

There were eateries in Fanwood in those days. Not many, to be sure, but some. One of the most popular was Erbetta's, or The Maple Tree Inn, which sat at the top of a slight incline, on the corner of Terrill Rd. and South Ave., the spot now occupied by a sprawling automotive center. Erbetta's was renowned in the area for its great spaghetti and meatballs, and its location made it "walkable" for most Fanwood residents.

Young's Paint and Varnish stood then where it still remains today, albeit in a slightly different kind of building then, on the corner opposite The Maple Tree Inn, by the bridge.....almost a landmark.

Further east, up South Ave. toward Fanwood center, and on the left, where there is now an office building, was a private home owned by a Mrs. Molinelli, who was a friend of Pete Foglia. Mrs. Molinelli had transformed her front livingroom into a small restaurant, and she also served wonderful spaghetti and meatballs. Her place, also, was surely "walkable". In that same area, where Fanwood Liquors is now, was a sort of roadstand called Fanwood Farms. A fellow in there could fry you up the greatest hamburger, for 25 cents. What a treat it was, whenever a friend and I were allowed to make that rather long walk up there. We were so deliciously rewarded!

The bustling beehive of activity that Fanwood center is now was truly quite different back in the 30's and 40's. The entire area between La Grande Ave. and the stores on South Ave. was nothing but fields, fields, and more fields. The only stores were those I have told about, that faced South Ave. and backed up to this fielded area. On a day in May or June, and this is the truth, you could, and almost had to walk up the center of Martine Ave., in order to avoid all the inchworms that hung and swung off the large maples which lined the sidewalks! Picture being able to do that today!

The Gulf gas station on the corner of La Grande and Martine operated for years by David Adler, was about the first of any structures to be built on that block. Steve's Towing Service, which is now across the street from it, did not exist then, but was only fields until the early or mid-40's, when an Esso station was built. It was operated by Bill Salisbury and Pete Peterson, as I recall, and thrived as such for a good many years.

But prior to that, when you could walk down the center of the street, there was just nothing but the long grass on either side. Sometimes, in summer, as you walked along the sidewalk, a long garter snake, a denizen of those long grasses, might have itself lazily stretched out across the walk, right in