

Growing up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s

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INTRODUCTION:

This article attempts to summarize the things that characterized our environment when we were growing up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. It is a brief trip through recent history. We all had different experiences. That's what makes each of us unique. However, there were cultural factors, places, people and happenings which almost all of us experienced while growing up in Windsor Locks at that time. This article takes a nostalgic look at our youth, and the things we had in common - the things that make us unique as the children of Windsor Locks in the 40s, 50s and 60s. An occasional glance back at our roots is both instructive and rewarding. Let's get on with a look at what we had in common, back when we were lucky enough to grow up in Windsor Locks. Here is a list of 21 of these things:

- our ethnic heritage
- we were "Free Range Kids"
- services came to the home
- the birth of rock and roll and the 45 rpm records
- the Cold War
- St. Mary's Park (now called Pesci Park)
- sSummer jobs in the tobacco fields
- the ice skating rink on Center St
- St. Oronzo Day
- Dr. Carneglia
- the Rialto Theater
- the town dump
- Johnny Cappa's store, Aldo's store, and Barberi's bakery
- Bradley Field
- Babb's Beach
- East Windsor Drive in
- Railroad Salvage
- Riverside Park
- our favorite places to go for ice cream
- our favorite places to go for pizza and grinders
- Main St, before redevelopment

If you haven't got a lot of time to read, you can stop here. You have read the list of things that most of us experienced. If you have a little more time, you can quickly scan

peruse the 31 photographs and two newspaper clippings. If you have the time and interest, you can read the brief narratives which cover each of these topics, or just read the ones that interest you.

Our Ethnic Heritage (Family Life)

Life in Windsor Locks was a bit like life in the “Leave it to Beaver” series on TV, except it was much more “ethnic”. Windsor Locks, at the time, was home to immigrants, their children and their grandchildren. They were mostly English, Irish, French, Italian and Polish. The cultural heritage of our nationality played a big role in our childhood. We spent an enormous amount of time with our parents and our grandparents. Meals, gatherings and parties included their relatives and friends. In my case, they all had Italian names. The older ones spoke Italian when they didn’t want the children to know what they were talking about. They often they moved back and forth between Italian and English in the same sentence. While my family was Italian, my friends and classmates had names like: Ouelette, McKenna, Carroll, Dzurick, Czarnecki, Root, Pohorylo, Tomaczek, O’Leary, Gallagher, Harvey, Babiarz, Flanagan, Norieka, and Taylor. Of course, there were Italian names like LaRussa, Roncari, Taravella, Rossi, Marconi, Tria, Pesci, Ferrari, Barbieri and Quagliaroli.

But while we were brought up in very ethnic environments, our parents wanted us to go to school, study hard, and become good American citizens. I remember my uncles telling me that their father (my grandfather, Vito Colapietry) told them repeatedly: “No cigars, no mustaches, go to school, go to college. I want you to be good Americans”. Of course, much of this push for this was very practical. If you want to succeed in business in Windsor Locks, you can’t just speak Italian. I never saw any trouble between people of different nationalities while I was growing up in Windsor Locks

We were “Free Range Kids”. Our parents were not “Helicopter Parents”.

The late 40s, 50s and 60s were a peaceful time. Our uncles had come back from WW!! and were getting married and building lives. We (the kids) lived lives that were a bit idyllic. We rode big heavy one-speed bikes. We often left home early on Saturday morning and went off to play with friends. We went from house to house. Sometimes a mother would phone other moms to let them know where we were. Now, in 2016, kids who roam around without close parental supervision are called “Free Range Kids” and their parents are often admonished for letting their kids do that.. Back then, we didn’t have “Helicopter Parents” who hovered over us. indeed, it was a time when the doors of our houses were often left unlocked. The back door of the house was usually open in the good weather, and an unlatched screen door was the only think stopping you from entering .

We felt comfortable growing up in Windsor Locks. We visited friends rode our bikes around freely. The group I went to kindergarten with walked about five blocks to go Grove St to the public elementary school. We climbed trees and played games without any planning. Nowadays there are things like “arranged play-dates” for preschoolers, where parents contact each other, make specific plans, drop kids off and pick them up. Back then we hopped on our bikes and went off for the morning, not knowing exactly where the group would be, but we found them and we figured out what to do.

School was much different than it is now. If a teacher or a principal called our parents, we would be asked “WHAT DID YOU DO WRONG?” Now, if a teacher complains about a student, the parents are likely go to the school and complain about the teacher. To put it simply, life was much simpler back then.

Service Came to the Home

Technology was different back then. When we were in pre-school and in grammar school, we remember:

- leaving a note for the milkman to leave something extra today.
- the coal truck delivering coal to our homes
- the mailman putting mail in a mailbox attached to the house near the front door.
- the paperboy or girl leaving the paper between the front door and the screen door if you asked them to. Of course, they expected a tip at Christmas for doing that.
- the man who made bleach and delivered it to your house.
- Viking Bakery delivered to your house
- Dr. Carneglia made house calls.

The Birth of Rock and Roll

The end of the forties was the end of the “old music”: Perry Como, Vaughn Monroe, Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, Dinah Shore, and Frankie Laine. It was the heyday of the Ed Sullivan Show. It was the beginning of ROCK AND ROLL. It was the time when 78 RPM records were going out of style, and being replaced by 45RPM records. We spent a lot of time listening to 45s.

The Cold War

The Cold War was in full swing. In school, and on TV, we heard about building bomb shelters. We even practiced what to do in case of an aerial attack by the Communists.

St. Mary's Park

Now it is called Pesci Park. This was the center of youth activity in Windsor Locks back in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. It was the place to find pickup games of sandlot baseball, basketball and football. It is where Little League Baseball was played. It had the swimming pool where we took swimming lessons on summer mornings. There was the green wooden building in which we did crafts during the summer months. On weekend evenings in the summer, there were outdoor movies and record hops on the basketball court. At the end of the summer, there were contests for the youngsters. For example, there were craft contests, and contests for the best decorated bicycles and wagons. The side of St. Mary's school next to the parking lot was used for practicing tennis.

Below is a photo of the swimming pool and of a newspaper article from the Springfield Union of August 27, 1955 giving the names of about 100 children who had won swimming awards.

Playgrounds Close; Swim Prizes Given

Windsor Locks, Conn., Aug. 26—Closing exercises at the public park playgrounds on Chestnut St., were held yesterday afternoon. The program was in charge of Miss Nancy Fuller, supervisor. Judges were Mrs. Joseph C. Becker, Mrs. Robert H. Fuller, Miss Jane Ann Downes and Miss Carol Wallace.

At the swimming pool, awards were presented to members of swimming classes by Albert J. Holmes, Red Cross instructor, and William Price, assistant. The following received awards:

Intermediate certificates, Dorothy C. Barbieri, Helen Blakeney, Carole M. Castoldi, William Devlin, Mary Ellen Flanagan, Charla Jean McDonald, Brenda J. O'Leary, Cornelius P. O'Leary, Ann Marie Pikul, Dorothy Pilkington, Douglas Quagliaroli, Dagmar Woods, Dietmar Woods, Shirley Young and Peter Samuelrich.

Beginners, Richard Hinckley, James Allen, Joan Becker, Charlotte Mae Becker, Brian A. Burke, Susan Brown, Theresa Carroll, David Sheridan, Vivian Walters, Douglas J. Castoldi, Susan Pikul, Frederick Dearborn, David A. Draghi, Eugene Pilkington, Janice Dzurick, June M. Pikul, Bradford Fuller, Donald Quagliaroli, Sherry Lee Gifford, Bruce Riggott,

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Swimmers' class, Thomas Kane, Melvin Montemerlo, Lewis Krupa, Jane Taravella, Patty Kane, Peggy Draghi, Ann Marie Barbieri and Robert Pastermerlo.

Junior lifesaving class, Virginia Kane, Malcolm Berman, Gail Root, Susan Root, Patty Kane, Patty Allen, Jane Taravella, Peggy Draghi and Louis Krupa.

Activities at the playgrounds were brought to a close this afternoon although the public swimming pool will be open for another week.

Springfield Union, Saturday, August 27, 1955



The pool at what is now known as Pesci Park.

Prizes Go to Children As Play Season Ends

Windsor Locks, Conn., Aug. 31—Closing exercises at the public park playgrounds yesterday afternoon attracted a large audience of both children and adults, and prizes were awarded for the various events as follows:

Doll carriage parade, prettiest, Corinne Ouelette; second, Jane Doyle; third, Irene DelFavaro; most original, Vito Colapietro; bicycle parade, prettiest, Nancy Frost; most original, Melvin Montemerlo; tricycle parade, prettiest, Robert Daniel; first, James Logan, second; wagon parade, prettiest, James Dwones; most original, Lynn Casey.

Costume parade, prettiest, Susan Grady; funniest, Rita Crowley; most original, Elaine Ouelette; hat parade, prettiest, Joyce Micha; funniest, Patricia Kennedy; most original, Patricia Samuelrich; pie-eating

est, Patricia Kennedy; most original, Patricia Samuelrich; pie-eating contest, five to nine years group, Douglas Quagliaroli; 10 to 14 years group, William Wegrzyniak.

Crafts awards, three to seven years group, Jack Kennedy, Jane Doyle, Irene Del Favaro, Betty Logan, Phyllis LaRussa, Ellen Taravella, Robert Pasternerlo, Sharon Root, Ronald Quagliaroli; eight and nine years group, Susan Grady, Phyllis Quagliaroli, Patricia Kane, Jane Taravella, Donna Scotto, Clair Gallerafi, Susan Root, Nancy Frost, Melvin Montemerlo; 11 to 13 years group, Patricia Samuelrich, Georg-

ine Glaney, Judy Gallerani, Marlene Ciparelli, Marilyn Kennedy, Patricia Kennedy, John Lee, Virginia Kane, bean guessing contest, 603 in the jar, Robert Alekson guessed 500.

More than 70 children entered the various contests, and more than 500 persons attended the program, which was under direction of Miss Nancy Redway, supervisor of children's activities at the playgrounds. Judges were Mrs. Norris J. King, Mrs. William J. McCue and Mrs. Albert W. Jar. Robert Alekson guessed 500.

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At the park swimming pool, the closing program included a water festival, and prizes were awarded as follows: balloon race, Sarah Wallace; relay race, Patricia Kennedy, Robert Fuller, Dale Harris, Gloria Zetterholm, Robert Oliva, Bernard Hanson; boys' races, seven to eight years group, Thomas Kane, first; Richard Colo, second; nine and 10 years group, Bernard Hanson, first; Peter Campbell, second; 11 to 13 years group, William Wegrzyniak, first, Robert Nevich, second; 14 to 16 years group, Edward Young, first, Robert Levesque, second; girls' races, nine to 11 years group, Karlene Ciparelli, first, Mary Ann Paluck, second; 12 to 14 years group,

Springfield Union, September 1, 1952

The above article gives the names of the winners of a number of contest at the park, including prettiest doll carriage, crafts and costumes. Following is a photo of the baseball field in St. Mary's Park that was the scene of so many pickup and Little League games. You can see the bleachers behind the field. That was often used for hanging around even when no games were being played on the baseball field. No single place in Windsor Locks was the scene of so many youth activities as this park.



Baseball field at what is now known as Pesci Park

Summer Jobs in the Tobacco Fields

In Connecticut, you can work in stores or factories once you are 16 years old. From 14 to 16 years old, you can only work on a farm. For decades, Windsor Locks youths from 14 to 16 years old have worked on tobacco farms in and around the town. It has long been a “right of passage”. The pay is low. The work is dirty. The bus to take you to the farms leaves before 6AM. Yet Windsor Locks youths have found that the experience is worth it. You not only earn a few dollars, and get some exercise, you learn that you need to do well in school so you can get better jobs when grow up.

Connecticut tobacco is “shade grown” under massive white tents which protect them from the sun and the elements . This tobacco is used for wrapping cigars so the leaves have to be “unmarked”, that is, not flawed by creases, rips, cuts or holes. There are jobs under the massive tents, and other jobs in the tobacco sheds (barns). In the fields, teams of three boys pick the leaves. Two boys pick the leaves and one puts the pads of leaves in a cart which he drags along. In the barns, the girls “sew” the leaves onto a long string. Those strings are hung up by boys in the higher levels of the shed.

Following are two photos of tobacco fields before the nets are put up for the summer, and of leaves hanging in a shed.



Tobacco field before nets are put over the wires



Tobacco leaves hanging to dry in a shed

Some of the tobacco farms which hired Windsor Locks youths were

- Ritchie and Kenny Christian in Poquonock
- Raffia in Enfield
- Orie Champigny in Windsor Locks, and
- Meyer and Mendelson in Windsor.

The following photo shows that things haven't changed in the tobacco fields since 1927.



Tobacco workers in Enfield, 1927

The Ice Skating Rink on Center Street

Almost everyone who grew up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, remembers the ice skating rink near the corner of Center St, and Whiton St. It was down the hill from the ballpark behind St. Mary's school. It wasn't fancy. There was a small shed with a pot belly stove where you could change into your ice skates.

Following are a few photos of that ice skating rink. In the second photo, you can see the small warming shed. There were no covered ice skating rinks anywhere near Windsor Locks. This was a popular spot on winter days and early evenings.



Ice Skating rink on Center Street near Whiton St.



Ice Skating rink on Center St. Warming shed is on the right.

St. Oronzo Day Celebrations

Many of the Italian immigrants in Windsor Locks came from near the city of Bari in southern Italy. Just south of Bari is a small village named Turi. The patron saint of Turi is St. Oronzo. My grandparents, Vito and Anna Colapietro, came from Turi. Vito owned and operated Coly's Hotel, across from the Train Station. He became president of the

St. Oronzo Society for a while in the 1940s. Here is a photo of the statue of St. Oronzo in front of St. Mary's Church, where it was housed every day except for St. Oronzo day, when it was taken out for the parade. Folks remember the strings of dollar bills were pinned to the statue as a donation. I



*St. Oronzo celebration, St. Mary's Church, Windsor Locks, Conn.
Vito Colapietro, President of St. Oronzo Society standing in front of statue*

After the parade, which included an Italian band, marched through the downtown, the celebration moved to a field where there was Italian food, music and games. At night, the celebration ended with a big fireworks display.

In Windsor Locks, St. Oronzo Day is like St. Patrick's Day. Everyone celebrates both, sometimes in Charles Tenerowicz's Polish Restaurant.

Dr. Carneglia

It was impossible to live in Windsor Locks in the 1940s and 50s without knowing Dr. Carneglia. He was everybody's doctor. He grew up in Windsor Locks and went to medical school at Harvard. He graduated in 1931 and returned to Windsor Locks to be the town doctor. After seeing patients all day in his office, his wife drove him around to make house calls in the evening. He was my grandparents doctor, my parents doctor, and my doctor. He set my broken arm, sewed up my chin, and got me through my

childhood diseases. His office and home was at 5 North Main St. He gave children a slip of paper that could be redeemed for an ice cream cone at Carroll's Drug store.

Dr. Carneglia spoiled us. He showed us what a family doctor could be. He was utterly selfless. No other doctor comes close to the standard that Dr. Carneglia set. He also showed us, by example and not by words, that you can do well if you set high goals for yourself, and work hard to meet them.



Dr. Ettore F Carneglia 1904 - 1970

Dr. Carneglia was the most well known and well respected citizen of Windsor Locks. He died in 1970.

The Rialto Theater

The Rialto Theater on Main St was the place for kids to go on Saturday afternoons for the Saturday Matinee. We saw the 1940s cowboy heroes such as Hopalong Cassidy, Roy Rogers and Gene Autry in the 1950s. We saw cartoons. There was a special thing that the Rialto Theater often did at the matinees. They gave you a ticket with a number between 1 and 10 when you purchased your admission ticket.. Before the main feature, there was a short fill which was a race of some sort. It was comical in nature, but serious business to the kids in the theater. If your horse, dog, car or human wearing that number came in first in the race, you got a prize. The photo below shows that the movie "El Dorado", starring John Wayne and Robert Mitchum is playing.



The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

The Windsor Locks Town Dump

It might seem strange to put the town dump on a list of things that many of us experienced as we grew up. Back then, we didn't have trash pickup at our homes, so we drove it to the dump, where it burned. You would see fires everywhere. You parked your car where you wanted (not over a section that that was burning), and you dumped your garbage. A dump like this would not be permitted to exist today. Back then, we thought it was normal. Besides dumping our trash there, male youths often used the dump for target practice. The dump had a good supply of rats.

Below is a 1960 photo of the town dump which was then located on West Spring Street.



Windsor Locks Town Dump, West Spring St. 1960

If you didn't know this was a dump, you might think the photo had a certain beauty.

Johnny Cappa's Market, Aldo's Market, and Barberi's Bakery

Windsor Locks was a small town in the 1940s and 1950s . In 1940 the town population was 4,347. In 1950, it increased to a whopping 5,221. A big part of small towns are the small stores that people frequent. Johnny's Market, run by Johnny Cappa was on Chestnut St, near St. Mary's Church. It always had a bunch of bicycles parked in front of it. It was the place where all the kids went for penny candy. In front of the cash register there was an old time coke cooler with a lift-up lid. When you lifted the lid, you saw bottles of soda sitting neck-deep in very cold water. Above the water was a hose through which the water was pumped. To test his toughness, a boy would put his hand in the stream of water and see how long he could leave it there. Of course, Johnny didn't let it go on too long. He'd yell at us to close the lid. Unfortunately, no photos of Johnny's could be found.

The other market that we frequented was Aldo's on Oak St., near Main St. Why go to the A&P, which was only a half a block away, when you could go to Aldo's? Especially for the Italian community, Aldo's was the place where you went for a nice loaf of REAL Italian bread, and Italian cold-cuts. However it wasn't just Italians who went there. Here is a photo of the interior of Aldo's market, the formal name of which was the Oak St. Market. Like any good Italian market, Aldo's smelled good. It was a unique piece of Americana.



Aldo's Market (Oak Street Market)

Then there was the unforgettable bakery on Main St in Windsor Locks. It was Barberi's Home Style Bakery. That was the place to go for doughnuts, cakes, cookies and all sorts of baked goodies. It was a popular place for the kids to go for a treat.



Barberi's Home Style Bakery, Main St.

Bradley Field

Bradley Field played a large role in our childhood in Windsor Locks. There was always a number of cars with parents and kids who visited “old Bradley Field” for the thrill of watching the propellor planes take off and land. Many of us remember the old wooden buildings. The folks at Bradley Field were very nice to Boy Scouts. If you were doing your aviation merit badge, they would take you into the tower. They let me turn the lights on the runways late one afternoon. That was a thrill. Kids loved going into the terminal and then out to the platform where you could stand outside and watch the planes come and go. Those were the days before high airport security.

If someone in the family was going to take an airplane trip in the late 1940s and early 50s, it was a BIG THING. No one took an airplane trip unless it was important. When a family member was going on a flight, family members got all dressed up and went to airport to wish them good luck. There were machines at the terminal into which you could insert quarters to buy insurance for the person who was going to take a flight. You couldn't let a relative take a flight without buying them some insurance. Looking back, that seems like a gruesome thought, but it was a loving thought at the time.

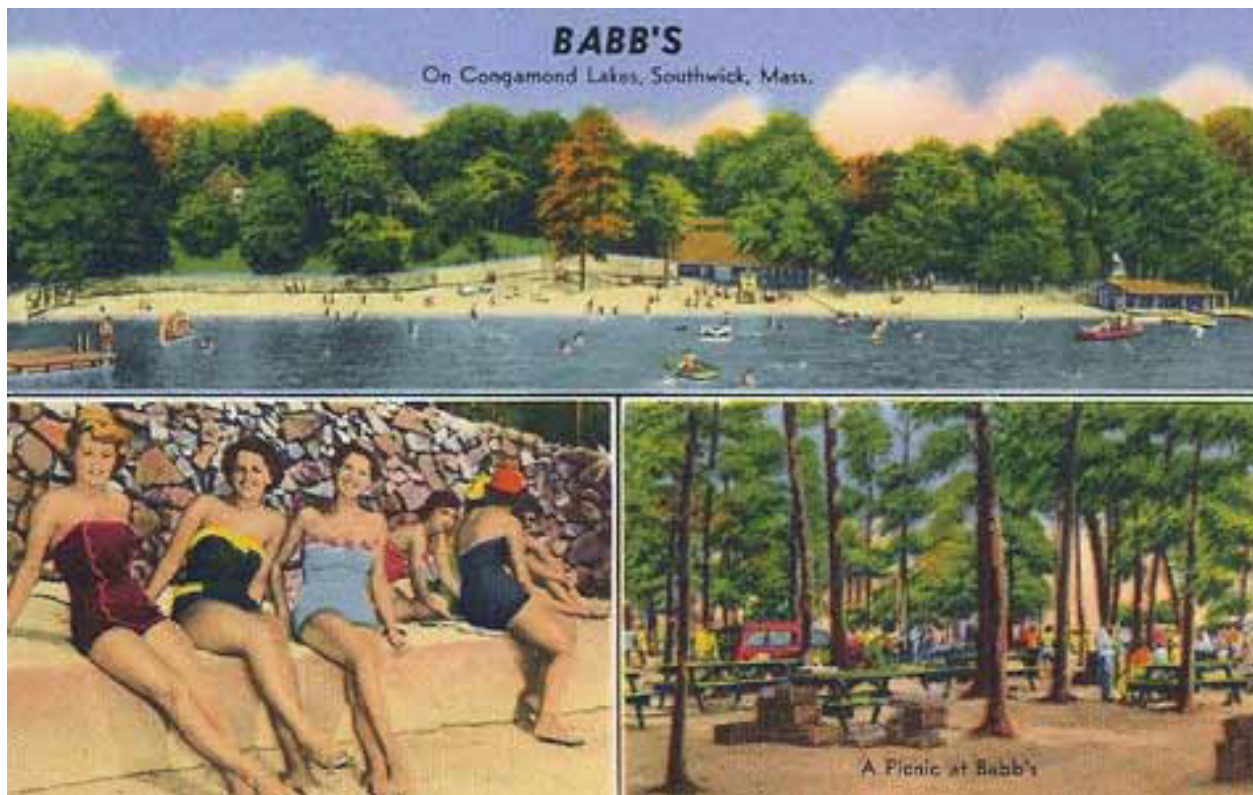


Bradley Field was not just a terminal where airplanes took off and landed. It was a high tech employment area. There was Hamilton Standard, Kaman Aircraft, Pratt and Whitney and other prestigious companies. Fathers of friends worked there. That opened my eyes to the possibility of the aviation industry when I grew up. Eventually I spent a decade in the field of aviation and the rest of my career at NASA. There is no doubt that the aviation industry at Bradley Field helped push me in that direction. While at NASA, I worked with Hamilton Standard who built many of NASA's space suits.

Babb's Beach

Back in the 40s, 50s and 60s, air conditioning didn't exist. In the summer, the kids like to get away from town and go to a place to swim and cool off. Babb's Beach on Lake Congamond is only a few miles away in West Suffield. It was a place to swim, and it had a roller skating rink and there were dances. It was a popular place to go for the teenagers to go.

Babb's was not new. It started in the 1890s. By the 1940s, it had big bands like Tommy Dorsey and Harry James. In the 1950s, the roller rink opened up, and it became a "cool" place to go. It was a favorite with the Windsor Locks crowd. It is now on the National Register of Historic places.



East Windsor Drive In

A big part of growing up in Windsor Locks was going to the Drive In movies. The East Windsor Drive in was just across the river. Prices were low. Families went there with their kids already in their pajamas. It was a popular place for teenagers to go on a date. The place had a park with swings for the kids to use before the show, and it had a refreshment stand. It was a quintessential old fashioned Drive In. Too bad they don't

still exist. Research didn't turn up any photos of the East Windsor Drive In. However, it did produce an arial photo of the theater taken in 1962.



East Windsor Drive in - Arial View 1962

Railroad Salvage

Just as Dexter Plaza was one of the first Shopping Centers in the United States, Railroad Salvage was the first of the closeout stores in the area, and one of the first in the nation. Now places like Job Lots and Odd Lots are everywhere. The Railroad Salvage store in East Windsor, was not far from the East Windsor Drive In, It was a place that Windsor Locks folks flocked to, to get bargains on everything from Hai Karate cologne to rugs, beds, outdoor furniture and CB Radios.

Ruby Vine, the man who founded Railroad Salvage was a World War II veteran, who lived in New Haven. In WWII, he was captured at the Battle of the Bulge, but he survived and returned to the US to become a first class entrepreneur. The TV commercials that he and his wife did were hilarious by today's standards. He was goofy and boisterous, edgy and cheesy, but it worked. The following web address is for one of the TV ads that Rubie and his wife, Choo Choo, made.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHUyxqyhIFU&feature=youtu.be>

If you were among the many from Windsor Locks who frequented Railroad Salvage, you probably met and knew Ruby. Below is a photo of Ruby and his wife.



**Ruby Vine and his wife "Choo Choo"
in a Railroad Salvage commercial**

Following is a photo of the Railroad Salvage store. This photo may or may not be one of the store in East Windsor. In any case, this photo evokes the spirit of that store.



Railroad Salvage Store

Riverside Park

Growing up in Windsor Locks, we often left town for some excitement, not just to Babb's Beach, the East Windsor Drive in and Railroad Salvage, but also to RIVERSIDE PARK. Riverside Park was the only amusement park around. It had a speedway where we watched Jocko Maggiacomo race. We roller skated, rode the bumper cars, the old wooden roller coaster and the Ferris wheel. We showed our strength by hitting a metal plate with a hammer, trying make the ball hit the bell, ate cotton candy and played the carnival games. It is fair to say that boys went there to meet girls and girls went there to meet boys. Going to Riverside Park wasn't something you did once a year. You went as often as you could. If you didn't have much money, and most of us didn't, you just went there to hang out with your friends and look for some excitement.



Riverside Park, Agawam, Mass.

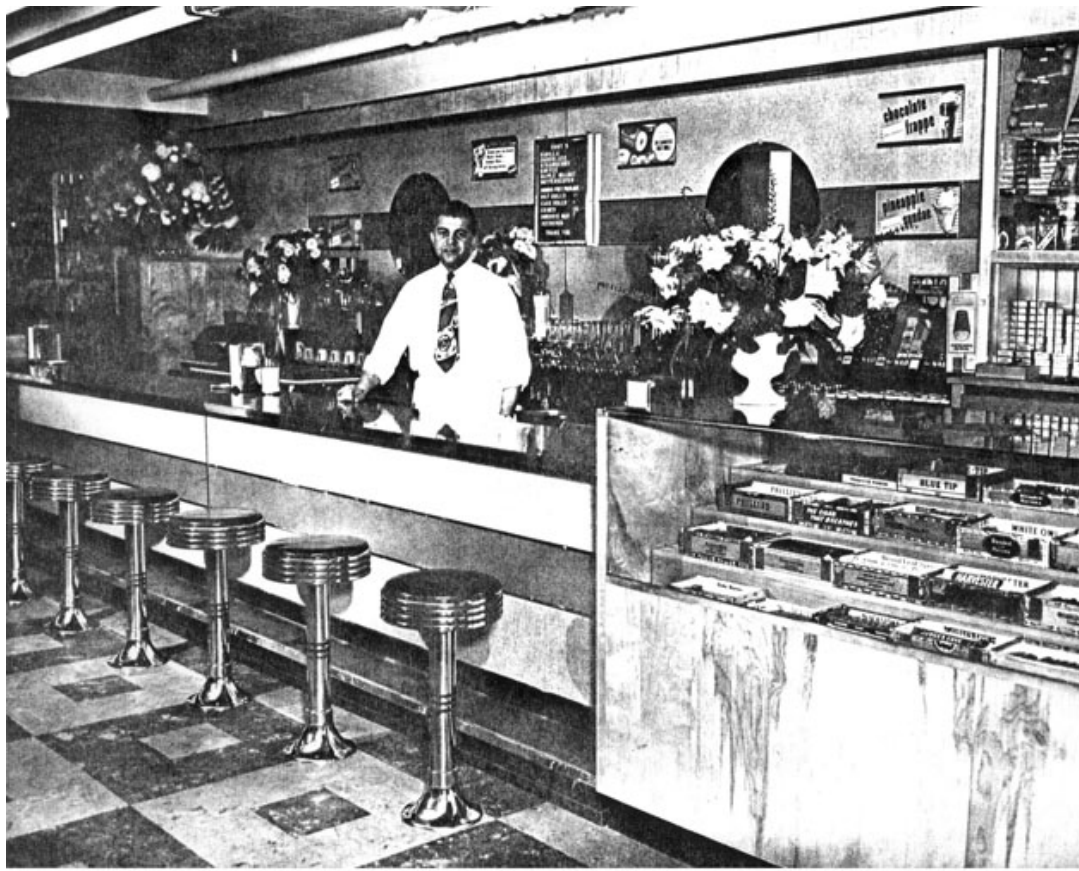
Going out for Ice Cream

In the decades prior to air conditioning, going out for an ice cream in the summer was almost a necessity. It was something that we did a lot of in the 40s, 50s and 60s. While there were a number of places you could go for ice cream, four were the most popular: Wuzzy's (Marconi Brothers Luncheonette), Tony's Soda Shoppe, Carroll's Pharmacy in downtown Windsor Locks and the Dairy Cream on Turnpike Road by Bradley Field. Each had it's own niche. Wuzzy's was the teen-age hangout. It was

popular. It was an institution that could not be duplicated. Tony's Soda Shoppe was a more traditional ice cream parlor. They didn't serve meals. Carroll's Pharmacy was primarily a pharmacy, but the kids at the time didn't seem to know that. It was where you went for an ice cream cone. The Dairy Cream introduced Windsor Locks to the wonders of soft serve ice cream. It is the only one of the four ice cream stores mentioned above which is still in existence. Actually, it is still in existence at of this writing in 2016. It has expanded and is flourishing. Here are photos of those unforgettable ice cream stores.



Marconi's Luncheonette on corner of Spring St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn., was usually called "Wuzzy's".
A great Ice Cream Store and teenage hangout .



Tony Colapietro at opening of Tony's Soda Shop, around 1950



James P. Carroll in his store. About 1955



The Windsor Locks Dairy Cream store at night.

Pizza and Grinders

Along with Ice Cream, growing up in Windsor Locks meant Pizza and Grinders. Windsor Locks has had a love affair with pizza and grinders since they were introduced to the town in the 1940s. Getting pizza for parties at home, or going out for a pizza was something we all did in Windsor Locks as we grew up in the 40s, 50s and 60s. The craze has not slowed down. The “Big Four” pizza and grinder shops in Windsor Locks were (and still are): AD’s, H&M, Second Poquonock and the Pizza Parlor. Back then, there were others such as Piccolos, Tanya’s, and Franks. We all had our favorites. The Big Four have expanded since they first opened, and all four are still going strong as of this writing in 2016. Here are photos of the Big Four pizza and grinder shops in Windsor Locks.



AD's original Pizza and Grinder shop on Main St.



The Original H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder shop



Second Poquonock Giant Grinder and Pizza Shop
75 Old County Road, Windsor Locks, Conn



Pizza Parlor Restaurant, 255 Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn - Since 1975

MAIN STREET

There is one single thing that everyone who grew up in Windsor Locks in the 40s, 50s and 60s will carry with them forever. That is the memory of the old Main Street, as it existed before re-development in the late 1960s. It didn't matter whether you lived downtown, in the Southwest section or in the northern section of Windsor Locks, you spent an enormous amount of time on Main St. You went to Syd's Modern Drug, the Rialto, Wuzzy's, Bidwell's Hardware, the First National Bank, the First National Grocery Store, Bianchi's Restaurant, the A&P, AD's, Barberi's Home Style Bakery, Swede's Jewelry store, the Donut Kettle, LaRussa's appliance store, Bianchi's Shoe store, the Post Office, the Library, and certainly the train station. Main St is where we went to shop, to hang out, and to live the Windsor Locks life.

The sound of the train whistle, the scents coming from Dexter's, the hustle and bustle of a small town center They all are embedded in our memory forever. Main Street was the vital center of small town life. It was a big part of growing up in Windsor Locks. Here are a few photos of the old Main St.



From right to left: Shonty's Restaurant, Bianchi's Restaurant, Coly's Hotel.
At right is corner of Grove St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn



Main and Church Streets



Dexter Plaza, 1965

CONCLUSION

The goal of this article was to describe the things we had in common while growing up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50, and 60s. These are the things that give us a special bond - that bring us together. We looked at 21 things and saw 31 photos and two newspaper clippings about the events of our youth which we shared. We took a brief historical trip through the time of our youth. If someone asked you to describe the culture of Windsor Locks when you were growing up, those 21 things would be a pretty good summary.

These are the things that we would talk about if we had a reunion dinner. These are the things that we will tell our grandchildren about, even if they look back at us with a quizzical expression, and say: "Who cares, grandpa?"

None of this would have been possible without the help and support of more than three dozen people who formed a discussion group on a private Facebook Group named "You know you are in Windsor Locks when." It was a free wheeling discussion of what we remembered about growing up in Windsor Locks. This article would also not have been possible without the existence of Jerry Dougherty's vast collection of historic photographs of Windsor Locks. Finally, this article would not have been possible without a modern computer and the ability to do Google searches through vast databases of newspapers and websites.

I hope you had as much fun reading this as I had writing it. If you know of anyone else who might enjoy this little trip through relatively recent history, please forward it to them.

Thank you very much.
Mel Montemerlo