provide a window into the ideology and functionality of an emigration society in East London trying to set itself apart from the EEEF and later the Salvation Army. Moreover, the SHES's adherence to a program of self-help distinguished it from an agenda of ‘pauper emigration,’ at least in its language, and can tell us something about the migration motivations of the working, or perhaps underemployed, poor and those who desired to help them.¹¹³

Emigration societies in East London generally operated on the defensive and the SHES was no different. This was largely due to the reception problems of East London emigrants in

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Johnson, 77.

¹⁰⁶ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886.

¹⁰⁷ Reported by the Secretary Rev. Robert Mackay. *East London Observer*, December 31, 1887.

¹⁰⁸ *Standard*, July 27, 1888.

¹⁰⁹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893.

¹¹⁰ *East London Observer*, April 8, 1899; and *Times*, May 6, 1903.

¹¹¹ Johnson, 77.

¹¹² *Times*, November 11, 1886.

¹¹³ See *East London Observer*, April 20, 1895 on the SHES work at decreasing pauperization.

Canada which continued to reverberate in the 1880s and 1890s. Indeed, these attitudes tended to endure throughout the entire time emigration operated as a solution to dealing with poverty in the East End for obvious reasons related to assumptions and stereotypes about the urban poor and degeneracy. To mitigate Canadian displeasure, the SHES presented itself as a superior, high-quality emigration charity. Reporting on his visit to Canada to inspect the backend of the SHES's emigration program in 1886, the SHES Secretary the Reverend Robert Mackay boasted that the "[Canadian Immigration Agent] stated that no other society had sent him a better class of emigrants and that no other society worked on as complete or satisfactorily a plan, in reference to the reception and placing of those sent out."¹¹⁴ In an 1888 letter to the editor of *The Standard*, the SHES committee quoted praise for its efforts as published in *The Canada Gazette*:

The Self-Help Emigration Society have again sent out a number of emigrants, consisting primarily of well-deserving families, who are doing well. This Society is the most practical of any engaged in assisting emigration, as they not only assist the emigrants pay their passage and railway fare, but, on arrival in Canada, a sufficient sum is remitted to pay their expenses until such time as employment is secured for them.¹¹⁵

In local circles, the Lord Mayor of London supported the SHES in 1889 on the basis of its self-help principles.¹¹⁶

Despite these endorsements, complimentary remarks about the flawlessness of the SHES program can be assumed to have been inflated. Canadian evidence suggests the SHES emigrants were just as problematic at times as other migrants from East London. Mr. Richard Macpherson, an immigration agent in Kingston, Ontario, reported to the SHES that some of their emigrants did not stay in their jobs and that he believed that "If the young men you send out would go on farms, they would do better generally than remaining about the city; but I have only been able to induce a few to do so."¹¹⁷ Canadian immigration agents repeatedly reminded the SHES that agricultural workers were much more easily placed in work than urban tradesmen.¹¹⁸ A letter

¹¹⁴ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual report 1886. This was a Mr. Wills, Canadian Government Agent in Ottawa, as per *Times*, November 11, 1886. Mr. Wills is also interviewed in Septimus Scrivener's SHES sponsored book: Septimus Scrivener, *English Emigrants: A Peep at Their New Homes* (London: James Clarke and Co., 1887), 9-12.

¹¹⁵ *Standard*, July 27, 1888.

¹¹⁶ *Times*, March 28, 1889.

¹¹⁷ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 7-8.

¹¹⁸ *Letter from J.A. Donaldson to Mr. Lowe*, May 10, 1887, Department of Agriculture, Government of Canada, RG 17, volume 536, file 59745, LAC.

from the Reverend Robert Hay of Watford, Ontario dated November 25, 1886, was equally cautious in his praise of the SHES emigrants:

On the whole, the men sent here have been a good class, who gave satisfaction to their employers, after they learned the ways of the country, and the way in which work is done here. At first the men seemed very slow and exceedingly awkward. One Canadian would do as much work in a day as three of them, but they soon got new inspiration and ‘worked up’ wonderfully. Many are good, intelligent men, strong of limb, clear-headed fellows, that meet life bravely and will do very well here.¹¹⁹

Indeed, commentators and emigrationists in East London generally understood that the best chance for assisted emigrants to succeed in the colonies was to secure land-based agricultural employment in the 1880s. The SHES even went so far as to warn prospective emigrants in bold lettering in their first annual report not to go to cities.¹²⁰ Artisans and mechanics had little chance of securing work in urban Canada in the 1880s.¹²¹ Yet the reality of sending emigrants out of East London, aside from those who had only recently drifted into town from the countryside looking for work, was that Eastenders tended to be more attracted to towns and cities and their work experience was generally rooted in urban trades. There was increasing concern amongst opponents of emigration in the 1880s that the East End of London was no place to seek and find agricultural labourers and thus assisted emigration operations should be ceased there; impoverished townspeople would find no better employment abroad than at home.¹²² By 1887, Canadian acceptance of SHES emigrants was in doubt at least amongst some immigration agents. The most telling evidence of the challenges SHES emigrants faced at the Canadian port of entry is found in records relating to the Canadian immigration agent John Donaldson.

Born in 1816, John Andrew Donaldson of Toronto had worked as an immigration agent for Canada since 1861.¹²³ A senior member of the Department of Agriculture’s immigration section, Donaldson never shed his distaste for emigrants from the East End of London. Having been at the forefront in the campaign against accepting the first batches of EEEF emigrants in 1867-68, Donaldson pressed his Department to refuse landing to East End emigrants almost

¹¹⁹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 5.

¹²⁰ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 4. Also see an editorial ten years later on the SHES in *East London Observer*, April 20, 1895, stating that the “only chance” for unemployed men in Canada is to work on the land.

¹²¹ See comments in the *East London Observer*, April 15, 1895 for an example of this understanding.

¹²² *Ibid.*, March 13, 1886.

¹²³ See Donaldson’s date of first appointment, birth date, and city listed in *Department of Agriculture Outside Service List*, Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Sessional Papers 51 Vic, no. 1833, 1888, accessed November 4, 2012, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=EUNOAAAAMAAJ&>.

twenty years later when SHES emigrants hit Canadian shores. Donaldson had a significant degree of authority in Toronto; this is evidenced by numerous letters addressed to and signed by him in 1887-88.¹²⁴ As a key official in Toronto, Donaldson received character letters from the SHES regarding specific emigrants. These letters stressed earlier good relations between the SHES and the Canadian government and asked for landing assistance for newly-arrived assisted emigrants including board and lodgings and employment assistance.¹²⁵ At the bottom of one letter regarding a labourer by the name of J.R. Adehead, Donaldson wrote the following comment: “These people I speak of in my letter are from this society.”¹²⁶ The letter he spoke of was one he had written to John Lowe, the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, which was catalogued as “That the persons sent out by the Self-Help Emigration Society are a very undesirable class.”¹²⁷ Donaldson reported to Lowe that about fifty or sixty emigrants from the East End of London had recently arrived (on May 10, 1887) and that “this class of persons” was proving to “be a burden to this country as they are totally unacquainted with agricultural work.”¹²⁸ Donaldson complained that all of the onward journey expenses incurred by emigrants were to be absorbed by the Dominion as the SHES had not accounted for these costs. He warned that McKay had another 100 families ready to be sent out and that another 150 emigrants were landing that night on the *Parisian*.¹²⁹

Donaldson did not hide his disapproval of assisted emigration charities in East London and noted that for years he had been trying to stop their migrations from happening in the first place. He noted that “the sooner it is stopped the better.”¹³⁰ When Septimus Scrivener visited Canada on behalf of the SHES in 1887, Donaldson was conveniently away. Yet, in his report *English Emigrants: A Peep at Their New Homes*, Scrivener rather incongruously reported that

¹²⁴ Library and Archives Canada has a significant number of letters and memos from Donaldson for the year 1887-88.

¹²⁵ In particular, *Letter from J.A. Donaldson, Toronto, Re: Letter from Rev. R. MacKay of Self-Help Emigration Society*, April 20, 1888, Department of Agriculture, General Correspondence, Government of Canada, RG 17, volume 585, file 66113, LAC.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Letter from J.A. Donaldson to Mr. Lowe*, May 10, 1887, Department of Agriculture, Government of Canada, RG 17, volume 536, file 59745, LAC. For John Lowe’s full biography see: Gwynneth C.D. Jones, “John Lowe,” in *Dictionary of Canada Biography*, volume 14, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003, accessed November 4, 2012, http://www.biographi.ca/EN/009004-119.01-e.php?id_nbr=7541.

¹²⁸ *Letter from J.A. Donaldson to Mr. Lowe*, May 10, 1887, Department of Agriculture, Government of Canada, RG 17, volume 536, file 59745, LAC.

¹²⁹ Donaldson noted, however, that he was not as worried about those passengers as they were “a better class” of emigrants although how he knew or determined that is unknown.

¹³⁰ *Letter from J.A. Donaldson to Mr. Lowe*, May 10, 1887, Department of Agriculture, Government of Canada, RG 17, volume 536, file 59745, LAC.

inquiries had “afforded full evidence” that Donaldson was “a real friend to immigrants, and spares no pains to forward their best interests.”¹³¹ This pretense reveals the lengths to which emigration societies bent the truth about the reception of the emigrants in Canada in order to secure subscriptions, maintain patrons, and continue their emigration programming even in the face of colonial disapproval – a practice they had been carrying on since the 1860s. Although Donaldson plainly discriminated against East End emigrants, his local knowledge of labour in Toronto may have been the basis of his comments; we cannot assume Donaldson was simply prejudiced. Rather, he may have been genuinely unable to place SHES emigrants in Toronto and instead of making creative attempts to help them, felt that stopping the migration from the outset was the better course for Canada. McKay’s character letters also reveal an attitude common amongst British philanthropic emigrationists in the 1880s – that Canada should accept London’s urban poor as citizens of a common empire within the ‘British World’ system. McKay writes about the SHES’s hopes that the selected emigrants “will make good colonists” given the society’s prior vetting of applicants. That Canada should accept British emigrationists’ assessments of suitable colonists implied an imperial arrogance that presumed Britain knew what was best for Canada. Donaldson’s sentiments reveal that such presumption was not always well-received.

The inclusion of men from Medland Hall in SHES parties was problematic given the physical condition of the men.¹³² Interestingly though, the Medland men who traveled to Canada with the assistance of the SHES were mostly agricultural labourers who had drifted into London from the countryside looking for work. Ending up homeless on the street they sought refuge in free shelters like Medland Hall. As late as 1910, Medland Hall men were still largely described as physically weak: “Some of them were sturdy men, with the big muscles of the field labourer. Others were so emaciated by long starvation that their skin was drawn tight over their ribs. They were living skeletons.”¹³³ Most were deemed unfit for work of any kind. The *East London Observer* generally praised the efforts of the SHES based on its foundational principles of self-

¹³¹ Scrivener, 14.

¹³² *East London Observer*, April 20, 1895.

¹³³ Philip Gibbs, “Free Coffins for Living Men: Where Misery Spends the Night, an Impression of Medland Hall,” *The Graphic*, October 8, 1910, 558.

help and so it naturally expressed concern about the Medland Hall emigrants.¹³⁴ The problem with Medland Hall was that it contradicted the liberal principles of the Poor Law – its inmates did not have to work for their beds which many Poor Law purists deemed liable to result in pauperization. The newspaper worried that the SHES’s connection with Medland Hall through Gates might lead to its downfall: “if it [the SHES] should ever commence operations with the dregs of our great cities, its record will no longer be one of unbroken success. The colonies very properly will not have the idle and the vicious; we have to keep them ourselves.”¹³⁵ The same commentator thought the inclusion of the Medland Hall men seemed “incongruous” and was “the one feature which casts a shadow on such work as that of the Self-Help Emigration Society.”¹³⁶ Indeed, pauperization and self-help were antithetical to each other, and the practice of the latter was believed to prevent or correct the former.

The SHES continued with its program of sending homeless East End men out from Medland Hall as late as 1899 when twenty-five of the 100 emigrants in April of that year were drawn from the shelter.¹³⁷ This is yet another indication that emigration societies in East London continued to put their needs and desires before those of Canada’s. But this should not be surprising. In 1894, the Thames Police charged Gates with overcrowding at Medland Hall. The Reverend was also accused of running a dirty and diseased establishment. Medland Hall was designed to accommodate 300 men but Gates would often let up to 1,000 men spend the night there.¹³⁸ This mounting pressure to relieve East End poverty, the failure of the Poor Law to provide sufficient relief, and Gates’s influential position on the SHES executive led to the continued emigration of homeless men despite Canadian displeasure. On the SHES’s part, it continued to maintain that its selections were of a high quality. In its annual report for 1893, one of its correspondents in Canada reported back on the quality of the Medland Hall emigrants that year:

Being naturally specially interested in the men from Medland Hall, I was pleased to find them, on the whole, a remarkably fine set of fellows. Frankness, cheery brotherliness,

¹³⁴ Similarly, the newspaper generally leaned towards supporting an end to indiscriminate relief and encouraged a greater adherence to the deterrent aims of the Poor Law although it did publish balanced reports and socialist articles as well.

¹³⁵ *East London Observer*, April 20, 1895.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, April 8, 1899.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, November 24, 1894.

straightforward resolution, and the joy of new hope, were features in their demeanour which particularly struck me.¹³⁹

This tension between practice and discourse tells us something about the decision-making process of emigration charities based in London in the 1890s. The men from Medland Hall were exactly the kind of emigrants Canada feared London would send them and their migrations surely had a direct effect on future policies. In the 1890s, Canada was still induced to accept such emigrants but by the 1906-10 period, which witnessed significant changes to Canadian immigration law, Medland Hall men would have been refused landing. So, as Canada still officially accepted charitable emigrants in the 1890s, the SHES continued to send emigrants who were deemed undesirable doing little to mend an already scathed reputation.

To balance this problem, the SHES prided itself on choosing the ‘right kind’ of emigrants for the colonies in its discourse. It boasted that each emigration season it carefully hand-selected only “a very useful, industrious, and thrifty class.”¹⁴⁰ The society firmly believed that a successful emigration could only take place if the emigrants had contributed to the momentous change in their lives themselves.¹⁴¹ Likewise, in formal correspondence, the SHES maintained it was only interested in helping those who were willing to help themselves: “there are thousands of either sex, and of all ages, willing and able to do all in their power to better their condition and to fight a hard fight These are the men on whose behalf I would plead, not for doles.”¹⁴² Yet, as much as the SHES claimed it only sought emigrants who could “work on the soil” or in domestic service, it continued to support homeless and physically unfit men from Medland Hall for emigration and worked in other capacities with the down-trodden.¹⁴³

The SHES did, however, make some attempt to recruit emigrants with agricultural experience. In 1893, the SHES facilitated the emigration of unemployed agricultural labourers from the fringes of East London in Essex presumably at the society’s full expense. That same year, the SHES involved itself with a London County Council (LCC) scheme to test the unemployed on waste land in West Ham for their agricultural potential in the colonies. Indeed, farm colonies at home were becoming an increasingly attractive experiment in dealing with unemployment in this period and will be further explored in chapter three. These early efforts to

¹³⁹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 10.

¹⁴⁰ *Times*, March 28, 1889.

¹⁴¹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 4.

¹⁴² *Times*, January 6, 1888.

¹⁴³ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 4.

send agriculturally-competent emigrants from East London to Canada set the SHES apart from the EEEF who did not implement such a scheme at this stage. The SHES offered to pay the entire cost of emigration for up to 100 of the men in the LCC scheme contrary to its self-help principles. Eighty-six emigrant men and their families were chosen for departure to Canada; fifty-six were wholly sponsored by the SHES and the other thirty paid part of their own expenses.¹⁴⁴ Thus, again the principles of self-help were not always in alignment with the society's practices. The principles of self-help were probably best applied for raising funds amongst a middle- and elite-class that believed in the righteousness of self-improvement and liberal independence. The SHES moniker and primary foundational principle of self-help thus remained more flexible in practice than in ideology and discourse throughout its existence.

One other feature of the SHES that set it apart from other emigration societies operating in East London, was its extensive network of imperial contacts. As early as 1886, the SHES had built an impressive coast-to-coast network of "correspondents" in Canada stationed as far West as Vancouver, whose task it was to help SHES emigrants settle in their new country finding temporary food and lodgings and securing employment for them. These emigration workers were not paid for their efforts.¹⁴⁵ Rather, they operated as transnational volunteers in frequent communication with SHES officials in London. By 1896, the SHES boasted seventy-two correspondents across Canada and thirty-seven in Australia and Florida.¹⁴⁶ Evidence of networking in Florida was unique in this period amongst emigrationists in East London who almost always touted themselves as imperial philanthropists sending emigrants to British colonies only. The EEEF, for example, frequently reminded its subscribers that in no cases did it sent any of its emigrants to the United States: "None of these cases for the United States received the slightest pecuniary assistance from the East End Emigration Fund. We never deviate from our principle of only giving money help to British subjects who are emigrating to the British Colonies."¹⁴⁷ The SHES's Florida connection remains a bit of a mystery as the society's records

¹⁴⁴ *East London Observer*, February 24, 1894; and *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893. These emigrants are hard to identify in the passenger lists because the SHES does not mention which ship this party sailed on.

¹⁴⁵ *Times*, November 11, 1886, January 6, 1888, and March 11, 1889.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, February 28, 1896; also see the *East London Observer*, April 20, 1895 for information on the SHES's "large and useful system of colonial representative" who had local knowledge. This system was believed to lessen "mistakes," presumably referring to choices in candidates for emigration and destinations. The editorial suggests that the function of the correspondent was also to hand over the emigrant to people in Canada who would employ them and look after them.

¹⁴⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 1.

indicate it was also committed solely to a colonial program of emigration. In its 1893 annual report, it states as its object: “To assist, by means of grants or information, in emigrating to Canada and other Colonies, those likely to make good colonists.”¹⁴⁸ Indeed, the number of emigrants going to the United States was negligible; only eight out of the 441 emigrants sent out in 1893 went to the United States, about as many as went to Australia (sixteen) and South Africa (fifteen).¹⁴⁹ At the height of the British Empire, emigration societies in East London were not about to advertise sending emigrants to the United States but undoubtedly some emigrants chose America as their final destination and others simply drifted there from Canada in search of urban work.

The SHES’s correspondent network not only secured employment for emigrants but kept in touch with them for a period of time after their settlement. These correspondents reported back to the SHES frequently to assure the society that its emigrants were doing well or to alert it of problem cases. In this way, the emigrants maintained a fair degree of contact with the philanthropic network that had facilitated their emigration. This connection had serious implications for their success, autonomy, privacy, and level of indebtedness for the privilege of emigration sponsorship. Take the case of a SHES emigrant “F.H.” His correspondent, Mr. Heath, Secretary of the London, Ontario Y.M.C.A., reported on F.H.’s condition to the Rev. R. Mackay on June 8, 1886:

Dear Sir, F.H. – has called on me and asked me to drop you a line, to the effect that he got here all safe and sound. He did not stop at Ingersoll as first intended. His brother, whom he hoped to meet there, had left and now lives in the city. F.H. – is working for Mr. H., a painter on York Street, and doing pretty well. He has 1 dol. 60 cents. a day and has rented a house, and got it partly furnished. Doubtless, he will get along well now.¹⁵⁰

In this short report to the SHES, Heath allays any concerns about F.H.’s ability to succeed after a slightly rocky start in Canada, even though he had ended up in a city, and explains why the emigrant did not follow the path intended for him by the Society.

Even though correspondents continued to make judgments about their viability as good emigrants, SHES emigrants displayed a desire to maintain connections with the charity and assure it its efforts had been worthwhile. It was important for emigrants to explain in detail the parameters of their employment and their degree of success in Canada which reveals a

¹⁴⁸ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 3.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵⁰ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 11.

combined, and sometimes contradictory, expression of deference, indebtedness, obligation, and gratefulness. Emigrants explained to the society, sometimes directly and sometimes through their correspondents, why they may have experienced failure or difficulty and what the correspondent did to improve their situations. “Mr. J.H.W.,” wrote to Mr. Marquette, the SHES’s most notable correspondent, when “things did not turn out well” at his first job in order for Marquette to find him another job.¹⁵¹ Correspondents also took care of families who fell ill, did their best with the limited funds the SHES sent them, and used their influence to get emigrants good jobs.¹⁵² These gestures were highly valued and thus correspondents were generally well-liked; one emigrant even described Marquette as an “exceedingly nice gentleman.”¹⁵³ While the emigrants may have hesitated to make negative comments about correspondents to the SHES that sponsored them, their honesty comes through in other matters in their letters explored in chapter four.

Emigrants do not seem to have been overly bothered by the interventions, interference, or other contacts of the SHES correspondents. Naturally, these emigrants may have felt they had little choice in the matter given the assistance they had received from the SHES, but there is convincing evidence that they enjoyed the contact with the correspondents more often than not. Indeed, some emigrants expressed their desire to stay in touch with their correspondents and other members of the SHES. “H.G” asked the SHES to forward his address to Walter Hazell as he had been unable to get in touch with him having lost his address; this inability to contact Hazell distressed H.G. enough to ask in a short letter to the SHES to please reconnect the two.¹⁵⁴ When some emigrants reached a certain level of independence they ceased to contact their correspondents. Mr. M.A. MacLean, a correspondent in Vancouver, reported to the SHES on the case of a young man who left Vancouver for Alberta who used to drop by and check in with him but since moving to Alberta and settling on his own land had ceased contact. While it cannot be known if the end of the contact signaled success or failure it at least suggests that the relationship had out-lived its usefulness to this emigrant. When the case of “H.G.,” whose work was more sporadic, and who may have from time to time been in need of further assistance, is contrasted with the young man in Alberta, a picture of why some emigrants stayed in touch with their correspondents and why others did not emerges.

¹⁵¹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 8, 29.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 7, 26, 39.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 33, 36.

In June of 1905, the SHES reported to the *East London Observer* that it had sent out a total of 7,943 emigrants to Canada since its inception in 1884.¹⁵⁵ It had been able to do this because emigrants contributed most of their passage money, the society contributing on average about one fifth of the costs through subscriptions.¹⁵⁶ This impressive number rivaled that of the EEEF who claimed 9,363 total emigrants between 1882 and 1905.¹⁵⁷ In an unprecedented collective fundraising effort to support emigration in East London, the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper promoted a “shilling fund” to send forty-nine families consisting of 230 persons described as “starving poor,” from West Ham to Canada in 1905 via the SHES and the EEEF.¹⁵⁸ The Hon. Harry Lawson, Liberal M.P. for Mile End and vice-president of the EEEF, bid the emigrants adieu reminding them of the imperial nature of their migration: “he [Lawson] was glad to think that the men about to leave England would soon be free and independent electors of the Empire in the King’s dominions beyond the seas.”¹⁵⁹ Some of the other philanthropists involved in this effort were long-time supporters of East End emigration like E.H. Kerwin and Frederick Charrington, former treasurer of the EEEF.¹⁶⁰

1905 appears to have been the first time the EEEF and the SHES worked closely together on an emigration scheme. In the annual report of the EEEF for 1905, the *Daily Telegraph* shilling fund is listed as having contributed the large sum of £2,064 3s. 0d. for this joint emigration project.¹⁶¹ This was by far the largest single donation the EEEF received in 1905, the Charity Organisation Society’s emigration sub-committee contributing the next highest amount of £1,176 2s. 7d.¹⁶² At other junctures in their histories, EEEF and SHES emigrants travelled

¹⁵⁵ *East London Observer*, June 24, 1905.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1905.

¹⁵⁸ *East London Observer*, March 18, 1905.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Edwin H. Kerwin was the secretary of the Tower Hamlets Mission and a close friend of Frederick Charrington, see: Guy Thorne, *The Great Acceptance: The Life Story of Frederick Charrington* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), accessed September 19, 2013, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/39999/39999-h/39999-h.htm>. Kerwin was also chairman of the Mile End Board of Guardians, see: Edwin Kerwin, *A Labour Colony in Working Order* (London: George Reynolds, 1895), accessed September 19, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/60217523?uid=3737720&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21102669388343>. Frederick Charrington was the son of an East End brewer who, after inheriting the family firm, became a radicalized philanthropist interested in issues of poverty, temperance, and emigration. He was one of the original members of the London County Council, a guardian on the Mile End Board of Guardians, and a councillor for the Stepney Borough Council. For more on Charrington, see: Arthur Cochrane, “Charrington, Frederick Nicholas,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed September 19, 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32375>.

¹⁶¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1905, 30.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 29.

together on the same ships but this does not necessarily signal a co-operative partnership; it may have been merely coincidence.¹⁶³ As early as 1894, the EEEF and the SHES shared the services of Mr. Marquette in Montreal. Émile Marquette worked in various capacities in emigration in Canada so again this is not to suggest co-operation.¹⁶⁴ Johnson suggests that there had been some attempt to merge the various emigration societies and charities working in East London in 1885 but that this idea failed to mature from fear that they would “lose their individuality and consequently their public support.”¹⁶⁵ Similarly, charities were fiercely competitive, constantly fighting for subscriptions and emigrants. It is unlikely they co-operated much before the twentieth century.

Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century and until at least 1910, the SHES continued to assist selected emigrants from East London to Canada.¹⁶⁶ Carrothers estimated that between 1901 and 1911 the SHES assisted 5,317 emigrants, the majority of whom went to Canada. This was considerably less for the same period than the EEEF which worked in conjunction with the Charity Organisation Society to send 17,631 emigrants chiefly to Canada. Indeed, between 1882 and 1913 the EEEF sent 26,623 emigrants to British colonies.¹⁶⁷ According to Carrothers, neither the SHES nor the EEEF/COS partnership could rival the Salvation Army’s 70,000 assisted migrants between 1904 and 1912.¹⁶⁸ In 1910, the SHES worked alongside the EEEF and other emigration societies to contest new landing restrictions in Canada passed in the 1910 Immigration Act.¹⁶⁹ By 1912, the SHES had merged with the EEEF, ending its independent status.¹⁷⁰ In the 1913 annual report of the EEEF, which that year changed its name to the British Dominions Emigration Society (BDES), there is no mention of the merger and no original

¹⁶³ For evidence of one journey where this occurs see: *Dundee Courier*, April 28, 1887 and *Argus*, April 28, 1887.

¹⁶⁴ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual report 1894.

¹⁶⁵ Johnson, 76-77.

¹⁶⁶ The last time the SHES is mentioned in the press on its own accord is in the *Times*, June 10, 1910.

¹⁶⁷ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1913.

¹⁶⁸ Carrothers, 253.

¹⁶⁹ *Times*, June 10, 1910. The press reported that a deputation of emigration philanthropists lobbied against the restrictions through the Colonial Office. The EEEF’s annual report for 1910 explains that some relaxation in the regulations was achieved by these meetings. What those are is unknown but likely points to some kind of arrangement wherein the Canadian Assistant Superintendent for Immigration in London would, more often than not, approve the charities’ cases. The EEEF’s numbers of approved emigrants did, however, decrease dramatically after 1906-07 from 6,096 that year to 833 the next. Between 1910 and 1913, the EEEF sent between no more than 1,456 emigrants to Canada each year.

¹⁷⁰ Marjorie Kohli, *The Golden Bridge: Young Immigrants to Canada, 1833-1939* (Toronto: Natural Heritage, 2003), 205.

members of the SHES appear in the committee list.¹⁷¹ The influence of the SHES appears to have all but ceased after the merger.

Opposition to Assisted Emigration from East London in the 1880s

Those who opposed a return to emigration programming in East London did so on similar grounds as those who had worried about it in the 1860s. Kitto lamented that critics of emigration were too quick to dismiss the notion, choosing instead to “keep these men here, with their children in a starving condition.”¹⁷² Critics of emigration worried that the labour-potential of East End emigrants was compromised by their weak physical condition and was of little value anywhere in the British Empire whether at home or abroad. Upon hearing the news of a renewed emigration movement in East London in 1882, several of these prominent critics wrote to the editor of the *Times* each expressing similar concerns about the condition of the poor in East London. Highlighted in these letters are judgments about the pitiable physiques, questionable morals, and inability to work of London’s labouring poor.

Captain C. Fitzroy’s letter of April 14, 1882 illustrates the shift in thinking about the effects of chronic poverty on the condition of the working-classes in this period. Fitzroy identified a number of factors that he believed had led to the degeneration of the London poor including indiscriminate and insufficient out-relief, unfit children, hasty training in trades at too young an age, an Education Act that allowed the young to leave school at fourteen years old, parental alcohol consumption, and a resulting inability to perform hard labour. These people, he worried, would not make good colonists and were “rotting the roots of our national tree.”¹⁷³ Fitzroy saw emigration as a stop-gap measure: “Cutting off a few unfruitful branches and planting them in fresh soil will not relieve the parent tree, except for a very brief moment”¹⁷⁴ As an experienced builder, Fitzroy believed that fit workmen were never out of work in England. He advocated the rehabilitation of working-class children, saving them from their parents’ bad influence. Finally, Fitzroy recommended that the remedy be found in applying the already

¹⁷¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1913. Unfortunately there is no surviving report for 1912.

¹⁷² *Times*, April 14, 1882.

¹⁷³ *Times*, April 12, 1882.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

existing Poor Law more strictly while abandoning both new schemes like emigration and private indiscriminate almsgiving that he believed only encouraged the poor to spend it on drink.¹⁷⁵

Social reformer Alsager Hay Hill held similar views. Hill was an active member of the Charity Organisation Society and a founder of labour exchanges in London in the 1860s and 1870s. Through the 1880s, Hill continued to work on issues related to the working-classes including unemployment, recreation, and working men's clubs.¹⁷⁶ Weighing in on the 1882 emigration debate in East London, Hill worried mostly about the disjuncture between emigration hype and actual emigrant selection. "I fear, as of old, 'many will be called,' and 'few chosen,'" he wrote in his letter to the *Times* on April 14, 1882.¹⁷⁷ Hill was concerned that Galt, the CPR, and Canada more generally, might not be "prepared to take the commodity offered;" like Fitzroy, Hill worried that the physical and moral condition of the labouring classes in London was sub-par by imperial standards.¹⁷⁸ With a certain degree of compassion, which is perhaps not surprising given that he had worked directly with the poor in East London since the 1860s, Hill worried that the false hope generated by the emigration movement was the greater evil:

To keep an increasing number of unemployed persons in a simmer of half-expectation and with their faces necessarily turned away from other markets where, perhaps, their intermittent services might be absorbed is, I venture to think, neither necessary nor philanthropic. The hope deferred which maketh the heart sick is responsible for more of the pauperism that surrounds us than many are aware.¹⁷⁹

Indeed, the emigration movement may have reinforced or aggravated internal class divisions in East London by overtly differentiating between the deserving and undeserving poor, refusing passage to presumed unfit applicants, and leaving behind those who were deemed unsuitable for colonial life. Those who were ultimately offered passage had beaten odds that would defeat most Eastenders – by finding a seemingly permanent way out.

Increasingly, in the 1880s and 1890s, successful selection also depended greatly on the emigrant's display of the principles of self-help. Prospective emigrants who did not display these attributes were generally not chosen. For those who hoped to be selected and never were, desperation, depression, and despondency may have been common effects of rejection. Likewise,

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ W. B. Owen, "Hill, Alsager Hay," rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009), accessed August 20, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33866>.

¹⁷⁷ *Times*, April 14, 1882.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., April 19, 1882.

emigration would have significantly altered and reconfigured local relationships, businesses, work patterns, and spatial use in East London. Emigration philanthropists gave little thought to these issues, at least on record. Very little is known about the aftereffects of emigration on East End people, places, and spaces.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, historians have said virtually nothing about whether or not emigration met its aims of bettering life in the East End for those who remained, or its intended effect on improving the labour market. More research is needed on these two points.

Another vehement opponent of the emigration system in East London in the 1880s was George Lansbury. Long before he became leader of the Labour Party, Lansbury got his start in politics in East London during the 1880s. Born in Suffolk, Lansbury moved to East London with his family as a young boy in 1868.¹⁸¹ He grew up in the East End under the influence of his local Anglican minister Reverend Kitto and as an adult settled with his wife Bessie at 39 Bow Road in Bow.¹⁸² In 1884, Lansbury, his wife, and children emigrated to Brisbane, Australia.¹⁸³ His experience there was unhappy and unsuccessful but fundamental to the development of his socialism; he worked amongst the urban unemployed in Brisbane and formed an opinion that emigration could not solve unemployment any better than what could be done at home in Britain. Indeed, in Lansbury's view emigration had simply transported the problem to the colonies perpetuating unemployment in the unskilled trades not just at home but now abroad as well. Lansbury found this to be depressing, noting that the workers he met in Australia had been "brutalized" by the demands of their back-breaking work.¹⁸⁴ Experiencing the suffering of men working due to economic necessity at what he believed were unpleasant jobs, prompted Lansbury to find humane solutions to hardship upon returning to England a year later. John Shepherd has argued that it was Lansbury's failed emigration that propelled him into liberal-radical politics upon his return to England.¹⁸⁵ Once he became involved in local politics in East London in the 1890s, Lansbury's platform centered around humanizing the Poor Law, including the establishment of decent and fair treatment of inmates in the Poplar workhouse. During his

¹⁸⁰ There is evidence to suggest early on in the 1880s that some people were quickly disillusioned with their emigration from East London. Lansbury and his returnees are but one case. See: *East London Observer*, March 29, 1884 for another example of a Mr. Matthias who spoke out at an EEEF-sponsored lecture about his personal knowledge that there were thousands in Canada and Australia who wanted come home to England.

¹⁸¹ George Lansbury, *My Life* (London: Constable and Company, 1928), 15.

¹⁸² John Shepherd, "Lansbury, George," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011), accessed September 12, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34407>.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Lansbury, *My Life*, 53.

¹⁸⁵ Shepherd, "Lansbury, George," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

time on the Poplar Board of Guardians he was also instrumental in the development of farm colonies for the unemployed which will be explored in the next chapter.¹⁸⁶

In 1886, Lansbury launched a campaign at various sites throughout East London calling for changes to the system of emigration and for accuracy in emigration information.¹⁸⁷ This was really his first public foray into the politics that would become his life's work. The anti-emigration group that Lansbury led met for the first time in January 1886 on an uncharacteristically cold snowy winter day in Mile End. Lansbury called the meeting to announce his plans for a conference on emigration in East London; he invited the agents general from colonial countries and experts on colonial trade and employment. Lansbury recruited other returned emigrants from East London to give testimony at these meetings about their unpleasant experiences in Canada and Australia. They all reported having had trouble finding work, receiving low wages, spending uncomfortable nights in emigration sheds or depots, and knowing people who sought shelter and food in colonial prisons. "It was disgraceful," said Lansbury, that given this knowledge "men – and plenty of them, too – were found inducing people to emigrate."¹⁸⁸ Revealing his budding radicalism, Lansbury blamed colonial capitalists for pushing workers out of East London, overstocking overseas labour markets and bringing down the cost of labour. Lansbury called for a working-class agitation on the matter and passed the following resolution: "That this meeting condemns the present system of emigration and pledges itself to do its best to bring about an impartial enquiry into the whole matter."¹⁸⁹

On January 22, 1886, the group held another rally featuring speeches from returned emigrants in Mile End. The testimonies of these returnees also revealed severe disappointment, disillusion, and resentment with the emigration schemes that had made claims to them that proved impossible to fulfill. Most of their complaints hinged on the slackness of trade in the colonies and promises of jobs that did not exist. The returnees also complained bitterly about the environmental harshness of the colonies, from frigid Canadian winters to scorching temperatures

¹⁸⁶ John Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 99, 133. Parts of this section appear in Elizabeth A. Scott, "Unite Idle Men with Idle Land: The Evolution of the Hollesley Bay Training Farm Scheme for the London Unemployed, 1905-1908," in *Rescuing the Vulnerable: Poverty, Welfare and Social Ties in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, edited by Beate Althammer, Lutz Raphael, and Tamara Stazic-Wendt (London: Berghahn Books, forthcoming 2014).

¹⁸⁷ See *East London Observer* throughout 1886; and Shepherd, "Lansbury, George," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁸⁸ *East London Observer*, January 16, 1886.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

in Australia.¹⁹⁰ Invoking a sense that British people should not have to go such places, the returnees called for emigration reforms that would allow the unemployed to find work in their own country, a country they believed had been made for them, the one that “God had given them.”¹⁹¹ Lansbury had found no beauty in the colonies and pleaded for an end to information that projected a “fanciful picture” of what life was actually like in Britain’s less temperate outposts.¹⁹² In his heavily anti-capitalist speeches Lansbury also tackled inequality in London.

Supporters of Lansbury’s lobby condemned the existing system of assisted emigration rather than the concept of assisted emigration more generally. In letters to the editor, readers of the *East London Observer* expressed their opinions about the dangers of sending Eastenders to colonies where work was scarce.¹⁹³ At other meetings throughout the first half of 1886, the group facilitated discussions about the alleged benefits of emigration for the working classes. These meetings were well attended and sometimes featured balanced views on assisted emigration. Prominent emigrationists were invited to the meetings including J.H. Tuke and Howard Hodgkin.¹⁹⁴ Some speakers contended that emigration was necessary but only for the right kind of Eastender, ones they called “thick legged men.”¹⁹⁵ But mostly, the meetings functioned to strongly denounce the present system. Lansbury and Thomas Barnardo openly criticized the EEEF’s selection methods and treatment of its emigrants at a meeting in March. These accusations fostered a fair amount of bitterness between supporters and opponents of emigration. At one meeting, the EEEF’s Frederick Charrington was said to have unkindly turned out the lights on the assembly in protest.¹⁹⁶ Barnardo’s involvement may point to the hostility embedded in the increased competition between charities that characterized the period, he being a prominent and publicity-conscious emigrationist of orphaned children. Anti-emigration meetings in East London in the 1880s were also bitterly anti-immigrationist. This is not surprising given the increasingly divisive context of East End ethnic demographics in the 1880s. Working men in attendance, looking for someone to blame for their labour woes, singled out recent Jewish and German immigrants as the reason for unemployment amongst English workers in East London. Whether or not this was the case would require extensive further research but what can be said is

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., January 16, 1886 and January 30, 1886.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., January 30, 1886.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., February 6, 1886.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., February 27, 1886.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., March 13, 1886.

anti-immigration sentiment in East London in this period was pervasive and was intimately connected to the emigration question.

The returnees made quite an impact, attracting a good deal of attention in the local press.¹⁹⁷ In Canada, anti-emigration sentiment at home was widely covered in the *Globe* (Toronto) newspaper in 1885-86. Throughout 1885, the Toronto Trades and Labour Council organized its members around an anti-emigration campaign specially targeting East London working men.¹⁹⁸ In early 1885, the Council made what the press called “a dreadful indictment against an incompetent and unprincipled Government” for allowing and encouraging assisted passages during a time of economic downturn in Canada.¹⁹⁹ In another scathing review of Canadian immigration policy in June 1885, the Council set out to explain “How the Dominion Government injures the Labour Market” by spending \$350,000 on assisted emigration from England.²⁰⁰ The Council had been following the emigration efforts of East London charities, expressing particular displeasure with the arrival of the Medland Hall men: “Your committee ... notice through Lloyd’s Newspaper of April 26th that the Congregational Union of the East End of London (Eng.) have shipped and intend to continue shipping at stated periods large numbers of paupers to Canada.”²⁰¹ Particularly disgusted with the position of the Canadian government, the Council commented on the ineptitude and madness of plans to settle the urban poor on the land:

‘With reference to the importations from the east of London, the Minister [Hon. Mr. Pope] records with satisfaction that it is possible for people brought up in cities, in many instances, to change their mode of life, and to become successful agriculturalists under the simple conditions afforded on the prairies of the North-West.’ The utter heartlessness of thus encouraging destitute people to the North-West is appalling.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ A survey of national British newspapers reveals that no other outlets covered the meetings and so the movement can be assumed to have been locally contained.

¹⁹⁸ See the *Globe* (Toronto), January 6, 1885 for the first of these articles. The labour movement’s hostility was, however, extremely conflicted and complicated when it came to English immigrants. David Goutor explains, “The pattern that marked labour leaders’ approach to continental European immigrants – intermingling compassion and even solidarity with demands for exclusion – was much more pronounced when it came to pauper and “upstanding” British immigrants. Labour leaders’ views of these migrants were often deeply conflicted, as they made substantial gestures of support toward them even while denouncing their migration in the most vociferous terms;” despite this ambiguity, English pauper labour did pose a significant threat to union labour in the 1880s: David Goutor, *Guarding the Gates: The Canadian Labour Movement and Immigration, 1872-1934* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 103.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., June 8, 1885.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

A paper by J. H. Scholes, representative of the Council in England, about labour problems in Canada featured prominently at the meetings and in the press.²⁰³ Scholes provided opponents of emigration in East London with evidence from Canada that “men from England were not wanted.”²⁰⁴

Later in the year, the *East London Observer* ran a set of debate columns between Scholes and Edwin H. Kerwin on the benefits and problems of the emigration of Eastenders to Canada with Kerwin in favour of East End emigration and Scholes opposed. Kerwin addressed the anti-emigration sentiment amongst Canadians in his second column, warning prospective emigrants that they should not be choosy about offers of work in Canada:

The fact is if a man goes over there determined only to get into his own particular line, and to do nothing in the meantime – well, he may as well stay over here and starve. What disgusts the Canadians is the imperious way of some of our emigrants, who, when they are offered a job, turn up their noses and reply, ‘I ain’t a going to do that; that ain’t in my line.’²⁰⁵

He included numerous examples of East End emigrants who had found well-paying work and were doing better in Canada than they had been in London.²⁰⁶ Most of what Kerwin highlighted in his columns reflected his work on the EEEF and his support of that organization. The EEEF equally found in Kerwin an eager committee member willing to travel to Canada to report on conditions there for prospective emigrants.²⁰⁷

Claiming to know the true facts of the Canadian labour market, Scholes responded to Kerwin’s claims about emigrant success in Canada in his column arguing that East End emigration would only lead to poverty, destitution, and disappointment.²⁰⁸ He noted there were debates underway in the Canadian Parliament about the viability of the emigration of London’s poor and that there was plenty of evidence to suggest emigration was not presently advised.²⁰⁹ Scholes noted that across the country, working men’s associations were opposing the emigration of townspeople from London for fear of losing their own jobs. In Toronto, the St. George’s Society reported that it was having trouble providing assistance to a great number of East End

²⁰³ *East London Observer*, March 13, 1886.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* A similar campaign, “No English Need Apply,” would materialize with more vigour than this one in the first decade of the twentieth century.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, October 30, 1886.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, and October 23, 1886.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, October 9, 1886.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, November 6, 1886.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* Kerwin refers here to a Canadian House of Commons debate on April 12, 1886.

emigrants that winter. Scholes commented on other limitations to Canadian emigration from London such as the inability of Eastenders to perform agricultural work, the lack of good pay and job security with the CPR, and the overarching reality that there was simply no room for England's surplus labour in Canada's overstocked market. Scholes stated that his motivation for alerting the public to these facts was based solely in his desire to present the truth and expose the "glowing descriptions" of the Canadian labour market produced by Canadian government agents, steamship companies, and "above all, by the so-called philanthropist."²¹⁰ Given that he was a representative of the Toronto Trades and Labour Council, it can be assumed this was a carefully-crafted understatement of his intention. The Council maintained its strong vocal opposition to East End emigration through 1888 in both the Canadian and British press.

Kerwin and the EEEF continued to claim that what they were doing for Eastenders was in their best interests, calling for prospective emigrants to "pay attention to those who only have their welfare at heart and whose motives are only actuated by a desire to do their fellow creatures a service."²¹¹ However good its motives, philanthropic knowledge of Canada was not always accurate, up-to-date, or attentive to the needs of Canada; the movement was generally inwardly focused, highlighting overcrowding, poverty, and lack of work at home. Idealized versions of Canada had also become conventional discourse in emigrationist publications and lectures as early as the first years of the reinvigorated movement. Even those who should have been well-informed about Canada's immigration preferences, like the Marquis of Lorne, Governor General of Canada from 1878 to 1883, made inflated remarks about Canadian opportunities for the English urban poor. Lorne delivered a lecture in the St. Mary's schoolrooms in East London for the EEEF in 1884, for example, entitled "The Advantages which Canada offers as a field for emigration to the Working Man," that well-illustrates the tone and messaging in these years:

the lecturer alluded to the favourable condition of the Canadian weather and the immense forests which provided inexhaustible fuel. There was everything there to attract settlement and nothing to repel it, as a farmer needed but small capital to start with, and an artizan might go there with the assurance of finding work. There was nothing to fear from the Indian tribes as they were now tamed and half civilized Farms, complete in homestead ... could be had for prices which, in England, would be considered ridiculous.²¹²

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid., December 18, 1886.

²¹² Ibid., March 22, 1884.

Other meetings in the 1880s highlighted the English character of certain parts of the colonies and their marked lack of poverty.²¹³ While Canadians may have been proud of this kind of promotional rhetoric about their country, they would have known, especially in cities, that much of it was simply not true.

Opposition to East End emigration was not limited to those who worked closely with the people of the district. George Osborne Morgan, MP and Under-Secretary to the Colonies in Prime Minister Gladstone's cabinet, wrote a lengthy condemnation of assisted emigration in *The Nineteenth-Century* in 1887 entitled "On Well-Meant Nonsense About Emigration."²¹⁴ Morgan took a great interest in failed emigration to the colonies in his role as Under-Secretary, eventually setting up the Emigrants' Information Office (EIO) in 1886 in part to address the problem.²¹⁵ The EIO functioned to provide government-published information to prospective emigrants in order to foster some standardization and legitimacy in emigration information in London. Morgan was a moderate liberal who extolled the virtues of Victorian liberalism – in his view free trade, industrialization, imperialism, Christianity, and science had made the lives of the working class better.²¹⁶ But for all of these improvements, Morgan recognized that unemployment was fast becoming one of the greatest social, political, and economic concerns of the decade especially in East London: "It does not require the harrowing realism of George Sims or the picturesque pen of Mr. Walter Besant to prove that where, as in the East End of London, the supply of workers is constantly overtaking the supply of work, wages will be driven down to starvation point."²¹⁷ He was not convinced that Malthusian theories of overpopulation had yet proven true but he was nevertheless concerned about overpopulation in towns and cities. In this respect, Morgan's views on land reform, aiming to keep agricultural workers in rural employment can be understood quite readily: what was needed to avoid over-congestion in the cities and a consequent turn to emigration was a program of small-holdings and other land reforms to prevent the filtration of rural labour into urban markets.

²¹³ Ibid., March 29, 1884. Lord Carnarvon wrote about Ontario in this article commenting that it looked and felt like England and was civilized.

²¹⁴ George Osborne Morgan, "On Well-Meant Nonsense About Emigration," *The Nineteenth-Century* 122 (April 1887): 596-611.

²¹⁵ Matthew Cragoe, "Morgan, Sir George Osborne," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2006), accessed September 17, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19221>.

²¹⁶ Morgan, 596-97; and see Cragoe, "Morgan, Sir George Osborne," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* on his moderate Welsh Liberalism.

²¹⁷ Morgan, 598.

Morgan's views on the inadequacies of state-aided emigration, assisted emigration, and emigration from East London more generally were formed during his time working in the Colonial Office. Morgan's work with returned emigrants convinced him that the current system required review. He stressed that there was an excess of bad information in circulation about emigration, stating it was "a question upon which more well-meant nonsense" had "been talked and written than upon any other subject under the sun."²¹⁸ This bad information, he contended, had directed unsuitable emigrants to the colonies only to find hardship and disappointment. In the case of the East End, Morgan stressed in his published writings that emigration to Canada was not at all desirable: "One thing, however, is certain. Nothing can be more unjust to the Colonies, nor more cruel to the subjects of the experiment, than the proposal to pack off promiscuous shiploads of half-starved 'Eastenders' to the wilds of Canada or Australia."²¹⁹ Part of his solution lay in preventing agricultural workers from drifting into London in the first place and in promoting schemes of agricultural colonization (which he defined as distinct from emigration) either at home or in the colonies.²²⁰ Such schemes, Morgan suggested, could be run through a combination of state-aid on the parts of both home and colonial governments, private subscription, and self-help.²²¹ This would eliminate the need for emigration charities that functioned to promote individual rather than collective emigration thus allowing for better control over both the dissemination of emigration information and implementation of other emigration schemes.

Morgan's indictment of individuals and groups producing bad emigration information surely referred to the proliferation of emigration literature and promotional events in London in the early 1880s including the work of the EEEF and other emigration charities. Oddly, Morgan praised the work of the Charity Organisation Society (COS) on emigration.²²² The COS began to work with East London emigration charities in this period to send out Eastenders to the colonies; their work will be examined in more detail in chapter three. In light of Morgan's praise of the COS it is perhaps not surprising to find among the members of the EIO committee in 1887 Mr. J. Martineau, Chairman of the emigration sub-committee of the COS. Also interesting is the presence of Mr. Walter Paton, the Honourary Secretary of the Central Emigration Society who

²¹⁸ Ibid., 600.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 602.

²²⁰ Ibid., 602, 605, 609-10.

²²¹ Ibid., 609-10.

²²² Ibid., 606.

promoted state-aided emigration.²²³ The Central Emigration Society was formed to promote both the assisted emigration of the unemployed to British colonies and to involve the government in a scheme of state-aided emigration. It was also concerned with providing good information to prospective emigrants. In this last respect it was particularly successful in doing so after the creation of the EIO.²²⁴ Many East London emigrationists Morgan might have taken issue with sat on the committee of the Central Emigration Society including: Kitto (who cautiously supported only very gradual state-aided emigration at this juncture), Reverend Panckridge, E.T. Wakefield, Walter Long, MP (and president of the Local Government Board), Captain Andrew Hamilton (EEEEF), Lord Brabazon (promoter of state-aided emigration), Reverend A. Stylmann Herring (Clerkenwell Emigration Society), and Reverend Hugh Huleatt who was involved in the emigration of the Moosomin settlers considered in chapter five.²²⁵ The presence of Paton and Martineau raises questions about the degree of influence the EIO committee had on the actual running of the office, the state's motivation for working with the very emigrationists it chastised, and perceived problems with emigrating the poor from London. Thus, the establishment of the EIO and its inclusion of certain emigrationists and exclusion of others, along with Morgan's writings on emigration, reveal a number of complexities and negotiations around the delivery of emigration programming in East London in the early 1880s. The state can be seen here to be negotiating its role within the praxis of emigration philanthropy both in its direct dealings with emigrationists and in its own research on the matter, research which was later compiled in the *House of Commons Select Committee Report on Emigration and Immigration* in 1889. The evolving relationship between the state and emigration charities would continue to change, modernize, and adapt from the late nineteenth century to the First World War; this is the subject of chapter three.

Conclusion

Chronic poverty in East London in the 1880s catapulted assisted emigration back onto the philanthropic agenda. The EEEF and the SHES in particular developed a sophisticated system of

²²³ Ibid., 601. For committee members see: Central Emigration Society, *State-Aided Emigration: A Report of Speeches Delivered at a Conference Held December 12, 1883 on the Invitation of the Central Emigration Society* (London: Spottiswoode and Co., 1883).

²²⁴ For more on the origins of the Central Emigration Society, see: *Sir James Rankin's Examination, Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Select Committee on Colonisation*, House of Commons, British Parliamentary Papers, May 5, 1890, volume XII, accessed September 19, 2013, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=sXATAAAAYAAJ&>.

²²⁵ Central Emigration Society, *State-Aided Emigration*.

assisted emigration in this period. Opposition came from several quarters, in part because of the boom in unprincipled emigration societies operating in the East End. The state showed some interest in assisted emigration with the creation of the EIO and its attempts to control emigration information in London after 1886. By the early 1890s, a much more mature assisted emigration scheme was in place in East London, run predominantly by charitable bodies but also in cooperation with boards of guardians. The emigration of the urban poor from East London in this period caused as much concern in Canada as had similar migrations in the 1860s; Canada remained on the defensive through the 1880s and especially in the early 1890s when its own economy was struggling. In 1890, General William Booth and the Salvation Army published *In Darkest England and the Way Out* ushering in a new debate that linked farm colonies, colonial instruction, and assisted emigration from East London together in a new discourse that would dominate the decade before new unemployment legislation was passed in Britain in 1905.²²⁶

Desmond Glynn argues that assisted emigration lost pace in the 1890s and ultimately failed because emigration charities were unable to establish a supportive official framework with Canadian authorities.²²⁷ This is, however, too simplistic an explanation and fails to account for conditions in Britain. Using a transnational approach, I find what is more convincing is that the direction of assisted emigration programming at home in East London changed course for two particularly complex reasons – the twentieth century ushered in new problems with post-Boer War unemployment and Canada imposed tighter immigration controls. Both of these developments pushed states to modernize their policies concerning unemployment and immigration. Emigration charities in London responded to these problems with new experiments in farm colonies at home while they reconfigured their relationships with boards of guardians and other charities. These changes resulted in new directions for assisted emigration before the onset of the First World War and are the subject of the next chapter.

²²⁶ William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: Salvation Army, 1890).

²²⁷ Glynn, 209.

CHAPTER THREE

Emigration in a Mature Bureaucracy: Poor Law Reform, Unemployment, and New Directions for East London Emigration, 1890-1913

“We have acted on the principle of careful selection of men and women who have come through the trials and temptations of unemployment with good characters for industry, honesty, and sobriety. The children of such parents are not unlikely, under their guidance, and in the freedom of Canadian or Australian life, to prove themselves citizens of whom any country should be proud, town-bred though they may be.”

- *East End Emigration Fund, Annual Report 1910.*

Introduction

In May of 1906, Henry Moore and his family of five found themselves in the Waterloo Road workhouse in Bethnal Green destitute and without a home. Henry had been out of work long enough to be unable to pay their rent; they were consequently “turned out” of their house with nowhere else to go.¹ Like thousands of families in East London in the early twentieth century, Henry’s story was not unique; winding up in the workhouse was a common consequence of the poverty cyclical unemployment produced. The Moores would not, however, have to stay long in the notoriously overcrowded and primitively-appointed workhouse.² By late June, Henry and his family found themselves on their way to Oshawa, Ontario, Canada where a job at Millside Iron Works awaited him. A job was also found for Henry’s wife. This new start was made possible by the interventions of several agencies working together on emigration in East London at the turn of the century: the Charity Organisation Society (COS), the Central (Unemployed) Body for London (CUBL), and the local board of guardians. Together, these agencies facilitated Henry’s new life within a highly organized, bureaucratized system of assisted emigration. The COS approved the family’s emigration and arranged for their outward journey, the CUBL paid the expenses under new unemployment legislation, and the board of

Note: Parts of this chapter appear in similar form in Elizabeth A. Scott, “‘Unite Idle Men with Idle Land’: The Evolution of the Hollesley Bay Training Farm Experiment for the London Unemployed, 1905-1908,” in *Rescuing the Vulnerable: Poverty, Welfare and Social Ties in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, edited by Beate Althammer, Lutz Raphael, and Tamara Stazic-Wendt (London: Berghahn Books, forthcoming 2014).

¹ *East London Observer*, November 10, 1906.

² Peter Higginbotham, “Bethnal Green (Parish of St. Matthew), Middlesex, London,” *The Workhouse: The Story of an Institution*, last updated 2013, accessed November 25, 2013, <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/BethnalGreen/>.

guardians processed their workhouse stay, investigated their character, and referred the case to the COS.

From the late nineteenth century to the onset of the First World War, thousands of emigrants left the East End in a similar manner; 1905-6 would prove an especially busy year with the passing of new legislation for assisted emigration enshrined in the Unemployed Workmen Act. Many of the assisted emigrants in this period faced opposition and deportation once they arrived in Canada.³ Whether or not Henry Moore's family faced the same fate cannot easily be known but there is some evidence that assisted emigrants sent to Oshawa in particular, indeed 1,500 of them, may not have fared well. J. Hall Richardson reported in 1909 that Oshawa had not welcomed the recent influx of assisted emigrants from London. An Oshawa newspaper felt the recent deportations of assisted emigrants were warranted and that the emigrants had in fact "signed the order for their own deportation, thus confessing their failure."⁴ Richardson also referenced the case of a London family of six deported from Oshawa who pleaded their case to a London magistrate once they returned to England; this could have easily been the Moores. This chapter will explore how the entangled relationships between new agents of assisted emigration developed and functioned as a response to persistent unemployment in East London in the early twentieth century. A history of new emigration programs for the laboring poor will also form part of this chapter, in particular home farm colonies. These changes in the direction of emigration programming in East London, however, did little to sway Canadian opinion about the quality and suitability of East London emigrants and by 1910 Canada officially closed its doors to assistant emigrants.

Fin-de-siècle East London was a tumultuous and raucous place. Terrorized by a series of horrific murders at the hands of a serial killer known ominously as Jack the Ripper, East London in 1888 was the subject of intense, sensationalized fear which solidified its reputation as the darkest place in England. In 1889, the agitators in the Great Dock Strike finally persuaded trade unions to admit casual labourers as due-paying members. Sidney and Beatrice Webb would write

³ A list of five deported families (a total of thirty-one people) sent out by the EEEF and the CUBL, for example, can be found in the Canadian House of Commons debates for March 30, 1907. These families were all described as public charges and some of the men were described as drunks, lazy, undesirable, and "shiftless," see: Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 10th Parliament, 4th session, vol.3, 1908.

⁴ J. Hall Richardson, "The Canadian Emigration Problem," *Fortnightly Review* (May 1909), 957-58. The Moores do indicate in a letter reprinted in the *East London Observer* on November 10, 1906 that things are going well in Canada but it is unknown whether they stayed. Further census research would have to be conducted as initial searches are inconclusive.

about it in their *History of Trade Unionism* in 1894 amidst the wave of “New Unionism” sweeping East London. In 1890, The Salvation Army’s founder General William Booth published *In Darkest England and the Way Out* highlighting the social ills of urban life especially in East London. His book outlined the Army’s colonies scheme that aimed to solve poverty with a healthy dose of Christianity, farm work, and emigration.⁵ Other publications like Arthur Morrison’s 1895 *A Child of the Jago* provided first-hand, although semi-fictional, accounts of the slum life of children in East London, spurring on lasting charitable interventions there.⁶ Perhaps the most influential of these publications were Charles Booth’s poverty maps and the series of early sociological investigations he funded into wealth distribution. Booth’s *Life and Labour of the People of London* provided striking visuals of the gulf between the rich and the poor in the capital.⁷ In politics, East London socialists and radical liberals under the leadership of Keir Hardie, MP for West Ham South in 1893, formed the Independent Labour Party (ILP) the precursor to the future Labour Party. In local politics, East London was increasingly represented by members of its own majority social class on borough councils, boards of guardians, and later in Parliament. Some of the most notable of these working-class politicians were Will Crooks and George Lansbury.

By the opening years of the twentieth century, East London was further economically destabilized by the war in South Africa. Reformers now descended on East London as an exemplary site of the phenomenon of long-term or even permanent unemployment as much as they remained concerned about its social and moral plight.⁸ In this context, working men, women, and their children searched, as they always had, for solutions to end or ease their poverty and avoid entering the old nineteenth-century institution, the workhouse. Still largely disenfranchised and dealing with ever-increasing levels of unemployment, working-class men and their families from the East End continued to be interested in emigration to British colonies in the 1890s and early 1900s. In these decades, they were presented with several new ways in which they could go about leaving England. The 1905 Unemployed Workmen Act, which created the CUBL, a ‘central body’ for the administration of unemployment relief and emigration assistance in the capital, especially affected East Londoners’ emigration experiences. Boards of

⁵ William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: Salvation Army, 1890).

⁶ Arthur Morrison, *A Child of the Jago* (London: Methuen, 1897).

⁷ Charles Booth, ed., *Labour and Life of the People*, volume 1-2 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1889-91).

⁸ It was around this time that the term “unemployment” came into common usage to describe the economic phenomenon of joblessness independent of individual agency. This is explained in more detail on page 187.

guardians also exercised their powers of emigration more often in this period than they had before the 1890s. However, amidst the widening of emigration programming for the poor in Britain, actual opportunities for new starts in Canada were becoming more difficult to find as the maturing nation progressively tightened its admittance regulations.⁹ By 1910, assisted emigrants were effectively barred from landing in Canada even when they were English.

The charities that had dominated the emigration landscape from the 1860s in East London largely continued their operations through to the First World War when most migration from the United Kingdom came, unsurprisingly, to an abrupt halt. Some of their operations in the 1890s have been discussed in chapter two. This chapter will consider their history in more detail from the 1890s until 1913, revealing new and changing relationships between emigration charities, boards of guardians, the COS, and the CUBL. It will also explore how unemployment and emigration discourses intersected to form new policies and practices for assisted emigration in East London. Prospective emigrants continued to be stuck in the middle of these complex relationships and suffered disappointment as often as they did selection. Even though they continued to face discrimination in Canada's emigration system, the number of emigrants leaving East London in this period generally increased until 1910 when the program began to decline. Assisted emigration in East London from the 1890s to 1913 was situated in an emerging modern bureaucracy subject to rigorous policy, legislation, inspection, surveillance, and program delivery. New emphasis was placed on emigrant training at home farm colonies in order to meet the Canadian government's clearly articulated preference for farm labourers over urban tradesmen. In this way, emigration charities tried in theory to take better heed of the needs of the Canadian labour market in this period than they had previously. The emigrants they chose, however, still rarely impressed Canadians.

Extended Relationships – New Partnerships Between Emigration Charities and ‘Others’

In the decade or so leading up to the First World War, emigration charities, local councils, boards of guardians, and national government began to work together more closely on assisted emigration in East London, eventually shifting the balance from charity to government.

⁹ Part of this was due to “cyclical unemployment problems and social unrest” in Canada after 1900 according to Keith Williams, see: Keith Williams, “A Way Out of Our Troubles”: The Politics of Empire Settlement, 1900-1922,” in *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*, edited by Stephen Constantine (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 22.

This new degree of cooperation in the practice of assisted emigration in East London was largely fostered by wider political and social changes in approaches to poor relief, unemployment, and migration in Britain. It was in this context that the direction of the emigration program in East London changed dramatically from a patchwork voluntary-sector approach generally rooted in Christian charity and liberalism to a more systematized and bureaucratized service characterized by more government intervention and secularism than before. The new cooperation also meant that the delivery of emigration services in East London became more intertwined and multi-directional, with many new people and agencies involved at every stage of the process. This section of the chapter will consider examples of these new relationships between emigration charities and other managers of the poor revealing the distinctly modern, more bureaucratic and systematized ways emigration was used to ease poverty in East London in this period.

Boards of guardians had long been able to assist poor emigrants to British colonies. Their powers to do so were enshrined in the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act and were revised on several occasions to reflect changing needs, attitudes, and migration trends throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Much of this legislation concerned the emigration of pauper or orphaned children but the law also set out the parameters for assisted adult emigration. Under the 1834 Poor Law, boards of guardians were legally allowed to use their rates (to a prescribed limit) to emigrate poor persons from their parishes and overcrowded workhouses. These entitlements stayed essentially the same until the passing of the Local Government Act in 1871 wherein a new approval process was created relating to Poor Law-sponsored emigrants. Under this new legislation, prospective emigrants now had to be approved not just by the sponsoring board of guardians but also by the newly created Local Government Board (LGB).¹¹ Because boards of guardians used emigration charities to facilitate the actual journeys of their emigrants, the emigrants also had to pass through the approval process of whatever charity made their arrangements. All of these regulations were explicitly applied to prevent colonial misgivings about poor English emigrants. In an 1889 memo, the LGB plainly stated the ways in which boards of guardians might mitigate these “strong objections:”

The Local Government Board have no wish to discourage boards of guardians in the discretionary exercise of their powers of aiding the emigration of poor persons, provided

¹⁰ There were legal amendments respecting emigration and the Poor Law in 1848, 1849, 1855, and 1866, see: Colonial Office, Emigrants' Information Office, *Emigration Statutes and General Handbook* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1892), 6-9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

due regard is had to the wishes of the Colonies, or of foreign countries, and such arrangements are made as are required for the welfare of proposed emigrants.¹²

For all of the power vested in them to emigrate their local poor boards of guardians tended to prefer spending their rates on out-relief and workhouses in the nineteenth century. Most of the evidence for boards in East London in the nineteenth century shows emigration being used only occasionally to send out adults; they were often more interested in sending out children. In their weekly reports to the *East London Observer*, East London boards of guardians reported sending out very few adults.¹³ Indeed, for all of England and Wales between 1881 and 1890, boards of guardians only sent out 4,278 emigrants to British colonies, about sixty percent of whom were children.¹⁴ Despite these low numbers, boards of guardians were still part of the assisted emigration equation in the period and there is evidence, for East London at least, that their interest in emigration broadened in the early twentieth century.¹⁵ Even though it was not frequently invoked, the Poor Law did legislate and dictate the ways in which the poor moved around the British Empire throughout the nineteenth century.

This movement repeatedly provoked colonial anxieties about pauper emigration and the stigma of the Poor Law-emigrant was largely inescapable. It is therefore not surprising that Canada reacted with tighter immigration controls in the face of increased adult emigration from England's Poor Law authorities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The real spike in this restrictive activity, however, occurred after the passing of the Unemployed Workmen Act in 1905 when thousands of unemployed urban workmen made their way to Canada. Likely, the troublesome intersection of class and gender also played a role in Canadian disapproval of these mass migrations – single working-class men descending in large numbers on Canadian cities may have provoked anxieties that were linked to their particular brand of

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 14.

¹⁴ Ibid. At least 2,483 of these were children under sixteen years of age. There is no breakdown between children and adults for 1881 and 1882.

¹⁵ For example, 146 children emigrated through the Limehouse Board of Guardians between 1906 and 1924, see: *Reports on Children Migrated to Canada by the Guardians of the Parish of Limehouse from 1906 to 1924*, Printed Booklet, Stepney Board of Guardians Records Collection, file number STBG-L-094-004, LMA. In south London, thirty-two children emigrated from the Greenwich union in 1906 alone, see: *Papers Relating to Emigration*, Greenwich Board of Guardians Records Collection, file number GBG 218, LMA. The Poplar Board of Guardians certainly increased its interest in adult male emigration from 1905. In April of 1905, it emigrated eighteen adult men, see: *East London Observer*, April 8, 1905. Another thirty-one men left Poplar for Canada through the guardians in 1907, see: *East London Observer*, April 13, 1907. On April 20, 1907, the Poplar Board of Guardians approved another sixteen adult cases.

masculinity. In other words, these men may have appeared to present a threat to social control and propriety.

The assisted emigration program in East London was always contingent on conditions in the labour market and the manner in which officials managed poor relief. If employment in East London had improved, either because of an upturn in industry or better provisions under the Poor Law, it is questionable whether emigration would have survived there. Steady employment would have likely reduced poverty to more acceptable levels which might have subdued reform efforts at improving the working classes in East London in all facets. Likewise, if the much-feared and stigmatized workhouse system had been abandoned earlier and out-relief had been brought up to more acceptable levels, the poor and philanthropists alike may not have been as interested in emigration. Because these conditions did not improve, economists, politicians, intellectuals, and philanthropists debated the aims and direction of unemployment policy and poor relief in Britain from the 1880s and found that emigration remained an option for dealing with acute and chronic unemployment in East London. Emigration was also invoked when new unemployment schemes such as farm colonies, smallholdings experiments, labour yards, and expanded out-relief programs failed. Indeed, assisted emigration would remain a viable solution to poverty until the outbreak of war in 1914 at least as far as British administrators of it were concerned. In peacetime, emigration was still being used to relieve poverty until Britain cemented the welfare state with the passing of the National Insurance Act in 1946. The coming of the welfare state essentially eliminated the need to emigrate poor Britons out of the United Kingdom on any kind of grand programmatic scale.

From the 1880s to 1914, debates around the future of the Poor Law in Britain ushered in new ways of thinking about the unemployed, unemployment, and poor relief. ‘Unemployment,’ since the economist Alfred Marshall began using the term in 1888, gradually came to be understood as not so much a moral problem of the failing individual but as a social scientific problem of chronic, sometimes predictable, cyclical work shortages in the labour market.¹⁶ In simple terms, the debate about the viability of the Poor Law in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was largely waged between those who supported the traditional deterrent aims of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act and those who did not. Deterrence was a central tenet of the nineteenth-century Poor Law and implied that poor relief should be applied at the

¹⁶ José Harris, *Unemployment and Politics: A Study in English Social Policy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 4.

lowest acceptable level to encourage the poor to return to the labour market; this was the notorious concept of ‘less eligibility.’ The ideology of less eligibility encouraged policies that created a system of workhouses and minimal out-relief in England that by the end of the nineteenth century was under severe scrutiny for its cruel treatment of the poor and its ineffectiveness in curing pauperism.

Throughout most of this period, supporters of deterrence included Charles S. Loch and the Charity Organisation Society (COS) and the predominantly conservative LGB.¹⁷ Radical liberals and socialists seeking less draconian and more sympathetic approaches, included the Fabians Sidney and Beatrice Webb, members of the Poplar Board of Guardians like Lansbury and Crooks, and those aligned with either Henry M. Hyndman and the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) or Hardie and the ILP.¹⁸ The dispensation of relief for the unemployed in this period was administered through machineries of both Poor Law officials (boards of guardians) and charities; the poor could apply for relief through both but were never guaranteed approval by either. Of the various agencies administering the Poor Law, each did so with varying degrees of severity or compassion, but most dealt with unemployment at the local rather than regional or national level. José Harris argues that this ad hoc approach “hindered the development of a more constructive policy” in the decades after 1834. One of these ad hoc remedies, or “abortive experiments” as she calls them, was farm colonies for the unemployed which will be examined in more detail in the next section of this chapter.¹⁹ Harris further notes that the primary aim of the Poor Law debates of the 1880s and 1890s was to address the social problems believed to have been worsened by chronic unemployment. In this vein, the ever-outspoken COS turned its attention to emigration as a new prong in its fight against indiscriminate out-relief in the 1890s. The organization aimed to run this program with the cooperation of existing emigration charities

¹⁷ C.S. Loch, chief executive of the COS, was said to “represent the COS in its sternest form,” see H. C. G. Matthew, “Loch, Sir Charles Stewart,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed January 1, 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34574>. Trevor Lloyd has argued that the LGB was “more merciful” than the COS in its attitude to the Poor Law but was still largely conservative in the early twentieth century, see: T.O. Lloyd, *Empire, Welfare State, Europe: History of the United Kingdom, 1906-2001* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 14.

¹⁸ Sidney and Beatrice Webb were two of the most prominent social reformers and critics of the Poor Law in Britain in the late nineteenth century and were members of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws. Will Crooks, also a Fabian, was an Eastender of working-class background elected to the Poplar Board of Guardians and later MP for Woolwich. Henry M. Hyndman was the founder of the Marxist SDF but never won a seat in Parliament. Keir Hardie was the MP for West Ham South from 1892 to 1895 and founder of the ILP involved in trade unionism in Scotland and London.

¹⁹ Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 2, 5, 363.

in East London. Other organizations would do the same throughout the period when it was expedient to do so.

The East End Emigration Fund and the Charity Organisation Society

In 1890, the EEEF and the COS joined forces to manage their emigration work in East London.²⁰ The COS was founded in 1869 to coordinate charitable societies with the Poor Law.²¹ Its founders included prominent philanthropists, social reformers, and politicians such as Octavia Hill, Lord Shaftesbury, William Gladstone, John Ruskin, Cardinal Manning and the Webbs. C.S. Loch was appointed its first chief executive officer in 1875. Supporting of a more literal and rigorous application of the Poor Law than some London charities, the COS worked to direct charities away from indiscriminate out-relief which it believed only further demoralized and degraded the poor.²² As it described itself, the COS “embodied an idea of charity which claimed to reconcile the divisions in society to remove poverty and produce a happy self-reliant community.”²³ The breadth of the COS’s program was impressive. Its main objectives were the following: to redistribute wealth from richer to poorer districts; to unite the wealthy with the poor to effect greater concern about them; to help those who had helped themselves by not seeking poor relief; to promote “temperance, self-dependence, frugality, and cleanliness” amongst the poor; to “discourage indiscriminate almsgiving;” to carefully investigate clients through home visitations; to work in conjunction with charities and boards of guardians to ensure cooperation and coordination; and finally to stop street begging.²⁴ The COS was also influential in formalizing and perpetuating the mid-Victorian distinction between the ‘deserving’ and the ‘undeserving’ poor, assessing each of the cases it investigated along this spectrum of moral

²⁰ Charles Loch Mowat, *The Charity Organisation Society 1869-1913* (London: Methuen, 1961), 90.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1-2. For a revision and complication of the “contested” origins of the COS, see: Michael J.D. Roberts, “Charity Disestablished? The Origins of the Charity Organisation Society Revisited, 1868-1871,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 54, no. 1 (2003): 40-61.

²² Mowat, 2; and Christopher Kent, “Charity and Philanthropy,” in *Oxford Reader’s Companion to Trollope*, accessed November 12, 2012, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198662105.001.0001/acref-9780198662105-e-486?rkey=4AD7LZ&result=10&q=charity%20organisation%20society>.

²³ Mowat, 1.

²⁴ *Minute book of the Hackney Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor; from Nov. 1871 Hackney Charity Organisation Society Committee*, Charity Organisation Society Records Collection, file number A/FWA/TH/A/03/001, LMA.

merit.²⁵ In order to best manage its services, the COS was divided into district commissions, the first of which were located in Poplar and Islington.²⁶

The COS did not, however, narrowly attempt to manage or control the flow of relief in London. Rather, the COS dealt with the complex web of emotional, physical, and spiritual causes and consequences of poverty in its attempt to reach the root of poverty for those suffering in the capital. This “social casework” formed the core of the COS’s activities and distinguished it as a distinctly modern charity in London’s poor districts.²⁷ In this way, the COS has often been hailed as an organization of early social workers. Indeed, its present-day incarnation, Family Action, claims that heritage as its own. In addition to its casework, the COS struck several committees in the 1880s and 1890s to deal with more specific problems of poverty like employment and sanitation. In 1886, the COS struck an emigration sub-committee to assist families who wished to emigrate to British colonies.²⁸ It continued this work until the onset of the First World War. In the late 1930s, the COS and the EEEF (then renamed the British Dominions Emigration Society) renewed their relationship.²⁹

The relationship between the EEEF and the COS was generally a cooperative one. This is perhaps not surprising as the two shared roughly the same philosophy about poverty and emigration.³⁰ Both believed in self-help, ending indiscriminate almsgiving, and promoting responsible charitable duty. In 1894, the EEEF reported it had entered into a “very satisfactory arrangement” with the COS’s emigration sub-committee.³¹ In 1899, the COS likewise reported in its annual meeting minutes that it was satisfied with the “good” relationship it had developed with the EEEF.³² The two bodies shared an office at 44 Newark Street behind the London

²⁵ Michael Roberts, “Charity Disestablished,” 40.

²⁶ “History – 1800s,” Family Action Website, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://www.family-action.org.uk/section.aspx?id=1155>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Mowat, 90.

²⁹ *Emigration Sub-Committee Minutes Book*, Minutes from Meetings Between 1936 and 1943, Charity Organisation Society Records Collection, file number A/FWA/C/A30/1, LMA.

³⁰ A joint letter to the editor of the *Times* seeking subscriptions presents the shared view of the type of emigrant the COS and EEEF sought to sponsor; that is, persons who were “independent and self-supporting,” see: *Times*, March 9, 1903.

³¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 3.

³² *Emigration Sub-Committee Minutes Book*, Minutes from Meeting on February 1, 1899, Charity Organisation Society Records Collection, file number A/FWA/C/A30/1, LMA.

Hospital in Stepney for which they shared all expenses.³³ They also formed an executive committee to deal with COS referrals.³⁴ The creation of the shared office, the drafting of shared paperwork, the employment of shared administrators, and the referral of shared cases suggests the two charities were committed to bureaucratizing and streamlining their processes in both principle and in practice. Efforts to streamline the charitable emigration program in East London made applications more straightforward for the emigrant but it also subjected them to more scrutiny by officials. They may have had to fill out fewer forms but they certainly had to deal with more officials. Not only did prospective East End emigrants now have to pass through the selection methods of the EEEF but they also had to be approved by the COS or vice versa. After the passing of the Unemployed Workmen Act in 1905, prospective emigrants would often have to pass through yet another set of officials on the CUBL emigration committee when they applied for emigration through the COS or the EEEF. These hurdles may have resulted in a higher number of rejections and stressors for prospective emigrants but it is difficult to confirm without the casebooks of the charities which are unfortunately unavailable.³⁵ What is immediately apparent is how the EEEF and the COS functioned together administratively to modernize their emigration programs in East London.

In 1894, the EEEF reported that it would have been impossible to have conducted its business without the aid of the COS:

it is obvious that without the assistance of the Charity Organization Society District Committees, who undertake the investigation of all our metropolitan cases, it would be impossible for us to deal with the hundreds of cases that come before us each year. It is only right that we should take this opportunity of bearing witness to the care and discretion with which such investigations are conducted by the London Charity Organization Society District Committees. Their work is our strength, and we only trust that by our advising District Committees on all their potential emigration cases, we have in some measure met our obligation to them by reciprocity.³⁶

It is highly doubtful, however, that the EEEF would not have survived without the arrangement. Through the 1880s and into the 1890s, the EEEF was presented with hundreds of cases and

³³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 3; *London Hospital Estate, Schedule of Leases, 1855, re: Lot 46*, Royal London Hospital Archives; and *London Hospital Estate Sub-Committee Minute Book, 1886*, Royal London Hospital Archives.

³⁴ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 3.

³⁵ There are some case notes in the records of the CUBL emigration sub-committee at the London Metropolitan Archives. However, these are not true case files. They could, however, be used to form a future study on decision-making and emigrants charities.

³⁶ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 4.

managed on its own to send good numbers of Eastenders to Canada when Canada was prepared to receive them.³⁷ In the early 1890s, as Canada capped its emigration landings in order to protect a recessionary market, and as the EEEF faced increasing competition from other charities, this fulsome acknowledgment was likely aimed as much at solidifying and protecting the monopolistic relationship the charity had with the COS as with getting as many emigrants through the Canadian gate as possible.³⁸ While there is evidence from the 1880s and 1890s of the EEEF almost desperately seeking subscriptions, such pleas were not unique to this period; the EEEF, and indeed all charitable emigration societies in East London, were in constant need of money and philanthropic support as evidenced by their pleas in annual reports and newspapers. Its relationship with the COS allowed the EEEF to expand its operations and the two together intensified the emigration program in East London, moving it towards a more systematized modern delivery capable of sending thousands, rather than hundreds, of emigrants to the colonies annually.

Records for the COS emigration sub-committee suggest that it met about once a year between 1898 and 1914. In these meetings, the COS chose its committee members, reported on its finances, considered problem cases, and discussed its business with the EEEF. By the early twentieth century, the COS's relationship with the EEEF had matured and fostered improvements in its joint administrative practices. In 1902, the COS sub-committee reported that under no circumstances were any emigration cases approved for departure without a prior meeting of the joint committee. At the same meeting the COS sub-committee reviewed its procedures for the filling out of application forms through the local district committees which were allowed to make recommendations to the COS on prospective emigrants. These cases were

³⁷ Between 1882 and 1894 the EEEF approved and sponsored a total of 4,792 to British colonies. It is not known how many of these went to Canada as the entire run of annual reports for this period has not survived (missing are 1886-87, 1887-88, 1888-89, 1889-90, 1890-91, 1891-92, and 1892-93). If 4,792 is divided equally into twelve years, the average number of emigrants sponsored by the EEEF was 399 per year in this period. While there may have been spikes in this average, and likewise dips, it can at least be suggested that the EEEF was operating an impressive emigration program without the cooperation of the COS in the 1880s. We know for instance in 1884-85 that the EEEF sent a total of 631 emigrants to British colonies (457 to Canada) and, in 1885-86, a total of 473 emigrants to British colonies (337 to Canada) on the strength of its own subscriptions, see: *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Reports for 1884-85 and 1894 for this information.

³⁸ The Church Emigration Society (CES) also worked with the COS but only until 1902 when it cancelled the arrangement; its numbers never rivalled the EEEF/COS numbers, see: *Emigration Sub-Committee Minutes Book*, minutes from meeting on June 18, 1902, Charity Organisation Society Records Collection, file number A/FWA/C/A30/1, LMA; and *COS Emigration Sub-Committee Annual Report for 1900-01*, pamphlet located in the above file. In 1900-1, for example the COS/EEEF relationship sponsored seventy persons for emigration as opposed the twenty-seven from the CES/COS relationship.

then forwarded to the EEEF for processing.³⁹ This lengthy but sophisticated process hinged on the importance of selecting the right kind of emigrant. Both the COS and the EEEF sought sureties that their reputations would be upheld in charitable circles; these processes reflected the need to formalize a system of selection that relied on the intense investigation of poor clients (a specialty of the COS) while at the same time reducing the costly duplication of work and multiple offices.

The annual report for the COS emigration sub-committee for 1900-01 reveals further details about the arrangement between the COS and the EEEF. Between 1899 and 1901, the COS sent out 115 people mostly to Canada, many of whom were from East London, through the EEEF. Together the EEEF and the COS collected 337 applications for emigration in 1900-1 of which it investigated 118. Of this group of 118, seventy people were approved.⁴⁰ This suggests that the joint committee had a fairly high rate of approval of fifty-nine percent for the cases it investigated which represented roughly one third of those received. In 1899-1900, the EEEF sent out 150 emigrants, forty-five of which were London selections referred to or from the COS; in 1900-01 the EEEF sent out 194 emigrants, seventy of which were referred to or from the COS.⁴¹ The majority of these selected emigrants went to Canada where they were received by Émile Marquette with whom, like other emigration charities, the joint committee had entered into a contract. He was paid an annual honorarium of £25 for this work.⁴²

The occupations of the seventy emigrants selected by the joint committee in 1900-1 consisted of the following: general labourers, tailors, French polishers, fitters' mates, handymen, domestics, and printers' labourers. There were also significant numbers of widows and wives and children joining husbands in Canada.⁴³ Marquette reported that a higher than usual number of COS/EEEF emigrants had actually returned to England, having saved up enough money for a return journey. However, most of these he said returned to Canada "at their own expense" within

³⁹ *Emigration Sub-Committee Minutes Book*, Minutes from Meeting on February 13, 1902, Charity Organisation Society Records Collection, file number A/FWA/C/A30/1, LMA.

⁴⁰ *COS Emigration Sub-Committee Annual Report for 1900-01*, pamphlet located in the above file. Eleven out of the seventy people who emigrated in 1900-191 through the EEEF/COS relationship were directly from the East End boroughs of Bethnal Green, Mile End, Shoreditch, and Stepney. The other fifty-nine emigrants were from equally poor areas like St. Olave's (City), Lambeth, Deptford, and Dalston. There were eight people from Stepney which was the second highest district number after Marylebone (thirteen persons). The East End numbers for 1899-1900 are not known.

⁴¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Reports 1900 and 1901 (there is no surviving report for 1898-99).

⁴² *COS Emigration Sub-Committee Annual Report for 1900-01*, pamphlet.

⁴³ *Ibid.* This group was made up of eighteen emigrants, the second largest group represented behind general labourers (twenty-two).

a few months.⁴⁴ There is no explanation for why the emigrants made these return journeys. We are left to make assumptions about why they might have done so – what is perhaps most noteworthy is that most deemed their lives in Canada to be worth returning to. Whether or not they returned to England to conclude unfinished business, collect family members, were homesick, could not find work in Canada, or wanted to try again to make a living at home remains unknown. In 1912, the Historian Stanley Johnson rather cheekily noted that, in his opinion, “no man who was work-shy and studied his comforts would leave London for Hamilton.”⁴⁵ This was in response to a letter in the *Times* from a resident of Hamilton, Ontario that suggested recent emigrants from London were the “scourings from London streets – the hangers-on to Church charitable organization.”⁴⁶ This sentiment implies that Johnson felt staying in London, where people had the benefit of charitable assistance and long-established social networks, was easier than resettling in Canada. The difficulty of making it in Canada may certainly have prompted return journeys to London but its prospects may have equally enticed many of those same people back.

In 1902, the COS/EEEF joint committee drafted a memo entitled “Suggestions re: Emigration” that included eleven points deemed to improve and modernize the emigration system’s functions and policies from a charitable perspective. The memo highlighted problems with the flow of information between governments, the COS, and emigration charities even though the Emigrants’ Information Office (EIO) committee included charitable representatives. The COS suggested that the charities partner with the EIO to form a “federation” for information and “common help.”⁴⁷ This desire for amalgamation fitted perfectly with the COS’s main function as organizers of charities in London. They also suggested that a council be formed under approval of the Colonial Office consisting of representatives from the emigration charities and the agents-general for the colonies. The council would report to the EIO on numbers, destinations, and occupations of sponsored emigrants and the EIO would in turn become a “central supply office” for information that charities could distribute locally.⁴⁸ From the outset the EIO committee had been formed instead of MPs, philanthropists, and “representatives of the

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Johnson, 33.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “Suggestions for Emigration Memorandum Draft,” in *COS Emigration Sub-Committee Annual Report for 1900-01*, pamphlet located in *Emigration Sub-Committee Minutes Book*, Charity Organisation Society Records Collection, file number A/FWA/C/A30/1, LMA.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

working classes.”⁴⁹ In the pre-war period, the national government directed most of its capacity on emigration towards the EIO rather than toward governing the process of emigration; it left that up to the various voluntary bodies and Poor Law authorities to administer.⁵⁰ Control over the EIO was really the only way in which the national government was involved in assisted emigration. Indeed, the 1889 *Select Committee Report on Immigration and Emigration* concluded that the government would not involve itself in a state-aid emigration program but that it would be prepared to increase the funding to the EIO.⁵¹

As the EIO had since 1886 assumed increasing responsibility for the distribution of emigration information in London, the proposed COS changes sought to decentralize the flow of information and return it to a system of local disbursement. The 1902 memo further suggested that the manager of the EIO would be tasked with new responsibilities and the council would assume a more influential role in the creation and processing of information and emigration services. The council would work directly with colonial authorities who would first approve the material and allow for the easing of control in the EIO.⁵² What the COS hoped these changes would achieve was manifold but overall it believed the changes would strengthen and reinvigorate the role of emigration charities in London that had experienced some decline in their powers to produce and circulate assisted emigration information since the opening of the EIO. The Earl of Stamford agreed to promote the proposed changes and begin discussions with the colonial office as soon as possible.⁵³ However, the changes were never debated in the House of Commons. Likewise, they were not reported in national newspapers suggesting the COS failed to move its agenda forward. Similarly, in its own emigration sub-committee records the subject was not broached again. In the decade before the First World War, emigration charities made none of the inroads with the EIO proposed in 1902. After the war, they were further shut out from the very machinery of assisted emigration they had helped to define, indeed been encouraged to define, in the 1880s and 1890s.

⁴⁹ Johnson, 29.

⁵⁰ *Emigration Policy Memorandum*, February 1, 1919, War Cabinet, reference number CAB 24/75/46, The National Archives, London.

⁵¹ Johnson, 30-31.

⁵² “Suggestions for Emigration Memorandum Draft.”

⁵³ *Ibid.*

After the First World War, historian Keith Williams argues, there was a “striking reorientation” of emigration policies in Great Britain.⁵⁴ As part of this reorientation, the national government became interested in more formally excluding charitable emigration societies from control over emigration with the introduction of a new emigration bill in 1919. A memo from the Colonial Office to the War Cabinet on emigration policy explains the change:

The effect of the Bill as it now stands may be briefly summarised as follows: - It sets up a Central Emigration Authority under the Secretary of State for the Colonies, competent to furnish information and advice to intending emigrants, and to carry out any policy with regard to emigration decided upon by His Majesty's Government, both, in the direct administration of that policy and in co-ordinating it with the policy of the Oversea Governments and with the efforts of unofficial bodies interested in emigration. It also gives the Central Emigration Authority power to exercise a reasonable measure of control over passage brokers and agents, and over the activities of emigration societies.⁵⁵

This bill was defeated in the Commons in part because of strong colonial opposition to any systematized emigration of the poor or unemployed, having fought such mass exoduses since the late 1840s.⁵⁶ Part of the British government's persistence with a program of post-war imperial settlement was directly attributable to the after-effects of war on population, gender imbalance, and the need for recognition of service.⁵⁷ The debates around the bill, and the introduction of various schemes for ex-serviceman and ex-servicewomen between 1919 and 1922 resulted in the eventual passing of the Empire Settlement Act in 1922 which marked the most significant national government intervention in overseas settlement since the 1820s when it had played an active role in the colonization of British North America, Australia, and New Zealand.⁵⁸ The President of the LGB's reasoning for limited government intervention in imperial emigration

⁵⁴ Williams, 22.

⁵⁵ *Emigration Policy Memorandum*, War Cabinet.

⁵⁶ Williams, 23. See footnote number 178 in Chapter One for more on government problems with assisted emigration of the poor in the 1840s.

⁵⁷ Kent Fedorowich, “The Assisted Emigration of British Ex-Servicemen to the Dominions, 1914-1922,” in *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*, edited by Stephen Constantine (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 45-46; Kent Fedorowich, “The Migration of British Ex-Servicemen to Canada and the Role of the Naval and Military Emigration League, 1899-1914,” *Social History/Histoire Sociale* 25, no. 49 (1992), 75; Janice Gothard, “The Healthy, Wholesome British Domestic Girl’: Single Female Migration and the Empire Settlement Act, 1922-1930,” in *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*, edited by Stephen Constantine (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 74; and Lucy Noakes, “From War Service to Domestic Service: Ex-Servicewomen and the Free Passage Scheme, 1919-22,” *Twentieth Century British History* 22, no. 1 (2011), 1.

⁵⁸ Williams, 22. For the early nineteenth century and in particular the British government's active role in emigration in the 1820s, see: C.E. Snow, “Emigration from Great Britain,” in *International Migrations, Volume II: Interpretations*, edited by Walter Wilcox (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1931), 243-47.

between 1906 and 1914 was to avoid the perception of colonial preference and maintain a position of neutrality. During this pre-war period, the national government was also uninterested in interfering with long-standing emigration philanthropists who, in their view, were generally doing an acceptable job of the business of emigration.⁵⁹ In a new post-war world that had experienced such tremendous destabilization and loss, the emigration problem had thus become a more pressing national one. No longer was assisted emigration only a matter concerning the poor underemployed family in East London, but it was now a tool that could be used to completely reconfigure the imperial landscape, one in which the boundaries of empire had contracted and flexed as a necessity of war. Unemployment remained a key feature of post-war assisted emigration but as a consequence of war rather than as an imbalance in the market.⁶⁰

Despite failed efforts to modernize the emigration system at the government level in 1902, the COS carried on an impressive emigration program in East London and London more widely with the continued assistance of the EEEF and, after 1905, the CUBL. The emigration efforts of the CUBL will be discussed further below but what can be said here is that between 1905 and 1907, the EEEF, the COS, and the CUBL together sent an unprecedented number of unemployed Londoners to Canada.⁶¹ For example, of the 3,955 emigrants the EEEF and the COS joint committee sent out in 1906, the CUBL paid for 1,760. In 1907, of the remarkable 6,103 emigrants sent out under the EEEF and the COS joint committee to British colonies, 2,377 were sponsored by the CUBL. Almost all of these emigrants went to Canada – 3,930 in 1905-6 and 6,096 in 1906-7.⁶² This influx of unemployed Londoners prompted Canadian officials to restrict assisted emigration in 1906, 1908, and 1910.⁶³

Before its program ended in 1913 the COS emigration sub-committee published one more annual report in 1912. This report provides a glimpse of the program near the end of its life and the aftereffects of changes to Canadian immigration law. The report speaks to the “general criticism prevailing with regard to emigration work.”⁶⁴ The COS can be seen here to be

⁵⁹ Williams, 29.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶¹ W.A. Carrothers notes that the CUBL sent out 21,000 unemployed men between 1905 and 1912, 13,000 of which were from London, see: W.A. Carrothers, *Emigration from the British Isles: With Special Reference to the Development of the Overseas Dominions* (1929; repr., London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), 252.

⁶² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Reports for 1906 and 1907.

⁶³ Valerie Knowles makes a similar argument, see: Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 111.

⁶⁴ *COS Emigration Sub-Committee Annual Report for 1912*, pamphlet located in *Emigration Sub-Committee Minutes Book*, Charity Organisation Society Records Collection, file number A/FWA/C/A30/1, LMA.

grappling with one of the foremost tensions in the emigration of the unemployed in London. On the one hand critics chastised emigrationists for sending England's best and brightest workmen to British colonies leaving behind those who were deemed unfit: on the other emigrationists could not send the unfit to the colonies as they would usually be refused. Therein lay the crux of the assisted emigration dilemma – who should stay and who should go and how would they be received? The COS's solution to this problem was the following: “[the emigration sub-committee] maintain that to assist men of good character and physique unable to obtain adequate work and in danger of demoralization from the lack of the necessaries of a decent life should disarm criticism from both sides.”⁶⁵ In order to quell criticism, the COS, like other emigration charities, included in its annual reports snippets of letters from their emigrants who had successfully settled in Canada.

As a charity concerned primarily with helping the ‘deserving’ unemployed, the COS subscribed to a more general view in the early twentieth century about the seemingly permanent nature of unemployment in the capital. The contrast between Canada and London in this period remained as it had ever since assisted emigration first became a mechanism by which to move the poor from one part of the Empire to another – that Canada could provide work where London could not:

It is not necessary to multiply such extracts to show the opportunities that await the willing workers in our dominions overseas, and the Committee's experience of the difficulties in the way of adequately helping a family in need through lack of work in London immensely strengthens the force of the contrast.⁶⁶

Yet restrictions to Canada's immigration law meant that fewer assisted emigrants made it through the gates. Because of the difficulty assisted emigrants faced in entering Canada after 1910, the COS grew anxious to increase the number of cases it sent to Australian colonies. One of the ways in which the COS and other charities were able to continue to send emigrants to Canada was by earmarking the assistance provided as a loan and increasing the numbers of people sent out to friends and family who could help them settle.⁶⁷ Interestingly, in the present

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

day, Canadian applications for permanent residence in the skilled worker category still give preference to those who have established ties, friends, or family in Canada.⁶⁸

Of the 463 people the COS and the EEEF sent out in 1912, 388 went to Canada. These 388 formed eighty-six families, twelve of which were confirmed from the East End (Bethnal Green, Poplar, Shoreditch, and West Ham). The other families hailed from other poor districts in London. Of the 463, the most common occupations were carmen, general labourers, painters, and plasterers – a mix of skilled and unskilled labour. There were also ninety-six widows, wives, and children joining husbands or other family members.⁶⁹ In 1913, the joint committee sent 404 of its total of 468 emigrants to Canada.⁷⁰ The COS emigration sub-committee met twice in 1914 to draft its annual report and choose its chairman for the year. This was the last time it would meet before the war: it would not reconvene until 1936, when it revisited its relationship with the EEEF.⁷¹

Between 1893 and 1913, the COS and the EEEF joint committee sent out 12,145 poor emigrants to British colonies, 11,454 of which went to Canada. This accounted for about half of the EEEF's total count of 22,152 emigrants to all British colonies in the same period.⁷² The relationship was thus a fruitful one and significantly expanded the EEEF's program. In the twelve years prior, the EEEF had been able to send out 4,792 emigrants to British colonies for a pre-war total of 26,623. While the EEEF never produced the kinds of numbers achieved by other emigration philanthropists such as Barnardo's or the Salvation Army, its influence and reach were nevertheless impressive. What started out as a small local charity in Stepney became a highly-functioning assisted emigration promoter, facilitator, and processor that helped not just

⁶⁸ The current federal permanent residence eligibility process in the skilled worker category is based on points. Points are given for applicants who have family already settled in Canada which means these applicants have a better chance of approval than those who cannot claim these points (those applicants may, of course, accumulate points in other categories like language ability or education but the point is that family in Canada provides the applicant with points towards their suitability and settlement ability as Canadian permanent residents). See: *Application for Permanent Residence Economic Classes – Federal Skilled Workers Schedule 3*, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Government of Canada, current as of November 26, 2013, accessed November 26, 2013, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/imm0008_3e.pdf.

⁶⁹ *COS Emigration Sub-Committee Annual Report for 1912*, pamphlet. Another family from the East End (Stepney) went to Australia.

⁷⁰ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1913. That year the EEEF also sent 1,031 to Canada out of a total of 1,101 emigrants. Together with the COS joint committee, 1,569 emigrants were sent to British colonies, with 1,435 going to Canada.

⁷¹ *Emigration Sub-Committee Minutes Book*, Charity Organisation Society Records Collection, file number A/FWA/C/A30/1, LMA. The COS wanted to terminate the old arrangement and enter into a new one with the EEEF (BDES) if it agreed. However, this does not appear to happen or it is at least unclear if it did.

⁷² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1913.

East London families emigrate but those suffering in other parts of the capital and beyond. It worked tirelessly to promote its legitimacy as an emigration agency in the face of multiple instances of opposition, some of which were warranted, some of which simply played on the fears and discriminations of poor Londoners on either side of the Atlantic. Nevertheless, the EEEF pursued its own self-preserving philanthropic agenda of poverty reduction. This would have severe consequences for assisted emigrants since the charity often ignored Canadian information about the labour market. Often, its emigrants fared badly after arrival. Like other emigration charities, the EEEF continued to send poor emigrants to Canada when Canada did not want them. Some historians have argued that the EEEF and other emigration charities in London were fiercely competitive in this endeavor. However, there were moments of cooperation that have hitherto been overlooked. What follows is an exploration of perhaps the most exceptional of those moments in 1905.

The Daily Telegraph Shilling Fund – Unparalleled Co-operation Between Charities

West Ham, a suburb just east of the East End proper, housed a large working-class population in 1905. At the turn of the century, the area suffered from fluctuations in the labour market and unemployment grew to epic and unmanageable proportions. Much of this problem was attributable to the problem of casual labour for those who sought work in the Victoria and Albert docks making chronic cyclical unemployment a particular phenomenon in West Ham.⁷³ From 1901, available hours of work in the docks began to generally decline after having remained relatively steady into the late 1890s. Researching these economic problems in West Ham, Edward G. Howarth and Mona Wilson have deduced that the rise in pauperism (or those seeking poor relief) between 1901 and 1905 directly corresponded with the decline in the availability of work at the docks. They also found that pauperism rates in 1905 were exceptional and “abnormal” after a “cyclical depression of trade reached its culminating point.”⁷⁴ The combination of the collapse of the demand for labour caused by the recent Boer War, and a thick fog, saw work grind to a halt in the winter of 1904-5. Many men worked in the building trades in West Ham in the first years of the twentieth century which created casual conditions of labour;

⁷³ Edward Howarth and Mona Wilson, *West Ham; A Study of Social and Industrial Problems; Being the Report of the Outer London Inquiry Committee* (London: J.M. Dent and Co., 1907), vii.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 345-46.

frequent bankruptcies of builders did little to help.⁷⁵ Families in West Ham were so badly off that many were said to have pawned virtually all of their belongings including clothing, furniture, and blankets and had limited access to food or fuel. The Toronto *Globe* reported to Canadians that “at the centre of British power and civilization” was a teeming mass of starving men and their families in West Ham: “Through the blinding fog that reigned on the riverside and in the miserable streets hundreds of woe-begone men, chilly in their scanty clothing, walked dully to find warmth.”⁷⁶ It was in this highly distressed winter atmosphere that London newspapers launched charitable campaigns to raise extra relief funds for those suffering in the East London suburb.⁷⁷

The newspaper campaigns of the *Daily Telegraph*, the *News of the World*, and the *Daily News* began as out-relief projects delivering cash to the needy unemployed in West Ham in conjunction with the efforts of the local board of guardians. This initial system proved to be unworkable mostly because the relieving officers could simply not keep up with the demand for funds. The *Daily News* found work for some men paving and painting but these schemes tended not to last very long and were temporary in nature. The *Daily Telegraph* decided that it would turn its attention instead to a scheme of emigration. It was a scheme that could provide a permanent solution to the distress in West Ham. As much as these newspapers believed they were helping solve poverty in West Ham, they actually created more problems. Casual labourers began to flock to West Ham from other parts of the city attracted by reports of relatively easy access to out-relief thereby exacerbating the problem. Moreover, the newspapers created an atmosphere of universal panic in the area, painting all parts of West Ham with the same brush when in fact conditions were dire in only some parts of the borough.⁷⁸ Howarth and Wilson agreed that pauperism in West Ham eased after 1905, but not because of emigration:

The amount of pauperism decreased very considerably after 1905, owing mainly to better administration due to experience gained from the past, more strict control from the Local Government Board, the gradual improvement of trade, and the creation in September 1905 of a Distress Committee for the purpose of dealing with the unemployed.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 340, 346.

⁷⁶ *Globe* (Toronto), January 13, 1905.

⁷⁷ The board of guardians allowed the funds to be dispersed as out-relief to able-bodied men which was not the norm, see: Howarth and Wilson, 347.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 347-49; and *East London Observer*, April 8, 1905.

⁷⁹ Howarth and Wilson, 349.

However, for the approximately 1,000 emigrants who left West Ham for Canada in 1905 with the assistance of the *Daily Telegraph* funds, prospects of a bright and secure future in East London surely seemed slim in comparison.

The *Daily Telegraph* had aspirations of raising over £20,000 in order to sponsor 3,500 unemployed labourers and their families from West Ham to Canada in 1905.⁸⁰ While these ambitious figures were never reached, the campaigners still managed to raise just under £15,000 which allowed them to assist about 1,000 people to emigrate.⁸¹ In an unprecedented co-operative move, the Salvation Army, the SHES, and the EEEF worked together with the *Daily Telegraph* to send these emigrants to Canada.⁸² At its height, over forty-five distinct agencies and interests were working on the shilling fund campaign, either raising funds or administering the emigration scheme that came from it.⁸³ It seemed for a moment that everyone wanted to help. Many of the most important emigrationists in East London formed part of this collective including Frederick Charrington, E.H. Kerwin, T.M. Kirkwood (the new Chairman of the EEEF), Robert Culver (Secretary, EEEF), Reverend E. Wilson Gates, the Hon. Harry Lawson, MP for Mile End, and representatives from the Salvation Army, the Church Army, and the London City Mission along with dozens of local vicars and reverends.⁸⁴ All of the unemployed men this committee selected were first put through a course of agricultural training at one of the newly-established emigration farm colonies around the London perimeter. These colonies will be explored in further detail below. Men selected for emigration under the newspaper scheme travelled to either the Salvation Army's Hadleigh Farm or Frederick Charrington's unemployment make-work scheme at Osea Island in Essex to be tested for their ability to perform physical labour or agricultural labour before transportation to Canada.⁸⁵ There is no record of whether every man chosen at the home colonies stage was granted final approval but it is unlikely all of them made it to Canada.

In an effort to possibly stall the emigration of too great a number of unemployed East Londoners yet again descending on Canadian shores, the Toronto *Globe* organized its own

⁸⁰ *Globe* (Toronto), January 2, 1905; *Evening Post* (New Zealand), February 25, 1905.

⁸¹ *East London Observer*, April 8, 1905. The entirety of this sum was not used for emigration. Some of the money was initially used for out-relief before the newspaper decided on emigration as its key objective.

⁸² For the most accurate description of these efforts, see: *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Times*, January 3, 1905.

⁸⁴ *East London Observer*, April 8, 1905. Harry Lawson had inherited ownership of the *Daily Telegraph* from his father.

⁸⁵ *Press* (New Zealand), July 29, 1905; *East London Observer*, March 18, 1905 and April 8, 1905; and *Globe* (Toronto), June 23, 1905.

charitable fund for the unemployed in West Ham, an area of East London the editors said both Canadians and Brits knew relatively little about.⁸⁶ The *Globe*'s "London Poor Fund" raised \$5,721.35(Canadian) to be dispensed through local charities for relief at home in West Ham.⁸⁷ *Globe* readers were said to have responded to the harrowing stories of poverty in West Ham and wished to help in some way. The money raised, however, was not well-received by those administrating the *Daily Telegraph* Shilling Fund in London who wished instead to direct such funds towards emigration. J. Hall Richardson, special commissioner for the fund, all but chastised the *Globe* for its interference in local affairs, claiming the Canadian money had "frustrated" the *Telegraph* scheme.⁸⁸ Richardson claimed that families who took the *Globe* relief would have otherwise emigrated. The *Globe* countered this claim citing that "kindness of heart" had been the only motivation in raising funds for the poor in West Ham. Furthermore, the *Globe* said it would never interfere in "local conditions and local machinery," its intentions being completely honourable.⁸⁹ The newspaper even went so far as to say that newcomers to Canada could certainly not arrive without proper clothing and food and that their assistance could at least help prevent the arrival of destitute emigrants should they proceed in leaving Britain.⁹⁰ Whatever their motivations, the *Globe* and the *Daily Telegraph* funds made an impact in West Ham and resulted in the sending out of a great number of families from an area of highly visible poverty in 1905.

The Daily Telegraph Shilling Fund and the emigration charities it worked with boasted having chosen only the best workmen for emigration, claiming that "a better, fitter set of emigrants had never been selected to leave our shores."⁹¹ Lawson believed that emigration of the unemployed workmen from West Ham had tangible imperial benefits. In his view, the men could become "free and independent electors of the Empire of the King's Dominion beyond the seas."⁹² Despite the imperial overtones, the committee still found it regrettable they had to send

⁸⁶ *Globe* (Toronto), February 15, 1905 and May 18, 1905. For its part the *Globe* never claimed to be stalling the emigration of more London poor. They were, however, accused of this by J. Hall Richardson in his essay "An Emigration Experiment" in the *Monthly Review*, 1905, which was reprinted in excerpts in the *Globe* (Toronto), June 23, 1905. Also see: *Press* (New Zealand), June 29, 1905 which called the *Globe* fund an "opposition fund" to tide over the West Ham poor in the hopes they would not come to Canada.

⁸⁷ *Globe* (Toronto), May 18, 1905.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, June 23, 1905.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *East London Observer*, April 8, 1905.

⁹² *Ibid.*, March 18, 1905.

anyone away from home in the first place. The committee had chosen these 1,000 out of 17,000 who had inquired.⁹³ Presumably, the 17,000 represented inquiries made by male heads of families which would have made for a much higher number when the entire family was accounted for. Indeed over 120,000 people in West Ham were living below Rowntree's poverty line in 1905 and at least 10,000 were chronically unemployed. In one week in December 1904, for example, there were 25,378 people on out-relief in the suburb.⁹⁴ According to the 1901 UK census, the total population in West Ham was 267,358 which meant that about half lived in abject poverty and at any given time ten percent were on out-relief.⁹⁵ When these numbers are considered against the number of the applicants for emigration, a picture of desperation clearly begins to emerge.

Canadians had mixed feelings about these "out-of-work townsfolk" as they arrived en masse in 1905 but they were generally quite well-received, at least by the public, despite initial skepticism.⁹⁶ The West Ham emigrants who arrived in Canada between January and April of 1905 were settled mostly in Ontario and Manitoba.⁹⁷ Many were general labourers or agricultural labourers, mechanics, dockers, and other skilled tradesmen.⁹⁸ The *Globe* reported that of the 700 West Ham emigrants who had already passed through Toronto most were "thoroughly cosmopolitan" (it is difficult to say whether this was a criticism or a compliment but it was probably a criticism), but that some were "plainly above the average" in terms of "means and intelligence."⁹⁹ Yet, the *Globe* worried that the quality of the West Ham emigrants might not be sufficient for the needs of the Canadian labour market: "it is doubtful to what extent the settler of

⁹³ Ibid., April 8, 1905.

⁹⁴ *Globe* (Toronto), January 21, 1905; also see: Howarth and Wilson for more specific statistics by area, date, occupation, in-/out-relief, and workhouse admittance.

⁹⁵ Howarth and Wilson, 6.

⁹⁶ *Press* (Christchurch, New Zealand), July 29, 1905.

⁹⁷ Ibid. Also consult the Library and Archives Canada Canadian Passenger Lists 1865-1922 Database, available at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passenger/index-e.html>, for passenger lists related to this scheme. The passenger lists show the emigrants' destinations in Canada. The ships include the *Lake Manitoba* which left Liverpool on January 24, 1905, the *Lake Erie* which left Liverpool on February 25, 1905, the *Lake Champlain* which left Liverpool on March 21, 1905, the *Dominion* which left Liverpool on March 16, 1905, the *Kensington* which left Liverpool on March 30, 1905, the *Vancouver* which left Liverpool on March 23, 1905, and the *Canada* which left Liverpool on an unknown day in April of 1905. While passengers are not listed as being part of a particular group certain trends can be noticed. Many general labourers and agricultural labourers are listed as hailing from Essex and destined for similar places in Canada like Belleville, Ontario and Winnipeg, Manitoba with large families in the passenger lists for these ships. Extensive research would need to be carried out using census data for Canada and Britain to determine if these are all people connected with the West Ham emigration scheme which this project does not allow for.

⁹⁸ *East London Observer*, April 8, 1905; and passenger lists for ships noted in footnote above.

⁹⁹ *Globe* (Toronto), March 31, 1905.

a type desirable for Canada and competent to face the new condition arising here is to be found among the underfed, city-bred population of a crowded London suburb.”¹⁰⁰ Richardson reported to the *Times* in August of 1905 that approximately ninety percent of the Salvation Army emigrants sent out under the Fund had been placed in agricultural jobs. According to Richardson, the Salvation Army had, however, applied the definition in its “widest sense.”¹⁰¹ Richardson worried that the “town birds” selected at West Ham were ill-suited to agriculture and that Canada had every right to be concerned.¹⁰² He thought the next year would provide evidence of their success or failure as agriculture immigrants. Richardson went on to lament that he had heard reports of failures amongst the group and that the entire project had been “defective” from the outset.¹⁰³ He hoped he would hear more promising news as the months passed.

Richardson’s concerns point to the wider problem all emigrationists faced with emigrant selection and suitability for the Canadian labour market. Yet, as with other emigrationists, the organizers of the *Daily Telegraph* fund clung to their belief that they had found a suitable set of emigrants. The fund believed it had been able “to raise up the standard of the West Ham folk” by providing them with emigration training before departure at a farm or work colony.¹⁰⁴ This relatively new idea was taking hold more broadly in the emigration program in East London and more generally in London unemployment circles. Indeed, farm colonies would be the new standard prong in the assisted emigration system in the pre-war period. Their introduction and success would be largely contingent on the kinds of partnerships formed in the early twentieth century amongst emigration agencies like the COS, the CUBL, boards of guardians, and the EEEF. However, the road to farm colonies would be fraught with much more contention than the cooperative efforts of longer-established unemployment relief schemes like assisted emigration explored above. The effort poured into farm colonies at home would also rarely impress Canadian immigration officials and did nothing to stop Canada from enacting more restrictive immigration controls for assisted emigrants.

New Directions – Farm Colonies, Poor Law Reform, Unemployment, and Emigration

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., June 23, 1905.

¹⁰¹ *Times*, August 12, 1905.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ *Globe* (Toronto), June 23, 1905.

In the first years of the twentieth century, the assisted emigration program was situated in a tense period for British labour. At the end of the Boer War in 1902, the unemployment question intensified as Britain contended with a flooded labour market after soldiers returned home in search of work, although, unemployment had long been of social and political concern in London. This ‘distress’ came to dominate the local press, positioning East London as the prime location for attempting experimental remedies aimed at solving the social and economic problems of casual unemployment. Distress and unemployment meant two different things to reformers.¹⁰⁵ Distress implied desperation and a lack of preparedness on the part of the unemployed worker who, even sympathetic reformers believed, should have taken precautions in the event of loss of work. The special status of distress, leftover from the late nineteenth century, was situated within a broader definition of unemployment. Its definition remained largely obscured and was embedded in a still wider discourse about the condition of Britain’s urban working classes. Unemployed workers in London had agitated through demonstrations on numerous occasions in the 1880s and 1890s to show their distress was no fault of their own. Yet, generally the poor themselves rather than the shortfalls of the capitalist market continued to be blamed for their own poverty. However, unemployment was increasingly understood to be largely caused by market deficiencies. In East London in particular, those deficiencies had long-enabled a system of casual labour offering low, seasonal wages that handicapped families from making a living wage and rendered them heavily reliant on charity. The skilled unemployed sought trade union assistance and the ‘unemployables’ were the responsibility of the Poor Law unions. So, it was the casual labourer who was in most dire need of a new form of unemployment or emigration assistance.

The casual labourer was the most problematic figure in the unemployment equation as he was believed to be the most vulnerable to moral, physical, and intellectual degeneration. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, a growing labour movement began to shift blame away from the unemployed individual to problems in the market.¹⁰⁶ Although, this shift was neither universal nor complete at this stage, reformers maintained that the poor were vulnerable to degeneracy caused by their unemployment. John Burnett suggests this shift began in response to working-class riots in 1886-87 arguing that “For the first time unemployment became a political issue,

¹⁰⁵ Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 33.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

perceived as a problem distinct from poverty, caused by factors other than moral failings, deserving of public sympathy and remedial action by the state.”¹⁰⁷ However, philanthropists still held deeply engrained notions about the deserving and undeserving poor, the deterrent aims of the 1834 Poor Law amendments, drinking, idleness, laziness, and indolence, and they rarely placed comprehensive blame on the labour market itself for the woes of the unemployed. The COS, for instance, actively segregated the ‘deserving’ unemployed from the ‘undeserving’ poor and as such opposed many of the early reforms on unemployment where the two categories could mix, like farm colonies.¹⁰⁸ Socialists may have been another matter but even they too believed that unemployment could cause moral failure. George Lansbury certainly mentions this in his writing and this is further evident in his aim to rehabilitate unemployed men in the farm colony system. Indeed, socialists worried deeply about the unemployable, the ‘loafer,’ and the vagrant polluting the deserving poor with their perceived unwillingness to work.¹⁰⁹

In the 1890s, assisted emigration discourse shifted to reflect this new preoccupation with relieving distress and unemployment. Unemployment and emigration became intimately connected in much the same way overpopulation and emigration had in decades prior. Emigrationists in this period were less concerned about overpopulation and more concerned with poverty caused by chronic shortages of work and they only sometimes blamed overcrowding for labour problems. They tended to be fairly anti-immigrationist, blaming foreign competition and new immigrant incursions on working-class districts in London for the inability of the English workman to find a job. The East End press tended to take the same view; numerous editorials in the *East London Observer* in the 1890s blame foreign immigration, especially Jewish immigration, for the unemployment problems in the East End.¹¹⁰ However, emigrationists often continued to criticize the poor for exasperating their distress as it was defined in the early twentieth century.

¹⁰⁷ John Burnett, *Idle Hands: The Experience of Unemployment, 1790-1990*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 146.

¹⁰⁸ Mowat, 156-57. For more on the concern in the 1880s about the mixing of the respectable and unrespectable poor, see: Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society*, (London: Penguin Books, 1971, 1984), 284-89. Stedman Jones also suggests the COS developed a highly influential theory about the hopelessness of the case of the ‘residuum’ in the 1880s. Essentially, the COS believed this group of unemployed, be it from drunkenness, laziness, or degeneracy, was beyond the scope of charity.

¹⁰⁹ Burnett, 148-49.

¹¹⁰ For a good example, see: *East London Observer*, December 20, 1890 which argues that wages were being driven down by incoming Russian-Polish Jews.

Kenneth Brown has suggested that Tories at the end of the nineteenth century remained resistant to recognizing the unemployment problem on ideological grounds that largely continued to hold the poor responsible for their own plight. In the years immediately following the Boer War, socialists, now better organized politically in the Labour Representation Committee, pressured Arthur Balfour's Conservative government to accept state responsibility for unemployment.¹¹¹ Hyndman and the SDF were particularly forward in their aims, organizing a series of unemployment marches throughout London in 1903 and calling for special parliamentary sessions to deal with unemployment. The SDF and the ILP had together lobbied Parliament through the 1890s to intervene more boldly in unemployment relief.¹¹² In response, Walter Long, President of the LGB, presented an idea to set up farm colonies at a conference of the Poor Law boards of guardians he organized in October 1904.¹¹³ Even though he was well-respected, Long's ideas set him apart from his colleagues in the Conservative Party; but he received broad support from most of them because farm colonies were not meant to be permanent fixtures in British welfare policy under his plan.¹¹⁴

Farm colonies for the unemployed were not, however, a novel idea nor is Long due sole credit for their inception as an unemployment experiment in the first decade of the twentieth century. Harris argues that in the 1880s, Poor Law reformers and critics became interested in farm colonies in order to deal with multiple new social and economic problems: rural depopulation, urban overcrowding, the decline of British agricultural profitability, and the chronic casualization of urban labour. To learn how best to run such schemes, British reformers studied continental examples in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, and Belgium that were attempting to remedy unemployment, vagrancy, and internal migration.¹¹⁵ Alfred Marshall and Samuel Barnett proposed two different types of labour colonies for the unemployed in the 1880s to help deal with the panic around the housing crisis in East London. Similarly, in 1889, Charles Booth suggested that farm colonies could re-instill good working-class values amongst the casual poor. General William Booth's plans for farm colonies were well laid out in his 1890 treatise *In Darkest England and the Way Out* and as such the Salvation Army had run a farm colony since

¹¹¹ Kenneth D. Brown, "Conflict in Early British Welfare Policy: The Case of the Unemployed Workmen's Bill of 1905," *The Journal of Modern History*, 43, no. 4 (December 1971): 615-29.

¹¹² Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 89.

¹¹³ Kenneth D. Brown, "Conflict in Early British Welfare Policy," 617-18; and John Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 60.

¹¹⁴ Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 153-65.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 116-18.

1890.¹¹⁶ George Lansbury and the Poplar Board of Guardians were interested in farm colonies from at least 1893. In the same year, Keir Hardie pressed the LGB to empower boards of guardians to acquire land for unemployment schemes as had been practiced decades earlier.¹¹⁷ Indeed, the farm colony as remedy to chronic unemployment harkened back to the Owenite co-operative movement of the 1820s and 1830s and the Chartist Land Plan of the 1840s, even though many of these schemes had been “economically discredited.”¹¹⁸

The COS generally did not support farm or labour colonies in the 1880s and 1890s because it believed them to be a variation of the out-relief they argued perpetuated pauperism.¹¹⁹ The first reason for this has already been briefly mentioned; the COS did not support unemployment schemes that conflated distress with unemployment and handled the deserving and undeserving poor together. The COS was extremely worried about the mingling of the respectable workman and the disreputable loafer. Secondly, the COS believed the work on farm colonies would debase the skilled labourer and insult his independence. Thirdly, the COS worried that farm colonies represented an acknowledgement by the state of its responsibility for providing work during those periods of unemployment that disrupted the natural ebb and flow of the labour market, thus creating artificial conditions. Finally, as the COS philosophy held that the independent workman was responsible for seeking and maintaining employment, the provision of farm colonies would remove from him that responsibility and replace it with dependence on the state. By the time the majority report was published from the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws in 1909, the COS had changed its tune cautiously supporting farm colonies for the deserving unemployed.¹²⁰ This shift might be partly explained in the context of the aftermath of the Boer War when philanthropists and politicians alike began to see the potential value of retraining the degenerated and weak bodies of the working classes that had become so evident during the war. Even though the COS signed off on the majority report, historians have maintained that the COS remained mostly critical of farm colonies in principle through the early

¹¹⁶ Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, 303-7. Alfred Marshall was one of Britain’s foremost economists and wrote extensively about the aged poor. The Marshall colony aimed to solve urban overcrowding. The Reverend Samuel Barnett was a guardian in Whitechapel and known for strict application of the Poor Law. His interest in farm colonies was somewhat contradictory to his COS-style Poor Law delivery. Barnett’s scheme was more eugenic and aimed to extinguish unemployment by drafting members of the ‘residuum’ and training them in industry and agriculture.

¹¹⁷ Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 85.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 116; and Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour*, 60.

¹¹⁹ Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 136.

¹²⁰ Mowat, 156-57, 160-61.

twentieth century as they ardently clung to their philosophies about the poor and for retention of their powers under the Poor Law.¹²¹

Despite considerable opposition from the COS and wider concerns about the expense of the project, the new President of the LGB Gerald Balfour presented provisions for farm colonies in the Unemployed Workmen Bill in April of 1905 to Parliament. Following more debate and the near death of the bill, the Unemployed Workmen Act was eventually passed in 1905 creating the CUBL and the distress committees that would select recipients for relief at the local level.¹²² The CUBL replaced the old London Unemployed Fund and was responsible under the Act for various committees, among others a working colonies committee, an emigration committee, and an employment exchanges committee.¹²³ These committees allowed the CUBL to launch a number of schemes designed to get men back to work including farm and labour colonies, emigration, and employment exchanges.¹²⁴ The 1905 Unemployed Workmen Act, the experimental reorientation of the Poor Law, and the social welfare reforms of the Liberal government in 1906, allowed for some farm colony schemes to develop. The history of one farm colony in particular weaves together these various themes as they relate specifically to emigration from East London to Canada – The CUBL’s Hollesley Bay Farm.

Hollesley Bay, the Central (Unemployed) Body for London, and Emigration

¹²¹ Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 141-43.

¹²² Kenneth D. Brown, “Conflict in Early British Welfare Policy,” 621.

¹²³ For a good brief overview of the committees see the entry for the CUBL on the Archives in London website, accessed January 1, 2013, http://www.aim25.ac.uk/cgi-bin/vcdf/detail?coll_id=12966&inst_id=118.

¹²⁴ Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 180.



Fig. 3.1: Colonists from Hollesley Bay Farm Colony, PRO /30/69/1824, National Archives.

Between 1886 and 1938, the 1,300 acre training farm at Hollesley Bay in Suffolk, England operated as the site of social welfare experiments aimed at turning the London unemployed into agriculturalists. The most ambitious of these experiments lasted from 1905 to 1908 under the direction of the CUBL whose officials devised a scheme to place chronically unemployed urban men and their families on permanent smallholdings at the farm, retaining the social ties of family and transforming the urban worker into a sturdy self-sufficient rural yeoman farmer. In 1905, American soap maker, philanthropist, and adherent of Henry George, Joseph Fels purchased Hollesley Bay farm and arranged for it to be managed by the CUBL. Fels was a key figure in the “Back to the Land” movement in England, having imported the concept from the United States. The “Back to the Land” movement had originated in the financial panics of 1893 and 1907 as a way to promote self-sufficiency amongst workers and protect them from crises in the market.¹²⁵ In London, Fels formed the Vacant Land Cultivation Society in 1907, a lobby group that pressured government on various levels to allow for the transformation of urban

¹²⁵ Dona Brown, *Back to the Land: The Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 3-4. Also see: Peter Gould, *Early Green Politics: Back to Nature, Back to the Land, and Socialism in Britain, 1880-1900* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1988); and Elizabeth A. Scott, “Cockney Plots: Working Class Politics and Garden Allotments in London’s East End, 1890-1918” (Master’s Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2005), 53. For a good biographical study of Fels, information on his poor upbringing and his move to England in 1901 for business purposes, see: Arthur Duddon, “Joseph Fels of Philadelphia and London,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 79, no. 2 (1955): 143-66.

waste lands into allotments for workers.¹²⁶ Fels, together with George Lansbury, who at the time was a key figure on the Poplar Board of Guardians in East London and the CUBL, campaigned to make Hollesley Bay a place where unemployed men would be reshaped into well-rounded skilled labourers armed with new agricultural competencies and a general education. Promoters of Hollesley Bay believed this rehabilitation would raise the men out of the degenerate condition of unemployment. Men not selected for a smallholding at Hollesley Bay could still employ their new skills in England or, if they so desired, emigrate to British colonies. Those who opposed the scheme believed it was uneconomic, demoralizing, and useless in relieving and reducing unemployment. Ultimately, ideological opposition to the socialistic foundations of the scheme, hostile political interference, and personality conflicts crippled Lansbury's hopes for permanent smallholdings at Hollesley Bay and reduced the colony to a glorified country workhouse by 1908.

The Hollesley Bay experiment provides historians with a specific moment and place for examining the development, administration, and reception of unemployment experiments in early twentieth century Britain and the ideological and political debates that surrounded such schemes.¹²⁷ The training farm scheme at Hollesley Bay also illustrates the multiple tensions inherent in the administration of the proto-welfare state in England. These tensions are especially evident upon analysis of an entangled, complex, and multi-directional relationship between the CUBL, the LGB, charities, boards of guardians, emigrationists, and unemployed men and their families. The complexity of these relationships was further compounded by divergent socialist, liberal, and conservative visions of the future of the Poor Law. The roots and dimensions of these tensions are analyzed here as well as the ways in which unemployed Londoners navigated their way through Britain's ever-changing system of poor relief from the perspective of their experience at Hollesley Bay. The Hollesley Bay experiment is thus a microcosmic example of the reconfiguration and eventual eradication of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act and the eventual adoption of a centralized universal unemployment insurance scheme.

Hollesley Bay was one of several agricultural training farm experiments for the London unemployed in this period. Unlike other schemes, such as the Poplar Poor Law Union's Dunton

¹²⁶ Scott, *Cockney Plots (Masters Thesis)*, 18.

¹²⁷ The best existing historical overview is found in Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*. Biographers of George Lansbury also provide brief overviews of the scheme. See Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour*; Jonathan Schneer, *George Lansbury* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); and Raymond Postgate, *The Life of George Lansbury* (London: Longmans, 1951).

Farm (Laindon, Essex), the Christian Service Union's Lingfield Colony (Surrey), and the Salvation Army's Hadleigh Farm (Essex), Hollesley Bay was never envisioned to operate as a country workhouse, reformatory, or vagrant colony; the men there would be free to leave, would demonstrate some degree of agency in their affairs, and would not be merely passive recipients of Poor Law or charitable relief.¹²⁸ Reflecting Fels' interest in the "Back to the Land" movement, and Lansbury's socialist commitment to breaking up the Poor Law, the smallholdings at Hollesley Bay were intended to restore independence and rebuild the foundations of a respectable masculine working-class character in the wake of demeaning unemployment. Accordingly, for the hundreds of men admitted to Hollesley Bay, resettlement on the proposed rural smallholdings theoretically offered a permanent egress from London's entrenched and demoralizing nexus of poor relief and casual labour.

George Lansbury's commitment to farm colonies was especially personal. In the previous chapter Lansbury's failed emigration was noted but his early life in the English countryside also informed his ideas about the possibilities for using the land to remedy urban poverty. Lansbury remained praiseful of his native county Suffolk's rural economy in his later years writing in his 1928 autobiography *My Life*, "it is possible to speak of my native county with feelings of respect, due to the fact that it can produce and give to the use of man all that is necessary for the maintenance of life."¹²⁹ Lansbury had been elected to the Poplar Board of Guardians in 1893 on a socialist platform. In the late-nineteenth century, the East London borough of Poplar suffered high rates of casual employment as the majority of its residents worked in its seasonal and itinerant riverside industries and docks. Poplar's socialist maturation had recently peaked in the Great Dock Strike of 1889 when tens of thousands of casual labourers unionized in the pervasive local spirit of "New Unionism."¹³⁰ While Lansbury was not a direct agitator in that particular strike he was certainly engaged in the general agitation in Poplar.¹³¹ After his own failed emigration to Australia, Lansbury also actively campaigned against emigration in East London

¹²⁸ At Dunton/Laindon Farm men from the Poplar workhouse were admitted as 'inmates' subject to the modified 'Workhouse Test' for eligibility. For more on this, see Peter Higginbotham, "Poplar, Middlesex, London," *The Workhouse: The Story of an Institution*, last updated 2013, accessed November 27, 2013, <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Poplar/>. For a history of the Lingfield Colony see Christopher Sladen, *Oxfordshire Colony: Turners Court Farm School, Wallingford, 1911-1991* (Milton Keynes: Author House UK Ltd., 2011), 33-65. For a history of Hadleigh Farm, see: Gordon Parkhill and Graham Cook, *Hadleigh Salvation Army Farm: A Vision Reborn* (Salvation Army: Shield Books, 2008).

¹²⁹ George Lansbury, *My Life* (London: Constable and Company, 1928), 15.

¹³⁰ Terry McCarthy, ed., *The Great Dock Strike 1889* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988).

¹³¹ George Lansbury, *Looking Backwards – and Forwards* (London: Blackie and Son Ltd., 1935), 191-99.

and focused his attention on resolving unemployment domestically as explored in chapter two. In 1893, Lansbury and fellow East End politician Will Crooks protested the deterrent aims of the Poor Law by administering a program of generous out-relief as members of the Poplar Board of Guardians. The pair, and the board as a whole, were scrutinized and criticized in the press and government for their refusal to administer the principles of less eligibility in the Poplar workhouse in the 1890s, cementing a reputation for being rabble-rousers in the minds of the LGB officials. This reputation would last well into the 1920s when the Poplar borough councilors were jailed for refusing to pay their rates.¹³²

As part of his effort to reform the Poplar Poor Law Union, Lansbury became interested in farm colonies for the unemployed. In 1893, the neighboring boards of guardians in Whitechapel and Stepney also considered the merits of labour colonies for the unemployed but they worried about how these schemes fit within the bounds of the Poor Law and its principle of less eligibility.¹³³ The Whitechapel Board of Guardians, well-known for administering a strict program of poor relief under the leadership of the Reverend Samuel Barnett in the 1870s and 1880s, showed some initial interest in farm colonies but appear from their records and from newspaper reports to have abandoned any real interest in the scheme. The scheme was presented to the board in Whitechapel by their chairman, Mr. James Brown, who, echoing Jesse Colling's 1885 land reform policy of "three acres and a cow," suggested each family be put on three acres under the guardians' provision.¹³⁴ Mr. W. Vallance, the clerk of the board did not believe such a scheme could be carried out under the existing Poor Law. Furthermore, the board imagined that the farm should be run like a workhouse that could detain inmates under a compulsory system of admittance.¹³⁵ Given that smallholdings instilled some renewed sense of independence and self-sufficiency amongst the poor, it is not surprising the more conservative board of guardians in Whitechapel abandoned further discussion of the farm colony scheme as it did not fit well with

¹³² The Poplar Poor Law Union was under investigation by the LGB for their Poor Law delivery from 1894 to 1906 as discussed later in this chapter. One of the first mentions of this is in the *Times* on October 5, 1894, reporting that the Poplar workhouse was under inquiry by the LGB for 'irregularities.' For more on 'Poplarism' and the later Poplar Rates Rebellion, see: Janine Booth, *Guilty and Proud of it!: Poplar's Rebel Councillors and Guardians, 1919-25* (Pontypool, Wales: Merlin Press, 2009).

¹³³ *East London Observer*, March 11, 1893 and April 19, 1893.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, March 11, 1893. James Brown later stated that the scheme was not his idea but that of some other gentleman, see: *Ibid.*, April 19, 1893. A. W. Ashby, "Collings, Jesse," revised by H. C. G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, 2008), accessed November 27, 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32500>.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* Also see: *Whitechapel Poor Law Union (1837-1943)*, Stepney Board of Guardians Records Collection, file number STBG, LMA.

their adherence to the deterrent aims of the Poor Law. For Lansbury, however, the scheme seemed a natural extension of the socialist direction he envisioned for the Poplar Board of Guardians and his wider aims to break-up the Poor Law. It was this campaign to “unite idle men with idle land” on farm colonies that Lansbury would be most proud of in his later life.¹³⁶

“The land was calling for cultivation,” Lansbury told his Poplar colleagues in August of 1893, and who better than the unemployed of Poplar to work it, he argued.¹³⁷ To promote the scheme, he called for a conference of all the London guardians. Stifled by the Poplar Board chairman Mr. Dean, Lansbury and his supporters were forced to wait until the LGB reported on the legality of such a scheme under the existing Poor Law. In the interim, Lansbury organized an open-air meeting in Bow. Supported by some of the other boards of guardians and by the Liberal MP for Bow and Bromley J. A. Murray MacDonald, Lansbury reminded the crowd, with his usual dramatic flair, that the suicides and starvation plaguing Poplar were directly attributable to unemployment and low wages. He believed that his land scheme “would not in any way displace outside labour” and that rather the “colony would increase the wealth of the nation, and add to the people’s prosperity.”¹³⁸ Lansbury envisioned taking unemployed families off the rates and restoring their self-sufficiency; in this way, he envisioned that the scheme would not be a burden on local ratepayers. Lansbury’s ambitious scheme would extend to the whole of London and begin to deal with the systemic problems in the market such as lack of access to land, the inability of the ordinary worker to add capital to the land, and the issue of the increased industrial mechanization that was displacing some East End workers.¹³⁹ MacDonald reported in his editorial in the *East London Observer* that summer that it was doubtful the LGB would give the Poplar Board of Guardians authority to administer such a scheme. While Lansbury and others hoped the LGB would allow for the scheme to fall under the proviso of the Poor Law, they waited quite a long time for the final decision.

By 1895, Lansbury’s hopes for a comprehensive smallholding farm colony scheme would be all but quashed and he faced considerable opposition. In June that year, the editor of the *East London Observer* commented critically on the Poplar Board of Guardians’ plans to try a farm

¹³⁶ Lansbury, *My Life*, 99, 133.

¹³⁷ *East London Observer*, August 26, 1893.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, and Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 27.

colony experiment near Hornchurch, Essex pending approval from the LGB.¹⁴⁰ Worried mostly about the burden of the costs falling on the ratepayers and the possibility that some recipients would refuse “unpalatable” relief work, the editor hoped the board would “be required to give every practical detail of their rules and regulations for the colony before it is permitted to be started, so that the ratepayers can console themselves with the reflection that possibly its futility may be made manifest before much harm is done.”¹⁴¹ The Poplar trustees, overseers of the local rates, unanimously voted against the scheme, lobbying the LGB to disallow the board of guardians from going ahead with the “wild and utterly reckless proposal” of “the Socialistic members” of the board.¹⁴² The conservative LGB agreed and refused to sanction Poplar’s planned unemployment farm colony. While the issue of the rates was presented as the foremost reason to oppose the scheme, an aversion to socialism weighed heavily on the minds of those who sought to derail it:

Nevertheless, the overburdened ratepayers of the Union are entitled to congratulation upon having been saved for the time being by a Government Department from the consequences of the rash policy of Socialists and Labour representatives, who are really responsible for the inauguration of the proposal. The scheme was one of the most costly which any public body has dared to seriously suggest The Socialists must either eat their words or proceed with their scheme and bide by the result.¹⁴³

As the Poplar Board of Guardians pressed on, the opposition’s anti-socialist rhetoric became less shrouded in criticism of the scheme as an assault on the rates and more concerned with the collectivist ideologies surrounding it.

“To the most superficial observer it is apparent that the rejoinder of the Poplar Guardians to the decision of the LGB respecting the proposed farm colony at Dunton in Essex is not only puerile, but actually admmissive;” so reported the *East London Observer* one week after the LGB limited the functions of Lansbury’s scheme to the principles of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act.¹⁴⁴ The stipulations rendered the project little more than a country workhouse and certainly made the possibility of smallholdings aimed at re-housing Poplar’s poor impossible. In keeping

¹⁴⁰ The location of the farm planned from 1893 is somewhat unclear. The Poplar Poor Law Union farm colony is often referred to by two different names: Dunton Colony and Laindon Colony. Dunton/Laindon Colony was later said to be close to Basildon, Essex. Hornchurch, Essex is eleven miles from Basildon. I suspect the location of the farm was referred to interchangeably as close to Hornchurch and/or Basildon.

¹⁴¹ *East London Observer*, June 1, 1895.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, August 3, 1895.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, August 31, 1895.

with their desire to experiment with Dunton as a progressive space for unemployment outside of the stringencies of the Poor Law, the Poplar Board of Guardians made a counter-proposal to the LGB suggesting that the farm colony might be legally defined instead as an addition to the workhouse system. Although, this was certainly already a compromise; the preferred scenario was to withdraw the farm colony from the legal inflexibilities entrenched in the Poor Law and divorce it from the “idea of pauperism” so it might be enabled to function as a self-sufficient entity. While charities like the Salvation Army were free to run such schemes from their own funds, the Poplar Board of Guardians found themselves trapped in the clutches of an archaic Poor Law system allergic to socialist aims of de-pauperization, self-sufficiency, and re-training. Indeed, the editor of the *East London Observer* boasted that “the principles of the Poor-Law are not so easily to be set aside as the Socialistic intelligence thinks can be done.”¹⁴⁵ Thus, the scheme at Dunton Farm was shelved for almost a decade until Lansbury found a “new friend” in Joseph Fels.¹⁴⁶

In March of 1904, Joseph Fels purchased Dunton Farm near Laindon, Essex and facilitated a lease between himself and the Poplar Board of Guardians for a “peppercorn rent” so that the guardians could fulfill their long-held wish of operating a labour colony for the unemployed.¹⁴⁷ As the farm colony idea was gaining some ground in Britain, the Poplar Board received provisional approval from the LGB to proceed in sending 100 men to Dunton Farm. Formal possession of the farm commenced on March 5, 1904 and by July the first batch of Poplar men was sent up to begin a course of relief work.¹⁴⁸ The men, who had been employed in the Poplar workhouse, were “cleared out” in the hopes that they would “be enabled to earn a living by agricultural work.”¹⁴⁹ From the outset the press remained dubious about the viability of the scheme as a re-training and resettlement project:

It remains to be seen, however, whether the Guardians will attempt to make a farm a place where men will be trained for independent work either in England or in the Colonies. If this is not done, with or without Government sanction, the farm will apparently just be an open-air department of the Poplar Workhouse; and its effect – by no means to be despised, to be sure – will be limited to breaking up the gang of able-bodied

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, October 19, 1895.

¹⁴⁶ Postgate, 68.

¹⁴⁷ *East London Observer*, April 4, 1904; and Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour*, 60.

¹⁴⁸ *East London Observer*, March 5, 1904, July 2, 1904, and August 6, 1904; and *Dunton Farm Colony Admission and Discharge Register June 1904 – September 1904*, Poplar Board of Guardians Records Collection, file number POBG/180/01, LMA.

¹⁴⁹ *East London Observer*, July 2, 1904.

vagrants who now use the ‘house’ as their hotel This should be borne well in mind, because if people get it into their heads that the Laindon Farm is a ‘colony,’ when they find the result small they will be inclined to arrive at a superficial judgment that ‘colonies are no good.’¹⁵⁰

The *East London Observer* was pessimistic about the size of the scheme claiming it was too small to overcome the “monotony of hamlet life,” and would devolve into social chaos amongst the bored and undisciplined inmates.¹⁵¹ Nascent of a lingering anxiety about the Poplar Board of Guardians’ lenient application of the Poor Law, these sentiments foreshadowed the coming demise of Dunton as a progressive space.

After the 1906 Liberal landslide election, John Burns, a prominent agitator in the 1880s trade union movement in East London and pillar of the Great Dock Strike of 1889, replaced Walter Long as the President of the LGB. Burns had distanced himself from the Labour ranks after the Taff Vale decision which threatened to subject union funds to legal intervention. He found a place for himself in the radical wing of the Liberal Party, forging connections with its leader Henry Campbell-Bannerman in 1905. This relationship secured his presidency of the LGB after the election, a move that Labour considered the first in a “long line of betrayals.”¹⁵² Burns was now “no longer a friend of Labour” and would launch a comprehensive attack on the Poplar Board of Guardians and their farm colony scheme.¹⁵³ The farm colony at Dunton became the Laindon Branch Workhouse under Burns’ direction and the relative freedom the colonists had enjoyed came to end. Management of the inmates was now controlled with reformatory-style discipline and strict punishments for offences such as absconding, drinking, using indecent language, tardiness, theft, idleness, and refusing to work.¹⁵⁴ Out was the guardians’ “tender and soft” treatment of the men who had previously enjoyed niceties like pocket money, tobacco, and beer at Dunton.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, August 6, 1904.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Kenneth D. Brown, “Burns, John Elliott,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, May 2010), accessed March 31, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32194>.

¹⁵³ Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour*, 63; and Lloyd, *Empire, Welfare State, Europe*, 14.

¹⁵⁴ *Dunton Farm Colony Punishment Book, 1907-1914*, Poplar Board of Guardians Records Collection, file number POBG/188, LMA; and *East London Observer*, December 19, 1907.

¹⁵⁵ The Dunton (Laindon) Farm Colony records (punishment books, medical reports, and registers) in the London Metropolitan Archives suggest there was a change after 1907 in the treatment of the inmates. After 1907, the unemployed there were more likely to be subject to the deterrent aims of the 1834 Poor Law Amendments. Also see *East London Observer*, December 19, 1907.

“The Local Government Board has stifled and made useless this experiment,” proclaimed Fels after learning of Burns’ direction for Dunton. Fels plainly stated that he had no intention of funding a workhouse and hoped the LGB would instead support the re-establishment of the men under the board of guardians’ direction: “I never for one moment dreamed that your Board [Poplar] would be forced by the LGB to keep 150 men on 100 acres of land, it being obvious to me then, as now, that neither men nor staff could have a chance in such conditions.”¹⁵⁶ Fels refused to extend the tenancy at Dunton on this account. The experience of the relationship between Burns, Lansbury, Fels, the Poplar Board of Guardians, and the LGB around Dunton set the stage for the future failure of the Hollesley Bay experiment. Lansbury’s first biographer Raymond Postgate argued that the Dunton experiment was safe from interference because it was run by the board of guardians but this was clearly not the case.¹⁵⁷ Hollesley Bay and Dunton Farm were equally vulnerable to Poor Law traditionalists, especially Burns and the still largely conservative LGB.

Like Dunton Farm, the unemployment and emigration scheme at Hollesley Bay did not enjoy an easy conception. Fels purchased the Hollesley Bay estate in its entirety in 1904. Set up as a colonial college to train prospective emigrants since 1886, the freehold farm was sold as a “Complete Educational Establishment” which included college buildings, dormitories, cottages, pastures, lecture rooms, stables and barns, offices, market gardens, workshops, and a blacksmith forge.¹⁵⁸ These features rendered Hollesley Bay a suitable turnkey operation for an unemployment and emigration experiment, requiring little new investment from government. Fels leased the land and buildings to the CUBL to re-train unemployed men and select some of them for emigration. Philanthropists attracted to the “Back to the Land” movement aimed to restore the worker displaced by industry, capitalism, and urbanization usually via smallholdings in order to solve and prevent their unemployment.¹⁵⁹ Fels saw Hollesley Bay as a venue wherein to achieve these aims. East Londoners themselves were attracted to land-based schemes for a

¹⁵⁶ *East London Observer*, January 12, 1907.

¹⁵⁷ Postgate, 71.

¹⁵⁸ *Particulars of Sale of the Colonial College, Hollesley Bay and other properties*, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB 158, LMA. For particulars on the origins of the colonial college at Hollesley Bay, see: Patrick A. Dunae, “Education, Emigration and Empire: The Colonial College 1887-1905,” in *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism*, edited by J.A. Mangan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 198.

¹⁵⁹ Gould, 6; and Frederick Impey, *Housed Beggars, or The Right of the Labourer to Allotments and Small Holdings* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1886).

variety of complex reasons I have examined elsewhere. Most notably, many East Londoners retained a connection to nature and agriculture either because they or their families had migrated from the countryside to the city or at least had some collective memory of having done so in the not so distant past.¹⁶⁰ Spurred on by Lansbury's leading role on the CUBL, Fels believed Hollesley Bay under its authority stood a better chance of escaping the strict parameters of the Poor Law inflicted on boards of guardians.¹⁶¹ The CUBL was designed primarily to administer the new legislation under the Unemployed Workmen Act rather than administer the Poor Law although links between the two tracts of law were certainly tangible. The CUBL was funded in part by the local rates and in part by subscription; it also distributed unemployed men and their families from local boards of guardians to its various relief works including Hollesley Bay. The LGB oversaw the CUBL's functions and with Burns in the presidency Hollesley Bay remained vulnerable from the outset. Indeed, in the first months of the scheme, Burns said that it was a "place fit for a doubtful experiment."¹⁶² Despite Burns' initial condemnation, Hollesley Bay worked for a short time towards its wider goals of resettling unemployed men on smallholdings.

The first party for Hollesley Bay left London on February 28, 1905.¹⁶³ By April 1905, the London Unemployed Fund (the short-lived predecessor of the CUBL) had sent 120 men to Hollesley Bay.¹⁶⁴ According to its committee records, 772 men had been through the colony between November 1906 and April 1907 alone. In the summer months the number of men decreased to about 150 at any given time and in the winter months the colony would swell again to at least 300 men.¹⁶⁵ Applications for admittance were immediately too numerous to

¹⁶⁰ I argue elsewhere that East Enders were attracted to land-based schemes like allotments for political, economic, social, and spiritual reasons that were dependent on their unique experience of urban poverty in East London. Allotments were more suitable for those in stable employment acting as a supplement to low wages whereas farm colonies were more suitable for casual labourers chronically short of work who could stay outside of London for longer periods of time, see: Elizabeth A. Scott, "Cockney Plots: Allotments and Grassroots Political Activism," in *Gardening - Philosophy for Everyone: Cultivating Wisdom*, edited by Dan O'Brien (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 109-10.

¹⁶¹ Shepherd defines Lansbury as one of the CUB's "leading members," see: Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour*, 62. For details on the functions of the CUB see "Central Unemployed Body London," Archives in London website, accessed March 31, 2012, http://www.aim25.ac.uk/cgi-bin/vcdf/detail?coll_id=12966&inst_id=118.

¹⁶² Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour*, 63; also see Postgate, 79.

¹⁶³ *East London Observer*, April 18, 1908.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, April 15, 1905.

¹⁶⁵ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on April 27, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA; and for the average numbers of admitted men at any given time, see: *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes* more generally for 1906 to 1908 in the above collection. The *Times* reported on August 19, 1907 that 1,711 had passed through the scheme to that date.

accommodate. By 1908, more than 18,000 unemployed men had applied for one of the coveted 350 spots reserved for men less than forty-five years old with families.¹⁶⁶ Those who made it, the “Selected Men,” were instructed in animal husbandry, dairy, seed and crop cultivation, fruit production, market gardening, and in workshop trades of plumbing, carpentry, joining, and blacksmithing. Admittance to Hollesley Bay came with a stipend of 14s. per week for the men’s families most of whom remained in London until such time as they could be resettled in one of the colony’s cottages. Life at the colony demanded hard physical work and the administrators expected colonists to be teetotal while at the farm (although they were allowed to visit public houses), punctual, and industrious.¹⁶⁷ Some jobs were disagreeable like unloading barges of manure but other tasks were pleasant enough like fruit picking, gardening, and mending fences.

Benefits unheard of in the workhouse enhanced the experience at Hollesley Bay and eased the distaste some men had for physical labour. During the first years the men were treated with a degree of compassion and dignity highly divergent from the norm; some called it extravagance. Lectures were organized covering topics from Oliver Cromwell to microscopic plants, meeting Lansbury’s objective of investing in well-rounded, worthy working-class citizens.¹⁶⁸ The men were given 6d. per week pocket money, evenings off to enjoy walks, draughts, billiards, or backgammon, and monthly paid trips back to London to visit family and friends.¹⁶⁹ At Hollesley Bay Lansbury was able to better meet the men’s needs, encouraging a degree of autonomy among them unimaginable in the workhouse. Despite the full scheme’s never being realized, and remaining cognizant of the ways in which these men continued to be bound and hampered by the language, direction, and application of a rapidly changing Poor Law, they can be understood to have been semi-politicized wage-labourers caught in the matrix of a political economy undergoing significant ideological and bureaucratic change.

The men were allowed to form an independent committee that had two main functions: The first was to organize leisure time, concerts, and run the tobacco shop and the second was to

¹⁶⁶ *East London Observer*, June 26, 1909 and April 18, 1908.

¹⁶⁷ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meetings held between October 13, 1906 and November 28, 1908, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA; and *East London Observer*, April 15, 1905.

¹⁶⁸ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on November 10, 1906, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA; this set of minutes lists all of the classes offered that year at Hollesley Bay.

¹⁶⁹ *East London Observer*, April 15, 1905; and *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meetings held between October 13, 1906 and November 28, 1908, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

enable advocacy on issues pertaining to colony life including bonuses, furloughs, clothing, discipline, and a burial club.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the men initiated strikes on several occasions. In February of 1906, seventy-seven men left the colony and returned to London protesting living conditions. They complained of inadequate food, dirty sheets, too short a time given to wash clothes, and open windows in the bedrooms. 200 men participated in the protest but most were convinced to stay at the farm. The men's committee petitioned the Bethnal Green Board of Guardians to write on their behalf to the LGB to resolve these issues for them so that they could return to the colony.¹⁷¹ In November of 1906, the men asked the committee to give the matter of a Christmas bonus their "fullest sympathy."¹⁷² They were successful, the committee granting them each a bonus of 2s. 6d. In January 1907, the men complained that the distress committee clerks had made confusing rules around wives sending money to the colony. The men were especially upset about the way in which their wives had been communicated with and asked the distress committees to better articulate what was allowed and what was not.¹⁷³ These families had been circumventing the poor relief system by attempting to control the flow of their own money. The men also complained about having to spend too much time on their furloughs in the distress committee offices in London obtaining identification cards. Once again the rota committee made changes in favour of the men, recommending that the identification cards be given out before leaving the colony to save time in London.¹⁷⁴ In April 1907, thirty-six of the selected men wrote to the rota committee concerned about the pace of resettling them, stating they were "still keenly anxious to permanently separate from London life and settle on the land in the country."¹⁷⁵ On other occasions, the rota committee consulted with the men before making decisions on various issues at Hollesley Bay.

The men at Hollesley Bay had generally made a better impression than their colleagues had at Dunton. According to the CUBL in 1909, the value of training unemployed men at

¹⁷⁰ *East London Observer*, April 18, 1908; and *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meetings held between October 13, 1906 and November 28, 1908, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁷¹ *East London Observer*, February 10, 1906.

¹⁷² *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on November 24, 1906, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁷³ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on January 19, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on April 27, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

Hollesley Bay in agriculture, most of whom had “never been on a farm before,” had been undeniably positive – measurable in the impressive output of fruits, vegetables, and dairy products they sold into local markets.¹⁷⁶ The Suffolk Chamber of Agriculture “noted that the men they saw at work appeared to be more active and interested than those they were accustomed to see in connection with the Rural Workhouse farms.”¹⁷⁷ The Market Gardeners’, Nurserymen and Farmers’ Association said that “If kindness, care, and lovely surroundings will effect reformation in human character, then Hollesley Bay ought to do it.”¹⁷⁸ Still, Lansbury frequently found himself defending the experiment at Hollesley Bay, reprinting favourable reports in the minutes, asking the CUBL to show off the colony’s produce in London, and holding flower shows to defend the productivity of the colony by proving the men had “been able to adapt themselves to their new condition of life.”¹⁷⁹

Criticism came from many directions, even amongst those who shared Lansbury’s politics. As such, the radical Liberal, later Labour, economist Hastings B. Lees Smith published several cautious articles in the *Economic Journal* about the farm colonies experiment. Lees Smith supported farm colonies for the casual unemployed that paid low wages to promote deterrence and denied the men extra benefits. He supported the idea of resettlement only in terms of emigration as he did not foresee British agriculture providing sustainable employment at home.¹⁸⁰ Harsher criticism was directed at the Hollesley Bay scheme by members of the LGB. Burns had James Davy launch a formal inquiry investigating the Poplar Board of Guardians’ “extravagant” Poor Law practices in 1906.¹⁸¹ Lansbury, as both a guardian and CUBL administrator, was a central figure in the inquiry that found the Poplar Board of Guardians had

¹⁷⁶ *East London Observer*, June 26, 1909.

¹⁷⁷ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on July 13, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁷⁸ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on July 27, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁷⁹ *East London Observer*, September 5, 1908; and for Lansbury’s request to show off produce in London through the CUBL, see: *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on November 10, 1906, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁸⁰ H.B. Lees Smith, “The London Unemployed Fund, 1904-5,” *The Economic Journal* 16, no. 61 (1906): 156-58; and Andrew Thorpe, “Smith, Hastings Bertrand Lees,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, 2006), accessed March 31, 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/66087>.

¹⁸¹ Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour*, 67-68; and the *Times*, March 8, 1906 and March 26, 1906.

not sufficiently adhered to the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act provisions. His vision for Dunton and Hollesley Bay would become the chief casualty in this inquiry.¹⁸²

At their January 19, 1907 meeting the rota committee reported that Burns had effectively ended the smallholdings program at Hollesley Bay: “As the Local Government Board has now definitely decided that the provision of co-operative small holdings is outside the work of the Central Unemployed Body for London, some steps must be taken with regard to the families on the colonies and the selected men.”¹⁸³ Burns remained hostile to farm colonies from the outset and felt they were demoralizing inefficient places. His refusal to fund Hollesley Bay was largely based on his role as a trade union leader where he worked to establish rights for workers in an urban industrial context. To remove workers to the countryside defeated the forward march of progress to which Burns had dedicated his life’s work. Historians and contemporaries, like Beatrice Webb, pegged Burns’ vanity and ego as one of the main reasons he opposed Lansbury’s scheme.¹⁸⁴ However, a precedent had already been set in the experience at Dunton in 1906. Lansbury’s first biographer, Raymond Postgate, claimed that Burns’ attack on Lansbury’s “most beloved projects” was entirely personal.¹⁸⁵ Certainly Lansbury understood the lack of support to have been of a personal nature. In a passionate letter to the editor of the *Times* in 1907 Lansbury lamented that the decision dealt a crushing blow to the men’s life chances who would now return to London “heartsick and weary:”

Nobody dreamed that a Local Government Board, controlled by one of the greatest Liberal majorities of modern times, would turn out so reactionary as to crush a scheme which had been tacitly agreed to by two successive Presidents under a Tory government; nobody dreamed that a colony, established primarily to re-settle men and women on the land in England, would be used merely as a country workhouse and to provide emigrants to Canada.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Harris makes a similar argument, see: Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 193-94.

¹⁸³ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on January 19, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁸⁴ Kenneth Brown describes Burns as “ineffective and reactionary” on the LGB and notes that his civil servants “played on his personal vanity.” Kenneth Brown, “Burns, John Elliott,” np. Jonathan Schneer says Burns “was like putty in Davy’s hands,” alluding to being easily pushed over by the more conservative members of the LGB: Schneer, 45. What these descriptions suggest is that Burns made decisions based in little real evidence or without much knowledge of details. On the other hand, they negate somewhat any malicious intent Burns might have had in ruining Lansbury’s farm colonies schemes; he may not have actually cared very much about the scheme at all, his indifference being what led to their ruin. At any rate, Lansbury took this personally because he and Burns had worked together in the 1880s and 1890s on unemployment in East London. Harris argues that Burns “condemned” farm colonies before his appointment to the LGB in the 1890s on grounds that reflected his unionism, see: Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 192.

¹⁸⁵ Postgate, 77.

¹⁸⁶ *Times*, April 2, 1907.

Lansbury further accused Burns of fabricating false information, exaggerating the number of men the scheme was intended to support, and of denying he had purposely hindered the program at Hollesley Bay. Burns not only disallowed smallholdings at Hollesley Bay but attempted also to reduce the market garden program by insisting that only “primary agriculture” be carried out.”¹⁸⁷ This interference significantly hampered the viability of the colony as it relied heavily on profits from the sale of produce. Burns further undermined the program by refusing to fund work for 300 men in April 1907, cutting the intake to 250.¹⁸⁸ Reminding Burns that twenty years previous they had stood shoulder to shoulder on unemployment in East London a frustrated and disappointed Lansbury remained astonished that his old comrade was now “desirous of wrecking” his farm colony experiments.¹⁸⁹ In later years, Lansbury’s comments cooled slightly but he still blamed Burns for “preventing” Hollesley Bay from realizing its potential.¹⁹⁰

By 1908, the smallholdings scheme at Hollesley Bay had “vanished into thin air.”¹⁹¹ Lansbury resigned from the chair of the colony’s rota committee and later from the CUBL altogether in protest.¹⁹² October 3, 1908 was the last time he chaired the rota committee or had any significant involvement in the daily operations of Hollesley Bay.¹⁹³ Hollesley Bay operated thereafter as a country workhouse placing men for an insufficient sixteen weeks to work in the market gardens and the poultry farm and as an emigration training ground. The rota committee continued for a time to fight the LGB’s reduction of service, asking in April 1908 for stays of seven months instead of sixteen weeks.¹⁹⁴ The colony now had three new “modest aspirations” – providing temporarily unemployed men with outdoor work in a healthy environment, training selected men for emigration, and training those not suitable for emigration in agriculture for work in England.¹⁹⁵ Those who supported the scheme argued it was less costly than the city workhouses and did not break up the home as wives as families could still be supported in

¹⁸⁷ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on January 19, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁸⁸ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on April 13, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Lansbury, *My Life*, 146.

¹⁹¹ *East London Observer*, April 18, 1908.

¹⁹² Shepherd, *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour*, 63-64.

¹⁹³ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on October 3, 1908, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁹⁴ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on April 19, 1908, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

¹⁹⁵ *East London Observer*, April 18, 1908.

London. Lansbury's supporters blamed not mismanagement but LGB hostility for ruining the scheme's chances of succeeding. Chairman of the Mile End Board of Guardians in East London, E.H. Kerwin, lamented the LGB's refusal to develop the farm colony scheme suggesting that Hollesley Bay represented his "idea of how we should tackle the question, and if we had been allowed to go on with it, I believe we should have found the way to some workable method."¹⁹⁶ Kerwin believed the experiment at Hollesley Bay had failed because smallholdings had not been allowed. Lansbury echoed this assessment in the 1909 *Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission* which he co-authored with the Webbs.¹⁹⁷

After 1908, the CUBL continued to run an unemployment scheme at Hollesley Bay that was consistently derided for its failures which were mostly due to the disadvantaged "type of man" sent there from the boards of guardians.¹⁹⁸ In 1912, John Burns complained in the House of Commons that Hollesley Bay had not been "a distinct success" as evidenced by the very low number he felt had found permanent agricultural employment after their time there.¹⁹⁹ Despite opposition, the CUBL carried on hosting flower and produce shows in an attempt to demonstrate the productivity and viability of its colonists and it continued to admit hundreds of men and sometimes their families to the colony for several weeks at a time.²⁰⁰ Hollesley Bay received no government funding after 1915 and the CUBL was forced to pay for its operation from the colony's market garden sales alone.²⁰¹ In 1929, the London County Council took over Hollesley Bay and sustained its function as an unemployment colony until 1938 when it was purchased by the Prison Commission. The question remains as to whether or not Hollesley Bay was doomed to fail and why farm colonies failed to evolve into national policy. José Harris has dealt with the latter question and her conclusions are in no need of immediate revision. For Harris, Hollesley Bay failed for three reasons: there were "inherent difficulties" in the management and efficiency of colonies for the casual unemployed; there was "active hostility" from the Burns and the LGB;

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., January 2, 1909.

¹⁹⁷ The National Committee to Promote the Break-up of the Poor Law, *The Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission, Part II, The Unemployed* (London: R & R Clark, Ltd., 1909), 146.

¹⁹⁸ *Training Colonies for Able-bodied Men, Hollesley Bay Colony*, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number LCC/CL/WEL/1/3, LMA.

¹⁹⁹ *Hollesley Bay Colony – Training of Men and Cost, Report of the Working Colonies Committee adopted by the Central (Unemployed) Body for London*, Meeting held on December, 15, 1911, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/48, LMA.

²⁰⁰ *East London Observer*, July 30, 1910.

²⁰¹ *Training Colonies for Able-bodied Men, Hollesley Bay Colony*.

and the Poplar Board of Guardians had been severely discredited in the Davy inquiry.²⁰² She did not, however, attempt fully to answer the question of whether or not Hollesley Bay was doomed from the outset or to analyze the ways in which the men themselves experienced their stay there and shaped the contours of the program as this study has attempted to do.

Between December 1905 and June 1911, 6,046 men were admitted to Hollesley Bay in various capacities, 910 of whom were tested or trained for emigration.²⁰³ Of these 910 it is not known how many actually emigrated but upon review of the CUBL emigration sub-committee minutes the emigration program under the Unemployed Workmen Act appears to have been steady and active throughout this period. The emigration program at Hollesley Bay provided unemployed East End men and their families with another avenue by which they could leave England even if the majority of cases admitted there never left the country. The emigration training scheme at Hollesley Bay reveals a shift in thinking about the viability of assisted urban emigrants especially to Canada. Emigrationists finally began to see the value of sending emigrants to Canada who could actually succeed there.²⁰⁴ Hollesley Bay, in theory, prepared urban emigrants for agricultural work in Canada. However, the poverty CUBL officials dealt with at Hollesley Bay was often complex in nature and the men who were admitted were frequently deemed physically unsuitable for work in agricultural.²⁰⁵ Their lives were subject to all of the vagaries of impoverishment – death, illness, homelessness, violence, and alcoholism were common and impacted on the men’s stay at Hollesley Bay. Even the most promising prospective emigrants could fail to reach the final selection phase for emigration because of these

²⁰² Harris, *Unemployment and Politics*, 188.

²⁰³ *Hollesley Bay Colony – Training of Men and Cost*. In the first decade of the twentieth century, agricultural labour in the Canadian West was enjoying a boom and plenty of work was to be had for capable men until the boom ended in 1913. Cecilia Danysk explains that by working as hired farm hands British male emigrants might be assured a chance to homestead on their own after a few seasons – this, of course, was not always the case. However, tens of thousands of men earned a living in this manner in the opening years of the twentieth century. Training at Hollesley Bay was the first step in securing one of these positions even though English workers were not preferred as they were believed to be lazy, see: Cecilia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 9-10.

²⁰⁴ The CUBL were not unique in their training aims. The Salvation Army was training prospective emigrants prior to departure at their Hadleigh Farm colony. Also, the Daily Telegraph Shilling Fund trained its recipients before departure as mentioned above, see: *East London Observer*, March 18, 1905. Because the COS/EEEEF co-sponsored emigrants with the CUBL, all of these organizations can be seen to have shifted their focus towards training before departure.

²⁰⁵ For examples of the complexities of poverty these families faced, see: *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on January 9, 1909, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/47, LMA. For some examples of the physical problems the men suffered, see: *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on January 23, 1909, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/47, LMA.

circumstances. Take the case of Frederick Pomphrett in 1909. Pomphrett was a thirty-year old horsekeeper from Poplar, married with five small children. He was thought to be especially suitable for emigration to Canada because he had already lived there for twelve years as a young boy and was familiar with agricultural work. Upon admittance to Hollesley Bay, all seemed relatively smooth until the health and appearance of his family began to decline; Frederick was held liable for the dirty condition of his children, his house, and the scabies that afflicted the whole family. After this discovery, Frederick was discharged from Hollesley Bay and transferred to the workhouse with his family where authorities felt their health and safety might be better ensured. Two years later, Frederick and his family appear to have gotten back on their feet and were living in a house in Limehouse; but it appears they never emigrated to Canada.²⁰⁶ One of their children had died and they still lived in fairly serious poverty. The family lived on Maroon Street which in Charles Booth's maps in 1889 had been coded as "dark blue," or very poor with chronic want, the wider area being described as "very rough."²⁰⁷ It is unlikely much had changed in a decade.

Frederick's case was not exceptional. The CUBL remained rigorous in its standards for selection for emigration from the outset and several similar cases, where the character and physical condition of the man and his family were in question, were denied either before transfer to Hollesley Bay or after. Another man by the last name of Brook, for example, was discharged because he was living with a married woman whose husband had deserted her.²⁰⁸ Hope remained that these men would succeed but more often than not they found themselves up against the odds that had placed them there in the first place – lack of good physical condition, lack of skills, learning difficulties, alcoholism, violence, propensity to steal, and the list went on. That said, all emigration charities in East London would have encountered these features of poverty and yet found it within their purview to emigrate thousands of poor families with some measure of

²⁰⁶ All of the information on the Pomphrett case is found in: *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meetings on May 15, 1909, July 10, 1909, July 24, 1909, August 7, 1909, November 27, 1909, and January 8, 1910, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/47, LMA; and *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on November 12, 1910, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/48, LMA. Also see UK census for 1901 and 1910. There is no trace of the family in Canadian census data.

²⁰⁷ Charles Booth notebook B346, 112-13, Charles Booth Online Archive, London School of Economics, accessed August 21, 2012, <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/notebooks/b346/jpg/113.html>.

²⁰⁸ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on January 9, 1909, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/47, LMA.

success. We can only assume they had as many failed cases as passed through the CUBL; they tended, however, not to report on these as often or openly.²⁰⁹

Emigration under the Unemployed Workmen Act was enshrined in chapter 18, section 1(5):

The central body may, if they think fit, in any case of an unemployed person referred to them by a distress committee, assist that person by aiding the emigration or removal to another area of that person and any of his dependants [sic], or by providing, or contributing towards the provision of, temporary work in such manner as they think best calculated to put him in a position to obtain regular work or other means of supporting himself.²¹⁰

The emigration program was to be managed by the CUBL which was also responsible for running Hollesley Bay and the district committees that selected men for both admittance to the colony and for prospective emigration. The conditions under which such persons might be helped were highly regulated under the Act and applied via district committee officials, colony administrators, and committee chairs and members. The successful prospective emigrant would need to possess the following qualities in order to be approved for emigration to a British colony: be of an appropriate age (this usually mean that the emigrant be of an employable age), be of good physical ability, have had past employment, and be “qualified” to work in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, or on the land in some other suitable capacity such as fruit growing or picking.²¹¹ Should emigrants not possess these qualities it would have been highly unlikely the CUBL would have facilitated their emigration.

In its first years, the unemployment scheme at Hollesley Bay focused on Lansbury’s vision of resettlement and smallholdings by attempting to solve poverty at home. Smallholdings could offer the same kind of permanence as could colonial emigration. When this was no longer a possibility, the committee responsible for the daily management of Hollesley Bay reconfigured its focused to spend more time on emigration as mentioned above. In the first years of this reorientation, the emigration program plodded along at a snail’s pace.²¹² This caused frustration for the rota committee who were constantly managing the cases of hundreds of men at Hollesley

²⁰⁹ Records of the EEEF, the COS, and the SHES, for example, tell us little about rejections. The CUBL records do because of the nature of their meetings and the ways in which they recorded their minutes.

²¹⁰ *The Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, 5 Edw. 7, Chap. 18, section 1(5).*

²¹¹ *The Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, 5 Edw. 7, Chap. 18, Article III (2).*

²¹² *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meetings on March 30, 1907 and June 22, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

Bay and trying to maximize the space they had at the colony to accommodate as many unemployed Londoners as possible. In some cases, emigration processing could take over a year in the early years.²¹³ One of the problems with the eligibility and suitability of men for emigration from Hollesley Bay was that they tended to have large families; this delayed the emigration process because Canada was not interested in receiving large families of assisted emigrants from London.²¹⁴ With this in mind, the rota committee spent more time placing Hollesley Bay men in positions around England. Some were sent to work in Welsh coal mines, others were farmed out to rural England to work in agriculture. In early 1909, the emigration committee of the CUBL finally began to press the Hollesley Bay rota committee to take more men, single and married, for emigration training.

Between 1909 and 1912, the emigration committee and the rota committee worked together to facilitate the training of anywhere from twenty extra men in the winter months to 190 extra men in the summer for emigration training at the farm.²¹⁵ Both the emigration and rota committees constantly battled with the LGB for funding for this program. Most of the money tended to come out of its overall budget which meant that fewer men were admitted to the farm for unemployment relief alone. Burns continued to deride the scheme and show little interest in funding it. He believed that efforts to train prospective emigrants were “futile” because he was unconvinced conditions at the farm reflected the “true” conditions existing in the colonies.²¹⁶ Burns may have actually had some firsthand knowledge of this having toured Canada from the East to the West Coast and back again in 1905.²¹⁷ The rota committee vehemently disagreed with Burns’s plan, arguing that as the district committees had limited options for helping large families regular Hollesley Bay funding should not be used to support men with small families who had better chances of emigrating.²¹⁸ Hollesley Bay favoured finding men work in England over colonial emigration and directed its work to this end. This was a clear reflection of

²¹³ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on March 30, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

²¹⁴ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on November 2, 1907, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/46, LMA.

²¹⁵ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on March 6, 1909, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/47, LMA.

²¹⁶ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on June 26, 1909, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/47, LMA.

²¹⁷ *Globe* (Toronto), October 5, 1905; *Toronto Star*, September 11, 1905 and November 6, 1905.

²¹⁸ *Hollesley Bay Rota Committee Minutes*, Minutes from Meeting on June 26, 1909, Central (Unemployed) Body for London Records Collection, file number CUB/47, LMA.

Lansbury's and Fels's initial hope for Hollesley Bay and Lansbury's earlier concerns about colonial emigration. The rota committee was all too aware that as soon as a cottage was emptied another man and his family was waiting to fill it. The tensions with Burns appear never to have eased even after Lansbury was no longer directly involved with the daily management of the farm. Burns never warmed to Hollesley Bay and was unable to see what good it might have done for unemployed Londoners and their families.

I have sought here to reposition the experiment at Hollesley Bay as a decisive moment in the development of the entangled relationships and complex processes of the early welfare state in England especially as it relates to emigration and unemployment. My arguments do not suppose that farm colonies, and the emigration programs attached to them, should have become national policy or that they might have solved unemployment had they been encouraged to flourish. Rather, reconsideration of the scheme can tell us much about the negotiations between old and new agencies, ideas, and policies relating to unemployment and emigration in the first years of the twentieth century. Likewise, Hollesley Bay can be seen to be a characteristic manifestation of the preoccupation in these years with continuing to remedy the problems of the individual in the unemployment equation rather than addressing flaws in the labour market. This traditional approach may have led to its downfall at a time when fresh perspectives on the potential of the welfare state were coming to the fore and new approaches to unemployment such as national labour exchanges seemed more viable and less politically polarizing.²¹⁹ Hollesley Bay, as an abandoned experiment, was as important to the creation of the welfare state in Britain as reforms that ultimately became legislation precisely because the state did not choose it as a permanent remedy for unemployment. The potential for working-class independence at Hollesley Bay was never realized because the paradoxical smallholdings component was at once too radical for some and too seemingly backward-looking for others. Many of the men who applied to work at Hollesley Bay found their experience there to be somewhat lacking probably in part because of the missed opportunity for smallholdings. Despite the failure to cement farm colonies into subsequent legislation, similar schemes were employed during the 1930s; Lansbury found this ironic.²²⁰ “The work that is being carried out now at the two agricultural colonies

²¹⁹ See for example William Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry* (London: Longmans, 1909 and 1930).

²²⁰ John Field has studied labour camps in the 1920s and 1930s in Britain, see: John Field, “Able Bodies: Work Camps and the Training of the Unemployed in Britain Before 1939,” paper presented at The Significance of the

under the Ministry of Labour,” he said, was “exactly the kind of thing that we were prevented by John Burns from doing at Hollesley Bay and elsewhere.”²²¹ Lansbury might well have delighted in this irony had he not still cared so deeply for the considerate care of the poor whom he saw continually treated as “human scrap” by the establishment he had long tried to dismantle.²²² If this was idyllic, utopian, and idealistic it did not bother George Lansbury in the slightest for it was a part of his vision of a better country that Hollesley Bay rested in his memory as one of “the best pieces of constructive work that stands to the credit of my initiative.”²²³

Conclusion

When J.S. Woodsworth published *Strangers Within Our Gates* in 1909, he explained the necessity for British immigrants in Canada: “We need more of our own blood to assist us to maintain in Canada our British traditions and mold the incoming armies of foreigners into loyal British subjects.”²²⁴ Yet, Woodsworth made clear that not all British immigrants were capable of fulfilling this responsibility of imperial citizenship. Among the 12,260 assisted emigrants sent out to Canada in 1906-7 from seven London agencies, most of whom were from East London, Woodsworth could see no suitable candidates for the task.²²⁵ These were the lowest of the low in his estimation. These were people like Richard Carter, a dyer from Whitechapel, his wife, a lace-maker, and their two small children. Woodsworth described this family of assisted emigrants with disapproval and the stereotypical hallmarks of the East London poor – degenerate, dirty, violent, weak, and ill:

A charity organization sent them to Canada to farm. They never got beyond Winnipeg. The man was not strong enough physically to farm, and his eyesight was defective. Before many months the wife was in the courts accusing her husband of assault. The children were sickly; after about a year it was discovered that the little boy was weak-minded. The ‘home’ was a copy of the homes in the slums of East London We

Historical Perspective in Adult Education Research Conference, University of Cambridge, Institute of Continuing Education, July 6, 2009, accessed January 1, 2013,

<http://www.ioe.stir.ac.uk/staff/documents/ScutreaJFpreamps2009.pdf>.

²²¹ Lansbury, *My Life*, 146.

²²² George Lansbury, *My England* (London: Selwyn & Blount, Ltd., 1934), 84.

²²³ Lansbury, *My Life*, 146.

²²⁴ James S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1909; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 46.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 49. Woodsworth notes the following numbers in this total for each charity: Salvation Army, 406; EEEF, 6,096; SHES, 506; Church Army, 1,519; Church Emigration Society, 663; CUBL, 2,842; Central Emigration Board, 228.

sympathize with these poor people, but we are glad that the Canadian Government is taking steps to prevent the ‘dumping’ of these unfortunates into Canada.²²⁶

Interestingly, this opposition to English emigration to Canada did not begin and end with poor emigrants. Historian Amy Lloyd has recently researched Canadian hostility towards English emigrants more generally in the early twentieth century in Toronto where emigrants were blamed for their own unsuccessful integration into Canadian society.²²⁷ Lloyd argues that many Canadians took issue with English emigrants’ suitability for Canadian work, criticizing “their tendency to grumble,” their arrogance and ignorance, their being critical of Canadian customs, and having unrealistic expectations about Canada.²²⁸ One of the most common complaints amongst Canadians was that the English viewed Canada through an imperial lens, arriving with no expectation or motivation to adapt to the new or foreign customs that had evolved in the former colony. Lloyd argues that the English were not “automatically embraced as compatriots” by Canadians despite common imperial ties.²²⁹ These sentiments, combined with influxes of assisted emigrants after the passing of the Unemployed Workmen Act in 1905, clarify the official Canadian reaction – the passing of restrictive immigration laws between 1906 and 1910 that sought to curb the number of emigrants from poor London districts.

This chapter has demonstrated that despite the evolution of a modernized, bureaucratized emigration system in London, Canada remained hostile to assisted emigrants. Moreover, Canada chose not to fulfil the British expectation that the two nations shared an imperially-bound responsibility for the well-being of the English poor. This reluctance encouraged emigration charities in England to produce more suitable emigrants for Canada, such as through the introduction of home training farm colonies. At the same time, London charities, philanthropists, and governments looked inward to better address the problems of unemployment at home during this period. Since the 1830s, the Poor Law, unemployment and emigration had been intimately connected. But at the turn of the century, these three phenomena went through a period of transition and assisted emigration had become a story of unemployment. Legal and ideological changes to the manner in which the unemployed were dealt with spawned new orientations for

²²⁶ Ibid., 51.

²²⁷ Amy Lloyd, “The Englishmen Here are Much Disliked’: Hostility Towards English Immigrants in Early Twentieth-Century Toronto,” in Tanja Bueltmann, David T. Gleeson, and Donald M. MacRaild, *Locating the English Diaspora, 1550-2000* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 142.

²²⁸ Ibid., 142-46.

²²⁹ Ibid., 147.

assisted emigration to Canada. The changes also occurred in part to ensure the survival of increasingly outdated Victorian emigration charities steeped in liberalism and religion. The case study of Hollesley Bay provides a reminder that emigration began as much at home as it did abroad; the push factors of unemployment combined with the pull of colonial promise channeled the working poor into new farm colonies at home before setting out as migrants. Moreover, the struggle reformers had in finding equilibrium between unemployment relief at home or abroad is illustrated in this case.

While a more bureaucratized form of emigrant selection developed in these years, the maturation failed to fully convince Canadian officials that better more suitable candidates were en route. This was in part because the people needing the most help were usually those who had long-suffered the effects of poverty and unemployment in East London. Because emigration was used in London as a tool to solve unemployment, the prospective emigrant was never likely to impress Canadians. The system was thus inherently flawed and never well-aligned to the imperial needs of either sending or receiving nation.²³⁰ Unfortunately, the well-being of the emigrant at the centre of these debates was often neglected. It is to the experiences of these ‘town birds’ that I now turn to in part two.

²³⁰ Janice Cavell takes up this debate in the 1920s. She argues that it is too simplistic to suggest Canada did not want assisted English emigrants. Her evidence suggests that a “vocal minority” in the 1920s during the Empire Settlement program defended the immigration of English assisted emigrants to Canada, see: Janice Cavell, “The Imperial Race and the Immigration Sieve: The Canadian Debate on Assisted British Migration and Empire Settlement, 1900-30,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34, no. 3 (September 2006), 346.

PART TWO

**‘Town Birds’ –
The East London Emigrant Experience**

CHAPTER FOUR

‘On the Whole I like Canada Very Much’:¹ Retrieving the Emigrant’s Voice Through Letters Home, 1882-94

“The best advertisement is a successful emigrant – the man who writes back to his old friends and tells them of his success.”

- Reverend J.F. Kitto, Chairman, East End Emigration Fund, 1883.²

Introduction

Eastenders by the early 1880s had long been plagued by chronic poverty, dependency on the Poor Law, and periods of unemployment. But they had also developed a rich working-class culture, forged strong community bonds, and lived in a multiethnic urban landscape alongside immigrants from Eastern Europe, Asia, and the rural United Kingdom.³ Typecast as morally, physically, culturally, and economically degenerate in an emerging slum discourse, Eastenders were not considered ideal colonial emigrants. For Canada, the urban working poor from London did not make good prospects for the westward expanding nation intent on recruiting agricultural immigrants. Despite these shortcomings and obstacles, assisted emigrants from the East End of London did their best to make new lives for themselves and their families in Canada. Their experiences of emigration in the 1880s and 1890s can be analyzed using a series of published letters some of them wrote to the charities that sponsored them. As a migrant group, assisted East End emigrants present a unique brand of English settler in Canada. Forever failing, despite their successes, to meet the ideal imperial British standard, Eastenders were considered undesirable on both sides of the Atlantic; a blight on British prosperity at home and unsuitable representatives abroad, Eastenders occupied an uneasy “third space” struggling to fit in somewhere between

¹ The words of a young domestic servant who emigrated to Canada with the assistance of the Self-Help Emigration Society in 1893, *Self-Help Emigration Society, Annual Report 1893*, 18.

² Central Emigration Society, *State-Aided Emigration: A Report of Speeches Delivered at a Conference Held December 12, 1883 on the Invitation of the Central Emigration Society* (London: Spottiswoode and Co., 1883), 11.

³ For the best recent overview of the history of East London people, culture, and place see John Marriott, *Beyond the Tower: A History of East London* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011). For the history of poverty in the 1880s in East London, see: William J. Fishman, *East End 1888: A Year in a London Borough Among the Labouring Poor* (Nottingham: Five Leaves Publications, 1988). On East London as an immigration hub for recent arrivals to the city, see: Anne Kersten, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields 1660-2000* (London: Routledge, 2005).

home and empire.⁴ Their letters reveal their precarious transatlantic social position, unique in the overall schemata of English colonial emigration, caught between two worlds of empire.

In its annual report for 1884-85, the East End Emigration Fund (EEEF) explained to its patrons the importance of keeping in touch with emigrants through letters home to England:

from time to time, we catch a cheerful note of encouragement from some far-off dweller on the Prairies, or in the woods of Canada, and from Australia, conveyed perhaps, in a mis-spelt letter, or well written diary, or a further request that we will help some perplexed relation to join them in their new and prosperous home. Sometimes a letter is brought to us by a stranger or some relative, revealing more success than we should ever dare to promise, and in this way we find we add to the reputation of Emigration as a panacea for the ills which afflict so many of our countrymen at home.⁵

In the late nineteenth century, letter-writing between assisted emigrants and philanthropists served multiple and distinct purposes for each party. For emigration philanthropists, hearing from successful assisted emigrants justified their often controversial work. Indeed, philanthropists solicited letters from recently re-settled emigrants with the intent of using them to promote their cause. Moreover, many emigrants asked philanthropists to send out friends and relatives in their letters which further encouraged the work of assisted emigration. The letters also provided evidence that Canada could absorb London's excess labour to counter claims in both the Canadian and British press and government reports that such people were unwanted in the colonies, could not be accommodated, and would not succeed. For the assisted emigrant, the act of letter-writing afforded a method by which to maintain connections with home, and to express gratitude, satisfaction, or regret concerning their migration experience. Letter-writing also encouraged assisted emigrants to cultivate an imperial transnational identity within the context of their ethnicity, class, and urban origin. The emigrants' letters considered here present an unparalleled and previously unexplored historical source for the study of poor urban English emigrants to Canada in the late nineteenth century.

Limits, Scope, and Source Potential

⁴ On 'third space,' see: Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber, and Suzanne M. Sinke, eds., *Letters Across Borders: Epistolary Practices of International Migrants* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 12. These authors were likely influenced by Homi Bhabha's notion of 'third place,' see: Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994). Elliott, Gerber, and Sinke suggest that undesirable parts of the migrant's past might follow them to their new destination. David Gerber's work is helpful in grasping the ways in which these transnational problems evolved, see: David A. Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives: The Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

⁵ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 5-6.

This chapter explores three major themes in the letters of forty-two assisted emigrants from the East End of London who emigrated to Canada between 1882 and 1894 through emigration charities: assessments of the emigration experience; family life and health; and thoughts on Canada. Migration historians have long been interested in migrant letters as rich texts on settlement adaptation and the mundane details of migrants' daily lives.⁶ In analyzing the communication of these themes between emigrant and philanthropist through both the act of letter-writing and the textual contours of the letters themselves, I illuminate how a transatlantic discourse on assisted emigration was produced and shaped. This chapter retrieves the obscured voices of assisted emigrants from the structural processes of charitable emigration that were built up around, by, and for them. In this way, the chapter uncovers the emigrants' motivations for writing the letters, their editorial decisions about content, and their expressions of identity. Assisted emigrants shaped the discourse of charitable emigration in their letters to the same degree as did the philanthropists who published them. Through this analysis I accord the emigrants a more central place in the history of assisted emigration. This chapter also problematizes the decisions philanthropists made about selecting and publishing the letters and the consequences of omitting or emphasizing certain sections of content for the discourse of assisted emigration.

Discourse theory and the linguistic turn have affected the historian's approach to letters in recent years. Previously, letters were used to supplement more traditional sources on migration like government records, but more recently historians have been interested in the letter for its potential to analyze the construction of discourse.⁷ This case study also contributes to a

⁶ Elliott, Gerber, and Sinke, 9, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 7. Lisa Chilton has found, for example, that the letters written by British female emigrants to their emigrators (her word for the agents who arranged for their emigration) were selected for publication based on "their promotional and educational value" as much as for reflecting something about the women who wrote them. She goes on to explain that emigrant letters "add weight to the emigrators' arguments that emigrating to the empire's frontier spaces required exceptionally strong, adaptable, resilient women." However, Chilton rejects the notion that emigrant letters that were published (that is public letters) cannot be used to analyze emigrant experience; in her chapter she uses the letters to explore the construction of an emigration discourse around female emigration from both the perspective of the emigrator and emigrant, as well as their complex relationship: Lisa Chilton, "Letters 'Home': Female Emigrants and the Imperial Family of Women," chap. 4 in *Agents of Empire: British Female Migration to Canada and Australia, 1860s-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 98-99. Another very good recent contribution on the place of letters in discourse analysis and the 'New Imperial History' is Laura Ishiguro, "Relative Distances: Family and Empire Between Britain, British Columbia, and India, 1858-1901" (PhD diss., University College London, 2011). Ishiguro argues: "letters worked as a kind of discursive and material performance of, among other things, family relationships and imperial identities Influenced by the 'new' cultural history, I see culture as produced through discourse. In this sense, I understand letters to be moored in wider cultural understandings of family and empire, acting as particular kinds of discursive performances that both constructed and

current historiographical discussion about English ethnic identity in the colonial world by presenting micro-profiles of a class of English emigrant that stood apart from the voluntary, self-sufficient, middle-class English emigrant that Canada readily accepted in this period.⁸ Finally, this chapter humanizes East End emigrants and removes them, however temporarily and ahistorically, from the damaging homogenizing slum narrative that assumed them all to be unworthy, and undesirable new citizens for Canada.

In order to employ the letters as sound historical sources they must first be problematized as they present a number of limitations. The collection of letters referred to here was published for public consumption in the annual reports of the EEEF and the Self-Help Emigration Society (SHES). Emigration charity committee members, patrons and subscribers, government officials, competing charities, and prospective emigrants were the primary audience for which the letters were intended. It remains unclear whether the emigrants knew their letters would be published or whether they had given permission for them to be printed.⁹ Presumably though, emigrants knew they were writing to persons involved in public affairs and that their information might be shared. Thus, the letters cannot be considered private and must be handled as public letters. In her groundbreaking 1972 study *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America*, Charlotte Erickson argues that these types of letters often mirrored public controversies around emigration and usually endorsed emigration. Conversely, she suggests private letters did not. This is certainly the case with the collection of

reflected this wider historical context ... I look to analyse the discourses of family and empire through which these texts were produced, and which they simultaneously helped to produce,” 16-17. For an excellent study on the “language of separation” and how migrants coped with distance between loved ones by writing letters, see: Sonia Cancian, *Families, Lovers, and their Letters: Italian Postwar Migration to Canada* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2010), 6.

⁸ The most recent contribution to this discussion is Tanja Bueltmann, David T. Gleeson, and Donald M. MacRaild, eds., *Locating the English Diaspora, 1500-2010*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012) which contains chapters that problematize the idea of an English diaspora and consider the English migrant in terms of their ethnicity rather than simply as a dominant migrant group that escaped notice across the world. An earlier collection of essays published in a special issue of the *British Journal of Canadian Studies* (specifically Volume 16, Issue 1, 2003) explored the issue of ethnicity and history of English migrants to Canada in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These essays originated as conference papers from a 2002 conference sponsored by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies on the theme “Migration from England to Canada: Origins, Settlement, Impact.” The contributors sought to complicate the history of English identity, migration, and assimilation in Canada and redress the imbalance in studies of British immigration to Canada that had largely excluded the English in favour of the Irish and the Scots. Ross McCormack’s 1981 article remains an important contribution to this discussion, see: Ross McCormack, “Cloth Caps and Jobs: The Ethnicity of English Immigrants in Canada 1900-1914,” in *Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada*, edited by Jorgen Dahlie and Tissa Fernando, (Toronto: Methuen, 1981), 38-55.

⁹ Chilton suggests her female emigrants knew their letters would be published because they had seen others in emigration propaganda, see: Chilton, *Agents of Empire*, 102.

letters used in this study as most of the emigrants overtly endorse emigration. Erickson also suggests that public letters, and the mid-twentieth century historiography that relied on them, obscure details about the ordinary emigrant and do not function as reliable sources for micro-profiling ordinary emigrants.¹⁰ While that may have been the case for those collections, most of which were from the early nineteenth century, I would argue that this is not a universal limitation of public letters. By reading the forty-two letters here with and against the grain, extensive detail about the emigrants' personal lives, settlement adaptations and adjustments, culture, and identity is revealed however careful the writers might have been in their epistolary etiquette or how steeped they were in the cultural limits of their time.¹¹ Indeed, any limit on the emigrants' ability to be honest further reveals the degree to which their class dictated their language and behaviour and are as useful to the historian as letters taken at face value. Assisted emigrants from East London wrote openly about the private and emotional aspects of their lives. The distinction between public and private letters is thus considerably blurred. Bruce Elliott, David Gerber, and Suzanne Sinke have more recently explained that personal letters were often shared or published in immigration guidebooks and newspapers exposing the "permeable boundaries of public and private space within immigrant communications networks."¹² These authors also discuss the historian's tendency to draw a line between public and private spheres in their approach to letter-writing when perhaps this is futile.¹³ In her study of early nineteenth-century emigrants' letters, Elizabeth Errington suggests emigrants had "no expectation of privacy" when writing letters and thus even letters intended for private eyes performed a public function of being heard.¹⁴ Like Errington, I treat the letters as documents that traversed a more fluid boundary between public and private, one in which the assisted emigrant was guided in their writing by a complex interplay of personal autonomy and deferential relationships based on class, expectation, and cultural convention.

Authenticity has been a problem for historians who use migrant letters; the case presented here is certainly no different and brings additional challenges concerning source validity and

¹⁰ Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1972), 4.

¹¹ Elliot, Gerber, and Sinke talk about the ways in which immigrants were bound by the cultures in which they wrote which often made them "tentative" in their writing, 7.

¹² *Ibid*, 10.

¹³ *Ibid*, 11.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Errington, *Emigrant Worlds and Transatlantic Communities: Migration to Upper Canada in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 8.

reliability.¹⁵ While it is impossible to know whether all of the letters considered here were written by legitimate assisted emigrants from East London, and to what extent they were edited, cropped, or tampered with for publication, it can at least be assumed that the letters were unlikely to have been wholly fabricated as this would have damaged the charities' reputations. Reputation was the cornerstone of charitable practice in Victorian Britain and emigration charities worked hard in this period to establish their credibility and legitimacy. It is unlikely they would have taken the risk of compromising this legitimacy by publishing entirely fictional letters.¹⁶ Like the case files of emigration charities, original copies of the letters were never archived. This is unfortunate as the original documents may have contained further textual, visual, or material clues that might have enhanced the value of the source – we cannot know, for instance, the type of paper or card, inks, penmanship, postage, addresses, marginal notes, sketches, photographs, or other epistolary minutiae the emigrants employed in their letters home that might have furnished clues about their migration experience and transnational identities.

For the twentieth century, it is more often possible to check the assisted emigrants' letters for authenticity by validating personal details in British and Canadian censuses and Canadian passenger lists.¹⁷ However, for the nineteenth century this is more difficult as the emigrants' names were almost never printed; initials were used instead. While there is no explanation for why societies published letters in this way it can be presumed that they did so for a number of reasons. Societies may have attempted to temper the stigma of assisted emigration by affording emigrants some degree of anonymity, perhaps so they would not be burdened by their origins and their poverty in Canada. Including the emigrant's full name identified them as individuals rather than presenting them as generic representative types. It was more effective to cast the emigrant as 'nobody' yet 'everybody' to attract the widest range of prospects. Semi-anonymity also allowed for greater manipulation of the image of the ideal emigrant rather than the more

¹⁵ Erickson, for example, cross-referenced to census data: Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 9. Also see Elliott, Gerber, and Sinke for limitations of immigration letters, authenticity being one, 3.

¹⁶ We do know that similar charities such as Barnardo's heavily manipulated photographic images in order to raise funds, see: Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 88-139. So while the letters are more than likely authentic they may have been edited. Chilton found significant evidence that the letters she analyzed were indeed written by emigrants. However, they were clearly the sort of letters emigrants wanted to publish; thus other letters must have been excluded for publication which is problematic: Chilton, *Agents of Empire*, 98.

¹⁷ This is because the names were published more often. These letters will form a future project; there are about 150 letters in this collection. Some of the nineteenth-century letters could be checked as there is sometimes enough unique information to place the emigrant at a specific time and location in Canada but this would still be somewhat challenging and certainly very time-consuming.

complex nature of the individual. In this sense, the emigrants' letters also served as representations of the kinds of people selected for assistance rather than to suggest that only a very particular individual had been chosen. Emigrants were thus not presented as special cases or possessing characteristics or skills that were extraordinary although they were certainly held to a high moral standard and expected not to fail. Finally, printing the emigrant's name and extraneous details may have been seemed like distracting or superfluous information when the primary purpose in printing the letters was to relay generic universal messaging about the ability to succeed in Canada given the charity's practice of proper selection methods.

Deciphering to what extent the emigrants represented in the letters were bona fide East End emigrants is difficult but not impossible. Between 1882 and 1894, the majority of EEEF emigrants, and a large number of SHES emigrants, were from the East End of London. These charities often prefaced the letters with background information about the emigrant's former occupation and neighborhood in London. This information confirms without doubt that Eastenders wrote fourteen of the forty-two letters. Londoners with no specific information about which borough they had come from wrote an additional four letters for a total of eighteen. However, additional information suggests that Eastenders likely wrote all ten of the EEEF letters for 1884-85; the EEEF reported that year that it serviced the East End unemployed who wished to emigrate to British colonies.¹⁸ This would bring the EEEF total to nineteen of its twenty-one letters. The SHES never limited its services to East London so it is not surprising that they printed the letters of emigrants from greater London. Still, of the twenty-one letters collected for the SHES, nine were from London with six of those hailing from East London. Moreover, the SHES emphasized that its work commenced after the 1883 publication of the Reverend Andrew Mearns's highly influential book on housing and the London poor *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* which highlighted poverty in the East End.¹⁹ As explained in chapter two, Mearns was a member of the SHES committee from the outset. Together with clues that suggest the SHES was primarily interested in emigrating unemployed dock workers from East London, it might safely be assumed that its letters for 1885 and 1886 represented substantially higher counts of

¹⁸ By 1894, the EEEF reported that it had extended its operations outside of East London, see *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 2-3.

¹⁹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 3; and Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883; repr., Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1970).

Eastenders than can be confirmed. Overall, the forty-two letters likely represent mostly assisted emigrants who originated from the East End of London.

Few, if any, studies of migrant letters can be representative of a whole population and representativeness has posed a problem for historians who use the migrant letter as a primary source. Erickson identifies types of individuals whose voices are not reflected in her collection of letters, such as women, the illiterate, and those who wished to sever ties.²⁰ Lisa Chilton argues that while published emigrant letters are not wholly representative neither are they entirely unique.²¹ Elliott, Gerber, and Sinke identified the same problem but nonetheless suggested that the letter as historical source remains one of unmatched potential for understanding migrants.²² I make no claim that the letters used here are representative of all assisted emigrants from East London. Indeed, they represent only a tiny sample of the whole. Between 1882 and 1894, the EEEF assisted a total of 4,792 emigrants to British colonies.²³ For the years 1884, 1885, 1894, and 1895 they sent out 1,206 of those emigrants to Canada. The SHES sent out a total of 4,551 emigrants to British colonies between 1884 and 1893 the majority of which went to Canada.²⁴ The forty-two letters used here represent a specific small group of assisted emigrants who took the time to write home and said the right things in their letters. They did so perhaps because they possessed a stronger desire to maintain ties or felt they had capitalized on their migration experience, proving the charities' investment in them had been worthwhile. On the other hand, perhaps they wanted to express that the process of emigrating poor was challenging, that life in Canada was hard, and that the move across the ocean should not be taken lightly. These are certainly subtexts present in the letters.

The forty-two letters used in this case study shed light on two parallel processes from two distinct points of view – the criteria and selection methods emigration charities employed in their practice (as well as their expectations for emigrant success) and the experiences of the emigrants whom they sponsored. As the emigration charities left no archive of case files, the letters serve as

²⁰ Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 6.

²¹ Chilton, *Agents of Empire*, 100.

²² Elliott, Gerber, and Sinke, 4.

²³ Gleaned from tallying counts in the annual reports of the EEEF between 1884 and 1913 (the 1913 report lists numbers from 1897 to 1913 in a helpful chart).

²⁴ The SHES did not break down by year either but provided some examples for numbers by year. For example in 1893, 441 out of 480 emigrants went to Canada, see: *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 6. In 1888, 843 went to Canada and only nineteen to Australia, see: *Standard*, July 27, 1888. These numbers suggest that most emigrants went to Canada.

some of the only documents that explain their decision-making processes. The letters can be read for insight on the types of emigrants who were actually selected for sponsorship; their characters, background, family size, gender, origin neighborhood in East London, and destination in Canada construct a picture of the charities' final choices and in turn expose those who might have been rejected. From the point of view of the assisted emigrant, the letters uncover how they managed their transnational lives in the early days of their resettlement to Canada. During this time, assisted emigrants frequently compared their new lives to their old ones; some were homesick, others never looked back. The letters also reveal how assisted emigrants crafted their identity as former Eastenders and new Canadians suggesting they often experienced uneasiness in their resettlement and adaptation to Canadian publics and cultures. The letters present not just a record of the emigrant voice but their manipulation (by that I mean their selection and publication) revealing details about the expectations, indebtedness, and precariousness that characterized the relationship between the poor emigrant and the wealthy philanthropist. There is a tremendous undercurrent of pressure in the subtext of the letters; pressure to perform, pressure to conform, and pressure to succeed as liberal, independent, responsible working-class imperial transplants. Historiographically, the letters have a capacity to enrich understandings about the practices of emigration charities and the production of a discourse on poverty and imperial emigration as much as they continue to be useful in charting the migrant experience.

The literary style of the letters is noteworthy. Many of the letters from the 1880s follow a formulaic pattern. This would suggest emigrants were responding to requests for updates from the societies and composed their letter as a series of answers to questions posed to them.²⁵ Some emigrants wrote several times, others only once. Some letters are filtered through the penmanship of a third party such as family members, correspondents for the societies, or clergymen but most appear to have been written by the emigrants themselves. Nevertheless, in all cases, the emigrants' personalities surface as do their personal and individual cares, worries, triumphs, and failures. Charities published emigrants' letters complete with spelling errors and incorrect grammar; these inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies have been left intact and I have not

²⁵ Emigrants mentioned in their letters in 1884-85 that they had received a Christmas card from the EEEF; see letters in *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85. By the early twentieth century, the letters are more organic and the emigrants tend to talk more freely about matters important and specific to them suggesting the societies became less concerned with collecting specific information from them. Chilton has also found that female assisted emigrants responded to requests for letters from their emigrators; emigrators who sent out women to the colonies wanted to know about work conditions for women and for suggestions on how to prepare for colonial life and work: Chilton, *Agents of Empire*, 103.

used [sic] to indicate errors. Most of the letters follow typical working-class linguistic conventions, sometimes phonetically indicating a Cockney accent or suggesting only a basic education. Other letters demonstrate a remarkable mastery of the written word and employ a sophisticated and extensive vocabulary complicating perceptions of the linguistic capacity of the poor and the kind of person who lived in East London. The letters are so dynamic, vivid, and lively that many of them have been quoted here at some length. As the object of this chapter is to retrieve the emigrant-writer's voice it seems appropriate to showcase the letters to this extent.

Motivations: Why Assisted Emigrants Wrote Letters and Why Charities Published Them

Assisted emigrants were expected to write home. In giving his last words to departing emigrants sponsored through the SHES at Euston Station in London, Mr. Walter Hazell, an emigration advocate and member of the society's committee, instructed them to promote the right kind of emigration in their letters to friends: "When you write home I should like you to tell your friends to stay in their own country villages if they can keep up their country homes, but that if they must move they must avoid the great cities, save up their money and strength, and get friends to help them go to Canada."²⁶ Emigration charities routinely used letters "from successful emigrants" to educate and inform prospective emigrants in East London about the benefits and challenges of colonial emigration.²⁷ These letters were also used to promote recruitment of the 'right kind' of emigrant by praising cases of success and disparaging those of failure. When they were printed (which was rare) stories of failure warned intending emigrants about the dangers of laziness, unwillingness to work, drunkenness, and immorality.

²⁶ *Leicester Chronicle*, April 18, 1896.

²⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 5.

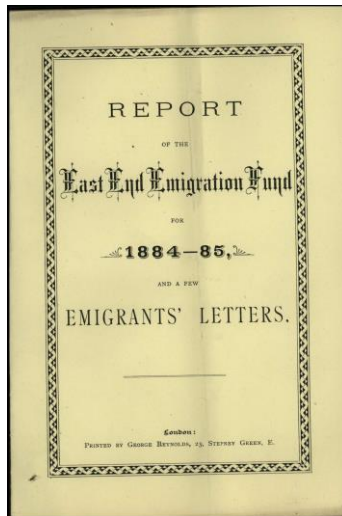


Fig. 4.1: Front cover of the East End Emigration Fund's Annual Report for 1884-85, Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives.

Emigrants' letters featured significantly in the annual reports of both the EEEF and the SHES, so much so that the cover of the 1884-85 EEEF annual report shows in bold typeface that it contained "a few Emigrants' Letters."²⁸ In the SHES's annual report for 1885, the inside cover highlighted a quote from an emigrant's letter, "I am getting my dollar-and-a-half a day – that is better than starving about London."²⁹ The primacy of these letters suggests that societies relied on hearing from successful emigrants in order to carry on the very business of emigration – soliciting donations, support, and public acceptance. Success letters acted as testament to the work done and justified the call for donations.³⁰ This is likely why very few letters were published that implied hardship, failure, or regret. Indeed, letters that demonstrated success helped assuage fears and opposition on both sides of the Atlantic about the sending out of poor urban dwellers to Canada. Britain worried that the practice rid England either of undesirable city dwellers unsuitable for colonial life or that conversely it sent out the best skilled industrial workmen, dock workers, and farm hands. Canada was often displeased with the perceived quality of assisted emigrants, and had been since the 1860s when the first batches of assisted

²⁸ Ibid, front cover.

²⁹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, inside cover.

³⁰ Gerard Moran, in his study of nineteenth-century assisted emigration of the Irish to North America, suggests the same for the letters he uses: "letters written by grateful emigrants that were produced by landlords and philanthropists, have to be treated with a certain level of caution as they were often published to highlight the benevolence of individuals who were under attack from critics or who sought support for assisted emigration. These letters were used as part of an agenda." Gerard Moran, *Sending Out Ireland's Poor: Assisted Emigration to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2004), 15.

East End emigrants were sent over. By 1894, this problem was amplified by a downturn in the Canadian economy that left hundreds of assisted emigrants from London supposedly wandering the streets of Canadian cities.³¹ Emigration charities used letters as “proof” that their work was worthy, well-intended, and good for the Empire:

We think it marvelous that credence should be given to those who assert that judicious Emigration is anything but a remedy for the sufferings of the enforced idleness amongst the working classes, as our experience more and more convinces us that nothing is so efficacious, and we have abundant proof in the numerous letters we receive from successful Emigrants that we are correct in our views. We subjoin extracts from some of our recent correspondence, of which we have enough to fill a volume, and at all times at hand for the inspection of those interested.³²

Both the EEEF and the SHES used letters to contrast the difficulties of life in East London and the relative prosperity gained by transplanting the unemployed and underemployed to Canada and other parts of the British Empire. In its annual report for 1885, the SHES employed this contrast to solicit donations from wealthy subscribers in the opening paragraph: “The object of this report is to give the reader a faithful account of the destitute condition of some of this Society’s emigrants before leaving London, and to present, in their own words or in those of their employers, their altered circumstances in our colonies.”³³ The SHES was hopeful that using the emigrants’ letters to present the contrast would translate into contributions from “friends of the poor.”³⁴

Emigrants wrote letters for rather different reasons. While they were certainly under pressure to write home to their sponsoring charity, either by implied or explicit expectation or in receiving a letter requesting an update, they were under no actual obligation to do so. Indeed, some emigrants disappeared after a period of time never to be heard from again, presumably once they had resettled and no longer felt the need to keep in touch. By all accounts it seems emigrants felt a certain degree of indebtedness to the society to the extent of writing at least a small note of gratitude after reaching Canada including some facts about their new home.³⁵ Here

³¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 2. This also happened in 1884-85, see: *East London Observer*, July 12, 1884 for a story on a group of East London unemployed emigrants wandering the streets of Montreal.

³² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 9.

³³ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 3.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 4.

³⁵ Chilton argues that her female emigrants wrote back to their emigrators not just because they felt obliged to do so (because they certainly did) but because writing served a useful purpose for furthering their agendas; these emigrants were often looking to further their own business interests for example in looking for workers or buyers of land, see: Chilton, *Agents of Empire*, 101-2.

is a typical example of those basic kinds of notes from E.H. who reached London, Ontario with his sister in the summer of 1884:

Dear Sir, We arrived quite safe at Quebec at half-past three on Monday morning, then we went to London at half-past one on Wednesday afternoon. I have got a very nice situation for my sister. I thank you very much for you great kindness to me and my sister. Yours truly, E.H.³⁶

As there is little in the way of content in these short notes, they will not be used at length in the analysis of the three themes that follows. Rather, they show on a very basic level, the kind of minimal effort in letter-writing assisted emigrants from East London practiced. These letters reported that the journey had been acceptable, that work had almost immediately been found, and almost always expressed gratitude for the assistance received from the charity. They were crafted soon after landing and thus the emigrant was not yet able to make any substantial remarks about the country, the people, or their transition.

While assisted emigrants were motivated to write home in part because they were expected to, they also took pride in reporting their successes and sought a venue in which to give their impressions of Canada. Letter-writing also allowed assisted emigrants to simply keep in touch with the people who had facilitated their move and to maintain connections with East London. David Gerber suggests there were complex psychological reasons why emigrants wrote letters and that in doing so they looked backwards and forwards at the same time.³⁷ The letter allowed them some way of traversing both worlds. Elliott, Gerber, and Sinke further suggested that it was rare for emigrants to completely sever ties with their homelands both in practice and in a more abstract sense of identity expression. In a similar way, they suggest that migrants often lived in two societies at the same time their feet straddling their old and new worlds.³⁸ While it could easily be assumed that moving from one English-speaking society to another might present fewer challenges than moving between two entirely different worlds, the letters show there was a significant period of adjustment for Eastenders in Canada. For U., a general labourer from Poplar, East London, receiving a note from the EEEF was a happy occasion that reconnected his family with home: “I also thank you very much for the photo and the little cards, we was very pleased with them, as they cheer us up, we open them to see who was thinking of us in

³⁶ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 15.

³⁷ Gerber, 2-5.

³⁸ Elliott, Gerber, and Sinke, 2, 11.

England.”³⁹ Thus, writing and receiving letters to and from home helped ease the period of transition.

Assisted Emigrants’ Letters

Assessments of the Emigration Experience: Overall Impressions and Work

Most of the letters emigration charities published were from emigrants who expressed satisfaction with their emigration experience and felt that they had been relatively successful in their re-settlement. However, some emigrants did explain that life in Canada was harder than they had imagined for a variety of reasons including the harsh weather and the lack of work in their trades. Interestingly, emigration charities published some of these letters.⁴⁰ Letters containing negative assessments served several purposes. They were published as warnings to prospective emigrants about the dangers and challenges of an unprepared, unfit, and ill-intentioned migration. Charities believed emigrants had to be strong, willing, and morally sound in order for their emigration to be successful and for the charity’s selection of them to be justified. Negative letters also demonstrated balance. Charities sought to demonstrate to subscribers that their rate of success was high but not unrealistically perfect. Almost all of the letters reveal gratitude and a sense of indebtedness to the sending charities even when the experience had been fraught with difficulties and challenges. The emigrants’ letters also regularly take a position in either endorsing or discouraging assisted emigration. Finally, many emigrants reported on the details of their voyages providing rich historical detail on ship conditions and colonial immigration processing upon departure and arrival.

Emigrants who reported satisfaction with their migration experience often did so by contrasting their former lives in London. R.W., formerly of Whitechapel in the East End of London, even wrote a poem contrasting his old life with his new one in 1885: “Think of our home over there---- Plenty to eat over here---- And plenty for millions more over there.”⁴¹ He went on to talk about his family’s distress in Whitechapel living in one room, “everything in pawn, and walking the streets with an empty stomach.”⁴² In contrast, he reported that his house

³⁹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 12.

⁴⁰ Chilton notes that emigration charities rarely printed “solidly negative” letters as they did little to further the philanthropic agenda of assisted emigration, see: Chilton, *Agents of Empire*, 100.

⁴¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 11.

⁴² *Ibid.*

in Midland, Ontario near Georgian Bay was full of furniture and situated on a quarter of an acre of land with access to wild game and plenty of wood for fuel.⁴³ This led him to report to the EEEF, “Thank God, we have no reason to complain . . . and are happy and comfortable.”⁴⁴ For J.T. the difference between East London and Canada was clear: he stated simply, “I am just twice as well off as I when I lived in London.”⁴⁵ In 1894, M. writes about the lovely view from his new home in Montreal: “While I writing this I am looking at the river St. Lawrence – it is only a stone’s throw from our house – such a contrast from our home in the East End of London.”⁴⁶ Emigration charities used the same technique of contrasting London slum life to the perceived emptiness of Canada in their annual reports to imply there was room in the British Empire for all its subjects no matter how poor. Underlying this contrast was the assumption that the colonies were under an obligation as imperial spaces to openly accept such people. Printing the same kinds of contrasts in emigrants’ own words provided further rationalization of Canada as the promised land.

Reporting about newly acquired assets was important to assisted emigrants who had arrived in Canada with few possessions.⁴⁷ H. reported in great detail to the EEEF in 1894 the types of possessions he had acquired for his new home in Montreal and expressed gratitude for his sponsorship:

I have bought a stove 9 dols., a regular bargain, the neighbours are all jealous of it, it is a No. 8 leader, almost new I have got a mansion to live in, it is 8 dols. a month, which I had to pay in advance, but I have let my front room, so it won’t come so hard after all I have got three bedsteads new, I paid 4 ½ dols. for, I made a dresser myself, and a table and a long seat, so we shall be able to rough it for a time. I have bought two sacks of potatoes; 200 lbs of coals; and 50 cents of wood paid for; but the children can get plenty of wood out of the forest where they go picking strawberries and flowers.⁴⁸

H. and his family had not had an easy time in Canada despite his overall satisfaction with the migration. He reported that his search for work had been difficult. Having finally secured a job at a factory he remained on the lookout for better work. Two of his children found work in a mill

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁶ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 21.

⁴⁷ For information from the Emigrants’ Information Office about what intending emigrants were allowed to bring on shipboard, see: *East London Observer*, January 8, 1887. It was very minimal baggage. Also see: *East London Observer*, July 8, 1882 for a report about emigrants having to dispense of furniture before departure.

⁴⁸ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 9.

but were not being paid while they learned the job. Despite these challenges, the family managed to acquire an impressive household for themselves in this first month in Canada.

Several of the assisted emigrants who wrote back to their sending charities in the 1880s and 1890s, explained that they had wanted to wait until they were able to report successes in Canada before writing their letters home. Such was the case of S., described as a father with a very large family starving in London before migrating to an unnamed large town in Ontario in 1894 under the auspices of the EEEF. In S.'s letter, he expresses satisfaction with the move but implies that the family's success had not been immediate:

I hope that you will not think me ungrateful for not writing to you before; I thought that I would wait till I was properly settled. Me and my wife and family are all well and happy. My sister fulfilled all she promised; we have got a nice little home together. I am still at work for the _____ Street Railway, and I am very comfortable. My son Harry is at work at the gas fitting, and we are very happy. I must thank you and the Committee, and all the ladies and gentlemen for your kindness to myself, wife, and family for the kind and generous way you treated us. You saved us from the workhouse; but thanks to you all I am getting a good living, and I once more thank you all.⁴⁹

Similarly, J.W.H., whose first job did not turn out well, explains to the SHES that he had waited to contact them in order to provide a successful report: "I hope you will forgive us for not writing before, but we have been waiting to send all the good news to you about how we have been going on."⁵⁰ In 1894, J., a house painter who emigrated to Montreal, made the same decision: "It is with pleasure that I now write to you to let you know of our progress in this City. I could have written earlier, but I wanted to tell you something definite about our future prospects."⁵¹ These decisions indicate that emigrant letter-writers did not want to disappoint their sending charities by reporting bad news or to worry family back home that the move was not going well. It may also suggest that they felt some obligation to report only positive news. Indeed, charities put pressure on their emigrants to be successful imperial transplants in Canada with the whole system of assisted emigration resting on their accomplishments.

Several emigrants mentioned in their letters that they had no intention of returning to England. In 1884, J.T. made this plain in his letter to the EEEF writing simply, "I don't want to

⁴⁹ Ibid., 20.

⁵⁰ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 18-19.

⁵¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 21. Chilton also shows that female emigrants apologized for not writing sooner in their letters to emigrators because they felt indebted to write back: Chilton, *Agents of Empire*, 103.

come back to England.”⁵² F.W.U., writing from London, Ontario in 1884-85 told the EEEF that he likely did not plan on returning to England but that if he so desired he could: “am glad to say there is not much chance of being one of your ‘returned empties.’ I am getting on much better than I expected, and have already enough money in the Post Office Savings’ Bank to pay my trip back if I wanted to.”⁵³ A SHES emigrant W.W., reported a similar feeling writing “I shan’t want to come to England again in a hurry.”⁵⁴ The father of an emigrant from Plaistow in East London who emigrated under the SHES to Brandon, Manitoba in 1886 wrote to the charity about his son’s satisfaction with his experience: “We think he has taken a wise step, and he thinks so too; at first, we regretted his going, but now we are glad, and thankful to your Society for the help it gave him, for he does not express one regret of his going in any of his letters.”⁵⁵ U. wrote in 1894 that he was glad he was no longer in London and was much better off in Canada.⁵⁶ Return migration amongst assisted emigrants was likely not all that common but it certainly did sometimes happen.⁵⁷ These letters suggest that emigrants were aware that some of their fellow assisted emigrants drifted back to England. However, most emigrants who left East London through emigration charities did so with the intention of permanently moving to Canada; few understood the move to be temporary or as an opportunity to earn money enough to eventually go home. Most had taken considerable time to make the difficult decision to leave England knowing that they would likely never return. They also had so few assets that paying for a return passage would have been difficult if not impossible in the first few years in Canada.

In their letters, assisted emigrants usually endorsed the charitable emigration schemes under which they traveled to Canada. Rarely, did they express blatant dissatisfaction with the process of leaving England. One case that did, however, concerned a large family of thirteen who reported back to the SHES on their difficult situation in 1893:

I remember you saying it was a great undertaking in bringing such a large family of young children out here; had I known what I do now, I would not have done it; but I have

⁵² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 14.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁴ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 8.

⁵⁵ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 11.

⁵⁶ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 12.

⁵⁷ We know relatively little about return migration. For a good overview see, Marjory Harper, *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movements of Emigrants, 1600-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005). In the *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, the charity suggests some emigrants returned home that year after their inability to find work in the troubled Canadian labour market. Still, the charity blamed emigrants as lacking the will to find work rather than the tough economic climate with which they were met.

no one to blame but myself. I hope you will give me time to discharge my liabilities to you, as I feel quite confident in a year or so I shall do all right.⁵⁸

The writer of the letter, and presumably the father, W.G., revealed that the migration of his large family was the primary reason for the difficulties they encountered in Canada. Indeed, the migration of large families was usually discouraged because it presented too great a risk to their success and charities did not want to bear responsibility for failures of their selections. W.G. rather sadly, however, blamed not the society but himself for the difficulties of his experience.

More common were reports of relatively minor difficulties in the re-settlement process in Canada rather than complete dissatisfaction. Much of these difficulties were related to work and work prospects. This is not surprising as assisted emigrants were working-class people who generally relied on wage labour for their living. The letters reveal that working-class life did not suddenly or miraculously improve after moving to another part of the British Empire. Indeed, for W., a former carman from Mile End, East London, life in Canada was just as challenging as anywhere else in the 1890s, his impression being that “a man has to go through a lot out here as well as elsewhere before he gets along in decent shape.”⁵⁹ Similarly, a former gardener from East London D. wrote in 1894 that after being let go from his first job in Canada he had found another one at a brewery after a period of three weeks unemployment, having “done odds job in the meantime.”⁶⁰ This instability did not seem to worry D. all that much as he felt there were “plenty of jobs about for men who are not afraid to work.”⁶¹ Still, it points to a process that was not free from complications. Others wrote about the period of adjustment to life in Canada as a normal part of the process of change they were undergoing. Mr. R., who went to Manitoba under the SHES to become a farmer, wrote to the society in 1893 confessing he had made a number of mistakes, presumably related to farming, which had created some difficulties for him:

So far I have not gone backward. I can find out now a good many errors I have made, which are lessons learnt in the school of experience. I wrote you giving the result of my last year's harvest. Although I have more than double under cultivation, my crop has not yielded so much as last. If it is consolation, I am no worse off than some of my neighbours, but it has put me back again.⁶²

⁵⁸ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 30.

⁵⁹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 16.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 19.

For assisted emigrants who worked for a wage, the promise of better or more consistent work was a common theme in their letters. While work was generally obtained almost immediately upon landing, these first jobs did not always prove fruitful or permanent. James Denny wrote back to a contact in London who passed on information to the SHES on his behalf in 1887. Denny reported to the “Lady” that he and his wife had found work in Canada, iron-working for him and laundry for her. However, this was not the work that was expected of him. The lady to whom he wrote was disappointed Denny had not taken to farm work as planned as she felt he would never make as good a living or be in permanent employment as had been hoped for him.⁶³ R.I., writing to his uncle via the EEEF in 1885 explained that the work he had found with a brick-maker had “stopped for the present.”⁶⁴ R.I. planned on patching together an income in Canada by chopping and splitting wood to get through the winter months. He assured his uncle, and by default the EEEF, that he would find more stable work again in the spring.⁶⁵ B., a general labourer in Montreal, also reported looking forward to “the promise of a better job in the spring of 1894.”⁶⁶ H., a general labourer from East London writing to the EEEF from Montreal in 1894, explained that while there was higher paying work in Canada than in London it was “not a certainty.”⁶⁷

For others, their labour was in constant demand and some even tried out a few jobs before they settled on the one they liked best. G., an East End handyman who emigrated to Montreal is a good example of this. He explained in his letter to the EEEF in 1894 that he had been recruited from his first job to another within a week:

I started for the C.P.R. on the 18th April in the yard at 1 dol. 10 cents a day. Then on Monday the boss asked me if I understood boiler making, so I told him no, but I understood hauling iron about, and could use a 14lb. hammer, so he says, come along with me and I will see what you are made of. He took me to another boss in the boiler shop, and he set me to work next day. He asked me how I liked the job, so I told him I was satisfied with my job if I suited him. He says, I will have 10 cents rise a day at once.⁶⁸

For J.T., a glass-cutter intent on trying farm work in Canada, instead immediately found work in his former London trade and changed his work plan. He earned £2 per week from this work

⁶³ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 11.

⁶⁴ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 16.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 14.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

which he reported was more than he made in London.⁶⁹ Some emigrants turned down the first offers of work for various reasons. R.I. had already sent his tools on to Hamilton, Ontario when he was offered work in Toronto.⁷⁰ However, the experience of easily finding work changed dramatically in 1893-94 when the Canadian economy began to decline. This is evident in the emigrants' letters for that year when many wrote of difficulty in finding work.

Some emigrants disclosed that they had to learn the new demands of their work in Canada before they could succeed, like F.J.B who tried his hand at farm work in 1885 near Kingston, Ontario: "The reason I got so little money is that I know nothing of farming, but I have made up my mind to learn it, and have one of my own. Men who understand it can get 20 dols. a month all the year round."⁷¹ Others faced physical challenges like injuries and illness that kept them temporarily out of the labour market; for example, U. hurt his shoulder in Montreal in 1894 but reported in his letter to the EEEF that he had healed and was again able find "regular" work after a period of unemployment.⁷² These challenges point to an emigration process that was not without risk, disappointment, puzzlement, and disorientation. Success was rarely immediate, nor was it ever guaranteed. Emigrants suggested in their letters that they hoped their financial situations would improve after some time in Canada had allowed them to secure housing and acquire assets. Many, however, felt that despite these challenges it was better to have some work rather than none or, in their words, "a half loaf is better than no bread."⁷³

In his assessment of life in Canada, H.K., an EEEF emigrant in Montreal noted in a letter in 1885 that while his new country was very beautiful he wished there were more people like him in it, in his words "more of the poor of England."⁷⁴ It was important for emigrants from East London who often came from close-knit neighborhoods to maintain connections with old neighbors, other Eastenders, or fellow assisted emigrants in Canada.⁷⁵ In their letters many emigrants mentioned that they had kept in touch with other East End transplants. F.M.J., writing

⁶⁹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 14.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁴ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 10.

⁷⁵ Neighborhood life in the East End in the late nineteenth century was complex and highly localized within the boroughs. Eastenders were not a homogenous groups and represented many different kinds of working-class people who were not easily categorized. Internal class divisions created distinct communities across the district. For more on this, see: Fishman, 27; and Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 171-73. Marriott suggests the bonds of community were based in an ever-changing working-class culture, new unionism, and "deeply embedded within the locality" in the 1880s: Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 192.

from Huntingdon, Ontario to the EEEF in 1885, mentions a number of fellow emigrants in his letter: “Stevens hired with a farmer, and is gone to him 10 miles from us. I have not seen him since he left, but I heard that he is doing well. Me and Jeffrey works a stone’s throw from each other.”⁷⁶ Similarly, W. wrote in 1894 from Winnipeg about other EEEF emigrants and his news of them: “W.’s are all well. I expect you know J., who lives with them. He is building a house next to W., and it will be a “dandy,” as they say here.”⁷⁷ Robert J. indicated to the SHES in 1886 that he had seen “S--- and wife, sent out by your Society; they seem to be getting on very well.”⁷⁸ There is a sense in these letters that East London emigrants looked out for one another, retaining in some small way the old bonds of community.

Part of endorsing assisted emigration was about building what I would call an ‘empire community,’ which both fostered the maintenance of existing ties with fellow emigrants in Canada and promoted the emigration of friends and family members who remained in East London. In this way, assisted emigrants cultivated a brand of transatlantic identity that at once retained strong connections to home and place and built new communities abroad. This transatlantic identity helped Eastenders play some role in easing the burden of poverty for their loved ones at home in England by endorsing the system of emigration that transplanted the urban poor to Canada. It also helped them build familiar working-class communities in Canada. Assisted emigrants from East London frequently asked emigration charities to help their networks of friends and family emigrate to Canada. R.J., living in Toronto and sponsored by the SHES, encouraged his siblings to correspond with the SHES’s Secretary the Reverend Robert Mackay about facilitating their emigration:

Dear sister and brother ... mother says she believes it would do you good if you could come out here, as you would be able to have better living than you can have at home; so try and tell us in your next letter what Mr. Mackay says about your coming out. We are very anxious to hear, as we know that you would do better out here, and better for your health.⁷⁹

Robert J., also asked the SHES if they could help send out his family members in 1886: “I hope you will do the best you can in trying to send my brother-in-law and sister-in-law out early in the

⁷⁶ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 11.

⁷⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 16.

⁷⁸ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 13.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

spring, as I have spoken to a gentleman, who will give them work as soon as they arrive.”⁸⁰ For the hundreds of homeless men who emigrated through Medland Hall connections to former shelter alumni stayed strong. A.K., who had drifted into London from the English countryside ending up destitute on the streets, hoped that “many more of the Medland friends may be helped to get out here.”⁸¹ The desire to have other Eastenders join them in Canada stemmed in part from assisted emigrants keeping informed about the conditions of poverty and unemployment in their former district. News of continued hardship saddened assisted emigrant B. who wrote in 1893: “It has made my heart ache to read in the papers of the distress at home in England. Am glad to see that miners are at work again: it must have been an awful time of it in London for the poor.”⁸² A.M. encouraged further emigration from the poor districts of London in her letter to the SHES in 1893, extolling the benefits of moving to Canada: “We feel sure many in the old country struggling between hope and despair would better their condition by coming here and accepting things as they are, making a determination to succeed All who are *willing* to do and *can* do need not be afraid to emigrate to Canada.”⁸³ Assisted emigrants hoped their emigration to Canada would benefit both their new and old communities within the Empire. For W.E.G., living in Whalland, Manitoba, his emigration fostered a sense of duty to do well in Canada both for his new adopted nation and his homeland: “I may perhaps be able to do you some turn in this country for the kindness you did me.”⁸⁴

Assessments of the Emigration Experience: Voyages and Landings

When assisted emigrants wrote about their voyages from England, they tended to first emphasize their overall comfort or discomfort on board the ship. F.J.B., writing to the EEEF from Kingston, Ontario in June of 1885, talks of a “stormy” but “safe” voyage and that he had “had plenty of good food, comfortable berths, and kept very clean.”⁸⁵ Another emigrant, J. McB., likely on the same ship as F.J.B., wrote to the EEEF in July of 1885 that he and his family had also “had a stormy voyage, but the officers of the ship were very kind” and they were all made to

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 34.

⁸² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 14.

⁸³ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 32.

⁸⁴ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 15. Gerard Moran suggests assisted Irish emigrants performed similar functions of promoting emigration amongst their friends and relatives back home; he calls them “agents of emigration” and explains that these emigrants provided information, resources, and support to other Irish emigrants once they had themselves settled in their new homes, see: Moran, 14.

⁸⁵ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 14.

feel very comfortable.⁸⁶ D., writing from Montreal to the EEEF in April of 1894, also found the voyage to have been a pleasurable one: “I will tell you about the passage in the ship. I enjoyed the trip very much. The people in the ship was very kind, especially the Chief Steward and the Steerage Steward. I found plenty of food in the ship, and it was good, too.”⁸⁷ Others reported more harrowing journeys. R.I. talks of the ship he was aboard “being detained in the ice for some days.”⁸⁸ Mrs. A.M., who wrote to the SHES from Montreal after only five days in Canada in May of 1893, describes the rough condition of the ocean on her family’s journey: “Had a pleasant voyage with the exception of one-and-a-half days’ gale, with a beam sea on which rather startled some of the nervous passengers, myself amongst the number.”⁸⁹ These voyage descriptions suggest relative satisfaction with steerage accommodations, reassuring emigration charities that the journey had been safe and comfortable and that the emigrant had arrived as intended in Canada.

Emigrants also made a special point of reassuring the charities that the officials on board had been kind to them and that they had been well-treated. A letter to the SHES from W.P. in 1894 illustrates this well. W.P. traveled to Alberta in 1892 under partial sponsorship of the SHES, meaning he contributed most of the funds for his family’s journey. The family was an extended one – along with six children and his wife, W.P.’s elderly father and mother emigrated to Canada with them. W.P. was most impressed with the Beaver Line shipping company with whom they had traveled:

You will remember we left England in May last on board the *Lake Huron*. And here I should like to say a word in favour of the Beaver Line. The kindness and courtesy which we received from all the ship’s officers made the voyage very pleasant. The stewards also did all in their power to make us as comfortable as possible. If any were sick they would bring beef tea or something nice on deck and try to tempt their appetite. We all agreed that if ever we crossed the Atlantic again it should be by the Beaver Line, and the *Lake Huron*, if possible.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Ibid., 15.

⁸⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 15.

⁸⁸ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 16.

⁸⁹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 32; a beam sea occurs when a ship is at a right angle to the wave.

⁹⁰ The mother and father are listed as being over eighty-years old, Ibid., 30-31. The *Lake Huron* was a 4,000 ton emigrant ship launched in 1881 by the Beaver Line, see: “S/S Lake Huron,” Norway-Heritage: Hands Across the Sea website, accessed February 20, 2014, http://www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=lahur.

Similarly, J.T., in 1884 reported to the EEEF that he and his family “were well treated on board ship and had no reason to complain of anything.”⁹¹ Reassuring the emigration charities that ship officials had been kind was a recurring theme in the letters. This suggests it was important to the charities to know their emigrants were well-looked after. In turn, the emigrants, many of whom were extremely poor, were grateful for good treatment from those in social stations above them and those in charge of their migration.

Emigrants regarded avoiding illness and sea-sickness on board, and generally staying healthy, as notable accomplishments. A.K., writing to the SHES in 1893 mentions this in his letter: “I dare say Mr. Stead let you know what sort of voyage we had. I never felt sick once. We found Mr. Stead to be a great friend and helper, and I believe he done his best to keep us alive, and Mr. Bell helped him, so we had quite a happy time on deck.”⁹² H., explained to the EEEF in 1894, that all of his “family were good sailors,” suggesting no one was sick or uncomfortable on board.⁹³ The inclusion of these kinds of details suggests that emigrants may have expected to feel ill or uncomfortable on board and that when instead they fared well such news was noteworthy. Having what they deemed to have been “good food” may have added to the emigrants’ overall comfort and health even if by first-class standards the food was poor.⁹⁴ For emigrants from East London, for whom consistent access to decent food was part of the daily struggle, the steerage food on board emigrant ships to Canada in the late nineteenth century appears to have been a welcome part of the journey and created a good first impression of what life in Canada might be like.

Cleanliness, both physical and moral, was a key character trait for assisted emigrants. It is not surprising to see emigrants talk of this often in their letters, assuring the emigration charities that they were keeping up their expected moral code both on-board ship and after landing. F.J.B., described the ship officials’ attention to cleanliness and health in steerage: “The Captain and Doctor inspected the berths every morning, and sick passengers were well cared for.”⁹⁵ In another letter from H.K. to the EEEF from Montreal, the emigrant made sure to indicate his

⁹¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 14.

⁹² *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 34.

⁹³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 10.

⁹⁴ In the accounts of Scandinavian emigrants in the 1890s, the food on the Beaver Line was considered to be of a fairly high quality and served three times a day as reported in the *Montreal Gazette*, August 14, 1893, see: “The Icelanders Arrive,” accessed May 30, 2013,

<http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~swanriver/voyagepage3.html>.

⁹⁵ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 14.

family's high moral standard: "We are getting very comfortable, but what we has is our own, for going in debt is as bad as drink, and I am very glad and thankful to say there is none of that with us."⁹⁶ F.W.U. from London, Ontario promised he was "a strict teetotaler" should the EEEF have been in any doubt.⁹⁷ Assisted emigrants were reminded throughout their emigration process that they had been selected because of their upright working-class characters – they did not drink or gamble and they kept their bodies and spirits clean which set them apart from the members of their community who lived harder lives on the street and in the workhouse. This, of course, was an ideal far more than it was a reality and assisted emigrants at no point in the history of the schemes represented a singular type of working-class character.

Assisted emigrants' letters are excellent sources on reception mechanisms in Canada.⁹⁸ For some emigrants, the landing process was quick and efficient like for F.J.B. who reported in 1885 that he was "well treated by the Government Agent on landing, and in less than two hours I was in the train for this place, 345 miles from Quebec."⁹⁹ For F.E.P., writing from Montreal to the EEEF in July of 1885, the government agent boarded the ship as soon as it docked and promised there was work for all on board. F.E.P. was actually somewhat disappointed by this as he wished to carry on further into Canada by train. He did not expect to be employed the day he arrived believing he might have had more choice of work.¹⁰⁰ For others landing was a bit more chaotic. In a rare letter penned by a female assisted emigrant, Mrs. A.M. describes in great deal the process of landing in Canada under the sponsorship of the SHES in 1893:

arrived at Point Levis, opposite Quebec, Tuesday afternoon; very much disappointed at having there to disembark and proceed to Montreal by train. Great bustle and confusion on landing-stage, luggage being unpacked to be disinfected; ours being bulky was lightly passed over. Left Quebec at midnight for Montreal; saw Mr. Marquette in the train. He is an exceedingly nice gentleman, and, with very many thanks to you, has interested himself greatly in us, and through him we are located in a pleasant spot at Longue Point, about four miles from Montreal, on the banks of the St. Lawrence. Owing to a strike at the goods station, we have not as yet all our luggage.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁹⁸ This is an understudied area in the history of British migration. Lisa Chilton's recent article has sought to fill in the gaps, see: Lisa Chilton, "Managing Migrants: Toronto, 1820-1880," *Canadian Historical Review* 92, no. 2 (2011): 231-62.

⁹⁹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁰¹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 32.

A great number of the emigrants commented on their dealings with Mr. Marquette. In the late 1880's, the Department of Agriculture hired Émile Marquette to serve meals from a counter to emigrants landing at the Quebec emigration sheds until the Department discontinued this service.¹⁰² In the 1890s, Marquette worked for both the EEEF and the SHES as a correspondent, job-finder, and general landing liaison. He was a central fixture in the landing process at the Quebec port in the 1880s and the 1890s.

In 1894, an old soldier, M., who emigrated to Montreal under the EEEF, spoke well of his relationship with Marquette: "Mr. Marquette has been very kind to us, and has done his best on our behalf."¹⁰³ Part of Marquette's job was to quickly find work for newly-arrived assisted emigrants so that they would not be a burden to local charities or become charges of the state. A young domestic servant here recalls how Marquette helped her after landing: "Mr. Marquette met us at the train, and when we had had our breakfast I went to his office, and that same morning I got my place."¹⁰⁴ Sometimes the first line of work found for the emigrants failed to work out, perhaps in part because work was found so hastily upon landing. Marquette helped emigrants find other jobs when these first placements did not work out. This was the case for J.H.W., a married unemployed man from West Ham whose first job in Canada did not turn out well. J.H.W. had first found work at the Radnor Forges in Montreal. With Marquette's assistance, J.H.W. was then hired to work on building the new power house for the Electric Light Company. In his letter to the SHES in October of 1893, J.H.W. expressed gratitude to Marquette for finding him this job after he had already found him his first one upon landing.¹⁰⁵

For some emigrants, the contact with Marquette was the difference between success and failure. Marquette forged connections with employers and spent considerable time and effort in placing assisted emigrants in situations that fit them well. The case of a young girl of fifteen years old who undertook to secure her family's emigration to Canada through the SHES provides a good example of how assisted emigrants understood their relationship with Marquette:

Kind Sir, I experience great pleasure in writing to you to inform you of our whereabouts and to thank you for your kindness I delivered the letter to Mr. Marquette which you enclosed while corresponding with me. Mr. A.A.P. ---- had asked Mr. Marquette to send

¹⁰² *Correspondence regarding Mr. Marquette's operations at the emigration sheds at Quebec*, Department of Agriculture, Government of Canada, RG 17, volume 608, series 11, file 68822, LAC.

¹⁰³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 21.

¹⁰⁴ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 18.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

him an Englishman fit for farm work. Mr. Marquette thought father was the right man, so we came down to Compton.¹⁰⁶

Marquette also provided emigrants with information about the state of the labour market. For example, in 1894 he told H., a general labourer from the East End of London, that he had “not seen such a dull labour market for years.”¹⁰⁷ These emigrants’ letters suggest that Marquette was an invaluable part of their migration experience; this corresponds well with the evidence that points to the high esteem with which he was held by the charities who employed his services.

Family Life and Health

Assisted emigrants wrote frequently about their families, their bodies, and perhaps more than any other subject, food. Food scarcity was a part of daily life in East London. In Canada, assisted emigrants were impressed with their ability to acquire and consume food as well as the quality of the food available in comparison to London. Emigration charities no doubt relished hearing about the plentiful food supply in Canada as it substantiated their Malthusian-based perceptions about the ability, if not duty, of the colonial world to feed the surplus hungry populations of the homeland. No doubt Canada played a significant role in growing and producing food for its own booming population, the United Kingdom, and other parts of the British Empire in the late nineteenth century; this is a well-known function of Britain’s imperialism. Canadian grain production also, of course, undercut British agricultural prices and made Britain reliant on foreign grain. However, information about abundant food supplies fueled dangerous imperial discourses like *terra nullius* (or empty lands), the idea of Canada, and western Canada in particular, as a “promised land,” and the right of the colonizer to access and exploit colonial lands and resources for the good of their people over that of indigenous populations.¹⁰⁸ Assisted emigrants were provided with very little information about Canada’s indigenous populations. Once Western Canadian settlement began to boom in the 1880s, assisted emigrants from East London were told that the indigenous populations who resided there were not be feared as they had been essentially removed from the settlement landscape and placed on

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 9.

¹⁰⁸ For more on this, see: R. Douglas Francis and Chris Kitzan, eds., *The Prairie West as Promised Land* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007).

reserves.¹⁰⁹ The collection of assisted emigrant letters used here suggests East London transplants had virtually no knowledge of Canada's indigenous peoples nor did they express awareness of the imperial ideologies, processes, and structures of colonialism under which they had traveled.

For assisted emigrants who worked for a wage in Canada (which was the majority), reporting back to the societies on the prices and abundance of food was common. In the majority of the letters the emigrants mention briefly that they had consumed plenty of food and that they were not experiencing scarcity; some were more specific. H.K. reported in 1885 that he could “get as good a dinner as any person would want for my family for less than two shillings.”¹¹⁰ R.I.'s letter to his uncle in 1885 contained a table of food prices in Hamilton, Ontario listing everything from the price per pound of goose to a sheep's head. W. wrote in 1894, that his family had so far consumed “115 lbs. of beef at 5 cents a lb.; one pig, 108 lbs. at 7 cents.; a 20 lb. ham, 30 cabbages, sack of carrots, onions, turnips, not counting flour, &c.; that should convince any person that we are not starving in Canada.”¹¹¹ D.'s letter from Montreal to the EEEF in 1894 suggests his Canadian wages went further than those in London even though he had been in and out of work in Canada: “There is one thing to be said, that is we are getting more food than we did in the old country.”¹¹² For assisted emigrants who lived in more rural settings, either still reliant on wages or trying their hands at farming, food consumption and production were the foremost topics in their letters. R.W. boasted having “30 chickens and a pig” and seeing a man shoot a deer on his way to work.¹¹³ R.I., mentioned above, also reported having a large garden and fruit orchard connected to his rented property. The following year he reported he had produced over 100 pounds of grapes and other fruits.¹¹⁴ W.W., working as a farm hand also enjoyed the quality of the food grown in the Ontario countryside writing that the food was “very nice out here.”¹¹⁵

Not surprisingly, East London emigrants equated good food with health. Good food in East London meant access to fish, meat, dairy and fresh vegetables but this kind of quality food

¹⁰⁹ *East London Observer*, March 22, 1884; and Dudley Baines, *Migration in Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3.

¹¹⁰ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 10.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 15.

¹¹³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 11-12.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹⁵ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 8.

was often hard to come by both because of poverty and accessibility.¹¹⁶ J.H.W. believed with good food his family could ward off frigid Canadian winter temperatures. He also mentioned that his children were “all fat and rosy and healthy at present,” suggesting food had improved their health.¹¹⁷ R.J. reported from Toronto to his sister and brother that their mother liked Canada in great part because she was “getting very fat.”¹¹⁸ D., the former East End gardener living in Montreal, attributed his family’s good health to the greater quantity of food he was able to buy in Canada.¹¹⁹ Others felt their improved health was attributable to fresh Canadian air. W.P. reported having lost his asthma since settling in Alberta and that his wife had “regained her strength.”¹²⁰ Similarly, B. wrote that he was “enjoying better health here than ever I did amidst the fogs of London.”¹²¹ T.J., who emigrated to Wolfe Island situated at the entrance of the St. Lawrence river across from Kingston, Ontario in 1885, wrote to the SHES that the island itself was “very healthy, and would not take long to put new life into a Londoner.”¹²² Many emigrants wrote about better health but did not explain which aspects of Canada had effected their improved physical condition. F.E.P., writing only a day after landing in Montreal, explained simply that his “dear wife’s health has greatly improved” but offered no reason why the change had occurred so rapidly.¹²³ Several emigrants reported that their wives were expecting babies, which evoked a sense of growth and health for the transplanted family.¹²⁴

Health was not a given and emigrants often reported on health problems in Canada. U. wrote to the EEEF in 1894 from Montreal that while his children were all in good health his wife was “not quite the thing just now” despite the family getting “plenty to eat.”¹²⁵ D.’s family in Montreal were all healthy except for their baby who was “poorly;” D. put the infant’s condition

¹¹⁶ On East London food culture, see: Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 202-204. Marriott explains that late nineteenth-century East End women were resourceful in finding good food for their families and that they were knowledgeable about healthy food. Providing healthy food for their families formed part of their expression of gendered working-class respectability.

¹¹⁷ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 18-19.

¹¹⁸ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 13.

¹¹⁹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 18.

¹²⁰ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 31.

¹²¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 14.

¹²² *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 8-9.

¹²³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 15.

¹²⁴ The Canadian government actually advised assisted emigrants and emigration charities against emigration during pregnancy and that child-bearing should be postponed until complete resettlement in Canada. Emigration charities also found it difficult to place men with large families in Canada especially if they had no agricultural work experience, see: *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 18.

¹²⁵ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 11-12.

down to “change of air.”¹²⁶ J., a house painter, having fallen “dangerously ill” had recently left the hospital after an eight week stay and was worried about getting through the winter in his weak physical condition.¹²⁷ Some emigrants took steps to insure themselves against illness and disability. This was a common practice amongst workers in London in the late nineteenth century and extended to their re-settlement in Canada; it is also evidence of assisted male emigrants performing expected modes of liberal subjecthood after emigration.¹²⁸ W., working at a factory in Winnipeg, was able to afford joining a club and explained the details of his benefits to the EEEF in 1894:

I have joined an Insurance and Sick Club since you were here, - 55 cents. a month for 1,000 dols., if I live to the age of sixty-eight. I get 500 dols. if disabled for life, 500 dols. cash sickness, 4 dols. a week 12 weeks, 3 dols. for 12 weeks, and a free doctor. It is called “Order Canadian Home Circles,” 10,000 members, started in 1884.¹²⁹

H., an East End general labourer, mentioned in his long letter to the EEEF in 1894 that he had “found out my Club.”¹³⁰ However, it is not clear if he was referring to a disability club or an English workingmen’s social club. These kinds of precautions were essential to workmen who relied on wage labour; their tradition of enrolling in these kinds of clubs or in unions appears to have crossed the Atlantic.

Emigration charities reprinted stories about food, health, and prevention for several reasons. Canada is shown in these passages to have afforded East End emigrants good health and abundant food in contrast to their former lives in London. The ability to collect and consume that food is seen to be a relatively easy process in Canada. Canada is also positioned as rehabilitative with several stories of improved health after landing. In particular, Canada is depicted as a place where the male emigrant’s wife could be healthier than she was in London which better facilitated healthy pregnancies. In the same way, Canada was believed to be a healthier environment in which to raise children. Taken together, these two themes expose that emigration philanthropists’ attitudes and anxieties about the degeneracy of urban life could be quelled by moving the poor to ‘better’ parts of the Empire. The strength of these assumptions was then

¹²⁶ Ibid., 15. This is a different “D.” from the East End gardener also quoted for the same year.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 21-22.

¹²⁸ For more on benefit clubs and working-class masculinity in Britain, see: Sara Horrell and Deborah Oxley, “Work and Prudence: Household Responses to Income Variation in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” *European Review of Economic History* 4, no. 1 (April 2000): 27-57; and Simon Cordery, “Friendly Societies and the Discourse of Respectability in Britain, 1825-1875,” *Journal of British Studies* 34, no. 1 (1995): 35-58.

¹²⁹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 15-16.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 9.

amplified through the words of the poor themselves in their letters. The cases where assisted emigrants had taken precautions to insure their well-being, either through the accumulation and consumption of healthy food or benefit clubs, further justified the liberal imperial project; the poor male emigrant is seen here to be performing the expected modality of the liberal subject taking care of himself and his family without relying on charity. This discourse was constructed in a complex manner with emigrants contributing content that emigration charities in turn used to serve their own agendas.

Thoughts on Canada

In the last third of the nineteenth century, emigration philanthropists, speculators, government agencies, and journalists all frequently invoked images and representations of Canada that were idyllic. Browsing through their various publications, drawings, pamphlets, and promotional material on Canada makes this evident.¹³¹ Canada was described as beautiful, clean, spacious, safe, and full of opportunity. In their letters home, assisted emigrants often did the same thing, adhering to accepted and expected depictions of Canadian landscapes and nature, weather, and people. However, emigrants' letters also offer a somewhat more honest view of Canada and add a distinct parallel narrative to the largely inflated accounts of Canada found in other late-nineteenth century emigration ephemera. They also provide a more balanced account of how recent emigrants adjusted to the differences between Canadian and London life.

Given the stark difference between Canadian and British winters, assisted emigrants wrote predominantly about the weather in their assessments of Canada. Surprisingly though, many of the emigrants reported thoroughly enjoying the Canadian winter if not feeling a bit overwhelmed by it. Since the emigration season was generally open in the spring and summer months emigrants rarely arrived in the winter, although depending on how early or how late in the season they travelled they might encounter cold conditions on the voyage and upon landing. Most, however, did not experience winter conditions until a few months after settlement in Canada. For emigrants arriving at the height of summer, reports back to London suggest the beautiful summer weather in Quebec and the impressiveness of the St. Lawrence River were

¹³¹ For more on this, see: Daniel Francis, *Selling Canada: Three Propaganda Campaigns that Shaped the Nation* (North Vancouver: Stanton Atkins & Dossil, 2011). For a good online collection of Canadian immigration posters and campaign information see, "Immigration," *Contact: Making the Canadian West*, The Canadian West online exhibition, archived website no longer updated, LAC, accessed June 13, 2013, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/canadian-west/052902/05290203_e.html.

noteworthy. F.E.P. who sailed into Montreal on July 26th, 1885 likely on board the Allan Line's *S.S. Peruvian* wrote to the EEEF the next day that the weather had been "lovely, and the sight, up the river, grand."¹³² Others remarked on how beautiful they found the "run up the river" into Canada.¹³³ The letters show that the excitement of finally arriving in Canada after a long voyage combined with the physical beauty of the riverbank and the stark natural contrast to their urban points of departure made for an enjoyable prelude to the settlement experience and immediately reinforced the contrast between London and Canada.

Once the first Canadian winter set in assisted emigrants described highly divergent experiences of the new climate. As might be expected some emigrants found the cold weather trying. W., writing from Winnipeg in January of 1894 wrote about the recent improvement in the weather and the fluctuating temperatures on the prairies suggesting the extreme temperatures had been difficult: "This last week has been a wonderful one as regards the weather, people going round with no mitts just like spring, and to finish up to-day we had five continuous hours rain, and as warm as summer. Previously we have been having severe weather, 30 below zero, and 40."¹³⁴ R.J. in Toronto wrote about being thankful for his preparedness for the winter weather. He reported back to family that it was "freezing very hard in Canada" but that they would be able to cope having stocked up on food and supplies in the summer.¹³⁵ Likewise, J.W.H. in Montreal wrote that his family was busy gathering coal and wood on the advice of Canadians that the winter would be "very severe."¹³⁶ W.P. pointed out that while his wife was healthier than she had been in London, the winter had "tried her very much."¹³⁷

Emigration charities expected emigrants from East London would find the Canadian winters hard. But they also believed that if they were properly clothed, fed, and housed the emigrants would be able to cope with the severe temperatures and that their new, more fruitful lives in Canada would outweigh any discomforts they might experience. This was in part why emigration charities provided emigrants with clothing suitable to the Canadian climate as part of

¹³² According to the Canadian Passenger Lists database, the *S.S. Peruvian* landed at Quebec on July 25, 1885 and interestingly carried 124 Barnardo boys in addition to any other assisted passengers, see: Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1922 database located at: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passenger/index-e.html>. For the letter, see: *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 14-15.

¹³³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 16.

¹³⁴ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 16.

¹³⁵ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1886, 13.

¹³⁶ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 19.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

their assistance. In their letters, emigrants sometimes mention the comfort these items of warm clothing had brought them. A.M. thanked the SHES for the package of clothing she was given upon departure from London in the spring of 1893 writing, “I cannot explain the comfort it was to me on board and since too, fitting me so well.”¹³⁸ In the post-script to his letter, W. asked the EEEF to please thank “the lady who gave us the clothes at the Vicarage.”¹³⁹ Warm clothing was an essential part of the charitable process of emigration in East London and emigrants required the donation of this costly investment in order to survive their first Canadian winter. Emigrants who did not receive these donations saved up enough money in Canada to quickly buy winter clothing to prepare for their first winter but this often set them back financially. F.M.J., for example, explained to the EEEF in 1885 that he was unable to pay back any of his emigration assistance because he had spent forty dollars on winter clothing.¹⁴⁰ There is an overriding sense in the letters that winter was something to be feared if not sufficiently prepared for. The majority of the emigrants mention in their letters that they had spent time and money getting their households and their bodies ready for winter. They did this to alert both prospective emigrants and to allay any worries the emigration charities might have had about their condition in Canada.

Despite the frigid Canadian temperatures, many of the emigrants reported enjoying the cold weather. R.I. found the weather in Hamilton to be “intensely cold” but reported that “the change agrees with us.”¹⁴¹ U. seemed impervious to the cold in his description of the January temperatures in Montreal: “Dear sir, we do not suffer with the cold at all, as for me, I am too hot in the shop, for we have got steam pipes all round the shop to dry the varnish on the cars, it is like summer there, so I consider I am a lucky man to drop in there at the right time.”¹⁴² B., also in Montreal wrote on New Year’s Eve 1893, “I like the winter here very much.”¹⁴³ For M., the Montreal sunshine appealed to him as the most “grand” feature of the Canadian climate he was experiencing.¹⁴⁴ D., accustomed to outdoor labour in London, penned the most extensive report about the Canadian weather in Montreal in January of 1894:

The next thing is the cold. The people out here told me the winter is dreadfully cold, and I would be frozen, but that is all nonsense. I consider it something grand. We had it 22

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹³⁹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 16.

¹⁴⁰ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 11.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴² *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 11.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

below zero a fortnight ago, It is nothing; I am at work outside from 5.30 in the morning till 6.0 the evening, with no more clothes on than I should have in London, bar one more pair of socks, and only one mitt on my bad hand; my right hand has not been cold yet. I don't know whether I am harder than other people, but I have felt the cold more on the river Thames than I have out here. The country is very healthy, and the scenery is very beautiful. The children run about the snow for hours at the time, and come in with faces like roses, for the people that move about are never cold, but those that crawl must feel the cold. My wife was a very cold subject in the old country, but here she says its nothing. There is no damp, miserable fogs; it is nice dry, and healthy weather. For my part, I would sooner work in open air all winter than summer.¹⁴⁵

Emigrants from the East End of London were struck by the fresh, dry, comparatively clean, and brisk Canadian air they had never enjoyed at home. From D.'s letter we can see that the drier climate combined with the cold temperature was still more comfortable in his estimation than the wet cold weather during London's winters.

"I consider Canada is a fine country; for a man who can work and will work," wrote J.H.W. in 1893.¹⁴⁶ It was with this cautious optimism that assisted emigrants overwhelmingly reported that Canada was a good place to start a new life but that it would not necessarily come easily. R.W. felt in 1885 that Canada provided poor Londoners with a "chance" to improve their lives rather than suggest this was a certainty: "This is a very healthy country, with splendid scenery, and a good one for a family, with a chance to become your own boss, own your own house, and a piece of land."¹⁴⁷ H., expressed the same conditional promise of success in 1894 writing, "I think this is a place to get on if you are persevering and look after yourself."¹⁴⁸ M., writing twenty-five days after landing in April of 1894, cautiously explained that after his family had "properly settled down" they felt they would probably "like the country" suggesting they were not yet sure enough to make a sound determination.¹⁴⁹ W. felt in 1894 "that if a man is careful with what money he does get, he can live like a lord."¹⁵⁰ Finally, E.H., writing from Aylmer, Ontario to the SHES in 1885, explained in his letter that Canada was "all work and no play" but that a Londoner could make a good living if, and only if, he put his "shoulder to the wheel."¹⁵¹ Essentially, emigrants reported that the onus was on them to succeed rather than to be

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 19.

¹⁴⁶ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 29.

¹⁴⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1884-85, 11.

¹⁴⁸ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 9.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 21.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹⁵¹ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1885, 8.

dependent on others. Given that they had emigrated under the stigma of charitable assistance, self-reliance was even more crucial to the re-establishment of their sense of independence in Canada. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of a respectable masculine working-class identity in late nineteenth-century Britain was to tout an independent character, one that was self-sufficient, sober, and clean.¹⁵² Assisted emigrants overwhelmingly sought to demonstrate the possession and expression of that liberal character on both sides of the Atlantic first in the emigration selection process and secondly in their letters home to London after arrival. Those who failed to cultivate or reinstate their respectable working-class identities in Canada were often labeled problematic emigrants. By 1910, this was considered to be such a serious problem that Canada legally closed its doors to assisted migrants from London under its new immigration act causing great unrest amongst emigration societies in London as we have seen in earlier chapters.

In 1893, A.K. wrote to the SHES that “Everything out here is quite different from what it is in the old country.”¹⁵³ That ‘everything’ included social norms, prices, housing styles, work habits, food, and landscape. Several emigrants mentioned how kind Canadians were to them. A young servant from East London reported that she liked Canada “as they treat the servants here much better than at home, and also pay better wages” and that she was very glad to have emigrated to Canada.¹⁵⁴ H. thanked the EEEF for introducing him to a former East London emigrant in Canada “who was very kind to me and made me feel very welcome.”¹⁵⁵ Emigrants also remarked often on the differences in prices in Canada and London. D. wrote that while he found his housing costs to be “dear” he was enjoying the low cost of other goods: “I must say that we like the style of beds in this country, and everything is so cheap.”¹⁵⁶ As a collection, the letters convey a sense that assisted emigrants enjoyed reporting on their initial assessments about Canada and that the topics they chose to write about reflected their class, their perceptions, and their worries. Emigration charities took those assessments and used them to further the business of assisted emigration.

Conclusion

¹⁵² For more on working-class masculine respectability, see: Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 174-210.

¹⁵³ *Self-Help Emigration Society*, Annual Report 1893, 34.

¹⁵⁴ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1894, 17.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

The forty-two letters used here offer an unparalleled window into emigrants' assessments of the process and outcome of assisted emigration to Canada. This chapter has worked to move beyond viewing these letters merely as windows that allow present-day readers to peer into the lives of assisted emigrants, considering instead how they suggest something more profound about the construction of a colonial discourse around assisted emigration. This was a discourse that generally attempted to remedy the stereotypes and the fears that surrounded the sudden unexpected mass movement of the poor from London to Canada in this case, in the 1880s and the 1890s. Philanthropists and emigrants constructed this discourse together, albeit for different purposes, primarily through the writing and publication of emigrant letters.

The voices of the poor are often obscured in the historical record and rarely do historians encounter a collection of sources like the ones examined here. For the history of assisted emigration, emigrant letters from the poor offer something in addition to the organizational histories explored in the first three chapters. Letters construct a picture of who emigrants really were, how emigration affected them, and how they participated in the creation of the discourse of assisted emigration that surrounded them. Assisted emigrants' letters from East London also reveal the operation and power of the slum narrative; the voices examined here do much to counter the trope of the degenerate slum dweller illustrating instead his or her humanity, vulnerability, determination, and ultimately identity. Curiously, very little of the presumed hostility surrounding assisted emigrants in Canada is evident in their letters. This is perhaps because they had not been in Canada long enough to encounter prejudice, that they simply did not mention it, or that they actually did not experience it at all. It also may suggest that opposition to assisted emigrants from East London did not fully crystalize until the early twentieth century when Canada changed its laws. The analysis of letters here has humanized assisted emigrants from East London, showing them to be ordinary people with thoughts, abilities, and capacity for change. Their voices resurrect the migrant experience of the English urban working poor in the late nineteenth century and contribute to the historiography on English ethnicity and the experience of migration.

Finally, the letters have also been employed here to explore evolving emigrant identities, which might be called hybrid identities or transnational identities and the expression of those identities within certain confines – articulations of class in particular. Assisted emigrants expressed their identities in two distinct ways in the letters examined here. Firstly, they used

letters to cope with transplantation and demonstrate their resolve to succeed. The act of letter-writing connected emigrants with home, expressing their commitment to success and proving to emigration charities they had made the right choice in selecting them. Emigrants also hoped the charities might select more of their friends, family, and neighbors to join them which would create a familiar 'empire community' for them abroad. Writing about working hard, saving money, acquiring assets, improved health, and family responsibility were expressions of both respectable working-class masculinity and a transnational migrant identity. These themes also demonstrated to emigration charities that the move had helped the male assisted emigrant regain (or perhaps for the first time obtain) his place in the empire as liberal subject. Secondly, assisted emigrants cultivated their transnational identity in relation to others. Assisted emigrants were excessively grateful to the emigration charities for sending them to Canada and their deference indicates that they continued to identify themselves as being lower down the social ladder than the philanthropists who had helped them. They also remained cognizant of their origins and the privilege they had been given to start anew in Canada. This is evident not just in their messages of gratitude but also in their wish to help others find the same chance. Transplanted Eastenders in the late nineteenth century revealed in their own words that while they slowly integrated into Canadian life they struggled to let go of the poverty, the uncertainty, and the limitations of their social class that had characterized their lives in London. It was along the threshold of this tenuous boundary in a liminal "third space" between two worlds of empire that Eastenders carved out a place for themselves in Canada.

CHAPTER FIVE

‘A Remarkable Experiment’: Rethinking the ‘Failed’ East London Artizans’ Colony at Moosomin, North-West Territory in 1884

“Stopping a couple of days in Winnipeg, Mr. and Mrs. Kitto pushed on across the great North-West. They had not time to see most of the colonisation districts, but on the line of railway they were able to visit Moosomin, which possesses special interest to them as East Londoners. It is there that a remarkable experiment was tried, about a year and a half ago, when a number of families from Bethnal Green, one of the poorest quarters of the metropolis, were taken from their dingy surroundings of bricks and mortar and planted on the North West prairie. Many authorities shook their heads at first. These town birds, of all people, were the least likely to succeed as farmers in the wild West. But the experiment has already proved a marvellous success; and the cellarmen, cobblers, and other people who two years ago had, perhaps, hardly seen a cow or a meadow, now take pride in showing their cattle, their poultry, and their waving acres of yellow grain.”¹

- *East London Observer*, November 14, 1885

Introduction

The “remarkable experiment” above took shape in early 1884 when the Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts, patron of the London Colonization Aid Society (LCAS), selected nineteen families, ninety-nine people in all, from the East End of London to emigrate to homesteads in the south-east corner of what would later become Saskatchewan.² According to the Reverend Hugh Huleatt, a key figure involved in the management of the scheme, the plans for the colony at Moosomin were conceived in the drawing-room of the Baroness’s London mansion.³ Close to the impressive young town of Moosomin, the colony was designed to capitalize on the opportunities in the newly ‘opened’ Canadian North-West Territory and help solve urban poverty at home. Once settled on their homesteads, it was imagined the colonists would gain their independence and be permanently liberated from the troubled London labour market of the 1880s; they would be transformed from poor urban workers to self-sufficient rural farmers. Yet, after arriving in Canada on May 7, 1884 on the Allan line’s *S.S. Austrian*⁴, and despite initial

¹ “From The “Rockies” to Stepney,” *East London Observer*, November 14, 1885.

² According to the Rev. Hugh Huleatt, fourteen families were living in the East End, and five were from neighboring Westminster, see: Hugh Huleatt, *British Columbia, Alaska, and the London Artizan Colony at Moosomin, Assiniboia* (Chilworth: Unwin, 1889), 12.

³ *Ibid.*, 12. Also see: *The Illustrated Police News* (London), April 19, 1884 for identifying the site of the meeting.

⁴ The *S.S. Austrian* was a 2,458 tons ship launched in 1867 by the Allan line, see: “S/S Austrian,” Norway-Heritage: Hands Across the Sea website, accessed February 21, 2014, http://www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=austr.

hopes and significant investment in them, most of the colonists had quit their homesteads by the early 1890s. This chapter seeks to understand why.

Frames and arguments

The overriding historical explanation for the demise of the East London Artizans Colony is rooted in a binary that pits success against failure; historians have suggested that because the colonists did not succeed in farming, the experiment was a failure. The little historiography that exists on the East London Artizans Colony leaves the impression that most of the artizans left the colony for more familiar towns and cities throughout Canada because, being townspeople, they never learned to farm.⁵ J.N. MacKinnon's assessment of the colony in *Moosomin and its Pioneers Including Humorous Incidents and Up-to-date Sketches* sums up this argument nicely:

their failure as farmers was a foregone conclusion from the start. Born and bred for generations in the big city; they knew nothing whatever of farming, of animals, or of the many other mysteries connected with farm life; especially life on a virgin prairie farm where everything has to be brought into being from the ground up. Moreover, their farm allotments were very scrubby and hard to bring under cultivation. Even some of the adults never saw a cow in their lives before they left London; so that we can easily imagine their many difficulties and discouragements when they were left to fend for themselves in their isolated little colony.⁶

Little credit is given to the efforts the colonists made in trying to farm or to their other contributions as immigrants to Canada.⁷ This chapter pushes against this binary, revisiting and complicating the narrative of inevitable failure by repositioning the history of the colony as a significant transnational fragment of Western Canadian and British history. The East London Artizans Colony acts here as a lens through which to better understand the local impacts of the wider imperial contexts of assisted emigration, utopian concepts of the Canadian west, and

⁵ Anthony Rasporich argues that most such settler schemes failed within about one generation because the colonies proved unable to achieve their idealized outcomes, see: Anthony W. Rasporich, "Utopian Ideals and Community Settlements in Western Canada, 1880-1914," in *The Prairie West as Promised Land* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007), 129. Local memory in Moosomin has tended to perpetuate the story of failure based on presumptions about the colonists' inability to farm and the conclusion that the experiment was doomed to fail from the start on this account, see: *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country* (Moosomin, SK: Moosomin History Book Committee, 1981): 257, 487, and 543 available online at <http://www.ourroots.ca/e/toc.aspx?id=6280>. Also see J.N. MacKinnon, *Moosomin and its Pioneers Including Humorous Incidents and Up-to-date Sketches* (Moosomin, SK: The World-Spectator, 1937), 24. On similar failed schemes for Jewish settlers see: Anna Feldman, "Were Jewish Farmers Failures?" *Saskatchewan History* 55, no. 1 (2003): 21-30.

⁶ MacKinnon, 24. As will be further explored below, many of their homesteads were not "scrubby" and were fit for cultivation.

⁷ With one exception; J.R.A. Pollard found that some of the colonists "persevered and became successful farmers," see: J.R.A. Pollard, "Railways and Land Settlement, 1881-91," *Saskatchewan History* 1, no. 2 (1948), 17.

relationships between Canadian government bureaucrats and British political elites and philanthropists. These relationships in particular reveal how class permeated the colonial world in the late nineteenth century. The working-class emigrants considered here were constantly at the mercy of those in positions of power and privilege above them even decades after their emigration. The experience of the settlers is also examined by asking questions related to the internal dynamics of success and failure amongst assisted emigrants from East London.

The sources available for this study are surprisingly abundant. Using census data and records of the Department of the Interior, I determine when and reimagine why the colonists left Moosomin. This approach reveals significant detail about the migration choices of the emigrants and explains better than the existing historiography why such a well-funded, well-intentioned, and much-anticipated scheme ultimately ‘failed.’ Then, using colonist questionnaires, homestead files, and other government reports, I explore the internal experiences and expectations of the colonists in their own words – a second approach in this dissertation’s wider effort to retrieve the assisted emigrant’s voice. Finally, using Canadian government correspondence between state immigration officials, the LCAS, their lawyers, and the settlers, I examine the hostilities, disappointments, and acrimony that I argue ultimately rendered the experiment toxic, unfair, and incapable of succeeding in the way the emigrationists envisioned it would. Through an analysis of this correspondence, this last section also reveals a constant interplay between the Canadian state and British emigrationists within imperial and local contexts, one in which emigrationists sought the assistance of the Canadian government in recovering their lost investments.

In the two decades this small community survived we find a useful entry point into British conceptions of the Canadian West as a place of salvation, new beginnings, self-sufficiency, cleanliness, morality, and middle-class idealism.⁸ Above all though, the Canadian West was imagined as an imperial frontier on which to build a new British society; in other words, a place to inscribe Britishness (and certainly a particular brand of Britishness – white,

⁸ There is an extensive historiography on British or imperial conceptions of the Canadian West and good general histories of the settlement of the area. See in particular: Patrick Dunae, *Gentlemen Emigrants: From the British Public Schools to the Canadian Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981); John Herd Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005); Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Douglas Owsram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); R.G. Moyles and Douglas Owsram, *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

male, and liberal) on a new landscape.⁹ British emigrationists including the LCAS relied on the dominant perception of the “promised land” to convey the belief that the clean air and vast lands of the Canadian West would mend urban workers made socially, morally, and physically degenerate by dirty, overcrowded, and unhealthy cities.¹⁰ Furthermore, this Canadian West offered a physical space in which to deposit disposable, extraneous, and superfluous British subjects. The land would provide them with a new independent vocation and identity in a country that imagined and planned itself to be culturally, politically, and institutionally British.¹¹ Such was the role for which the town of Moosomin was cast, a town that envisioned itself to be a “little metropolis” on the prairies.¹² In 1937, J.N. MacKinnon described early Moosomin as “a little Mecca or Rome to which all trails lead,” a commercial and cultural hub for the area.¹³ When the East London Artizans Colony was formed, Moosomin was brand new, founded in 1882 when the first CPR rail tracks were laid.¹⁴ Most of its early settlers and townspeople were British in origin or at least English-speaking, and having ties to the Hudson’s Bay Company which had long been in the area.¹⁵ That area was also characterized by a vibrant Aboriginal population who developed unexpected relationships with the settlers before being legislated onto reserves.¹⁶ Through the 1880s, Moosomin boasted several prosperous businesses including the Grosvenor Hotel, a drug store, an insurance office, and a cheese factory. The town also had a number of British churches in the early 1880s – Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and

⁹ William A. Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2005), 59.

¹⁰ On the “promised land” see: R.D. Francis and Chris Kitzan, eds., “Introduction”, in *The Prairie West as Promised Land* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007), ix. Also see: Marjory Harper, “Abraham and Isaac Ride the Range’: British Images of the Western Frontier,” *Journal of the West* 40, no. 1 (2001): 8-15. On the British ideal of rural idyll and the ills of urbanity see: Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 2, 3, and 297; and Jeremy Burchardt, *Paradise Lost: Rural Idyll and Social Change in England Since 1800* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002). These ideas formed the foundations of Salvation Army thought, see: William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: Salvation Army, 1890).

¹¹ Thank you to Andrea Geiger, Associate Professor, Department of History, Simon Fraser University for suggesting that the landscape itself was a place to deposit these kinds of people in a previous version of this paper given at the Directions West Conference, University of Calgary, June 2012. Also see Waiser, 59.

¹² MacKinnon, 2. For more on Moosomin and its desire to be thought of as a booming metropolis on the prairies see: Moosomin Board of Trade, *Moosomin: Bountiful, Beautiful, Progressive* (Winnipeg: MacPherson-McCurdy, 1912) and Moosomin Board of Trade, *Progressive Moosomin, Industrial and Commercial Centre of Eastern Saskatchewan* (Winnipeg: MacPherson-McCurdy, 1912) in the University of Saskatchewan Shortt Collection.

¹³ MacKinnon, 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5; and *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 5.

¹⁵ MacKinnon, 6; and *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 1-2.

¹⁶ *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 4. Kitty Krister, e-mail message to the author, July 25, 2013. Kitty Krister is the granddaughter of Charlton and Eliza Wykes born in London in 1923. We were put in touch by a relative through online family history websites.

Catholic.¹⁷ The town boasted an opera hall and the Scottish settlers held annual celebrations on Robbie Burns Night.¹⁸ Close by was the Victorian imperial splendor that was the Cannington Manor settlement where a group of well-to-do young English gentlemen briefly recreated a wealthy British micro-society. The cultural transition for British settlers then was not imagined to be overly difficult.¹⁹ Certainly, the LCAS envisioned that the artizans chosen in London would benefit from the civilizing influences of this flourishing little imperial town and its residents.

To realize these visions many emigrationists became interested in setting up distinctly British communities or “ethnic blocs” in the North West Territory in the 1880s.²⁰ The East London Artizans Colony was one of several of these English ethnic bloc experiments (there were similar blocks for Scottish settlers and for non-British settlers mostly from Continental Europe).²¹ Other English ethnic bloc settlements included the Temperance Colony at Saskatoon in 1882, Cannington Manor near Moosomin in 1882, the York Farmers Colonization Company at Yorkton in 1885, and the Church Colonization Land Company at Salcoats in 1887. In 1903, one of the best-known English ethnic bloc settlements, the Barr Colony at Lloydminster, envisioned an imperial society on the Canadian prairie but was ill-conceived and badly managed and also ultimately failed.²² What all of these schemes had in common was a desire to recreate

¹⁷ MacKinnon, 10-16.

¹⁸ *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 10-11.

¹⁹ In 1935, Lloyd Reynolds tackled this presumption in a chapter on assimilation in his book on British immigration. Reynolds argues that even though the British immigrant entered Canada with some advantages like shared language, heritage, and ethnicity, he or she (in this case Reynolds is really writing about male emigrants) did not possess Canadian attitudes, speech, dress, customs, or habits and required a period of assimilation in order to feel they belonged. British immigrants also maintained connections with home through newspapers, food preparation and dietary choices, British books, art, and music, loyalty to the monarchy and empire, and membership in churches and clubs, see: Lloyd Reynolds, *The British Immigrant: His Social and Economic Adjustment in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1935), 206-36.

²⁰ Alan Anderson, “English Settlements,” *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* (University of Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2006), accessed June 8, 2012, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/english_settlements.html; and David Smith, “Instilling British Values in the Prairie Provinces,” in *Immigration and Settlement, 1870-1939*, edited by Gregory P. Marchildon, (University of Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2009), 441-56.

²¹ On continental ethnic blocs see: Waiser, 64-74; for the Scottish see: Marjorie Harper, “Enigmas in Hebridean Emigration: Crofter Colonists in Western Canada,” in *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, eds. Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006): 198-214.

²² Waiser, 60-62 and 68. Also see Anderson. Even though most of these ethnic blocs were short-lived, interest in farm colonies grew over time in Britain. The Salvation Army in particular was interested in establishing farm colonies in North America, see: H. Rider Haggard, *The Poor and the Land, Being a Report on the Salvation Army Colonies in the United States and at Hadleigh, England, with Scheme of National Land Settlement* (London: Longmans, 1905), accessed July 18, 2013, <http://archive.org/details/poorlandbeingrep00hagguoft>. Also see my recent work on farm colonies for the London unemployed in the early twentieth century: Elizabeth A. Scott, “‘Unite Idle Men with Idle Land’: The Evolution of the Hollesley Bay Training Farm Experiment for the London Unemployed, 1905-1908,” in *Rescuing the Vulnerable: Poverty, Welfare and Social Ties in Nineteenth- and*

British society in Canada without proper preparation, knowledge, or understanding of the Canadian climate, environment, and the relative isolation of prairie life. This was especially the case amongst London-based emigration philanthropists who rarely visited the landscape themselves. This ignorance contributed to the failure of these schemes much more than did the efforts, or lack of efforts, of the individual colonists.

The LCAS was blinded by utopian visions of Canada and failed the colonists in three distinct ways. This argument inverts the failure narrative placing a greater degree of blame on the emigrationists than on the colonists themselves. That said, I do not suggest that the colonists were not also agents in the failure of the scheme; they certainly made choices that affected the outcome of the experiment. Rather, the relationship between the emigrants and the philanthropists remained complicated from the outset and contributed to the multiple reasons why the scheme failed. The LCAS also viewed its involvement in the scheme primarily in business rather than charitable terms believing its investments in the scheme would render a quick return.²³ The society's actions must be understood within this framework; its motivations were in effect far from purely charitable.

The first way in which the philanthropists failed the colonists was that they did not take into account the resiliency of their urban culture and preferences. Theirs was a culture characterized by a strong sense of working-class identity distinct from middle-class British culture and not easily forsaken.²⁴ Recognizing the colonists may have been reluctant to let go of this identity helps explain why most of them drifted into Canadian cities.²⁵ Ex-colonist William

Twentieth-Century Europe, edited by Beate Althammer, Lutz Raphael, and Tamara Stazic-Wendt (Oxford: Berghahn Books, forthcoming 2014).

²³ Huleatt refers to the scheme being founded on "business principles," and noted that investors could feel that they were doing good work for a moderate return, see: *Letter from Rev. Hugh Huleatt to the Department of the Interior*, October 4, 1884, Government of Canada, RG 15, volume 333, File 82941, LAC.

²⁴ Peter Ackroyd puts this succinctly: "A fierce and protective sense of identity marked out the East End," see: Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (London: Vintage, 2000), 684.

²⁵ This was especially the case for the fourteen families from East London. For more on East End diasporas and the propensity for Eastenders to transplant their culture when they collectively moved around, see: Peter Watts, "The Death of the Cockney," *Time Out London*, July 2, 2007, accessed June 8, 2012, http://www.timeout.com/london/big-smoke/features/3110/Death_of_the_cockney.html. On interwar diasporas and transplanted culture in Dagenham, see: John Marriott, *Beyond the Tower: A History of East London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 276-8. Also see: Benjamin Lammers, "The Birth of the East Ender: Neighborhood and Local Identity in Interwar East London," *Journal of Social History*, 39, no. 2 (2005): 331-44. This is, of course, a complicated notion. Many Eastenders had not lived in the area long and so it is impossible to say to what degree they formed their identity around place. It must also be taken into consideration that they sought emigration to remedy their conditions at home which may indicate they were not overly attached to the area. Further family research would need to be conducted to patch together a more accurate picture but for now it is reasonable to suggest that these emigrants were at least

Mitten is described by his great-great-nephew, for example, in the following terms which display well-known East End traits: “Gregarious and not at all abstemious, he was not the sort of man to amass worldly success, nor to stay long in one place, and he eventually drifted into Vancouver where he “died in harness” in his late eighties.”²⁶ Another story about William Mitten suggesting the Eastender’s fondness for drink tells of when he passed out in his wagon after a day of drinking in town and was pranked by two young boys who replaced his ox with a donkey.²⁷ Not all Eastenders drank alcohol but a great number of them did, at least in moderation, and belonged to a culture centered around the pub and drinking in the late nineteenth century.²⁸ As noted in the previous chapter, assisted emigrants often reminded philanthropists that they were teetotal precisely because they were automatically assumed to be partial to drink. Whether or not they were actually sober remains unknown and is not nearly as important as the expectation that they would not partake as a condition of their assisted emigration. The LCAS failed to foresee that the emigrants they selected in London might leave their rural homesteads for Canadian towns and cities where their urban trades were highly desirable. When the first settler left the colony, the society was taken by surprise and reacted without due consideration for the others. This was the second way in which the society failed the colonists. Liens of \$500 (Canadian) plus a rate of six per cent interest per annum were hastily placed against the colonists’ lands. Settlers who applied for homestead patents were refused on account of the liens even though they met all the conditions, completed their settlement duties, and had completed all of the work. Finally, despite an initial flurry of attention,²⁹ the philanthropists failed to furnish the new settlers with the training and support required to become successful farmers; they simply gave them each a guide book that some of the colonists claimed was inaccurate on several counts.³⁰

somewhat attached to their urban identities and expressed them in their migration and employment choices after arrival in Canada.

²⁶ *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 257.

²⁷ MacKinnon, 24-5.

²⁸ Marriott, *Beyond the Tower*, 201-2.

²⁹ See, “The Coutts’ Colonists,” *Moosomin Courier*, October 2, 1884: “Considerable interest has been shown with respect to these people by a large number of visitors from the old country, and at various times during the summer there have been many influential persons here looking after their welfare.” MacKinnon also speaks about how the colonists received more attention than other assisted settlers, see: MacKinnon, 24.

³⁰ Colonists Gray and Emmanuels mentioned the problems with the guidebooks in their interviews found in *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC. However, Waiser reminds us that no homesteader in what became Saskatchewan received much government aid. It was not out of the ordinary then that the East London colonists received no aid from the government. Rather, I would suggest that it was irresponsible of the emigrationists to make promises they

The booming town of Moosomin and the growing cities of Winnipeg and Vancouver may have seemed overwhelmingly attractive to skilled workers who had simply been unable to make a living at their chosen trades in London and may never have wished necessarily to become farmers. Homesteading was also extremely challenging and presented hardships for those who tried it; two out of every five of homesteaders cancelled their claim in this period.³¹ Considering these reasons, it is not surprising the colonists renegotiated the terms of their emigration to Canada. Tracking the emigrants through thirty years of Canadian census records and analyzing their homestead records reevaluates the misguided experiment at Moosomin arguing that while it indeed ‘failed’ as an agricultural settlement it nonetheless provided Canada with British working urban migrants who contributed to building the nation in other productive ways.

Angela Burdett-Coutts, the LCAS, and the Promise of the Canadian West

Angela Burdett-Coutts (1815-1906) grew up in a wealthy, politically radical family. By 1871 she was admitted to the peerage in her own right in recognition of her extensive charitable work. She was raised with strong humanitarian values and was extremely well-connected politically and socially not only in England but elsewhere in the world. As a young woman she received an inheritance worth an extraordinary £1.8 million pounds which won her the moniker “the greatest heiress in England.”³² From the 1840s she dedicated her life and her money to charitable projects. A deeply Christian woman, Burdett-Coutts spent vast amounts of money building and rebuilding churches and setting up endowments for the Church of England both at home and throughout the Empire. She also funded educational institutions and charitable schemes that protected animals. As with many nineteenth century philanthropists, East London was of “particular concern” to her.³³ Not all of her projects in East London, however, were successful; a working-class market she set up near her model housing project at Columbia Road,

could not fulfill, to place these settlers on the land with virtually no capital, training, or assistance, and to assume they could quickly begin earning a living. For more, see: Waiser, 105.

³¹ Waiser, 105, and 101-20. Also see Marjorie Harper, “Settling in Saskatchewan: English Pioneers on the Prairies, 1878-1914,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 16, no. 1 (2003): 88-101. Harper uses pioneer questionnaires to examine the English settler experience.

³² Edna Healey, ‘Coutts, Angela Georgina Burdett,’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2012), accessed July 5, 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32175>.

³³ *Ibid.*

for example, had failed by 1885.³⁴ She had been interested in emigration charity since the early 1860s as discussed in chapter one and her work often extended its reach beyond domestic spheres to imperial ones. Her patronage of the LCAS was but of one of many charitable schemes she either spearheaded or funded.

The other central figure in the East London Artizans Colony was the Reverend Hugh Huleatt, Vicar of St. John's Anglican Church in Bethnal Green. In 1883, Huleatt wrote a letter to the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which was reprinted in the *East London Observer*, in favour of assisted emigration of the East End poor to Canada. The scheme he envisioned at that time was a grand one that may have formed the foundation of the 1884 scheme. Like so many other philanthropists doing emigration work there, Huleatt was motivated to support assisted emigration from observing the condition of the working poor in East London. He was convinced there was not enough work for the area's residents and that unemployment was a chronic rather than temporary problem requiring a more permanent solution. Huleatt was most concerned about the "sober, steady people" he observed in East London living in a state of semi-starvation due to lack of work. Managing this poverty domestically was problematic for Huleatt who, like others, felt that the demoralizing effects of the Poor Law diminished the recipient's self-worth and masculinity. "The true remedy," he wrote, "is the colonisation of our redundant population in the rich wheat-producing lands of north-west America, which would, under proper management, prove a safe and profitable investment."³⁵ Huleatt believed there was room in Manitoba for 500 families of four persons (husband, wife, and two children – the model emigrant family) to be placed on 160 acres of land with the option of acquiring an additional 160 acres each for a total investment of £50,000.³⁶ He also believed it was possible for the colonists to pay back the amounts loaned to them providing "full and ample security" to the investor.³⁷ This last idea formed the financial basis of the proposition for the Moosomin experiment.

By 1884, Huleatt was "entrusted" to select nineteen families from East London on behalf of the LCAS. He found fourteen families in the East End and five in Westminster.³⁸ The committee appears to have been formed sometime in early 1884 but it remains unclear exactly

³⁴ Ibid., and Walter Marcel Stern, "The Baroness's Market: The History of a Noble Failure," *Guildhall Miscellany* 2, no. 8 (1966): 353-66.

³⁵ *East London Observer*, June 30, 1883.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Huleatt, *British Columbia, Alaska, and the London Artizan Colony at Moosomin, Assiniboia*, 3.

who spearheaded the project.³⁹ According to a short report in the *Illustrated Police News* for April 19, 1884, the LCAS was said to have recently formed after a meeting of philanthropists at the Baroness's mansion to facilitate "the settlement of suitable emigrants to Manitoba and the North-West, by advancing them capital sufficient to enable them to make a fair start, and to secure homesteads under the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act of last year."⁴⁰ Prominent trustees of the LCAS included Sir John Whittaker Ellis, Francis William Fox, Sir Francis de Winton, William Burdett-Coutts, and William Peacock Edwards.⁴¹ The LCAS engaged the Canada Northwest Land Company in April of 1884 to choose the land parcel for the colony and to facilitate the transfer of land to the colonists under the Dominion Lands Act of 1872.⁴² The land chosen was situated in the Pipestone Creek area in two townships about ten kilometers south-east of the town of Moosomin in the North-West Territory. According to a list of the quarter sections of land given to each colonist, the homesteads were located either adjacent to

³⁹ The LCAS was also sometimes referred to as the London Artizan Colonist Society, the East End Colonization Society, and the East London Colonization Aid Society. I can find no official records for the society so information has been pieced together from various sources including *London Colonization Aid Society, Advances to Settlers - Minister of Interior*, April 22 – May 8, 1885, Privy Council Minutes, Government of Canada, RG 2, series 1, volume 308, LAC, accessed July 5, 2013, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/orders/001022-119.01-e.php?&sisn_id_nbr=27505&page_sequence_nbr=1&interval=20; and Dominions Land Branch Correspondence regarding the East London Artizans Colony, Department of Interior, Government of Canada, RG 15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC. The document available in the Glenbow Archives in Calgary, Alberta is too water-damaged to be of much use but is included in the Canada Northwest Land Ltd. Fonds., M-2274-vol.13, Settlers - Miscellaneous written reports, 1879-1904, London Colonization Aid Society's settlers. I have not consulted Angela Burdett-Coutts's vast papers and correspondence which are held in the British Library and may contain documents related to her involvement with the scheme.

⁴⁰ *Illustrated Police News*, 19 Apr 1884. J.R.A. Pollard mentions that these types of charities were enabled to advance settlers up to \$500 (Canadian) secured by the land under an 1881 Act, see: J.R.A. Pollard, "Railways and Land Settlement, 1881-91," 17.

⁴¹ Sir John Whittaker Ellis (1829-1912) served as Conservative MP and Lord Mayor of London in the 1880s, see: "Ellis, Sir John Whittaker (1829-1912)," Archives in London website, accessed July 5, 2013, http://www.aim25.ac.uk/cgi-bin/vcdf/detail?coll_id=19166&inst_id=118&nv1=search&nv2. There is very little information on Francis William Fox but he appears to have been a humanitarian interested in anti-slavery in the late nineteenth century, see: Francis William Fox, *A Crusade Against the Slave Trade*, (Publisher unknown, 1889), accessed July 5, 2013, <http://archive.org/details/crusadeagainsts100foxf>. Sir Francis de Winton (1835-1901) was an army officer with imperial ties to Canada through marriage and in service to the Governor-General of Canada, the Marquess of Lorne. He also had dealings in the Congo and other parts of British Africa, see: J. H. Leslie, 'Winton, Sir Francis Walter de,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, online edition, May 2006), accessed July 5, 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32806>. William Burdett-Coutts (1851-1921) was Angela Burdett-Coutts's much younger husband whom she married in 1881, see: Brian Holden Reid, 'Coutts, William Lehman Ashmead Bartlett Burdett,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, online edition, May 2006), accessed July 5, 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58663>. I can find no information on William Peacock Edwards. There were multiple other subscribers and supporters of the scheme; the individuals listed here, however, acted as trustees and managers of the scheme.

⁴² Dominions Land Branch Correspondence regarding the East London Artizans Colony, Department of Interior, Government of Canada, RG 15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

one another on the same section or at least in close proximity, suggesting the plan from the outset was to have the colonists living together as a community of independent farmers. William Mitten, Henry Plunkett, George Sims, Edward Arnold, Charles Edmunds, Joseph Budd, Charlton Wykes, John Black, Henry White, James Page, and Patrick Mallea were settled in township 12. John Gray, William Young, Samuel Emmanuels, Henry Burke, John Cumbers, Fred Cattermole, Henry Macey, and John Bloom were settled in township 13.⁴³

In October of 1884, the *Moosomin Courier*, one of the earliest local newspapers published in the North-West Territory, ran two articles on the East London Artizans Colony. In the first article, the writer indicated that the families who had arrived that summer were the “first and experimental contingent” in what was hoped would be a successful colonization scheme of transporting “the poorer classes of East London” to the district.⁴⁴ The article goes on to explain how the scheme worked:

Each head of the family was advanced £100 by the promoters of the colony to make a start with in this country, the greater portion of which was laid out for them by the North West Land Company in stock, implements and provisions, and on arrival here were speedily located in this vicinity on Government Lands by those in charge of them, and by Mr. Brokovski the Dominion Lands Intelligence Officer here and the Land Guides under him.⁴⁵

Implied throughout the article was the hope that there would be more of these types of settlers to come. The success of the scheme rested on these first families which may account for the attention paid to them. Ironically though, little assistance was actually given to ensuring their success. While the colonists were provided with a loan, some implements, stock, and provisions,

⁴³ For a list of the quarter sections, see: *London Colonization Aid Society, Advances to Settlers - Minister of Interior*, April 22 – May 8, 1885, Privy Council Minutes, Government of Canada, RG 2, series 1, volume 308, LAC, accessed July 5, 2013, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/orders/001022-119.01-e.php?&sisn_id_nbr=27505&page_sequence_nbr=1&interval=20. I have cross-checked all of these quarter sections in the searchable Saskatchewan Homestead Index located at: <http://www.saskhomesteads.com/search.asp>. For details on Patrick Mallea’s quarter section see various correspondence in Dominions Land Branch Correspondence regarding the East London Artizans Colony, Department of Interior, Government of Canada, RG 15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC. Mitten, Sims, Plunkett, and Arnold were all put on the same section as were Cattermole, Cumbers, Macey, and Bloom. Page and White were on the same section as were Emmanuels, Grey, and Young and Black, Budd, and Wykes. Burke and Edmunds had distinct quarter sections with no other colonists from the scheme. White, Page, Mallea, Wykes, Budd, Black, and Edmunds are all noted as being given quarter sections in the Martin School District, see: *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 487. By 1908 and 1910 two new farmers had gained patents on these farms (the Edmunds, Page and White quarter sections) and the other four sections were (at least in the 1980s) left to pasture, see *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 488.

⁴⁴ *Moosomin Courier*, October 2, 1884. The writer states there were eighteen families rather than nineteen possibly because Patrick Mallea was already gone.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

they were given little to no advice or training on how to go about homesteading. Like most prairie homesteaders they must have wondered where to start upon seeing the prairie stretching before them.⁴⁶ The newspaper reported that the colonists were busy breaking land, building dwellings and structures, and planting their gardens in preparation for the winter ahead.⁴⁷ Perhaps more interesting, however, was the newspaper's reportage on the tremendous attention paid to the colonists by those in social stations above them.

The colonists were visited by a flurry of clergymen and other "influential" people that first summer. These people included "the Hon. Mrs. Joyce and Rev. Mr. Joyce of Manchester, England, the Rev. H. Jones one of her Majesty's chaplains, Prof. Ramsay of Edinburgh, and Mr. Longstaff of London, England," the Reverend Dean Spencer of Hadleigh, Suffolk, and a Mrs. Snellgrove.⁴⁸ Huleatt was also present at various times during these first few months inspecting and reporting on the colonists' progress. These visits at least came with some benefits; on one Saturday in late September, 1884 the colonists gathered on fellow colonist William Young's land to receive "winter wear" the Baroness had sent them.⁴⁹ On this occasion, they were joined by several prominent gentlemen from the town of Moosomin. The gifts included blankets, pocketknives, fabric for clothing, and presents for the children. W.B. Scarth from the North West Land Company also promised seed grain in the Spring. Not only were these items essential to making it through the winter but the blankets had been personalized for each of the colonists with their names embroidered on them. This spectacle served to further express the self-serving desires of the wealthy emigrationists as nice as it might have been for the colonists to receive such gifts. The receipt of these items might also have heightened the sense of pressure, indebtedness, and later guilt on the colonists further binding them to the emigrationists. In this way, the material items represented much more than warm comforts far from home.

The following week the newspaper reported on the progress of the colonists. This shorter article reported that the scheme was still going well and that the colonists expressed extreme "gratitude for the kindness they had received from the Canadians."⁵⁰ They were said to be encouraged by their progress on the land thus far and reported to Huleatt in their interviews that

⁴⁶ For more on how challenging homesteading was and the rates of failure amongst even experienced farmers, see: Waiser, 105-7.

⁴⁷ Ibid. In the first few weeks the colonists lived in tents on the land, see: William Mitten, Statutory Declaration, 1885, homestead file 300419, SAB; and *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 188.

⁴⁸ *Moosomin Courier*, October 2, 1884.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ *Moosomin Courier*, October 9, 1884.

they were sure of their future prosperity and happiness.⁵¹ This was the last time the newspaper would report on the colony indicating perhaps that interest in it waned over time as the novelty of the scheme tapered off. It may also suggest that the newspaper was not interested in reporting that the colonists were having trouble and that some were starting to leave the district. Either way, what follows is an attempt to understand why the process of retreat began and how the hope expressed in the articles and the people above began to fade away.

Using Census Data to Reconstruct the Emigrant Experience

Methods

The core of this research is based on British and Canadian census records. I used the 1881 England Census to profile the emigrants before departure to Canada. I catalogued place of residence, occupation, place of birth, marital status, age, and number of children. I then tracked the migrants through the 1891, 1901, and 1911 Census of Canada as well as the 1906 and 1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta to determine their patterns of movement after arrival.⁵² I cross-referenced the passenger list of the ship they travelled on together with the census to further solidify the details of the group.⁵³ Additional sources allowed me to extract the emigrant's voice, move towards a micro-history of assisted emigrant experience, and fill several gaps in modern British emigration and Canadian immigration history.⁵⁴ Employing the emigrant's perspective and experience allows historians to better comment on patterns of migration within the British Empire, answer questions about emigrant expectations and disappointments, and recover the history of the imperial project from below.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² I use the census data captured on <http://www.ancestry.ca>.

⁵³ I use the Library and Archives Passenger Lists Database, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passenger/index-e.html>.

⁵⁴ In 1990, historian Stephen Constantine called for the need to retrieve the ever-elusive 'migrant's voice,' see: Stephen Constantine, *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 16. My contribution also speaks to historiographical calls for English emigrant profiles, in particular considering ethnicity as a neglected category of understanding the English emigrant, see: Tanja Bueltmann, David T. Gleeson, and Donald M. MacRaild, eds., *Locating the English Diaspora, 1500-2010* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012). Marjorie Harper also notes that the English have been ignored in the history of British emigration, see: Harper, "Settling in Saskatchewan: English Pioneers on the Prairies, 1878-1914," 88.

One of the central methodological problems of this study has been navigating from raw census data to narrative.⁵⁵ Census data can be extremely useful to historians as it was designed to capture snippets of information relevant to nation builders. Information that was included uncovers the social and economic markers governments felt were worth knowing about – that is, gender, religion, occupation (denoting class), place of residence, ethnicity, and family size. For the purposes of this chapter, one of the ways in which I shift from data to narrative is to look for pre- and post-departure patterns amongst this group of emigrants. Similarities in lifestyle, marital status, family size, and work prospects in England are contrasted to new ones in Canada to determine the impact of this particular emigration scheme over time and the success or failure of the Moosomin experiment. This also hints at why these particular colonists were chosen by the emigrationists who sponsored the scheme. This data can also help construct the push and pull factors at play in the families' decisions to leave Moosomin and their other migration choices. This micro-historical approach suggests certain groups of emigrants, in this case English urban assisted emigrants, displayed similar life circumstances that led them to leave England rather than stay. The following is a summary and analysis of these patterns for the East London artisans at Moosomin. I have not referenced the census information as it is readily available and searchable online.

Census Data Analysis: Towards Profiles of East London Emigrants

To begin, I examined the colonists' family and work patterns before and after arrival in Canada. At the time of emigration in 1884 at least fifteen out of the nineteen couples were in well-established marriages.⁵⁶ Of the fifteen marriages that can be confirmed all were at least three years in length. Most of the couples were in their late twenties or early thirties in 1884 but a

⁵⁵ Historian Amy Lloyd is currently conducting similar research using passenger lists and census data to create profiles of English emigrants to Canada in the early twentieth century. For more on her current project see her blog at <http://englishemigrationtocanada.blogspot.co.uk/>. I also heard Lloyd present this work as a conference paper entitled, "Who Emigrated? Using Passenger Lists and Census Returns to Study English Emigration to Canada, 1900-1914," at the *European Social Science History Conference*, University of Glasgow, April 11-14, 2012. Also see: John Cranfield, Kris Inwood, and Andrew Ross, "Counting the Scots: What Can We Learn from Canadian Census and Military Records?" *History Scotland Magazine* 11, no. 5 (2011): 38-45.

⁵⁶ I was unable to locate James Black, Patrick Mallea, Henry White, and William Young in the 1881 England Census. However, three of these colonists each had an eldest child of six years old (Black), twenty years old (Mallea), six years old (White) in 1884 suggesting their marriages preceded 1884 by at least six or seven years and in Mallea's case much more as he was older. William and Martha Young travelled with two young male relatives Fred Young (eighteen years old) and George Young (twenty-two years old); they may have been William's brothers. They do not appear to have had their own children at the time of emigration nor do they appear to have had children in Canada.

few were older like Henry Macey who was forty years old at the time of emigration and Patrick Mallea who was forty-five years old. These were the kinds of emigrants the LCAS thought were suitable for life in Canada and whom they most desired to help – young families with young children.⁵⁷ Most had a typical family size in 1884, with a range of zero to six children – only two couples had no children. Most had around three to five children. For example, Charlton Wykes and his wife Eliza had one child aged one whereas James Page and his wife Helen had five children aged two to eleven. Almost all traceable families increased their family size after emigration, sometimes by as many as six or seven more children.⁵⁸ This was also typical – family size in East London ranged from about five to upwards of thirteen children in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁹ The fact that all but two families came to Canada with children suggests that these were young families seeking better opportunities not just for themselves but for their children.

Twelve out of the nineteen couples had at least one spouse born in East London (eight had both spouses born in East London and four had one spouse born in East London). For the rest, their birth was in another part of London, rural England, or was unknown. The majority of the families had ties to East London at the time of emigration that extended back to birth in most cases. While this data reveals nothing about the nature of the kinship networks these families had in place, East London was their home and its culture would have permeated their daily lives. For those colonists who returned to England, ties to East London appear to have remained. Charlton Wykes's family returned to live in Kent but their youngest son Edwin (born in England after their return) was working in Bethnal Green in 1911; family history suggests they lived in London upon their return.⁶⁰ The Plunkett family was back in Bethnal Green by 1901 where Henry worked as an oil dealer that year and a window cleaner in 1911. Their children also worked in East London. By 1911, the family had taken in a nephew, Alfred, a widower of thirty years old, and his two little girls. They retained connections to extended relations in East London after having left Canada sometime between 1896 and 1901 (their daughter Mabel was born in Winnipeg in 1896). Samuel Emmanuel was also back in Bethnal Green by 1891 but his family

⁵⁷ Interestingly, Mallea 'failed' first and was the oldest.

⁵⁸ These were mostly naturally born children except for the Grays who appear to have adopted.

⁵⁹ For more on the trials of motherhood, family size, and poverty in East London see: Helen Bosquanet, *Rich and Poor* (New York: Garrett Press, 1896), 104-5. Also see: Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁶⁰ Don Knibbs, *Our Knibbs Family*, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://www.knibbs-family.org/fam648.html>; and Kitty Krister, e-mail message to the author, July 25, 2013.

is not listed with him in the census. Their whereabouts, or whether or not they were still alive, is unknown. By 1911, Samuel had returned to Canada, this time to Vancouver. His occupation was listed as “Broken,” suggesting he was disabled in some way. He had a new young Dutch wife named Desia, aged twenty-four. One possible explanation for Samuel’s multiple migrations between East London and Canada may be that his family died in Canada or he abandoned them (or they him) sometime between leaving Moosomin for Vancouver before 1891, returning to England before 1901, and moving back to Canada before 1911. Overall, what his movements suggest is that he did not break ties with East London during his time in Canada and that Canada remained open to him and his complicated family.

Most male heads of household worked in low to mid-range skilled trades in East London. Many of their occupations were distinctly urban and included the following: police constable, saw mill labourer, grinder, cellerman, labourer, painter’s labourer, carriage driver, bootmaker, blacksmith, plasterer, coachman, table maker, stoker in a factory, and milkman. Other than general labour, these were decent jobs compared to others that were more casual. However, they would have all been vulnerable to downturns in the local economy. A few of the wives worked at home taking in laundry, mending, or ironing. One worked as hawker (women who peddled small goods), one as a shop assistant, and one as a brushmaker. These patterns provide a picture of who the colonists were in England and what kinds of expectations they might have had for their emigration to Canada. It also confirms they were not farmers in the United Kingdom nor were most of them simply ‘labourers’ as recorded on their passenger list.⁶¹

Tracking the families through the census records has revealed patterns especially related to movement and improved life chances for the families’ children and their descendants. Many of the original colonists’ children demonstrated some degree of upward mobility in Canada but most remained in fairly typical well-paid working-class jobs upon reaching adulthood. Many of the girls got married and are hard to track through the census. Henry (Harry) Arnold, the eldest son of Edward and Clara Arnold, worked as a printer at the *Courier* newspaper in Moosomin in 1901 (his whereabouts are unknown for 1911).⁶² His brother Albert Arnold worked as a labourer for \$400 a year in Vancouver in 1901. James Black, aged twenty-two, worked as a waiter in

⁶¹ List for *S.S. Austrian*, Allan Steamship Line Company, Landed at Quebec, May 7, 1884, Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1922 Database, accessed May 16, 2012, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passenger/index-e.html?PHPSESSID=n69vsiu9afqu8gmtbeasrk2fs4>.

⁶² Additional information from *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 188.

Winnipeg in 1901. James Cattermole, Fred and Maria Cattermole's son, worked as a carpenter in Vancouver in 1911. By 1916, he was back in Saskatchewan with his younger brother Fred both of whom worked as carpenters in the Swift Current area. Two of the Cumbers boys, John and William had working-class jobs in Winnipeg in 1901, John as a driver and William as a labourer. Emily Macey, aged twenty-four, was employed as a dressmaker in 1901. By the 1906 census of the prairie provinces she becomes untraceable; she married sometime before 1909.⁶³ Two of her younger siblings, Joseph and Edith became schoolteachers in Oxbow (in what later became Saskatchewan) after the family moved there sometime around 1896. William Mitten's younger sons William, Henry, and Robert all took on the family trade of plastering, two of them interestingly, in Oxbow and one in Vancouver. These boys also tried their hand at farming. They must have worked as plasterers while also working on their homesteads during this period which was common.⁶⁴ By 1906, William (the son) and Henry had both moved to Saskatoon; so too did Robert by 1916. The Page children were active workers in the Moosomin area until the family moved to Winnipeg sometime before 1906. Charles and Percy Page worked as labourers in Moosomin in 1901 and their sisters Helen and Emily worked as domestic servants. Their eldest brother, James Page did quite well working as a postmaster in Winnipeg by 1911. Mary White, aged twenty-six, worked as a domestic servant in 1901 in Winnipeg. By 1911, her younger brothers Robert and Charles White were working in Winnipeg as a servant and a printer. William Sims, son of George and Eliza Sims, worked as a labourer in Moosomin in 1901 and his sister Annie worked as a dressmaker. She later worked as a cashier in Vancouver in 1911. These children all contributed to the Canadian economy in the early twentieth century, working at a variety of jobs in both cities and towns across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. Some of them moved around Western Canada in search of better opportunities. Examining their work patterns suggests that their broader integration into Canadian society was successful; many also fought in the First World War.⁶⁵ Some sons continued to farm in and around Moosomin and other parts of Saskatchewan which demonstrates generational flexibility and improved chances for independence in the colonists' children. Where their fathers had difficulty letting go of the

⁶³ *Furrow to the Future: Oxbow and Glen Ewen, volume 2*, (Oxbow, Sk: Oxbow-Glen Ewan History Book Committee, 1984), 776.

⁶⁴ Waiser, 112-113.

⁶⁵ See George Cumbers, CEF soldier detail, Canadian Great War Project, accessed Jul 30, 2013, <http://www.canadiangreatwarproject.com/searches/soldierDetail.asp?Id=28569>.

city, sons raised in Canada appear not to have retained such strong ties and were interested in farming.⁶⁶

If one family is chosen to follow through to the present day we can learn more about the children's and grand-children's life chances in Canada. The Mitten family is a particularly good choice because of its descendants' interest in genealogy and the power of online-based family history websites like ancestry.ca and mundia.ca; dozens (if not hundreds) of the descendants of William and his two wives are easily traceable into the twenty-first century.⁶⁷ William and Eliza (née Frost) came to Canada with four children – Eliza (Elizabeth), William, Henry, and Robert. In Canada, the family had five more children. Before she died in 1891, Eliza (née Frost) had Hugh and Moosomina. Mabel, Bert, and Gertrude were born to William's next wife also named Eliza (née Allitt). According to family history, William married this second Eliza in 1895.⁶⁸ Eliza Allitt was actually William's third wife. His first wife died after one year of marriage in England before he was married to Eliza (née Frost) in 1873. William, being a skilled plasterer, erected a monument to his deceased wife Eliza (née Frost) in the Moosomin North Cemetery which still stands today.⁶⁹

William, known as Bill, is remembered in his family's history as having tried to farm his “rolling, stony homestead without much success as he knew nothing about agriculture.”⁷⁰ While family members explain that Bill knew nothing of farming they also understood that the lien against the land crippled any possibility Bill had in succeeding: “a \$500 settlement loan from Burdett-Coutts to set up the farm was a debt Bill was unable to repay and in 1900 he turned the homestead over to British Columbia.”⁷¹ William Mitten applied for a homestead patent in January of 1888 and completed all settlement duties despite his lack of agricultural knowledge. The matter was still unresolved in 1900 because of the problem with the LCAS's lien on the

⁶⁶ For more on the children who homesteaded see the following homestead files available at the Saskatchewan Archives Board: Mitten children (files 1679223, 1782193, 1288298, 1287338, 1636008, and 1288405); Cattermole son James (files 1591375 and 2031034); Bloom children (2176025, 3361466, 300389, 3743954, and 2414263); Macey son Joseph (108998A).

⁶⁷ See one family member's genealogical work: “William Mitten,” mundia.com website, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://www.mundia.com/ca/Person/25774691/12005348743>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 257. For photo of the headstone and plaster work see: Moosomin North Cemetery, Saskatchewan Cemeteries Project, accessed July 10, 2013, <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cansacem/moosomin/232.jpg>.

⁷⁰ Accessed July 9, 2013, <http://www.mundia.com/ca/Person/25774691/12005348743>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

land; this will be discussed in more detail below.⁷² Prior to leaving his land, Bill found success in his plastering trade in Moosomin and moved the family into town by 1887. In these early years, his land was rented out and his sons worked on it.⁷³ By 1901, Bill had moved the family to Vancouver except for some of the older children who stayed behind.

The children who emigrated to Canada with William and Eliza (née Frost) Mitten, and the two she bore in Canada, were all still living in Saskatchewan in 1916 in Kindersley, Oxbow, Humboldt, and Saskatoon. Elizabeth Mitten, the oldest child, married William Murison, Indian Agent in the Touchwood Hills Agency in Saskatchewan. Elizabeth died in Vancouver in 1949. William James Mitten died in 1955 in an unknown location. Henry Mitten, also known as Harry, died in 1929. Robert Mitten died in 1956 in Vancouver.⁷⁴ Moosomina Mitten married a fellow Englishman Joseph Bartholomew Armishaw in 1906 before the birth of her first child Eric Armishaw in British Columbia in 1908.⁷⁵ In 1911, she lived with her sister Elizabeth's family in Saskatchewan with no sign of her husband. However, it appears they stayed together until he died in 1930; they had two more children June and Oliver.⁷⁶ Hugh Mitten, Eliza's (née Frost) last child, was living in Buena Vista in Saskatoon in 1916, a young married man with a toddler and a baby working as a contractor. He died in 1960 in Ontario.⁷⁷

If just one of these original children is followed through to the present, it is clear the family has mostly continued to live in Canada and contributed to the Canadian economy and to Canadian society. Moosomina will be used here because, given her unique name, she is easy to track through the census. Moosomina died in Essondale, British Columbia on August 28, 1962 in

⁷² William Mitten homestead file 300419, SAB.

⁷³ "William Mitten," mundia.com website, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://www.mundia.com/ca/Person/25774691/12005348743>. This date contrasts with the homestead patent application except for the fact that William Mitten stated his dual occupations of farmer and plasterer, see: William Mitten homestead file 300419, SAB.

⁷⁴ "William Mitten," mundia.com website, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://www.mundia.com/ca/Person/25774691/12005348743>.

⁷⁵ Marriage certificate available at: Marriage Certificate for Joseph Bartholomew Armishaw and Moosomina Mitten, Vancouver, British Columbia, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.mundia.com/ca/Gallery/Details/25774691/5041067240/43ae54c4-3ff3-45b1-aab3-d7b8a66ac1f8>. His birthplace is listed as Cannock, Staffordshire, see: Family group sheet for Joseph Bartholomew Armishaw and Moosomina Mitten, Canada Family Trees, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://canadianheadstones.com/familytrees/familygroup.php?familyID=F1599&tree=SissonRoe>.

⁷⁶ See Oliver's Obituary: Oliver Joseph (Joe) Armishaw, *Kamloops The Daily News*, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://www.inmemoriam.ca/view-announcement-30824-oliver-joseph-joe-armishaw.html>.

⁷⁷ "Hugh Douglas Mitten," mundia.com website, accessed July 10, 2013, <http://www.mundia.com/ca/Person/25774691/12483973607>.

the Provincial Mental Hospital from toxemia and bronchopneumonia.⁷⁸ Her death certificate provides additional information about her life and her migration patterns within Canada. It states she had been resident in the municipality of Coquitlam for nine years, had lived in British Columbia for sixty-two years, and was seventy-seven years old when she died. Her permanent residence, however, was stated as Victoria, British Columbia. Further information reveals she may have been admitted to the mental hospital in 1958 as indicated by her doctor's attendance of her between December 1, 1958 and August 28, 1962. She is buried in the Ocean View cemetery in Surrey, British Columbia.⁷⁹ Moosomina's eldest son Eric fought in the Second World War as a Lance Corporal with the Canadian Scottish Regiment. He died in 1990 and is buried next to his father in the Vanderhoof Municipal Cemetery in British Columbia.⁸⁰ Moosomina's daughter June died in Denver, Colorado in 1978.⁸¹ An obituary for Moosomina's son Oliver provides more information about this part of the Mitten family and their long-range outcome in Canada. Oliver Joseph Armishaw was born to Moosomina in 1923. He died recently in 2008 in British Columbia after a long battle with cancer. Joe, as he was known, left behind numerous children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren all of whom, of course, descend from the original Mitten family at Moosomin. The obituary explains that Joe grew up in Vanderhoof, British Columbia. He joined the RCAF and worked as a pilot instructor. After the war, he married and worked for the CN railway in Kamloops. In 1957, Joe began his career as a federal public servant for Indian and Northern Affairs. His family lived all over British Columbia and in the Yukon because of this job.⁸² Joe is but one descendant of the original Mitten family who came to Canada under the East London Aritzans Colony scheme. Their contributions to Canada make it extremely difficult to suggest this family, and by extension the other families, failed in successfully emigrating to Canada. While William Mitten may not have succeeded as a farmer as had been intended, much of which was not his fault, the long-range outcome of his life and his descendants' lives suggest the scheme in no way failed Canada.

⁷⁸ Family group sheet for Joseph Bartholomew Armishaw and Moosomina Mitten, Canada Family Trees, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://canadianheadstones.com/familytrees/familygroup.php?familyID=F1599&tree=SissonRoe>.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Tombstones for Joseph Bartholomew Armishaw and his son, Eric Lloyd Armishaw Vanderhoof Municipal Cemetery, Bulkley-Nechako Regional District, British Columbia, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://www.mundia.com/ca/Gallery/Details/25774691/5041067240/857069b4-78db-4422-8b90-2b065efaaa3b>.

⁸¹ Family group sheet for Joseph Bartholomew Armishaw and Moosomina Mitten, Canada Family Trees, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://canadianheadstones.com/familytrees/familygroup.php?familyID=F1599&tree=SissonRoe>.

⁸² Obituary for Oliver Joseph (Joe) Armishaw, *Kamloops The Daily News*.

The dates at which the colonists left Moosomin and how long they tried farming revealed some surprising contradictions to the overriding myth that the colonists were simply doomed to fail from the outset. Homestead records complement census data about the abandonment of the settlements. The 1891 Canadian census shows thirteen of the families were still living in Moosomin that year. Of these thirteen, six gave 'farmer' as their occupation and seven had returned to their old trade or taken up a new trade in Moosomin. Six families (the Budds, the Cattermoles, the Cumbers, the Pages, the Plunketts, and the Youngs) were still working the original homestead themselves seven years after emigration which destabilizes the failure myth suggesting instead that about one third of the families gave farming a solid chance. By 1901, three of those six families had moved to bigger centres or returned to East London. Only one family continued to farm at Moosomin in 1901, the Cattermoles. In 1911, the Canadian census showed none of the original couples living in Moosomin; even the widowed Mrs. Cattermole had retired to Vancouver after the death of her husband. What these movements indicate is that the original colonists left Moosomin in stages rather than in one fell swoop. Some packed it in early like the Edmunds and the Whites who went to Winnipeg before 1888, and others put down deeper roots in rural Saskatchewan like the Grays, the Maceys, and the Sims.⁸³

After they left Moosomin, the census shows that the original colonists actively participated in the early twentieth century Canadian economy working in the construction trades as carpenters, builders, plasterers, and painters as well as labourers, blacksmiths, and caretakers. The census records for 1891, 1901, and 1911 list all of the colonist's wives simply as "wife" so other sources are needed to determine the kinds of work these women did; the sources exist only for their time in Moosomin. Hannah Edmunds and Clara Gray both worked at a hotel in Moosomin in 1884.⁸⁴ Anna Macey talked of picking cherries and making preserves which provides an example of the kind of domestic work the colonist wives did.⁸⁵ After her husband John died, Martha Bloom was reported to be working her husband's homestead with her children

⁸³ Edmunds and White were gone by 1888, see: *Letter from Rufus Stephenson, Inspector to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, from Moosomin, Assiniboia regarding the East London Artizans Colony homesteads*, December 27, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

⁸⁴ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

in 1888.⁸⁶ Certainly, all of these women performed the taxing work of homesteading wife, mother, and sometimes off-farm employee. Of the three heads of household who returned to England, Samuel Emmanuels came back to Canada to retire and the other two, Henry Plunkett and Charlton Wykes, did not. If the particulars of their cases are considered a more nuanced picture of the colonists' attempts to farm becomes apparent.

Samuel Emmanuels was an adaptable man. Census records indicate he worked as a carriage driver, a fire inspector, and a general dealer in Canada. Emmanuels's homestead file reveals several more lines of work in addition to farming: proprietor of the Queen's Hotel in Moosomin, trucking and freighting, "pound keeper" for the town of Moosomin, and travelling insurance salesman between Moosomin and Regina.⁸⁷ Huleatt reported that Emmanuels had been "thoroughly successful" on his homestead breaking seven acres in 1884.⁸⁸ Emmanuels worked hard to maintain and improve his homestead and support his family with work in Moosomin in the 1880s. All indications suggest he wanted the homestead to be successful. In 1887, the local land agent recommended Emmanuels apply for patent to his homestead finding all settlement duties to be complete.⁸⁹ The homestead inspector reported that Emmanuels had sixty acres in cultivation and had built a frame house. The government was prepared to issue the patent in Emmanuels's name as soon as the lien was discharged. This was the same for the other colonists as well. It appears then that the Canadian government wished for the colonists to receive their patents and tried to support them in submitting their applications despite the issues with the liens. Yet, in 1890 Emmanuels submitted a quit claim deed to the Dominion Lands Commission after a lengthy investigation into the botched illegal sale he initiated of his homestead. Prior to this, in October of 1889, he wrote a letter to the Minister of the Interior asking that the patent to his homestead be issued in the name of the trustees of the LCAS.⁹⁰ Despite finding success in Moosomin and being eligible for homestead patent, Samuel Emmanuels was in Vancouver by 1891 never to return to the Moosomin area. By 1901, Emmanuels was back in Bethnal Green before returning to Canada to retire. While he was found to have been not guilty in the case of

⁸⁶ *Letter from Rufus Stephenson, Inspector to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, from Moosomin, Assiniboia regarding the East London Artizans Colony homesteads*, December 27, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

⁸⁷ Samuel Emmanuels homestead file 223027, SAB.

⁸⁸ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

⁸⁹ Samuel Emmanuels homestead file 223027, SAB.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

his illegal land sale, Emmanuels, like the others, was crippled by his indebtedness to the LCAS eventually turning the land over to them to discharge the lien. Emmanuels also found it was impossible to make a living farming without working off the farm in those first few years of homesteading. Combined with the lien, these were likely the reasons he quit his homestead and headed for the city. His efforts at farming his land, however, remain impressive and are not in doubt.

Henry Plunkett enjoyed a high degree of praise as a colonist in Moosomin suggesting his time and experience in Moosomin was not predictive of his later migration choices. Huleatt described Plunkett's abilities as a farmer as a "decided success."⁹¹ Having broken eight acres by the Fall of 1884, Huleatt reported that "In the opinion of the old settlers, he [Plunkett] is likely to prove the most successful colonist."⁹² In 1891, the Plunkett family was still living in Moosomin; Henry was listed as a labourer. Plunkett left his homestead sometime between 1891 and 1896; Henry's daughter Mabel was born in Winnipeg in 1896.⁹³ In 1888, Henry Plunkett was reported as having a good-sized dwelling, stable, granary, twenty-five acres broken with twenty-two seeded, livestock, and implements. Rufus Stephenson, inspector to the Minister of the Interior, remarked that, "In connection with my visit to the enumerated settlers I am pleased to be able to repeat that their condition is very much better than I was led to expect and generally their present future prosperity is fully assured."⁹⁴ In 1887, Henry Plunkett and William Mitten helped form a cricket club in the Pipestone Creek area. The club met Saturday afternoons to practice on a local farmer's land.⁹⁵ Plunkett also served as a homestead patent witness for fellow colonist George Sims in 1889.⁹⁶ Both of these examples suggest the colonists had formed bonds of community. Yet, by 1901 Henry Plunkett had left Moosomin and was back in Bethnal Green via Winnipeg.

Charlton Wykes also showed great promise as a settler in 1884. Huleatt considered him to be a "success" with twelve acres broken and had an advantage in the quality of the land he

⁹¹ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ There is no homestead file for Plunkett so information gleaned solely from census data.

⁹⁴ *Letter from Rufus Stephenson, Inspector to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, from Moosomin, Assiniboia regarding the East London Artizans Colony homesteads*, December 27, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

⁹⁵ *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 661.

⁹⁶ George Sims homestead file 207252, SAB.

received.⁹⁷ Wykes left the Moosomin area for Winnipeg in 1888 having stayed on his homestead for four years.⁹⁸ During this time he built a sixteen by twenty-two foot house, broke forty acres, had thirty acres in crop and was entitled to apply for patent having completed his settlement duties.⁹⁹ He also had a yoke of oxen, a young bull, some pigs, and a cow.¹⁰⁰ Even though he had moved to Winnipeg, Wykes applied for his homestead patent in 1892 suggesting that even at this late stage he remained interested in maintaining a connection to his homestead. The Dominion Lands Commission also explained to him that he was entitled to apply for a second homestead entry which would have expanded his farming operations.¹⁰¹ By 1895, however, the LCAS had been granted patent to his land and any hope of his continuing farming ended.¹⁰² As much as the old settlers in the Moosomin area are said not to remember him, Charlton Wykes left his mark on the Pipestone Creek landscape. An area on his homestead was still in the 1980s referred to as “Wykes’s Hill.”¹⁰³ Joseph Budd named his son, born in 1890, Charlton likely after his friend Wykes. These anecdotes suggest Charlton Wykes was a presence in the colony during the short time he was there before he left for Winnipeg. For public servants, the memory of Charlton Wykes’s time on the Canadian prairie lasted into the 1940s. Government records indicate a small seed grain loan from 1887 was still outstanding and in collections in 1942 before it was finally written off.¹⁰⁴ Charlton Wykes’s descendants do not know why or exactly when the family returned to England.¹⁰⁵ They do know, however, that the family endured a tragedy in Canada losing their two small children within one week likely to an infectious disease. The Manitoba death register index confirms that two children by the last name Wykes, one born in 1883 (Eliza)

⁹⁷ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

⁹⁸ *Letter from Rufus Stephenson, Inspector to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, from Moosomin, Assiniboia regarding the East London Artizans Colony homesteads*, December 27, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC. Also in his homestead patent declaration Wykes says he and his family were in “steady” residence for four years, see: Charlton Wykes homestead file 300397, SAB.

⁹⁹ *Homestead inspector’s report*, June 7, 1892, Charlton Wykes homestead file 300397, SAB.

¹⁰⁰ *Patent Statement/Declaration*, October 29, 1892, Charlton Wykes homestead file 300397, SAB.

¹⁰¹ *Letter from Secretary Dominion Lands Commission to Charlton Wykes*, June 12, 1894, Charlton Wykes homestead file 300397, SAB.

¹⁰² Charlton Wykes homestead file 300397, SAB.

¹⁰³ *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 553.

¹⁰⁴ Charlton Wykes homestead file 300397, SAB.

¹⁰⁵ I cannot locate the family in the 1891 or 1901 census of Canada. They do not show up again until the 1911 England census. In Joseph Budd’s homestead file (which is the same folder/file number as Charlton Wykes) there is a homestead declaration from Budd dated March 2, 1893 which he writes from the same residential address as Charlton Wykes, 65 Kate Street, Winnipeg, see: Joseph Budd homestead file 300397, SAB. This suggests that the two families were either living together at this address or that Joseph Budd’s family took over the house after the Wykes’s left.

and the other born in 1886 (name unknown), died on October 22 and October 27, 1888 in Winnipeg.¹⁰⁶ Given the problems with the liens and this family tragedy the Wykes's may have simply had too devastating an experience in Canada to stay. Their return to England was arranged in haste; they travelled home on a cattle ship with no advance booking.¹⁰⁷

The Emmanuels, Plunkett, and Wykes cases complicate the history of the colony in that they, like other fellow colonists, appear to have given the Canadian prairie west at least a fair and decent shot not only in terms of farming but also in their attempts to integrate into and shape the Canadian West's social and economic fabric. Remaining in Canada for more than a decade in Plunkett's case and close to a decade in Wykes's case cannot be classified as an all-out failure in the immigration project. Rather, it suggests these families tried their best to make it in Canada and establish roots before going home. It also hints at emigrant agency; these families made certain choices about their movements within the British Empire. Whatever their reasons, these three families are examples of the ways in which the colonists re-negotiated the terms of their stay in Canada and made choices about their migrations independent of what their sponsors expected of them. If we considered the complicated histories of others we would expect to see similar patterns except for the one major difference – the majority of them did not return to England. Rather, they moved around Canada. Together, the six families that were still farming in 1891 make an even stronger case for this argument. Given that the LCAS pressed heavily upon the colonists that future emigration projects in East London depended on their success, it is perhaps not surprising to see the immense disappointment and later hostility the society expressed in response to their perceived failure as agriculturalists.

Finding the Emigrant Voice in Questionnaires

¹⁰⁶ Manitoba Death Index, 1881-1941, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://search.ancestry.ca/search/db.aspx?dbid=7060>; and Kitty Krister, e-mail message to the author, July 25, 2013. Kitty says there were three children who died that week but I can only find two.

¹⁰⁷ Kitty Krister, e-mail message to the author, July 25, 2013.



Fig. 5.1: Homestead at East London Settlement near Moosomin, Assa, unknown colonists, c. 189-?, Photographer: Norman Caple, Reference Code AM54-S4-: SGN 1511, Vancouver City Archives.

This is the only known archived photograph of the East London Artizans Colony. The identity of the three people in the photograph above, with their dog, their thirteen head of cattle, and their modest house in the background, remains unknown. However, supplemental evidence suggests they may be Fred and Maria Cattermole and their son James who was nine years old in 1891. When Rufus Stephenson visited the colonists in 1888 he was impressed with Fred and Maria's condition. They had a sixteen by sixteen foot house and two outbuildings, the same as pictured here. They also boasted twelve head of cattle, three pigs, eighty acres broken with forty to fifty acres seeded for 1889. These figures are the closest to those represented in the photograph. While we cannot know for certain which of the original ninety-nine colonists they are, these settlers nonetheless present an evocative picture. The photograph, taken in the 1890s, conveys a sense of permanence, effort, and pride as the farmers look out from their land towards the camera.

While visual sources are scarce, written sources for the East London Artizans Colony are surprisingly abundant given the neglect historians have paid to them. The questionnaires Huleatt circulated in 1884 provide a window into the emigrants' experience of their time in the East

London Artizans Colony. Much like the letters used in chapter four, the questionnaires allow the historian to extract the emigrant's voice, albeit through a limited set of questions posed to them. My approach to these questionnaires is much the same as for the emigrants' letters in chapter four so I will not repeat the historiographical and methodological framework here. While I use caution in suggesting these questionnaires are representative of all of the colonists' experiences, it can quite safely be assumed they reflect the overall experience of the settlers in the first few months in Canada as they are drawn from a much smaller sample; fourteen of the original nineteen colonist families filled out the questionnaires.¹⁰⁸ Along with the colonists' responses, Huleatt made his own assessments of the nineteen families in September 1884.¹⁰⁹ These can be later contrasted to Stephenson's assessments in 1888 revealing details on how the colonists fared over time.¹¹⁰ Together, this collection of documents reveals the optimism, excitement, apprehension, and hard work the colonists exhibited at two distinct moments in time – their first summer in Canada and four years later in 1888. The targeted questions the LCAS asked the colonists expose the society's expectations for success. Much like the emigrant letters in chapter four, the responses to these questions acted as proof the scheme was successful in its earliest days. This information was intended to rally support and financing at home in London.

The first of four questions on the questionnaire handed out to the colonists in September of 1884 was: "Do you consider your position and prospects improved by your coming out as a colonist?" All but three answered with a simple yes. Anna Macey, who filled out the questionnaire for her husband who was away at the time, felt that it was too early to tell if her family was better off. She wanted to get through the first winter to form a more definite opinion but "should rather say yes than no."¹¹¹ George Sims felt that his family's prospects were improved so long as they could persevere, suggesting he was also unsure of their ultimate success. Charles Edmunds thought that if his health would "stand the climate" he and his wife would enjoy better prospects than in London.¹¹² The optimism with which the colonists answered

¹⁰⁸ Missing are Wykes, Black, Budd, Cumbers, and Mallea.

¹⁰⁹ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

¹¹⁰ *Letter from Rufus Stephenson, Inspector to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, from Moosomin, Assiniboia regarding the East London Artizans Colony homesteads*, December 27, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹¹¹ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

¹¹² *Ibid.* Edmunds was also sometimes spelled Edmonds.

these questions is not surprising. In their general comments, examined in further detail below, they conveyed feelings of wonderment about the land on which they had been placed. They were also enjoying a beautiful prairie summer and fall having yet to experience the winter months. This early in the experiment the colonists would have also likely been hesitant to express displeasure to their sponsors. The “yes” responses then are highly conditional.

The second question regarded the colonists’ health: “Have you and your family enjoyed good health since you have settled on your land?” All of the respondents reported good health since arrival and six reported better health than in London. Anna Macey was again the exception having had a very trying time with her family’s health. Huleatt also noted this in his assessment of the family. He reported Henry Macey had endured “trials with the sickness of his Wife and death of his son” and that his children were “naturally weak.”¹¹³ Anna’s explanation for the family’s ill health was an ongoing issue with diarrhea. She explained that she too had been ill but had recently been feeling better. Her youngest son, Joseph, was “rather subject” to diarrhea and the family’s eldest son, Percy, aged ten had tragically died from a similar illness shortly after their arrival in Canada.¹¹⁴ Anna felt, however, that this ill health was not related to Canada and that the family would have suffered these problems had they remained in England. She may have been correct; she had some medical knowledge having worked as a midwife in London.¹¹⁵ Indeed, as an adult, Joseph Macey lived to enjoy a rewarding, upwardly mobile career as a schoolteacher in Oxbow and later a farmer near Rosetown. He was remembered as a “wonderful teacher” who descended from “pioneer stock.”¹¹⁶ Joe Macey left a further indelible mark on the rural Saskatchewan landscape, planting a cottonwood tree on the original site of the Scout Hill school in 1904 which in 1979 was still considered a local landmark.¹¹⁷ The Macey family went on to become active citizens in the Oxbow area after moving there from Moosomin likely around 1896. Anna Macey taught Sunday school in two churches, the Anglican and the Presbyterian. Henry Macey, a seventh generation blacksmith, ran his blacksmith shop there from 1896 to 1906. It was one of the first businesses to open in the town.¹¹⁸ The rest of the children lived well

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ *Furrow to the Future: Oxbow and Glen Ewen, volume 2, 775.*

¹¹⁶ *Furrow to the Future: Oxbow and Glen Ewen, volume 1, (Oxbow, Sk: Oxbow-Glen Ewen History Book Committee, 1984), 44-45.*

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 72.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 151. For more on Henry Macey’s work as a blacksmith during the Riel Resistance, see: *Furrow to the Future: Oxbow and Glen Ewen, volume 2, 775.*

into adulthood and did not succumb to any more tragedies except for Emily who died in childbirth at the age of thirty.¹¹⁹ Henry Macey died in Oxbow, Saskatchewan in 1907 and Anna died in Winnipeg in 1921.¹²⁰ Their children settled around Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, and Ontario. They farmed, worked, served in the First World War, and had many children across the country. Joe was even said to have employed innovative farming techniques to minimize dust on his homestead near Rosetown.¹²¹ The weakness which Huleatt attributed to these children in 1884 seems to have been completely misjudged.

The third question Huleatt asked the colonists in 1884 concerned the value of their land and possessions: “What do you consider your homestead with its present crop, stock, and chattels to be worth?” The values varied depending on the colonist’s luck. Some, like Charlton Wykes, received land that was more fertile than others. Some were placed closer to the rail line which increased the value of their land to \$1,500 (Canadian); these included Samuel Emmanuels and John Gray. Gray explained he had been “fortunate in getting homestead within the mile railway belt and within 3 miles of the town of Moosomin the land is daily becoming more valuable.”¹²² Most of the colonists valued their land at £200 (Sterling); others reported similar values in Canadian dollars of \$800-1000. William Young placed his value highest at \$2,000 (Canadian). George Sims predicted these amounts would “of course” improve over time.¹²³ Huleatt reported that William Young had broken nineteen acres but also had grown 200 bushels of potatoes which may have added to his value. Young explained also that his “position” was “rather different to the London Artizans” but it is not clear what he meant by this.¹²⁴ He certainly felt that the potential of the area to produce wealth was great:

farming prospects are very good indeed and a good future may soon be realised, there is no rent to pay, no taxes, no coals to buy, butchers meat is very rarely wanted, so nearly all the farmers income is profit. The land in Moosomin District has this year yielded, 46 bushels of wheat to the acre.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ *Furrow to the Future: Oxbow and Glen Ewen, volume 2, 775-776 and Furrow to the Future: Oxbow and Glen Ewen, volume 1, 105.*

¹²⁰ “Family of Henry Macey and Anna Frances Butt,” Apperley Family History website, accessed July 10, 2013, <http://www.apperley.ca/fam214.html>.

¹²¹ *Furrow to the Future: Oxbow and Glen Ewen, volume 2, 775-6.*

¹²² *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

Regardless of the value of their land the colonists would later be unable to pay the liens against their homesteads which made it impossible for them to secure patents.

The responses to the fourth question served the interests of the philanthropists in carrying on or expanding the scheme. Huleatt asked the colonists, “What sort of men in the Old Country should you consider most likely to succeed in your locality?” The answers to this particular set of questions raise some methodological concerns about the authenticity of the colonists’ input. Their answers are formulaic, often identical save for a few words, and express the same general sentiments. In Samuel Emmanuel’s response he mentions that a settler needed \$500 (Canadian) (or £100 Sterling) capital in order to succeed, which was the exact amount the LCAS lent to the colonists. The specificity and similarity to the details of the scheme in some of these answers suggests Huleatt may have manipulated their answers to please the LCAS and to bolster the scheme but this is only speculation; these may genuinely have been the colonists’ answers. The majority of responses to this question hinge around the same set of qualities required of a successful settler: men used to hard and rough work, men used to agriculture, and energetic, willing men prepared to take any kind of work. Some of the colonists also responded that the London artisan made a promising settler. Fifteen of the nineteen heads of household and some of their wives were also reported to be working off the farm in the local area either at their trades, in local businesses, or for other area farmers.¹²⁶ It is probable that all nineteen worked off the farm and Huleatt simply did not mention this in his report. Hard work then was clearly part of daily life for the colonists in the first summer both on and off their homesteads. If this question did contain genuine responses it should not be surprising the colonists felt strongly about this trait. The responses also signal that the colonists understood the hallmarks of the ideal assisted emigrant: hard-working, sober, and respectable. These responses served as assurance to the LCAS that it had chosen the right kind of emigrant and that in the estimation of those emigrants this was indeed the kind of person required to succeed on the Canadian prairie.

At the end of the questionnaire the colonists were encouraged to make general comments about their experiences. These responses are the most varied and interesting and read much like the emigrant letters in chapter four. The comments reflect gratitude and contentment with their move and often contrast London life to prairie life. The colonists were struck by the beauty, freshness, life, food, and nice weather of the Canadian prairie landscape. They also felt that the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

place was “perfectly suitable to English settlers.”¹²⁷ Several explained they did not wish to return to England. John Bloom’s comments reflect these sentiments well:

Gentlemen this a beautiful Country for a man willing to obtain his independence but he must be a man that is handy at many things for it does not become a man to pay for labour here as it is a high price, but a handy man with a willing Heart can soon see himself what will be the result of his labour, I am very thankful to the Community as well as to my God that it fell to my lot to take a portion of Canada for my Home.¹²⁸

Many of the colonists mentioned an abundance of game, wild berries, and fertile soil around their homesteads. Samuel Emmanuels was awestruck by the ability of the prairie soil to produce such abundance: “I have raised a good crop of Potatoes on my homestead by simply turning over the sod and placing the seed underneath while vegetables grow as if by magic.”¹²⁹ James Page, a lay preacher who held church services on his land that the locals dubbed “Page’s Settlement,” was particularly moved by the beauty of his adopted landscape:

every day seems to bring me and family more comfort they have what thousands would like to have that is a free Range of Country and such a Country for in the Summer it is one vast Flower Garden and now it is beautiful beyond descriptions and has for their Health there is no question about that for it is all that can be desired and such land I never saw Ploughed up like it for it if Just like Garden would Mr. Hewlett or his esteemed friend can answer for the truth of this or I will answer any communication that is made to me.¹³⁰

Charles Edmunds seemed to enjoy his first summer on the Canadian prairie before he moved to Winnipeg sometime between August and December of 1888 to take up his trade in house painting¹³¹:

I am very pleased to say as a humble working man that is a man carnt live out here he cant live no where for since we have been here have had all the Ducks and Chickens we can eat and as regards fruit we have picked Bushells such as rarasberrys and currents and June berrys and now the winters is ____? heaps of rabbits which we can senare very Easy. also the Northern lights are something grand hear the reflection is so great that you can see for miles off at night even see to read at night out doors also I think if we can

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid. On “Page’s Settlement,” see: *Moosomin Century One: Town and Country*, 543.

¹³¹ For confirmation Edmunds had abandoned, see: *Letter from Rufus Stephenson, Inspector to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, from Moosomin, Assiniboia regarding the East London Artizans Colony homesteads*, December 27, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC. Also see: Huleatt, *British Columbia, Alaska, and the London Artizan Colony at Moosomin, Assiniboia*, 16-17. Charles Edmunds’s homestead file suggests Edmunds left his homestead by the Fall of 1886, see: Charles Edmunds homestead file 301154, SAB. Likely Edmunds worked in Moosomin and tended his homestead until he left for Winnipeg in 1888. Either way, he left the colony within a few years.

stand the winter there is nothing to hinder us from gaining our independence in a few years by Gods help which could not be gained in England for there are too many in London all ready.¹³²

Charles and his wife Hannah both worked in town, he painting for a Mr. Bedford and she at the hotel. In 1884, Huleatt judged that Charles was “not very successful or energetic as a Colonist” but that the couple had a nice little house and a pig and pony.¹³³ The soil on Charles’s homestead was rated as “sandy loam” and his subsoil as “clay” and it was fit for cultivation even though Charles had done very little breaking.¹³⁴ Charles Edmunds referred to himself as “farmer” in his homestead declaration in 1885, further explaining “I follow farming” and no other occupation.¹³⁵ These irregularities in Charles’s occupation suggest a desire to become a farmer but a necessity to take up other work in town in order to survive. As much as Charles seems to have enjoyed the few years he and Hannah lived at Moosomin, finding work in town, and wishing to be farmers, they ultimately chose early on, or were forced to choose, a more urban life in Winnipeg.

The only dissenting comments the colonists made in the questionnaires concerned problems with the guide books provided to them and a lack of assistance upon arrival. These were serious concerns and may help to explain the retreat of many of the colonists. Samuel Emmanuels expressed reservations about the validity of emigrant guide books in his questionnaire:

I would like to warn intending emigrants against placing too much confidence in the Guide books which are circulated in London, although published by the (Dominion Government) as I have found by personal experience that the quotations given for farming utensils & live stock are from 30 to 50 per cent below the actual cost this year at Moosomin, the quotations given in the books being Winnipeg prices to which has to be added the freight which is very heavy.¹³⁶

While this was not the only reason Emmanuels left his homestead, his comments do at least reveal some level of dissatisfaction with the process. Emmanuels’s neighbour John Gray also shared concerns about the guide books but perhaps more telling was his request for better

¹³² *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Charles Edmunds homestead file 301154, SAB.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

settlement assistance: “I would also add that when a party of Emigrants are sent out as we were it would be very beneficial if someone were sent with them who had some experience of the Country so as to be able to advise them on the journey also what articles to bring with them.”¹³⁷ Next to the liens, placing emigrants from East London on the Canadian prairie with virtually no training, guidance, assistance, or advice was perhaps the greatest shortcoming of the scheme and the colonists appear to have also felt this was a major deficiency. Despite these challenges, Huleatt reported that Gray was also a “thorough success.”¹³⁸ However, this early success did not last. Stephenson reported in 1888 that while Gray was still on the land, had built a house and broken eighteen acres, he preferred to spend his time gardening; he had broken no new ground and had only yielded sixteen bushels of barley. At that time he had not yet applied for a patent and by the 1891 census he was listed as “carpenter” in Moosomin.¹³⁹ Indeed, Huleatt described John Gray as a “first-class carpenter.”¹⁴⁰ In August of 1888, Huleatt revisited the Grays lamenting that John had “made the least success of any of all the East End families” despite being located on one of the best homesteads.¹⁴¹ Huleatt put this down to the fact that the Grays had no children; no children meant they had very little help on the farm. Despite Huleatt’s disappointment in John Gray’s progress, the Reverend did seem pleased that he and his wife Clara were happy:

He showed me over his kitchen-garden, which is a source of profit as well as of pleasure, as he weekly sells three dollars’ worth of his garden produce in the adjoining town of Moosomin. On the whole, his wants are few and simple; he is happy and contented, and seems strongly attached to his homestead, though the least successful of the East End families.¹⁴²

All indications were that this couple would stay on their homestead even though the land posed a greater challenge for them than for the others. John Gray was issued a patent for his homestead in 1899 fifteen years after his arrival in Moosomin at which time he quite quickly signed the

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ *Letter from Rufus Stephenson, Inspector to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, from Moosomin, Assiniboia regarding the East London Artizans Colony homesteads*, December 27, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁴⁰ Huleatt, *British Columbia, Alaska, and the London Artizan Colony at Moosomin, Assiniboia*, 16.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., 16-17. The Grays’ children stayed in England and did not accompany them to Moosomin.

homestead over to the LCAS to cover the lien.¹⁴³ By 1911, the couple had re-established themselves in Vancouver where John worked as a builder.

Early assessments of the colonists' progress in their own words and in those of Huleatt and Stephenson were not predictive of later outcomes. What they do show, however, is that the majority of the colonists embraced the challenge of homesteading from the outset. Only Patrick Mallea was considered to have completely failed by the first summer though he too built a house and had broken some land.¹⁴⁴ The rest made efforts to prepare the land for cultivation and build their new homes in the first few weeks on the prairie. Much of this work was done cooperatively. Joseph Budd and three other colonists shared a wagon, for example.¹⁴⁵ Anna Macey explained that not only did fellow colonists help each other but other local area homesteaders lent their time and skills to the colonists as well:

The Folks here have a very good way of helping one another if a man has a Mower and comes 1 Day to cut your hay for you give him 2 days to help him get his up and ___? you work is done much quicker and pleasanter for People are so far apart it is quite a treat to see any one. The farmers are so glad to have neighbours that they will always put a stranger in the right way of doing things if he acts upright and Strait in return.¹⁴⁶

Huleatt wrote of a similar time where two of the East London colonists had incorrectly harnessed their oxen causing the animals to be immobile. After hours of frustration a local farmer found them and helped correct their mistake teaching them how to properly harness and plough.¹⁴⁷ Inspectors for the Department of the Interior noted that the East London colonists developed a custom of sharing the implements and livestock they received upon settlement. This was explained as one reason why the colonists were slow to cultivate their land.¹⁴⁸ Eliza Wykes later explained to her granddaughter that the men would rotate from homestead to homestead helping each other with farm work.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ John Gray homestead file 300427, SAB.

¹⁴⁴ *Letter from Hugh Huleatt to the Department of the Interior*, October 4, 1884, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁴⁵ *Letter from Rufus Stephenson, Inspector to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, from Moosomin, Assiniboia regarding the East London Artizans Colony homesteads*, December 27, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁴⁶ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

¹⁴⁷ Huleatt, *British Columbia, Alaska, and the London Artizan Colony at Moosomin, Assiniboia*, 14.

¹⁴⁸ *Letter from the Department of the Interior to Dominion Lands Branch*, January 31, 1888 in William Mitten homestead file 300419, SAB.

¹⁴⁹ Kitty Krister, e-mail message to the author, July 25, 2013.

Stephenson remarked in his letter to the Minister of the Interior in 1888 that it was “next to marvelous” that the colonists were faring well given their urban backgrounds.¹⁵⁰ Sharing the colonists’ own optimism four years earlier, Stephenson reported that “without indulging in prophecy I confidently predict that prosperity and happiness will be their future lot, and that in them Canada will find a worthy and healthy... people.”¹⁵¹ Stephenson was certainly correct in his prediction only not in the way that had been intended. The 1890s would see the colonists leave the colony one after the other. In large part they did so because of liens the LCAS levied on their lands.

Failure and Liens: Government Intervention in the East London’s Artizans’ Colony

By the spring of 1885, the LCAS had withdrawn the generosity it had earlier extended by placing liens on all nineteen homesteads thus crippling any chance the colonists might have had at profitable farming.¹⁵² On April 7, 1885, LCAS trustees Sir John Whittaker Ellis, Angela Burdett-Coutts, and William Peacock Edwards, asked the Canadian Minister of the Interior to pass an Order-in-Council under Section 38 the 1883 Dominion Lands Act, charging the \$500 (Canadian) advances made to the colonists in 1884 plus six per cent per annum interest against their lands.¹⁵³ The order was passed on May 5, 1885. Section 38 of the Act legislated that patent to a homestead would not be provided to the settler until any liens were paid in full. Subsection 38.2 allowed for the persons who made the advances, in this case the trustees of the LCAS, to claim patent for the homestead if the settler forfeited his land or did not qualify for the patent. If, however, the settler qualified for the patent in the usual way but did not apply for the patent, the lien holder would be granted the patent.¹⁵⁴ Settlement duties were still required to be completed in all cases for the patent to issue. This part of the law created a great deal of confusion when some of the colonists applied and were approved for their patents in the late 1880s and early 1890s even though their liens were outstanding.

¹⁵⁰ *Letter from Rufus Stephenson, Inspector to Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, from Moosomin, Assiniboia regarding the East London Artizans Colony homesteads*, December 27, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Letter and list of liens on homesteads from E.L. Elmwood, Barrister to the Department of the Interior*, April 29, 1903, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁵³ There is a copy of the order-in-council in William Mitten homestead file 300419, SAB.

¹⁵⁴ *Dominion Lands Act, 1883, with the amendments and additions thereto, authorized by 47 Vic., cap. 25 (1884)*, accessed July 19, 2013, Early Canadiana Online Database, http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9_03762/20?r=0&s=1.

Before the colonists left England, they each signed a promissory-type note that promised they would repay their advances; some were to do this within ten years making annual installments, others agreed to pay off the loan faster over a shorter period of time.¹⁵⁵ However, very few made any payments on their advances and as the years went on, the LCAS grew restless waiting for repayment. Using their political connections, the LCAS made a bitter plea in 1890 to Sir Charles Tupper, then Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, complaining that six years after emigration, “not a single penny has been received from any of the families in repayment of the interest and principle” on their initial loans.¹⁵⁶ The issue of collecting on the loans dragged on well into the twentieth century. Hundreds of letters between LCAS lawyers and the federal government in Canada discussing the liens can be found in the colonists’ homestead files in the Saskatchewan Archives and in departmental correspondence from Library and Archives Canada. By the early twentieth century there was a great deal of confusion over the legality of the liens and the position of the colonists who had applied and qualified for patent. The colonists, the LCAS, their lawyers, the Dominion Lands Commission, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Justice, and select members of Parliament chaotically worked towards a solution, each particular case being slightly different than the next. The colonists ended up on the losing side in these battles in part because they were up against wealthy, well-connected emigrationists who ironically at one time were meant to have their best interests at heart. Multiple amendments to the Dominion Lands Act and the general legal confusion surrounding new and unprecedented land laws made matters worse.

In addition to the issue of the liens, most of the colonists required assistance in learning how to farm; this assistance was never formally given. Despite this, Huleatt still believed in 1888 that overall the scheme was a success even though the colony was fraught with difficulty. Huleatt pinned its challenges on two deficiencies: the will of some of the colonists to do things their own way, which resulted in what he called “mistakes and disappointments,” and the unavailability of knowledgeable gentlemen to personally guide and instruct the colonists in agriculture.¹⁵⁷ He considered the first reason the “chief cause” of five of the families leaving their homesteads in

¹⁵⁵ Copies of the originals of these agreements can be found in some of the colonists’ homestead files. For one example see: Patrick Mallea homestead file 207421, SAB.

¹⁵⁶ *Letter from East London Colonization Aid Society, signed by Francis de Winton, William Burdett-Coutts, James Rankin, and Francis W. Fox to Sir Charles Tupper*, May 2, 1890, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁵⁷ Huleatt, *British Columbia, Alaska, and the London Artizan Colony at Moosomin, Assiniboia*, 13-14.

these early years. Huleatt did not, however, primarily blame the colonists who had already left for being stubborn, nor was he overly upset with their subsequent migration choices. He felt strongly that the colony's "radical weakness" was its small size which had not allowed for the hiring of "personal superintendence so essential to the development of such undertakings."¹⁵⁸ This line of thinking advocated for more settlers and greater investment in such schemes in the future rather than finding the experiment had been an inherent failure.

Huleatt defined success in the following terms: "By success, I mean that every one of these fourteen families is now in better circumstances than when they left London ... and this applies to the five families who are following their trades in town as fully as to the nine families who are permanently located on their homesteads."¹⁵⁹ Interestingly, this definition of success was not conditional on the success of the scheme as an agricultural experiment. Huleatt seemed content to know the colonists who had already drifted into town were doing well. Upon visiting Henry Burke in Winnipeg, who he had previously found to have failed at farming, he found the ex-colonist so happy with his family's situation that when asked if he would consider returning to London he quickly answered, "Not for five hundred pounds I'll remain where I am."¹⁶⁰ This was acceptable to Huleatt because the family was better off in Canada than they had been in London, which proved his and others' views correct on the potential of colonial emigration for solving poverty at home. Still, the positive tone of Huleatt's assessment in 1888 overall suggested that the reason the colony was a success was that most of the colonists remained on their homesteads and had no desire to return to England; "If you hint they are not a success," he wrote, "I should not want to see the consequence."¹⁶¹

Some colonists clearly experienced difficulty from the outset and appear to have been overwhelmed by or disinterested in homesteading. Henry Burke explained to Huleatt that he felt he could not go off the farm to work for the winter as his family would be too isolated. Indeed, Burke was placed on a section with no other colonists and may indeed have felt extremely isolated from the rest of the group.¹⁶² He explained he lived ten miles from another "living sole"

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 12-13.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 18.

¹⁶² *London Colonization Aid Society, Advances to Settlers - Minister of Interior*, April 22 – May 8, 1885, Privy Council Minutes, Government of Canada, RG 2, series 1, volume 308, LAC, accessed July 5, 2013, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/orders/001022-119.01-e.php?&sisn_id_nbr=27505&page_sequence_nbr=1&interval=20.

and that he feared his wife and children would be left “to the mearcy of the wild animals.”¹⁶³ Huleatt believed Henry Burke was “very doubtful as a colonist” having only broken five acres and travelling around the area as a “tinker” in 1884.¹⁶⁴ Huleatt failed to mention that Burke had drawn very poor land described by a homestead inspector as “scrubby ravine and ... hilly.”¹⁶⁵ Henry Burke lived on his homestead for six months in 1884 before heading to Winnipeg to find work. Despite being fearful of doing so, he did leave his wife on the homestead that first winter. By May of 1885, she had joined him in Winnipeg. Despite their short time on their homestead, the Burkes owed the LCAS a staggering \$687.95 (Canadian) by March of 1889.¹⁶⁶ This was likely never collected; the homestead entry was cancelled in 1888 and the LCAS likely lost all of their investment in this case as well as those of Black, Budd, Edmunds, White, and Mallea.¹⁶⁷ The colonists also suffered a devastating prairie fire in 1886 in which many of them lost everything.¹⁶⁸ While the extent of the fire is not known, documents confirm that the Mitten, Sims, Black, and Budd families were affected. They lived fairly far away from each other (two on Section 36 and the other two on Section 16 of the same township) so we can presume this was an extensive and serious fire.¹⁶⁹ This devastating event was likely enough for some of the colonists to quit their homesteads although William Mitten and George Sims definitely rebuilt, carried on, and applied for patents. According to the homestead inspector, John Black was reported to have left his homestead in approximately 1885. This would indicate that he left before the fire but if the calculations were approximate he too may have left after or because of the fire.¹⁷⁰ Either way, the fire was a setback and must have been disheartening.

¹⁶³ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* The homestead inspector’s report for August 20, 1888, suggests Burke broke ten acres in 1884, had six acres in crop, and had built a twelve by twelve shanty, see: Henry Burke homestead file 174279, SAB.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Memorandum Department of the Interior*, June 10, 1889, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*; Huleatt, *British Columbia, Alaska, and the London Artizan Colony at Moosomin, Assiniboia*, 17.

¹⁶⁹ *Memorandum from the Deputy Minister of the Interior to the Hon. E. Dewdney, Minister of the Interior*, June 10, 1889, Government of Canada, RG15, vol. 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁷⁰ The homestead report was conducted in June of 1892 when Black was said to have quit his claim seven years prior. Black was, however, still in Moosomin in November of 1892 as he wrote a letter to the Dominion Lands Commissioner from there that month about being unable to pay Budd’s or Wykes’s seed grain loans for which he had co-signed, see: Joseph Budd homestead file 300397, SAB.

Patrick Mallea stayed the least amount of time on his homestead. Mallea was the only colonist Huleatt dubbed an all-out “failure” in October of 1884.¹⁷¹ Mallea and his family are untraceable in any of the Canadian or British census records and it remains unknown what happened to them.¹⁷² His case prompted a great deal of anxiety amongst the LCAS members as he was the first to leave the colony. The issues surrounding Mallea affected the entire experiment and led the LCAS to panic resulting in the hasty placement of the liens on all the colonists’ lands. “He only remained on his homestead a couple of months,” reported Huleatt to the Department of the Interior on Mallea’s case, “then surreptitiously stole away and is now in England.”¹⁷³ Huleatt was particularly concerned with the insecurity Mallea caused to the LCAS’s investment in the colony, explaining that the scheme had been “frustrated” by his actions.¹⁷⁴ Huleatt suggested at this early stage in the experiment that there be some kind of legal protection in place to prevent future disappointments, or “casualties” as he called them, so as to ensure investors’ confidence in the scheme.¹⁷⁵ The LCAS believed they had protected their investment before the colonists left London with the promissory notes.¹⁷⁶ However, this agreement was a loose one, not explicitly enshrined in any particular law on either side of the Atlantic. Furthermore, the Dominion Lands Act was amended between 1883 and 1886 which changed certain sections of the law pertaining to these types of cases.¹⁷⁷ Having no clear legal recourse for recuperating its investment, the LCAS sought the assistance of the Canadian government. What followed was a legal battle that spanned two decades. This battle was shaped by multiple changes to Canada’s lands acts and a general reluctance amongst Canadian immigration and land bureaucrats to give in to the demands of wealthy British emigrationists.

The most pressing problem the LCAS faced was the requirement under the Dominion Lands Act to complete settlement duties on each homestead before a patent could be issued. This

¹⁷¹ *Rev. Hugh Huleatt Report on London Colonists at Moosomin*, October 14, 1884, Government of Canada, RG17, document number 45676, LAC.

¹⁷² There are some problems with both his first and last name. Patrick Mallea is referred to as Henry Mallea in his homestead file and in other documents referred to as John Mallea. Also, Mallea is sometimes spelled “Malea” and I suspect the family may have been Irish and at one time their name was perhaps O’Malley or Melia. Despite varied attempts at searching for this family in the census records I have been unable to locate them anywhere at any time.

¹⁷³ *Letter from Hugh Huleatt to the Department of the Interior*, October 4, 1884, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Specifically sub-section 38(d) of the Dominion Lands Act was amended in 1886 to allow for companies giving advances to settlers to place liens on the land and receive patent if said liens were not collected on without performing settlement duties. This was not applied retroactively, however.

was, of course, impossible for the wealthy trustees resident in London, who had no intention of traveling to the Canadian prairie, to complete settlement duties. They asked instead to be exempt from this requirement and that the Minister of the Interior grant them special patents to the lands in order to be able to turn around and sell them for a profit. The government found this to be an impossible request in 1884-85 even seeking an opinion from the Department of Justice on the matter. All of these problems began in 1884, when Patrick Mallea left his homestead. The Mallea case forced Canadian government bureaucrats in both the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to come to terms with the gaps in the law and the demands of elite British emigrationists. The Departments felt this was a question “of very great importance in view of possible future advances of capital of this kind in order to enable settlers from the Old Country to take up lands in the North-West.”¹⁷⁸ As much as the trustees of the LCAS were highly influential people in political and philanthropic circles at home and throughout the British Empire, the Canadian government, even at its highest ministerial levels of bureaucracy, remained cautious for years on the issue of the liens for the East London Artizans Colony insisting the settlement duties had to be completed in order to issue patents in observance of the law.

In 1888, the LCAS tried again to have patents issued on those homesteads where the colonists had left. The timing of this renewed interest in realizing on their loans was significant and would result in the majority of the colonists losing or giving up their lands to cover the liens. Sir Francis De Winton, LCAS trustee, wrote to the Minister of the Interior in November of 1888 to again request that patents be issued in favour of the LCAS. De Winton explained the urgent necessity of this in the context of renewed debates about emigration in London’s political circles; the Select Committee on Colonization and Immigration was about to begin its work.¹⁷⁹ Ironically, it was important for De Winton to show that schemes like the East London Artizans Colony remained worthy and profitable. He explained to the Minister that the East London Artizans Colony “owed its origins to a purely philanthropic movement,” and that its success was soon going to be examined in the select committee investigations.¹⁸⁰ He wanted to show

¹⁷⁸ *Letter from Department of Agricultural to Department of the Interior*, December 13, 1884, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁷⁹ *Letter from Sir Francis De Winton to Minister of the Interior*, November 12, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC. For the select committee report, see: *Report from the Select Committee on Colonization*, July 23, 1889, House of Commons, British Parliamentary Papers, accessed August 1, 2013, <http://ied.dippam.ac.uk/records/22604>.

¹⁸⁰ *Letter from Sir Francis De Winton to Minister of the Interior*, November 12, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

prospective future investors and politicians that the land in Canada, even though it had not worked to the advantage of the settlers placed on it or met any philanthropic goals, retained a market value in London. In other words, De Winton needed to demonstrate that the scheme had not suffered a financial loss or the future of such schemes would be in danger.

The Moosomin experiment was deeply entrenched in debates about both state-aided colonization and charitable emigration in the 1880s and 1890s. Little concern was directed towards the actual colonists themselves or to helping them stay on their land. What was more important to show those shaping emigration programming at home was that these kinds of schemes were good investments, no matter what happened to the emigrants at the centre of the migrations, precisely because the land retained its value. Again, the Canadian government was not overly sympathetic to the LCAS's requests for patents in 1888, stating in a letter dated November 28 of that year that nothing had changed in this matter since the Department had last heard from the society four years prior. The Minister of the Interior suggested, however, that an inspection of the colony be conducted to gather further information about the case. This was what prompted Rufus Stephenson's visit in late 1888.¹⁸¹

Through 1889-90, the LCAS sought the assistance of high-level Canadian bureaucrats like Charles Tupper to help them "induce the Minister of the Interior" to issue the patents.¹⁸² The Department of the Interior again did not bend to the wishes of the society, explaining to Tupper that even though the Dominion Lands Act was amended in 1886, the law could not be applied retroactively to suit the trustees: settlement duties would have to be completed before patents could be issued.¹⁸³ In 1890, the Department of the Interior reported to the LCAS trustees that parliament retained a "very strong objection to the enactment of legislation of the character indicated in the request of the Society" and had no plans to bring forth a bill to change the existing law.¹⁸⁴ The LCAS refused to accept these explanations and continued to press the Canadian government to make changes to the law through 1891.¹⁸⁵ After another year of

¹⁸¹ *Letter from Minister of the Interior to Sir Francis De Winton*, November 28, 1888, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁸² *Letter from the LCAS Trustees to Charles Tupper*, May 2, 1890, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁸³ *Letter from Minister of the Interior to Charles Tupper*, July 15, 1889, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁸⁴ *Letter from the Department of the Interior to Sir John Thompson*, October 28, 1890, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁸⁵ *Letter from Francis Fox to Department of the Interior*, March 18, 1891, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

correspondence pressing to have their patents issued, the LCAS was finally granted the legal measures by which to receive patents in the summer of 1892 after an amendment to the Dominion Lands Act was passed in parliament.¹⁸⁶ What followed was an extensive examination of the colonists' homesteads and the eventual granting of patents to the LCAS on all but one homestead.¹⁸⁷ William Burdett-Coutts thanked the Department of the Interior for resolving the "long-standing difficulty" and was pleased that future attempts at such schemes were ironically now secure. Why they would ever want to invest again in such a scheme remains a mystery other than the fact that they certainly made money from the sale of the lands.¹⁸⁸ Although the power to issue the patents was resolved in 1892, it would take until 1911 to finalize all of the patents. More than twenty-five years after it began, the East London Artizans Colony was finally defunct.

While lack of knowledge about farming was certainly a factor in the colonists' abandonment of their homesteads, those who applied for and met the patent requirements were nonetheless barred from succeeding because of the liens placed on their lands. The liens thus render any arguments about the colonists' inability to farm moot, for even if all of the colonists had stayed and succeeded at farming they still would have likely been unable to pay off the liens plus the accrued mounting interest. That interest, compounded annually, swelled the debts to intolerable levels making it impossible for any colonists left on the land to succeed even when they had completed their settlement duties and were eligible and approved for patent. If the cases of Mitten, Budd, and Cumbers are examined in closer detail this becomes clear.

William Mitten applied for patent in January of 1888. After submitting his application, Mitten wrote to the Dominion Lands office in Winnipeg to inquire about the amount owing on his lien to the LCAS. On a tiny piece of undated, unsigned paper in his homestead file (perhaps indicative of the amateur handling of these types of cases), the Dominion Lands office indicated that Mitten's application for patent would be issued as soon as the lien against the land had been discharged as he had completed all settlement duties. By 1900, Mitten's patent had still not been issued owing to confusion about the lien and ended up in court. With years of mounting interest,

¹⁸⁶ *Letter from the Assistant Secretary Department of the Interior to Francis Fox*, January 15, 1892, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁸⁷ Fred Cattermole is the only colonist to receive a patent.

¹⁸⁸ *Letter from William Burdett Coutts to Department of the Interior*, March 1, 1895, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

he now owed the LCAS \$856.48 (Canadian).¹⁸⁹ Being unable to pay this amount William Mitten's patent was instead issued to the LCAS on February 5, 1901.¹⁹⁰

Joseph Budd was also eligible for patent in 1892. For years, Budd struggled to make a living on his homestead. Homestead inspector R.S. Park reported in 1894 that Budd was “eaking out an existence” on his land and had been doing so for a decade.¹⁹¹ Several times a year Joseph Budd wrote to the Dominion Lands Commissioner about his inability to pay both his seed grain loan and his lien. His letters between 1888 and 1893 show a man who was stressed by his mounting debt. Budd repeatedly apologized for not being able to make payments on his debts and explained his inability to do so was due to his small crop and large family. In addition to these pressures, Budd's crop was badly frozen in 1891 and hail storms damaged his crops in 1892.¹⁹² Budd and Wykes also learned from the homestead inspector in 1892, that since their arrival in 1884 they had actually been living on the wrong quarter-sections; this was likely a clerical error but it caused Budd a great deal of distress. In September of 1892, Budd wrote to the Dominion Lands Commission worried that he would lose the land he had worked hard on for so many years: “I thought I was on my own land all these years I have sent you my paper to see for yourself, I hope it is allright for it is not my fault it is [?] after all these years will I have to give it up, Please will you be kind enough to let me know?”¹⁹³ Each year Budd promised to pay his debts the following year suggesting that despite the setbacks he endured he continued to hope and believe he could succeed on his homestead. In 1893, the Dominion Lands Commission assured Budd that the lien against his land would in no way interfere with this ability to receive patent. The Commission urged Budd to apply for his patent but by May of 1894 he had not

¹⁸⁹ William Mitten homestead file 300419, SAB.

¹⁹⁰ *Letter and list of liens on homesteads from E.L. Elmwood, Barrister to the Department of the Interior*, April 29, 1903, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁹¹ *Letter from R.S. Park to unknown*, February 2, 1894, Joseph Budd homestead file 300397, SAB. Although other evidence suggests Budd was already in Winnipeg by March of 1893, see: Statutory declaration, March 2, 1893, signed by Budd from Winnipeg, Joseph Budd homestead file 300397, SAB. The declaration says he had been in steady residence “up to a few weeks ago.” Either way he was on his homestead for nine to ten years.

¹⁹² Various letters written by Joseph Budd in Joseph Budd homestead file 300397, SAB.

¹⁹³ *Letter from Joseph Budd to Dominion Lands Commission*, September 26, 1892, Joseph Budd homestead file 300397, SAB.

applied nor had he paid anything on his debt.¹⁹⁴ The following year the LCAS received patent for Budd's land.¹⁹⁵

John Cumbers wanted to pay his debt to the LCAS. In May of 1891, he boldly wrote directly to the Minister of the Interior to inquire about getting more land in order to make more money farming to be able to pay his debt:

I ask you as a great favour to allow me to take up the north west quarter section of 26/13/31 of the Hudson Bay Land Companys for a homestead for myself and also section 8/13/31 for my children, of which I have 9. I came out here in May 1884 from England and have hard on this quarter section for 7 years and now I find it is canceled land, so that I have got only 80 acres, instead of 160 and as I owe 500 dollars in England and have to pay for 80 acres, I thought if I could get some more land to work, it would help me pay some of the expenses as I find it very hard to make ends meet now.¹⁹⁶

In 1893, Cumbers again expressed his desire to pay his lien in another letter to the Dominions Land Commission.¹⁹⁷ W.B. Scarth, the agent of the Canada North West Land Company with whom the LCAS had dealt for years, advocated for Cumbers to be granted this additional land, writing to the Dominion Lands Commission that "Cumbers both father and son are hardworking people and I hope you will be able to arrange this."¹⁹⁸ Cumbers also sought the assistance of W.W. McDonald, MP in his case. John Cumbers's son, also named John, had an advocate in McDonald who described him in official correspondence as a "good boy" who should be "protected and given a chance."¹⁹⁹ Despite having his patent approved for his original homestead in 1893, John Cumbers lost his land to the LCAS in 1899.²⁰⁰ He never received additional lands. By 1901, the family had moved to Winnipeg and John returned to working as a labourer, his station in life arguably no better off than when he left in England in 1884. John died in 1928 in

¹⁹⁴ *Letter from Dominion Lands Commission to Joseph Budd*, July 3, 1893, Joseph Budd homestead file 300397, SAB.

¹⁹⁵ *Letter and list of liens on homesteads from E.L. Elmwood, Barrister to the Department of the Interior*, April 29, 1903, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

¹⁹⁶ *Letter from John Cumbers to Minister of the Interior*, May 6, 1891, John Cumbers homestead file 247805, SAB.

¹⁹⁷ *Letter from John Cumbers to Dominion Lands Commission*, July 3, 1893, John Cumbers Homestead File 435142, SAB.

¹⁹⁸ *Letter from W.B. Scarth to Dominion Lands Commission*, July 31, 1893, John Cumbers Homestead File 205245, SAB.

¹⁹⁹ W.W. MacDonald, M.P., correspondence in John Cumbers homestead file 336786, SAB.

²⁰⁰ *Letter from Secretary of the Department of the Interior to John Cumbers*, March 30, 1893, John Cumbers homestead file 247805, SAB; and *Letter and list of liens on homesteads from E.L. Elmwood, Barrister to the Department of the Interior*, April 29, 1903, Government of Canada, RG15, volume 333, file 82941, LAC.

Vancouver.²⁰¹ Together, these colonists' cases illustrate the impossibility of succeeding in the East London Artizans' Colony not primarily because of a lack of agricultural skill but because of much larger legal and political structures at play in the experiment. Their experience also suggests the loan was far too large and made finding success at farming simply impossible.

Conclusion

“Mr. Cattermole has proved himself an excellent settler in every way, not troublesome, but honest and industrious and when I last saw him he had made considerable improvements on his homestead.”²⁰² This was the opinion of Mr. Bedford of the Department of Agriculture in 1890. Descriptions such as these challenge historiographical interpretations of the fate of the East London Artizans' Colony. The settlers themselves were not doomed to fail from the outset. Rather, many of them showed resolve in learning how to farm, working their homesteads, and following the proper legal channels to obtain patent. They were more than awkward placements on an unfamiliar landscape. While the circumstances surrounding their emigration impacted heavily upon them, they demonstrated a significant degree of agency. The design and scale of the loan scheme, the ignorance of the emigrationist investors at the helm, and the overall mismanagement of the experiment led to the failure of the colony. Above all, the nineteen families sent out from East London to Moosomin in 1884 were used as test subjects in a pseudo-charitable colonial settlement experiment designed to make wealthy investors feel good about helping poor families make a fresh start. Unfortunately, all these investors really did was create heartache, disappointment, distress, and indebtedness. Remarkably, the colonists rebounded and made a place for themselves in Canada nonetheless.

The East London Artizans' Colony was itself a fleeting concept but reveals much about the adversities of life on the early settler prairie for urban migrants, the idealism and utopianism inherent in nineteenth-century emigration philanthropy, the ruinous effects of lack of support for assisted urban emigrants, and finally the emigrant's degree of agency in making choices about their external and internal migrations. On a broader scale, this case study illustrates how expectations of immigration could change after arrival in Canada and that the idealistic goals of

²⁰¹ “Family Tree: Melmers in Canada,” Tribal Pages website, accessed July 30, 2013, <http://www.tribalpages.com/family-tree/melmer>.

²⁰² *Letter from Department of Agriculture to Department of the Interior*, November 27, 1890, Fred Cattermole homestead file 247805, SAB.

emigration for philanthropists were often at odds with those of their migrants. It raises questions about how Canadian officials handled dysfunctional British emigration charities and also how emigrants' chances for success were subject to stringent regulations in the nation-building project of the Canadian West and to the aims of sponsors who finally defined themselves more as investors than philanthropists. Ultimately, yes, the East London Artizans' Colony failed as a physical and social space but it did so in a way that was gradual and piecemeal and to differing degrees for each colonist while at the same time it filtered the participants into wider Canadian society in which their descendants still live.

CONCLUSION

“Many a British immigrant comes to Canada with the antique notion that he is coming to a country owned by Great Britain.”¹ In 1909, Basil Stewart, English railway engineer and supporter of English emigration to Canada, came across this passage in the *Winnipeg Free Press* as he was writing a book on Canadian displeasure with English immigrants. It was one of many indications that Canada was becoming fed up with English immigrants, especially poor ones. The foremost complaint Canadians lodged about English immigrants was that they were not adaptable to Canadian society like their Scottish, Irish and Welsh neighbours. Throughout his small book entitled *‘No English Need Apply’ or, Canada as a Field for Emigration*, Stewart commiserates on the fate of the English immigrant in Canada, an imperial nation within the ‘British World’ system wherein the newcomer was by virtue of his ethnicity supposed to find a welcome home. Stewart chastises Canada for the recent legal decision it had made to restrict English immigration and the wide brush with which it painted all English immigrants. He writes, “Canadians should stop and remember they are a British country and rely on British assets and protection for trade.”² Stewart also notes that the new restrictions in Canada’s immigration laws designed to keep out assisted emigrants were futile; even the poorest emigrants, he argues, were usually able to scrape together enough money to reach Canada in the early twentieth century.³ In these people Stewart believed Canada would find not undesirables but good hard-working citizens belonging to a common heritage, just as had the emigration charities that had sponsored their journeys. For their part, emigration charities like the EEEF openly hoped the restrictions would be lifted. In its annual report for 1913, the EEEF expressed its hope that Canada would soon relax the recent changes and once again allow the free flow of assisted emigrants from England without the added bureaucracy of single-case approval from the Assistant Superintendent of Emigration in London which had become standard practice since the passing of the 1910 Act.⁴ The First World War would interrupt assisted emigration from East London, permanently changing its direction. The war, however, was not the only reason for the decline of assisted emigration; before 1914, that process had already begun.

¹ Unknown, *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 18, 1907, quoted in Basil Stewart, *‘No English Need Apply’ Or, Canada as a Field for Emigration* (London: George Routledge & Sons Limited, 1909), 80.

² Stewart, 6.

³ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1913.

1906-7 was a banner year for the EEEF. In all the years it had been assisting emigrants it had never sent out so many. 6,096 emigrants, the majority of whom hailed from London and East London, were assisted to Canada that year.⁵ These emigrants were only a portion of the thousands more sent to Canada under other programs. In part this was due to the introduction of the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 which, in tandem with relief efforts in West Ham, propelled thousands of unemployed men and their families towards emigration with a vigour that had not been seen since the late 1860s and early 1880s. Poor Law unions also invoked their powers of emigration to a greater degree amidst the unemployment crisis at home. Canada felt the shock of this influx almost immediately. In April of 1907, the Assistant Superintendent of Emigration in London received a worrying letter from the Ontario Department of Agriculture referring to problems it was having with a group of assisted emigrants from Poplar, East London:

On Sunday night there arrived here thirty-one men, bringing cards of introduction from L. Leopold. I interviewed some of them yesterday morning, and, picking out the one that appeared the least drunk of the lot, I learned that they had been engaged on some farm colony for some three or four months. They received an express order when they landed, which they cashed in Toronto, and immediately proceeded to get drunk. At the lodging-house last night they raised such a disturbance that they had to send for the patrol wagon and send several of them to the police-station. We sent a few to Harrowsmith this morning, and they will probably work in some mine; but I do not think they are at all fit men to send to farms, although they are said by Leopold to be wanting farm work. They did not want to go on farms, and I do not think they would be the kind of men whom it would be safe to send into a farm house. They are, without exception, the toughest lot, that I have seen for years.⁶

The reception these men encountered in Canada reveals multiple anxieties about assisted emigrants that I have discussed throughout the dissertation. The agent wrote the letter almost immediately after the men's arrival clearly shocked by their raucous behaviour. He also felt quite strongly that these were not the kind of immigrants suitable for agricultural work and that beyond that it would simply not be safe to send them onto farms suggesting they were inherently criminal. The agent was also put off by the men's lack of interest in taking up agricultural work and likely preference for working in towns. Overall, the men were regarded as a nuisance for both social and economic reasons. Of course, it cannot be known without further research whether they would have remained a nuisance or what finally became of them, but certainly Canada was beginning to enforce more deportations during this time. 247 of the 6,096 emigrants

⁵ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1907.

⁶ *East London Observer*, June 1, 1907.

sent out by the EEEF in 1906-7, for example, were deported immediately upon arrival.⁷ Valerie Knowles notes that in 1908, seventy percent of deportations from Canada were of British immigrants, a large portion of which may have been those who came out under the Unemployed Workmen Act emigration programs and the West Ham relief schemes.⁸ The mechanism by which Canada chose to prevent these kinds of migrations was to enshrine its preference for specific types of immigrants in its evolving immigration laws in the early twentieth century.

Before the passing of these restrictions, however, there was considerable debate in the House of Commons about the recent arrival of at least 12,000 assisted emigrants from East London. Frank Oliver, the Canadian Minister of the Interior and minister responsible for immigration, spoke in the Commons about the recent activities of the EEEF, the SHES, the CUBL, the Salvation Army, and other emigration charities in December of 1907. Oliver's comments capture a central argument of this dissertation; that London-based emigration charities felt Canada should be obliged as imperial kin to help ease unemployment in the motherland:

I think nothing can be more distinct than that, however well we may wish to the philanthropic instincts of the men who are engaged in these organizations, we do not recognize that what they assume to be their obligation is in any degree our obligation. That is to say, while we recognize their charitable efforts in trying to do well for the people of whom they have taken charge, we do not recognize any such obligation on our part. We deal with these people simply on their merits as prospective citizens of Canada, and if they come up to a sufficient physical standard and if they come with good intentions and if there is reasonable opportunity for their employment in Canada in the calling which we desire to have filled, we give those immigration societies the same consideration as we give any other booking agent.⁹

Oliver's comments hint at the underlying reasons why assisted emigration from the East End of London was a problem. Eastenders were not deemed suitable 'prospective citizens.' Opposition members of Parliament expressed their displeasure with the recent arrivals with even more candor. Mr. Thomas Simpson Sproule, the member for Grey West in Ontario, stated plainly that in his opinion "it will be an unfortunate condition of affairs if such organizations are permitted, unrestricted and unrestrained, to pour upon the shores of Canada large numbers of persons, few

⁷ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1908.

⁸ Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 111. Also see Myra Rutherdale, "Scrutinizing the "Submerged Tenth": Salvation Army Immigrants and their Reception in Canada," in *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, eds. Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 186. These authors note, likely correctly, that in 1907 the London unemployed who emigrated to Canada were the first to be out of work.

⁹ Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 10th Parliament, 4th session, vol.1, 1907.

of whom are morally and physically fitted. That is the class that are coming in.”¹⁰ Other members from Ontario, both Liberals and Conservatives, were openly vocal about the unsuitability of emigrants from East London whom they believed ran the gamut from useless to clinically insane. At home, Eastenders were costing local authorities a tremendous amount of money in the early years of the twentieth century and pressure mounted to move them to another part of the Empire as it had through the second half of the nineteenth century. In the spirit of the ‘New Imperial History,’ this dissertation has shown how Eastenders as emigrants, subjects, and citizens, occupied a tenuous space across the blurred lines of Empire – unwelcome both at home and abroad.

By 1907-8, the EEEF and all similar London-based charities found themselves severely hampered by new Canadian restrictions. The EEEF sent out only 833 emigrants to Canada in 1907-8, for example.¹¹ The decline in numbers in 1907 was partly due an industrial depression fueled by the American ‘Panic of 1907’ which created a surge of unemployment in Canada.¹² During this time, the Canadian government acted decisively to protect its fragile labour market and solidify its autonomy within the ‘British World’. The panic aside, Canada remained unready to accept assisted emigrants from London for other social reasons such as those mentioned above. To diminish the perception that its emigrants were unworthy, the EEEF maintained that it chose only the most suitable emigrants to send to Canada and that it took “no part whatever in sending to Canada any person who, however poor, is not in our estimation a worthy British citizen.”¹³ Feeling the pressure of the new restrictions, the EEEF reminded its patrons and subscribers that it would never choose drunk, dirty, or lazy emigrants to send to Canada as that would only harm the reputation of the English as a distinct group of migrants in the colonies. Furthermore, the EEEF pleaded with Canada to take more English emigrants in order to balance the “already too large number of emigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe,” emigrants it deemed far more unsuitable for Canada than its English selections.¹⁴ Basil Stewart was equally intolerant of Continental emigrants in Canada warning the Canadians that

¹⁰ Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *Debates*, 10th Parliament, 4th session, vol.3, 1908

¹¹ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1913.

¹² Ian Bushnell, *The Federal Court of Canada: A History, 1875-1992* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 98. Also see, Georg Rich, “Canadian Banks, Gold, and the Crisis of 1907,” *Explorations in Economic History* 26 (1989): 135-60.

¹³ *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1907.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

the indiscriminate immigration into Canada of Russian and Galician Jews, Greeks, Germans, Dutch, Poles, Hungarians, Italians, and even Syrians and Turks, and other peoples, who, estimable as they may be in the land of their birth, are not the kind of material form which the British Empire has been made, nor of which it should be built in the future.¹⁵

This British-based racist commentary failed to take into account Canadian economic needs, especially with respect to the building of its agricultural economy and did little to persuade the Canadian government to change its attitude towards charitable emigration of the English urban poor. Canada pressed ahead with its legal restrictions.

Oliver passed two bookend immigration acts, the first in 1906 and the second in 1910 with Orders-in-Council in between resulting in a progression of restrictive measures aimed at preventing certain types of immigrants from landing in Canada. In 1906, the list of undesirables included prostitutes, pimps, criminals, the mentally deficient, the deaf and the blind, the insane, and those who were physically ill. Those who had become a public charge or had landed themselves in jail in Canada within two years of arrival were now deemed deportable. Under the 1910 Act, charitably assisted emigrants were barred unless they had prior permission from the Canadian Assistant Superintendent of Emigration in London.¹⁶ This change was deliberately designed to stop emigration charities in London, and East London in particular, from sending the urban unemployed to Canada. Emigration societies like the EEEF would never recover although they did manage to continue to send an impressive number of approved emigrants to Canada until the outbreak of war.¹⁷ Canada had succeeded in significantly reducing the number of assisted emigrants it allowed.

Canadian displeasure aside, there were homegrown reasons for the decline of assisted emigration in the years leading up to and after the First World War. The dominance the British Liberal party once enjoyed was coming to a close, as were seemingly outdated Victorian liberal ideals and idealized visions valuing rural over urban life. The intensity of a number of social and political questions decreased in the aftermath of war – notably male franchise reform and Irish Home Rule. In particular, the land question lost its position as a central political problem, one it had held through the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century, the majority of ordinary

¹⁵ Stewart, vi.

¹⁶ Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 107-12.

¹⁷ The EEEF sent the following number of emigrants to Canada: 1,167 in 1909-10; 1,138 in 1910-11, and 1,268 in 1911-12. See *East End Emigration Fund*, Annual Report 1913.

British people turned instead to the state to help support their living in cities. Owning property in the countryside or participating in programs that used the land to remedy their poverty often lost their attention.¹⁸ This is not to say that the land question, which had been a central tenet of Liberal party policy since the 1880s, died completely; Lloyd George's land campaign, which he introduced in 1913, is evidence enough of that but was the last gasp of an expiring cause.¹⁹ Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman observe that the land question "simply faded away under the impact of broader changes in the economy, society and culture of early twentieth-century Britain."²⁰ I suspect this may have had serious implications for any sustained interest the urban working poor had in emigrating although further research is needed to make a firm argument.

The working-classes in the early twentieth-century also turned to the Labour party to address their specific needs. Labour was never overly interested in emigration, as discussed in chapter three. Instead, its supporters sought remedies to poverty at home with the eventual development of the welfare state in Britain in the 1940s. In determining why assisted emigration tapered off after the First World War and why the state took up a new interest in Empire migration in the 1920s, Stephen Constantine argues that "two parallel reforming responses" changed the course of emigration after the war.²¹ The first, as already mentioned, was an inward turn to solving Britain's economic and social problems at home with the creation of the welfare state. While the welfare state can trace its origins to New Liberalism in the late nineteenth century and the sweeping social policy reforms under the Liberal governments of 1906-14, classic Victorian liberalism failed to maintain its grip.²² Emigration to British colonies as remedy to the many social and economic problems the poor had faced in the late nineteenth century no longer applied in the early twentieth century; the unemployed worker saw more potential in

¹⁸ Ian Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land: The Land Issue and Party Politics in England 1906-1914* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Royal Historical Society, 2001), 3-4. Packer speaks to the issue of disinterestedness in the land amongst the working-classes and the failure of the Liberal party to connect with them on this point.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁰ Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman, eds., "Introduction," in *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (London: Palgrave, 2010), 15.

²¹ Stephen Constantine, ed., *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 6.

²² Elaine Hadley also notes that collectivist and democratic tendencies marked the later part of the nineteenth century and can be considered the inheritance of the welfare state in the twentieth century, see: Elaine Hadley, *Living Liberalism: Practical Citizenship in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 5-6. Many other historians have made the same argument, situating the roots of the modern welfare state firmly in late nineteenth century liberalism (radical liberalism in particular) as much as in socialism and the widening of the working-class franchise, see Robert Haggard for a good historiographical overview: Robert F. Haggard, *The Persistence of Victorian Liberalism: The Politics of Social Reform in Britain, 1870-1900* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 2-7.

state-run welfare services like unemployment insurance, council housing, and pensions than in improving himself as a liberal subject searching for a place in the forward march of progress in overseas colonies. After 1918, the British working-class man had gained the full franchise and arguably in finding his political voice at home reduced his need to find it abroad. He could now play an active political role in solving poverty at home and was no longer at the mercy of liberal reformers intent on helping him and his family. The second reason assisted emigration by charities and Poor Law boards declined in the 1920s was the British government's interest in improving and expanding a shared imperial economy under its own new terms. The passing of the Empire Settlement Act in 1922 and the creation of the Empire Marketing Board in 1926 signaled an underlying anxiety about losing imperial control and aimed to re-forge the bonds of Empire that had held the system together through the nineteenth century.²³ State-sponsored emigration was now finally on the agenda but this meant that emigration charities who had taken up the bulk of the work since the 1850s would play a diminished role in moving people about the Empire in the post-war period.²⁴ Overall, post-war British society, and in particular the working-class, was less characterized by the nexus of classic liberalism, religion, and poverty than it had been in the late nineteenth century, hence the waning relevance of Victorian emigration charities enshrined in it.

Assisted emigration from the East End of London to Canada occurred at very specific moments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries usually connected to economic crisis. In chapter one, I argued that between 1857 and 1882 the foundations of a system and discourse of assisted emigration took shape in East London due in large part to acute economic crises in East London in the 1860s. These remedies were often fraught with debate on both sides of the Atlantic and from the outset Canada worried about the mass migration of the urban poor from London's eastern boroughs. However, this period saw the emergence of a discourse on assisted emigration that positioned Britain's colonies, and in particular Canada, as the ideal place in which to transplant surplus British labour and transform the impoverished slum dweller into a more desirable liberal subject when conditions at home deteriorated beyond tolerable levels. In chapter two, I explored how chronic poverty identified in the 1880s in East London affected emigration schemes. I argued that in tandem with the growing knowledge of and anxiety about

²³ Constantine, 6.

²⁴ It would also mean the end of the Salvation Army dominance in emigration to Canada, see: Rutherford, "Scrutinizing the "Submerged Tenth," 188.

poverty in the 1880s and 1890s, assisted emigration emerged as a frequently-used mechanism by which to alleviate poverty at home. Emigration charities and Poor Law boards in this period operated not only on economic grounds but also on more clearly defined ideological grounds. Emigration was believed to offer a remedy to a permanent rather than cyclical problem and took its place at the forefront of philanthropy in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. This period saw a transition – understandings of the roots of poverty slowly shifted from blaming lax moral character to recognizing wider problems in the labour market. Although, it should be noted this transition did not forever change the way the poor have been blamed for their own poverty in Western societies. In chapter three, I argued that emigration was resituated by modern bureaucracy that gave increased state attention to unemployment. In the early twentieth century, emigration charities expanded their relationships to work with new unemployment agencies. This period was characterized by new policies addressing unemployment at home. By the outbreak of the First World War, emigration charities were largely replaced by modern state-run mechanisms to deal with poverty and unemployment. Experiments with farm colonies intended to solve poverty at home and produce more suitable emigrants for Canada never fulfilled the hopes of their supporters.

During these three periods, thousands of emigrants established new lives in Canada despite significant opposition. These people would likely not have otherwise been able to afford their outward journeys or resettlement costs and for that emigration charities deserve credit. However, these charities often failed their emigrants by neglecting to properly prepare them for life in Canada, ignoring Canadian opposition to their arrival, and assuming they would easily find work in Canada without proper understanding of the overseas labour market. The assisted emigration of the poor from East London no doubt saw other tragedies like those explored in chapter five at Moosomin in 1884. The letters of East End emigrants from 1884 to 1894 which are used in chapter four hint at the hardships of emigration but overall exhibit a fairly positive account of the experience.

Assisted emigrants were also subject to a discourse of emigration built up around them in ways they themselves contributed to either by adhering to expectations about their behaviour and character or by subtly resisting those expectations. In their letters assisted emigrants often reminded emigration charities that they were good, moral, sober, hard-working, and grateful people, thus perpetuating the discourse of the ideal assisted emigrant. But they also sometimes

disappointed the philanthropists who had high expectations of them like the first settlers to leave the Moosomin colony for Canadian cities and the unemployed, drunk, and rowdy characters who roamed the streets of Montreal and Toronto refusing the first jobs offered to them. Assisted emigrants from East London were never all that easy to manage or control on either side of the Atlantic and exhibited in their migration experiences a certain desire for agency and a fierce urban working-class identity that some wished to abandon and others sought to maintain upon leaving England. We still know very little about their experiences in Canada and the outcomes of their emigration. What we do know is that despite multiple and continued attempts to refuse them a place in Canada, East End emigrants appear mostly to have established new lives for themselves and their descendants. These resettlements were made possible by the assistance rendered to them in London and by the relatively low numbers of deportations from Canada over the period under study. Their movement exposes tensions over migration between Britain and Canada within the 'British World' system, the lengths to which emigration charities went to continue their work, the power of an imperial, liberal, and transnational discourse on migration, the power of the slum narrative on the practical applications of charity in East London, and finally the experiences of poor urban English migrants in the British Empire. Assisted emigration of the London poor to Canada also sheds light on how the Canadian government practiced a relatively closed-door immigration policy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries despite its rhetoric of openness. Canada did not welcome all emigrants with open arms, this we know from scholars of Eastern European and Asian immigration. This dissertation has illustrated that certain English emigrants were equally unwelcome, their problematic class trumping their supposedly preferred ethnicity.

Further research is required on a number of points to deepen our understanding of this important part of Britain's history of imperial emigration. First, case studies for the twentieth century require attention. There are abundant sources for this period including emigrant letters, records relating to unemployment in West Ham, records relating to the Empire Settlement Act of 1922, and the records of emigration charities well into the twentieth century even though they functioned in a diminished role. The EEEF annual reports, for example, extend to 1958. This dissertation has considered the history of assisted emigration in East London to 1913 as a starting point but there is much more to be said about the period after the First World War than has been hinted at here. In a similar way, a longitudinal study of assisted emigrant outcomes would help to

resolve arguments over to the success or failure (however that binary is defined) of East End emigrants in Canada using census data and other Canadian records. This would be an enormous project but could be more manageably conducted as a series of case studies in different communities across Canada. It might also reveal rates of return to England which are currently unknown. Second, a comparative study of Canadian and Australasian experiences of assisted emigration from East London is needed. Space was not available in this dissertation to address this comparison but it would deepen our understanding of the entire process along transnational and intra-imperial lines. It would be useful to examine reception mechanisms, opposition, and support for assisted emigration from East London in Australia and New Zealand in the same period. Third, a case study that elaborates on assisted emigrant reception in Canada is needed. I have begun work on the medical inspection of assisted emigrants at Canadian ports of entry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is but one of the ways Canadian protectionism in its immigration policy can be understood. This work can also illuminate the influence of American immigration policies on imperial spaces, the experience of arriving assisted emigrants, the bureaucratic function and practice of immigration control on British emigrants in Canada, and the context of anxiety within which assisted emigration was situated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Finally, a wider British history of assisted emigration across the United Kingdom in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century would provide a better understanding of how assisted emigration of the poor was dealt with in other British cities, amongst the other British ethnicities, and in the British countryside. This would likely show that London was a particularly active hub of assisted emigration but without further research it is difficult to say. The outcome of such research projects would complement this dissertation which I hope has provided as comprehensive an analysis and narrative as possible on assisted emigration of East Londoners to Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This work is dedicated to them.

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