

In those days, the A & P was located on the corner opposite the corner store, where there is now a travel agency. It was a fun place to go, a very small store, the more so by today's supermarket standards. Many food items were sold "loose" then, such as cookies. They were displayed in large boxes with glass-door fronts. You told the clerk the kind you wanted, and how many, and he dug them out with a scoop, placing them in a paper bag. Butter was scooped out for you in a similar manner, and hunks of cheese would be lopped off according to amount and type you desired.

If you were a kid, you could be hoisted up to sit on the counter, if you wanted, where there was a large, intricate looking red machine which ground coffee to order. What a great aroma! There were "8 O'clock", "Red Circle", or "Bokar" brands, among others.

You read the clerk your list, item by item, and he'd pick your purchases off the shelves. Self-service had not yet come into existence, at least not in Fanwood. If you wanted something off a top shelf, the clerk would quickly and cleverly snag it with a special long pole that had a hook at one end. When your order was complete, he'd always ask, almost melodically, "Aaaand will there be something else?" To tally up your tab, a manual, crank-handled adding machine was used. The clerk would quickly tap each item with a pencil, after adding them up, in order to double-check the count. Most times, you took home two, maybe three full bags of groceries, and plenty of "folding money" change from a ten dollar bill!

I remember dark-haired, bespectacled Mike who worked there for a long time, as well as his younger brother, Jim. Prior to this time, Norm Prudhon operated a small, independent grocery store, about where the library was later located, on the other block. When that closed, Norm also worked in the A & P store for a time.

On summer afternoons, that old-fashioned, red-painted screen door was always closed and locked between the hours of one and two each day. Sort of a Fanwood summer "siesta", I guess you could call it.

There was sort of an unspoken but understood and adhered to "dress code" too. Many Fanwood ladies, at least back in the late thirties, would not dream of going down to the A & P or other stores without wearing a hat, and more often than not, gloves, as well!

Speaking of those Fanwood ladies, there were two who stood out. They were "the Scudder twins". I believe they lived down on So. Martine, and were frequently seen driving by, sitting high, in an impressive older model