

Incidences of child migration to Canada, Australia and, to a lesser extent, the United States are documented in our records between 1859 and 1880. The earliest cases of child migration documented in Kibble's records are few and far between, and were fairly exceptional. Some of these were under more irregular circumstances than others; for example, William McCulloch of Greenock, sentenced to fifteen days in prison and three years in the reformatory for theft of a flannel shirt in 1860, when he was fourteen years old, is recorded as having left irregularly. He stowed away on a ship to the West Indies and afterwards settled at the boilermaker trade. Another Greenock boy, David Gray, was sent to prison for fifteen days then to Kibble for five years for stealing a silver brooch. He was liberated by warrant in 1864 at the age of sixteen. First working as a blacksmith in Greenock, he subsequently went to sea and, sadly, died in the West Indies.

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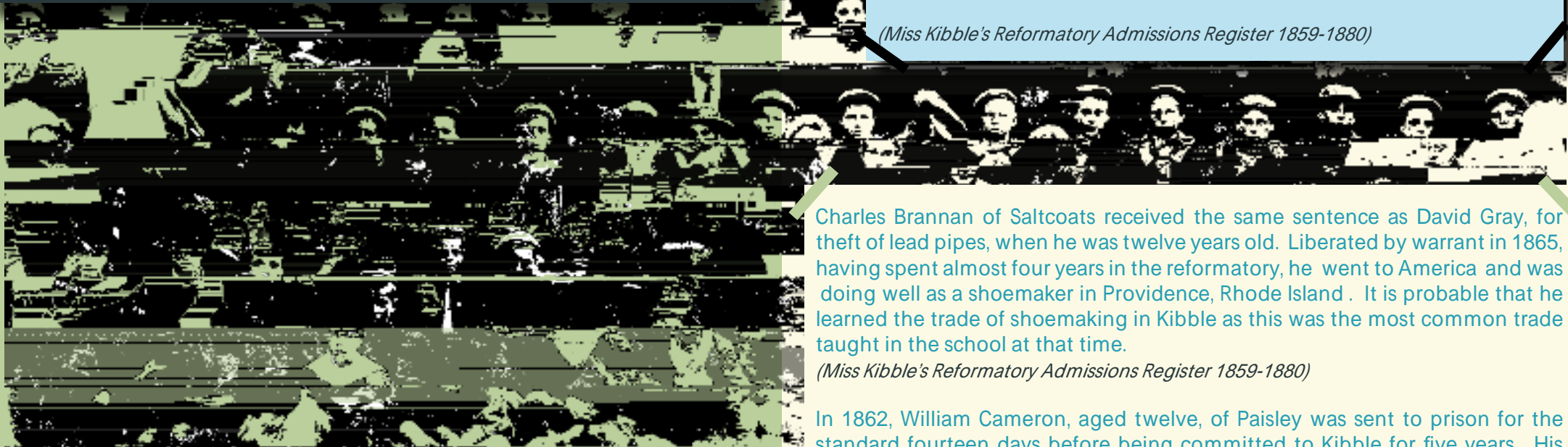
(Miss Kibble's Reformatory Admissions Register 1859-1880)

Charles Brannan of Saltcoats received the same sentence as David Gray, for theft of lead pipes, when he was twelve years old. Liberated by warrant in 1865, having spent almost four years in the reformatory, he went to America and was doing well as a shoemaker in Providence, Rhode Island. It is probable that he learned the trade of shoemaking in Kibble as this was the most common trade taught in the school at that time.

(Miss Kibble's Reformatory Admissions Register 1859-1880)

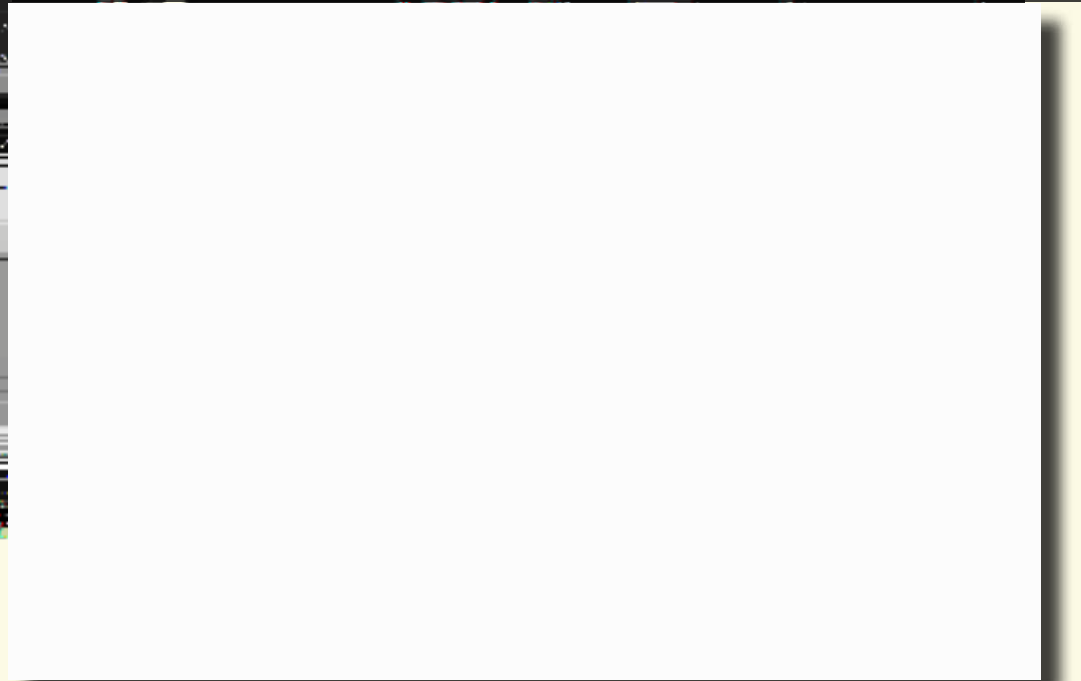
In 1862, William Cameron, aged twelve, of Paisley was sent to prison for the standard fourteen days before being committed to Kibble for five years. His "crime" was stealing cabbages. Unusually, he was released after eighteen months and allowed to go to America with his mother under warrant. Alex McLuskey, also from Paisley, was released under similar circumstances in 1867; he, too, went to America with his mother.

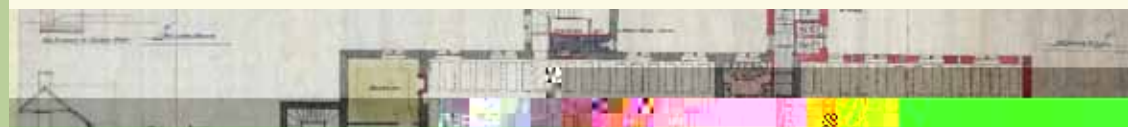
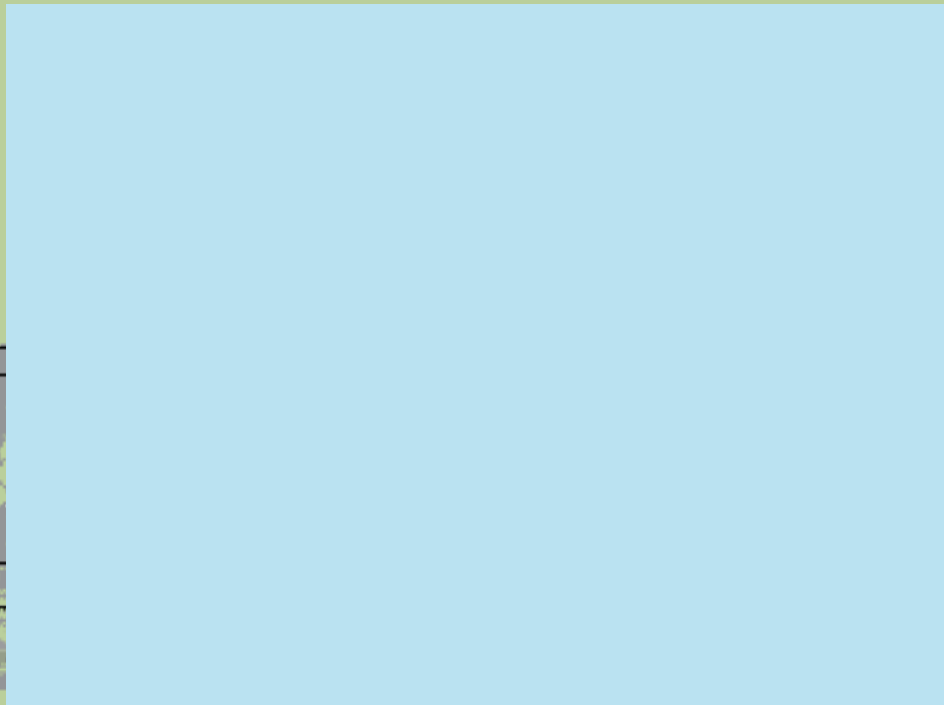
(Miss Kibble's Reformatory Admissions Register 1859-1880)



Records from 1910-1914 refer to boys proposed for licence being eager to emigrate, and being encouraged to do so, mainly to Australia. Kibble's records have a few brief follow-up reports on these boys but most of the information we have on them has come from an Australian historian, Elspeth Grant MA Hons. Elspeth's research quest began with her father, Peter, who was carrying out family history research and discovered from personal papers that his late grandfather, Lewis Grant, had been sent to Australia by the Kibble Farm School in July 1914. The family had no idea about Lewis's Kibble background until after his death, when Peter discovered papers referring to his means of immigration. Lewis had always claimed that he stowed away on a ship to Australia, perhaps because of the potential stigma attached to the real story. Elspeth subsequently researched and wrote her Honours dissertation on the groups of boys who went to Australia, via Kibble, during this period. We were delighted to welcome her on a visit to Kibble in July 2008, during her trip to the UK, and to allow her to see Lewis's original Kibble records.

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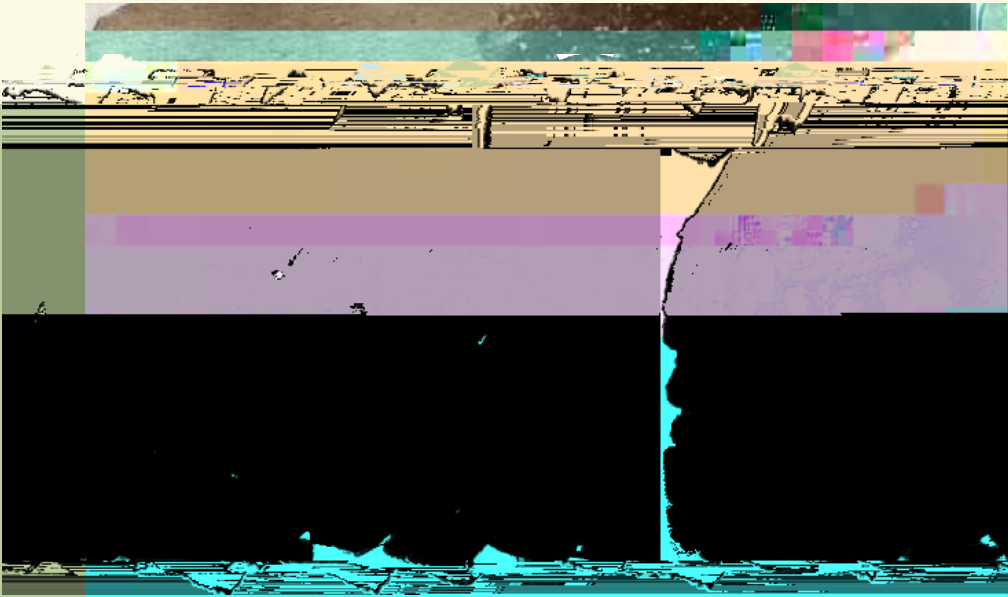


Organised, official initiatives and programmes to facilitate the migration of British children were in operation between 1868 and 1925, with around 100,000 British children sent to Canada under the auspices of around twenty five individual charity organisations. Over 7000 Scottish children were sent to Canada by Quarriers alone, between the early 1870s and the early 1920s. Others went to Australia and the former Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).⁷ Kibble's contribution to child migration numbers was, therefore, relatively very small.

The impact of the Great Depression was affecting Canada very severely by the late 1920s and early 1930s. Canada therefore became reluctant to support immigrants and they refused to take any more "Home Children". Nevertheless, migration of other groups of British children to other parts of the world continued until 1967.

The importance of migration to Australia is demonstrated by this 1928 quote from our Visitors Book:





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