

About the Stories

The people contributing to this collection grew up in the 1940's and 1950's in Sunnyside, Queens. We now live scattered across the globe. This is both a cyber-reunion and a story-writing adventure for us. We want to call up memories to share what it was like to grow up in the post-War years in Sunnyside. What binds us together it is the human need to tell our stories to someone who will listen.

Many of the essays in this collection reflect our innocent enjoyment of childhood - of street hockey and tobogganing and hanging out on the tree-lined streets playing patsy and jumping rope. Sunnyside was like a giant playground where kids poured out on to the street after school to play until their mothers called them in for supper. Others tell stories about our families. Still others include an interesting encounter, a person we remember, the physical neighborhood, our school years.

Some essays, however, talk about the dark shadow cast over our child years by the McCarthy era. At its height, the "Red Scare" with its attendant fear-mongering, hung like a pall over our community, driving a wedge between neighbors. Often, children were caught in the middle.

The 2016 presidential campaign has brought fear and hatred of "the other" into sharp relief. The normalization of bigoted rhetoric towards Muslims and Mexicans most notably is reminiscent of the chilling effect of the McCarthy era when red-baiting was the order of the day, people were sharply divided, and many were deeply hurt.

Story-telling makes us real people to one another, difficult to demean or discount. In telling our stories to each other lies the hope that we will be able to reflect on our collective past, find common ground, and make some small contribution to our collective future. We hope you like what you read.