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# SETTLING DOWN IN THE MOTHERLAND

## THE SEARCH FOR HOME

Eric boarded the SS Columbia with a mixture of resentment and anticipation. He was leaving British Guiana because the colonial authorities did not want a Black, left-wing government there, yet he was heading to the home of the very same colonial authorities that had implemented left-wing policies in Britain - including a welfare state where left-wing literature was widely available and trade unions operated legally. However, he knew he would be joining many from the Caribbean who, like himself, had become persona non grata in the countries of their birth.

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It would take Jessica nearly a year to save enough money for the fare to England. She carefully budgeted from the money that Eric sent, “throwing box” as they had done before to save for his ticket to England. Counting down the months to her departure, she and Eric made detailed plans for the practical arrangements to be put in place for their sons to remain in BG, deliberating over the best options for Karl and Chauncey when she went to England. After numerous exchanges of opinions by letter, they finally agreed that the boys would live with their grandmother Hectorine. Jessica bought large quantities of household and personal items to ensure that they would have the essentials they needed.

It was very difficult to say goodbye to her children, but knowing they would be in the care of her mother made it easier for Jessica to leave for England.

Chauncey and Karl became very close after their mother left for England. Chauncey describes himself and Karl as “real boys”, meaning they were involved in the sort of risky antics that were a source of stress to the adults who cared for them. Chauncey admired his older brother’s physical prowess, and imitated his actions. Chauncey has fond memories of the period he spent with his grandmother.

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Now that the Huntleys were both working, the next important task was making arrangements to be reunited with their children. They needed a place with more than one room and with space for the boys to play. This was not an easy task for Black or Irish people in 1950s London, with many rented properties boasting the sign “No Coloureds, no Irish, no dogs”. Jessica and Eric decided to buy a property.

Unable to borrow money from the usual mortgage providers, because of the colour bar being practised, the Huntleys instead had to use private sources to obtain a mortgage to purchase their first home, at Haroldstone Road in Walthamstow.

It took two years for them to save enough to pay for their children's fare to England. Jessica's mother Hectorine brought Karl and Chauncey to England to join their parents in 1962.

Eric decided to return to studying again. He took evening classes at a further education college, passed A-level exams, and then enrolled at Croydon Technical College on an undergraduate degree programme.

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