

Gary: welcome back to the Sunday review joining me this morning Alan Donovan

Alan: good morning Gary

Gary: goodmorning and welcome to the sunday review and Wow and and the debut of your new project kitchen table conversations

Alan:kitchen tablec onversations well I'm delighted to be hosting this series and I certainly want to thank my partner Mark Simonson who is as you know a columnist for The Daily Star City historian and he's been a great deal help in terms of research and also technical advice on this series

Gary: this is giving you an opportunity to get out and speak to a lot of people it

Alan: certainly hasn't well what we've tried to do is to talk with the number folks in the region and give us a sense of importance of these individuals for the educational the business cultural life of the region itself

Gary: who's uh who's up today

Alan: well today we start with an icon in the Oneonta community sam nader himself and we have a four-part series with sam the first part begins with his growing up on River Street the second part deals with Sam as a politician because he was at one point in time mayor of Oneonta and then the third part will deal with Sam and they spall in Oneonta and he of course was responsible for bringing minor league baseball Tony on and it's maintained it for so many years

Gary: a fantastic community resources

Alan: yes he is it's been one it was a wonderful

conversation with Sam

Gary: and we'll pick up this first conversation where

Alan: well we'll
start with Sam coming to the country as
an immigrant or son of immigrant parents
back in early days

Gary: right now Allen Donovan and Sam Nader

Alan: let's talk about
when your family came here because I
knew you grew up in Oneonta

Sam: well my parents my parents Lebanon from
a little village which is about 10 miles
from Beirut in the mountains
in there it was a Maronite Catholics and
so my people are married we're Maronite
Catholic he came from the village called
me back you had little met them any Bay
is the name of the town of the methane
is the mountain and they left my my
mother and father were married and
they're extremely young when they can't
they started for this country and they
left they left Lebanon Beirut and 1909 a
matter of fact I looked it up
anticipating what you're going to ask me
it was August 17 1909 and they there
were several families from from this
little village who settled in only on
over around the same ship as my parents
the two feet wakens family of awakened
family Sadie Corrie
Esther Corrie is his daughter he he was
kind of a stowaway but anyway but when
they got into Marseilles France and the
way here my father couldn't pass the eye
examination and so they wouldn't let him
he couldn't continue on anything coming

to America by the way and Meyer sailed
my mother always called it that I guess
it in Arabic it's Marcia and so so we
had it my father had a cousin in Rio de
Janeiro Brazil so rather than exhaust
all of his funds that going back and so
on he went to Rio yes cousin was there and
his cousin was a peddler dry goods and so on and so they went to
real and my mother was a pretty good
seamstress and so my father and my
mother went to Rio de Janeiro and they stayed there
for two years until my father could pass
the eye examination and then they came
to this country and they came Ellis
Island yes I was thirteen nineteen
hundred and eleven but my father
my father worked in real he and he carried
he carried the merchandise for brother
is his cousin the peddler and so on so
forth and my my dad was a big man and I
did was about six foot two he was very
very he was very strong and any nice as
well what did you do in real well he's a
jackass

Alan: which means he carry things

Sam: he carried my mother but my mother was seamstress
and so they gather enough money they got
me come to this money and they had come
to this country Mike my father had
another cousin David's neither who was
here at the time and so they came and
they all came to only out of because the
railroad it were sure to a job with a
railroad

Alan: your father's name was Elijah
mother's name was...

Sam: my father's nameless Elias and urinator
my mother's name was rose Rajah and my mother was
the one that pushed for education my dad
he felt you know this high school is
good enough and so on so forth those
depression days but my mother my mother

is a woman my my parents we illiterate
she never they never had a chance to go
to school when they came my father
worked for the for the railroad
therefore the dnh worked on this on the
section and there's most of the section
workers were Italians and they called
him Leo but when they would asked for
one time my father would
Abdo ties

Alan: he was that big

Sam: yeah alright and he was much bigger different than
the rest of him but my mother my mother
wanted to get a job and they say and the
other Lebanese families in the only on
there are quite a few Lebanese families
and only out probably about 19 to 20
Lebanese family so the only element they
came because of the Silk Mills

Alan: the Silk Mills in Oneonta
is there were silk milk
that only on oh absolutely there were
two silk notes and only on my end and so
they many of them worked in the silk go
but so the other Lebanese women said you
know you can you get a job you can't
speak the language my mother says I
don't expect to talk you get a job
speaking I just want a job with my hands
I don't need that so see wet to the
overall factory which was unjust in
streets okay and and there's only words
she nooses me job my mother told me that

Alan: did you say English and Lebanese at home

Sam: I'm sorry

Alan: you speak two languages

Sam: oh yes right there Arabic right oh yeah right
we would my parents would speak Arabic

Lebanese you know and we would respond
in English I guess that helped both of
us but they they were kind of pushing
for us to learn the language and I
forget to say that I I can understand
practically anything but my but my
speech my speech is a leaves a lot to be
desired

Alan: in arabic

Sam: in it are great but
but if I had tried but now I find myself
remembered words thought my book cabinet
is not too bad but so my I was the third
child my mother lost childbirth she lost
a couple of children her three children
she lost him and but my sister Julia
was the oldest and then I had brother
Nasim sister Adele and my sister Dorothy
and my sister Chameli my brother you
know that's quite a handle to put on the
kid when you're going to the schools but
all of the kids down here
it had names that were pretty
much identified with their with their
backgrounds but to have a handle Nasus
it was very difficult and for instance
to free waken and Najib Cory and so you
know

Alan: these are all in your generation

Sam: they're pretty difficult and
people would make fun you know this this
indeed was the lower deck

Alan:mm-hmm

Sam: youknow and

Alan: what some of the
italian-american families had

Sam: oh well we lived we lived on West Broadway relieved
on West Broadway in which they called
The Beehive and matter of fact worse
Campbell's body shop is now is where the
the Dena we rented from the Delavan
Hudson Railroad from the dnh and there
were there were six Lebanese families
that lived in there and they might like
to be that guy

Alan: like Alec carton

Sam: Of apartment complex but it was all joined
and if there was any difficulty for one
one with Elias trapped on the walls and
one would respond to the other
and of course none of us had there is no
central heating furnaces we have
information a regular stove and and most
everybody burned railroad ties you know
they let you have the ties of my dad as
I said you know he he'd carry home from
work a couple of ties and we'd take the
crosscut saw in song and but but they
also had the carpenter shop and so they
would buy wood there but we never bought
coal swe never bought coals we didn't steal
any coal but we never bought Paul
because we lived right next to the track
and and the railroad workers the Karman
and so on who did it but they would push
it off off the tracks and so

Alan: where some
of the kids you played with when you
were when you were growing up

Sam: well played played resist you don't
everybody had a play was mostly kids
were on on West Broadway and Gilbert
Street Miller Street Fonda Avenue and
pretty much in my playmates were like
with awakens and Willy built Willy

Club Co he was my buddy he lived on
Miller Street and he graduated from from
SuCo and Herbie Mastro rich goes and the
chink raha Savitch and over on Fonda
Avenue over the Superboy's Louis Eddie
and Frankie super and West on Miller
Street was ever Brooks and a lot of
American families really called an
American family pretty much on Miller
And the

Alan: Tony Drago did he grow up

Sam: Gilbert street

Sam:I'm sorry

Sam:Drago told he drinkable
no Tarun Tony draggable came later -
Tony Tony was up on the the end of River
Street Main Street right yeah no I
played with him later on you know in
junior high school and so on but growing
up yeah

Alan: honey was probably

Sam: yeah I've no I but but Donny was older than me and
and but they're the rich goes in the
Nader's were great or great I mean my
cousins and E in Ferris my cousin Ferris
by the way was uh he was on to pretend
Death March he was he was in the
Philippines when the Japanese invaded he
was on that boat at time Death March and
the Lockwood's yeah yeah well we can't
he

Alan: haha tell me about that

Sam: in the summertime we my mother and my dad and
song we we'd pick strawberries for gates
he had a pietà and for Alf Paris Lyra
Pierce's father and but mostly for
Burton gates and he had a grocery store
here but he also had a truck farm and so
we'd go early in morning and we would
pick a crate of strawberries greatest

strawberries 32 quarts and a crate
okay and when we got three sets of three sets
a court for picking berry and that was
96 cents but Burton gates we it was a
dollar and then we go and caddy

Alan: is that the old grocery store that it's boarded
up now

Sam: that was the grocery store you
know just talking about grocery stores
we had grocery stores in the 6th Ward just in the 6th Ward
we had been a Cheerios which later applied
right to had we had we had finish
aerials we had Drago's we had the there
was a victory store and there was an A&P
store where Seeley's is there in the
victory store was where where no place
is I was a victory store we had been
Buren's this for JD printers is now we
had Rossi's where and then we had WI
cross later became sumos store and then
on West Broadway we had Angela Lo and we
had rich goes store and on and on
further down on River Street we had
Burton gates Redbury gates his grocery
we had we had pop Warner's store which was where a
case neighbourhood star off of the River
Street and then I'm fond to heaven with
Caroline's grocery store and they all
and we had Joe doubts which was where
silver nails later had their farm
stopped there right on the corner a
river and and on Gilbert Street right so
those were the grocery stores that we
had and and oh yeah we had Lara Martinez
on fonda Avenue Villar Martinez store
was where was where the keg is that was
learned Martinez start and then Lang's
was was there for a little while but
these are all grocery stores yeah
but I remember when we first got
electricity you know used to have to go
to the store and buy your kerosene for
your career for your lamps so I remember

going the grocery starter going to start
getting kerosene and I remember when we
first had electricity we my mother had
the first washing machine and she
tried it out she is and so she told all
of her friends as we bring her laundry
right out the washing machine

Alan: Did you can think milk deliveries and vegetable
carts in the summer that kind of thing

Sam: oh yeah oh sure right

they'd have guys would go fishing they'd
come around with fish and vegetable
carts and apples dollar a bushel yeah
but we did my dad and
my dad would he did the same with apples
and he didn't put potatoes he would go
with to a farmer and our whole
family would go and we picked apples or
potatoes and so on and it was on a share
basis you know he gets to we'd get one
but you know what we had ice boxes in
order frigerators but at the ice box and
we had the cellar there's no central
heating so but so everything kept well
and cabbage and so on

Alan: so where's the ice
house in town

Sam: the ice house nice house
and town was on the other end of town
Stewart's Stewart's was up on the east
end right and I can remember the ice man
coming and you'd hang up the sign up you
now so they could see the sign we had
25 50 75 or honored that was the number
of pounds that you wanted and so they'd
come bringing it put it in your rice pot

Alan: put the ice in sawdust they used to do

Sam: yeah yeah oh sure they're in the sawdust
right absolutely right

Alan: so you could walk
to get all your groceries

Sam:yeah

Alan: somebody said that in Gina's cafe now up on River
Street that they used to be a butcher
store going back a number of years

Sam:no oh sure right right yeah tomorrow
then to have indeed have a farmers
market was on Market Street and on
Saturday morning is the butcher your
Stuff

Alan: fodeez forties bakery when did they start

Sam: Forties bakery was always a
hole god that was always a great bakery
and but most of the families here
in the sixth Ward they made their own
bread but I never forget my mum
when my mother was sick or something
then we'd always looked for John Foley
he come around with his horse of wagon
with and please my sister Julia who was the
oldest would have to go out and get and
buy the bread deal and so John Foley
would say do it uh your mother said they
would know you know they had a cookie
man thinking they had a bakery nice
bakery and they had you know he had a
horse and wagon and and they'd come
around with bread and and cookies and so
on and

Alan: when did fodeez bakery begin well

Sam:forties bakery began on Fonda Avenue

Alan:okay

Sam: quality bakery began on Fonda Avenue
still there I remember the horse and
wagon that they had and then later on I
think I think his sister or his cousin
lived on Bond Avenue and then they then
he moved on with John Foley built a
store there good family great but I
remember the horse and wagon milk
well the milk was horse and wagon you
always remember you could hear him in
early in the morning then and they'd
leave the milk in ice cold days you know
that cream would come up like that on
top

Alan: get the cream from the time
Sam: yeah that's right and so everybody had a milk
box we had only out of dairy company
which was the dairy companies we're alfresco

Alan: yes

Sam: Oneonta dairy company sure

Alan: of course but almost nowhere to stop with enough deliveries to

Sam: yeah yeah

Alan: now as a as part of a hyphenated American family coming
in yeah there were sometimes that were
not so good because you were Lebanese

Sam: oh yeah absolutely right
I remember remember many times you know
they'd call you a story on air over my
weather if my father had a camel in the
backyard but the Russians we were in a
kind of a League of Nations down here we
had to fold assure our friends were the
Kriegers they lived on going on Gilbert
Street than and Russians and Polish and
Italians of we assimilated pretty good

we pretty well pretty much stuck
together you know what somebody gave us
a hard time and what and yeah we

Alan: the lower deck

Sam: we were lower Decker's we we were lower
Decker's

Alan: referring to the emigration
over here and

Sam: Wow pretty much the lower
deck in a sixth Ward here the lower deck
was pretty much laborers and we're a
chestnut Street the Main Street then up
above and so on where they were either
the shopkeepers or executives or bosses
on the railroad and so on we were pretty
much laboring but we had we had polish we had Russians
we had Italian we had we had blacks there weren't too many
blacks but we're all the same as far as
nobody nobody paid attention but yeah

Alan: biggest employer for down here with the
railroad

Sam: the biggest I'm right right
yeah most everybody yeah

Alan: your uncle work
for the railroad

Sam: I'm sorry
my uncle worked for the railroad
oh yeah my cousins were my father's
brother but my cousin he worked for the
row you was a box packer
my father later on worked in the you
lurking up in the powerhouse he worked
he Peter - coochy should know people my
father impeded the coaches worked in the
power house ever great buddies used to

got one and all his hair he just lived
on West Broadway across from rich girls
at the time I took

Alan: used to cut each
other's hair

Sam: oh sure yeah help
my father's got our hair he had he had
the Clippers he wasn't very good at it
I'm telling most of the time he pulled
before the Clipper was the air was out
and we went to the movies 10
cents

Alan: where was the theater Chestnut Street

Sam: the fed down to the theater
oh yeah but that was for those that was
persisting movies cheston's redo only on
the theater right well we went to the
Palace Theater that on Saturdays went
palace ten cents and you would see a
serial you know

Alan: rent in ten cents it

Sam: and then you'd see the Cowboys they were you
know Tom Mix Ken main are hoot Gibson
their Saturdays we were going to the
movies

Alan: where was the palace theory

Sam: Palace Theatre was where at the end of
where will Burbank is right now King
right on the corner of Main and Ford
Avenue and sit by the way Sid was the
became the only honest uh and and he he
was the manager of the Palace Theater
yeah shines

Alan: yes shine was the change

Sam: right but well we
very rarely went to the to the movie on
on Chestnut Street that was for there
were sissy movies we would really cow
boys we we'd say go about noon my father
would give us 15 cents five cents for
for candy or a popcorn but he
always encouraged us to buy see what he
called kisses candy you know the candy
the wrapped and the caramel with the
you'd get enough so that you wouldn't
wanna be candy for the rest of week but
15 cents right but but before we went we
had to pick a pale coal

Alan: bring it to the house

Sam: oh yeah right yeah Chris the stoves you
know the stoves were as they said we didn't
have any central heating and then so if
you wanted hot water your stove was a
cold wood stove and on the end on the
end of the stove was a what they called
a reservoir and you'd fill that up and
as the soap got warm and hot and so on
you you dipped your hot water out of
there and

Alan: no long showers

Sam: yeah Oh shower
stall shower that was one of the reasons
I think we played sports because we
could take a shower

Gary: so what an
interesting what an interesting
conversation you had was saying

Alan: well it
was it was wonderful and very revealing

in

Sam has a marvelous memory and is a treasure trove of stories about Oneonta and growing up in the early days down on River Street and

Gary: I understand next week we'll have a little more of Sam growing up and

Alan: we will indeed and then we'll start talking about Sam in the third segment as a politician

Gary: perfect thank you so much
Alan: thank you Gary

Gary: we'll be right back with more Sunday reviewed