

In December of 1940, my mother was evacuated due to being pregnant.

Enter January 1, 1941, my life began in the chaos of World War 1.

Our first home resided in a country hospital located in Hitchen Hurts, England.

Upon being released from the hospital we had a temporary home in what is referred to as a council home. This was our place of shelter until I was one.

My mother had decided to return to her place of employment in London.

I was taken in by a lovely foster mother whom I called Auntie Illiot.

It is in my sheer beliefs that she shaped the first five years of my life.

Auntie Illiot was a loving and kind person just like her sister and her sister's children.

Auntie Illiot's sister ran a farm in which I had spent most of my time chasing around the chickens(although I admit I disliked the chickens because they often pecked at me). I also loved picking the succulent peaches that grew on her abundant trees in the summer.

She had three daughters and a son. Two of her daughters I was close to. Their names were Violet and Maude.

The two sisters made me feel welcome, safe and loved. It was as if I was an important member of their family.

When I was four Maud had me participate in her wedding as a bridesmaid.

Auntie Illiot did not have an indoor bathroom. Therefore I had no choice but to use the outdoor. At first, it was hard to adjust to the gnawing chill of the winter air in the outhouse. However, I got used to it.

At the back of her house, she had a large garden.

I adored that garden. I can remember picking all the vegetables and fruit. I ate so many blackberries that it would make me ill.

Her garden consisted of endless fields. The first two consisted of walnut, hazel, and other nut trees. I was too short to reach them so I often threw sticks to help get them down.

Outstretching the fields of nut trees were rolling hills of buttercups. I would run down the field and then lay on the ground. Placing the buttercups beneath my chin, I would become engulfed in the beautiful yellow glow.

Beyond the trees were more fields, which I ran through and used to lay

Auntie Lott took me on trips to the parks and we often took long strolls through them.

When I suffered from agonizing stomach, and ear aches, Aunt Lott would come to my room and give me soothing belly rubs, medication, and apply warm oil to calm my earaches.

She was the best surrogate mother a child could ask for.

I came to remember being terrified of the loud screams of the air raid warnings. She held onto my hand tight and ran to the air shelter with me in tow. To this day loud sounds terrify me.

I resided with her until I was five and had to return to London.

I missed her so much that I took advantage of using school vacations to visit her.

Sometimes I would get into mischief. One time I sprinted down the driveway to the end of the road. I fell and busted my knee. This was after being told not to go there.

One year my cousin Sydney came to visit. We had a lot of fun together. Except when he had sat on a bunch of bees.

Summer was so much fun in the country. There was always something to do. Kids would often be seen chasing after rabbits.

I was one of the lucky children who got to enjoy London in the summer.

Life in London 1946-1951

I moved back to London at the end of 1945.

In 1946, I enrolled in school.

Schooling in England was different than in the US. We had one big class broken up into sections according to age, and learning ability.

I loved school and always wanted to do the things the older kids did.

I remember when I was about 7 or 8 and I had thought I was big enough to go to the older girls bathrooms. The bathrooms were outside, so I started to go in

and out of the doorway. There was an iron handle that came up to about my

forehead. As I made the turn to go in the door opening I hit my head on

the handle and started bleeding badly. One of the girls went to get the

teacher and they took me to the school and stopped the bleeding.

I was sent to the headmaster for disobeying the rules. I got 3 lashes

on the back of my calf. After I had suffered the sting of the lashes he had me sit in front of the fire and gave me a cup of tea.

Discipline was harsh in the 1940's. It's nothing like it is now.

It may seem harsh and inhumane to some people. But it taught us how to be respectful of rules.

I enjoyed the years I spent at school in London. It broke my heart when we had to leave.