

Profile of a child from Norfolk Street that attended St. Matthew's School

Albert, 13, and Flora, 11, lived in 4 Norfolk Street in 1901 and both attended St. Matthew's school. They had three older siblings: Richard, 14, had already left school and worked as an Apprentice Printer; Arthur, 16, worked as a bookbinder and Mary, 18, was a dressmaker. Their father, David, 51, was a milkman and their mother Florence, 50, did not have a profession as she stayed at home to look after the family, but she occasionally took in laundry, a job she could do from home. They also had two lodgers living with them, John, 26, who was a gardener and George, 30, who was a painter.



It was usual in this period for households to contain several generations, relatives and lodgers to increase the money earning potential of the household which ensured that the family had enough money to keep themselves.

Albert and Flora enjoyed the busy house as children as there were always people to talk to before and after school and there were lots of things around the house that they could help with.

Sometimes Flora would assist her mother with the laundry she took in, and when she wasn't at school she learnt to sew and tailor dresses from her sister Mary. Washing clothes and sewing were important skills that working-class girls of this period had to learn as they were expected to stay at home and do household chores. If they did work, it would be in jobs like dressmaking, laundering clothes, or as domestic servants for wealthier families, where they would clean, wash and iron clothes and sew.



Albert would learn about bookbinding from his brother Arthur and would soon have to leave school to earn a living. Often, people would take jobs at the same places as their family members, who would recommend them for a position, so Albert may join his brothers at the printers or bookbinders or join his father as a milkman.



Families like the ones who lived in Norfolk Street were working-class which means they had to work for a living and often did not have any political power like the middle or upper classes. They usually did not own their own houses, and children had to leave school and get a job to be able to pay for their food and clothes. If children did go to school, they would be expected to help around the house with tasks such as washing, cleaning and cooking (girls only) and collecting water and carrying coal (usually boys).

There were a lot of families like Albert and Flora's living on Norfolk Street very close together, therefore, there would have been a strong community where everyone knew each other. Albert and Flora would have enjoyed playing with their school friends in the street and knowing all the people they saw day to day.