

Remembering the Old Downtown Malden Square

My business was the Malden Jewelry store, a retail store of which I was the owner. The business was started by my father, Barney Kahn, and we were in business for a total of 73 years. We sold over 250 Malden High school class rings to the students for graduation. We also sold the 1st 13 inch black and white TV in Malden.

Malden was the leading shopping center north of Boston for many years until the opening of shopping malls which were not in existence at that time. Some were open 6 days and 2 nights every week. A newspaper boy sold and greeted shoppers at the head of Pleasant Street. A policeman walked the street daily and checked in on merchants regularly.

Sidewalk sales were held annually in the Spring and merchants set up tables in front of their shops where they sold their merchandise at discounted prices. Parking was limited to allow shoppers the ability to walk up and down Pleasant Street to do their shopping.

These are some of the memories I have of downtown Malden.

Jordan March (formerly known as Joslin's), Kresge's 5 & 10 Store, Woolworths 5 & 10, Grants 5 & 10, Sparks Department store, Art-Carl Jewelers, Edson Shoe, Thom McCan shoe, Louis Klane's Shoes, Danberg's shoe, Baker Clothing, Boston Leader Ladies Clothing, Hardwick's Ladies Clothing, Lady Grace, Gordon's Clothing, Binder's Fur shop, Ruderman's Furniture, Kotzen's Furniture, Bloom Bros. Furniture, Rexall Drug Store, Mal's Market, Bluestein's Stationary, and many theaters lined the street namely Granada, the Strand, Mystic Orpheum, and one or two others whose names escape me. The Kernwood restaurant was the place to go where many merchants met for lunch to discuss business. Litchy's Deli was the most popular place and was one of the best NY style delis around. There was Jade's Chinese restaurant, another popular dining spot. Scattered along were a few beauty and barber shops as well as 3 or 4 banks. All of this made Malden a very popular thriving downtown where people came from everywhere to shop.

The old City Hall was located at the corner of Main and Pleasant streets and was closed and a new one was about to be built. There was funding from the Federal Government given to the city to build a new City Hall. Unfortunately, the location chosen to erect this 6-story structure, caused the death of downtown. It was built at the end of Pleasant street, directly in the middle of the street, closing off the whole downtown area. The street was now blocked off, diverting vehicles to drive around Pleasant Street. Now that shoppers had to bypass this once thriving city, business dropped off and merchants, one by one, had to close their doors. It was a very sad time for the city of Malden. This once bustling downtown was now devoid of the many shippers that had kept Malden so popular.