

On the subject of dance lessons for Fanwood children, there were tap lessons given by Irma Trautmann, at her home on Westfield Ave. in Scotch Plains, for 25 cents per lesson. Our mothers dutifully took us to the Trautmann home, each Tuesday afternoon, and Irma taught us the basics. Sometimes, for a special treat, her younger sister, Edna, would join in, and both of them in fancy pink tap costumes would dance a routine for us, on ROLLER SKATES! How impressed we little girls were.

Our lessons took place in the diningroom, where all the furniture had been pushed to one side and the rug rolled up. One routine we were taught involved a salute, and was called the "Military Step". So much of everyone's daily lives revolved around the war, and the war effort, that many things took on patriotic flavor, and names.

If you mis-stepped during class, you had to go to the front hall of the house where there was a section of bare floor, and practice that particular step until you had it perfected. Irma later opened a dance studio in Scotch Plains, and Edna often performed on stage at Scotch Plains High School, sometimes also on roller skates!

Back at School #4, fire drills were, of course, a necessary evil. I recall that the alarm for ours was truly frightening, at least to me. It was a very loud, long, honking sound, which seemed to go on forever. Then there were the AIR RAID DRILLS.....Now you are really talking scary stuff! Of course, this was during World War II, and the scuttlebutt among us kids in those days was kind of like, "the enemy might come goose-stepping down your street any day!" There really was that ongoing fear.

When we first had to undergo air raid drills in School #4, we all had to quickly AND SILENTLY file down to the auditorium, on the basement level, and lie down on our stomachs on the floor! The soles of another kid's shoes were always right in front of your face. Later, after many parents protested about children's clothing getting soiled, the procedure was upgraded, and we had only to line up in the corridors, backs pressed flat against those tile walls. This method was an improvement, but still very scary. Not a word could be spoken, not a sound could be made, and this was strictly enforced, until the "all clear" sounded.

The "blackouts", or air raid drills, in town, were also frightening....to us as children, and I am sure to adults, somewhat, as well. There was always that ever-lurking threat of real war coming to American soil. Maybe Nazi bombs would be dropped on New York City, or Newark, or closer!