

My most vivid memories of living on Buffalo's East Side from 1942-1960 (the year of it's demolition), are filled with a mixed bag of ethnic people. Grandparents, parents and some young children who were my age spoke with accents very different from the Italian which my father, Serafino Paolini, my mother, Giulia Paolini (third cousins) and their siblings spoke. Later on in life I learned that our neighborhood was very different from the West Side. We had paisani: the D'Andrea's, Joe and Lina, who lived on the West Side and whom we visited on the corner of Rhode Island and Prospect. Their son would become my Godfather and Lina, my Godmother. *Per Niente* readers know the son as Bernard D'Andrea, artist, painter and contributor to *Per Niente* magazine.

Memories of some of the East Side families and stand-outs within them come to mind often. Rocco Santoro and I were inseparable friends. His brother Mario founded Santoro Signs in a low ceilinged woodshed in their back yard on Eagle Street. Eventually the whole family worked in the business and today it's reputation is still respected. The Aloisio name is stamped in concrete slabs all over WNY: some dating back to the early 1920s. Attilio Aloisio, an uncle, was one of the financial leaders within the circle of Italians making homes and businesses on the familiar streets: Eagle, Swan, Jefferson, South Division, North Division, Pine, Cedar, Hickory, Chicago, Carroll, Pratt. He was able to make



Italian-American boys at Swan and Chicago Streets

loans and he did. There was a large group of us who had come from a small village commune in Aquila, Abbruzzi: San Pio Delle Camere. They came to Buffalo at the turn of the 20th century, mostly settling in what we know as The Lower East Side. Many lived there until 1960, when the City of Buffalo enforced a project inappropriately named "Urban Renewal." Using the force and principles of Eminent Domain, they evicted to the last. Included was my father's original self-service supermarket, "Paolini Brother's & Sons at the corner of Eagle and Hickory as well as the original Bocce Club Pizzeria (a former horse barn/garage), which was attached to the rear side of the store. Malvina Sacco was the founder that spawned six "Bocce Pizzerias" in her lifetime, by franchise, to her sons and brother, Dino. The store was take-out only and was rented from Mr. Lazzari, the owner of the Bocce Club. Prior to Mrs. Sacco renting, Lazzari would occasionally bake a sheet pizza and walk it out into Hickory St. where we all played our street games: Releavio, Nip, Kingers (wild chestnut game) Beef-Trust and "It" were most often played. We constantly nagged Lazzari to make pizza. Eventually it became the

best wish come true when the Sacco's moved in. Rudy Sacco, her oldest son, although presently recovering from a stroke, still operates the Bocce's Pizzeria on Clinton St. and Monroe.

Without delving into family history there are many who have left their mark on Western New York and beyond. Tobbio Martino, a Cornell

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grad taught horticulture, hosted a weekly radio show on WBEN and ran a very large nursery in Lancaster. Joe Mosey became a national magazine distributor, collection agency magnate and Real Estate investor by nothing more than hard work. The Sorrentino family not only ran Marco and Duffy's Tavern in the shadow of Chef's Restaurant, but Vince (Jim) Sorrentino rose to lead the Democrat Party as it's Chairman for several years, while still practicing Law. Carl Spavento was a radio news announcer on AM and FM radio for almost 5 decades. The Attea family is so large and successful that only their name be mentioned; the same goes for the Joseph and Moran families. Jim Horne, one of the best basketball players in UB history started in Welcome Hall and School #6 playground. Msgr. Pulling, the pastor of St. Columba's Church during the mid-forties was famous for his height, 6'3", but more so for his cousin, Johnnie from Phillip Morris of "Call for Phillip Moorriis" fame. He was about 5' tall and visited Msgr. Pulling often. Roxie Gian, a builder and developer of strip plazas and his large family made their start from the East Side as did Dan Amigone, world famous funeral director. His first "Parlor" was on Eagle St., near St. Columba's Church. In the early 20s his mother begged my father to have

young Dan apprentice for him at the Pierce Arrow Company, but after a few weeks of blacksmith work, Dan left for the undertaking career he so desired. He told that story till his last days. The Battistoni family, known for cured Italian sausage making fame as "Bison Products", was located within the neighborhood for nearly four decades. They wholesaled their products to grocery and meat stores locally (except to those who made their own i.e. Paolini Bros.) and now are doing it nationally, re-branded as "Battistoni".

This was a true melting pot. Lebanese, Hasidic Jews, Irish, German, African Americans and Italians some of whom were not yet naturalized citizens. Our house was separated by 30" side-yards. We always knew what was cooking next door when the windows were open. It could be kibbeh, matzah ball soup, spaghetti sauce or a pork roast. "Have a taste," is what you heard as a hand reached through the open window. That explains the "Old Neighborhood." By the mid '50s, many Italians moved to the East Delavan area and South Buffalo; the Jews and Lebanese moved to North Buffalo and Amherst.



Naples Delicatessen at Spring Street and Myrtle Avenue



Walking on Myrtle Avenue