

**A CITY COUSIN'S  
RECOLLECTIONS  
OF NASSAU  
IN THE 1950's & 60's**

# All About Nassau

## People, Buildings and Memories

**BY KURT VINCENT, NASSAU VILLAGE HISTORIAN**

*As a young girl and teen, Claudia Cunningham would come to Nassau to visit her relatives. She graciously shared her memories of those years with us.*



George Young, Jr., pictured above and below, was called "Junie" by the family and is honored today along with William Chandler as Nassau soldiers who lost their lives in WW2.



Nassau was the home of my mother's family. My great grandfather John Jordan sold his cigar shop on Clinton Avenue, married Helen Fisher of Albany, moved in a horse wagon to Jordan Road, named after him, and built his home. Today it is called Raven Haven.

My great grandmother would read her Bible in her long dress, surrounded by the children who adored her. She was a gentle spirit and a hard working woman, the perfect wife, mother, and eventually, grandma. The oldest girl, Helen, was my grandmother. She met my grandfather George F. Young, whose family came from Germany and who settled in Hancock, Mass. They moved to Nassau to McClellan Road (the house behind the garden shop that is there now). In later years George's brother, John and sisters Laura and Ella lived there, never marrying, after the parents Ida and Frank, passed on. They had an outhouse(!) and smoke house where they cured their own meat. Aunt Laura made her own soap out of lard, and I remember their kitchen sink had a pump on it instead of a faucet. They were the greatest and warmest people. Uncle John worked in Russia on a dam for a long time. Jessie Coons, a widow, was a friend and lived next door. Ella worked at Bayer Aspirin next to Sterling Winthrop until her death.

My grandfather married Helen Jordan, and according to my mother lived in several homes in Nassau and then Gramp built his own place on the foot of Lord's Hill. It used to be a lovely white home with many acres, and a lovely garden. Now it is a blue apartment house.

My mother, Helen was born in 1916 and her brother Howard joined the family three years later, followed by George, Jr. We called him "Junie". The hallmark of their home was honesty and hard work. My grandfather worked at the old piano factory across from the elementary school in Nassau before starting his own milk business, George F. Young and Son. He and Howard ran the business for many years. Junie went to war at 18 and died Christmas Day, 1944. He was the family's golden boy, someone who may have become a professional baseball player, a boy who would ride the bus into Albany on a Saturday and hold his mom's arm as they walked up and down North Pearl Shop where all those fabulous family run stores were. He had blond hair and blue eyes, a very handsome kid, I'm told, and when the notification came that he had been killed on the ship Leopoldville in the English Channel, it all but destroyed the family. He and his buddy, Bobby Chandler, have the Nassau VFW Post named after them.

Nassau in the 1950's. I'd happily spend many a weekend at my Uncle Howard and Aunt Doris' house at 34 Elm, when I was around 10. My cousins, Dale, Diana and Donna (later Billy) were my playmates. We'd ride on



At the home on McClellan Road, Aunt Laura Young is to the right with the big hat with the author's mother and grandmother.

Pictured right, Howard Young and his dad, George F. Young making a milk delivery. This photograph was taken at the corner of Chatham Street and Route 20. Both the Grand Union store, now the vicinity of Cumberland Farms gas pumps, and the to the rear, Kelly's Hotel, now the still vacant former Mobil station are gone. Beside them is the blue milk truck they used to keep Nassau supplied with milk, cottage cheese, and all things dairy.



our bikes to Malden Bridge Playhouse where Barbara Streisand got her start, and character actor Malcolm Atterbury (he is on literally all major t.v. shows from that era) appeared...along with many other actors who got their start there.

We ate pizza - the best I ever had - at Mantica's on Nassau Lake. My Aunt Doris pretty much let us do whatever we wanted. We rode in my Gramp's big blue truck when he delivered milk to people all over Nassau, and later Diana and I were treated to a shopping spree at the great Delson's Economy Store, next to the old Warner's hot dog stand. He'd give us money and we'd run in and I'd always go for the toys and remember I bought a dentist play set and doll shoes and Diana got whatever she wanted. Delson's was fantastic. Everything from fancy ladies' bathing caps with the flowers on top, to notions, to food, to garden supplies and clothing was available. My aunt Doris was bookkeeper and eventually went to Delson's in Chatham or Hudson, I can't recall which. I remember Mr. Healey, the red headed gentleman, who worked there. He always had a cigar in his hands. The wooden floors creaked and the smell of the cigar was all over the store. It had character and originality, as many of the old family stores had back then.

We ice skated on the little pond on the Malden Bridge Road in the winter. We shopped at the Grand Union in the square in Nassau, had vanilla phosphates or cherry Cokes at Waters' drug store. We had a ball. I knew many of the people on Elm Street then - the Tenants, the Browers, the Strevelles, through my cousins. They were all good people. I remember Christmases in Nassau at my grandmothers' where we would all have a big dinner, and at Christmas her house looked like a toy store. We grandchildren made out very well!

They are gone now, my parents, grandparents, aunt and uncles. They rest in Nassau Schodack Cemetery, and I can't help but think they have run into Junie, and all those they loved and lost. The flavor of old Nassau has gone, the great people who lived there through the decades have departed from those salad days of the 1950's, but they live through the memories of the people who loved them. And loved, they were.