

Who Remembers...A&W Restaurants?



Look at those 1970 prices! Nothing over a buck!

Here is another installment in our *Who Remembers?* series. You can browse previous articles by using the search bar on the right or by clicking **here**. These articles are strolls down memory lane. In some cases the buildings, but new businesses have replaced them. In other instances, the buildings or even the properties have been razed. Instead of a building, it may be a TV show, personality, or commercial that no one longer exists. Either way, it can't stop us from taking the Memory Lane stroll!

As always we would rather this be a discussion. No one knows this area better than those who grew up here! Please, leave constructive criticism, feedback, and corrections. We'd love to hear your anecdotes. Please share!

In this installment of "Who Remembers..." we take another

stroll down a memory lane that will involve some mouth watering memories. It seems, in my case anyway, that many fond memories revolve around food and drink. They seem to serve as a mnemonic anchor – you not only remember that first pizza, ice cream, or steak, but these evoke the conversations, laughs and people in our lives during those moments.

A&W Restaurant is one that evokes strong memories, particularly the one on Route 6 in Fairhaven, where Honey Dew is today. While I don't particularly recall what the building looked like, I do recall the big, brightly lit sign and of course, the iconic "frosty" mug. As a kid, a gimmick as simple as a frosty mug was all it would take to get me and my brother Mike to recommend a visit!



This is what's called happiness!

Of course, A&W had so much more than gimmick and marketing going on for itself. That root beer or as the kids would say today "Dat root beer." A&W is synonymous with root beer. It conjures that rich, mildly spicy flavor of founder Roy W. Allen's recipe that he created one hot, California summer day in 1919 and sold from a stand.

Allen's motivation was a parade to honor WWI veteran's. He sought something refreshing to cool down spectators and

participants, and bought a recipe from a pharmacist in Arizona. Yes, a pharmacist since at that time soda or tonic was not a dessert, but a concoction for health. Root beer takes its name from the root or bark of the Sassafras tree and was a lightly alcoholic beverage, hence the “beer” aspect of its name.

Allen’s idea was to promote a health drink (minus the alcohol) that would cool the locals down at an irresistible price: a whopping 5 cents! He succeeded in doing this so well that he almost immediately took on a partner, Frank Wright and they went into the root beer business, named after the first letters of their surnames.

In 1923 they opened up their flagship drive-thru in Sacramento, California and by the early 1970s, they would have more stores than McDonald’s all over the world!

Do you remember the Family Burger mascots Papa Burger, Mama Burger, Teen Burger, and Baby Burger or the Great Root Bear, also called Rooty? The Papa Burger which was “...two 1/8-pound beef patties, with two slices of American cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion, pickles, and A&W’s proprietary sauce, on a sesame seed bun”? The mouth watering curly fries, onion rings, fish & chips and hot dogs? The delicious root beer float at the end of the meal?



The Acushnet Avenue location had car hop service.

sigh

Besides the Fairhaven location there was an A&W in New Bedford on Acushnet Avenue (anyone remember where?) that offered a car hop service. Wouldn't it be a kicker to have a retro A&W with car hop service brought back the area? With all the local car shows and 50s nights, we'd have a spot to retire to! Someone make some phone calls and make it happen!

A&W restaurants still exist all over the country and many are doing rather well. Today the company is owned by the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group. The nearest locations are at 1460 Putnam Pike, Smithfield, RI – 401.949.9892 and 297 Route 28, Harwich Port, MA – 508.432.9838.

Well, now that we've taken this stroll? Maybe I'll bump into you in Smithfield or Harwich Port in the future – we can share a toast over a frosty mug.

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