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Résumé de l'article

Au 19e siècle c’était généralement les femmes qui s’occupaient du secours aux enfants. Mais les sociétés de l’aide à l’enfance (SAE), fondées à partir des années 1890, étaient dominées par les hommes. Cet article tente de comprendre comment ceux qui faisaient le travail des SAE le concevaient comme un travail particulièrement masculin, et de décrire le rapport entre cette conception et la pratique réelle du travail. Notre recherche aux archives de trois SAE ontariennes – celles d’Ottawa, de Brantford, et surtout de Belleville – suggère que les chefs des SAE envisageaient leur travail comme une entreprise morale et virile qui avait essentiellement pour but d’affronter des milieux dépravés pour sauver les enfants menacés des dangers de leur environnement.

"At Last a Practical Man Got a Gun"

The Masculinity of Children's Aid, 1893–1912*

by Mike Reid

In 1905, John Joseph Kelso, the government supervisor of Children's Aid Societies (CASs) in Ontario, visited Halifax at the invitation of the Local Council of Women. There, he told a parable to explain the work of the Children's Aid.

> Mr. Kelso...related the fable of a river down which children who had been thrown in further up, no one knew by whom, were being swept down to destruction, except for the few that people were able to save as they passed along. At last a practical man got a gun and went up the river to see what could be done to stop the supply.[1]

To Kelso's audience, it seems, this story was rational, even pithy. In order to understand what it meant, we must examine the metaphors of manliness that were at the heart of early Children's Aid in Ontario. These concepts in turn shaped CAS practices that transformed the lives of families and children.

Scope and Context

The two decades from the Ontario Children's Protection Act (CPA) authorizing Children's Aid work in 1893 to the creation of a provincial association of CASs in 1912 showed little standardization or professionalization of Children's Aid.[2] Although CASs derived their special authority from the CPA and were technically subject to the monitoring of Kelso's office in Toronto, they were nonetheless municipal charities. CASs were therefore always the products of negotiation between Kelso and local elites. The following article combines sources from Kelso's office with primary sources from Brantford, Ottawa, and Belleville from 1893 to 1912. In particular, the

*The author would like to thank the staff of the Hastings Children's Aid Society, the Children's Aid Society of Brant, and the Children's Aid Society of Grey County. Special thanks is due to Paula Loube, Zann Coltsman, Lisa Thompson, and Diane Sule. The names of all children and families affected by the Children's Aid have been changed.

[1] Children's Aid Society of Brant archives (hereafter BrCAS), S.M. Thomson box, S.M. Thomson's 1905 Day Journal, "Give the Children a Chance," undated newspaper clipping.

[2] Much of the later push for CAS standardization and professionalization came from this organization, the Associated Children's Aid Societies of Ontario (ACASO). Archives of Ontario, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies fonds, box MU5072, Minutes 1912–1919, page 82, 17 and 18 June 1919. The provincial government did not insist on much in the way of detailed budgets or properly completed forms from Kelso or local CASs until the ACASO began demanding increased state funding. Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 144.

Abstract

Throughout the nineteenth century, Ontario child saving had been largely a women's domain. But Children's Aid Societies (CASs), appearing in the 1890s, were consistently dominated by men. This article explores the gendered meaning that CAS work held for the people who performed it and the relationship between that meaning and the actual practice of the work. Research in the archives of three Ontario CASs — those of Ottawa, Brantford, and especially Belleville — indicates that CAS leaders imagined their work as a manly, moral enterprise centred on the dramatic, confrontational rescue of imperiled children from evil surroundings.

Résumé: *Au 19e siècle c'était généralement les femmes qui s'occupaient du secours aux enfants. Mais les sociétés de l'aide à l'enfance (SAE), fondées à partir des années 1890, étaient dominées par les hommes. Cet article tente de comprendre comment ceux qui faisaient le travail des SAE le concevaient comme un travail particulièrement masculin, et de décrire le rapport entre cette conception et la pratique réelle du travail. Notre recherche aux archives de trois SAE ontariennes – celles d'Ottawa, de Brantford, et surtout de Belleville – suggère que les chefs des SAE envisageaient leur travail comme une entreprise morale et virile qui avait essentiellement pour but d'affronter des milieux dépravés pour sauver les enfants menacés des dangers de leur environnement.*

unusual organizational history of the Belleville CAS, and the contested position of women within it, brings the gendered meaning of Children's Aid more clearly into view.

Although much of Ontarian society was male-dominated in the 1800s, charitable childcare was clearly the province of women. Protestant Orphanage Homes, the most prevalent of the child-saving institutions, were usually organized by middle- and upper-class women.[3] Carol Baines has noted that in the second half of the nineteenth century "...throughout Ontario...women assumed responsibility for managing, raising funds for, and directing the operations of...children's institutions."[4] These organizations had no legal power to keep children in their care against their parents' will, and many poor families used orphanages intermittently to mitigate the effects of poverty in difficult times.[5]

However, towards the end of the century, several prominent male child savers criticized these children's institutions on three grounds: (1) for being needlessly expensive, (2) for being unable to provide children with the moral influences of a proper, private home, and (3) for being unable to actively rescue children from immoral homes. For these reformers, the ideal place for a neglected child (especially a boy) was a foster home on

[3] Patricia Rooke and R.L. Schnell, "The Rise and Decline of British North American Protestant Orphans' Homes as Woman's Domain, 1850–1930," *Atlantis* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1982).

[4] Carol Thora Baines, "From Women's Benevolence to Professional Social Work: The Case of the Wimodausis Club and the Earlscourt Children's Home 1902–1971" (PhD. diss., University of Toronto, 1990), 6.

[5] Bettina Bradbury, "The Fragmented Family: Family Strategies in the Face of Death, Illness, and Poverty, Montreal, 1860–1885," in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 110; Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English-Canada (1800–1950)* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), 151.

a rural farm.[6] They believed that child saving should actively relocate neglected children to such moral, private homes — by the force of law if necessary. Children's Aid Societies were a central plank of such proposals for replacing the congregate-care system of child saving with the decentralized, ostensibly less costly and more natural foster-care system. In the CAS system, volunteering women were expected to serve as foster mothers, or as members of CASs' visitation committees to oversee foster mothers, rather than as administrators of congregate-care institutions. As Rooke and Schnell put it "...the CAS model was clearly one which, if perfectly actualized, must erode the former spheres of traditional child rescue, the orphan asylum."[7]

The Ontario Children's Protection Act of 1893 granted two new legal powers to the nascent Children's Aid Society movement in that province. The first of the CASs' new powers was the ability to "apprehend without warrant" any child they deemed to be "neglected" within the rather broad definitions of the act. The second was the power to bring such a child before a lower-court judge, who could then legally transfer the guardianship of the child away from its natural parents and make it a ward of the CAS.[8] This second power was intended to allow CASs to then transfer the guardianship again to foster parents.

This study argues that the CPA and the Children's Aid critiques of the orphanage system contained powerful masculinist metaphors. In the words that CAS leaders used, and in the practices they performed, they exalted certain manly attributes and denigrated certain womanly ones. By looking at these behaviours and statements, such as Kelso's 1905 parable, we can begin to understand the gender of Children's Aid and the effects of these ideas on the children it was supposed to help.

"A General and Municipal Character"

Children's Aid Societies were municipal charities, but the Ontario government created a new department —and hired the energetic J.J. Kelso as its superintendant—to oversee and encourage their growth. Kelso called on local volunteers and philanthropists to establish Children's Aid Societies in towns throughout the province. He could often veto the creation of a CAS of which he disapproved, but he could not himself actually create or sustain one. His first step in getting a new CAS started in a given town was usually to encourage prominent local citizens to arrange a public meeting there, with him as a guest speaker. Kelso would then urge the assembled populace to organize a CAS. The idea of Children's Aid enjoyed broad and enthusiastic support around the turn of the century, and many towns created a CAS immediately

[6] LeRoy Ashby, *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 40.

[7] Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 275.

[8] Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 6(1), 3152–54.

after Kelso's speech. Indeed, in one case the society was formed before Kelso's representative even came to the podium.[9]

Local women were often important in these preparations. (It was at the invitation of a women's organization that Kelso gave his "practical man" speech in 1905.) But once the CASs were formed, it was almost always men who had control of them. In Brantford in 1893, a three-citizen exploratory committee of Mrs. Fullerton, Mrs. Cochrane, and Mr. Thomson assembled to investigate the possibility of starting a CAS. But while Mr. S.M. Thomson went on to become the society's secretary, agent, and most prominent member, neither woman ever became a member of the CAS board. Indeed, the only mention of the work of these two women in the whole of the Brantford CAS's official record is a brief reference to them by Thomson in a 1907 retrospective.[10]

In Ottawa, a group of women worked to arrange an effective and large CAS organization meeting. But they do not seem to have spoken at this meeting, and the *Ottawa Citizen* report of it mentions them only at the very end of its article, and then as an anonymous adjunct to a named man. The last lines of the story read, "Among them who have quietly contributed time and trouble in the preliminary work of organization is one whose assistance has been of the greatest value, the Hon. William Macdougall. His advice and efforts were... placed at the disposal of the ladies who first took up this important work."[11] Even though these women apparently started the project, that was the only recorded mention of them.

The first attempt to establish a CAS in Belleville left much more extensive documentation, perhaps because it was so fraught with difficulties. Unlike most of his presentations, Kelso's passionate November 1894 speech to the Belleville public meeting did not immediately stir the audience to action. The *Belleville Intelligencer* began its report of the event by noting indulgently, "Mr. Kelso is a young man, and appears deeply interested in the work...." An audience member suggested to Kelso that the town's new Humane Society should be certified as a CAS; but the Humane Society was reluctant, and Kelso expressed his preference that the Children's Aid be an independent organization. The townsfolk decided to form "a committee to meet to discuss the question and report to a subsequent meeting."[12]

A few weeks later, this committee recommended to Kelso that he certify Belleville's Woman's Christian Association (WCA) as the CAS.[13] Established in

[9] BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, S.M. Thomson's 1905 Day Journal, 19 May.

[10] BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, page 1.

[11] "To Rescue the Children," *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 December 1893.

[12] "A Children's Aid Society: A Meeting Last Night Discussed the Question," *Belleville Intelligencer*, 3 November 1984.

[13] Hastings Children's Aid Society archives in Belleville (hereafter BeCAS), correspondence folder, Thomas Ritchie to J.J. Kelso, 12 November 1894.

1879 by women representatives of each of the local Protestant churches, Belleville's WCA was, by 1894, the town's most important charitable organization.[14] It had built and staffed Canada's first and only hospital ever to be owned entirely by lay women, and it operated an extensive poverty-relief network whose recipients were monitored by a centrally organized schedule of home visits.[15] The WCA therefore already had some of the structures and experience required to handle the duties of a CAS.

But Thomas Ritchie, the member of Belleville's CAS exploratory committee who wrote this recommendation to Kelso, obviously anticipated some resistance from him. Ritchie forwarded Kelso the WCA's constitution,

> by which you will see that one of the objects of this Association is the cause of neglected children and that it is a duly incorporated and organized society....This Society is composed wholly of women and as it does not state in the [Children's Protection] Act that some of the Members shall be men (though it does state that of the Visiting Com. for each electoral division at least three shall be women) therefore I suppose we may presume that the composition of the WCA being all women cannot be objected to....[16]

Kelso wrote back rejecting this offer. Rather than choosing to argue with Ritchie's loophole, he objected on the grounds of the public nature of a CAS.

> I do not think the plan you mention would be just the thing. I fully recognize the value of the splendid organization of the WCA and the desirability of having it...aid as sympathy in carrying on work for children but.... If the WC...did the whole work the [Roman Catholic Church] would then regard the Children's Aid as a purely Protestant organization whereas the desire and intention is that it should be of a general and municipal character.... I should think the Humane Society would be the next best.[17]

Instead of arguing that management solely by women was inappropriate for a CAS, Kelso argued that management solely by Protestants would compromise the public status of the Children's Aid. But almost all women's charitable work in this period was church based, and it rarely transcended the Protestant/Catholic line. Therefore, maintaining that CASs must not be based in any religious group was tantamount to maintaining that they must not be based in any women's group.

After ruling out the Woman's Christian Association in November of 1894, Kelso apparently gave up hope of establishing the Belleville CAS as an independent organization; he resorted to pressur-

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[14] Diane Sule, *The Woman's Christian Association of Belleville* (Unpublished, 2004), 4.

[15] W.C. Mikel, *City of Belleville History* (Picton: Picton Gazette, 1943), 179.

[16] BeCAS, correspondence folder, Thomas Ritchie to J.J. Kelso, 12 November 1894. The sections on visiting committees are the only parts of the 1893 CPA that explicitly address the question of which gender should do what parts of child saving. The committees of six visitors for each municipality were supposed to contain at least three women. Ontario, *Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1897*, c. 259, CPA 5(1), 3151. Thus, the CPA singled out investigation as a task that men could not do alone.

[17] BeCAS, correspondence folder, J.J. Kelso to Thomas Ritchie, 19 November 1894. Despite this ecumenism, no Catholic clergyman made an appearance at a Belleville CAS meeting before 1912.

ing the reluctant Humane Society, which had only been created in April of that year. According to a newspaper report of that society's first meeting, "Its chief objects...were the prevention of cruelty to animals, the protection of insectivorous birds and the care of children." However, it seems that the organization was more interested in discussing these goals than in doing anything about them. At this first meeting, "The recently organized Humane Society gave the first of a series of poetry readings..." followed by a presentation by J.J.B. Flint about the recent "Child-Saving Convention" in Toronto, after which "Mrs. York read a charming little story of 'Two Waifs,' written by herself." All in all, "the affair was a pronounced success" and a "delightful and instructive entertainment." The society made no resolutions for any action at all.[18] Indeed, Flint, the Humane Society's leader, later warned Kelso before the CAS public meeting in November that the Children's Aid idea would probably not get much support in Belleville.[19]

It took almost six months of Kelso's badgering before the Humane Society was properly organized as a legal CAS.[20] Although it finally began to take action in the spring of 1895 — finding an adoptive home for a single child — by then public interest in the fledgling society had waned.[21] It drooped from having an attendance that "was fairly large and most appreciative" for its poetry readings in the spring of 1894 to "there not being a sufficient number of members present for a general meeting" in the spring of 1895.[22] Belleville's Humane Society soon disappeared altogether, thus depriving Kelso of a CAS in Belleville. In the meantime, the WCA continued to handle adoptions of abandoned children ad hoc.[23]

Over the next two decades, as the CAS network was established in Ontario, male leadership of CASs was clearly the norm. The 1912 "Directory of Children's Aid Workers in Ontario" lists only 2 women out of 82 CAS presidents, 21 out of 103 CAS secretaries, and 1 out of 42 CAS agents.[24] It is possi-

[18] "The Inaugural Meeting," *Belleville Intelligencer*, 2 April 1894.

[19] BeCAS, correspondence folder, John J.B. Flint to J.J. Kelso, 26 October 1894.

[20] BeCAS, correspondence folder, J.J. Kelso to W.S.B. Armstrong, 9 May 1895.

[21] "Children's Aid Work," *Belleville Intelligencer*, 31 May 1895.

[22] "The Inaugural Meeting," *Belleville Intelligencer*, 2 April 1894; "Children's Aid Work," *Belleville Intelligencer*, 31 May 1895.

[23] BeCAS, Jean Cunningham, "A Brief History of the Children's Aid Society of the City of Belleville, the County of Hastings & the City of Trenton," unpublished report, 2007, page 5; Diane Sule, pers. comm.

[24] Library and Archives of Canada (hereafter LAC), William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 2, file 5: "1912," "Directory of Children's Aid Workers in Ontario, 1912." A total of 121 societies are listed. Each CAS had at least one of the three aforementioned officers. Many of these 121 societies existed only "on paper," and others were soon to collapse, or had recently emerged. J.J. Kelso, "Fourteenth Report: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario," no. 35 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1907,* 66. The only woman agent, Owen Sound's Mrs. Lediard, was the successor to her husband, the Revd. James Lediard, who had filled the position until at least 1905. Annual Report 1905, front cover, Grey County CAS archives.

ble that leadership came informally from women in some CASs, but no historian has yet examined this possibility. Every published study to date of a pre-WWII Canadian Children's Aid indicates that men were the leaders both formally and practically.[25] Although women were often active in Children's Aid, they seem to have filled roles that were generally subordinated to those of men or isolated as secondary to the general work of the society. Xiaobei Chen has demonstrated women's innovation in using these roles to expand their power within the "male-dominated organization" of the Toronto CAS.[26] Yet before 1893, child-saving organizations had been female-dominated. What was it about Children's Aid Societies that handed this mantle to men?

Practical Men and Volunteering Women

Many child savers depicted children, especially boys, as resources or citizens-to-be in the project of nation building. A 1910 statement by the Reverend Drumm of Belleville was typical: "The Children's Aid...means the making of citizens, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually."[27] In 1897, Brantford's S.M. Thomson gave a speech explaining that the CAS endeavoured to give children moral and spiritual influences, "that they may grow up to be useful and intelligent citizens, helpful in building up this Canada of ours which needs for its development and true progress the help and assistance of every child born in the land."[28] In a particularly hyperbolic moment, Kelso once wrote that "Boys are the most valuable asset in the Province of Ontario to-day. Without them there would be no possibility of developing the country.... At a low commercial estimate the value of a boy would be one thousand dollars."[29] Economic and nationalistic rationalizations like these helped to reposition children, and therefore the families and civil-society organizations that raised them, within the purview of government. And if children were an essential national resource, a part of the business

[25] Xiaobei Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship: Child Saving in Toronto, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 96; Rooke and Schnell, "The Rise and Decline," 22; Robert Adamoski, "'Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice Is Another': Law and the Politics of Familial Regulation in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia," in *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, and the Law,* ed. J. McLaren, R. Menzies, and D. Chunn (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2003), 146; John Bullen, "J.J. Kelso and the New Child-Savers: The Genesis of the Children's Aid Movement in Ontario," in R. Smandych, G. Dodds and A. Esau, ed. *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada* (Manitoba: Legal Research Institute, 1991), 141; Alvin Koop, *To Celebrate Children: A History of the Children's Aid Society of the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington, 1893-1993* (Guelph: CAS of Guelph and Wellington, 1993); Rosalyn Cluett, "Child Welfare on a Shoestring: The Origins of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies, 1893–1939" (PhD. diss., Guelph University, 1994).

[26] Chen, *Tending the Gardens of Citizenship*, 96.

[27] BeCAS, Annual Report 1910, page 13.

[28] BrCAS, S.M. Thomson's prepared speech for the annual meeting held on 1 February 1897.

[29] J.J. Kelso, "Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario," no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1901,* 8.

of the state, then working in their interests could be the business of men.

The rise of Children's Aid in general as a man's method of child saving, and Kelso's rejection in specific of the Belleville Woman's Christian Association as a candidate to become a CAS, occurred in the context of a late nineteenth-century crisis of Christian masculinity. Marguerite van Die has explored the problem in the course of her discussion of evangelical revivals in Brantford. In churches there, before 1850, "women had outnumbered men...by 16 per cent."[30] Pulpits and pundits throughout the English-speaking world offered warnings, explanations, and solutions for men's lack of attendance at churches. Many argued that the problem was church services unwelcoming to manly men. One 1908 issue of the *Ottawa Citizen* included an opinion piece entitled "Tempting Men to the Church," which advocated clergy doing more to make men feel comfortable, up to and including placing spittoons in the aisles.[31]

Indeed, there was a contradiction between the dominant middle-class ideals of manliness and of Christianity in the second half of the nineteenth century.[32] The archetype of successful masculinity was the independent businessman.[33] Such a man was expected to be honest but self-serving, and to attend business meetings where he would negotiate boldly and aggressively for practical gain. A good Christian, on the other hand, was expected to be self-sacrificing, and to attend church services where he would listen passively and quietly to the clergyman speak about theology. In fact, theology itself was commonly seen as impractical and contrasted to the supposed pragmatism of business and industry.[34] Commentators usually blamed this mismatch of faith and gender on the churches. Christianity, many believed, had been "feminised."[35]

One response to these inner conflicts was a movement we now call muscular Christianity. Like the social gospel, this movement sought to change religion by replacing theological discussion with practical action. Like evangelism, it was both popular in focus and individualistic in its concept of salvation. Muscular Christianity was peculiar, however, in putting a positive spiritual value on manliness, largely defined as business pragma-

[30] Marguerite Van Die, "'The Marks of a Genuine Revival': Religion, Social Change, Gender, and Community in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario," *Canadian Historical Review* 79 (March 1998): 535.

[31] "Tempting Men to the Church," *Ottawa Citizen*, 29 January 1908.

[32] Van Die, "The Marks of a Genuine Revival," 556; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 169.

[33] David Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment and Social Mobility in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 65.

[34] Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), xii.

[35] Patricia Dirks, "Reinventing Christian Masculinity and Fatherhood: The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1900-1920," in *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1760-1969,* ed. Nancy Christie (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 291.

tism and physical power.[36] It identified temptation with battle and virtue with strength. These ideas were an important source for the YMCA and Frontier College movements, and they emphasized the importance of physical training and sport to the building up of a man's moral fibre.[37] Through muscular Christianity, some of the men who struggled to reconcile their gender and their religion found a solution in the ideal of righteous combat.

CAS child savers shared these ideas about the positive moral value of forceful manliness. Consider the following statements from guest speakers at two annual meetings of the Brantford CAS. In 1908, W.P. Archibald argued concerning a hypothetical lawbreaker that "He is a criminal, not because of strength, but because of weakness."[38] At the 1909 meeting, the guest speaker was the principal of the Mimico Industrial School for Boys, who reminded the audience that "Work, sport, education, and religion were all necessary to give the boy 'a fighting chance,' to make good in the world...."[39] These speeches were part of a broader CAS narrative of men using strength to overcome immorality. Little wonder, then, that in 1894 Kelso expected the Belleville Woman's Christian Association to merely "aid as sympathy."

Thirteen years after that decision, and twelve years after the Belleville Humane Society collapsed, J.J. Kelso asked Brantford's prominent CAS agent, S.M. Thomson, to go to Belleville and try to get a CAS established there again. In the spring of 1907, Thomson spent two weeks in Belleville, meeting with businessmen, clergymen,[40] and members of the local chapter of his fraternal order.[41] He had no formal meetings with any women or women's organizations, but on 28 May, he managed to get a Belleville CAS officially organized.[42]

Despite Thomson's efforts (or perhaps because of them), the first eighteen months of the Belleville CAS's second life consisted largely of a struggle to survive. Two corresponding secretaries resigned; the agent, Mr. Checker, was laid off twice; and the society barely passed a motion not to disband.[43]

During this early period, although a few women attended CAS executive

[36] David Rosen, "The Volcano and the Cathedral: Muscular Christianity and the Origins of Primal Manliness," in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 26.

[37] Sara Z. Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 17.

[38] "Annual Meeting of the Children's Aid," *Brantford Expositor*, 4 February 1908.

[39] "Children's Aid Society," *Brantford Expositor*, 2 February 1909.

[40] BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1907, 22 and 23 May.

[41] Thomson was a member of the International Order of Oddfellows. BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1907, 3 May.

[42] *Ibid.*, 28 May.

[43] BeCAS, correspondence folder, W.W. Knight to J.J. Kelso, 18 June 1908; BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, page 14, 16 December 1907; *ibid.*, page 17, 24 February 1908; BeCAS, correspondence folder, H.C. Hunt to J.J. Kelso, 30 October 1908.

meetings, they neither made nor seconded any motions, and the men treated them simply as subordinates. For instance, in early 1908, the (male) executive appointed Mrs. Maybee and Mrs. Parks *in absentio* as unpaid probation officers to replace Mr. Checker, who was being laid off for the second time.[44] The executive felt it had to pay a man to do the work of an agent, and financial difficulties were the precipitate cause of Mr. Checker's removal both times. But the executive assumed it could count on Maybee and Parks to sacrifice their time and energy freely and without complaint.

In early 1909, the Belleville CAS achieved greater stability. The society had attracted several prominent businessmen, most notably Thomas Ritchie, the man who had originally recommended to Kelso that the WCA should run the CAS. The society also gained the interest of a much more vocal group of women. The most prominent of these were Mrs. Louisa Lewis and Mrs. Vermilyea. Both women also held important roles in the Woman's Christian Association. In October of 1910, Mrs. Lewis was elected the WCA's president, and Mrs. Vermilyea, its "Chairman of the Department of the Indigent."[45]

Although Lewis, Vermilyea, and several other WCA women were highly active in CAS activities and in meetings of the board of management, they did not invade what were commonly seen as men's roles of governance on the executive. Instead, the energy of these women was expressed through the increasing autonomy and importance of separate ladies' committees, which were devoted to visiting families and to fundraising and maintenance for the shelter. Before 1909, largely ad hoc committees dominated by men, who regarded women as useful accessories, had handled these duties. For example, in 1908 a committee on finance was formed of Thomas Ritchie and four other men, "with power to add...any of the ladies who would be glad to associate."[46] Over the course of 1909, however, more and more space and autonomy were devoted to women on committees, within a broader structure that still emphasized male dominance at the upper levels. In November of 1909, the CAS formed standing committees for fundraising and shelter maintenance, both dominated by women.[47] In February of 1910, Mrs. Lewis emerged as the "Convenor of the Ladies," apparently in charge of coordinating and reporting on the work of all the women in the Belleville CAS.[48] At a November meeting that year, a standing committee to visit foster homes was added, and all of the committees became populated entirely by women, with the occasional exception of the agent (then W.C. Wrightmyer).[49]

[44] BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, page 16, 3 February 1908.

[45] Belleville Woman's Christian Association archives, Annual Report 1910.

[46] BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, page 23, 20 October 1908.

[47] *Ibid.*, page 41, 4 November 1909.

[48] *Ibid.*, page 47, 16 February 1910.

[49] BeCAS, Annual Report 1910, page 4. Also at this meeting, the executive appointed the leadership and membership of all of the ladies' committees. The process by which these nominations were made is

In 1910, members of the male executive began to make statements indicating their lack of involvement in determining the directions that the women's committees took. For instance, in October of 1910, after a lengthy report by "the ladies" concerning the shelter, the executive merely "approved of the policy of the ladies in these several matters and adopted same."[50] In February of 1910, the CAS president noted the "particularly good work having been done by the ladies in their several departments."[51] This gendered division of labour appears to have afforded women considerable autonomy within their spheres. It also discounted these spheres as marginal. Certain departments were "their" departments, while the rest of the CAS, most notably the executive, belonged to men.

In Ottawa and Brantford, the same general tendency can be seen towards treating women volunteers as unimportant, subordinate, and separate from the main work of the CAS. In Ottawa, the prestige of a noblewoman, Lady Ritchie, and the presence of a few female vice-presidents (appointed to represent the local orphanages) added something to the power of women in that CAS, but they still did not give speeches at annual meetings until 1906. In that year, W.L. Scott, the CAS president, became enamoured with Philadelphia's "probation system" for monitoring child deviants. He hired Mde. Bruchesi and Mrs. Cassaday as Ottawa CAS "probation officers," and these two women spoke at that year's annual meeting to advocate for Scott's new system (later to be ensconced in law as the 1908 Juvenile Delinquency Act).[52] Although women may have had autonomy at this CAS in other, more informal spheres, within the very public forum of the annual meeting, they spoke only as part of a man's exhibition of his new system.

Furthermore, in their capacity as probation officers, Bruchesi and Cassaday seem to have had much less autonomy in their day-to-day work than did the male corresponding secretaries and agents who were the only field employees at most other local CASs before the First World War. Each week, Bruchesi and Cassaday visited families and reported their findings to Scott, who then made the judgements on each case and gave his officers their assignments for the next week.[53] Male agents like Belleville's Colonel Wrightmyer frequently decided what cases to investigate and what to do about them, seeking the approval of their CAS presidents only for serious legal action.[54]

In the early Brantford CAS, the most

unclear, and it is possible that the executive merely ratified a list given to them by "the ladies." Nonetheless, the male executive had at least symbolic control over the composition of women's committees. BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, page 64, 15 November 1910.

[50] BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, page 60, 3 October 1910.

[51] *Ibid*., page 49, 16 February 1910.

[52] LAC, Ottawa Children's Aid Society fonds, Minutes 1893-1907, 11 October 1906.

[53] For example, see LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, volume 1, file 4: "1911," from W.L. Scott to John Keane, Mde. Bruchesi, and Mrs. Cassady, 6 April 1911.

[54] BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919 , page 49, 16 February 1910.

prominent woman was Mrs. D.F. Campbell. Until 1906, she frequently offered up her own home as a temporary shelter for the society. Other CAS workers repeatedly praised her in correspondence and case files, and occasionally in public, for her "Noble Self Sacrifice" and for being "an excellent matron, who had wonderful tact and good judgement...."[55] Nevertheless, Mrs. Campbell did not have a place on the CAS executive, nor does she seem to have had much influence on the administrative level of CAS decisions. Furthermore, after she had reduced her services in 1906 as a result of remarrying, CAS leaders spoke very little of the women who performed the caring work after her. For instance, in his 1907 annual report, in a section entitled "Faithfulness of Officers and Constancy of Friends," S.M. Thomson used two paragraphs to describe the stalwart support of a number of male friends of the organization, including lawyers, the treasurer, and the police force. In between these two paragraphs, he devoted a single, isolated sentence to the society's female friends, saying "There are several ladies, also, who in all the years since the society was established rarely if ever miss a monthly meeting, and who are ready to assist in any duties to which they may be called."[56]

Much of women's work in CASs like Brantford's had to do with maintaining the shelter and caring for the children in it. Ironically, Children's Aid Societies were intended to do away with such institutional care. The early advocates of Children's Aid often claimed that congregate childcare in institutions was unnatural.[57] In 1902, Kelso argued that, by placing a child in foster care instead of an institution "...the child is kept in his proper element instead of being subjected to the danger of becoming hardened and perverse...."[58] These arguments implied that the supposed nurturing abilities of women volunteering in institutions were inadequate to the task of child saving. The best thing a benevolent lady could do for a needy child was to become its foster mother. Ideally speaking, although women visitors would remain important to monitor foster homes, CASs were to render obsolete the major women's child-saving strategy of the nineteenth-century: group nurture in institutions.

Despite these plans, CAS shelters steadily acquired more and more long-term inmates from 1893 on. By 1912, CASs across the province were pleading for government funding to build, maintain, or repair their shelters, and the search for this funding seems to have been one of the main reasons for the establishment of the provincial association of CASs in that year.[59] The number of children in

[55] "Another Year," *Brantford Expositor*, 8 February 1898; BrCAS, Annual Report 1904, cited in Annual Report 1907, page 10.

[56] BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, page 13.

[57] BeCAS, Annual Report 1911, page 15.

[58] J.J. Kelso, "Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario," no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902,* 28.

[59] BeCAS, correspondence folder, from C.B. Scantlebury to J.J. Kelso, 4 April 1912; LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 2, file 5: "1912," from W.L. Scott to R.B. Chadwick, 1 April 1912.

shelters kept increasing partly because the eager droves of selfless, respectable foster parents that the designers of Children's Aid had expected never materialized. Foster applicants were especially difficult to find for children who were deemed "unattractive," including those who had unruly behaviour, were believed to possess temporary or permanent disabilities, or were categorized as non-white.[60] Such children could remain in limbo waiting for a foster placement for weeks or months, and they were often returned to the Children's Aid later on. Annabel Simmons, a girl of "brunette complexion," stayed in the Brantford shelter for six months between foster placements in 1904, and five months again in 1905.[61] For many of the stigmatized wards of the Children's Aid, a CAS shelter became their semi-permanent home, and CAS volunteers their only adult caregivers. By October 1911, the Belleville Society shelter housed twenty-four children.[62]

Yet the ideas at the root of Children's Aid encouraged Belleville's CAS leaders to deal with the shelter as something secondary to the true methods of the society. The fact that the shelter was the largest item on the Belleville CAS budget each year after 1907 did not qualify the women who made all the decisions about it for roles on the executive.[63] It qualified them instead for special roles in performing duties that were increasingly separated from the executive. Therefore, the people who directly controlled the daily circumstances of all the CAS wards in the shelter were distanced from the most basic decision: whether or not the society should use the force of law to remove a child from its family and make it a ward of the Children's Aid.

"A Sufficiently Aggressive Work"

As well as claiming that the congregate-care system was expensive and unnatural, CAS advocates often argued that it had failed to solve Canada's social problems because it undertook the work of child saving only passively. Orphanages in particular received only those few children who could be reached without the use of state power—that is, those children whose parents asked for help. The parable that Kelso told in Halifax in 1905, quoted at the beginning of this article, represents one such argument against the passivity of the old system. In it, Kelso ridiculed the ineffectiveness of the people on the banks. Their linger-

[60] J.J. Kelso, "Tenth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario," no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1902,* 6.; J.J. Kelso, "Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario," no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1901,* 15.

[61] BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Annabel Simmons entry.

[62] BeCAS, Annual Report 1911, page 8.

[63] For example, see BeCAS, Annual Report 1910. The Brantford CAS had the same experience: see "The Children's Aid Society," *Brantford Expositor*, 5 February 1895. The Ottawa CAS collection at the LAC does not preserve the records of that CAS's expenditures, but it seems that the Ottawa CAS relied extensively on local orphanages as shelters.

ing on the riverside, trying to save a "few" children, appeared cruelly stupid when he compared it to the simple, direct, and aggressive action of the "practical man."[64] Although CASs, much like orphanages, were frequently approached by desperately poor families seeking temporary childcare, Children's Aid Societies emphasized their ability to undertake child rescue actively. Children's Aid Societies could "apprehend without warrant" any child whom they believed to be neglected. This made them the first Canadian organizations with the power to rupture the legal relationship between parents and children. More specifically, because men were legally and symbolically the heads of households, this was the power to rupture a man's authority over his family and take his children away.

The assumption of legal and symbolic patriarchy applied even though it was usually the mother whose conduct was in question.[65] Take for example the Lyons case from 1909 in Belleville.[66] Throughout the investigation of this home, CAS personnel referred to it as the "home of Mrs. Lyons."[67] Eventually, the male executive decided to have Agent Checker temporarily remove the children. A few weeks later, Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Vermilyea visited the house to see if "Mrs. Lyons" had learned her lesson and made some improvement in the home life.[68] No man was ever mentioned. Nonetheless, when the time came for the Lyons parents to sign a contract pledging to the CAS that they would reform themselves, it was the male executive who prepared the contract, and "Mr. Lyons" who showed up to sign it.[69] Mothering was the parenting usually under surveillance, and volunteering women were often the ones authorized to evaluate and encourage its improvement. But fathers were the heads of families, and male child savers were needed to constrain or revoke their authority.

Thus, the CAS system set up man-to-man confrontations as the definitive acts of child saving. S.M. Thomson once wrote with satisfaction that "those who have the care of children in Brantford have learnt that they cannot with impunity continue to illtreat their children...."[70] Alternately, concerning some of the failures of moral reform, he wrote, "[w]e are not doing a sufficiently aggressive work...."[71] Child savers like Thomson

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[64] BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1905, "Give the Children a Chance," undated newspaper clipping.

[65] Karen Swift, "Contradictions in Child Welfare: Neglect and Responsibility," in *Women's Caring: Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare*, ed. Carol Baines, Patricia Evans, and Sheila Neysmith (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 242.

[66] BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1911, page 28, 9 March 1909.

[67] *Ibid.*, page 30, 3 May 1909.

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] *Ibid.*, page 31, 13 May 1909. The minutes of these meetings do not record the reason for the children's removal, nor what the Lyons parents promised in order to convince the CAS to return the children.

[70] BrCAS, S.M. Thomson's prepared speech for the Annual Meeting held in February 1896, page 1.

[71] BrCAS, Annual Report 1907, page 16.

and Kelso considered their methods to be aggressive, threatening bad parents with the legal power to seize their children. This made it very difficult for parents to make use of CAS services to aid their own children.

In 1903, a working-class Brantford man named Charles Whittier deserted his wife, Elaine, and their two-year-old son, Jesse. Elaine Whittier worked at a local textile mill and could not afford to care for Jesse on her own, so she decided to make him a ward of the CAS. Several months later, her working conditions at the factory having improved, Elaine applied to recover Jesse.[72] She wrote to Frank Cockshutt, the president of the Brantford CAS, "He is my son but circumstances were so with me some time ago that I thought it better to give him into the care of your Society. Since then my affairs are on a much better footing and I am now in a position to maintain him in a respectable manner."[73]

Unfortunately for Elaine, she now had to provide an application and three references, just like every other prospective foster parent. When the CAS took Jesse in as a ward, his mother lost all legal rights as his parent. Elaine provided the required references, but Cockshutt stated that they "are not of such a character as to Warrant the Society returning the child...."[74] A little over a week later, he reconsidered and allowed Jesse to return to his mother, but only under certain conditions: "as her working hours are very long, it appears to me necessary that her Mother or some other suitable person should live with her and care for her children in her absence."[75]

Children's Aid did provide a source of support for the Whittiers. The Brantford CAS (more specifically, its matron, Mrs. Campbell) gave Jesse food, clothing, and shelter, and thus gave his mother a temporary reprieve from the duties of parenthood. This support gave Elaine the breathing room she needed to get her family's life reorganized "on a much better footing." However, in order to make herself and her child eligible for this aid, Elaine first had to be disqualified as Jesse's parent.[76] The Children's Aid was designed as a manly enterprise to "rescue" children and defeat immoral parents conclusively. It was therefore not well suited to the purposes of parents who sought temporary assistance.

This is not to say that CASs were always bellicose in their interactions with parents they deemed to be bad, nor that they always separated children from parents. CASs did provide a great deal of advice and aid, sometimes as simply as finding shoes for children so they could

[72] BrCAS, History Book 1894-1904, Jesse Whittier entry.

[73] BrCAS, case files, Whittier file, from Elaine Whittier to Frank Cockshutt, 7 March 1904.

[74] BrCAS, case files, Whittier file, from Frank Cockshutt to S.M. Thomson, 11 March 1904.

[75] BrCAS, case files, Whittier file, from Frank Cockshutt to S.M. Thomson, 19 March 1904.

[76] For the concept of parental disqualification, see Robert Adamoski, "'Charity is One Thing and the Administration of Justice Is Another': Law and the Politics of Familial Regulation in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia," in *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, and the Law,* ed. J. McLaren, R. Menzies, and D. Chunn (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2003), 165.

walk to school.[77] However, much of their ability to give advice and aid rested on their capacity to threaten. In 1901, the Catholic CAS of Toronto reported, "Some years ago it was next to impossible to convince bad parents...but now that hundreds of unfortunate children have been...rescued from misery and crime, our words of advice and warning are heeded in most cases."[78] Cautioning against cavalier removals, the Revd. Pedly once argued, "the whole resources of the Christian church ought to be used before, in these kind of cases, the weapon was raised to take the children away."[79]

Notwithstanding Pedly's advice, the removal of children from their families was central to the idea of a Children's Aid and necessary for its institutional survival. The Belleville CAS executive reported considerable difficulties while it employed its first agent, Mr. Checker. He was not given to splitting up families. As a 1908 letter from the Belleville CAS president to Kelso put it, "The agent, I believe, performs his duties faithfully, but has not as yet found it necessary to remove any child from the custody of parents or guardians, and so the work of the Society has not attained a very great amount of publicity."[80] After the near-dissolution of the society in 1908, another letter was sent to Kelso: "...I believe we could not get a better man to faithfully discharge his duties than Mr. Checker...but he is a modest, unassuming man and the public gauge results largely by spectacular display; this he is not likely to furnish."[81]

Therefore, Colonel W.C. Wrightmyer finally replaced Checker in October 1909. In his first three days of office, Wrightmyer removed three children from their families.[82] By the end of his first three months, he had removed another forty-two.[83] Long-standing members of the society applauded these deeds and frequently expressed their appreciation for Wrightmyer's methods. The Revd. Drumm declared at the end of the new agent's first three months, "Mr. Wrightmyer was the right man in the right place."[84]

At the 1910 annual meeting of the Belleville Society, the child savers regaled their audience with adventure stories of encounters with families living bestial lives far from the light of civilization. Kelso, who frequently attended such annual meetings, gave a speech presenting "an illustration...of a family in North Hast-

[77] BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1907, 30 May; LAC, William Louis Scott fonds, vol. 4: "Children's Aid Society Cases," file 11: "1906-1908," from W.L. Scott to "Fanny" Scott, 25 April 1908.

[78] J.J. Kelso, "Ninth Report of Superintendent: Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario," no. 43 in *Sessional Papers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1901*, 42.

[79] "Children's Aid Meeting Shows Work of the Year," *Brantford Expositor*, 15 February 1910. Pedly was the CAS officer of Woodstock and Oxford County.

[80] BeCAS, correspondence folder, from John Williams to J.J. Kelso, 25 January 1908.

[81] BeCAS, correspondence folder, from H.C. Hunt to J.J. Kelso, 30 October 1908.

[82] BeCAS, Minutes 1907-1919, page 41, 4 November 1909.

[83] *Ibid.*, page 49, 16 February 1910.

[84] BeCAS, Annual Report 1910, page 13.

ings, whose children lived underground, ate raw meat, and what they could find in the woods."[85] Colonel Wrightmyer described his approach to another vice-ridden home by saying,

> We went to the nearest point by rail and drove from there to the scene of the trouble, a distance of seventeen miles. It was dark when we neared the home and we stopped to remove the bells from the team, having been assured the children would never be found if they saw or heard us approaching.[86]

In such stories, Children's Aid work seemed to be a kind of colonial expedition into an uncharted moral landscape of savages. Indeed, the Belleville Society's 1911 annual report opened by referring to the "Golden Heritage" of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Morton Stanley, both of whom were renowned for their exploits in darkest Africa.[87] What part in such stories could be played by a single mother who actively sought out CAS help for a few months and then expected to get her child back? How could the quotidian shelter work of middle-class women be positioned so as not to detract from the climactic tales of men rescuing children from such evil environments?

Colonel Wrightmyer and his adventures provided the "spectacular display" that a Children's Aid Society needed. The *Belleville Intelligencer*, the town's only newspaper at the time, regularly carried stories of Wrightmyer's work. Here is a 1910 report on a dramatic arrest Wrightmyer made with a provincial agent, W.A. Gunton:

> "C.A. Officers Made
> Round-Up in North"
>
> ...two "dives" were broken up, three abandoned women sent to the Mercer reformatory, and ten children have been brought to the shelter here...The Children's Aid agents tell horrifying tales of the state of things they found...There are now 21 children in the local Shelter. Clothing and other things are needed.[88]

The *Intelligencer* detailed the aggressive police act of "rounding-up" deviants in both the active and the passive voice, and attributed it to the brave agents. It described the philanthropic act of seeking "clothing and other things" briefly in the passive voice only, and attributed the work of it to nobody.

The Children's Aid Society system was advertised to philanthropists and governments as a replacement for the orphanage system. It was intended to attack the root of social problems by saving children from homes of vice. This emphasis on child saving as a manly, confrontational adventure encouraged CASs to separate children from their families rather than collaborate with them. In do-

[85] *Ibid*., page 15.

[86] *Ibid.,* page 8. Henrika Kuklick has written about "...the equation between the urban underclass and primitive peoples..." in late 19th-century British journalism. Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 100. See also Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 292.

[87] BeCAS, Annual Report 1911, page 3.

[88] "C.A. Officers Made Round-Up in North," *Belleville Intelligencer*, 14 May 1910.

ing so, child-saving men relied on women of their own class to care for the children in shelters while yet insisting that institutional care was ineffective.

In 1905, when Kelso referred to the "practical man" who "got a gun," he was speaking about the acquisition of the legal power to interfere in private families and forcibly remove children from them. With this power, Kelso believed that men like Wrightmyer could travel up the river that swept children to destruction, find out who was responsible, and "stop the supply."[89] The power to apprehend children, which the Revd. Pedly called a "weapon," defined the CAS system as a new, manly, aggressive solution to the problems of neglected and dependent children.[90] That gun had to be fired to justify a Children's Aid Society's existence.

Conclusion

The metaphors that CAS rhetoric employed, the legal framework that the Children's Protection Act established, and the hard work that Kelso did to promote his particular vision, all strongly favoured the development of a child-saving system controlled by men. This system, however, relied on local philanthropists and volunteers to create and operate the societies in any given place. Kelso could forbid the Woman's Christian Association to perform CAS duties, but he could not make the Humane Society fulfil them; the state-charity partnership of the Children's Aid system gave independence to neither communities nor Kelso. Furthermore, the faulty design of the system itself inevitably led to extensive breaches of its mandate to do away with the institutional childcare traditionally provided by middle-class women.[91]

The three main critiques of the congregate-care system made by CAS advocates had been that it was unduly expensive, raised children in an unnatural environment, and was too passive in failing to address the root of the problem of neglected children. When CAS leaders criticized a female-dominated institution for being passive and failing to be businesslike, they were criticizing it for being too womanly. When they criticized it for being unable to nurture children in a proper way, they were arguing that womanliness was not enough. In contrast, the Children's Aid system presented a number of solutions that were tied to metaphors of manliness. The system was to be more cost-efficient and more effective (businesslike) by outsourcing the nurture of children to families. It was also to be practical and aggressive enough to seek out and attack the root of the problem. When CAS advocates praised these attributes of their new system, they were promising that it would be manly enough to get results.

Kelso's 1905 speech quoted at the beginning of this article conveys both his criticism of institutional care and his

[89] BrCAS, S.M. Thomson box, Day Journal 1907, "Give the Children a Chance," undated newspaper clipping.

[90] "Children's Aid Meeting Shows Work of the Year," *Brantford Expositor*, 15 February 1910.

[91] Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*, 287.

proposal for a solution. The people on the bank, saving just a few children as they are swept by to destruction, represent the orphanages and reformatories. Kelso paints them, as he often did, as well intentioned but passive—unable to take the manly, forceful action required to address the root of the problem. The "practical man" is of course the Children's Aid founder. The gun he takes on his foray into the unknown is the legal power of the state. By positioning heroic, aggressive men as the only acting persons in a troubled world, such stories set up child-saving women as unimportant sidekicks, impoverished parents as savage adversaries, and children as imperilled blank slates who could be conclusively rescued. That narrative did not fit well with the experiences of the parents who actively sought out CAS help, the middle-class women who laboured over CAS shelters, or the many children who remained at length within them.