



Marjorie

Her War Years

A British Child Migrant sent to Vancouver Island

Patricia Skidmore

Marjorie: her family broken apart and her identity taken away, she had to forget her past in order to face her future. But forgetting isn't forever.

Taken from their mother's care and deported from England to the colonies, ten-year-old Marjorie Arnison and her nine-year-old brother, Kenny, were sent to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School on Vancouver Island in September 1937. Their eight-year-old sister, Audrey, followed the next August.

Marjorie's new home was on an isolated farm — a cottage she shared with at least ten other girls and a “cottage mother” at the head, who had complete control over her “children.”

Survival required sticking to bare essentials. Marjorie had to accept a loss, which was difficult to forgive. Turning inward, she would find strength to pull her through, but she had to lock away her memories in order to endure her new life.

Marjorie was well into her senior years before those memories resurfaced.

<https://www.dundurn.com/books/t22117/a9781459741669-marjorie-her-war-years>

Patricia Skidmore is the daughter of a British Child Migrant. Patricia started researching British Child Migration in the late 1990s. The biggest surprise she found was that worldwide, it had a 350-year history, and that over 120,000 children were sent to Canada starting as early as the 1830s and continued to 1948. The last 329 children were sent to the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School just south of Duncan. Over 95% of the children were not orphans.



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This is a worthy sequel to Marjorie, Too Afraid to Cry, which told a painful but critically important story of lives turned upside down by the then UK Government's policy of sending children overseas and away from their families for ever.

—Gordon Brown,
former Prime Minister of Britain.

Marjorie: Her War Years is the sequel to the stunning *Marjorie: Too Afraid to Cry*, that chronicled the experience of British children forcibly taken from poor families and used as cheap labour and “white stock” for the British colonial empire. In 1937, at the age of 10, Marjorie Arnison found herself motherless and alone at the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School, near Victoria, British Columbia, an environment of humiliation and abuse.

Marjorie Her War Years follows day-to-day life at the school, how the girls banded together to soothe each other from the constant verbal abuse and to avoid the ubiquitous pedophiles. This is an important book because it exposes the dark side of “civilized” society, as it reveals the strength of the human heart to rise above that darkness.

Rex Weyler, author of *Blood of the Land* and *Greenpeace: The Inside Story*.

The two books are harrowing to read, but this story of one family's experience helps us to better understand the destructive effects of the child migration program. They are also a testament to the human spirit, to resilience and reconciliation.

Sylvia Crooks, Ormsby Review. 2019