

Strolling the Shops

A walk through the past is great exercise.

By Nancy Harris, Brewster, Massachusetts

ORCHARD STREET in Tarrytown, New York was a block from the Hudson River and once the city's center of commerce.

In the 1940s, the entire street was lined with small shops, most with their striped, sun-faded awnings in many colors proudly heralding their store names.

I remember Boyce's Fish Market in particular. At age 4, I thought those fish lying in rows on a bed of ice in the store window seemed to stare out at us. We'd quickly move on to the wonderful aromas from the bakery in the early morning and, if we had the money, go inside for a cinnamon bun or a black-and-white cookie.

In the summer, splintery wooden crates held fragrant peaches. The flies would buzz around, and the man who owned the store would come out and swat them away with a big red flyswatter.

The butcher shop was fun because there was sawdust on the floor that we could kick around, but that awful, sticky flypaper, with its struggling flies, was horrible.

My father's radio-repair shop near the end of the street was downstairs from the small apartment walk-up where we lived. At noontime, we'd take him his lunch of a ham sandwich, coffee and, if

we'd been to the grocery market, some Mallomars cookies.

That small A&P store held wonderful, tiny lemon pies in boxes and Eight O'Clock coffee, which we ground ourselves, savoring the heavenly fragrance.

In good weather, we'd play beneath the huge shade tree that seemed to grow despite concrete. Sometimes, in the dog days of summer, the fire department opened hydrants for us.

We'd run up to our apartment and get out old wool bathing suits and splash through the street.

By the standards of today, we were quite poor, but we enjoyed walks down to the Hudson. Tarrytown was, and is today, a town of walkers. In the evening, townspeople come out to stroll on North Broadway, which is up the hill from where Orchard Street used to be—it was razed in the '60s for urban development, but it will always be there in my memories.