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"Truth before favor - Principles, not men"

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George Bunda remembers

by George Bunda

On July 22, 1930, I was born in the kitchen of 118 Mulock Avenue. My father, Michael T. Bunda, and his friends and relatives from the village of Zhelevo, Macedonia, bought ten new homes on Mulock Avenue in 1928 for approximately \$3,400 each. They were the newest homes in the neighbourhood until the townhouses were recently built at Junction Road. They worked in the restaurant business and had established businesses in the Junction. The Harris Abbatoir had recently moved here from down near Bathurst and King.

The Junction was a great place for kids to grow up. I have so many happy memories.

Ontario Stock Yards

The rail road tracks spurred off the Canadian Pacific north-south main line to go west through Mulock Avenue and across Keele Street, immediately south of St. Clair Avenue all the way to Cobalt Avenue in the west. Cattle would be shunted to the unloading docks and headed off the boxcars to the various holding pens in the Stockyards. Auctions for cattle, pigs and sheep were held on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The box cars, when empty, were shunted back to the main tracks. On many occasions, lame cattle were left in the boxcars. Usually on Saturday or Sunday, a low slung wagon was drawn to the lame animals, which would be butchered on the spot, winched into the wagon and hauled to Canada Packers for further processing.

The stockyards had a huge parking lot on the west side of Keele Street.

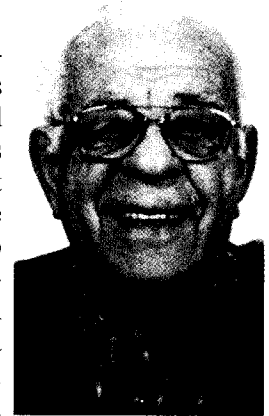
There was a row of rental garages and further in were loading docks where the trucks and semi-trailers unloaded animals for sale. Cattle that had been sold may have been transported from here to smaller abattoirs.

At the south end of the lot, a large building housed the Hog & Pork Exchange, various offices and a huge cafeteria. This building was replaced with a new one containing a branch of the Royal Bank on the main floor.

South of the stock lot and all along West Toronto Street were the repair yards of Canadian Pacific Railroad. Further west at old Stockyard Road, there was an area where the trucks would be cleaned out. The cattle refuse was carted to a massive mound and sold to farmers and

neighbours for fertilizer.

The rail-road box cars were cleaned out on sidings on the east side of Keele Street. A two wheel horse-drawn wagon carrying a huge barrel of white wash would arrive via Lloyd Avenue. When the white wash was completed, the horse would return to the stables unassisted. The horse was blind.



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Grade 3 classroom, 1939. George is in the far row, second from back.

Bowling alleys and a stolen bike

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The demise of the local rooming houses, hotels and most of the local restaurants came about when the Stockyards decided they would no longer house the animals for auction unless their rental was increased. Instead of the farmers bringing the animals from Thursday to Sunday and staying at the rooming houses and hotels, they arrived at the earliest on Sunday or on the day of the auctions.

When the animals were ready for slaughter, they were led from the stockyards by a "Judas" cow. The cow would cross St. Clair Avenue and pull over to the side while the cattle would continue up a ramp to the killing floor

Roseland Bowling Alleys and Roseland Sweets

My father, Michael T. Bunda and several associates built the Roseland at 2789 Dundas Street West on the SW corner of Indian Grove in 1923. It was originally built to house a theatre on the upper floor, but a license was denied. In 1925 my father, being the spokesman of the group, applied for a license to have a public dance hall and again was denied. So they put another ten lanes on the upper floor.

The main floor had ten lanes for bowling and a confectionary store at the front which my father ran as Roseland

Sweets. The basement housed a billiard room. My father and associates lost everything during the Great Depression.

On November 27, 2008, The Toronto Star had an article on the Roseland Bowling Alley (Editor's note: The beautiful Edwardian structure has recently been torn down by a developer who wished to build condominiums. When he was denied the density he wished, the land was offered for rent. It remains undeveloped today.)

The key figure in the article was Martin Scott, the owner of Forever Interiors, a store that offers used furniture and furniture made from salvage. Martin was offering tables made from the beautiful hardwood bowling alleys. I asked him if I could purchase a chunk to finish myself. Martin said he did not sell unfinished goods. When I told Martin of my connection with the Roseland he relented.

My daughter did not share my enthusiasm. She said, "You bought something with your heart not your brain. Where are you going to finish it? There's no room for a big table in the house and you can't even lift it."

Thankfully, Martin was sympathetic, and I bought a smaller piece of the bowling alley.

Hot Wheels

One Saturday afternoon in the late 1930's, my buddy Jack Apps, who lived near me on Mulock Avenue, and I were playing around in the stockyards parking lot at Keele Street and St. Clair Avenue. Our neighbour Dave peddled into the lot and showed us his new bike. It was a beautiful, a nice green colour with balloon tires and a bike-carrier in the front. It looked familiar, like a Tamblin's Drug Store delivery bike but no sign was hanging from the cross-bar.

Jack and I didn't think a thing about it and started to ride it. We didn't own bikes and had never learned to ride so when Dave let us use it, we were thrilled. After a few falls and starts, we got the hang of it and took turns. Soon we were zooming around the parking lot and before we knew it two hours had passed.

A police car pulled into the lot, and the officers asked us who owned the bike. When we told him that it belonged to our friend Dave who lives on Mulock Avenue, he started to laugh and said, "That Dave!" He told us the bike was stolen and put it in the trunk of the cruiser.

Later that day we heard that Dave was picked up at his home and was sent to reform school. His family moved away, and we never saw Dave again.



Carelton, Intermediate Jr. Champions, 1942. George is in the back row on the far right.



Earls Court Boys Club Midget Hockey Team. George is center, back row

Learning a lesson at Woolworth's

Restaurants

The following restaurants and lunch rooms were owned by gentlemen of Macedonian descent. Most of the owners were related or friends as they came from the same town in the old country. Ten to fifteen families lived in the Mullock Avenue and Old Weston Road area and others lived above their businesses.

On St. Clair Avenue from Cobalt to Lansdowne were C.P.R. Restaurant SW corner at Cobalt: Don's and Park Lunch, NE corner at Keele: Ford Restaurant and Everglades (next door) Venus Lunch, St. Clair Lunch: St. Clair Restaurant: Premium Lunch near the CNR Offices and Melrose Restaurant at Lansdowne.

Keele Street from St. Clair Avenue to Dundas Street: on the west side: Stockyards Cafeteria; on the east Nick's Country Kitchen (where the Purple Onion was before it moved to Dundas)

Dundas Street from Dupont Avenue to Pricilla Avenue: Westown (It is still there on north side near Hook Avenue with the same name): Roseland Sweets: Skyway Restaurant (beside the bank NE corner at Keele): John's Lunch (on Keele beside the United Cigar Store): Coney Island (near Kresges): Clendenan Restaurant (on the NE corner): Runnymede Restaurant (beside the Guffin's Hardware on the south side): C.P.R. Grill (on Runnymede north of Drug Store),

These establishments were operated from as early as the 1920's around West Toronto Junction. They are long gone or are under new management.

Light Fingered

Back in the late 30's, five of six of us kids went to the Woolworth's store on Dundas. Some were at the soda fountain sipping on cherry coke while the others roamed through the store.

Near the rear of the store, was a display of lead soldiers all lined up in six tiers. One of the boys had light fingers and tried to pocket a few soldiers. In doing so, knocked a whole pile of lead soldiers all over the shelves and floor. He got caught by the manager, and we were all herded to the basement through a trap door at the back of the store. The manager gave us orders to take a pile of empty boxes and put them on the other side of the room. When he came back, he told us to put the boxes back to the other side. This went on for about two hours. Then he told us to leave and not to come back. If it happened again, he promised he would call the police.

Lost Gloves

Back in the early 40's, the Popsicle Company on the east side of Dundas Street north of Bloor Street, would give various prizes for a certain number of Popsicle wrappers. About ten or 12 of us kids decided to get together to collect

wrappers and obtain our own baseball gloves. We scoured the streets and garbage cans and asked other kids to save the wrappers for us.

After two years, we felt we had enough wrappers to exchange for the gloves. We had lost count, but must have had thousands of wrappers. We lugged four large sacks full of wrappers to the company office. The man in charge couldn't believe his eyes. He didn't count them; he just gave us the gloves.

The oldest of our group was our so called "leader", and he suggested we keep all the gloves together so we would be like an organized team. We had no alternative but to agree. After a couple of outings playing baseball, our leader told us that his father had found the gloves and had burned them. A likely story! After almost 70 years I still maintain the gloves were probably sold.

A & P Bakery

While going to school at Western Tech, a bunch of us worked at the A & P Bakery on Laughton Avenue just north of Davenport Road. The bakery and warehouse have been replaced by townhouses. We all enjoyed working there: had a lot of fun and made good money. Our pay was \$1.00/hr. for the regular shifts doing the normal duties. When you worked on the ovens, you earned \$1.05/hr. The top rate was \$1.12

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Macedonian Zhelevo Soccer Team, 1946, George is front row right.



Royce Flyers Hockey Team. George is in back row, second from the right.

Cattle round ups on Keele Street

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on the ovens during the midnight shift. There was always a waiting list for employment at the A & P because the pay was great. I had a great time working there in 1948 and 1949.

During the week, we would be called to work on an emergency basis. One foreman, Bill Martin, had such a strong Scottish accent I could hardly understand him. When called, I strained my ear just to hear the time to start.

We worked the weekend shifts so that the full time employees could have the weekends off. During the summer months, we worked full shifts for their holidays. We baked all the various breads and cakes. After the morning shift on Saturdays, a bunch of us usually went horseback riding at a ranch off Brown's Line and Lakeshore Road.

Run-Away Steer #1

Cattle, pigs, and sheep were unloaded from the railway box cars and taken to be penned in their proper places. On many occasions, the odd animal would jump to the ground and get away, making their escape along St Clair Avenue running east or west. The employees of the stockyards were responsible for the animals and would go chasing after them. They commandeered passing cars to follow in pursuit. One time a steer came romping down Keele Street with a few cars chasing it. The men from the stockyards were standing on the running boards and holding the doors. They came to a stop on Vine Avenue when the steer entered a parking lot where transport trucks were stationed. The steer went crazy and was ramming the trucks, piercing their radiators.

The police came with drawn guns and finally killed the steer with about a dozen shots. Then came the hard part. It took several hours to get the steer onto a truck to take back to St. Clair Avenue.

Run-Away Steer #2

One summer day, there was a run-away steer pounding down Keele Street bumping into the passing cars. I had just left Nick's Country Kitchen when the steer eyed me. It charged toward me and

I ran to the gas pumps at the B. A. service station at Lloyds Avenue. The steer had horns about a yard wide and was chasing me around the pumps. Finally, it gave up and headed south again. All of a sudden, a car came screaming around the corner at St. Clair and Keele. There was this big guy named Chester Ellis, who worked for the stockyards, and he was on the running board on the passenger side. They were zooming down Keele Street after the steer. When they caught up to it, Chester leaped on the beast and bull dogged it to the ground. By the time I got there, he had the steer roped to a fence at Junction Road. It was a little easier to load this animal onto a truck to return to the stockyards.

Strides

While going to Western Tech. in the late 40's, a school buddy of mine would take your order for a pair of strides (pants). Strides were the "in" fashion for men. A description would go like this: 2 inch drop with 1/2 inch loop, inside or outside pleats, 27 inch knee, 7 inch cuff (sometimes with zippers) and any colour of fabric. John Blanchard would take your measurements and deposit and have your new strides for you in ten days. The pant maker was Winestocks on Queen Street near Lansdowne Avenue. John went on to U of T in engineering and paid his way by taking orders for strides from both men and women.

Chicken George

I believe I was in grade 5 at Carlton School when my class went to Perth Avenue School for manual training. On leaving Perth to return to Carlton, we were instructed not to go north on Perth Avenue to jump the fence and cross the rail road tracks. We were told to walk up Osler to cross.

One day as we were going home, the man in the rail road house, which controlled the crossing arm when a train was approaching from about 30 feet in the air above Osler Avenue, told us to be careful because of an accident had occurred further east on the tracks. I told the rest

of the kids to stay put while I checked it out. When I got to the scene of the accident, there was George Corona with his right leg mangled below the knee.

What had happened was four or five of the boys decided to jump the fence and cross the tracks. George had dropped his book by the fence and went back to retrieve it. A slow moving train blocked his route, and he decided to climb between the box cars then jump to the other side. As he did, he fell and his leg ended under the wheels.

During the summer months, my cousin, George Glavin, and I had visited George at his home on Davenport Road near Laughton Avenue. He was managing very well with his artificial leg. He could run, play hockey and baseball. We ended up calling him "Chicken George." We would go swimming at the Oakwood Collegiate pool on St. Clair east of Dufferin. He would be hopping like a chicken before he dove into the water. I have not seen or heard from him in forty years. I hope he is well.

Private Bus

Back in 1947, I was playing for the Earls court Midget Hockey Team representing the Earls court Boys Club located in the Lansdowne and St. Clair area. Forty five teams in the Toronto Hockey League were vying for the city championship.

As a first year team, we had a tremendously good year. We lost to Byers Motors in the semi-finals and they were defeated by St. Mike's, the champions. We had a very good coach, Don Scott, a local Junction boy. Don was the sales manager at West York Motors. Ed Seedhouse owned West York Motors and West York Bus Lines which operated from its garage at Pacific and Vine Avenues. Don made arrangements with Mr. Seedhouse to have a bus for our games, especially for our out-of-town exhibition games. I remember on one occasion, the bus came right to my home on Mulock Avenue to pick me up for a game. Our team was the talk of the town for having our own private bus.