
family



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FATHERS DIARY

Hotdogs link present to the past

Where did you go when you were a child growing up in New York City?

Remember the breeze, bright lights, smell of popcorn, salt water pool and the voice of Paul Anka at Palisades Amusement Park? Remember the amusements and beach houses that once adorned the loveliest of boardwalks at South Beach on Staten Island?

These are fond memories our children will never have a chance to experience. There is, however, still one tradition and vital source of generation linkage surviving in our city that will probably go on indefinitely. The area is Coney Island.

The parachute jump and roller coaster may be silent today because of needed work, but the other rides and penny arcades are doing a booming business and kids of all ages are able to escape from the panic of the big city for a little relaxation.

Many a Sunday afternoon is spent by my family enjoying the beaches of Coney Island. And, when get hungry, well, where else can you eat that has history and a special gastronomical ambience then Nathan's Famous.

It was just three weeks ago that my oldest daughter, Elizabeth, had a Nathan's hotdog and said to me, "Daddy, what's the big deal about a hotdog?"

It got me to wondering about the American hotdog and I decided that it would be a good idea if we

all read up on it.

We found out that if it wasn't for the business wisdom of Ida and Nathan Handwerker as well as their desire to make a quality homemade hotdog for all to eat, America today would only have its apple pie. The hotdog would not be.

As Elizabeth flipped through some old back copies of Time Magazine we were referred to at the library, she was amazed to read the following: "Nathan's is the spiritual home of the hotdog."

Famous frank eaters

If you should ever go to Nathan's at Coney Island or Time Square, you will see dozens of pictures of America's top personalities feasting on a dog—from Queen Mother Elizabeth of Great Britain (that made my Elizabeth feel really royal!) to Jimmy Durante. And what better tribute can anyone pay a hotdog of Nathan's than to publicly say, as did former Governor Nelson Rockefeller on one of his campaign trails: "No man can hope to get elected in New York State without being photographed eating hotdogs at Nathan's Famous."

Finding out about the history of the hotdog became a family project. The more we looked, the more we found about it. One thing was for sure, the hotdog is liked by just about every American. Ida and Nathan Handwerker have affected everybody's life in America today.