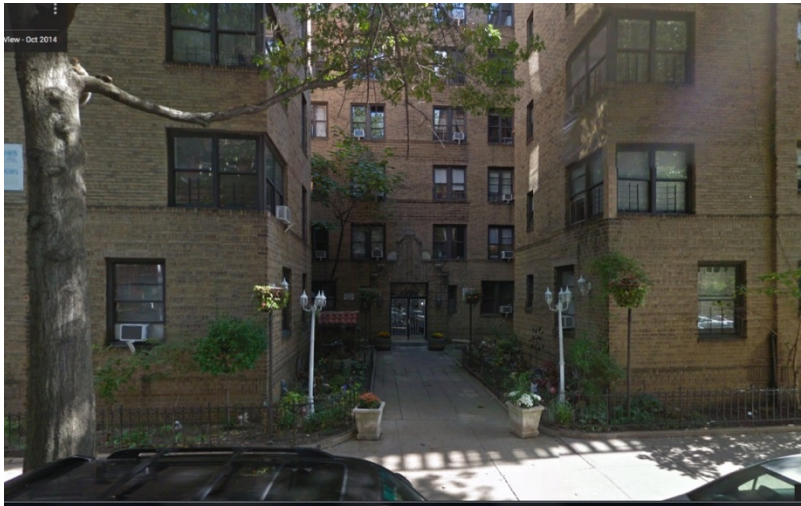


THE VIEW FROM THE WINDOW

By Allan Berlind

I lived for my first six years in an apartment in a six-story building at 41-41 46th St., near the corner of 43rd Ave. My most prominent memories of the neighborhood are related to the closeness and warmth of extended family, with all of the nurturing, drama and enterprise that went with it. My grandmother lived a short walk away at 41-22 42nd St. There I was often doted on and fed in the best manner of a Jewish grandmother. My grandmother's sister lived a bit further away, on the other side of Queens Boulevard near the big cemetery. There I was often doted on and fed in the best manner of a Jewish great-aunt. The two sisters, who had emigrated from Eastern Europe as young adults, were never to be seen together. They hadn't spoken to each other for years, for reasons that no one was ever able to determine. In all of these homes, including my own, I was exposed to lots of Yiddish, at least in part as an attempt on the part of my elders to get me to learn it. Much to my parents' disappointment and to my own later chagrin, I resisted the efforts completely. Also within walking distance, on Greenpoint Ave., was the old-fashioned butcher shop owned by my great-uncle, husband of the third sister (who did speak to both of the others). That butcher shop served us not only while we lived in Sunnyside, but also for decades afterwards. My great-uncle and great-aunt moved their residence to Great Neck at about the same we did, and after that orders were called in and delivered when my uncle came home.

I have a single memory of the layout of our apartment. It was on the second floor, with a living room window that looked down the length of 46th St.



toward Skillman Ave. I remember sitting at that window (the one to the right of the entrance walk in the photo) and identifying the makes of cars, all of them black in that era, that were parked on the street. This ability implies that I must have spent time on the street learning the identifications, but I don't remember that phase of the project. Walking in the neighborhood was the only way

of getting around, so it was done often, and there is certainly photographic evidence that it was done.

I went to first grade at P. S. 150, probably walking there with my sister Binnie, who was three years older. Oddly, I have absolutely no memory of what the inside of the school was like or of anything that might have gone on in



there. What I do have is one memory of the outside of the school, particularly of the bars that were over the lower windows as seen from the outside. Was this a scary first impression that remained etched in my mind forever after? I do have proof that we were educated there, in the form of an illustrated collection of poems written by me and my classmates, including two by my best friends Myra Goldberg and Philip Kurinsky. They were probably written in the spring of 1949, near Father's Day, judging from the theme of the poems and the dedication which I wrote on the volume: "I Love You Daddy".



Allan and Binnie, 1945

Allan and Myra



Baby goats
 And baby deer
 Mother camels
 From far and near.
 Allan Berlind

The flowers
 The flowers
 The summer is coming
 The flowers
 The flowers
 The bees are humming
 Myra Goldberg

I saw a sparrow
 With a hurt wing
 Standing on the branch
 Of a tree,
 He hopped off the tree
 And tried to fly
 He fell down on the grass
 Philip Kurinsky



First grade, 1948-9

The 46th street apartment was also where I was introduced to the Brooklyn Dodgers, of whom I later became a die-hard fan. This resulted in a life-long burden with the Dodgers, while they were still in Brooklyn, and with their successor Mets. The adoption of the Dodgers was entirely the result

of growing up in a family that was, politically, on the far left. My parents had no interest in baseball, and very little knowledge about it, but they did know as a result of their political and social interests that the Dodgers were the team that integrated the major leagues, and that was

more than enough to encourage fandom, support, and attention. In my Sunnyside years, I had no other understanding of the basis or consequences of being active in left-wing politics in that era. That understanding would come later. But I think that my outlook on social and humanitarian issues took root in that culture and environment, and that developments in baseball played a particularly large role.

I continued to visit Sunnyside after we moved to Great Neck, since my grandmother remained there until my late teens. And in one minor way, my relations continued long after that. When I was old enough to drive and was going into the city, I would always drive in as far as my old neighborhood. I parked either on the street near our old house, or more often, under the elevated IRT tracks near the Bliss St. station, and would take the subway in from there. I'm guessing that it's no longer possible to park there for free.

Allan Berlind has lived in Middletown, CT since 1971 and is retired from the Wesleyan University faculty (Biology Department and Neuroscience Program). There were stops along the way in Cambridge MA, Berkeley CA, Cambridge England, and Honolulu. Mother camels???