

KINGSBRIDGE

AND

VAN CORTLANDT PARK



CHANGES SINCE THE 1920s



by

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About the Author

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Vincent M. Altamuro, has been the president of Management Research Consultants for over 40 years. He has advised or taught the managements and employees of hundreds of corporations, including many of the world's largest, in almost every industry. He has been cleared for U.S. government Secret level security in order to do work for clients in the national defense industry. He is internationally recognized as a leading authority on industrial management, particularly product design, robotics and autofactoring - a term which he originated to describe the state-of-the-art high technology activities which are replacing the older methods and systems used in manufacturing. His word, autofactoring, is now in both the dictionary and encyclopedia.

Concurrent with his consulting practice, he was for approximately ten years on the adjunct teaching staffs at Columbia University's Graduate School of Engineering, The University of the City of New York's Graduate School of Engineering, New York University's School of Continuing Education all at the same time and before that at Manhattan College's School of Engineering. Professor Altamuro has been a consulting editor to McGraw-Hill's Encyclopedia of Science & Technology since 1977 and has written several of its articles. He is a member of Cahners publishing Company's magazine DESIGN NEWS' Engineers Council and Auerbach Publishers' journal CONCURRENT ENGINEERING's Board of Advisors. He is a Certified Management Consultant (CMC) and a Certified Manufacturing Engineer (CMfgE).

Professor Altamuro has written approximately 50 books, monographs, encyclopedia entries, magazine articles, technical manuals and videotape scripts. He is interviewed frequently by professional publications and the mass media.

His formal education includes a bachelor's degree in business from the City College of New York, a master's degree in engineering from Columbia University, doctoral studies at New York University, post-graduate work at Northwestern University, Fordham University Law School, U.S. Navy's Electronics School, IBM's Customer Executive program, AT&T conferences and many professional seminars.

He was born in The Bronx, New York in 1931 and now lives in Toms River, New Jersey.

Currently, he is the managing director of The Vincent Altamuro Foundation, a philanthropic organization that provides gifts and financial aid to children with life threatening afflictions.

1 **KINGSBRIDGE AND VAN CORTLANDT PARK:**
2 **CHANGES SINCE THE 1920s**

3
4 Vincent M. Altamuro

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7
8 **PREFACE**

9
10
11 These are my remembrances of how the Kingsbridge and
12 Van Cortlandt Park sections of The Bronx were during the
13 six decades that my family lived on West 238th Street
14 between Broadway and Bailey Avenue.

15
16 It is less a story than it is a collection of
17 memories. When I mentally place myself back in that
18 time, the images of the past come back in a flow of
19 consciousness - some connected and some disjointed. I've
20 tried to organize some of them, but for the most part,
21 I am recording them in the same random way I've recalled
22 them.

1 My parents and I left the area in 1977 and haven't
2 been back since. Were I there now, I could check my
3 recollections. But, that not being the case, I may have
4 a few names misspelled and dates off by a year or two.
5 On the whole, however, I think the following is a fairly
6 accurate report of how that corner of the Northwest Bronx
7 was in the 57 years from 1921 to 1977.

8
9 I would like to take a moment here to recognize the
10 contributions of several people. My mother, Theresa
11 Altamuro, who is 87 years old at this writing and still
12 very sharp mentally, added her memories of the years
13 prior to my birth and awareness of the world around me.
14 My sister, Marie A. Flinter, being 3 years my senior,
15 remembered many things that I did not. She became a
16 vice-president of the Chase Manhattan Bank. My good
17 friend, Joe Greeley, who not only grew up in the
18 neighborhood but also rose to become a captain in the New
19 York City Police Department, added his recollections to
20 mine. And I would also like to thank my brother-in-law
21 Joe Flinter, who lived in the neighborhood both before
22 and after marriage; Dino Matsoukis, my lifelong pal, who
23 lived in the apartment below me in 226 West 238th Street
24 for as long as I was there; Loretta Quinn McNierney, my

1 sister's lifelong friend, who also lived on the floor
2 below us at 226 West 238th Street, and who married Jack
3 McNierney, who lived in the basement apartment and also
4 went on to become a bank vice-president; Pete Stafford,
5 who was born in the neighborhood, too, and also still
6 lives there, and was so very important to the Visitation
7 Church, from its inception to the present; and Anne
8 Carron Flinter, the wife of my brother-in-law's brother,
9 Bill, and daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Carron, who, like the
10 Staffords and others, were early and important builders
11 of the parish and neighborhood. All of these friends
12 and relatives added their memories to mine, corrected
13 some of my mistaken recollections and answered many
14 questions for me. And I would also like to thank

15
16 and

17 of The Bronx County Historical Society for their research
18 work in the libraries and in the neighborhood in
19 confirming, correcting and adding to my statements.

20
21 Most of the photographs have been supplied by The
22 Bronx County Historical Society.
23
24

THE LAY OF THE LAND

1
2
3 The City of Greater New York (the proper name for
4 "New York City") is atop a foundation of metamorphic rock
5 ridges of three strata of an ancient subterranean
6 glaciated mountain. One of these strata, the Manhattan
7 Schist, proceeds south from Isham Park at the northern
8 tip of Manhattan island and is not a part of our area.
9 The other two strata - which are judged by geologists to
10 be Pre-Cambrian, meaning in the order of a billion years
11 old - are called the Fordham Gneiss and the Inwood
12 Dolomite or Kingsbridge Limestone. The Fordham Gneiss
13 splits as it comes down from Westchester and underlies
14 the Spuyten Duyvil (originally spelled "Spyt den duyvil,"
15 meaning "in spite of the devil" in Dutch, as the name
16 they gave the dangerous and difficult to navigate waters
17 at the spot where the Harlem River and the Hudson River
18 meet) and Riverdale ridge on the west; the Fordham
19 Heights and University Heights ridge in the middle; and
20 the Grand Concourse ridge in the east. The Inwood
21 Dolomite or Kingsbridge Limestone submerged stratum is
22 much smaller and thinner. It forms the bed of the
23 Harlem River and emerges between Dyckman Street and
Marble Hill. A good side view of it can be seen in the

1 "cut," which is where the Harlem River Ship Canal was
2 made in 1895 by blasting through the rock in the general
3 location of the former Spuyten Duyvil Creek so as to make
4 a more navigable path for vessels going between the
5 Harlem and the Hudson rivers. The making of the ship
6 canal created a relatively straight, wide, deep and
7 shorter path of water to replace the curved, narrow,
8 shallow and longer path that the Harlem River previously
9 took as it wended its way from where the east end of the
10 canal now starts, going north from a point south of 225th
11 Street, east of Broadway and just west of Exterior Street
12 and the Putnam Railroad tracks; under Farmer's Bridge,
13 which was on 225th Street near Exterior Street; then
14 northwest along Exterior, crossing under the "Iron
15 Bridge," which was at Broadway and 230th Street (then
16 called Depot Place); then west under the King's Bridge
17 (from which the neighborhood gets its name) which was at
18 Church Street (which was renamed Kingsbridge Avenue);
19 thence to Ewen Street under Johnson Avenue; where it
20 turned south to re-enter the western end of where the
21 ship canal is now. After the cut was made, the old path
22 of the river was filled in to create a solid land mass
23 north of the canal. The old path is now the borderline
4 between the Borough of Manhattan and the Borough of The

1 Bronx. Thus, a portion of Manhattan (the Marble Hill
2 section) lies beyond the water at its northern end, and
3 The Bronx is no longer the only New York City borough
4 that is part of the continental United States, rather
5 than being an island - but it is still the only one that
6 is entirely on the mainland. When the portion of The
7 Bronx which included the Village of Kingsbridge joined
8 New York City in 1874, several of the streets were
9 renamed so as to conform with the names of the Manhattan
10 streets. The last street up to the river was 229th
11 Street, so the first street on the other side of the
12 river in The Bronx, on the east side of Broadway, Depot
13 Place, had its name changed to 230th Street. In a like
14 manner, the first street on the west side of Broadway,
15 Riverdale Avenue, as far west as Ewen Street, also became
16 230th Street; Webbers Lane became 232nd Street, and so
17 forth.

18
19 The natural topography of the northwest corner of
20 The Bronx forms a valley or flat bottomed basin. It
21 consists of the high ridge of land rising up from the
22 Hudson River in the west and running north and south,
23 which is Riverdale; highlands to the east, where
4 Reservoir Avenue, Sedgwick Avenue, Jerome Avenue and

1 Yonkers' Central Avenue define the other ridge; and
2 lowlands in-between emanating up eastward and westward
3 from Broadway in the middle (as if it were its central
4 spine) as it runs north from the Marble Hill section at
5 225th Street up to the Yonkers City Line. Broadway is
6 level up to around Mosholu Avenue or 259th Street where
7 it begins a gentle rise to the City Line, which is
8 several yards past 262nd Street. There is a West 263rd
9 Street, but it does not go through to Broadway. It
10 comes down from Riverdale Avenue only to Spencer Avenue.

11
12 Where the land is relatively flat at the bottom of
13 the basin, the streets are laid out in a crosshatch
14 (orthogonal or straight lines at right angles) pattern,
15 much like Manhattan, to form a checkerboard of blocks.
16 As the land rises to the west and east, however, straight
17 streets give way to curves which follow the natural
18 contours of the hills.

19
20 In several places, where a street at the bottom of
21 the valley runs into a hill at the side that is too steep
22 for a road, steps are used. There are (or were) long
23 flights of steps instead of the continuation of the
4 street. Therefore, there are flights of steps: on Van

1 Cortlandt Park South (this street is named West 240th
2 Street on its west side of Broadway and Van Cortlandt
3 Park South on the east side of Broadway and all the way
4 up to Sedgwick Avenue), between Bailey Avenue and Gale
5 Place; at the east side of 238th Street, from the
6 junction of Fort Independence Street and Orloff Avenue
7 up to Cannon Place; at the west side of 238th Street,
8 going from Irwin Avenue up to Waldo Avenue; on Bailey
9 Avenue, just south of 238th Street, going up to 238th
10 Street; on Bailey Avenue, north of 238th Street and the
11 row of apartment houses, and going up to Orloff Avenue;
12 at the east end of 231st Street, going from Bailey Avenue
13 to Heath Avenue; at the west side of 231st Street, at the
14 bottom of Riverdale Avenue, going up through Ewen Park
15 to Johnson Avenue; at the west side of 230th Street,
16 where one flight goes up to Johnson Avenue and is
17 followed by another flight going up to Netherland Avenue;
18 and two flights going up to Naples Terrace, one from
19 231st Street and one from Broadway.

20
21 The New York Central Putnam Division railroad tracks
22 were laid at, or slightly below, the natural grade level
23 of the section. They ran parallel to and in-between
4 (but somewhat closer to Bailey) Broadway and Bailey

1 Avenue until they entered Van Cortlandt Park at Van
2 Cortlandt Park South, where they bent slightly to the
3 west so as to run along-side the Saw Mill River Parkway.
4

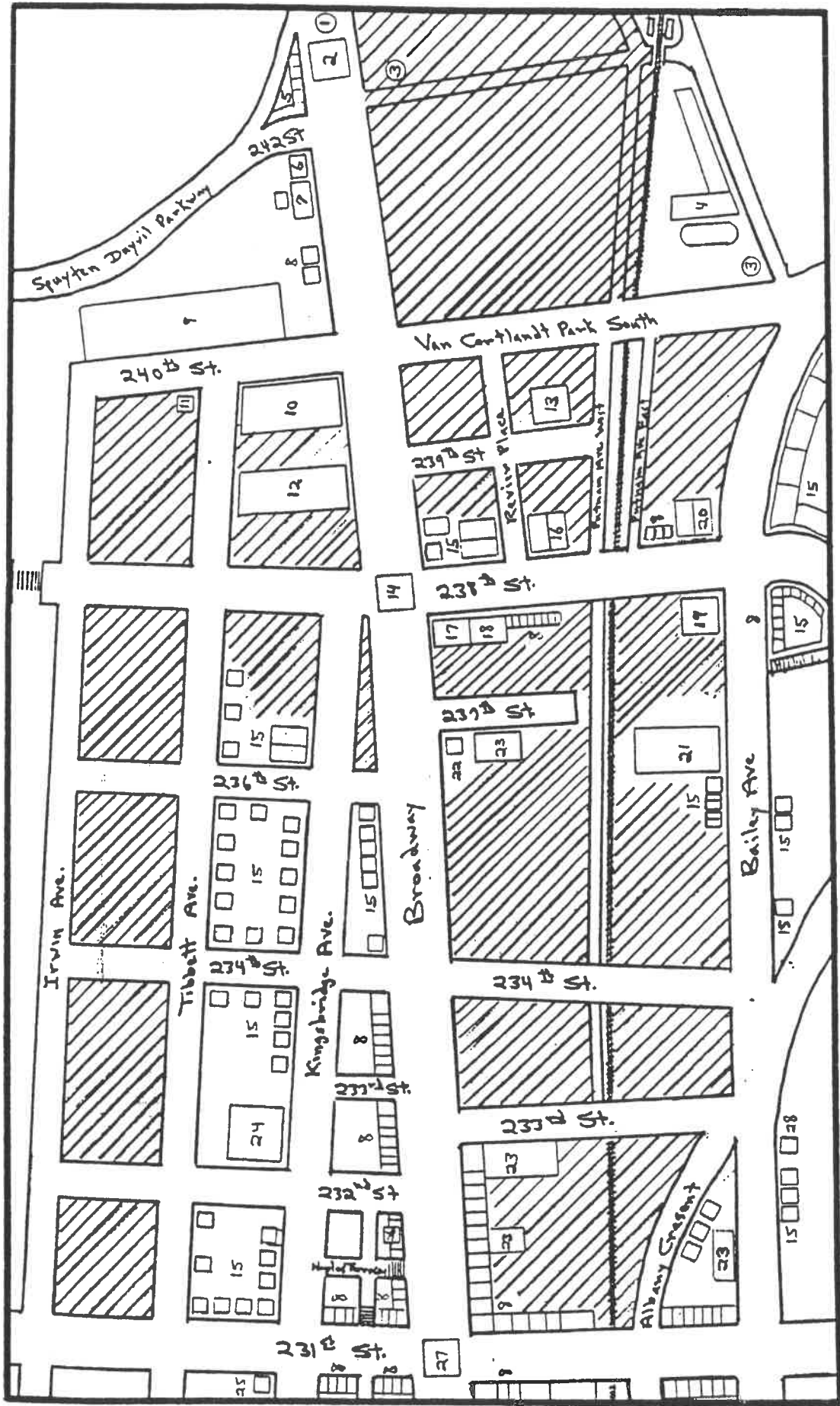
5 So as to avoid dangerous railroad-vehicle-
6 pedestrian grade crossings along the train's path,
7 bridges were built to serve as underpasses for the trains
8 and overpasses for vehicles and pedestrians at 225th,
9 230th, 231st, 233rd, 234th, 238th and Van Cortlandt Park
10 South. Those streets were built up with "fill" so as to
11 bring them up to the height of the bridges. 236th,
12 237th and 239th Streets were not built up (probably in
13 the interest of economy and to avoid having too many
14 bridges) and terminate at Putnam Avenue West. Putnam
15 Avenue was a sometimes street. It ran alongside the
16 railroad tracks in places as a paved street, unpaved
17 path, or not at all in some places. It was mostly on
18 the west side of the tracks, but was also on the east
19 side in places. Between 238th Street and Van Cortlandt
20 Park South, it was on both sides, being unpaved and paved
21 Putnam Avenue West on one side and paved Putnam Avenue
22 East on the other side where the Visitation Church and
23 School and a row of private houses were located until
4 removed to make room for the Major Deegan Expressway -

1 which also resulted in the removal of Putnam Avenue East
2 and the tracks.

3
4 Before their slopes were altered, the streets going
5 from Broadway up to the higher Bailey Avenue were either
6 nearly level until the tracks (or to a point slightly
7 beyond them) and then rose sharply to get up to Bailey,
8 or else they were continuous slight slopes from Broadway
9 up to the elevation of Bailey Avenue. In either case,
10 the fill added made them to be sharper rises up to the
11 newly built bridges and then level stretches to Bailey.
12 It is interesting to note that of all the streets
13 altered, only 238th Street was given a level portion. It
14 is flat from Broadway to Review Place, at which point it
15 begins its rise to the bridge. It would appear that
16 the reason this was done was because only 238th Street
17 had trolley tracks - the "U" trolley. And the line
18 terminated at 238th Street and Broadway, with its
19 switching track section located between Broadway and
20 Review Place. It is highly desirable to switch trolleys
21 on level ground. The streets, therefore, are not the
22 way they were originally, but have been changed for well
23 thought out reasons.

1 It appears that Broadway, itself, was elevated
2 somewhat (about 4-6 feet) judging from how far below it
3 were the old frame houses on the west side of Broadway
4 between 234th and 236th Streets (for some reason, there
5 is no 235th Street in the neighborhood). These lower
6 houses were there before the elevated subway tracks were
7 erected. Broadway could have been raised so as to
8 lessen the angle of rise that the built up streets would
9 require to reach the height of the new bridges; or to
10 level any dips or rises in it so as to have the elevated
11 tracks be built on a level surface; or to provide a
12 better base for the very heavy steel tracks and their
13 supporting super-structures, as the entire basin was
14 originally marshland; or all three reasons.

15
16 Where did the dirt come from to build up Broadway
17 and the several streets? It would not be reasonable to
18 cart it in from some distant place when the surrounding
19 area was mostly open fields and farms. When my parents
20 moved to the neighborhood in the 1920s and in my youth
21 in the 1930s, most of it was comprised of empty lots.
22 These are shown on Map #1 as cross-hatched areas. Every
23 one of these was depressed several feet below street
1 level. Clearly, these marshy, cat-tail, pussywillow,



Kingsbridge in the 1920s

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Workers laundry terminus | 7. Stores | 15. Apartments & private houses | 22. Seabright |
| 2. 187 292nd St. station | 8. Industrial park | 16. 217 E 217 W, 238th St. | 23. Parking Garage |
| 3. Road to lake and Mt. Central | 9. Gallagher's | 17. 238 W, 238th St. | 24. P.S. 7 |
| 4. Horse stables and truck | 10. Repair shop | 18. 221 W, 238th St. | 25. Church of Mediator |
| 5. Stores | 11. Fieldston's | 19. 140 W, 231st St. | 26. Marble Hill |
| 6. Hand service station | 12. Fireplaces Inn | 20. 181 & 183 W, 238th St. | 27. 187 231st St. station |
| 7. Roller rink & pool | 13. 187 238th St. station | 21. Tennis courts | 28. Annemann & Younce |

1 reed filled lots were at the original grade level. It
2 was the streets which were built up. From the air, the
3 terrain would look like a checkerboard with the squares
4 (blocks of empty lots) depressed and the lines between
5 the squares (streets) raised. As the streets were made
6 to slope up to the level of the bridges, the lots at
7 grade level, obviously, became increasingly deeper. I
8 would approximate that they averaged around 2-4 feet
9 below the street level on the east side of Broadway to
10 about 10-15 feet deep just before the bridges. Some
11 lots, however, - such the one bound by 239th Street,
12 Review Place, Van Cortlandt Park South and Putnam Avenue
13 West; the one at the northwest corner of 239th and
14 Broadway; and the two right across Broadway from that one
15 and on each side of Fieldstone's garage - were extra deep
16 (about 20-30 feet down). It may be from there that
17 material was dug out and used to build up the streets.

18
19 A stream, Tibbets Brook, came down from Yonkers and
20 Northern Westchester, into and through Van Cortlandt
21 Park. It fed the swamps and marshlands above the Van
22 Cortlandt Park lake, passed under the railroad tracks
23 from west to east into the northern end of the lake, then
24 under the tracks again from east to west at the southern

1 end of the lake. The stream came out of the park
2 somewhere around Broadway and 240th Street and worked its
3 way westward back to where Irwin Avenue and Tibbet Avenue
4 are now, then meandered southward until it came out at
5 the Harlem River's northern loop (until filled in) just
6 south of 230th Street. Oldtimers (John Kieran - born
7 in 1892 - and George Bergen - born 1893 - to name two)
8 report swimming in the small ponds which formed along the
9 path of the brook as it meandered its way in the back
10 lowlands between 240th and 230th Streets. Around 1915
11 or 1916, an overflow dam was built at the southern end
12 of the lake, restricting the exit flow of the water and
13 causing the lake to become larger and deeper. From the
14 point of the dam on, the water was made to run
15 underground, causing Tibbets Brook to disappear. It was
16 made to come out at a newly constructed Spuyten Duyvil
17 Outlet Sewer, which emptied directly into the Harlem
18 River Ship Canal. It wasn't until the brook's surface
19 water and the marshes it caused were removed that the
20 streets of Tibbett Avenue and Irwin Avenue and the houses
21 along them could be built. So, Tibbett Avenue replaced
22 Tibbetts Brook. Before that, Corlear Avenue (previously
23 named Water Street for a short part of its length and
4 Ackerman Street for the rest) was the last street back.

MOVING IN

1
2
3 In 1921, my father who, like my mother, was born in
4 Yonkers shortly after the turn of the century, got a job
5 at Gallagher's garage at the southwest corner of Broadway
6 and 240th Street. Charlie Gallagher, among others,
7 concentrated on sales; my father, among others, handled
8 repairs. Charlie's father owned the business. The
9 automobiles they sold were the Star and the Durant,
10 primarily, before they acquired a Dodge-Plymouth
11 dealership. An important part of their business in
12 those days was the storage, maintenance and delivery of
13 cars owned by neighborhood residents. For many of these
14 people, they would drive their cars from the garage to
15 their doors - either upon a pre-established schedule or
16 upon a telephone call. This service arose as people
17 bought cars but had no place to store them, because their
18 homes were built before the advent of the automobile and,
19 obviously, did not have garages. There were several
20 such large garages in the area which did the same thing.
21 Fieldstone's, just south of Gallagher's on Broadway and
22 who later got a Desoto dealership, was one. Another was
23 located on 237th Street, which later became a slipper
factory, then the office/garage of LaMura trucking

1 company, then one of the Stella D'Oro Biscuit Co.'s
2 buildings. Another was on 233rd Street, which later
3 became a factory of Art Steel Co., And still another
4 was at 3129 Bailey Avenue, near 233rd Street. A common
5 feature of these garages was that in addition to having
6 space at street level, they also had a ramp leading to
7 a second story and another to a basement parking area.
8 Many of Gallagher's customers for this service lived up
9 in Riverdale and some of them were quite rich, with house
10 staffs of chauffeurs, butlers, cooks, maids, and nannies
11 for their children. One such customer was Mr. Gamble,
12 of Proctor & Gamble. My father became friendly with Mr.
13 Gamble and his chauffeur, Jack O'Day. As a result, our
14 family was occasionally guests on the Gamble yacht kept
15 at the New Jersey shore. Also, I was given Gamble's
16 son's practically new shoes when he outgrew them.

17
18 When the car storage and delivery business died out
19 in ~~the~~ late 1930s or early 1940s, my father moved into
20 the ~~main~~ building. For the several years prior to that,
21 he worked in the "tin garage," as we called it - a mostly
22 corrugated metal structure with no cooling fans, heat or
23 insulation - located on the corner of 240th Street and
4 Corlear Avenue. It was just across 240th St. from the

1 entrance to what was then called Innisfail Park - owned
2 by John O'Donnell and later to be renamed Croke Park by
3 its new owner, Patty Grimes, who also owned The Irish
4 Echo newspaper and a travel agency; and later renamed
5 again as Gaelic Park. The shop was an oven in the
6 summer and an ice box in the winter. All it did was
7 keep the rain and wind off the men who worked in it. I
8 remember my father's hands getting so raw and cut that
9 he had trouble holding the tools. The tin shop (among
10 other small structures) was razed in the 1940s to clear
11 the land to be the site of the Fanny Farmer's Candies
12 factory - which took almost the entire block from 240th
13 to 238th Streets and from Corlear to Tibbet Avenues. Only
14 the fine brick house at the 238th Street end of the block
15 was excluded from the candy factory's land purchase. It
16 was owned by Mrs. Smith, whose son, Walker, bought it
17 for her and refused to sell. Mr. Walker Smith, of course
18 is better known by his professional boxing name: Sugar
19 Ray Robinson. He didn't live there, so we didn't see
20 him too much. But when he did visit his mother, we all
21 knew it by the presence of his pinkish-lavender Cadillac
22 convertible parked in front of his mother's house.
23 Sometimes we'd see him in person when he shopped in one
4 of the stores on 238th Street.

1 When my parents were married in 1927, they decided
2 to move closer to my father's work, rather than stay near
3 my grandparents in Yonkers. They rented a three room
4 apartment on the first floor of 213 West 238th Street,
5 the newest house on the street. The rent was a
6 surprisingly high \$57. per month, my mother recalls. Both
7 my sister and I were born there (my actual place of birth
8 was Union Hospital, just south of Fordham Road and two
9 blocks west of the Concourse). We moved to 140 West
10 238th Street around 1935 so as to get four rooms (for
11 \$40. per month). Our last move was to 226 West 238th
12 Street around 1939 or 1940. We moved there because that
13 apartment house provided free school bus transportation
14 to P.S.95, whereas our prior house did not. Our
15 original rent at 226 was \$42 for four rooms and was \$107
16 when we left in 1977. The reason we moved out when we
17 did was because a thief tried to get into the apartment
18 even though we were home at the time. While it was
19 true in those days that landlords offered such attractive
20 incentives as free painting, a new refrigerator, a new
21 stove, a month's free rent, etc. to induce people to move
22 into their buildings, we were quite stable - three moves
23 in fifty years, and each for a legitimate reason.

HOW IT WAS IN THE 1920S

From 1921 to 1927, when he moved to 238th Street, my father had to commute between his home in Yonkers and Gallagher's. Before he got a car, he made the six day per week trip on the trolley. He lived close to Getty Square where several trolley routes converged. Four of those travelled south on Broadway. They were identified by numbers painted on movable steel plates (about 15" by 25") mounted on their front and rear. He could take the number 1, which started at the Yonkers/Hastings border and came down Warburton Avenue; or the number 2, which came down Palisades Avenue; or the number 3, which came up Main Street from the Day Liner's pier on the Hudson River. The number 4 also travelled south on Broadway on the same tracks as the others, but was not to be taken as it switched off onto McLain Avenue at Lincoln Park. Whatever trolley he took, the fare was 5¢, and it took him to the City Line, which was the northern terminus of the New York "C" trolley. The N.Y. trolleys used letters to identify their routes, instead of numbers. Thus, we had the "U" trolley which ran along University Avenue for the major part of its route, the "B" on Bailey Avenue, "W" for Webster Avenue, "T" for Tremont Avenue,

1 "O" for Ogden Avenue, "X" for Crosstown, etc. The "C"
2 stood for City Line.

3
4 At City Line, there were special switching tracks
5 which enabled the trolleys to move from the northbound
6 to the southbound track. The motorman had to effectuate
7 the switching maneuver. This entailed pulling down and
8 securing the pole at the rear and raising the pole at the
9 front (the new rear when the trolley would be travelling
10 in the other direction). These poles made contact with
11 the electrified overhead wires and conducted power to the
12 trolley's motors. He also had to reverse all the seats
13 so that they would face the proper way for the southbound
14 trip and fold up the seat which he, himself, used as he
15 operated the trolley. Further, he had to detach his
16 power handle and brake lever and gather up his transfers,
17 coat and other items, then move them to the other end and
18 set them up as required. Lastly, he had to get a
19 special crowbar-like lever and manually move the track
20 switch so that the trolley would be guided onto the
21 cross-over rails to the southbound track.

22
23 My father did not switch from the Yonkers trolley
4 to the "C" at 262nd Street, however, as the Yonkers cars

1 travelled on the New York tracks all the way down to
2 242nd Street. The obvious reason they did that was to
3 interface with the elevated trains of the IRT
4 (Interborough Rapid Transit system), whose last
5 northbound stop was 242nd Street. While 262nd Street
6 had one section of trolley switching tracks, 242nd Street
7 had three. It was a very congested place, with the "1",
8 "2" and "3" Yonkers trolleys switching over, the New York
9 City "C" passing through, people pouring out of the IRT
10 (down four large staircases) every time a train arrived,
11 plus an ever increasing number of automobiles and people
12 visiting the businesses on the west side of Broadway and
13 Van Cortlandt Park on the east side of it. A multitude
14 of traffic control schemes were tried to facilitate flow
15 while assuring the safety of the people getting off and
16 on the trolleys. At various times, they had stanchions,
17 poles, chains, one concrete island, two concrete islands,
18 and nothing at all.

19
20 What my father saw on his trip from the City Line
21 to his job at 240th Street, in the 1920s, was mostly the
22 open fields of Van Cortlandt Park on the east side of
23 Broadway and empty lots on the west side, with a lone
4 house here and there. As he travelled from the City

1 Line, Caryl Field was on his left side until Mosholu
2 Avenue - which came down from Riverdale and crossed
3 Broadway into the park and (before the construction of
4 the Henry Hudson Parkway and the Major Deegan) then
5 through the park and up to what is now Mosholu Parkway
6 at around Van Cortlandt Park South and Gun Hill Road.
7 After Mosholu Avenue came the parade ground, then an
8 unpaved street leading in to the Van Cortlandt Mansion,
9 a small street at 242nd Street that ran down to the lake
10 and the N.Y. Central train station, then low open fields
11 to 240th Street. At that time, there was no Henry
12 Hudson Parkway bridge over Broadway between 253rd and
13 254th Streets, and the Van Cortlandt Park stadium and
14 playgrounds had not yet been built.

15
16 On the west side of Broadway on my father's trip
17 from City Line, the first structure was an apartment
18 house between 262nd and 261st Streets. Then there were
19 mostly empty lots until Mosholu where Paul's Restaurant
20 was. Previously called The Mosholu Hotel and now called
21 The Riverdale Inn, it may well be the oldest commercial
22 structure and longest running business establishment in
23 the area. The Mosholu Hotel was a true inn for
4 travelers - with a restaurant/bar below and rooms above.

1 In those days, travelling salesmen and others away from
2 home, primarily wanted a hot meal and a comfortable bed
3 after a wearying day on the road. As Paul's Restaurant,
4 it still catered to travellers, but increasingly served
5 as a fine place for local people to dine and have their
6 special occasion parties. Just past Paul's were a row
7 of small (big enough only to hold one car) tin garages
8 which were cropping up all over for rental to people who
9 bought automobiles but had no garage in their house.
10 There was another five story walk-up apartment house on
11 the corner of 251st Street and then just a few private
12 houses and more empty lots all the way down to near 242nd
13 Street. In those days, most empty lots had billboards
14 erected on them so as to provide the owners with a source
15 of income while they sat with vacant land. Many were
16 dual billboards - that is, two were erected together and
17 positioned like a V with its point toward the road, such
18 that one billboard would be tilted toward traffic coming
19 in ~~one~~ direction and the other would face the traffic
20 coming the other way. There was another five story
21 apartment house, followed by a few frame houses just
22 before where Post Road curves down into Broadway. At
23 that spot, Spuyten Duvil Parkway comes down into Broadway
4 from the other direction. In the 1920s, there was a

1 little lunch stand in the small space between where the
2 two roads entered Broadway. This ideal location was at
3 the train-trolley juncture and across from Van Cortlandt
4 Park. There must have been a hotel on the next block
5 because I recall seeing parts of embedded tiles in
6 sections of the sidewalk which had not been replaced at
7 the present locale of the Pinewood Bar and Terminal Bar
8 and which spelled fragments of the name of a hotel. If
9 there was a hotel there, it may well have predated the
10 construction of the elevated train tracks in about 1905.
11 My father got off the Yonkers trolley at 242nd Street and
12 walked the rest of the way to 240th Street. Beyond his
13 view, up 242nd Street, Manhattan College was completing
14 construction of its Quadrangle - three classroom and
15 office buildings, with connecting arches, laid out in a
16 "U" to face a rectangular field in the center and with
17 a chapel located on the fourth side at the open end of
18 the "U" - and whose cornerstone was laid in 1922. The
19 college was in the process of moving to The Bronx from
20 its original site at 131st Street and Broadway in
21 Manhattan. Spuyten Duyvil Parkway was renamed Manhattan
22 College Parkway in 1953 to commemorate the college's
23 100th anniversary. From 242nd to 240th, again was
4 mostly empty lots, billboards, a few small structures,

1 but no apartment houses. On the corner of the parkway
2 and Broadway, was a gas station and auto repair shop.
3 Hans, the owner, and my father became long time friends.
4 Just past there was a building which housed a roller
5 skating rink, and behind it, as part of the same business
6 establishment, was a large outdoor swimming pool with two
7 slides - one small and one large. After more lots and
8 billboards, there were a few small stores and shops. One
9 was The Wheel, which sold and repaired bicycles, but
10 mostly rented them to people who wanted to ride through
11 Van Cortlandt Park. After that were a row of individual
12 tin garages followed by an entrance to the IRT storage
13 and repair barn and tracks. That facility took most of
14 the area behind the lots along Broadway there and went
15 all they way back to Irwin Avenue. Innisfail Park was
16 sort of cut out of the IRT property, starting a few yards
17 in on 240th Street and going back to Irwin Avenue.

18
19 When my parents moved to 238th Street in 1927, the
20 neighborhood was comprised of a few five story walk-up
21 apartment houses and one or two smaller structures - like
22 the building on the northeast corner of Broadway and
23 238th, which had a tavern below and living quarters
4 above. Of course, the row of nineteenth century wood

1 frame homes south of 236th Street on Broadway, which have
2 already been mentioned as being below street level, were
3 there. Most of the rest of the neighborhood was empty
4 lots which were recessed, overgrown with reeds and weeds,
5 with a billboard or two, and were places where the
6 superintendents of the apartments dumped their furnace
7 ashes. Van Cortlandt Park was there, but the only
8 development of it were the boathouse and golfers'
9 building. The park, approximately two square miles in
10 area, was established in 1889 from part the Van Cortlandt
11 estate, which in turn, was part of the original 1646
12 Dutch land grant to Adrian van der Donck (from which The
13 Bronx gets its name). Its mansion, built in 1748, and
14 which may be the oldest structure in the Bronx, was the
15 home of Frederick Van Cortlandt and his family. George
16 Washington really slept there. There is supposed to be
17 a hidden tunnel in the basement for refuge in case of an
18 attack by indians or the British. On Vault Hill, (which
19 we called Cemetery Hill) just north of the mansion, was
20 the family's burial grounds. The official records of
21 The City of New York were buried there during the
22 Revolutionary War to prevent them from falling into the
23 hands of the British. It was on these same hills that
4 a multitude of small camp fires were kept burning through

1 the night at one time so that the British would think
2 that Washington's army was still there, when in fact, it
3 had already begun its march to Yorktown.
4

5 There was no church in the immediate neighborhood
6 when my parents moved there. They had to go to St.
7 John's on Kingsbridge Avenue, between 230th and 231st
8 Streets. My sister was baptized there in the Spring of
9 1928. In the Fall of that year, they informed my
10 parents that there was to be a new parish and that it was
11 to be located in the 238th Street area. Its founder was
12 Reverend Joseph V. Stanford, who was then the Senior
13 Assistant at the Church of the Incarnation, in Manhattan.
14 On September 27, 1928, he was appointed the first pastor
15 of the new Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin
16 Mary. Not having its own building, the church rented
17 two adjoining units (numbers 3640 and 3642) in a row of
18 newly constructed stores on the east side of Bailey
19 Avenue, just south of 238th Street. The first mass was
20 celebrated December 8, 1928 and was attended by over 300
21 adults - most of whom stood, as there were less than 150
22 folding camp chairs available. Exactly one year later,
23 on December 8, 1929, ground was broken for a church-
24 school building on Putnam Avenue East, about midway

1 between 238th Street and Van Cortlandt Park South. At
2 that time, there were no other structures on that street.
3 The view from where the front of the church was to be
4 was of the side of 213, where we lived, and rear of 3816,
5 the new (and first in the neighborhood with an elevator)
6 apartment house on the corner of Review Place and 239th
7 Street. Also in full view from the front door of the
8 future church was the Fireplace Inn, which at the end of
9 the 1920s was thriving - in spite of Prohibition. It
10 was located on 239th Street, between Review Place and
11 Putnam Avenue West. Built at the bottom of the lot at
12 natural grade level, it could be entered at street level
13 (its second floor) or below, via a ramp which cars drove
14 down to a parking area. It was an old building and had
15 been there long before my parents arrived. Whether it,
16 or a predecessor structure was there before the roads
17 were raised, or whether it was intentionally build in the
18 hole, I do not know. It was like the Mosholu Hotel in
19 that it had a restaurant/bar on the main floor and rooms
20 above, but its reputation was that of a bistro or
21 prohibition days roadhouse. It burned down around 1940.
22 Today, the new Visitation Church and School occupies the
23 site. It is interesting that a house of God now sits
upon the ashes of a house of ill repute.

HOW IT WAS IN THE 1930S

1
2
3 In 1930, the church was completed. The school
4 above it was finished in 1935, followed shortly
5 thereafter by the rectory, which was behind the church,
6 but which faced Bailey Avenue. The church also owned
7 a lot, about 100 feet wide and stretching from Putnam
8 Avenue to Bailey Avenue, where the school children played
9 during recesses and lined up before marching up to their
10 classrooms. The lot was also the site of the annual
11 church bazaars. When the church moved into its
12 building, a food store - a Peter Reeves, I believe -
13 moved into the storefronts which it vacated. There were
14 a series of priests who served as assistants to Father
15 Stanford, but one in particular became a good friend of
16 my father's. Father John B. O'Connell arrived in June
17 of 1932 and it wasn't long before my father was bringing
18 him home for lunch and supper - usually without any
19 advance notice to my mother.

20
21 The newly constructed building had the church
22 downstairs - a wide, inside flight of steps led from the
23 entrance at street level down to the inner doors of the
24 church - and classrooms upstairs. I was one of the

1 first babies to be baptized there in 1931. It goes
2 without saying, that Father Stanford deserves the major
3 part of the credit for the success of the parish. But
4 recognition must also be given to the work of volunteers
5 such as William Carron, Eugene Larkin, Richard Morgan,
6 Peter and Peggy Stafford, and others. Pete Stafford,
7 Jr. became active in the church as a teenager and
8 remains, today, one of its hard working parishioners.

9
10 Having been born in 1931, I spent most of the first
11 half of the decade being pushed around in a carriage by
12 my mother and the second half not far from 140 West 238th
13 Street, where we then lived. My faint memories of the
14 early 1930s have been supplemented by those of my mother.
15 And, my sister and several friends have added to my
16 recollections of the latter part of that decade.

17
18 140 is located at the corner of 238th Street and
19 Bailey Avenue. It had a large arched entry-way -
20 measuring approximately 20 feet wide, 20 feet deep and
21 a story high - which led to a large open paved courtyard
22 which had a fountain at its center. It was not unknown
23 that an inebriated tenant would drive his car up, onto
4 the curb, through the arch and into the courtyard. The

1 archway is now bricked closed, with only a conventional
2 door installed as an entrance. The fountain is long
3 since gone. Off the central courtyard were four doors,
4 one at each corner, leading to the A, B, C and D series
5 of apartments. There were two apartments on each floor,
6 in each wing. We lived in apartment 32A, which was on
7 the third floor in the A wing and whose windows faced
8 north toward 238th Street and west. After we moved out,
9 and after an intermediate tenant, my good and lifelong
10 friend, Joe Greeley moved into 32A with his bride, Muriel
11 Barrett, one of the most beautiful girls in the
neighborhood, and whose family also lived in 140.

13
14 On the west side of 140, there was a long ramp
15 leading down to the basement level, at which there were
16 additional apartments facing a large vacant lot between
17 the building and the railroad tracks. These were
18 approximately 10 feet below the levels of 238th Street
19 and Bailey. The railroad tracks were down another 4 or
20 5 feet. The space then occupied by most of both the lot
21 and the tracks is now part of the Major Deegan
22 Expressway. The lot wrapped around the south side of
23 140, where, at Bailey, it rose up sharply to the level
4 of the street. On it, there, just south of 140 on

1 Bailey, was a billboard. Moving farther to the south,
2 the lot stayed at its recessed level (except for the part
3 along Bailey) for about 100 feet, where the rest of it
4 rose very sharply up to the level of Bailey. It stayed
5 at that level, still just a vacant field of weeds and
6 with no trees for another 150 feet, or so, until the
7 tennis courts fence. The courts were part of a tennis
8 club located on Bailey. On the lot, on Bailey, before
9 the courts, was a row of small tin parking garages. After
10 the tennis courts there were about four brick private
11 houses, after which there was a small lumber yard, then
12 more empty recessed lots down to 234th and 233rd streets.

13
14 As a child, I made many trips - first in a carriage
15 pushed by my mother, then alone - along Bailey Avenue
16 between 238th and 231st Streets. Local shopping was
17 done right on 238th or Bailey; more extensive buying was
18 done in the 231st Street area; and major purchases were
19 made either on Fordham Road or at Yonkers' Getty Square.

20
21 The following is what I remember of what was between
22 231st and 238th in the 1930s. John Kieran recalls
23 seeing things in the blocks around 233rd and Bailey at
24 about the turn of the century which were gone in my day.

1 He has childhood memories of there being a brickmaking
2 yard between Bailey Avenue and the Putnam Railroad's
3 tracks at about 233rd or 234th Street. On page 30 of
4 his book, A Natural History of New York City, (1), he
5 says, "I remember the baked bricks in long narrow stacks
6 about three feet high over which ran ridged 'hutches' to
7 keep off the rain. But what particularly attracted me
8 at that early age was the plodding horse that walked in
9 a circle and pulled along the outer end of a radial beam
10 that turned the grinding machinery of the old-fashioned
11 'pugmill' in the center. That must have been about 1896
12 or 1897. How such an antiquated method of making brick
13 survived to that late date I do not know, nor do I recall
14 the name of the owner or operator. But I remember the
15 name of the owner and operator of an equally old-
16 fashioned sawmill that stood just to the north and
17 outlived the brickyard by some years. He was a Captain
18 Hebble, a bearded Civil War veteran and a kindly old
19 gentleman who was most obliging to small boys in the
20 matter of sawing to size the wooden parts needed for the
21 making of bobsleds." I remember the spot of his
22 brickyard only as an empty, weed filled lot. The small
23 lumber yard of the 1930s may have been the remnants or
24 successor to Captain Hebble's sawmill.

1 I remember that on the east side of Bailey at around
2 233rd Street, there were a few houses just north of where
3 Bailey Place went up to Fort Independence Street. They
4 were replaced in later years by a Texaco gas station at
5 which I worked for a short time years later, as a
6 teenager, when it was owned by a fellow named Jerry. A
7 little bit south of there, was Ahneman & Younkeere's
8 Lumber Yard, which was established in 1892. Young George
9 Younkeere was a grade school mate of mine. After the
10 lumber yard was a brick five story walk-up apartment
11 house which must have been built around 1912-1914,
12 judging from a 1915 photo of it, and beyond that were
13 several nineteenth century wood-frame houses.

14
15 Proceeding south, we left Bailey at 233rd and
16 entered Albany Crescent. On the right was another
17 recessed lot, which stretched south to 231st and west to
18 the tracks, but this one had a dirt path going down to
19 a house at the bottom of it. Like almost all of the
20 recessed lots in the area, it had a wooden rail fence
21 around its periphery. On the east side of Albany
22 Crescent, there were several private houses and a few
23 businesses, including Tynan's Hardware store, which later
1 moved to Broadway, south of 231st Street.

1 When we reached 231st Street and Albany Crescent, we
2 turned west, down to Broadway. I have very little
3 knowledge of what was to the east of that intersection -
4 that is, on 231st Street, between Albany Crescent and
5 Bailey Avenue. To the west, however, was a bridge over
6 the railroad tracks. It was the same design and
7 construction as the one which was then at 238th Street -
8 that is, steel, one lane in each direction, with a heavy
9 solid steel center divider (about 3 feet high by one foot
10 thick) and steel outer guards of the same size and
11 construction as the center divider, and on which young
12 daredevils would often walk. This was a little
13 dangerous, because the top surfaces of these guards and
14 dividers were not flat, but had the round heads of the
15 many rivets used to construct them sticking up. When
16 they were wet, they were even more hazardous.

17
18 The stores at 231st Street and Broadway in the 1930s
19 were, roughly in this order, going down 231st from the
20 bridge. On the south side: Woolworth's 5&10, Fuhrman's
21 Department Store, a barber shop, an optometrist, and an
22 ice cream parlor on the corner of Broadway. On the
23 north side, the Dale movie theater, a beauty parlor, a
4 bar, a real estate/insurance agency, the entrance to

1 apartments on the level above the stores, and a butcher
2 shop, The Manhattan Pork & Provisions Company, which we
3 just called "the pork store," on the corner. I'll hold
4 the description of what was on Broadway until my
5 discussion of when I lived at 226 West 238th Street and
6 used Broadway instead of Bailey Avenue to get to the
7 231st Street area.

8
9 However, the stores near our house, 140, in the
10 1930s were as follows: On the corner of 238th Street
11 and Bailey Avenue was Reiss' Drug Store. In those days,
12 the local pharmacists seemed more willing to help people
13 with medical aid than they are today. Mr. Reiss and Mr.
14 Marqules, whose pharmacy was then on 238th opposite where
15 Review Place enters it, would always - willingly and
16 gratuitously - remove eye cinders and bandage cuts. When
17 about five years old, I slipped and fell against the
18 sharp edge of my toy truck and laid my whole cheek open,
19 from just below the eye and curving down my face, such
20 that the skin flapped down. My mother scooped me up and
21 ran across Bailey with me into Reiss'. He pushed the
22 flesh back in place and bandaged it until we could get
23 to a doctor. Going south on Bailey from Reiss' was
4 Louie Caputo's shoe repair shop (he later relocated

1 around the corner to 138 W. 238th going up the hill),
2 then came Ginsberg's dairy-deli-grocery, then Joe Grecco
3 and (Louie's brother) Richie Caputo's bar (whose formal
4 name was the Parkway Restaurant and Bar), then a food
5 market, which replaced the church, then Stella D'Oro's
6 bakery, on the end. Across 238th, at the corner of
7 Putnam Avenue West, was Morris Grummer's candy store.
8 Next to it was Frank's barber shop, which was replaced
9 by Charlie Danker's delicatessen, when Frank moved down
10 and across 238th to store #212, next to the Victory
11 Market. The third store in that row across from 140 was
12 a Peter Reeves food market, which was later replaced by
13 Brennan's bar.

14
15 It happened that Frank's parents and grandparents had
16 been among the many tenants and workers on my
17 grandmother's grandfather's (Doctor Giacinto Sabatini)
18 vast estates in Italy many years ago. My sister and I
19 were thrilled at the thought of money, power and nobility
20 in the family, but my mother quickly brought us back to
21 earth by admonishing us that we would be judged by what
22 we, ourselves, accomplished, not by who some ancestor was
23 a century ago on the other side of the world, and that
24 if we wanted to be "somebody," we had better study hard

1 and work hard so as to be the best in whatever field we
2 chose.

3
4 Although we paid the rent to Neering Brothers, they
5 were only the agents for the owner of 140, Mrs. Kinneer
6 (sp?), a fine, elegant old lady, who was left the house
7 when her husband died. She also lived in the house and
8 befriended my mother, who was only one-third her age. As
9 they sat out in the sun on camp chairs on the sidewalk
10 at the corner of 238th and Bailey, and I played nearby,
11 my random memories include watching Tom Burke, a
12 motorcycle policeman (and husband of Charlie Gallagher's
13 wife Anne's sister) hide behind the corner of the house
14 and then speed off, siren wailing, after anyone who
15 passed the newly installed red light at the corner. My
16 father told me that before traffic lights were introduced
17 in the mid 1920s, the job of most of the few thousand
18 policemen then on the force was to stand (some stood in
19 little elevated towers) in the streets, at intersections,
20 and direct traffic - sometimes by alternately holding up
21 a green paddle that had "GO" painted on it and a red one
22 with "STOP." All also had whistles. When the lights
23 were installed, they feared that they would no longer be
4 needed and protested the threat to their job security.

1 Then my father whimsically added, the compassionate and
2 resourceful New Yorkers invented crime so as to provide
3 the cops with something to keep them busy.
4

5 I also remember the milkman, often waking up to the
6 gentle clinking of the glass bottles hitting each other
7 in the carrier he used as he went from floor to floor
8 leaving one or two quarts in front of each door. His
9 delivery wagon was horse drawn, and he would often hang
10 a pouch of oats on the horse's head so that the animal
11 could snack while waiting. Often, when the horse would
12 make a puddle in the street, someone would tell the
13 milkman that his horse had lost his "gasoline" and needed
14 a refill in order to make it back to the barn. The
15 milkman must have heard that one a hundred times.
16

17 Other things I remember of those days were the
18 delivery of coal for the apartment's furnace. There
19 were grates in the sidewalk at spots above the coal bins.
20 The truck driver would open the grate, insert a chute
21 into the hole, and then tilt the back of the truck so
22 that the coal would slide out and down the chute into the
23 bin. In cases, such a private houses, where there was
4 no such grate, the driver would have to put a canvas

1 pouch on his back, squat under the little door at the
2 back of the truck, open the door until the coal running
3 out filled the pouch, close the door and carry the load
4 into the house. He had to go back and forth until he
5 delivered the required amount. In a similar manner, the
6 iceman (who was sometimes the same person as the coal
7 man) would come with large (200 pound) cakes of ice, over
8 which he had put a large canvas so as to keep the sun off
9 of them. Where he got the ice in the hot summer was
10 always a mystery to me. Then, with his ice pick, he
11 would stab at the large piece until a smaller block of
12 the desired size broke off. He always knew how much the
13 commercial establishment wanted, but for private houses,
14 he had to look at a piece of cardboard the owner would
15 position in the window. It would have a number on each
16 of the four edges - 25, 50, 100 and 200 - and the number
17 placed at the top was the amount of ice the person
18 wanted. The iceman would always give the kids watching
19 him **free** slivers of ice to suck on. The names Conroy,
20 Volpe and Burnside stick in my mind of at least three who
21 were in the ice and/or coal business then.

22
23 Another thing for the kids to watch, was the changing
4 of the billboard signs. These were pasted on in

1 sections, right over the prior sign. The man would
2 arrive with his truck and ladder and climb to the top of
3 the billboard with his glue pot, big brush and one
4 section of the new sign. It was printed on paper and
5 folded so that the picture could not be seen until it was
6 unfolded. It was engrossing to watch the new picture
7 develop as he progressively unfolded and pasted the
8 several sections of it, one at a time.

9
10 Many other men came around, too, in those days. It
11 was an era of immigrants and unemployment. People did
12 whatever they could to earn a living. My father's
13 mother used to travel from Yonkers to downtown New York
14 City to pick up large bundles of sewing to do at home on
15 a piece-work basis. When done, she would carry them
16 back and pick up a new load. Many men were peddlers.
17 They walked the streets and alleys shouting their wares
18 and announcing their services. I remember those who
19 bought and sold used clothing, sharpened scissors and
20 knives, repaired umbrellas and fixed watches. Others
21 who came around included those with a pony, on which kids
22 could ride or have their picture taken; organ grinders
23 with monkeys dressed in jackets and little hats; ice
4 cream vendors; and those with trucks equipped with rides,

1 such as carousels, "The Whip" and the like.

2
3 The 1930s were hard times, economically, for many
4 people. I remember that several men - but never more
5 than one at a time - would camp on the lot south of 140
6 and north of the tennis courts. As we got older, we
7 got up the courage to get near enough to one or two of
8 them to talk. I don't remember anything of the
9 conversations, however. Perhaps these men on hard times
10 and who had seen much of life gave me some very valuable
11 advice. But, like most advice given by the old to the
12 young, it made no impression. That same vacant lot,
13 being one of the few at street level, was the annual site
14 of a travelling carnival. They would arrive in the
15 morning, set up their tents and things all day (which was
16 something else for us kids to watch) and open for
17 business that evening. They would stay for three or four
18 days and then be gone. I don't know if it was related
19 to ~~the~~ hard times of the 1930s or for some unrelated
20 ~~personal~~ reason, but a man committed suicide by jumping
21 out of a top floor window of 140, landing on the concrete
22 apron outside of the basement apartments. Even though
23 we children were not allowed to look at his body, the
4 event made a big impression on us. We all went down to

1 look at the blood after his body had been taken away.

2
3 One of the greatest advantages to living in
4 Kingsbridge is the proximity of Van Cortlandt Park. It
5 is still an attractive place today, but in the 1930s it
6 was a genuine treasure. From our earliest days in
7 carriages, my mother took my sister and me all through
8 the park. We virtually lived there. One spot was
9 outstanding. It was called the Dutch Gardens - an
10 expanse roughly the size of a football field, located in
11 front of and down two elegant flights of steps from the
12 mansion. The park employees were constantly planting
13 and removing flowers - tulips, daffodils, peonies,
14 daisies, geraniums, and others - each at the right time
15 so that something would be in bloom at all times. There
16 were also forsythia, azalea, lilac, rhododendron,
17 hydrangea and rose bushes, as well as both flowering
18 deciduous and evergreen trees. It had a large,
19 overflowing, fountain at its center, where the paths
20 converged, and canals filled with water along its borders
21 and main paths. There were even goldfish, frogs and
22 lily-pads. It was truly a beautiful place.

1 In those days, one could drive their automobile
2 through the park. One road that came in from Broadway
3 passes in front of the mansion and at the top of the
4 steps leading down to the Dutch Gardens. There was a
5 fork in it at the east end of the gardens, with the left
6 part curving northward toward a picnic area at the east
7 end of the parade ground, just before Vault Hill. The
8 right part of the fork curved southward and went along
9 the eastern side of the gardens to join a second road
10 that came in from Broadway from a point just south of the
11 southerly staircase of the elevated train station and ran
12 east, under the Putnam Division tracks to connect with
13 the road coming north from Van Cortlandt Park South which
14 led to the railroad station, lake, boathouse, golf house,
15 golf course, picnic grounds and Jerome Avenue. The
16 railroad tracks, obviously, did not rise as they passed
17 the road. The road dipped down quite sharply to pass
18 under the tracks. That dip caused a basin - and it
19 wasn't very well drained - which filled up with water
20 every time it rained heavily. The automobiles did not
21 have water-tight electrical systems then, causing those
22 who tried to drive through the deep water to stall and
23 get stuck in the middle. This kept my father very busy.
4 In the beginning, people would have to call Gallagher's

1 to have the tow truck come and get them out. Later, as
2 soon as it rained heavily, my father would head over
3 there, knowing he would get a lot of customers.
4

5 As a result of his activities in the park, and of
6 his fixing almost everybody in the neighborhood's car -
7 some at Gallagher's and some on his own at nights and on
8 weekends - my father was very well known. People would
9 say, "If you want to find Jimmy from Gallagher's, look
10 for a cigar and he'll be at the other end of it" - he
11 smoked 14 or 15 a day. All the policemen knew him, too,
12 and one detective gave him a miniature badge to carry so
13 as to show any strange cop who might stop him that he was
14 a friend of the police. His friendship with the park
15 employees got me free rides on the horses kept at the
16 stable and riding ring which was then located just north
17 of VCPS on the road into the park. I wasn't too
18 thrilled about those rides, as they had no ponies and I
19 had to ride a full sized horse.
20

21 Three major changes were made in Van Cortlandt Park
22 during the time I lived in the area. Two were in the
23 late 30s and the third was in the early 50s. The first
4 was a WPA project which included the construction of the

1 stadium, tennis courts, handball courts, track, baseball
2 fields and playgrounds, as well as the comfort station
3 at 242nd Street and Broadway. The second set of changes
4 involved those caused by the construction of the Henry
5 Hudson Parkway, its bridge over Broadway between 253rd
6 and 254th streets, and its extension through the park so
7 as to join up with the Saw Mill River Parkway. The
8 intrusion of it into the park resulted in the severing
9 of Mosholu Avenue, the breaking up of the golf course
10 into separate sections, the removal of the road which
11 went from VCPS at Bailey to East 233rd Street and Jerome
12 Avenue (at the corner of Woodlawn Cemetery where on the
13 night of March 12, 1932, Bruno Hauptmann, the kidnapper
14 and killer of the Lindbergh baby, hid behind one of the
15 entrance pillars, with a handkerchief hiding his face,
16 while negotiating ransom terms with Dr. John F. Condon,
17 an intermediary), the removal of a road that went from
18 the lake up to around Jerome Avenue and Gun Hill Road,
19 the elimination of many picnic tables and the shrinking
20 of the swamp north of the lake, which was the habitat of
21 a wide range of birds, animals, insects and plant life,
22 and was one of New York's most important and valuable
23 nature preserves.

1 I don't remember being taken to Innisfail Park in
2 the 1930s, but my sister does. She recalls seeing both
3 motorcycle and bicycle races there. But, I do remember
4 being taken down to the velodrome at Dyckman Street and
5 the Harlem River to see the midget auto races. The
6 olfactory sense, being the most basic, that memory
7 returns whenever I smell the combination of burning
8 rubber and gasoline.

9
10 It was while living in 140, and while still quite
11 young, that I started going to the library. I wouldn't
12 have been able to go alone if my mother did not take me,
13 at first, and later with Edgar Joseph, an older boy who
14 lived across 238th in 183. The library was located on
15 Kingsbridge Avenue, between 230th and 231st. It was a
16 small two story brick building, made to appear even
17 smaller in than it was tucked between the huge edifices
18 of St. John's Church and the Church of the Mediator. The
19 library was built in 1905 as a gift to the public by
20 Cleveland E. Dodge, of Riverdale. I had to use the
21 lower level which contained the books for children, but
22 Edgar - even though not old enough - was allowed to go
23 upstairs to the adult section, as he had read just about
4 all of the children's books.

1 In walking to the library, we would pass P.S. 7, one
2 of the oldest public grade schools in the city. It was
3 built on the eastern half of the former Singer estate,
4 which was bound by what is now 232nd and 234th streets,
5 going from Kingsbridge Avenue (then called Church Street)
6 back to Tibbetts Brook. Instead of Corlear Avenue
7 running through that land, it as does now, that road was
8 called Water Street and stopped at the southern edge of
9 the property, and was called Ackerman Street and stopped
10 at the northern edge. The walks to the library and
11 elsewhere throughout the neighborhood were on sidewalks
12 that were made of slate slabs in places and concrete in
13 other places. It was a mixture of the old and the new,
14 with the sections made of slate steadily disappearing as
15 new buildings were erected on the empty lots.

16
17 As previously stated, the reason we moved to 226 W.
18 238th Street in the late 1930s was that it had a free bus
19 to P.S. 95. The choices of grammar schools were: the
20 Visitation, which was just starting its school; P.S. 7,
21 which was between 232nd and 234th on Kingsbridge Avenue,
22 and a bit of a walk for small children - plus we would
23 have had to cross busy Broadway; or P.S. 95, for which
4 there was a free bus available.

HOW IT WAS IN THE 1940s

1
2
3 The bus to P.S. 95 had to be boarded on Bailey
4 Avenue. It proceeded north on Bailey, then up "Snake
5 Hill" (our name for the hill on Van Cortlandt Avenue West
6 from Bailey to Sedgwick) to the school. Its return
7 route was down Snake Hill, then west on Van Cortlandt
8 Park South, left onto Review Place (which was not a one-
9 way street then), to 238th (right across the street from
10 226, and where I got off) then left up 238th, to Bailey.
11 P.S. 95 was an excellent school. I was there for nine
12 years - kindergarten through the 8th grade. My sister
13 spent even longer in the building, as she also went to
14 Walton High School, that used the third (top) floor of
15 P.S. 95 as its annex for freshmen. The teachers were
16 excellent. As I recall, Miss. Conroy taught English;
17 Miss. Kosky, Arithmetic; Mr. Levy, History; Mr.
18 Schwartzbacker, Woodworking Shop; Miss. Dinegro, Music;
19 and Miss. Fox and Mr. and Mrs. McNally taught all
20 subjects to the lower grades. The principal was Mr. Ira
21 Sasserath, a fine man. The office had only one or two
22 clerical people, as I recall, who acted as receptionists,
23 secretaries, recording clerks, et al. The student body
was predominantly Jewish - living mostly in the recently

1 (1927) completed Amalgamated Houses on Norman, Saxon and
2 Dickenson avenues. On Jewish holidays, the school was
3 open and the few non-Jewish students were required to
4 attend. There were too few of us to hold classes, so
5 we did other things. We were taught arts & crafts and
6 other interesting things. Mr. Sasserath taught me how
7 to play chess. When he saw that I and others were
8 interested in the game, he had a large (about 4 feet by
9 4 feet) chess board built. It could be set on the chalk
10 and eraser rail so as to lean against the blackboard, and
11 each square had a hook onto which could be hung tabs of
12 wood containing pictures of the chess pieces.

13
14 We didn't have many toys. As a child, I had a few
15 miniature cast lead toy cars and soldiers. I never had
16 a set of electric trains or a bicycle. Very few of us
17 did. The only one I knew who had a set of electric
18 trains was Marty Brooks. It was a gift from an aunt.
19 As youngsters we collected things. We collected
20 matchbook covers, bottle caps, marbles, comic books, and
21 baseball cards - which we flipped. In flipping, one
22 person would flip a card onto the ground, then the second
23 person would flip a card; if the second card matched the
24 first card (a face up for a face up or a face down for

1 a face down) the second person would take both cards,
2 otherwise the first person would win. During the war,
3 we saved the tin foil from cigarette packages. We
4 peeled it off the inner wrapper paper and made a ball of
5 it. Eventually, the balls would get so large and heavy
6 that we would have to start another one. Other things
7 some kids collected were the lids from the Breyer's ice
8 cream cups. These had pictures of movie stars on their
9 inner sides, protected from the ice cream by a layer of
10 paper, which had to be peeled away. Some bottle caps
11 also had pictures under the cork seals. A brand of ice
12 cream pops, whose name I forget, interspersed a few pop
13 sticks embossed with the company name amongst the many
14 blank sticks. As the imprint was hidden by the ice
15 cream, you couldn't see it until you ate the pop. Those
16 lucky enough to get such a stick could turn it in to the
17 vendor for a free pop. Oddly, we didn't collect coins
18 or stamps, as children. Upon reflection, most of those
19 things we did collect were refuse picked up from the
20 street - bottle caps, matchbooks, cigarette wrappers,
21 etc. Another item of trash that we converted into a
22 plaything was the tin can. Stamped on smartly, as it
23 laid on it side, caused the ends to be pulled in to grip
4 one's shoe. A can affixed to each shoe produced a

1 rather noisy set of cleats. Most of us had roller
2 skates - the kind that clamped onto one's shoes when
3 tightened with a special key - that we constantly lost.
4 The skates had metal wheels which also were noisy against
5 the concrete sidewalks. As we got older, we played in
6 the street, as well as the sidewalk. We played roller
7 skate hockey, curb ball, stickball, football, ring-a-
8 leev-ee, and other games in the middle of 238th, Review
9 Place and Van Cortlandt Park South. There were so few
10 cars, that almost none were parked along the curbs and
11 very few drove along the streets to interrupt our games.
12 For many of our games (curb ball, "off the wall," box
13 ball, wall ball, handball, and "hit the stick"), a lively
14 pink rubber ball, which we called a "Spaldeen." was our
15 only equipment - but for stickball, and old broomstick
16 or mop handle was also needed. There were many times
17 when the ball would go into someone's open window - at
18 which time we would plead for its return. On occasion,
19 a ball would break a window - at which time we would all
20 run like hell. Looking at things now, from an adult's
21 perspective, we must have been real annoying to the
22 people whose windows faced the street. For baseball,
23 I owned a mitt and a couple of well used balls, but not
24 a bat - that was owned by Don Battle or Billy

1 Fitzmaurice, as I recall. To watch a high school,
2 college or pick-up baseball game, or to play, all we had
3 to do was to walk two blocks to the fields in Van
4 Cortlandt Park. To see a New York Yankee game, we would
5 walk up to the 50th Precinct police station, then located
6 at Kingsbridge Terrace and Summit Place, and ask for free
7 PAL (Police Athletic League) tickets. Eddie Morrison
8 and I used to walk up to the police station to get the
9 tickets, then continue walking along Reservoir Avenue to
10 the Kingsbridge station of the Jerome Avenue elevated
11 train to ride down to Yankee Stadium at 161st Street. We
12 usually bought a 5¢ hot dog at the Nedick's stand outside
13 the stadium, rather than pay 10¢ inside.

14
15 The toys that the girls had included dolls and
16 carriages, jumping ropes and jacks. I remember that my
17 father made something for my sister. He took an empty
18 wooden thread spool and tapped small nails around the
19 periphery at one end, between the center hole and the
20 outer edge. Somehow, my sister hooked yarn over the
21 nails, then unhooked it in some sequence, as she pulled
22 the resultant cord down through the center hole of the
23 spool and out the bottom. The woven cord was made as
24 long as she pleased and later coiled into place mats,

1 coasters for glasses, or whatever. The girls also
2 played games such as hopscotch on patterns which they
3 drew with chalk on the sidewalk or street.
4

5 In the summer, we would get a chestnut from Van
6 Cortlandt Park and drill a hole through it, through which
7 we would thread a shoe string with a knot on the end, so
8 as to hold the chestnut. Then we would challenge each
9 other to a "fight" in which the combatants would
10 alternately sling their chestnut at the opponent's as it
11 hung from its shoe string. After that, it was the
12 opponent's turn to sling his chestnut. And back and
13 forth it went, until someone's chestnut was broken. The
14 one whose chestnut broke lost and had to go find himself
15 another chestnut. The survivor gained in reputation with
16 each successive win and was soon the object of challenges
17 from all.
18

19 As we got older, we ventured farther and farther
20 from the immediate area of our houses. Some of my
21 friends had bikes, and to be able to go along with them
22 on their rides, I borrowed Ray Hand's. We rode up to
23 Fieldston and Riverdale, then down the other side of the
4 crest to Palisade Avenue, the New York Central tracks and

1 the Hudson River, all the way up to Yonkers. Riding
2 through the neighborhoods of mansions and estates was
3 like entering a new world for us. Our fascination with
4 the rich and famous continued into our adulthood, when
5 we would drive our cars through those streets at
6 Christmastime to see how Mayor LaGuardia, Arturo
7 Toscanini, the Dodges and others decorated their homes.

8
9 Gradually, but relentlessly, the empty lots in the
10 neighborhood disappeared, one after the other in the
11 1940s. Because of the marshy subsoil, long piles had
12 to be hammered down until they hit bedrock. There was
13 a period when part of our environment was the incessant
14 noise from the steam operated piledrivers. They drove
15 hundreds of piles for virtually every construction
16 project in the area - from the Kingsbridge Heights
17 project on Broadway, between 225th and 230th, up to the
18 Yonkers City Line, and everything in between, including
19 the Fanny Farmer Candies factory. The vacant lot behind
20 my house, 226 W. 238th, was used as a parking lot for two
21 of the piledrivers. 1940 saw the completion of a row
22 of brick private houses, started around 1939, that
23 progressed around the block from a point on Bailey Avenue
4 just north of the church's side field, going north to the

1 corner of Van Cortland Park South, then west on VCPS to
2 the corner of Putnam Avenue East, then south on PAE to
3 a point on it just north of the church's side field.
4 Prior to their construction, the large lot had a softball
5 field that was well used. The ubiquitous wooden rail
6 fence around it served as a grandstand for spectators.
7

8 For a few years after the church and school were
9 built, the road in front of it, Putnam Avenue East, had
10 only a wooden rail fence at its western edge, before
11 where the land sloped down to the railroad tracks. There
12 must have been some continuous erosion which threatened
13 to undermine the road and church and new houses, because
14 a large, thick retaining wall was built about 1940-1941.
15 A WPA project, it ran from 238th to Van Cortlandt Park
16 South and went from the level of the tracks up to about
17 five feet above the street level. It was about 18
18 inches thick and its flat top surface sloped down toward
19 the tracks rather sharply - about 30 degrees - but that
20 did not stop the boys from sitting on it and walking
21 along the top of it, risking an approximate 30-35 foot
22 fall down through the telegraph wires to the tracks
23 below. Included as part of that same project was the
4 removal of the old bridge over 238th Street and the

1 construction of a new, wider, one.
2

3 The Fireplace Inn burned down around 1940. Some
4 mourned its loss. Some were glad to see it go. I
5 remember exploring its burned out rooms. It was my
6 first and only time in the place. Soon after the fire,
7 the debris was removed and the lot cleared. It quickly
8 overgrew with weeds, however, and became yet another
9 playground for us. When they were evacuating for the
10 construction of the Major Deegan, they deposited the
11 earth in that recessed lot, converting it to a small
12 mountain - which, again, presented us with a new place
13 to fool around. The current Visitation church, school
14 and rectory were later built on this site.
15

16 Other things that happened in the first part of the
17 decade include: 1940 - The first class of 13 students
18 graduated from the parish grade school. 1942 - Father
19 Michael V. Bell, the parish's longest serving assistant
20 pastor arrived. 1943 - the parish baseball team won the
21 Diocesan C.Y.O. Championship.
22

23 Grummer's candy store was purchased by Mr. Aaron
4 Mintz. Charlie Danker sold his deli and entered the U.S.

1 Army. The "U" trolley on 238th Street was replaced by
2 the #38 bus and the "C" trolley on Broadway was replaced
3 by the #20 bus. At first, they just left the trolley
4 tracks as they were, even though no longer used; then,
5 gradually, as a road needed repaving anyway, they simply
6 paved over them; finally, when steel became an important
7 war commodity, they dug them up and carried them away.

8
9 World War II did not have a great physical effect
10 on the neighborhood. Probably the most visible thing
11 was the large scrap metal pile on the north side of
12 238th, at Putnam Avenue West. People threw their old
13 pots and things on it and it grew quite large. We also
14 had what every other neighborhood had during the war -
15 ration stamps, A-B-C gasoline priority stickers on the
16 windshields of our cars, auto chrome painted over in a
17 dull cream color, headlights taped and hooded, balls of
18 tin foil gotten primarily from cigarette packages, coffee
19 cans of lard collected from cooking drippings and turned
20 in at the local butcher shop, and piles of newspapers to
21 be turned over to people who came around to collect them.
22 That was what I did for the war effort. My friends,
23 Tootsie (Donald Hulbert) and Herman Freund, went from
4 door to door, and apartment house to apartment house,

1 ringing bells and collecting scrap paper. Many others
2 did this too; adults as well as kids. Of course, we had
3 the blackouts and air raid drills. And we had the air
4 raid wardens, who would blow their little whistles and
5 yell bloody murder if they could see the slightest bit
6 of light coming from your window during a blackout. Mayor
7 Fiorello LaGuardia made several appearances in the
8 neighborhood during those drills, as he lived just up the
9 hill in Riverdale. The WAVES (Woman's Auxiliary
10 Volunteer Emergency Service) moved into Hunter College,
11 up on Goulden Avenue, on the east side of the Jerome Park
12 Reservoir. That also was the first site of the United
13 Nations' Security Council, after the war, in 1946.

14
15 On the human side, however, the war did have a major
16 impact on the approximate 500 neighborhood men and women
17 (and their families) who served in the armed forces. Nine
18 from the Visitation parish made the supreme sacrifice:
19 Thomas Burke, James Burns, Joseph Fitzpatrick, Charles
20 Gallagher, Joseph Lochner, Robert Mullin, Francis
21 O'Keefe, and both John Silk and his brother, Mathew Silk.
22 Raymond Miller, not a member of the Visitation parish
23 also was killed in battle. I don't know for sure if
4 there were any others who were not in the parish, but

1 there must have been. The omission of their honored
2 names here is due only to my ignorance.

3
4 I earned my first wages for work in 1943. Mr.
5 Margules, the druggist, would call one of us who happened
6 to be playing near his pharmacy when he needed someone
7 to deliver a prescription. He paid us 10 cents. The
8 recipient would tip us 10 cent, five cents or nothing.

9
10 Croke Park had prize fights, picnics and other
11 events. It also had holes in its fence - way in the
12 back, by Irwin Avenue - so we kids got to go to the
13 fights, picnics and other events.

14
15 We had three mail deliveries then - 7:30 A.M., 10
16 A.M. and 3 P.M.. In later years, it went to two a day,
17 then one. They made us Bronx 63, N.Y., then in later
18 years, we became zip code 10463.

19
20 Bess Meyerson was chosen as Miss America in 1945.
21 She was two or three classes ahead of my sister at P.S.
22 95, lived up the hill near the school, and often walked
23 through our neighborhood on her way between her home and
4 the 238th Street stop of the elevated.

1 The 1940s, for me, was a time of discovery and of
2 exploring the world in which I lived. I was from 9 to
3 19 years old during that decade. My friends and I spent
4 most of our time in Van Cortlandt Park. In the early
5 years of the 40s, we seemed to be in the playgrounds
6 every day. There were three playgrounds at the
7 southerly edge of the park, along Van Cortlandt Park
8 South. The playground in the middle had a wading pool,
9 swings, a slide and a superstructure of "monkey bars" to
10 climb upon. There was a very small circular house - no
11 more than five feet in diameter - in which the games were
12 stored. Miss O'Neil - a tall, slim, red-headed lady -
13 was the park employee in charge. She would hand out
14 the checkers, chess sets, carom pool table, games, balls,
15 and so forth. There were many times when she went home
16 at the end of her day and left the house door unlocked,
17 and telling us to return whatever we were playing with
18 when we left. I know of no instance where anything was
19 missing the next day. The playground to the east was
20 larger than the center one and had swings for babies,
21 regular swings, seesaws and several basketball courts.
22 It extended up to the railroad tracks. The playground
23 to the west was also larger than the center one and had
4 swings, parallel bars, a chinning bar, several basketball

1 courts and a softball/stickball field. It extended to
2 Broadway. Farther up on Broadway, was a rectangular
3 area of horseshoe pitching courts. North of them, were
4 fenced in areas in front of the stadium. Those on
5 Broadway had tennis courts on them, while those in the
6 rear had handball courts which used the back wall of the
7 stadium as part of the courts. In the 1940s, there were
8 dances in these fenced in areas on weekend evenings
9 during the summer months. The area was also used for
10 the physical fitness portion of the Police Department
11 test. There were four parts to the test - adding up to
12 1000 points. Candidates could earn a maximum of 100
13 points for broad jumping; up to 300 points for running
14 around a track while carrying a weighted canvas bag on
15 their shoulders; 100 points for each of three types of
16 weight lifting; and 300 points for agility, which
17 involved running an obstacle course that had a zig-zag
18 section, which they had to negotiate, a maze of auto
19 tires lying on the ground, which they had to hop through,
20 a section of concrete sewer pipe, which they had to crawl
21 through; and an 8 foot wall, which they had to scale.
22 One tenth of their total score would be combined with
23 their written exam score, with an equal weight, to arrive
24 at their final grade. Thus, a score of 800 on the

1 physical fitness test would be regarded as 80.0 and
2 averaged with, say, a 90.0 on the written, for a final
3 grade of 85.0. We used to stand on Broadway watching
4 and rooting them on. It was really sad watching many
5 of them give up, dejected, after being unable to scale
6 the wall after repeated tries. That would give them a
7 zero on the agility part, killing, for all practical
8 purposes, any chance of getting the job. Many of the
9 people of my generation took the police or other civil
10 service tests. We were known as "depression babies,"
11 having been born and raised in the 1930s. There were
12 little or no government assistance programs then. Those
13 who lost their jobs during the depression had a very hard
14 time of it. We, their children, were driven to seek job
15 security. Hence, the popularity of civil service jobs.
16 For my part, I could not go that route. When I was 15,
17 I had ruptured appendix and severe peritonitis. The two
18 6-8 inch incisions through my abdominal wall and muscles
19 ruled out any chance of passing the type of gruelling
20 physical fitness test which was conducted outside of the
21 stadium.

22
23 There was always something for us kids to see or do
24 inside the stadium. There were drum and bugle marching

1 band competitions, football games, track meets, the
2 finish lines of marathons and cross-country races through
3 the park's hills to the north, and other events. We ran
4 on the 1/4 mile track often and, when the hurdles were
5 set up for a track meet, we would try them, too. We
6 knew all of the park employees - whom we referred to as
7 "parkies" - by either name or sight. Bob Nuggent was
8 the supervisor and he knew most of us by name, too.
9 Beyond the infield of the stadium were three baseball
10 fields, which extended to the railroad tracks, and on
11 which we played, as we got older. North of the stadium,
12 past the comfort station (which was also build as part
13 of the WPA project and which we used often) at 242nd
14 Street was a large open field called the parade ground.
15 Before my time, the New York State National Guard drilled
16 there. My friends and I went there often to watch the
17 baseball, football, soccer and cricket (which we did not
18 understand) games. We also enjoyed watching the
19 hobbyists fly the model airplanes which they had built.
20 These had miniature engines which took them high in the
21 air. Their owners had to run after them to retrieve
22 them when they came down after running out of gas.
23 Occasionally, one would head straight west, out of the
4 parade ground, across Broadway and over the roofs of the

1 houses on the other side of Broadway, and out of sight.
2

3 The Van Cortlandt Park lake was behind the parade
4 ground, on the east side of the railroad tracks. It was
5 a year-around magnet for us. In the summer, we used the
6 row-boats. They were rented by the hour, but we got to
7 use them free because we "hung out" there and willingly
8 helped the employees with a myriad of little chores.
9 Actually, rowing on the lake left a little to be desired,
10 as it was heavily infested with seaweed that would wrap
11 around the oars and otherwise impede the movement of the
12 boat through the water. On the whole, however, it was
13 an inexpensive way to entertain our teenage girlfriends.
14 In the winter, we ice skated on the lake. There was
15 skating both during the day and at night. The boathouse
16 served hot chocolate, hot dogs and the like, making it
17 even more enjoyable. The only problem was that there
18 were always long ruts in the ice, into which one could
19 catch the blade of their skate and fall. These cracks
20 were caused by the ground vibrations made by the trains
21 as they passed on the tracks along the west edge of the
22 lake. Skating wasn't allowed until the ice was
23 sufficiently thick to hold the weight of all the people.
24 Before the war, they would announce that skating was

1 permitted by hoisting a white flag with a large red ball
2 in the center. It could be seen from most spots in the
3 neighborhood. Those who could not see it, were soon
4 told by those who could that, "The red ball is up." With
5 the war, however, the red ball flag, looking just like
6 the Japanese flag, was eliminated.

7
8 On the way from the railroad tracks underpass to the
9 boathouse there was a fountain. On the sidewalk side,
10 it was a drinking fountain for people; on the road side,
11 it was a water trough for horses; and between the two was
12 a granite monument (about eight feet high, three feet
13 wide and one foot thick) with writing on it, which I read
14 a few times, but cannot recall now.

15
16 The Van Cortlandt Park woods, fields and swamps were
17 wonderful places. There were many summer days when we
18 took off our shoes and socks and waded through the
19 swamps, streams and lake edges. We would get wet and
20 dried out several times during the day. Other times
21 we would walk along the railroad tracks. It was common
22 to see squirrels, rabbits, skunks, turtles, snakes,
23 frogs, chipmunks and field mice. Occasionally, we would
4 spot a raccoon, beaver, woodchuck, muskrat, fox or deer.

1 There were all types of flowers, trees, bushes, birds,
2 fish and insects; but not having any knowledge of
3 ornithology, ichthyology or entomology, we didn't know
4 one from another. We did know that we were in the midst
5 of a wide array of flora and fauna, and we enjoyed it
6 tremendously.

7
8 A few of us tried caddying at the golf course. I
9 found carrying a full set of clubs in a large leather bag
10 - that was heavy even when empty - very hard work on a
11 long, hot summer day. I tried playing the game instead,
12 as we could get on the course free in the evenings. A
13 few fellows, like Bill Scalley and Dick Brady, took to
14 the game and played it seriously as they got older.

15
16 The city tried to convert the hills of the golf
17 course into ski slopes in the winter, but they just
18 weren't high enough and the program was dropped after a
19 few years. Those same hills were fine for sledding,
20 however, and as kids, we used them extensively.

21
22 Almost every Saturday was movie day. When we were
23 young, our parents brought us; as we got older, we went
24 with our friends; and as we grew bigger, we bent our

1 knees and scrunched down so that the ticket seller would
2 agree that we still qualified for a child's ticket (25¢,
3 as I recall) rather than an adult's (35¢ or 50¢). We
4 almost always went to the Marble Hill rather than the
5 Dale. As young adults, our choice of movie theaters
6 broadened to include the Park Hill, Loew's Strand and RKO
7 Proctors - all on Broadway, in Yonkers - and the
8 Valentine, Loew's Grand, RKO Fordham, Lido or Windsor
9 (which had live stage shows and amateur nights) - all on
10 Fordham Road - and the quintessential Paradise - on the
11 Grand Concourse - before which we would buy a supply of
12 nuts and other goodies from Krum's just across the street
13 and after which we would return to Krum's or Jahn's for
14 a big fancy ice cream sundae or a banana split.

15
16 To get to the Marble Hill, we did not usually walk
17 down to it along Broadway, as one would expect. Rather,
18 we walked along what we called, "the aquaduct," which,
19 in fact, was not an aquaduct, but merely a long man-made
20 earthen ridge, which ran from 238th Street to 233rd
21 Street, along the western side of the railroad tracks.
22 it was about 20 feet high with a flat top about 15 feet
23 wide and its sides sloped down to the railroad's drainage
24 gully on one side and the depressed (at the natural land

1 level) vacant reed and marsh lots that stretched to
2 Broadway on the other side. In these lots, during the
3 war, several people fenced off sections and planted
4 "victory gardens." The path was shown on maps as
5 Putnam Avenue West, but in no way was it a usable city
6 street. It is now gone, having been absorbed by Stella
7 D'Oro, Kelton's skating rink and tennis courts, the
8 Safeway and the stores between 234th and 233rd. The
9 Marble Hill's Saturday afternoon program was always the
10 same - two full-length features, an installment of a
11 serial, one or two cartoons, a newsreel reporting the
12 status of the World War II, and coming attractions. Some
13 of the features are now being called classics.
14 Occasionally, an actor by the name of Horace McNally
15 would be in a film. That was a big thing for us,
16 because he was the brother of Mr. McNally, our teacher
17 at P.S. 95. The serials were short episodes in the
18 continuing adventures of the likes of Tom Mix, Hopalong
19 Cassidy, The Lone Ranger, Gene Autry or Roy Rogers. Each
20 installment invariably ended with the hero in a seemingly
21 inescapable deathtrap. We knew he would escape, but
22 couldn't see how he possibly could, so we were compelled
23 to return the next week so as to see the following
4 installment. When the next installment began, however,

1 it backed up a bit to show again how our hero got into
2 his predicament. The catch was that there was always
3 something a little different about the situation then,
4 and it was that difference which provided him his means
5 of escape. Some of the kids who noticed these changes
6 from the prior week's episode would hoot or otherwise
7 vocally let everyone else know that they spotted the
8 trick. On the whole, the Marble Hill was a noisy and
9 unruly place on a Saturday afternoon. It was not the
10 place for an adult to go to enjoy a movie. At one time
11 the children's section was on the Broadway side of the
12 theater. But, as that was also the side where the
13 emergency doors to the street were located, and as some
14 kids thought it funny to bolt out of their seats to push
15 open the doors, flooding the dark theater with sunlight,
16 the children's section was relocated to the opposite
17 side. As soon as we got old enough to be eligible to
18 sit outside of the children's section, we made a beeline
19 for ~~the~~ balcony, as that previously off limits area was
20 where the "big guys" sat. It was interesting that we
21 tried to convince the ticket seller outside that we were
22 still to be regarded as children, and then the matron or
23 usher inside that we were no longer children.

1 In the winter, many of us kids earned a few dollars
2 by shovelling snow. We would go from house to house,
3 usually the private homes up the hill on Cannon Place and
4 Orloff Avenue, offering to clear their steps and sidewalk
5 for 25¢. For the record 25.8 inch snowfall on December
6 26th and 27th, of 1947, we raised our price to 50¢. That
7 storm crippled not only our neighborhood, but the entire
8 city. Supply trucks could not get through to the stores
9 for several days, resulting in shortages of milk, bread,
10 meat and other perishables. We didn't get newspapers
11 for days. It wasn't that snowfall, but another in
12 March, that killed our superintendent, Mr. Atardo. A
13 very conscientious and hard working man, he always
14 shoveled the wide sidewalks around both 226 and 238 West
15 238th, of which he was also the super, as soon as it
16 snowed. The sad thing was that the day after he dropped
17 dead shovelling the snow on that March day, the sun came
18 out bright and strong and melted whatever snow was not
19 shovelled. When we first moved into 226, Mr. Atardo
20 collected the garbage every day via the dumbwaiter
21 located in our kitchen. From the basement, he would
22 pull ropes to get the cage up to the top floor, then
23 lower it, floor by floor, to each apartment and ring a
4 bell inside the shaft to tell you to deposit your trash.

HOW IT WAS IN THE 1950s

1
2
3
4 The third major change made in Van Cortlandt Park,
5 which I experienced, was the construction of the Major
6 Deegan Expressway. That project not only cut through
7 the park, but it also slashed a long, wide swath through
8 the entire neighborhood. It generally followed the path
9 of the railroad tracks, but was much wider. It
10 eliminated - among other things - the tracks, the lot
11 next to 140, Dolan's (who bought Mintz's), Brennan's, the
12 "Wall," the Visitation Church and School, the row of
13 brick private houses on Putnam Avenue East and the
14 street, itself. In the park, The Major Deegan and the
15 road built to connect it to the Henry Hudson Parkway,
16 eliminated the field north of Van Cortlandt Park South,
17 more of the golf course and picnic areas, the horse
18 stables and track (these were relocated to a spot in the
19 street that used to be Mosholu Parkway, east of Broadway.
20 In addition, all new bridges had to be built, making the
21 third one on 238th Street in my time there.

22
23 The following is a description of the retail stores
24 in Kingsbridge as they were in the 1950s. Many were

1 there since the 20s, 30s and 40s, and many were still
2 there in the 60s and 70s. A few are still there today
3 with different owners and, in some cases, different
4 names.

5
6 Starting from the bridge, on the south side of 238th,
7 to the west of Putnam Avenue West and the recessed lot,
8 was a row of stores that extended all the way down to
9 Broadway. They had nothing above them until apartment
10 house #226, where I lived, at which point they were built
11 into the street level of the apartment houses.

12
13 The first store, #204, was the Ritz Tailor shop. It
14 was owned by a kindly old man, named Oscar. I never
15 knew his last name or nationality. In retrospect, I
16 think he was Armenian or Turkish. Not to know a
17 person's nationality is in keeping with how we lived
18 then. We didn't really care what a person was. It
19 wasn't important to us. Even though we had a wide
20 variety of nationalities - Irish, Italian, German, Greek,
21 Austrian, Polish, Russian, French, Chinese, etc. - we
22 didn't refer to people as "the Arab" or "the Jew" or
23 whatever. People had names. We knew everybody's name.
4 And we called them by their name. If they were regarded

1 as good or bad, respected or not, it was because of what
2 they did, not because of their nationality. Denigrating
3 epithets were rarely heard.
4

5 One of Oscar's best customers was Molly Quill. Every
6 week she would tote several of her husband's suits up to
7 the Ritz to be cleaned and pressed and to pick up the
8 load she had brought the week before. Her husband was
9 Mike Quill, the pugnacious president of the TWU
10 (Transport Workers Union) Local 100. He ultimately
11 landed in jail in a head to head confrontation with Mayor
12 John Lindsey about a transit strike around 1964. While
13 we didn't see much of Mike, Molly - a warm, gregarious
14 woman - would stop and chat with all the women she would
15 meet along the way from her apartment in 275 West 238th
16 (across Broadway) to the Ritz and other stores along the
17 street.
18

19 The next store down, in the 1950s, #206, was occupied
20 by Eugene Monahan's upholstery and slipcover shop. He
21 moved in when John Pickerill left. John was quite a
22 character. His store, ostensibly, was a radio and TV
23 repair shop. In reality, it was his home. He lived
4 in the rear with his many dogs. Its difficult to say

1 just how many dogs he had, as the number varied, but five
2 to seven is a good approximation. They made quite a
3 menagerie trailing after him when he took them out for
4 a walk. Before John, was Julie. She had a beauty
5 parlor which was also a gathering place for the
6 neighborhood ladies - including my mother - to just sit
7 and chat. My sister worked there as Julie's assistant
8 for a while. It was there that she met Mrs. Flinter,
9 who introduced her to her son, Joe - a person of the
10 highest character and integrity - who had just returned
11 home from a Marine Corps tour of duty of WW-II battles
12 in the South Pacific islands. Marie dropped her other
13 boyfriends and married Joe. After over 40 years of
14 marriage, neither has expressed any regrets. Mrs.
15 Flinter, Sr., at this writing, is 97 years old and just
16 as mentally alert as she ever was.

17
18 Next came the Victory Market. It was there as long
19 as I can remember - it is in the background of a 1934
20 photograph. Originally, it was two separate stores.
21 Zibby had a grocery store in #208 and Willie had a
22 butcher shop in #210. They merged the two and created
23 the Victory Market.

1 Frank's barber shop, which he called the Review
2 Barber Shop, was in #212. He had moved down from across
3 238th Street from 140 in the 1930s, as previously stated.
4 After Frank's was Chin's laundry, in #214. The Chins
5 also lived in the back of their store. Next to them was
6 Mike Connelly's grocery store in #216. Then came #218,
7 in which Mike and Marion Treretolla had a candy store-
8 luncheonette. This was a gathering place for most of
9 the neighborhood's young men after church on Sundays.
10 They would argue sports and agree upon the time and place
1 of the weekly softball game in Van Cortlandt Park. Those
2 playing would usually have to chip in 10¢ each so that
13 a new ball could be purchased from the sporting goods
14 store at 242nd Street. In retrospect, Mike must have
15 been frustrated to see 25 to 30 guys gathered in front
16 of his store, discouraging adults and young ladies from
17 approaching to purchase the Sunday's newspapers. Mike's
18 pile of papers stood largely unsold while people passed
19 by to purchase them from O'Leary's, Murray's or Dolan's.
20 Before Mike and Marion came to the neighborhood from
21 their prior location at 242nd Street, next to the Green
22 Leaf tavern, a fellow named O'Neil had the candy store.
23 He didn't stay long, however. Before him, Mr. Margules
4 had his drug store there, until he moved down to #228.

1 Mr. Duman's bakery was in #220. As the years pass,
2 I appreciate more and more how good a baker he was. His
3 breads and cakes were not only very good, they were
4 inexpensive. Small rolls were 2¢; large rolls, 3¢;
5 small loaf of bread, 10¢, large, 15¢ and layer cakes 35¢
6 to 50¢. His rye bread and onion rolls were the best
7 I've ever had. He had two display cases - the items in
8 the front case were baked that day; those in the rear
9 case were left over from the prior day and were called
10 "day-old" items, and were sold at a reduced price. He
11 also had small tables at the rear of the store where one
12 could sit and have a cup of coffee with a roll or
13 cookies. Looking back, I don't know when Mr. Duman
14 slept. He seemed to always be in the store - either
15 baking in the early morning or late at night or waiting
16 on customers during the day. After Mr. Duman retired,
17 another bake shop took over the store, but it wasn't the
18 same. That bakery didn't last long and the business
19 became a baker of cheesecakes for restaurants. It was
20 called the S.S.Cheesecake.

21
22 In the next place, #222, was a hardware and household
23 goods store. It was there since the 1920s and had just
4 about anything one would want. It was amazing how the

1 elderly owner could go right to whatever was wanted, amid
2 the mass of items crowding the shelves and hanging from
3 the ceiling. That was the store into which Peter
4 Brennan moved his bar when he was displaced by the
5 construction of the Major Deegan Expressway.

6
7 Next to Brennan's was #224, in which Mr. Cohen had
8 his dairy store. He, too, was there since the 1920s.
9 In the early days, he sold many items from bulk. He cut
10 as much butter as was wanted from a large tub of it, used
11 a taut wire to slice a hunk of cheese from a large slab,
12 pick as many eggs as desired from a large crate of them,
13 and so forth. Mr. Cohen was really a nice man. A
14 gentleman. A small, slightly hunched over elderly man;
15 soft spoken and always pleasant. We were all shocked
16 when he was murdered. Some terrible person ordered him
17 to the back of his store and shot him dead, before
18 robbing what little money he had in the place. With an
19 average of over six murders a day in New York City now,
20 we've gotten a little used to violence. But in
21 Kingsbridge, in the early 1950s, violence of any type -
22 let alone cold blooded murder - was unknown and
23 unexpected. The Cohens were also our neighbors in 226.
4 We lived on the fourth floor in apartment 19 and they

1 were in apartment 11 on the third floor. Milton, his
2 son, even though Jewish, was a student at Catholic
3 Manhattan College. He later joined the Police
4 Department. His father's killer was never caught.
5

6 On the other side of the entrance to apartment house
7 #226, was Margules' drug store, in #228. He moved down
8 from #220, where he was since 1925, so as to be closer
9 to his apartment on the ground floor of 226. His store
10 at 228 had a rear door that opened into the lobby of 226,
11 facilitating indoor movement between his workplace and
12 home for him and his wife. He, too, put in a long
13 workday - 8 A.M. to 11 P.M., seven days a week. The
14 store had two telephone booths. These were very
15 important to the people of the neighborhood in the 30s,
16 40s and 50s. Few people had telephones in their homes
17 then and the booths in the drug stores, candy stores and
18 bars were the only place they had access to them. In
19 the 1940s, Richie Hand was my only friend with a
20 telephone. I made my first telephone call from the
21 booth in Margules' - not to communicate anything to
22 Richie (he lived just across the street) but merely to
23 use a telephone. Gradually, we all got phones. Our
4 number, KI 3-0005, was an indication of how few were in

1 use at the time. For many years, we used them only
2 for emergencies. A ring frequently meant trouble.
3 Eventually, we began to use them to set up appointments
4 and dates; then for social chatter.

5
6 The store next to Margules, #230, was small. It had
7 a series of tenants - storage for Margules' stock; a
8 bakery that did not bake, but merely resold; a frozen
9 food store that was really before its time, as there were
10 few products available and fewer people willing to try
11 them; a liquor store that moved from its prior location
12 on Broadway, where the Stella D'Oro Restaurante is now.

13
14 Next were Dominick's barber shop and Ralph's shoe
15 repair shop. Both were there for a long time. In
16 #234, was a butcher shop. It was owned by Mr. Schlick
17 for many years, then taken over by Morton Cohen (no
18 relation to the other Mr. Cohen) in the 1950s, when Mr.
19 Schlick and his signature boater straw hat retired.

20
21 On one side of the entry court to apartment house
22 #238, was Como's vegetable store, in #236, and Danker's
23 deli in #240. Charlie Danker had sold his store up the
4 hill when he entered the army, and bought this store upon

1 his return. I don't remember the people who had the
2 deli before Danker, but I do know who had it before them.
3 Even before we moved to the area, my father used to buy
4 his lunch sandwich and container of coffee from that
5 store, as far back as 1921. It was owned by the diNapoli
6 family, who had it for years - perhaps as far back as
7 when the building was built, around 1910. They also
8 lived in 226, on the second floor. In those pre-
9 supermarket, pre-shopping cart days, of Danker' time, one
10 went to the store with a written or mental list of items
11 needed and told them to a person standing behind a
12 counter. That person - usually clad in a white apron
13 and with a pencil behind one ear - would fetch the items
14 - using a long pole with a closable gripper at the end
15 to reach high things - from the floor to ceiling packed
16 shelves that rimmed the walls of the store. He or she
17 would pile them up on the counter, saying, "What else?"
18 until the customer said, "That's it." Then, a brown bag
19 would be laid on the counter, the pencil would come off
20 the ear, and the price of each item would be written on
21 the bag, then added. All this while, other people
22 entering the store would get on line behind the person
23 being waited on. Those people either chatted with one
4 another or observed what those ahead of them on line were

1 buying. When we were small, our parents sent us
2 shopping with a written list and orders to "count your
3 change." I remember how mad the shopkeepers would get
4 when a kid would read off the first item, say, a pound
5 of coffee, which would require the clerk to come out from
6 behind the counter and trudge to the opposite wall to
7 fetch it from where it was kept. When he returned to the
8 counter and asked, "What else?," the kid would ask for,
9 say, two pounds of sugar, which, of course, was stocked
10 on the shelf right next to the coffee.

11
12 Next to Danker's was the corner candy store. It
13 carries a Broadway number, 5818, rather than a 238th
14 Street one. It was the United Cigar Agency, and was
15 owned and operated by the Engel family when we moved to
16 the area. In the early 1940s, Murray and his wife,
17 Nettie, took over. They couldn't have been nicer to
18 their customers. They rarely complained when kids read
19 several of the comic books on display without buying
20 anything. Even though they were in business trying to
21 sell those books, they had compassion for those for whom
22 the dime to buy one was quite a bit of money. Murray
23 gave wedding gifts to my sister when she married Joe
24 Flinter, Loretta Quinn when she married Jack McNierney,

1 Katherine Tully when she married John Sweeney, Helen
2 Wentworth when she married Bill McLaughlin, Nan Cassidy
3 when she married Ray Murray and several other
4 neighborhood girls. I've never seen such a sudden and
5 drastic change in a person. Murray went from being an
6 outgoing person with a smile, joke and good word for
7 everyone to a sullen, silent, sad man from the day Nettie
8 died. He kept the store for a few years after her
9 death, then sold it and just went away.

10
11 Across the street from Murray's, on the northeast
12 corner of 238th and Broadway, #5820, was Jim McNichols'
13 bar. It was a real old fashioned saloon, with a tile
14 floor, textured tin ceiling and long dark wood bar. To
15 the best of my knowledge, Jim McNichols was the only bar
16 owner in a neighborhood of many bars that would refuse
17 to continue to serve a person who had too many.

18
19 Up 238th, from the bar was Ying's hand laundry in
20 store #239, and next to him was a candy store in # 237.
21 It was owned by the O'Learys and then acquired by Julia
22 McCambridge. Next to it, in #235, was Mr. Litman's Gem
23 Tailor Shop. The Litmans, too, lived in 226. He, his
4 wife and several daughters were good neighbors. I

1 recall Mr. Litman walking down to the Jewish temple on
2 Corlear, near 231st Street, religiously, all year around,
3 regardless of the weather. Bill (Jake) Flinter worked
4 for him in the store, and remembers how the old man would
5 ask him to stay after they closed the shop at night for
6 a few games of cards. After Manhattan College, Bill got
7 an M.B.A. from Harvard and became a V.P. of First Boston.
8

9 We all worked in one or another of the stores then.
10 Dino Matsoukis and I worked for Margules, for 25¢ an
11 hour; Popalo (Al Hannast), then Kenny Hindley worked for
12 Louie the shoemaker; Joe Greeley delivered orders for
13 Cohen's dairy; Martin (Frankie) Feeney worked for Morton
14 Cohen, the butcher. Ronnie Anderer and Arnie Olivia
15 worked as soda jerks for Mintz. Marty Brooks caddied at
16 the golf course and several worked in the boathouse,
17 either behind the counter or with the row boats - Randy
18 Farmer, Don Ryan, and others. Many whose parents owned
19 a store, helped out there, including Milty Cohen, Jimmy
20 Brennan, and the Dolan, O'Leary and Treretolla children.
21

22 Work was expected of us, and we accepted it as a
23 thing that we naturally did as soon as we were able. My
4 father made about \$30-\$35 per week as I was growing up.

1 I didn't have to hand in any of the money I earned from
2 my little jobs, but I was expected to work and to save
3 my pay in a bank account. The jobs I had, in the
4 neighborhood included shovelling snow, delivering
5 Christmas trees, Margules, delivering The Bronx Home
6 News, Van Cortlandt Park boathouse and caddying, Gabe's
7 auto body shop in the basement of Gallagher's garage,
8 pumping gas at Jerry's Texaco station, freelance auto
9 repairs, freelance income tax form preparation, freelance
10 ice cream wagon vending, setting pins at the Riverdale
11 Bowling Center on 233rd Street, stock handing at the A&P
12 at 231st Street, counter work at the White Tower at 242nd
13 Street, production work at Gustave Rubner's at 5925
14 Broadway, teaching at Manhattan College, and consulting
15 work at Art Steel. The list of jobs outside of the
16 neighborhood is just as long - Macy's, Gimbel's,
17 Nedick's, a Fanny Farmer Candies store in the Port
18 Authority Building, ushering at the Ascot movie, Anaconda
19 Wire & Cable Co., United Parcel, Kings Electronics, to
20 name a few. As can be imagined from the multitude of
21 jobs, some didn't last very long. Several lasted only
22 a few days. Caddying and stock work at the A&P were too
23 hard for me. I only lasted one night (11 P.M. to 7 the
4 next morning) at the White Tower, where I got paid 67¢

1 an hour for seven hours, even though I really worked
2 eight. But I wasn't the only one who had one day jobs.
3 My mother worked on the cookie assembly line at Stella
4 D'Oro's factory for one day. Joe Greeley, Frank Andre,
5 Charlie Kingley and Jimmy Brennan worked at the slipper
6 factory on 237th Street for one day. They paid them 65¢
7 an hour for the first day, while they were "training" to
8 glue soles on slippers, then were shown large racks of
9 slippers they would be working on the next day at the
10 piece work rate of one dollar per rack. The boys
11 figured they could do only two or three racks a day, so
12 they said goodbye. The record for the shortest job,
13 however, must go to Rudy Hattendorf, who lived in 238
14 West 238th. He applied for a job at Stella D'Oro's
15 cookie factory, was hired, taken into the kitchen, shown
16 a high stack of large dirty baking pans and told to scrub
17 them clean. Rudy said, "Are you crazy?" and walked out.
18 He must have been in the building for all of fifteen
19 minutes.

20
21 Returning to the description of the neighborhood, in
22 the 1950s, a person going south on Broadway, from 238th
23 Street, would pass the following stores. When Engel
4 owned the corner candy store, the next place was a very

1 small store. I don't recall it ever being occupied, but
2 have heard it said that it was the first location of
3 Margules' drug store, before he moved around to 238th in
4 the mid 1920s. At any event, Murray incorporated it
5 into his store, so as to enlarge his place and provide
6 a second entrance. Next to it, from the 1920s to the
7 1950s, was a restaurant owned by a Greek man, whose name
8 I forget. Then, in the last store, was the liquor store
9 that later moved around to #230 on 238th. After a
10 driveway that sloped down to a recessed lot in the rear
11 of the apartment houses on 238th, was another lot which
12 extended to the corner of 237th Street. It had been
13 filled in so as to bring it up to street level and was
14 successively used for a fenced in parking lot, a private
15 storage area and Gary Allen's used car lot and Willy's
16 Motors dealership. The entire stretch just described,
17 from the end of Murray's to 237th Street, was acquired
18 by Stella D'Oro and now holds their restaurant, pizzeria
19 and customers parking spaces.

20
21 On the south side of 237th, was Gerbig's gas station,
22 auto repair shops and a few rows of tin parking garages.
23 An uncle of my friends, Jerry and Don Ryan, Gerbig was
4 there since the 1920s. He was bought out by Craven in

1 the 50s, after which LaMura began to park some of his big
2 red trucks and construction equipment on part of the
3 property and on 237th Street. Past that was Joyland
4 Amusement Park kiddie rides, then Kelton's indoor ice
5 skating rink and 16 tennis courts, then a Finast
6 Supermarket, whose parking lot extended to 234th Street.
7 That entire strip had previously been another of the
8 areas ubiquitous and characteristic recessed vacant lots
9 which was filled in when the businesses were constructed.
10 The same was true for the lot between 234th and 233rd.
11 On it, in the 1950s, a strip mall was built. It
12 included a Waldbaum's food store, several small shops
13 and a bank.

14
15 Across 233rd Street was Williams Funeral Home. It
16 was built on the site where the laundry, bowling alleys
17 and pool room had been before they burned down in the
18 late 1940s. Past there, in the strip extending to 231st
19 Street, were the Kingsbridge Paint & Glass Co. ("The Blue
20 Store"), owned by Charlie Kingley's family; several other
21 small stores whose identities escape me; entrance ramps to
22 the set-back White House Auto Garage; H. Von Bargaen's
23 wholesale beer and soda distributorship, which was later
4 bought by Gallagher; Fay's bar and restaurant, which also

1 had great Chinese take-out food; a vegetable store; a
2 dentist's office (Dr. Charles Yaeger was there in the
3 1950s); a candy store; O'Neill's liquor store; and, on
4 the corner, the "pork store," previously described.

5
6 Across 231st Street, going south from the ice cream
7 parlor on the corner, on the west side of Broadway, was
8 a bar and grill, the A & P and the post office, then the
9 land was vacant to 230th Street. In later years, an OTB
10 outlet moved into where the ice cream parlor was; a bank
11 moved into where the post office was when it moved to a
12 newly constructed building across Broadway, just north
13 of the Cities Service gas station on the corner of 230th
14 Street; and a new row of stores was built, just past
15 Verveelen Street, on what was previously the empty lot.
16 Robert's Bookstore, previously up near 233rd, where
17 Williams Funeral Home went into, took one of those new
18 stores; James Tynan & Sons hardware store, previously on
19 Albany Crescent, moved into another one; and a Thom
20 McCann shoe store took a third.

21
22 Across Broadway, from the new post office, north to
23 the corner of 231st Street, were Dale Home Furnishings
4 (linoleum, rugs, mattresses), Donaghy's Steak House, the

1 Climax Men's Shop, Dale Cameras, Jove Jewelry, Buster
2 Brown Shoes, and, on the corner, a Horn & Hardart
3 packaged baked goods store that used to be an Automat in
4 the early days. Going up 231st, west toward Kingsbridge
5 Avenue, were all types of stores on both sides. Ehrings
6 restaurant and bar was on the south side at the corner
7 of Godwin Place, and right across 231st from it were the
8 steps leading up to Naples Terrace.

9
10 Going north from 231st Street, on the west side of
11 Broadway, was a branch of The Chemical Bank on the
12 corner, then Lademan's eyeglass store, Marble Hill
13 Variety Store (dry goods and household items), Joe's fish
14 market, Riverdale Florists, another flight of steps going
15 up to Naples Terrace, and the Progress radio (and later,
16 TV) store. When television was new, none of us had
17 sets. Progress put one in their window and turned it on.
18 We would walk down there and spend hours in the crowd
19 staring in the window to watch Milton Berle; Kukla, Fran
20 & Ollie; the weatherman, Mr. Weatherbee; wrestlers,
21 Antonino Rocco and Gorgeous George, and others. After
22 Progress, was LaBelle Tailors, DeSpirit Ice Cream Parlor,
23 the Marble Hill Yarn Shop, a barber shop that had a small
4 wooden horse as the window chair for children, the

1 marquee and entrance to the Marble Hill movie theater,
2 and a small newspaper and candy store on the corner of
3 232nd Street. On the block between 232nd and 233rd was
4 James McGuire's Bar, and three businesses which had been
5 just across Broadway before the fire. They were the
6 Riverdale Laundry; the Reid Quality Cleaners, on the
7 corner; and the Riverdale Bowling Center, which was in
8 the basement and had its entrance up the hill on 233rd
9 Street. As a teenager, I set pins in the bowling alley
10 so as to be able to bowl there.

1
2 I don't remember everything about what was on the
3 block between 233rd and 234th, but Stella D'Oro baked and
4 packaged their bread and cookies there for a few years
5 before they moved to 237th Street. I do remember that
6 the The Wheel was there. They repaired, rented and sold
7 bicycles and was where I bought all of my model airplane
8 kits and hobby supplies. They had moved down from their
9 prior location a little north of 240th Street where they
10 rented bikes to people who wanted to ride through Van
11 Cortlandt Park. Past The Wheel was the Broadway Chair
12 Rental Company. It was on this block that Art Steel,
13 which already had a factory across Broadway, up 233rd,
14 past Williams, opened their third location in the

1 neighborhood - the second was just across the street, on
2 Broadway, south of Williams, where the Blue Store, et al,
3 had been.
4

5 On the northwest corner of 234th and Broadway was an
6 ESSO gas station, the Broadway Nursery (plants and
7 bushes), followed by a row of nineteenth century wood
8 frame private houses, most of which were set below street
9 level, as previously described. On the southern corner
10 of 236th Street was the building with Wilken's bar below
11 and apartments on the floor above. There was no 237th
12 Street on that side of Broadway. The entire block,
13 which was a triangle formed by the Broadway and
14 Kingsbridge Avenue corners of 236th Street and the point
15 which they ran to on 238th Street, was, again a recessed
16 weed filled vacant lot.
17

18 Across 238th, the recessed lot there, on the corner
19 of Broadway, was filled in gradually over the years by
20 the **super** of 275 dumping ashes there and by other fill.
21 Eventually, Joe Ettl put a fence around it and made it
22 a short and long-term parking lot (#5825 Broadway). North
23 of there, Fieldstone's Desoto car dealership (#5845) went
4 out of business and was replaced by a Sloan's furniture

1 store. Gallagher's (#5865) remained, and north of it,
2 across 240th Street, a two-level bowling alley was built.
3 In #5925, Gustave Rubner, Inc. opened a factory to dye
4 fluff, grit, flakes and other materials that are glued
5 to greeting cards so as to give them a texture. I
6 worked there for a while, until I burned my eyebrows and
7 eyelashes off. My job was to load undyed material into
8 a vat of boiling dye, tumble it until it was dyed, then
9 unload it. The vat was heated by gas burners. One day,
10 I let a little too much gas out before putting a match
11 to it to start the heater. The result was the same type
12 of little explosion that I had caused as a youngster when
13 my sister was teaching me how to light our oven at home.
14 I lost my eyebrows and eyelashes in that experience, too.

15
16 Just north of Gustave Rubner's was the indoor roller
17 skating rink, at #5935. Both my parents, as newlyweds,
18 and I, as a youngster, skated there. It closed in the
19 1940s and just sat there, empty, until a automobile
20 dealership, Berrigan Pontiac went in. They filled in
21 the swimming pool in the rear so as to create a place to
22 park their cars. They also pulled up the beautiful
23 hardwood floor of the rink in the rear where they put
4 their repair shop, but they left it in the front where

1 they had their showroom. The dealership was not
2 successful, and they, too, vacated the premises in the
3 mid 50s. In 1957, Manhattan College asked Professor
4 Alfred DelVecchio, then the only one teaching the civil
5 engineering and electrical engineering majors a course
6 in thermodynamics, to start a mechanical engineering
7 department. He hired me as one of the two first
8 instructors in that department. He later left Manhattan
9 College and went on to be the longest serving mayor in
10 the history of the city of White Plains, New York. In
11 the beginning, we had no equipment at all and taught our
12 classes in tin quonset huts obtained as war surplus
13 material. I recall my father supplying me with
14 automobile transmissions, cluster gears, differentials,
15 universal joints, fluted drills, reams and the like to
16 use as class demos. Then, the college acquired the
17 #5935 Broadway property, renamed it "The Paulean
18 Laboratory," and installed a host of steam engines,
19 internal combustion engines and test and measurement
20 equipment. It became the location of the new mechanical
21 engineering department. The feelings I had, standing
22 in the middle of that building teaching serious students
23 the theory and operation of the Otto cycle engine, while
4 looking at the rafters and balconies that remained from

1 the days when carefree people skated around and around
2 amid gay music, were a combination of sadness for a happy
3 time that was gone and a satisfaction to be part of a
4 constructive future.

5
6 To finish the tour of Kingsbridge in the 1950s, Hans
7 still had his service station and repair shop at #5959,
8 north of Paulean Labs and south of 242nd Street. Around
9 the corner, going up 242nd Street, were the Green Leaf
10 Bar and a candy store that was owned by Mike & Marion
11 Treretolla, before they moved to 238th. On the stretch
12 between 242nd and where Manhattan College Parkway enters
13 Broadway were the French Bake Shop, a sporting goods
14 store, the VC Food Shop & Luncheonette, the Pinewood Bar,
15 Feldcrest Chemists drug store, the Terminal Bar, George's
16 candy store, a luncheonette and hot dog stand, the Van
17 Cortlandt Wine & Liquor store, and a taxi stand. North,
18 across Manhattan College Parkway, was the White Tower
19 hamburger place that I worked in for one long night. It
20 took **the** place of the snack stand that was there in the
21 1920s, when my father came to Kingbridge.

22
23 By the end of the 1950s, almost all of the empty
lots in the neighborhood were filled in and built upon.

1 Broadway was widened from 239th Street up to 242nd in
2 anticipation of an increase in traffic going to and
3 coming from the entrances and exits of the Major Deegan
4 on Van Cortlandt Park South. That same change included
5 cutting off the southwest tip of the playground at the
6 corner of Broadway and VCPS. Across the street from
7 there, on VCPS, a new apartment house was built on the
8 lot between Broadway and Review Place. That reed filled
9 recessed lot had been filled in a few years before and
10 was used as a site for visiting carnivals and for
11 Gallagher's used car lot. Several neighborhood families
2 - the Carrons, Walshes, Murrays, and others - moved into
13 the new house. Going east, a new Visitation Church
14 (plus a school and rectory) was build on the block
15 between Review Place and Putnam Avenue West. The old
16 church and school were razed to make room for the Major
17 Deegan, but the old rectory building on Bailey Avenue
18 survived and was converted to a convent house. Still
19 farther east, houses were built along Bailey Avenue to
20 and all the way up "Snake Hill." And so it went, until
21 there was virtually no empty space left. As we entered
22 the 1960s, all of the major structural changes to
23 Kingbridge and Van Cortlandt Park were over. The future
4 changes would be sociological, not physical.

HOW IT WAS IN THE 1960s

1
2
3 By the 1960s, the people of my age group had full-
4 time jobs and no longer had the time to roam the
5 neighborhood or explore Van Cortlandt Park. Occasionally,
6 my friend Jerry Ryan (who, after graduating from Fordham
7 Law School, became an Assistant District Attorney in
8 Manhattan, and then a New York State Assistant Attorney
9 General) and I would walk the trail through the park's
10 Vault Hill and other hills. That was the path over which
11 the cross-country races were run, and which Jerry had run
12 many times as a younger person when on the Manhattan
13 College track team.

14
15 Our days were spent out of the neighborhood at our
16 jobs. The management and engineering consulting company
17 I started had its offices at 200 Park Avenue, in the Pan
18 Am Building. I left Manhattan College and accepted a
19 position teaching at Columbia University's Graduate
20 School of Engineering, whose classes were held in the
21 evenings, allowing me to spend the days at my consulting
22 practice. One thing that stands out when comparing that
23 time to now, was the change in the subways. The fare

1 was 5¢ from the time it began (around 1905) to 1948, when
2 it was raised to 10¢. It stayed at 10¢ only until 1953,
3 when it went to 15¢, and then to 20¢, after the strike
4 during which Mike Quill went to jail. The steep, rapid
5 rise in the fare since then is well known. When I was
6 using the train every day, the station platform at 238th
7 Street was so crowded, those near the edge had to lean
8 back into those behind them so as to be sure to not be
9 pushed onto the tracks. Further, there were many times
10 when the train, which had only come from one prior
11 station (242nd) was so full that no seats were empty for
12 those of us getting on at 238th. Some people, knowing
13 this, entered the 238th Street station on the uptown,
14 rather than the downtown side, got on a northbound train
15 to the 242nd Street terminal, sat there reading their
16 paper until the train reversed its direction and began
17 its southward trip, and at the 238th Street stop, greeted
18 all of their friends rushing in to find that there was
19 standing room only. Virtually everyone riding the train
20 read a newspaper in those days. Those walking down
21 238th to the train could buy a paper at Dolan's (who
22 moved up to #135 when his store at the corner of Putnam
23 Avenue was displaced by the Major Deegan), Mike's,
4 McCambridge's, Murray's or the little newsstand that was

1 tucked under the staircase going up to the train
2 platform. And they had a large number of different
3 newspapers to choose. There was the New York Times,
4 News, Mirror, Journal, American, (later, the Journal-
5 American), Herald, Tribune, (later, the Herald-Tribune),
6 World, Telegram, Sun, (later, the World-Telegram-Sun),
7 Post, Wall Street Journal, Yonkers Herald-Statesman,
8 Riverdale Press and The Bronx Home News. Before being
9 converted to concrete, the platforms were made of wood.
10 Being outdoors, the wood eventually disintegrated under
11 the onslaught of the weather, creating somewhat of a
12 hazard from splintered, broken or rotted planks. The
13 stations waiting rooms provided welcome shelter from the
14 wind and gave heat from old-fashioned, coal-fed pot-
15 bellied stoves. There were two waiting rooms - one for
16 men and one for women - each with a relatively clean
17 toilet behind it.

18
19 In 1967, the Gallaghers fired my father. He had
20 worked there for 46 years. I can't remember him missing
21 a day's work. I do remember him going to work sick and
22 hurt, with a patch on his eye from a sliver of steel,
23 with cuts still bleeding from the day before, with a back
4 thrown out from heavy lifting, with a fever, limping,

1 etc. But when he got too old and too slow and had a
2 cancer growing in his throat, they told him he was
3 through. No pension, no two weeks notice, no retirement
4 party, no gold watch. In recalling this, I am reminded
5 of how hard all of our parents worked in those days.
6 After supper, my father used to fall asleep in his chair
7 in front of the TV set. My mother used to walk all the
8 way from 231st Street carrying large heavy bags of
9 groceries - and then up four flights of stairs with them
10 - wash clothes in a tub on a washboard, iron, sew, cook,
11 clean the house and care for her husband and children.
12 And that routine was the same for the other people of
13 the neighborhood, too. If there was little social night
14 life, it was as much because the people were plain tired,
15 as it was that they didn't have the money for it.
16

17 Almost every evening, during the 1960s, several of
18 us got together. Joe Greeley, Dino Matsoukis, Bill
19 Scalley, Jerry Ryan, Vinnie Costello and I stood on the
20 street in good weather and sat in a car in bad weather.
21 We smoked our cigars and discussed politics, current
22 events and, generally, offered our solutions to the
23 problems of the world. I mention this only to observe
24 that there was a time when we knew virtually everyone who

1 walked past us. In fact, many would stop and join in
2 our conversations, for a while, before moving on. It
3 wasn't only the people who lived on 238th, Review Place
4 and Bailey Avenue that we knew. We knew almost everyone
5 from "up the hill" (Fort Independence Street, Orloff
6 Avenue and Cannon Place) and the "back roads" (Corlear,
7 Tibbett and Irwin avenues). If someone passed who we
8 did not know, we would discuss who they might be, after
9 they passed. Clearly, the neighborhood was extremely
10 stable for decades. Both the residents and store owners
11 were there for the long haul. People moved in and
12 stayed. They raised their families and grew old there.
13 They had no intention to move. Whereas the normal
14 turnover rate for an average neighborhood might be
15 somewhere between 15% and 20% - due to retirements,
16 deaths, transfers and relocations - ours was much, much
17 lower than that. When told that someone had moved out,
18 our first question was, "Why?" When someone moved in,
19 it was news. And it was rare to have someone move in,
20 as there was almost no new construction and few people
21 were moving out to create a vacancy. Then, in the
22 1960s, it slowly began to change. Members of my
23 generation were getting married and moving out - mostly
1 either to Rockland County or Long Island. For the most

1 part, the new couples did not settle in Kingsbridge, as
2 their parents had. This was because there were no
3 vacancies there, they wanted a private house of their own
4 in the suburbs, or both reasons. In any case, once a
5 few went, many of their friends followed, and a mini-
6 migration was soon underway. Those who moved to
7 Rockland County included Joe and Muriel (Barrett)
8 Greeley, Babe (Daniel) and Catherine (Barrett) Greeley,
9 Hank and Rosemary (Bracken) Helferty, Frank and Catherine
10 (Bracken) Andre, Bobby and Joan (Eggert) Hartford,
11 Freddie and Gloria (Conners) Marlowe, Jimmy and Kitty
2 (Gleason) Brennan, George and Mary (Brennan) Mitton.
13 Also, Richie Hand, Randy Farmer, Jerry Griffin, Eddie
14 Patterson and Jackie Verrier - whose wives' names I do
15 not know, moved there. And, among the girls, whose
16 married names I do not know, Isabel Eggert, Connie Eggert
17 and Joyce Palumbo moved to Rockland County. Those who
18 moved to Long Island included Billy and Anne (Carron)
19 Flintner, Jackie and Edna (Scalley) O'Brien, Joe and Anne
20 (Dowd) Hennessey. Also, Joe Shea, Nicky Treretolla,
21 Jerry Marino - whose wives' names I do not know, moved
22 there. And, among the girls whose married names I do not
23 know, Dierdre O'Brien and Mary Lowe moved to Long Island.
4 Several of the other girls I grew up with married fellows

1 from outside of the neighborhood, whose names I do not
2 know, and moved away to places unknown - including Elinor
3 Costigan, Joan McCrorcken, Barbara King, Diana Marlowe,
4 Alica Tracy, Ann Murray, Joan Daly, Laura Phillips, and
5 others. They all moved out. Some took their parents
6 with them. Some parents remained and later died. In
7 both cases, vacant apartments became more prevalent. The
8 rate of new people coming in increased. And that - the
9 increased rate of change - I think, is the key reason for
10 the fundamental change in the nature of the neighborhood
11 that occurred. Prior to that, when a rare newcomer
12 arrived, they were obliged and impelled to conform to the
13 mores and norms of behavior of the indigenous population.
14 If they left a bag of garbage outside their door in the
15 hall, for example, they would be told, politely and
16 respectfully, that we didn't do that here, that it
17 attracted roaches and was unsightly, and that we all
18 carried our garbage down to the covered metal cans in the
19 basement. Being new, and a lone stranger among people
20 they wanted to be accepted by, and somewhat timid, they
21 would invariably accede, conform, blend in and become
22 part of our world. When the rate of change increased,
23 however, at some point, it reached what might be called,
24 a "critical mass." So many strangers came in so fast

1 that the "old-timers" had no influence on them. Many
2 came with friends and relatives. They did not need or
3 seek our friendship or acceptance. They did what they
4 wanted. As their numbers grew, the number of old-times
5 shrank. Instead of living in a place where I knew
6 everybody, I was in the midst of strangers.

10 HOW IT WAS IN THE 1970s

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11
12 By the 1970s, almost all my friends were gone from
13 Kingsbridge. Only a few stalwart diehards, like Pete
14 Stafford, Gene Smith, Herbie DeGarris, Bernie and Kevin
15 Feeney, and a few others remained. We expected our
16 parents and those of their generation to die out over
17 time. Even though we were sorry to hear about the death
18 of a mother or father of a friend or of an elderly
19 neighbor, it was expected and accepted as the natural
20 order of things. What was not expected and difficult
21 to accept, was the increasing number of deaths of our
22 personal friends - people our own age, or younger. Nicky
23 Treretolla, Larry Feeney and Joe Tracy were in their

1 twenties, Mike Sheridan was in his thirties, and Johnny
2 McIver, Jack McNierney, Popolo, Babe Greeley, Gerard
3 Lowe, Joe Burns, Lefty Trazzo, Arty Knight, Ray Murray
4 and Joyce Palumbo were all young and in the prime of
5 their lives when they died. By the 70s, we realized
6 that the time and place of our youth was a thing of the
7 past.

8
9 We still had the apartment at 226, but also had a
10 house up in Putnam County, and only came down on the days
11 I had to teach my courses at Columbia University.

12
13 We finally left in 1977. It is interesting that
14 the apartment we left was essentially exactly as we had
15 moved into it so many decades before. The landlord had
16 made virtually no improvements in it in all those years.
17 The major changes we, ourselves, made was the
18 installation of extra locks and bars on the door and a
19 steel gate on the fire escape window. We sealed off the
20 door to the dumbwaiter, as it was no longer used and was
21 only a passage for roaches to get from apartment to
22 apartment. We had gotten used to the old refrigerator
23 with no freezer section and the gas stove whose pilot
4 light for the burners kept going out. The oven had no

1 pilot light. One had to turn on the gas and insert a
2 lit match into a hole in the floor pan so as to ignite
3 the burner. It wasn't easy and could be dangerous. The
4 inadequate electrical wiring was really disturbing. Power
5 outages occurred with increasing frequency as people
6 added more and more electrical appliances to wiring
7 installed with 1910 loads in mind. We had to keep a
8 supply of fuses on hand so as to replace any that burned
9 out in the fusebox located in our apartment. When a
10 main fuse (located in the basement) blew and blacked out
11 the entire house, we were often without power for hours
12 until the super could be found to replace it. The
13 landlord said that it would cost too much to rewire the
14 building and that the low rents he was receiving did not
15 justify it. The furnace kept breaking down, too,
16 invariably in the winter, leaving us without heat or hot
17 water for days. There were two wash tubs in the
18 kitchen. They had hinged porcelain metal lids and,
19 being located next to the sink, provided added counter
20 space. Above the tubs was a rope and metal clothes
21 drying rack, which was lowered and raised by means of a
22 rope. A metal box - about one foot cubed - with a door
23 was built in under the kitchen window. It was for the
4 cold storage of potatoes, onions, apples, and the like.

1 A rope on pulleys stretched from the kitchen window to
2 the fire escape was used to dry clothes. I remember how
3 everything came in frozen stiff when hung out in the
4 winter. The bathroom floor was covered with small
5 hexagonal white tiles and the walls had larger square
6 white tiles half way up. The raised large white tub
7 stood on sculpted legs. The rooms were big, the
8 ceilings high and the walls plaster. The combination of
9 the house being built on marshland and the vibrations
10 from the elevated trains outside the windows (the noise
11 of which we became immune to over time) caused rather
12 large cracks in the walls, which reopened as soon as they
13 were patched. All those negatives aside, however, the
14 view from our apartment was stupendous. Looking south,
15 in the early days before new construction obstructed the
16 view, we could see the Empire State Building, the
17 Chrysler Building, the buildings of the Rockefeller
18 Center complex, the New York University's Hall of Fame
19 colonnade around the memorial library, and the lights at
20 the top of the New York side tower of the George
21 Washington Bridge. At certain times of the year, the
22 setting sun created an orange-red sky and a black
23 silhouette of the New York skyline. It was a sight as
4 good as any seen on a picture postcard.

1 During all the years I lived in the area, I never
2 knew of anyone carrying a gun, knife or other weapon; nor
3 of any rapists, child molesters or other perverts; nor
4 muggers, professional criminals or recidivists; nor
5 prostitutes, pimps or drug dealers; nor career welfare
6 clients, unwed mothers or men who abandoned or did not
7 support their families. They may have been there, but
8 if they were, there weren't many of them, because I knew
9 pretty much, what was going on. We weren't perfect,
10 however. We had at least one compulsive gambler, who
11 borrowed money from all of his friend and, of course,
12 ended up losing his friends, his wife and his job, as
13 well as his money. We had two drug addicts, whose young
14 lives ended due to either overdoses or bad stuff. And,
15 unfortunately, we had too many heavy drinkers. Several
16 of my childhood friends were unable to grow up to use
17 alcohol only for social and recreational purposes - they
18 misused it, over used it and abused it, increasingly,
19 until it dominated their lives - and some died sooner
20 than they should have because of it. But the greatest
21 failure of my generation, I believe, was under-
22 achievement. There were some very sharp, very capable,
23 guys and girls there. In my opinion, many of them could
24 have gone much higher in life. They could have achieved

1 much more, had they aimed higher. But their ambitions
2 were modest, too modest. I think it was because we were
3 all children of the depression, and the goal of most of
4 us was just to get a secure job. If more of us had the
5 self-confidence and vision to aim for the top, we would
6 have more success stories to tell today.

7
8 The foregoing description of how Kingsbridge and Van
9 Cortlandt Park changed since the 1920s is probably of
10 little interest to those who did not live there. To
11 those of us who were born and raised there, however, it
12 should rekindle some fond memories of carefree, innocent
13 and happy days in a friendly, clean and safe place. As
14 the time and distance we are from those days and that
15 place increase, we also increase our appreciation of how
16 good it was.

EPILOGUE

[THIS COULD BE A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT THE AREA LOOKS LIKE NOW.]

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