



NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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Main Avenue in Wynantskill Over The Years

Jim Flanigan recently passed away. For many years, he served the town as a councilman and later Town Supervisor. He was interested in local history and shared with me some observations of what you can learn about a community from its main thoroughfare. During the 1950's Main Avenue could best described as a semi-rural mixture of residences and businesses. The street was nicknamed "gas station row" with seven service stations in less than a mile. The stations were known by the names of their owners- Welch's, Labrecks, Panichi's, Sarkiis's etc. rather than the brand of gas they sold. Customers buying gas would often watch as the station owner would pause from the car he was repairing to fill their tank with gas, check the oil and clean their windshield.

There have been many banks on Main Avenue. Going west, there was Union National(which is now M&T. Further down the street there is Trustco Bank. The lot on the corner of Main and Brookside has an interesting history. Before the Troy Savings Bank branch was built on this site, the property was residential not commercial. The bank site was assembled by purchasing several homes which were then demolished before construction. The Troy Savings Bank later became First Niagara and then Key Bank. Today it is now longer a bank. It is a business called Choice Physical

Therapy(although the building still has the bank's drive through windows)

By the 1960's you could get food at Appleknocker's, Deeb's Fruit Stand, Safeway, or Schilling's Meat Market and RKO(which was followed by A&P, P.C and now Hanniford.

Main Avenue experienced two major environmental disasters, the first in 1950 when the Main Avenue School burned down. Students were temporarily relocated to the second floor of the Fire House(which at the time was located on Main Avenue). Soon afterward, the students back to a newly constructed steel-framed and brick structure later becoming town hall and the North Greenbush Library.

The other environmental tragedy involved the site of Roxy Cleaners. It was discovered that a spill of solvent had contaminated the wells of over 20 residences and businesses. Fortunately the Town was able to obtain funds from the State DEC Superfund which extended the waterline from the City of Troy up through Main Avenue and resolved the well contamination from the Roxy disaster. Today the Roxy site is a bakery.

Jim Flanigan gave us a glimpse of what Main Avenue looked like in the past. What will it look like 50 years in the future