

## AWAY FROM HOME ON THE HOLIDAYS

*By Mike Harris*

We are a mobile nation. Everyone in this country has, or has ancestors who had itchy feet or unbounded courage or both. We or our forebears were all immigrants. So our heritage includes ancestors who had spent time away from home on holidays. Since then we and the other residents of Windsor Gardens, I would guess, have at one time or other been away from home at holiday time, probably more than once.

For many World War II was a first time, and this interruption in our lives was an unexpected occurrence. In the interest of not being biographical, I will try to tell of my observations of my brothers in arms, and how they coped.

First, Junior, seventeen, Appalachian frontier background. He talked about younger siblings, brothers and sisters whose company he sorely missed. The need to hunt an animal for the celebrated table, a wild turkey or young deer, the produce of his mother's kitchen garden, and the sumptuous meal he would not help provide for or partake of.

Then there was Friedlander, nineteen, a product of the streets of Brooklyn, a part of New York City. He too missing close family and the holiday meal, procured from the local merchants, the grocer, the baker, and the butcher.

Then there was Burk, of English or British descent from Long Island, a more affluent community. He was twenty one, and talked about the festive parties that usually took place at this time of the year.

These varied conversations were illuminating, interesting, and revealing of the multicolored fabric that made up the whole of this nation. These three were to me the most interesting, but I will not slight Berttiny, or Sachetty who talked of their Italian backgrounds; or Morzinsky of Russian antecedents; or Kowalski and his buddy Potomkin of Polish background — almost a league of nations, yet all here because "with liberty and justice for all" leveled the field. They were here because each family had left Europe, at one time or other to seek a place where "liberty and justice" were the key words for a new beginning. All of us putting our lives on the line to protect the promise of a different world. This world was a promise made in 1776. It was now two hundred and thirty eight years old, had survived and kept the promise all these years for the multitudes who had the courage to not be home for the holidays, with the hope of making new homes for those to come. The promise is alive and well!