

Remembering new-found kin

Relatives of young Titanic victim to hold memorial

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When she visited Halifax for a math conference 21 years ago, Carol Goodwin found time to stop by the grave of the young Titanic passenger known simply as the Unknown Child.

Next week, the Wisconsin woman will be back in Halifax, and this time she'll know the boy in the grave is her relative.

"I remember standing there having a very spiritual feeling that I wished my grandmother was there," Ms. Goodwin, 75, said about her first visit to the grave.

Last year, DNA tests revealed the unknown child is actually Sidney Leslie Goodwin, a 19-month-old English boy whose entire immediate family died when the Titanic sank in the North Atlantic in 1912. Ms. Goodwin is organizing a memorial service next week at the grave, in Halifax's Fairview Lawn Cemetery.

Sidney's mother and Ms. Goodwin's father were first cousins. Ms. Goodwin was also related to Sidney's father.

It's believed Sidney boarded the massive liner with his parents and five siblings as third-class passengers.

Ms. Goodwin said she saw her grandmother go through terrible grief over the deaths, and as a result, she's always had feelings about the Titanic. Now she's confronting those fears by writing a book about her family's voyage, and by remembering Sidney.

"I hit on the idea of a memorial service," said Ms. Goodwin in a phone interview from her home on Thursday.

"I really felt strongly that I wanted my grandchildren to be standing there with me and that this was important family history."

Some of Ms. Goodwin's immediate family will be making the trip to Halifax with her. So will relatives of Sidney's from California, Illinois and England.

Identifying the Unknown Child has been a long and complex process. DNA tests initially narrowed the identity down to two people — Sidney and a



Relatives of Sidney Leslie Goodwin, a 19-month-old English boy whose entire immediate family died when the Titanic sank in 1912, will be in Halifax next week for a memorial service at his grave in Fairview Lawn Cemetery. Last year, DNA tests revealed the identity of the previously unknown child. (ERIC WYNNE / Staff)

13-month-old Finnish boy.

The results of two early tests comparing Sidney's DNA to a relative on his mother's side of the family were inconclusive.

A forensic dentist was consulted, and the dead child was mistakenly identified as a Finnish baby named Eino Viljami Panula. Relatives of Eino came to Halifax in 2002 to visit the boy's memorial.

Doubts about the identification surfaced soon after, but researchers did not announce they had made a mistake until five years later.

Colleen Fitzpatrick, a forensic genealogist and retired nuclear physicist, was called in to help with the project after the two initial tests on Sidney's DNA.

Ms. Fitzpatrick found Sidney's nearest living male relative in Australia through the boy's paternal grandfather.

"I had to go up the (family) tree and down the tree," said the California resident. She figures there were eight generations separating Sidney from his Australian relative.

But before a sample could be

submitted, a third test showed a mutation in the maternal DNA that was an exact match to a living relative on the Sidney's mother's side.

Ms. Goodwin said she corresponds with one of the Finnish boy's relatives by e-mail, and there are tentative plans for that person to attend Sidney's service next week.

"The tombstone represents all of the children (lost on the Titanic), not just one child," said Ms. Goodwin.

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