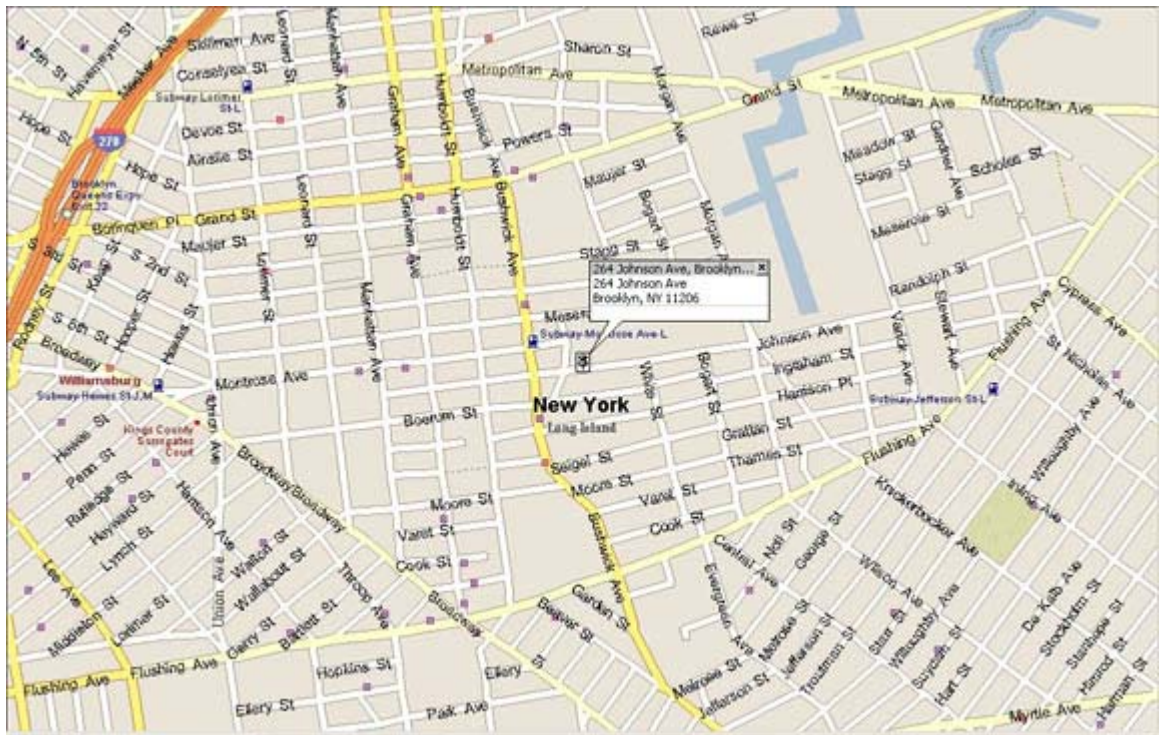


A Boy Discovers His First Hero

George W. Dagis' first known address was taken from his birth certificate, and is listed as 264 Johnson Avenue in Bushwick, Brooklyn. In those days most of the neighborhood was quite similar in nature to the major settlement areas for Lithuanian immigrants in Chicago. It was a tough area especially with the added problems caused by prohibition (an eerie similarity to today's dangerous neighborhoods created by the prohibition on drugs). Life was very hard, especially since the Great Depression was at its zenith, unless one were "fortunate" enough to have the opportunity to enter into the dirty realm of politics or if they managed to engage themselves in the alcohol industry in some capacity. By this time people were becoming wiser and the government's woeful attempt to stamp out the "evil" of alcohol had matured into a generally tolerant attitude toward it among the common folk. Still, technically it remained illegal and many in politics, lawyers, and judges among many others still found it to be very lucrative if alcohol remained illegal.



It has been said that George W. Dagis' father Joseph (Juozas as he was properly called in Lithuanian) owned a speakeasy in the back of a candy store run by his mother Anna. It sure beat working in the slaughterhouse but the family of four still lived in the same Wild West neighborhood,

nonetheless. Cattle and pigs ruled the streets as a major railroad hub ended right down the block where the animals were dispatched to the adjacent “meatpacking” factories. According to a story told to his daughter Joann Dagis Samide, and collaborated at least in part by others, a memorable event occurred one day during this period, at least in the eyes of a young George W. Dagis.

Somehow, without warning, one of the frightened and raging bulls broke loose from the doomed crowd of beasts and ran straight into the front door of the candy store. Anna Dagis started screaming, waving the only weapon at her disposal, a broom but to no avail, as the insane ton of beef luckily whizzed past her, missing her by inches, and entered the tavern. Glasses and stools flew every which way and patrons screamed for their lives and jumped in haphazard fashion to avoid the razor sharp horns. As the animal approached George W., his father grabbed the bull’s horns and pushed him backward through the back entrance. Whether or not a rush of adrenaline added to his brute strength could not have diminished this supermanlike feat. He became an instant hero to his son George W. (among others), and George W. would sometimes retell it with the same smile that he probably wore when he looked in awe at his father that day so long ago

