

## Seeing, Saving, and Remembering Barnardo's Children: Technologies of Access and Preservation in Historical Research

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Article abstract

This essay explores how photography and digitization have shaped access to and preservation of key sources of the historical phenomenon of child migration from the UK to Canada, as organized by Barnardo's charity. It examines two case studies illustrating how stakeholders in the history of Barnardo's have adopted digital technologies and networks to ensure the continued preservation and dissemination of photographic sources of that history. Focusing on the significance of digital tools in the process of researching case studies, this discussion opens up broader questions of the role of access and preservation technologies in transnational historical research.

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**Résumé :** *Ce texte explore la manière dont la photographie et la numérisation ont façonné l'accessibilité et la préservation de sources clés sur l'émigration d'enfants du Royaume-Uni vers le Canada pilotée par l'organisme de bienfaisance Barnardo. Il examine deux études de cas illustrant la manière dont les acteurs de l'histoire de Barnardo ont adopté les technologies et les réseaux numériques pour assurer la préservation et la diffusion pérennes de sources photographiques. En se concentrant sur l'importance des outils numériques dans la démarche de recherche dans les études de cas, le texte soulève des questions plus larges sur le rôle des technologies d'accessibilité et de préservation dans la recherche historique transnationale.*

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**Keywords:** Archives, Barnardo's, Child migration, Digitization, Photography, Preservation technologies

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“History,” according to the historian Emma Rothschild, “changes discontinuously with the technologies of listening, seeing, saving, and remembering.”<sup>1</sup> The adoption of some new technology of inscription, such as writing or photography, or storage, such as filing cabinets and databases, can effect both sudden and gradual change in the production as well as the interpretation of historical records. The work of history does not rely exclusively on technologies of recording and preservation, of course; it is equally dependent on those that enhance the abilities of historians to see and listen in the present. For instance, the installation of electric light in public libraries around the turn of the twentieth century greatly improved the conditions for reading and writing outside daylight hours. A century or so later, the establishment of online repositories of digitized archival records began to eliminate physical presence as a requirement of archival research. Both these technological developments made the contents of libraries and archives accessible to new audiences who would previously have been prevented from using them, and exemplify how technologies of access affect how, when, and by whom the work of historical research can be undertaken.

Photography and digitization are two technologies that have afforded new ways of seeing and saving, across time as well as space. In this essay I explore how these technologies have shaped access to and preservation of key sources to a specific topic in modern Canadian history: the emigration of children from the UK promoted and coordinated

by the Barnardo's charity. First set up in London, England by philanthropic agent Thomas Barnardo in 1866, the organization ran schools and residential care homes for poor or destitute children for more than a century.<sup>2</sup> From the 1880s to the 1960s it also organized the emigration of thousands of British children to overseas dominions including Canada and Australia.<sup>3</sup> From early on, Barnardo the philanthropist displayed technological foresight in the use of photography for recordkeeping and fundraising purposes. The charity he founded routinely produced, stored, and circulated photographic images of children admitted to its care, eventually amassing a photographic archive of around 500,000 images. Barnardo's also made use of a range of photo-reproductive media technologies, from printed periodicals to mass-produced cards, in order to promote its purpose. As a result, there exists a vast and distributed corpus of photographic and printed records that testify, not just to the historical practices of the charity, but to the specific role of photographic technologies in the management and promotion of those activities.

Barnardo's photographic legacies are of enduring significance to those affected by the charity's past practices, whether as children emigrated through its offices or as descendants of those child migrants. This essay is structured around two case studies that illustrate how self-perceived stakeholders in the history of Barnardo's and its role in child migration have strategically adopted digital technologies and networks to ensure and enable the continued preservation and dissemination of photographic sources to that history. The first case is an illustrated magazine published by Barnardo's in Canada in the 1890s, copies of which have been digitized and made available to a general audience online through the voluntary work of local historians and descendants of child migrants (**Fig. 1**). The second case centres on a digitization project at Barnardo's London, UK headquarters in the 2010s, which gave rise to online protests from archivists and descendants worldwide when it was rumored that the organization intended to destroy original photographs after digitization. In the concluding discussion I reflect on the instrumental part that digitization has played in my own approach to and interpretation of these sources to show how these two cases can offer larger lessons on the role of access and preservation technologies in transnational historical research.

The historical phenomenon of organized child migration from the UK was predicated on what historian Ellen Boucher has called "a vision of mutual development," whereby children would be saved from destitution at home and instead contribute to the growth and prosperity of Britain's overseas empire.<sup>4</sup> An article advocating for the practice, which appeared in *Longman's Magazine* in 1887, gives a flavour of the rhetoric that proponents used to justify it:

To the advantages of giving these children a good education suitable for emigrants to the colonies would be added the advantages of placing the children beyond the reach of the evil communications which corrupt good manners.<sup>5</sup>

As this quote illustrates, improving the lot of destitute children by offering them a better life abroad was just one argument in favour of child migration in the 1880s; another was that it supplied the colonies with homegrown stock, however compromised by the delinquent culture and degenerated individuals from which they purportedly hailed.

**BRITISH HOME CHILDREN IN CANADA**

Home Page

This site is maintained by Home Children Canada

Home Children Canada website

The Sending Organizations

Requesting Children's Records

Beacons of Light BHC Tribute

BHC Registry, over 82,000 children registered!

Ups and Down's Magazine

How to Research Your BHC

**THE DR. BARNARDO MAGAZINE UPS AND DOWNS**

SOURCE & PUBLISHED WITH PERMISSION OF: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA/DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES - "UPS AND DOWNS"/AMICUS 33339575/REELS 1-10

**Ups and Downs**

PUBLISHED BY THE DR. BARNARDO HOMES, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES.

T. J. BARNARDO, P.R.C.S., Eng.  
 114 St. George Street, Toronto, Ont.  
 Canadian Agent and Superintendent.  
 FRANK VYPORD,  
 Managing Editor.

OFFICE OF PUBLICATION, 214 FAREY AVE.,  
 TORONTO, ONT.  
 TEL. 3607.

UPS AND DOWNS circulates mainly among the many thousand young people who have been placed out from Dr. Barnardo's Homes with farmers and others, and will be found a desirable advertising medium by those who wish to reach the farmer and every member of his household.

Advertising Rates will be supplied upon application at the office of publication.

The Annual Subscription is 50c., which may be remitted in stamps or cash.

All Correspondence should be addressed: Editor - Ups and Downs, 214 Farley Avenue, Toronto, and letters intended for publication should reach the office not later than the 20th inst. of the month to insure insertion in the next issue.

We shall be obliged if subscribers will notify us at once in the event of delay or irregularity in the delivery of their papers.

These magazines were published by the Dr. Barnardo Homes at Toronto, Ontario, usually quarterly between 1895 and 1949. Over the decades there were more than 200 issues printed, some, or many of which numbered in the thousands of copies. Many Home children subscribed to the magazine, many thousands did, partly to keep in contact with their surrogate families of other children from the Homes, partly to maintain their spirits in a time of their young lives when many gained little emotional support from the families with whom they were placed.

These magazines contain many short snippets and occasionally longer excerpts from letters sent by the children to the Homes offices in Toronto, attributed to the child writer by name; and many photographs sent by children with the intention of their being published as well. All photos are identified by name. When letters were published, the geographic location of the writer is sometimes provided. There are many references to the Russell Manitoba Training Farm.

Many issues also contain lists that give the names of about 100 boys in recent immigration parties, their employers' names, and the postal addresses of these first placements. Also in these magazines are statements of policy and of

**Figure 1.** British Home Children in Canada website. Screenshot 17 January 2022.

This emphasis on Home Children as the bearers of a desirable genetic and cultural heritage is consonant with “a broadly shared British vision of families, childhood and the colonial future” that Laura Ishiguro has labelled “settler futurity.”<sup>6</sup> Her concept encapsulates the imperialist project’s reliance upon a regular supply of children who could be racialized as White and British, whether they were born into settler communities in British Columbia in the 1860s or transported from the UK and distributed to Canadian farms, businesses, and households from the 1880s onward. Unlike the settler children raised among natural parents and siblings, however, Home Children were forced to forge new emotional bonds to replace those severed by orphanization and emigration. Thanks to the efforts of historians and activists, it is now widely accepted that child migration was harmful.<sup>7</sup> Governments as well as charities have in recent decades acknowledged their historical responsibility for the practice, offering formal apologies and launching official inquiries in attempts to atone for injustices and abuses suffered by victims of child migration.<sup>8</sup>

This essay builds on the work of historians who have documented the systems and effects of philanthropy, residential care, and child migration in the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> It contributes to the interdisciplinary branch of that scholarship which focuses on the role of visual and narrative media in the work of philanthropic organizations. My research further expands the range of studies that have made use of Barnardo’s historical photographic records and publications to explore ideas not immediately associated with philanthropy or residential care, including representations of sexuality, race, respectability, and spectacle in the Victorian period.<sup>10</sup> Thematically, it also extends a strand of scholarship that has specifically addressed the enduring impact of the organization’s

photographic practices.<sup>11</sup> Like those earlier studies, this article is based on visual and textual records produced by or about Barnardo's that have been created, stored, and made available for study through the technologies of photography, photo-mechanical printing, and, more recently, digitization. My analysis is grounded in ideas about materiality that, since the early 2000s, have gained traction in the field of photography studies, and which seek to "read" the technological origins and material properties of photographs as sources of meaning in their own right.<sup>12</sup>

### **Barnardo's and the Uses of Photography**

When Thomas Barnardo first introduced photography into his philanthropic mission, the technology was deployed as a tool of both administration and advertising. As a recording device, the camera provided a means of processing and preserving information about children admitted to the charity's many homes. As a picture-making instrument, it helped to craft persuasive visual representations of the kind of transformation that Barnardo's could effect in those children's lives. While it is unclear how early Barnardo began using photography as part of the admission process for destitute children, by the early 1870s it appears to have been standard practice to make a photographic portrait to accompany the information recorded on each child's individual "History Sheet." The accumulated pictorial record numbers in the tens of thousands of photographs, with as many as "21,000 for the period 1875-1900 alone," according to historian Clare Rose.<sup>13</sup>

Writers John Tagg and Seth Koven have rightly situated Barnardo's use of photography within the nineteenth-century discourses on surveillance and control of the poor and criminal classes.<sup>14</sup> This connection was first explicitly made in a 1974 exhibition of photographs from the Barnardo's archives at the National Portrait Gallery in London.<sup>15</sup> In the book that accompanied the exhibition, curator Valerie Lloyd cited Barnardo's own statements about the benefit of photographic records in allowing, for example, the police to identify "boys and girls guilty of criminal acts, such as theft, burglary or arson," although the primary purpose of recording "the exact likeness of each child" was to help "trace the child's future career" in a more benevolent sense.<sup>16</sup>

Children admitted to Barnardo's were photographed in *carte-de-visite* format, a material form that was both convenient for archival storage and easy to reproduce for advertising purposes. The *cartes-de-visite* might be furnished with a text or story at the back, and either given out for free to members of the ragged classes whom the charity wished to recruit, or sold to a middle-class audience to raise funds to support Barnardo's homes.<sup>17</sup> Such photographs provided a tangible token of charitable patronage, even at the relatively small scale of buying one or two cards at sixpence apiece.<sup>18</sup> In the case of photographs showing destitute children, one can imagine that they carried an additional emotional charge when juxtaposed with the well-fed and -clothed children of a middle-class family's own photo album.

Inside the Barnardo's homes, meanwhile, the albums of children's portraits also served to construct a family history of sorts. For each residential home, the portrait album "was a way of keeping its history as a family, a kind of practical genealogical record, a line of descent," as Alec McHoul has noted.<sup>19</sup> Photographic portraits were,

in this respect, “a means of creating ancestors for those yet to come as Barnardo boys and girls.”<sup>20</sup> The ritual of the standardized entry photograph, and the preservation of this portrait among scores of identically-produced others, had the effect of “merging... into a common” the individual identities that Barnardo’s children had held outside the context of the institution.<sup>21</sup> As we shall see, however, many of these children would go on to use the medium of the photographic portrait actively in constructing and circulating a visual expression of their individual identity after leaving the institution.

Around the same time that he established the practice of making entry photographs, Barnardo also began commissioning “before” and “after” images of children for fund-raising and recruitment purposes.<sup>22</sup> This practice was controversial, and formed part of a complex of accusations launched against Barnardo by “a transitory cabal” of rival actors in philanthropy, which came to a head in an arbitration hearing at the Institution of Surveyors in London in 1877.<sup>23</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the arbitration in any detail, save to note that among the myriad charges made by his accusers, the one that attracted the most attention was the claim that the photographs which he distributed of recently-admitted children represented them as dirtier and more destitute than they had actually been upon admission. Perhaps unexpectedly, the arbitration thus became a battleground of mid-nineteenth-century conceptions of ethics in photography.

Debates about Barnardo’s use of photography for charity purposes followed familiar arguments about the photograph as document or art. According to Koven, Barnardo considered such opposing views “a false dichotomy because both ways of understanding and using photography served his benevolent ends.”<sup>24</sup> The philanthropic entrepreneur saw no conceptual conflict between using photography to create, on the one hand, a visual record of the physical appearance of each individual child in order to supplement written records about them, and, on the other hand, artistic representations of a more generic kind, illustrating the state that many of the children in his care were in upon their admission. Barnardo even had a clear system for differentiating between the two kinds of images, as Koven shows, furnishing individual portraits with the initials of the depicted person, while devising evocative captions for those “typical photographs” deployed for illustrative rather than documentary purposes.<sup>25</sup> Today, both kinds of photographs can be analyzed as “working objects in their own time,” with the same status, function, and power as other primary historical sources.<sup>26</sup> In this capacity, they offer equally valuable evidence of the multiple ways in which Barnardo’s exploited the affordances of photography as both visual medium and information technology.<sup>27</sup>

From the 1870s onward, Barnardo’s created and used photographs for a variety of purposes. In this respect, they conform to conceptions of archival records that have been developed in archival theory by Joan Schwartz and Geoffrey Yeo. Schwartz draws on diplomatics to argue that photographs, like all documents, must be understood as “created by a will, for a purpose, to convey a message to an audience.”<sup>28</sup> Yeo offers a definition of “elementary” and “aggregated” records that helps us conceive of photographs as “persistent representations of activities or other occurrences, created by participants or observers of those occurrences, or their proxies.”<sup>29</sup> While articulated in slightly different ways, these approaches to archival records are similarly useful in that

they encompass records in virtually any format or medium, and explicitly acknowledge the possibility of multiple and dynamic meanings for single-medium records, as much as for multi-media or re-purposed ones. In the case studies that follow, these perspectives are useful for disentangling primary sources that are aggregated and/or repurposed in complex ways, and preserved and made available by means of a range of technologies, including photography, newsprint, microfilm, PDF, and html.

For example, a photographic negative, produced in Barnardo's photographic studio, depicts a specific child posing in front of a camera operated by a particular photographer. The negative may afford certain kinds of evidence or information on its own, but, when printed (whole or cropped) and then juxtaposed with text or other images it can produce evidence, information, or documentation of other kinds. A print from this negative, placed in an album containing entry photographs of children admitted to Barnardo's, inscribed with the name and age of each child, might serve the purposes of surveillance, investigation, and identification when perused by police officers searching for criminal suspects, by parents looking for a lost child, or by investors or philanthropists considering financial support. Combined with the history sheets giving personal details about each child, the admission photograph forms part of a multi-media record that documents an individual child's time spent in Barnardo's care, furnishing biographical information of particular interest to genealogical researchers. The same photograph can afford different kinds of information, however, if it is viewed as part of a series of photographs taken by the same photographer, or in a version engraved for reproduction in the charity's periodicals. In these cases, the photograph would work either in aggregate with other photographs, or with a printed page, to provide evidence about visual and technical practices at Barnardo's, which is primarily of value to historians of media or technology.

### **Ups and Downs: a Printed Social Medium and a Digitized Community Archive**

Printed and illustrated periodicals, produced and distributed with the help of photo-mechanical mass reproduction technologies and steam-powered infrastructures, emerged in the nineteenth century as central to the construction of communities, both real and imagined, in all corners of the globe.<sup>30</sup> In one of these corners, Toronto, Barnardo's published the magazine *Ups and Downs* (**Fig. 2**) between 1895 and 1949. It was circulated, first monthly and then quarterly, to the "young migrants" now usually designated as British Home Children, who had been relocated from the UK to Canada at the charity's instigation.<sup>31</sup> Studying the visual and textual content of this magazine reveals that print-based media practices in late nineteenth-century Canada pre-figured patterns of use associated with globalized digital media in the twenty-first century. The periodical relied heavily on what would now be termed user-generated content, in the form of letters, photographs, and other contributions by readers. Historical geographers Tim Brown, Alastair Owens, Oliver Gibson, and Lesley Hoskins have shown how the magazine "was used as an institutional device for (re)building a sense of belonging to the wider Barnardo's "family," offering children emotional support and access to social networks to aid their transition to a new life in an unfamiliar land."<sup>32</sup> My analysis expands this reading to reveal *Ups and Downs* as a social medium in at least two senses. First, I point to its uses and functions that prefigure those afforded by contemporary social media; second, I highlight how it preserves ancestral legacies of the Home

The image shows a digital PDF viewer interface for the magazine 'Ups and Downs'. On the left is a blue sidebar with white text listing various topics: Stories of British Home Children, Documented Immigration Process, Making the Canadian Flag, Apologies to BHC & Families, Political Bigotry, Migration Legislation, The Doyle Report 1875, Home Child Interviews, Collection/Penny Boxes, LAC and Heritage Canada, Order your official BHC Pin, Lori Oschefski, Contact us, GRIMES, Arthur, WWII, Korean and Boer War Project, and Hazelbrae Indexing Forms. The main content area displays the title page of the magazine, which includes the title 'UPS AND DOWNS', the subtitle 'A MONTHLY JOURNAL', and the publication information: 'Published under the auspices of Dr. Barnardo's Homes. Circulating chiefly among the many thousands of young people placed out from Dr. Barnardo's Homes with farmers and others.' The issue is 'Vol. I.—No. 1. TORONTO, AUGUST 1ST, 1895.' The price is 'Price Per Year, 25c. Single Copies, 2c.' The page contains several columns of text, including a section titled 'ECHOES OF THE MONTH' and a portrait of Dr. Barnardo. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'Download this PDF' button, a page indicator '1 of 58', and social media sharing icons.

**Figure 2.** *Ups and Downs* magazine digital resource, PDF view via Scribd. British Home Children in Canada. Screenshot 17 January 2022.

Children in the configuration of a historical social network created and sustained by photographic and digital imaging technologies.

In the current meaning of the term, one thinks of social media as online platforms where members update each other on their respective statuses, whereabouts, experiences, ideas, and appearances. This is precisely the sort of content that dominated *Ups and Downs* from its earliest print runs. The magazine explicitly codified its community of readers as “friends,” featured puzzles and quizzes, and included advertising, a crucial revenue stream.<sup>33</sup> Reproductions of photographic images played a significant part in the journal’s appeal, whether depicting members of the extended “family” to each other, or reminding them of the places they were encouraged to think of as “home.”

A typical issue from the 1890s might contain a prominently displayed reproduction of a well-known British landmark such as Tower Bridge or St. Paul’s Cathedral; a smattering of studio portraits of Barnardo boys and girls accompanying short reports on their progress in Canada; a reproduction showing “village homes” back in the UK (usually in the section devoted to girls), and one or two more elaborate montages of portraits reminiscent of Victorian photo-album designs. There might also be items on celebrities such as the Princess of Wales (in the girls’ section, July 1896, p. 9), or on agricultural or industrial topics, such as coffee-growing in Brazil (in the boys’ section, February 1896,



p. 13). In more elaborate image displays, such as an assemblage of portraits reproduced in the January 1896 issue (**Fig. 3**), the magazine borrowed graphic elements from contemporary album designs to inscribe its “friends” into a visual template associated with social and familial network-building. Correspondents and subscribers evidently took part in both identity-making and remembrancing, two of the key functions of social media at any time in history, as Lee Humphreys has argued.<sup>34</sup> Many of the functions fulfilled by a paper periodical such as *Ups and Downs* were, in short, broadly the same as those performed by digital social media today. The magazine’s affordances as a social medium were nevertheless defined by the same technologies and infrastructures that shaped all nineteenth-century print media.

Time is the crucial factor here. The magazine must have relied on railway, water, and road transportation not only for distribution across its huge territory, but also for incoming correspondence from contributors, without whose personal content the publication would probably not have had the same appeal for its subscribers. There would have been a significant delay, first between the posting of news from readers and its reception at the editorial office in Toronto, and then between the paper’s printing and its distribution in Ontario, its main catchment area, as well as into Manitoba and beyond. Although advances in transportation technologies meant that, by the late nineteenth century, mass-reproduced print commodities were able to circulate faster than ever before, by twenty-first-century standards, the news was old by the time it reached its audience.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, a printed periodical did not afford the audience a way to demonstrate its reaction to the news instantly, in the form of comments or likes. The editorial comments that accompany submitted portraits nevertheless performed some of those functions by proxy, anticipating what readers and friends of the depicted person might think or say about them, and, in a manner of speaking, pre-moderating those comments, making sure only positive feedback found its way into print.

The proliferation of visual material in *Ups and Downs* exemplifies how photographic images were incorporated into the social aspects of print culture at an early stage, not least in communication media that sought to keep distant communities and people in touch with each other.<sup>36</sup> From its earliest print-runs in 1895 and 1896, photographic reproductions were among the key attractions of *Ups and Downs* for subscribers. This suggests that, aside from the well-documented official uses of photography within Barnardo’s (such as the before-and-after images that helped finance its philanthropic work) photographic images served important uses among Barnardo boys and girls in their new homes scattered around the empire. More likely than not, their first experience of being photographed would have been when they were admitted to a home, a potentially traumatic event in the lives of many of these children. And yet, after emigration, children would either be taken to the photographer again, or would go themselves, probably for the same reasons that people had their portraits taken in the late nineteenth century: to show off nice clothes (even if they were borrowed from the photographer); to accompany an optimistic letter home; to give as a souvenir to friends or relatives or potential partners. In the case of Barnardo’s boys and girls in Canada, it could also have been a motivation to appear in *Ups and Downs* with a new “profile picture.”

## UPS AND DOWNS.

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of these 51 reports, six—all of big lads or young men—simply state that they had left the neighborhood; in three cases to return to England; in another to settle in California; and in the other two cases without any information being obtainable as to their whereabouts.

Of the 45 left in the neighborhood 39 were doing exceedingly well; that is, there were no complaints whatever against their character or conduct, and they were spoken of by their employers and by those who know them in the most satisfactory terms. In the case of the other six there were complaints either of the boys being unreliable in their work or rude in their manners or that they did not speak the truth, but only in ONE case was notice given to return the boy, and even in this case Mr. Griffith succeeded, after long talks with the boy and his employer, in inducing the latter to give him another trial.

One of the six was a dissatisfied, "ugly" dispositioned mortal—complaining of his having been sent from England; complaining of his surroundings; and uncouth and uncivil to everybody about him. He is the sort of boy who doesn't know what he wants, but we think we do, and if he is returned to the Home we promise him faithfully he shall have it.

Of course we must not mention the names of these six delinquents, it would be neither kind nor fair to do so, but we would like to say to them and to any other of our boys who are not all they ought to be, that we would have them remember that their failings and shortcomings are visited not only on themselves but on many hundreds of others who are leading irreproachable lives. People unhappily insist upon judging the flock by the few black sheep, and our fair name is tarnished and our work injured by this insignificant percentage. We would therefore beg of them to start this New Year with an honest desire to retrieve their characters, to lay aside the sins and shortcomings that so easily beset them, and throughout the New Year to walk in newness of life.

It is pleasanter to pass on to the 39 of unblemished record, although we can attempt only to make the briefest summary of Mr. Griffith's full and careful reports. Wm. Seager, aged 13, placed out in April, 1894, is a well-behaved, willing little worker, as happy as a cricket in his home, and liked by everyone who has to do with him. Mr. Griffith expresses the opinion that Mr. Shearing is a good farmer and that Willie is in the right hands for receiving a practical training for his future in Canada.

John R. King, with Mr. Thos. G. Shearing, is slow but sure; is in splendid health, growing and thriving; likes Canada and means to do his best. "A very satisfactory visit," is Mr. Griffith's note.

Henry Fox, with Mr. John Small, of Wallacetown, is truthful and trustworthy, and has a home that is all we could desire for him. Mr. and Mrs. Small will, we are sure, forgive us for mentioning the fact that they themselves started in this country without capital and achieved their present success by their own efforts. Such people can best feel for a little lad facing the trials and struggles of life for the first time, and we can rest assured that Henry will be helped both by example and precept to make the best use of his opportunities.

William Doyd, 19 years of age, with Mr. John A. Campbell, of Mono, is a stalwart, useful farm hand. Mr. Griffith refers to his cheery, pleasant manner and bearing, and the report is most favorable both as to employer and employee. William will have fulfilled the engagement we made for him on the first of April next, and may very likely hire on again with Mr. Campbell. This we shall leave entirely to William, as we shall consider that by that time he will be quite competent to make his own arrangements, and that for the future our relations with him need be nothing more than an interchange of friendly greetings just sufficient to show that on our side we continue to take an interest in his welfare, and, we hope, on his side, that he has a warm corner in his heart for the old Home and the old friends.

Lionel Rogers is the subject of the next report. Lionel was especially committed and commended to us by Mr. Anderson when he left Stepey, and he is a boy that we feel sure will do well and give a good account of himself wherever he may be. He was placed with Mr. Malcolm Blue, of Wallacetown, on his arrival in 1893, and his three years' engagement will end on the first of April next. Lionel will have well earned the money that will fall due to him then, and with this in the bank, and with the experience and training he will have gained, he will be well started in life.

William Fitch, placed with Mr. Samuel F. Brokenshire, of Port Talbot, is a stout, sturdy, thriving little lad. "Doing remarkably well; milks five cows twice a day; can drive a team; kind to stock; truthful, cheerful in manner; gets on well with the children; neatly and warmly clothed," are a few scraps that we select from Mr. Griffith's detailed report. Willie desired to become a subscriber to UPS AND DOWNS and believing that "short reckonings make long friends," produced his "quarter" and handed it over to Mr. Griffith.

Thomas Smith, who was one of our last party, was only placed a fortnight before Mr. Griffith's visit, & was therefore quite new to the country and its ways. So far, however, Thomas has

made a good impression and has been favorably impressed. His employer is Mr. Angus Turner (Lawrence Station P.O.), and the lad is in good hands. As Mr. Griffith observes, "a likely place for a lad to do well."

Figure 3. Facsimile from *Ups and Downs* January 1896, p. 5.

The popular and conveniently small formats of carte-de-visite and cabinet-card portraits, produced in assembly-line fashion by presenting sitters in standardized settings or against painted backdrops, made it easy to construct a more socially elevated persona for oneself, at least in purely visual terms. Photographic studios provided not

only glamorous backdrops and bourgeois furniture against which to pose, but could also furnish outfits to match, whether one wanted to look more impressive and well-off, or dress up in a costume. For the same reasons that people today might post a selfie to a social media account to show (or show off) a new self, readers of *Ups and Downs* might have sent in their carte-de-visite portraits in order for them to circulate and meet with approval within a wide but nevertheless limited circle of virtual and real-life friends.

The magazine was clearly aimed to keep Barnardo's and the children it had fostered in contact with each other. The use of photographically derived portraits and views of homes to feed a certain kind of nostalgia among its former inhabitants was yet another way of emulating the social and emotional functions of a family album.<sup>37</sup> We recall that McHoul identified the creation of ancestors for Barnardo children yet to come as a key purpose of the portrait albums kept in the charity's homes. Similarly, the social medium of *Ups and Downs* displayed the likenesses, experiences, and accomplishments of Home Children who had gone before to child migrants newly arrived in Canada. Like younger siblings witnessing the milestones of older brothers and sisters commemorated in a family album, and imagining how their own achievements would be photographically captured in due course, recent arrivals might find in the pages of *Ups and Downs* a source of pride in the attainment of their elders as well as exemplars to model or visualize their own future progress.

The context in which the periodical was read and its pictures viewed in the 1890s was, of course, more likely to resemble the individual reading of a newspaper than the gathering of a family around a photographic album. In this respect, *Ups and Downs* was probably more instrumental in enabling Home Children to imagine themselves as a community rather than a family, as any reader of Benedict Anderson would acknowledge. For boys and girls widely dispersed—each on their own—on farms and in households across the vast territories of Canada, the printed and photo-mechanically illustrated periodical sought to construct a particular sense of an “imagined community” among Home Children. Regular reports from the “old” country, pointedly illustrated by images of talismanic sites, emphasized the Britishness of Barnardo children and intimated a privileged connection to the heart of empire. This was entirely in line with “a broader social trend” identified by Murdoch, in which “notions of imperial citizenship stressed poor children's direct link and ensuing responsibility to the nation.”<sup>38</sup>

This technologically enabled entanglement of childhood and empire came to the fore in an editorial comment from June 1896, which recounted reactions the editors had received from readers to one particular photograph, depicting members of the Barnardo's Home Band (**Fig. 4**). The picture had been reproduced in the previous issue, in the front-page slot usually reserved for British monuments, and accompanied an account of the first ship of that summer's sailing season taking a new cohort of Barnardo's boys from England to Canada. In the next issue, published one month later, the regular editorial column “Here and There” noted that while the editors knew their readers appreciated the architectural views of historic English sites, which had graced most of the front pages so far,

[o]ur reproduction of last month, “The Home Band,” was a change, and without any disparagement of our boys' patriotic interest in the national landmarks of Old England, we must say that the change seems to have given intense satisfaction all round. ...Of course those forming the

# UPS AND DOWNS

A MONTHLY JOURNAL PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES.

VOL. I.—No. 10

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SINGLE COPIES, 3 CENTS.

## ECHOES OF THE MONTH.

THE event of the month has, of course, been the arrival and distribution of our first detachment for the season. The party was composed of 63 lads from the Youths' Labour House, 49 from the Stepany Home, 47 from Leopold House, 8 from Jersey, 5 little chaps from Sheppard House, and 37 from boarding-out homes in the country districts of England. The Stepany contingent included several apprentices and non-commissioned officers, and a great many amongst the party had been for many years under Dr. Barnardo's care.

Our sailing date from Liverpool was Thursday, the 2nd, and on the morning of that day we took our leave of the old Homes, and steamed out of Euston station at 10.45 to the good old tune of Auld Lang Syne. The London and North Western gave us a special train and a fine "run" and by 3.30 we had pulled up in the Riverside station at Liverpool. This was our first experience of the recently constructed Riverside station — bringing us close alongside of the ship, and saving us the long, troublesome march through the streets of Liverpool. The new station adjoins the Landing Stage, so that we had only to be at the foot of the gangway. The great Dominion Liner *Scotsman* was moored to the stage ready to receive us, and a magnificent ship she looked, towering above us out of the water. She is the second largest cargo ship in the Atlantic trade, her dimensions being only exceeded by the huge ship *Georgic* of the White Star Line. The *Scotsman* is 490 feet long and 49 feet in width or beam, and has a carrying capacity of over 10,000 tons. We soon passed the Board of Trade Doctors and

the various surveyors and inspectors who watch against the embarkation of unhealthy or unsuitable people, every boy being sound in wind and limb, and without an ailment or blemish that the most lynx-eyed examiner could detect, and in a few minutes after our arrival we were safe on board and rejoicing in finding ourselves as well off for space, light and air as we have ever been in any of our trips across the Atlantic. The Dominion Line had evidently resolved to treat us well, and nothing could have been

"baby" from Sheppard House, I am proud and pleased to be able to say that the conduct and behaviour of the party was a credit to themselves and to Dr. Barnardo.

Our voyage was not an eventful one, and the time soon began to pass rapidly. Of course a good many of the party felt very unhappy for the first day or two, and Neptune exacted his tribute from all but the "old sailors," but the *Scotsman* proved herself a splendid sea boat, and despite a good "lump" of a sea, and strong westerly breezes, there was very little disagreeable motion. After the first two or three days, appetites began to revive astonishingly, and the excellent fare so abundantly provided received the amplest justice. We cannot speak too highly of the kindness shown us by all the officials of the ship, from the captain downwards, and constantly was it impressed upon us that if we wanted anything it was "our own fault if we didn't get it."

From Sunlight soap to plum pudding there was enough and to spare of everything, and whatever befalls them in after life our boys can look back upon "good times" on board the *Scotsman*.

Late in the day on Saturday, the 11th, the lights of Halifax harbour were in sight, and before midnight we were alongside the wharf. We don't believe in disorder or confusion on arriving in port, and "all hands" were in bed and asleep long before the ship was made fast, ready for an early breakfast and a start to business in the morning. Those in charge, who had to be up all night getting ready for the next day, didn't feel quite so lively, but we consoled ourselves with the thought that Halifax doesn't come very often. The Labour House lads, destined for the Farm Home, Russell, Manitoba, were the only members of the



THE BOYS' HOME BAND.

better than the accommodation provided.

Before nightfall the shores of old England were fading in the distance, and we were "out on the ocean sailing"; but no one seemed at all homesick, and we venture to say that a jollier party never left the old world to seek their fortunes in the new. We dropped into our daily routine, and the rules and regulations of life on board ship, with very little trouble to anybody, and from the first day to the last, and from the biggest Labour House lad to our five-year-old

Figure 4. Facsimile from *Ups and Downs*, May 1896, p. 1

band, as seen in our reproduction, are not those [who] played the '87 party out of Euston station: but it was *the band*, the well-known uniform with its attractive facings, the same or apparently the same instruments, and it was certainly the same Mr. Davis as of yore; and a wall of the same old Home formed the background. No wonder that our photograph...struck a tender chord in the hearts of so many of our boys.<sup>39</sup>

The editorial comment suggests that the image of the band stood metonymically for the Barnardo's "family" in its entirety, with the background wall "of the same old Home" similarly representing the whole network of Barnardo's homes and villages. Seeing this image in a space normally reserved for national monuments must have had a startling effect on readers, who were unlikely to have considered themselves sources of national pride on a par with historic buildings.

To more recent viewers and readers, the image and its editorial interpretation are both indicators of the link between Barnardo's use of photography as philanthropic machinery for turning "street arabs" into "useful and honourable citizens," and for furthering the imperialist ambition of "civilization."<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the Barnardo's Home Band itself could be read as an embodiment of the imperialist ideology that underpinned child migration schemes, as detailed earlier in this article. The drills, drums, and uniforms emulated the ceremonial and military trappings of British imperial presence, and the performing children's bodies alluded to the actual "foot soldiers" of the empire.<sup>41</sup> More than anything, perhaps, the editors' comments illustrate that while *Ups and Downs* can be read as an aggregate record of the presence, lives, experiences, and concerns of Barnardo boys and girls in Canada, it is also a persistent representation of Barnardo's promotional activities and ideological messaging.

This documentary duality is highlighted on the research website British Home Children in Canada, which describes *Ups and Downs* as "a window into the minds of the dominate [sic] executive personalities that controlled the organization."<sup>42</sup> The website is run by the not-for-profit organization Home Children Canada and hosts an online collection of magazine issues scanned from microfilm copies held by Library and Archives Canada (**Fig. 2**).<sup>43</sup> The organization's stated mission is to "bring the true stories of the British Home Children to light, maintain their memory and to reunite the families separated by the child migrant schemes."<sup>44</sup> Its associated research website effectively functions as a digital community archive, giving open access to digitized versions of a wide range of records and documents pertaining to organized child migration. Some of this material derives from the families and descendants of child migrants, while other documents and records have been digitized from public collections. The digitized versions have been produced and made available in PDF-format by volunteers using Scribd, a commercial platform for publication and document sharing. The Scribd PDF viewing application is embedded as a window in the web browser interface of the research website, which is hosted by another commercial platform, Weebly. The PDFs have not been furnished with a layer for optical character recognition (OCR), and, as a consequence, they are not text-searchable; however, volunteers have transcribed the names of all children mentioned in each issue, and these are displayed alongside the PDF versions on the website.<sup>45</sup>

The use of commercial online platforms that offer basic functionalities free of charge is a clear sign of the limited financial and technical resources that volunteers have had at their disposal when digitizing the microfilmed print runs of *Ups and Downs*. The prioritization of name transcription, rather than creation of OCR layers to enable searching across all kinds of text, likewise indicates that this aggregated digitized record has been considered first and foremost a significant archival source for genealogical research and memory work by the community of Home Children families and descendants.

In this respect, the British Home Children in Canada website exemplifies the growth of community archives from around the turn of the millennium, when “the advent of the Web and its democratic promise” seemed to galvanize an already “surging interest in personal and family history, increased awareness of and frustration with absences in and biases of the historical record.”<sup>46</sup> One powerful motivation behind digitized community archives is to take back control over the records of ancestors from the institutions that captured them, by exploiting the affordances of digitization as a technology of access as well as preservation. An unintended consequence of open-access, digitized community archives, however, is that they also attract the interest of historians and scholars who are otherwise unfamiliar with the local historical and community contexts that have produced these archives.

Writing on “the coinciding digitized and transnational turns” in historical scholarship, Lara Putnam has warned that instant access to all kinds of archival sources from anywhere enables historians in general, and those with privileged access to digitized resources in particular, “to publish about places they have never been and may know very little about.”<sup>47</sup> I largely concur with Putnam that the all-too-ready availability of digitized sources encourages what she calls “drive-by transnationalism,” whereby researchers produce an appearance of comprehensive scholarship by superficially consulting a large number of far-flung sources rather than conducting in-depth and on-site study in local archives. The rapid and largely uncritical adoption of digitized research practices since the early 2000s — with a concomitant decline in available funding for time-consuming archival research trips — nevertheless means that historical inquiry is increasingly limited to sources that have been digitized.<sup>48</sup> This dilemma also arises, as Alex Poole has noted, in the otherwise counter-hegemonic sphere of community archives, where there is a risk of “a handful of community archives dominating the resource representational landscape at the expense of those lacking resources.”<sup>49</sup> As access to the physical archives of Barnardo’s in the UK has become increasingly difficult to negotiate — for reasons I will soon address — the user-friendly online repository of *Ups and Downs* may come to sustain a larger proportion of future research into the organization than might otherwise have been the case.

Certainly, the convenient availability of the *Ups and Downs* collection in the digital community archives of British Home Children in Canada has been instrumental in enabling me, a UK-trained photo historian based in Norway with no personal or professional affiliations to Canada, to pursue this research on the topic of photography and child migration. It was, moreover, another online community that first drew my attention to this subject: the specialist forum British Photographic History, which invites “information and discussion on all aspects of British photographic history,” and draws engagement from both professionals and amateurs in the field.<sup>50</sup> In 2013, an item about an ongoing digitization project at Barnardo’s archives in the UK was posted on this forum, which suggested that Barnardo’s was considering destroying original photographic records in its archives once they had been digitized by an external contractor.<sup>51</sup> The story was soon picked up by charity sector websites and elicited strong reactions in social media, not just from photo historians and archivists, but also from members of the globally dispersed community of descendants from Barnardo’s children. In this

case, which I explore in the next part of this essay, the traumatic legacy of child migration appeared to work as a powerful accelerant on more broadly held concerns about the impact of digitization practices on the long-term survival of analogue archival photographs.

### Changing Perceptions of Barnardo's Photographic Archives

As a publication produced by Barnardo's to promote and support its child migration programme, *Ups and Downs* made use of photography first and foremost to fulfil its intended function as a medium of (imagined) community and social interaction. This was in line with Barnardo's earliest uses of photography as a medium of advertising and fundraising. Within the daily business of the charity itself, however, photography was above all a medium of administration and accountability, typified in the routine production of entry photographs. Today, the Barnardo's archives are located in a designated facility in London, England. They contain around half a million images and hundreds of films of both administrative and promotional material, which represent "the visual history of the organization."<sup>52</sup>

The status of the photographic records preserved in these archives has changed more than once since they were first produced and assembled. Having started out as administrative tools in the day-to-day running of the charity, in the 1970s Barnardo's photographs attained a new visibility as both documents and illustrations of social history, prompted by the previously discussed 1974 exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. There was a time when Barnardo's actively promoted its photographic and documentary material for illustration purposes. For instance, the 1996 edition of *Picture Researcher's Handbook* listed Barnardo's Film and Photographic Archive among its specialist sources of illustration, describing its holdings as relating to "voluntary childcare and related social history."<sup>53</sup> Around the same time, a feature in the *Library Review* informed the journal's target audience of librarians and information scientists that the Barnardo's Photographic Archive was "open to researchers, historians, editors, schools, colleges and anyone interested in the social history of the twentieth century."<sup>54</sup>

In the 1990s and 2000s, Barnardo's archives furnished empirical material for important research in the fields of social history, historical geography, and dress history, ranging from Caroline Bressey's work on the lives of Black people in Victorian Britain to Clare Rose's analysis of sartorial signs of respectability among receivers of charity in London in the 1890s.<sup>55</sup> In recent years, however, the charity has developed a more guarded policy towards external researchers, making it clear that its responsibilities are first and foremost to children and relatives of children who have been in its care. By the 2010s, the historical photographs preserved in Barnardo's archives were no longer promoted and monetized for their value as a specialist source of illustration, as they were in the 1990s, but were once again considered primarily as records for use in internal documentation work.

The 1995 *Library Review* feature on the Barnardo's archive stated that "thousands of former residents of Barnardo's and their families" had by that time "been able to fill gaps in photo albums thanks to the charity's policy of photographing every child who passed through the homes."<sup>56</sup> Some twenty years later, the retrieval of historical

photographs of children in care was no longer considered a mere matter of filling out the family album, but part of the organization's duty of care to the individuals affected by its activities. The main purpose of the photo archive is now defined by the charity's aftercare department, Making Connections, in line with its "Statement of Purpose" published in 2018, which describes the department's priorities as follows: "firstly to manage the collection, indexing and storage of Barnardo's child care records in its archive, and secondly to provide an access to records service to adults who were either in Barnardo's care or adopted through Barnardo's as children."<sup>57</sup> The wording of this statement signals a shift of emphasis away from the organization that produced the records and onto the individuals represented in those records. It implicitly recognizes the Barnardo's archives as first and foremost a repository of personal data pertaining to named individuals, in contrast to the 1990s conception of its contents as documentary sources on childcare and social history. In short, it indicates an acknowledgement of the archival holdings first as material records of the lives of children, and second as "the product of actions and transactions" by the charity.<sup>58</sup>

This conceptual shift occurred over the course of several years and in response to several developments outside the organization itself. The first key event was the introduction of the UK Data Protection Act in 1998, which unambiguously conferred the status of personal data upon archived material such as children's photographic portraits and history sheets. Barnardo's is legally obligated to comply with this statutory framework for storing and managing personal data, which was recently updated in 2018.<sup>59</sup> A further change in archival practices followed revelations about historical abuse across children's institutions both in the UK and abroad, which came to light in the early 2010s and demonstrated the need to preserve historical records in the event of future investigations or inquiries.<sup>60</sup> And finally, a third contributing factor was the online opprobrium over the digitization of Barnardo's photographic archive in the summer of 2013.

The digitization initiative was undertaken in a bid to improve the organization's efficiency in the management of internal records. Yet it attracted the attention of activists, drawn both from the globally-dispersed community of Home Children descendants and from the worldwide professional community of photo historians and archivists, when rumours emerged that Barnardo's was set to destroy original photographs after digitization. Although Barnardo's was quick to deny these reports, the charity appeared unsure of its ability to house its historical records in an adequate manner, and in need of finding "a new home" for at least 210,000 of its analogue photographs.<sup>61</sup> An online petition was set up by an individual in Sydney, Australia, the signatories of which appeared to be a mixture of historians, photo archivists, voluntary sector activists, and descendants of Barnardo children across the UK, Australia, and Canada.<sup>62</sup> About ten days after the initial blog post that brought attention to the case,<sup>63</sup> a short piece on the *Amateur Photographer* website reported that "interest generated by the online commotion may help secure the archive's future," and that the charity had so far received "40 offers to re-house part of its archive."<sup>64</sup> By the time the digitization project was completed in early 2014, Barnardo's had also decided to repurpose one of its former children's centres to enable safe and permanent storage of archival records and photographic originals under its own roof.<sup>65</sup> The decisive factor appears to have been that compliance with



the data protection laws, cited above, effectively prohibited Barnardo's from separating out the photographic materials from other records and re-housing them with another organization.<sup>66</sup> Further confronted with the strength of feeling expressed online from a globalized community of self-identified stakeholders, the charity eventually realized it must preserve all its historical records within its own organization in order to fulfil both data protection requirements and its moral obligations towards descendants as well as ancestors.

Reactions to Barnardo's digitization project posted or published online revealed that many of those who might be thought to benefit from improved, digitally mediated access to archival records were advocating — via digital platforms — for them to remain in place. Consider the following three “reasons for signing,”<sup>67</sup> provided by signatories from three different continents, to the Change.org petition urging Barnardo's to “find a new home” for its photographic archives:

“It is important for us to keep documentary evidence of social history. Dr Barnardo is an inspiration for many children who still suffer today.” (Signatory A, Hereford, United Kingdom)

“It is essential that original source material is preserved. It always contains more information than the digital version.” (Signatory B, Lewisham, Australia)

“My grandfather was a Barnardo's child” (Signatory C, Ontario, Canada)

Signatories A and B expressed the typical viewpoints of historians and archivists, who from a professional perspective appreciate the value of documents and records in their original formats and contexts. Signatory C, meanwhile, was one of several supporters of the petition to cite their grandfather's background from Barnardo's as their reason for signing. For these descendants, maintaining the relation between the analogue parent holdings and their digital offspring may have assumed a loaded significance because the photographs in question were records of children who had been either orphaned or removed from their original and family contexts.

From this perspective, digitizing and then destroying perhaps the one material artefact that remained in England with a direct connection to thousands of Canadian British Home Children might be conceived as repeating the acts and compounding the harms of orphanization and migration, only this time with pictures rather than people. For descendants, Barnardo's plans (or lack of them) for the photo archive suggested that the organization which had exerted a lasting hold on their ancestors' lives was not to be trusted with preserving their photographic remains.

A notable aspect of the online controversy was that members of the public appeared to mobilize against digital technologies of preservation by making use of digital technologies of access. I consider this an unusual manifestation of what Nanna Bonde Thylstrup calls “the politics of mass digitization,” which since the early 2000s has been shaping both experiences and expectations of technologically mediated access to the contents of archives, libraries, and museums.<sup>68</sup> Grounded in the conception of digitization as a “moral imperative,” this mainstream politics deploys the rhetoric of “democratization” and “access” to oblige institutions to ensure the immediate and (seemingly) unmediated availability of cultural, scientific, and historical records regardless of physical location or personal accreditation.<sup>69</sup> It can also be couched in the language of liberation, as recently

illustrated in promotional material about Library and Archives Canada's digital policy, where the conversion of "documents, films, paintings, photographs, music into digital form" is said to ensure that "they are no longer the prisoner of their original form."<sup>70</sup> Yet the petition to preserve the Barnardo's photographic originals after digitization demonstrated that stakeholders can hold archives accountable and responsible for the safeguarding of historical records in their original, material forms, regardless of whether their informational content is considered to be adequately preserved through reproduction in digital formats. The web-enabled mobilization of Home Children descendants also indicated how the digital access and preservation technologies of today can provide the means by which to salvage and re-create something of the family and community connections that Barnardo's had sought to construct among the children in its care using earlier photographic and printing technologies.

### Concluding Reflections

The two case studies explored in this essay exemplify a number of ways in which digital technologies of access and preservation have been enlisted for the purposes of seeing and saving photographic sources to the historical phenomenon of child migration. In both cases, stakeholders outside the organizations that hold the original sources — Library and Archives Canada, in the case of the *Ups and Downs* magazine copies, and Barnardo's, in the case of the archival photographs — have been instrumental either in extending access to these sources in the present or in ensuring that they are preserved for the future. In doing so, they have made use of digital platforms that have been designed not for the purposes of research or archival preservation, but rather to encourage online engagement, whether in the form of content consumption, discussion, or campaigning.

In the first case, British Home Children in Canada's dissemination of digitized microfilm copies of *Ups and Downs* by means of the Scribd platform, accompanied by lists of personal names manually transcribed from each issue, functions as a community archives that derives its sources from material originally collected and still preserved by a public institution. While serving the interests of former Home Children and their descendants, the volunteers behind the website are also providing a service to a transnational community of professional researchers who will make other kinds of discoveries through this digitized repository than those likely to be made by its main target users.

In my analysis of the magazine, I have argued that *Ups and Downs* in the 1890s functioned as a social medium for its original readers and contributors, thanks to the particular affordances of photography and photomechanical printing as technologies of seeing across space as well as time. Recalling Rothschild's idea that history changes along with the technologies we use to study it, however, this interpretation has no doubt been shaped by the current-day technologies of seeing that I have been employing to access the magazine. The affinities between this printed periodical and an online social medium seemed obvious when consulting the pages of *Ups and Downs* on a networked laptop at home or in the office, through the same web browser that is used for checking status updates and profile pictures on Facebook. Yet they might not have been equally discernable had I been in a library reading room leafing through paper copies or turning the handles on a microfilm reader. Working from digitized documents and records

means working from sources that have first been dislocated from their original material supports, and then exiled from “the documentary universe in which [they] circulated and generated meaning,” as Schwartz has noted.<sup>71</sup> And as my reading of *Ups and Downs* suggests, the networked environment of a digital repository constitutes another documentary universe, in which digitized surrogates circulate in different spheres and thereby generate new meanings.

In the second case, archival activists, who were concerned about the potential loss of original photographs after Barnardo's digitization project was completed, harnessed the power of social media to drum up sufficient engagement to influence the charity's decision making. The petition did not raise the question of access to digitized surrogates, but was solely aimed at ensuring that the analogue, emulsion-based originals remained intact. This was in other words less an example of the effects that digitization has had on the study of history than of the impact that digital activism can have on the preservation of historical source material. Writing up this brief episode of activism as a case – in the sense of “a problem-event that has animated some kind of judgement”<sup>72</sup> – has nevertheless required its own process of historical research, based on born-digital sources that have only partially been preserved, less than a decade after they were created.

This highlights perhaps the most urgent aspect of the observation that history changes discontinuously with its technologies; namely, that the production of digital records far outstrips the systems and capacities in place to preserve them. For this reason, as Rothschild sees it, the records created in the present are “closer to oblivion” than those which have already been preserved for hundreds of years.<sup>73</sup> The purpose and appeal of digitizing analogue sources – whether photographs, magazines, or public records – is to make persistent representations of the past easily accessible in the present through the most up-to-date technologies of seeing, saving, and remembering. If representations of our own present are to be made persistent and accessible into the future, however, we must ourselves remember to preserve the relevant technologies.

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- 12 The literature on materiality and “the material turn” in photography studies is too vast to cite comprehensively here, but two essay collections published fifteen years apart provide excellent guides to the field: *Photographs, Objects, Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, eds. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (London: Routledge, 2004); *Photo-Objects: On the Materiality of Photographs and Photo Archives*, eds. Julia Bärnighausen, Costanza Caraffa, Stefanie Klamm, Franka Schneider & Petra Wodtke (Berlin: Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften, 2019).

- 13 Rose, "Raggedness and Respectability," 140.
- 14 Tagg, *Burden of Representation*, 83–85; Koven, "Dr. Barnardo's 'Artistic Fictions,'" 29. See also Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (1986), 3–64.
- 15 Gillian Wagner and Valerie Lloyd, *The Camera and Dr Barnardo* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1974), 14–15.
- 16 Thomas Barnardo, cited in *The Camera and Dr Barnardo*, 14.
- 17 Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 36.
- 18 "The Barnardo Photographic Archive," *Library Review* 44, no. 7 (November 1995): 38, <https://doi.org/10.1108/00242539510791525>.
- 19 McHoul, "Taking the Children," 38.
- 20 McHoul, "Taking the Children," 38.
- 21 McHoul, "Taking the Children," 39.
- 22 Wagner and Lloyd, *The Camera and Dr Barnardo*, 11.
- 23 Koven, "Dr. Barnardo's 'Artistic Fictions,'" 2. This article provides a detailed account of the arbitration that was nominally occasioned by a contemptuous publication about Barnardo by an evangelical minister, but which also involved a wide range of disgruntled former employees and associates, as well as the powerful Charity Organisation Society, which was committed to upholding the existing model for poor relief.
- 24 Koven, "Dr. Barnardo's 'Artistic Fictions,'" 29.
- 25 Koven, "Dr. Barnardo's 'Artistic Fictions,'" 29.
- 26 Joan M. Schwartz, "'Working Objects in Their Own Time': Photographs in Archives," in *The Handbook of Photography Studies*, ed. Gil Pasternak (London: Routledge, 2020), 525.
- 27 As Alec McHoul has pointed out, the aggregated record represented by the accumulated number of albums also documented the sheer scale of Barnardo's "almost scandalous quantitative success" as a philanthropic agent. Alex McHoul, *Semiotic Investigations: Towards An Effective Semiotics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996) 33.
- 28 Joan M. Schwartz, "'We Make Our Tools and Our Tools Make Us': Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomats," *Archivaria*, 40 (1995): 42.
- 29 Geoffrey Yeo, "Concepts of Record (2): Prototypes and Boundary Objects," *American Archivist* 71, no. 1 (2008): 136.
- 30 The classic account of this process is Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991).
- 31 Brown et al., "'To Transform and Renovate,'" 14. Names of Home Children featured in the magazine have been indexed by the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa, available at: <https://www.bifhsgo.ca/search-name-index> (accessed 15 December 2021).
- 32 Brown et al., "'To Transform and Renovate,'" 5.
- 33 Indeed, it was not above enlisting its readers as potential "influencers" (in modern parlance), as the following excerpt from a May 1896 piece "About Advertising" indicates: "Many of our boys ... could be of great assistance to us if they would occasionally indulge in a little "persuasive eloquence" on behalf of our advertising columns." From *Ups and Downs*, 1, no. 10 (May 1896): n.p.
- 34 Lee Humphreys, *The Qualified Self: Social Media and the Accounting of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2018).
- 35 Personal correspondence was of course subject to the same time delay between the sending and receiving of news. For a perceptive analysis of its effects on a transnational family network in the same period, see Laura Ishiguro, "'How I Wish I Might Be Near!': Distance and the Epistolary Family in Late-Nineteenth-Century Condolence Letters," in *Within and Without the Nation: Canadian History as Transnational History*, ed. Karen Dubinsky, Adele Perry, and Henry Yu (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 212–27.

- 36 This point has been particularly well argued by Simone Natale and David M. Henkin, who have both emphasized the importance of the US postal system in disseminating daguerreotypes and later photographic formats from the 1840s onward. See Simone Natale, “Photography and Communication Media in the Nineteenth Century,” *History of Photography* 36, no. 4 (2012): 451–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2012.680306>; David M. Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 59.
- 37 On the role of albums in constructing and maintaining social networks in the nineteenth century, see Patrizia Di Bello, *Women’s Albums and Photography in Victorian England: Ladies, Mothers and Flirts* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007).
- 38 Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*, 131.
- 39 “Here and There,” *Ups and Downs* 1, no. 11 (June 1896): 4. Emphasis in the original.
- 40 Ash, *Funding Philanthropy*, 445.
- 41 For more on the importance of performance and imperialist ideology in Barnardo’s “public spectacles,” see Ash, above.
- 42 “Ups and Down’s Magazine,” British Home Children in Canada, accessed 16 November 2021, <https://canadianbritishhomechildren.weebly.com/ups-and-downs-magazine.html>.
- 43 “British Home Children in Canada,” British Home Children in Canada, accessed 17 January 2022, <https://canadianbritishhomechildren.weebly.com/>.
- 44 “Home Children Canada,” Home Children Canada, accessed 14 December 2021, <https://www.britishhomechildren.com>.
- 45 On the significance of optical character recognition and searchable text for historical research, see Lara Putnam, “The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast,” *American Historical Review* 121, no. 2 (April 2016): 377–402, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/121.2.377>.
- 46 Alex H Poole, “The Information Work of Community Archives: A Systematic Literature Review,” *Journal of Documentation* 76, no. 3 (2020): 658, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-07-2019-0140>.
- 47 Putnam, “The Transnational and the Text-Searchable,” 397.
- 48 Ian Milligan demonstrated the correlation between citation rate and digital availability in a survey of Canadian history dissertations and research articles, finding that the digitisation of all past issues of *The Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* in the early 2000s meant they rapidly became by far the most prominent newspaper sources cited by historians in Canada. See Ian Milligan, “Illusionary Order: Online Databases, Optical Character Recognition, and Canadian History, 1997–2010,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 94, no. 4 (2013): 540–69.
- 49 Poole, “The Information Work of Community Archives,” 677.
- 50 British Photographic History, accessed 29 April 2022, <http://britishphotohistory.ning.com>.
- 51 “Barnardo’s Archive ‘Up for Grabs’ or Destruction (UPDATE 3) – British Photographic History,” accessed 4 April 2019, <http://britishphotohistory.ning.com/m/blogpost?id=2680769%3ABlogPost%3A72775>; Jenna Pudelek, “Fears Circulate That Barnardo’s Photo Archive Might Be Destroyed,” accessed 4 April 2019, <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/fears-circulate-barnardos-photo-archive-destroyed/communications/article/1192660>.
- 52 Barnardo’s, “Photo Archive,” [Barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk), accessed 19 April 2018, archived at: [https://web.archive.org/web/20180507150116/http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/our\\_history/working\\_with\\_former\\_barnardos\\_children/photo\\_archive.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20180507150116/http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_history/working_with_former_barnardos_children/photo_archive.htm)
- 53 Hilary Evans and Mary Evans, *Picture Researcher’s Handbook: An International Guide to Picture Sources and How to Use Them*, 6th ed. (London: Routledge, 1996), 554. This entry suggests that the film and photographic archive operated in much the same way as professional photo libraries at the time.
- 54 “The Barnardo’s Photographic Archive,” 39.
- 55 Bressey, “Forgotten Histories”; Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans*; Rose, “Raggedness and Respectability in Barnardo’s Archive”.

- 56 “The Barnardo Photographic Archive,” 34.
- 57 Barnardo's Children's Services Making Connections Service, “Making Connections SOP 2018.”
- 58 Schwartz, “We Make Our Tools,” 42.
- 59 Megan Parker, archive manager at Barnardo's, conversation with author, London, 21 January 2019; Data Protection Act 1998 c. 29, accessed 20 December 2021, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents/enacted>; Data Protection Act 2018 c. 12, accessed 20 December 2021, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted>.
- 60 In 2018, the UK Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published an investigation report on child migration programmes. According to the report Barnardo's handled its first case of sexual abuse by a member of its Canadian staff in 1889. This person was in fact Alfred Owen, “Canadian Agent and Superintendent” for Barnardo's, as well as editor of *Ups and Downs* magazine, who remained in his post until the early 1920s, in other words for thirty years after he had been “convicted of sexual interference with girls in his care” (IICSA report p. 66). IICSA reports that Barnardo's took steps to ensure “that locks should be put on bedroom doors and chaperones provided when girls were in vulnerable situations” (p. 67), and found that “the system Barnardo's had in place to take sufficient care to protect the child migrants from risks, including of sexual abuse, was more robust than those adopted by many of the other institutions.” See IICSA, *Child Migration Programmes: Investigation Report* (March 2018), p. 73.
- 61 “Barnardo's Denies Plan to ‘Destroy’ Photo Archive,” *Amateur Photographer*, 29 July 2013, <https://www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/latest/photo-news/barnardos-denies-plan-to-destroy-photo-archive-9044>.
- 62 Geoff Barker, “Find a New Home for the Original Photographs,” Change.org, 13 September 2013, <https://www.change.org/p/save-barnardo-s-photographic-archive-find-a-new-home-for-the-original-photographs>. The petition had obtained 1,390 signatories at the time it closed, including that of the present author.
- 63 “Barnardo's Archive ‘Up for Grabs’ or Destruction (UPDATE 3) – British Photographic History.”
- 64 “Barnardo's Denies Plan to ‘Destroy’ Photo Archive.”
- 65 Martine King, former archive manager at Barnardo's, email to author, 4 November 2015, and Megan Parker, conversation with author, 21 January 2019.
- 66 It is worth noting that Barnardo's had tried outsourcing parts of its archives before: In the 2000s a considerable number of records were deposited in the University of Liverpool Library Special Collections and Archives, which at the time were building collections on the history of social work. By 2014 the university library was no longer prioritizing this area of research, and the records were repatriated to the charity. Information from Megan Parker, conversation with author, London, 21 January 2019.
- 67 “Reasons for Signing: Find a New Home for the Original Photographs,” Change.org, 13 September 2013, accessed 17 January 2022, <https://www.change.org/p/save-barnardo-s-photographic-archive-find-a-new-home-for-the-original-photographs/c>.
- 68 Nanna Bonde Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitization* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2019).
- 69 Thylstrup, *Politics*, 3.
- 70 Quoted in Joan M. Schwartz, “‘In the Archives, a Thousand Photos That Detail Our Questions’: Final Reflections on Photographs and Archives,” in Bärnighausen et al (eds), *Photo-Objects: On the Materiality of Photographs and Photo Archives*, 318.
- 71 Schwartz, “‘In the Archives,’” 318.
- 72 Lauren Berlant, “On the Case,” *Critical Inquiry* 33, no. 4 (2007): 663. <https://doi.org/10.1086/521564>.
- 73 Rothschild, “The Future of History,” 289.