

## Birth and time living in the Bronx 1929 - 1942

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I was born 17 November 1929 in the family house at 684 East 237th Street, in the Wakefield section of the Bronx.

[{99}](#)

My father returned from service in World War I to the Mullins who lived at 271 East 238th Street on the Woodlawn/Yonkers border. Our house was close to the Mount Vernon border.

After my father left the Army, he became a citizen [{100}](#) and drove a cab in New York City for several months or even years. Eventually he hooked onto a grocery chain called Andrew Davey, where he became the general manager of

the chain until it folded during the depression of 1929.

[{101}](#)

Peter then organized his own chain of stores, drawing on his experience with Andrew Davey. The Royal Food Stores were small (we would call them mom-and-pop today) and were operated by friends and relatives, many named Morley.

[{102}](#)

Peter quickly became successful at the grocery business, and decided to purchase a house being built in 1922, although he was not married until 1925. There is a family legend that the Mullin family occupied the house at the beginning until Peter's marriage to Virginia McKeon in September 1925.

The house at 684 E 237 street was located on the block between White Plains Road and Richardson Avenue. The former was the business street, with the 241st Street elevated trains overhead and a trolley system below. Richardson Avenue was the only smoothly paved road in our area; 237th street was rough paved, and I think White Plains Road was cobblestone.

The house was a two family house with a separate two car garage behind, accessed by a common driveway between 684 and 682. My family occupied the ground floor and the basement and Mrs. Elizabeth Wimmer and her nephew August Gieg rented the upper floor.

The Gieg family appear in the 1900, 1910, and 1920 census records as living on 87th Street near the East River in Manhattan, New York. August's father and mother, August and Emma are born in New York of German parents. Elizabeth Wimmer is Emma's younger sister. August senior is a "shoe cutter" and Elisabeth works in a shoe shop. August

junior is an accountant for a Baking Powder company in the 1920 census. The Giegs moved to the Bronx in the 1920s; it seems that the houses along 237 street block were built in that timeframe. {[103](#)}

## Financial matters

We were too young to understand the Foy family finances at the time. Our parents never told us of any problems, but we discovered them in retrospect. My father's businesses failed in 1937. He borrowed money from his older sister Cecelia to establish an independent store on Phillips Avenue in the East Bronx, renting the space from Mr. and Mrs. Dumulo. {[104](#)} that venture lasted three years. He gave up the store and began work for George Loft (the candy man) in a food store in New Rochelle. After mother died he worked for supermarkets, Tradewell in Greenwich CT and Shopwell in several locations in Westchester. The company used him to open stores and train the eventual manager, then moved him to another location to repeat the process.

In a letter to his sister Cecelia he sends her a blank check to repay all the help she has given him since 1937, telling her he does not want to be in debt to anyone.

We knew we were not as affluent as others on the block or neighborhood. {[105](#)} In retrospect, we were exemplars of the word "eke". Luckily the rent from the Gieg's probably took care of the house mortgage and taxes, and we often were recipients of clothing from our cousins the O'Gradys who were older and more affluent than us, as Thomas O'Grady was in the accounting department of the A & P.

## Neighbors

Although we knew our neighbors, we did not socialize with many of them. The Kerrs at 682 shared a common driveway,

our relationship was courteous but not close. The Findisen and Hollreisen families at 602 were friendly. Both men traveled extensively One of them was trapped in Germany when the war broke out; I never learned if he ever got back to the States. We were friends with Robert Wallace at 680 but I don't remember socializing with his parents. {[105a](#)} We were also friendly with Jimmy Saunders who lived in the apartment building. {[106](#)} Around the corner on Richardson Avenue lived the Espositos. {[107](#)} The O'Connors moved into an apartment on the east side of Richardson Avenue shortly after their mother died. They moved from St. Mary's parish around 219th street. {[108](#)} Across the street lived Timmy Smith, younger than us who attended Mount Saint Michael grammar school with its high tuition. {[109](#)} On the west side of Richardson Avenue lived the Weidner family; Henry or Junior Weidner was a little younger than myself, but we were good friends. {[110](#)}

Fred Waterhouse lived in the apartment building on the northeast corner of Richardson Ave and 237th street. I think his father was the superintendent. Fred was a little older than us but we played together often. He was shorter and wirier than my brother Peter.

The Gallaghers lived on Richardson Ave but moved away to Los Angeles and then returned to our neighborhood shortly before the USA entered World War II. The Gallagher boy was one of the first drafted into the army. Helen Gallagher became an actress {[111](#)}

## **trains and trolleys**

stub for trains and trolleys

## **trips and vacations**

stub for trips : Sheffield Farms, Kensico Dam,  
Peach Lake, Central Avenue diner,  
Tibbets Brook pool, free some mornings

## **world's fair 1939-1940**

stub for worlds fair: Free on Wednesdays, trolley to 225  
street, then bus to the fair. money for one drink, bring you  
own sandwich and perhaps an apple for dessert.

## **games we played**

stub for games we played

## **social life**

stub for social life

## **church and school**

stub for church and school

## **Chatham vacation - 1941**

stub for chatham experience

## **Summer of 1942 - our last**

stub for summer of 1942

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