

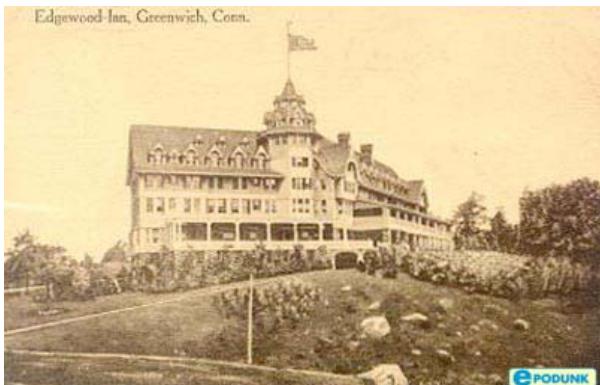


GHS
Wreadin' Writin' 'n' Wreminiscin'
From the Editor's Desk
22 November 2003

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Well I finally did it. Sold my new sletter about cruises and I'm officially retired. Wanted to do it at 55, but hey at least I made it before 60. I'm looking fow ard to working on my cars and driving them around places in the U.S. It also gives me more time to add some material for Mac's effort to keep the spirit of GHS-62 alive and well. Here's the first piece.

Growing Up in Greenwich in the 1950s



I was fortunate to be born and raised in Greenw ich and to attended school from grades K-12

A while back, Mac suggested we write about what we remember about growing up in Greenw ich. In looking back it's remarkable how much has changed. My recollections might not be 100% accurate (please let me know if you recall differently).

I remember that there were only three "chain" stores on Greenwich Ave - Woolworth's, Grants and the A&P back when I started kindergarten at Julian Curtis in 1949 (can you believe that it was that long ago!). Today it is the exact

opposite as I think there are only three stores still in business that were there in the late 50s - Betteridge Jew ely, Grannick's Pharmacy, and Subway Barber shop. So much for progress.

We lived on Brookside Drive (north of the Post Road side) so it was easy to walk to the "Avenue" Unlike those w impy kids of today, who can barely make it to the end of their drivew ay (their mommies drives them) to catch the school bus. Starting in first grade, on many days; I w ould walk home from Julian Curtis, sometimes w ith my older sister Chris (GHS 1959), but many times by myself, crossing busy streets and the Post Road (w hich in the pre-turnpike days w as a mess, w ith trucks and traffic). I w ould guess the distance w as about 1½ to 2 miles.

In reflecting back, I think that Greenwich in the late 40's and early 50's, w as pretty much what it had been like in the late 20's and 30's in appearance. Little had been built or altered during the depression and war years, and it wasn't until about the mid 1950's, when a number of things began to change.



EDGEWOOD INN, GEORGE A. RICHARDS, PROPRIETOR

See how many of these things (landmarks of our age), you can remember; as I take a "Virtual Walk" from Brookside Drive, up the Post Road (Putnam Avenue), to the top of Greenwich Avenue and down.

(Editor's Note: If you want to follow the current status of the real estate along this route, a virtual tour can be made at the following website: <http://www.greenwichchamber.com/map/map.htm> Just click on any number on the map and the stores in that area, will be listed.)



RESIDENCE OF A. P. DE MALGLAIVE, OLD CHURCH ROAD

Where Brookside Drive met the Post Road there was a traffic light, that truck drivers hated as it was right in the middle of the hill. That stretch of the Post Road from Brookside Drive to Deerfield Road and Field Point Road was all private homes. Nice large ones with a lot of character. Today they are all gone, replaced by office buildings or food stores.



On the other corner of Deerfield Dr and the Post Road was Franklin Simons Department Store. Later it became Oppenheim Collins Department Store, before it eventually became the Greenwich Library. Next door to it was a bowling alley, which later became a Cadillac Dealership, and even later, was torn down to become parking for the Greenwich Library. Across the street was a large piece of land with an old very large house that was turned into apartments, but still retaining a lot of "class and style". Today, on that property in the U.S. Tobacco building. Next to it (working towards the Avenue) was the Maples Hotel. Built in the late 1800s (my guess) it was a classic style old turn of the century hotel. It was always well maintained. Today it has been replaced by the modern headquarters for Cheesboro Ponds (unless someone else now occupies it). After a series of small stores, there was one of my favorites, the Pickwick Theater. Many Saturdays were spent here. The movies were never first run, but what difference did it make if you never saw it. It used to cost \$.10 on Saturdays if you were under 12, and \$.25 if you were over 12. On the other side of the Post Road was Minchin Buick (Hank Minchin, GHS 61 still owns it, but is now located in Stamford). Behind it was a large wooden building which for a long period of time was an ice house which stored ice, that was cut from the large pond where the current GHS is located.



The top of Greenwich Ave was dominated by the classic Pickwick Arms Hotel. I think it was a big loss to the character of Greenwich, when this magnificent hotel was torn down. One of the first stores on the avenue was Nielsen's Ice Cream parlor. Same family that built the restaurant near the high school. Across the street was Mark's Brothers Stationery (still there I think, but not the same people or ambiance).

This was always a favorite for

me on Sundays when my father went to get the paper - a comic book and candy was my goal. Continuing down on the left side and a little down on Lewis Street was the Grand Union - the pre-supermarket one where all the goods were behind the counter and were gathered for you by the clerk. I also recall in that section from there to Mason Street and Milbank Avenue I remember many times seeing milk from Round

Hill Farms being delivered in a horse-drawn wagon! (You had to be careful where you walked). There was also an open vegetable truck that made the rounds there.



PICKWICK ARMS HOTEL, GREENWICH, JOHN W. HEATH, GENERAL MANAGER

Back on the avenue there was Downe's where we would buy 45 rpm records and a few shops down was Veaudry's drug store and then Greenwich Drug Store (I worked at each for a short time). Across the street was Rexall's Drug where I remember they had the best root beer floats - Hires Root Beer right out of the barrel. It later became the Sport Shop (where I also worked at one time). Next to Greenwich Drug and down the alley, was Allen Brothers Cadillac - a multi-story dealership where cars had to go up and down an elevator to get to the different floors.

Back on the other side and in the same block was Woolworth's and Grant's 5 & 10. These were always a favorite as a kid because they seemed to have everything. Next to Grant's was the Greenwich Library, a beautiful stone building that had the classic look of a library. Another victim of the times it is now a store (Saks 5th Ave, I think).

Going down and around the corner on Elm Street in the building just before what is now a parking lot for the avenue, was a small bowling alley. I think it only had about 6 lanes and it cost \$.25 a game to play - no wonder it went out of business!

Heading down the next block was D. W. Rogers Department Store which closed only a few years ago. Down a little further was Grannick's Pharmacy. On the other side was Mead's Stationery and next to it (almost) was the Green Witch, an after school hangout for the pre-1960 GHS kids. Our choice was usually Nielsen's.



The next block started with the Post Office, which is still there and across the street on the corner was Finch's Drug Store, now a Starbucks (wee, bid deal) next to it was (and is) the Subway Barber shop, then



Greenwich Hardware (now something else) a true hardware store where someone knew where everything was. Near it was a real old-time drug store, soda shop (right near where the big clock is). Kind of dark, high ceiling, granite counter - the kind you always imagine as an old-time soda fountain. Down from it was the Motor Post, an auto supply store. Across the street was the A&P, the Greenwich Movie Theater (which was closed for a while, but then re-opened). It seemed to run a lot of "B" flicks that never made it anywhere else. Next to it was a Stationery store. Across the side street (can't remember the name) was the Star Restaurant which was run by Ed Nicosia's (GHS 1961) parents. On the other side was the Fawcett Publications building and down from it the Greenwich Food Store. I don't



remember too many others in that block, but going down further and under the RR bridge was Maher Brothers (where the new hotel that replaced the Showboat is located) which was a coal and cement operation. Down from it on the other side was and is Manero's Steakhouse (<http://www.culinarymenus.com/manerosrestaurant.htm>). One of the last family-owned businesses in Greenwich. A little further down, where a large office building is now located was a big red wooden building on the water. The company here was named Sea Bees and they built small minesweepers and boats for the Navy during the war. Of course to end up this tour by stopping off at the Indian Harbor Yacht Club at the base of Steamboat Road.



One last place that needs mentioning is on Church Street and that is Peabody's Automobiles. It too, Like Manero's is still under the same family-ownership since the turn of the century. I recently ran into Dave Peabody (third generation) who told me the building used to be a carriage and stable establishment. His grandfather later became the Packard dealer and eventually became just a used car dealer. I think the reason it has survived is for a couple of reasons. First they own the building, but second and most important is that they are 100% honest and caring about the cars they sell. In college I worked at Greenwich Auto Supply and delivered parts there. Peabody's was the only dealer in town that totally went through each car they sold with new brakes, tune-up, and what ever was needed for it to last a long time.

Next time I'll cover some of my memories of friends and schoolmates of the 1950s. I'd like to hear about others who also grew up in central Greenwich during the 50s and what they remember.