



BENZIE
SANGMA
Intelligencer

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How their hearts must have thumped. Hardened by fear, they boarded the ship that was to take them away that chilly and misty morning.

How their bewildered eyes must have searched for a reassuring expression on the faces of the adults briskly shuffling them aboard.

How the knuckles on their diminutive hands must have turned white as they gripped the ship's railing: a moment of terror and grief for the familiarity. No matter how dismal, they were leaving their world behind.

In the absence of loved ones who would have surely stopped the chain of events from tearing into their young lives, well-meaning adults, in an attempt to salvage them from a life of poverty, thought them better off leaving their country of birth for an unknown but "promising" land.



MARION
KELLAR

These were the children from the orphanages and streets in England who were sent to Canada in thousands between 1860s to mid-20s.

"I remember my mother telling me that the children were all crying during the trip in the ship. They were all so scared," recalled Marion Oliver.

All Marion's mother — Marion (Thorley) Kellar — would tell of that trip was about watching a dead body being lowered into the water. "She couldn't tell whether it was that of a child or an adult," recounted Oliver. Kellar was one of the orphaned children who came to Belleville on May 11, 1907. She was 10 years old.

Shortly after her trip aboard the ship S.S. Tunisian, which brought her to Quebec, her mother along with a group of 30 girls and two boys aged between 5 to 19, were brought on a train to Belleville. Although both girls and boys in previous groups have been known to stay at the

Marchmont Home on Moira Street West, Oliver said she remembered her mother telling her that while the boys in her group were taken to Marchmont, the girls were taken to stay in an old building, long torn down, near the Belleville Hospital.

But for many others, before and after 1907, the large building on the west side of the city was where they spent their first few days in Canada waiting for the authorities to place them in foster care. Within the walls of this Home, they solemnly waited to complete their journey.

Following a brief stay, the children were placed in foster care in the homes of area farmers with an understanding, agreed to by both the Home authorities and the applicants, that they would be fed, given room and board and sent to school in exchange for light help around the house and the farm.

"She never said much about the rest of what happened to her following her arrival. She only said that she was sent to live with two farming families in the area. One of those families was mean and nasty to her," recalled Oliver. She said her mother once told her about an incident where she had been beaten severely when the water from her mop splashed slightly on the leg of one of the farmer's children.

The social workers, who attempted to