

SIDEWALK MEMORIES .....For what it's worth .....

A couple of days ago I went to lunch with a coworker.

Felt like a nice corned beef sandwich (in lieu of Chinese which is lunch three days a week for me. I am Jewish after all) and chose one of the last remaining "Jewish Deli's in the area.

I saw your video.

You can't believe the emotion that welled up inside me. (Or maybe you can.)

I was very late in this process, a very late "baby-boomer". My sidewalk memories include the Death of a Jewish Neighborhood, but while this neighborhood was still alive, I had the great fortune to experience it.

Your flier hits the nail on the head. My wife and kids cannot relate to what I tell them about growing up in Mattapan. My youngest son looks at me cross-eyed when I tell him that I had about 80 (eighty) close friends and of these I considered about ten to fourteen my best friends. That we had no trouble fielding a complete stickball team any given time on the spur of the moment. That there was always something to do (without spending money), and always someone to play with.

The Greatest Generation of all time came back to Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan after the War and got on with their lives all at the same time. Many did not make it back. My father was lucky.

My dad was 30 years old when I was born, nine years after the end of World War II, so as stated above, my memories are of the end of an era.

But I do remember the following....

Having "three" mothers and fathers cause we lived in a triple Decker w/ aunts and uncles on the first and second floors. When I was bad, and everybody knew it, I had to climb the gauntlet before getting to my ultimate punishment.

Places like Waldman's Candy store, the Chez Vous roller rink, the Morton Theatre, Sam's bowling alley (I once bowled 135!!) and Barney's pool hall, I was a little "punk".

Always having something to do *without* TV, Video Games, Xbox or a Computer!!

Eight teams of twenty kids each playing Buck-Buck, (all at the same time) at the stone wall of Franklin Field. In suits and ties cause it was the Jewish Holidays.

Jewish Holidays at the Fesident Street Shul, and the great Acorn fights. No cars, just a sea of people taking over the entire intersection and surrounding streets.

In 1963, standing on the stairs of the Roger Walcott elementary school, with the rest of the school and being dismissed early. Some of the teachers crying, and not a peep out of the kids. Something was very wrong, and I had no idea what. President Kennedy had been assassinated.

This was one of my last distinct memories of living in Mattapan. After that day, all I truly remember was my mother and father's constant worry when he and Mom were looking at houses, my boredom in the car. Their pain and heartache as the crime escalated, as "red-lining took affect", as friends and relatives moved out to Sharon, Randolph, Canton, Newton and beyond ... and out of Mattapan.