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JAMAICA PLAIN, QUINCY

## Author to talk about history of iconic Howard Johnson chain that began in Quincy

Posted by Matt Rocheleau January 14, 2013 03:39 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A local author and historian will present an illustrated lecture in Jamaica Plain next month about the history of the iconic Howard Johnson restaurant and hotel chain that began in Quincy during the 1920s.



(Anthony Sammarco)

A Howard Johnson location in Jamaica Plain.

“HoJo” locations spread across the country, became the largest restaurant chain in the country during the 1960s and 1970s and the company’s founder is known as the father of the franchise industry.

The company established an “orange roofed empire of ice cream stands and restaurants,” as local author Anthony M. Sammarco describes it.

He will present an illustrated lecture at a meeting of the Jamaica Plain

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He will present an illustrated lecture at a meeting of the Jamaica Plain Historical Society at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 3, at the St. Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox Church at 24 Orchardhill Road in JP.

The talk is based on Sammarco's upcoming book: *A History of Howard Johnson's: How a Massachusetts Soda Fountain Became an American Icon*.

"For most of the twentieth century the orange roof of Howard Johnson's was a familiar sight along the great American roadside," the author said. "When a motorist spotted a Howard Johnson's, they knew exactly what to expect - with standardized menus and building designs, a Howard Johnson's miles away felt as familiar and comforting as the one back home."

With orange porcelain tile roofs and sea blue shutters, the buildings were not hard to spot. *Reader's Digest* once described them as "eating places that look like New England town meeting houses dressed up for Sunday."

"By the late 1930's, with the popularity of the automobile, these restaurants were opened on major roads and interstate highways where the travelling public could be assured of consistently high quality foods that were the same served locally whether in Maine or Florida," said Sammarco.

Today, Howard Johnson hotels are run by Wyndham Worldwide. As few as two of the original Howard Johnson restaurants are still in operation.

The lecture on Feb. 3, sponsored by the Jamaica Plain Historical Society, is free and open to the public.

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