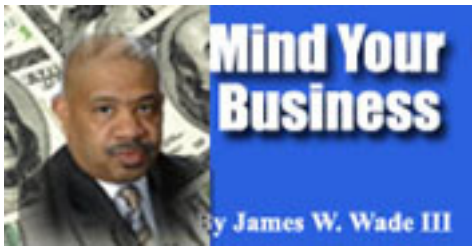

I remember when

I I hope everyone is starting 2013 off okay and, if you made any resolutions that you are sticking to them. In response to all the phone calls in response to my past 2 columns and the memories I had growing up in Cleveland, I decided to talk about the businesses that were around. Now, it was no secret that you could dress up on Sunday's and head downtown to possibly have a great dinner at the Forum Cafeteria located at 2050 East Ninth Street, at the corner of 9th and Euclid, right next to the Western Union office. In case you are too young to remember, Medical Mutual takes up that location now.

The place gave you a school-like dining feel. The cafeteria had separate work divisions, each with their own management and staff: the Bake Shop, Salads, Kitchen, Pot Wash, Dish Line, Dish Transfer, Serving Line, and Cashier.

Rarely did employees cross over and work in the other disciplines, although one could work their way up to other positions.

There were two long cafeteria lines where diners queued up and could view and select the items they wanted. Taking a tray and a wrapped table service, you slid it down the chromed rails and moved through the soups and salads first then entrees, vegetables, breads, desserts, and beverages. At the end of the line was a cashier who rang up your selections, you paid, and then found a place to sit and enjoy a freshly prepared meal.

After getting full there, you could walk around the corner and have a pick of the Hippodrome or Embassy theaters to watch some good Bruce Lee movies or any Black movie out at the time.

The Hippodrome (or the "Hipp" as everyone called it) was built in 1907 and located at 720 Euclid Avenue next to the Taylor & Sons department store (we know this building now as 668 Euclid). The theater was part of an 11-story office building and had entrances on both Euclid and Prospect Avenues. Today a parking lot occupies that area.

The Embassy was right across the street from the Hipp at 709 Euclid Ave., one of downtown Cleveland's last movie theaters.

The Embassy Theater was furnished with air conditioning, gleaming chromium, velvet hangings, and indirect lighting. Seating capacity was 1,200. During the 1970s, it became a showplace for action-type karate films. Owned by Community Circuit Theaters, the Embassy was closed on Dec. 1, 1977 and razed to make way for the National City Bank building.

Looking around and wondering where all these places went, I realized I even remember going to Jerry Mill's clothing store, The Fly Store (I worked there while in school and during summers) or going to Record Rendezvous or Woody's Music Hut.

Places have closed up but you have to remember the good times at the stores like Giant Tigers (Gaylords), Woolworths, Zayres, Federal's, Uncle Bills, or Army and Navy stores where I purchased my first pair of Chuck Taylor converses for $10.

Another great place I loved was Richmond Brothers, who manufactured and sold men's suits, furnishings, and hats, supplying a national network of stores from its 23-acre tailoring plant and offices at 1600 E. 55th St. The firm began in 1879 when Henry Richman moved his manufacturing and wholesale clothing business to Cleveland from Portsmouth, Ohio.

In 1907, the company took its present form when the founder's sons Nathan, Charles, and Henry opened retail outlets, selling factory-produced men's clothing directly to customers, the first clothier to do so. All suits were priced at $10 until 1939 when men's furnishings and hats were added to the line.

In 1969, the company was sold to F.W. Woolworth Co. of New York. By the early 1990s, the firm had become unprofitable and at the end of 1992 Woolworth closed its Richmond unit, including 9 stores in Cleveland and the distribution center located at the original plant on E. 55th St.

George Benson had a song called "Everything Must Change" and I guess this is so true. Nothing stays the same, in the Lee Harvard area you could get anything you wanted all in this one area.

West's Fish, Banks, Golden Point, KFC's, Kings Men's Shop, Robert Hall's, Paul Warfields, DK Marshalls and the place to find out everything Carl & Sons Barber Shop on Lee Road were among the hot spots. All the other places except Carl's are closed now.

If you ever watched TV and seen scenes with barber shops, Carl's is that place for sure. You can go in there and find out anything that happens in Cleveland and around the world even.

My father's close friend Raymond Collins Sr. stayed on 108th Frank Ave., one street over from Cedar and maintained memories of what Cedar Ave. use to be even before I can remember.

Art's Seafood, Bob's Toast of the Town, State Restaurant, the YMCA, and the great Pla-Mor skating rink. My co-worker Gloria said the Original Whitmore's on East 83rd and Cedar had some of the best shoulder dinners and pies she can remember growing up with.

Remember Gold Circle's, Peaches Record Stores, and Po Folk's restaurant?

Those were the good old days before big franchises came in and took over. Kids growing up today know about Golden Corral, Five Guys, Chik Filet, and Walmart.

They have missed going to Sterling Linder to see the tallest Christmas tree or Higbee's and May Co. window displays. Or the great times we had at the Forum and Woolworth's eating downtown.

Even though I have those memories, new memories are being created everyday for younger people. A new aquarium in the flats will be opening real soon. Medical Mart and Horseshoe Casino are also coming. Maybe we can even see the Cleveland Browns in a Super Bowl in the future.

Follow me on twitter @JimmyWadeIII

Write Wade at the Call & Post, 11800 Shaker Blvd., Cleveland, OH, 44120, or e-mail him at jwade@call-post.com.
Comments and questions are welcome but, because of the volume of mail, personal responses are not always possible.