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Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Thank you for coming in. The first question I'd like to ask is what is your name?

Speaker 2: [00:06](#) Valerie.

Speaker 1: [00:06](#) Where were you born?

Speaker 2: [00:09](#) London.

Speaker 1: [00:09](#) What year were you, what year was you born?

Speaker 2: [00:12](#) Beginning of 1940.

Speaker 1: [00:21](#) What did your parents do for a living?

Speaker 2: [00:24](#) My dad was a storekeeper and my mother didn't work she years ago, the women didn't go to work. They stayed at home and looked after the house.

Speaker 1: [00:38](#) Describe what your liquid area was like for you as a child before the war started.

Speaker 2: [00:44](#) I wasn't born before it started. So I was only a very young when the war was on. Actually, my mother was very, very worried and upset. My father, he, he went into the army. He was actually in in the home guards heard of dad's army? That's what he was in. But he also done work for Churchill during the war. But I didn't find that out until a few years ago and I, he never ever spoke about it, so I don't know what secret work it was.

Speaker 1: [01:36](#) What was it like to live in London when war broke out?

Speaker 2: [01:39](#) It wasn't very nice. It wasn't very nice. My mum was bombed, my parents was bombed out from Poplar and so we had to be evacuated and we went to Oxford.

Speaker 1: [01:56](#) What did your parents do during the war?

Speaker 2: [01:58](#) What did my parents do during the war? My mother became a cook for the, in the village that we was evacuated in. She worked in the lady that owned the village and she had done as a cook during the war.

Speaker 1: [02:16](#) How did you feel when you first found out you were going to be evacuated?

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- Speaker 2: [02:22](#) When I was only a very tiny, very young. So I don't really remember much about that.
- Speaker 1: [02:28](#) Tell us about the journey on your first evacuation.
- Speaker 2: [02:33](#) I believe we went by car, Lorry or something cause I took a clothing and things with them, cases, everything. So I believe hwewas taken to where we was.
- Speaker 1: [02:48](#) Who were you evacuated with?
- Speaker 2: [02:50](#) I was evacuated with my mum and my two older sisters and some other relatives of my mothers, cousins.
- Speaker 1: [03:03](#) How did you feel when you lost all your parents? When you were going away?
- Speaker 2: [03:10](#) But I was with my mum anyway so I, I didn't miss, I was with my mum. I'd miss my dad cause I couldn't see my dad through the war.
- Speaker 1: [03:26](#) Tell us about the things you took with you. If you remember, tell us the things that you took with you when you got evacuated.
- Speaker 2: [03:37](#) What we took with us. Yeah. I'm going to presume my mum took babies, things and things like that. Cause I was only at very young, very tiny. I was born up near the beginning of the wall. I was only about a year old or something like that.
- Speaker 1: [03:53](#) What were you feeling at first?
- Speaker 2: [03:57](#) Hmm. I can't really answer that because I didn't, I wasn't old enough to even know what was all about. Really not what a year old.
- Speaker 1: [04:12](#) What was it like, what was it like with your host family
- Speaker 2: [04:16](#) With the other families?, It's okay. Yeah it's fine. We knew that, but my mother, there was my mother's family, her cousins, and they had children as well. And so we knew them cause they all got bombed out the same street at Poplar. That's how they come to be all together.
- Speaker 1: [04:36](#) What was the house like?

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- Speaker 2: [04:38](#) Lovely. I've got a photo here of where we stayed at big house. It was called the kennels and they used to keep the horses and the hound dogs there so that every weekend the, they would go out Fox on tin in the red tunics and quite smart.
- Speaker 1: [05:03](#) What was, what was your school like?
- Speaker 2: [05:06](#) Well, when I did go to school down there when I was three and that was nice, but all you had was just mornings only. It was one class, but they put a, a board across to make it into two classes. And you so some older ones was in one my, so my sister was in one side and I was in the other, but we only had schooling in the mornings.
- Speaker 1: [05:34](#) How were you treated in your new area? Tell us some of your experiences in the countrysides.
- Speaker 2: [05:45](#) I loved it. I loved it there. I guess I was, they were very young, but I did make friends there and we when the Americans came into the war, they came down to the little village and used to take us out and little pony traps for little rides to give us some, you know, entertainment. That was very nice.
- Speaker 1: [06:13](#) Tell us about any friends you made, any friends you made.
- Speaker 2: [06:18](#) Sorry, I didn't get that. Tell us about any friends, friends. Had one major friend, he like, he was the nephew of the lady that owned the village and it was very nice. It was always with him. Clive is time.
- Speaker 1: [06:39](#) What happened? What happened to your dad and London while you're away?
- Speaker 2: [06:43](#) My dad was in the armed guards and doing other secret work as I've already said. So we didn't see him. He worked for a firm in Charlton and he was there. My dad worked there actually for 50 odd years in the same, same place, and he was a store keeper.
- Speaker 1: [07:15](#) Can you tell us about any time you saw or communicated with your dad while you were away?
- Speaker 2: [07:20](#) Yeah, we did. On occasions he would come down to us and near Christmas times he used to try and get to us and him made toys for the children in the village. Abacus, you know what about abacuses? It's what we had you have isn't square and it's got beads on it and we used to use those for adding up or

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subtracting. That's what we had. So to help us to read or not to read, to, to count. We had those, and my dad made those for, for school.

- Speaker 1: [08:00](#) Tell us about any more evacuations and experience from the war.
- Speaker 2: [08:05](#) I didn't go to any other, they stayed there throughout the war and came back in 19, just before 1946 to London.
- Speaker 1: [08:19](#) What did you do when, when, when there was an air raids?
- Speaker 2: [08:24](#) We didn't have any air raids there. We did see the planes going off because I was right near an airfield which was a Bicester. And the planes used to go off there and occasionally some of them would crash there as well. Come down and crash. We used to see those and as children we used to run around and go and see where it was and take bits from it. And
- Speaker 1: [08:53](#) What was it like when bombs were falling
- Speaker 2: [08:58](#) But I wasn't in London so we never actually see the bombing. As I said my mum did. She was very upset and worried.
- Speaker 1: [09:07](#) Tell us about any friends or family who were injured during the war.
- Speaker 2: [09:14](#) I dunno. I had an uncle who was injured. Yeah. But apart from that, no.
- Speaker 1: [09:22](#) What did you and your family do when, okay, what were you, what were your feelings when you came back to London after being evacuated?
- Speaker 2: [09:32](#) I didn't like it in London. I was ill at the time and the children in the school used to take the mickey out of me cause I had TB gland, so it looked like I had two heads. So the children wasn't very nice. It was quite nasty to me.
- Speaker 1: [09:52](#) What, what, what, what about London? What does it look like and what about how London looks when you came back?
- Speaker 2: [10:01](#) I didn't like it much at all. We in the school we were in, as I say, it wasn't very nice and it wasn't a very nice area, whereas in near Victoria Park it's near Hackney actually, I went to a little

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school there and the only good thing was when we was right near a railway bridge and when the Americans used to go past those, the throw sweets and things over the top for us little children. We used to wait there every day for them to come past and throw sweets and things like that little knickknacks for us, which was very nice. But apart from that, I didn't, not the area

- Speaker 3: [10:55](#) [Inaudible].
- Speaker 2: [10:55](#) How had London changed while you were away?
- Speaker 2: [10:59](#) But I don't really know what it was like before because I wasn't born, but my mother was always loved London anyway, family, my sisters knew the difference, but I didn't cause I was too young.
- Speaker 1: [11:19](#) How did your host family feel when you were leaving?
- Speaker 2: [11:24](#) I think my mother was glad to come back to London on that down eating meals. When we got to the, we had to come back by train and we had a great big trunk with clothes and all our clothes and everything in and it was stolen on the railway. And so when we got back and we had no home, so we had to go to my grandmother's at Dagenham and I was wearing my uncle's jumpers for dresses because we had no clothes to wear.
- Speaker 1: [11:55](#) Did your host family feel upset when you, when you left?
- Speaker 2: [12:00](#) Yes. Well, what some of them had already gone anyway, back to London to wherever they lived except for Clive and I don't know what happened to him.
- Speaker 1: [12:12](#) How did you celebrate the end of the war?
- Speaker 2: [12:16](#) I believe they all celebrate by dancing and singing and things like that. But being a child I didn't, didn't have anything to do with that too young.
- Speaker 1: [12:32](#) Looking back, how do you think your experiences as an evacuee have affected your life?
- Speaker 2: [12:39](#) It didn't really, it didn't and I loved where we went anyway.
- Speaker 1: [12:47](#) Well, what are your strongest memories of the war?

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- Speaker 2: [12:50](#) The strongest memories is I'm going to school where we was. It was in a place called Stratton Audley and I went to school, there was a say and I liked it around there and I still like watching the adults, when it was winter time skating on a pond it used to be nice.
- Speaker 1: [13:18](#) Is there anything else that you would like to say that you haven't said already?
- Speaker 2: [13:23](#) No I can't think of anything else cause I was so young, I didn't know I was even going to do this interview because I was my husband, he's got a lot, a lot to say, but no, I did love it in Oxford. It was lovely. And I went there last year and I see where I was evacuated. My nephew took us there and I told him that. I said, I, even though it was only about three or four years old, I remember there was a pond where the adults used to skate, and him and his young lady, they went up and had a look and spoke to some people and they said, yes it's still there. So I was right. I remembered it. And I remember the school, I took a photo of the school where I went and yeah. Where we lived and in the kennel, it was called the kennel.