

Years before Patchogue ever heard about Dollar Days, Ocean Avenue was a white shell road from the railroad tracks to the bay The mud was so deep along by Ackerly's Music Store on Ocean Avenue that Lance Still's Team of "skinners" would get stuck. He would have to unload the groceries and roll them up to the store on the sidewalk by hand truck. There was a wooden shed over the sidewalk at the southwest corner of Ocean Avenue and Main Street, where Moore's Grocery Store was located. Saturday night it was the favorite meeting place of the baymen which usually only came way up to the village over the week. We used to go down under the grist mill and electric light plant on West Main Street with a lantern flashlight then ... and with a scap net or snatch hook fish for alewives and perch which swam around near the turbine water wheel .

There were 40 or more one and two horse stages on Ocean Avenue, all making a living. "Right down to the beach" was the main cry on Ginnocchio's corner. Now two little jitney buses hardly make enough to pay for their gas and oil. The girls used to wear "rats" in their hair and vie with each other who could wear the biggest . The girls all wore cotton stockings every day except Sunday; now if anybody saw a girl with ten cents stockings on, they would send for the funny wagon. The girls wore long stockings bathing, and what a time they had to keep them up. If any girl with advanced ideas tried to go in without any stockings, she would be ordered off the beach. Now the usual girl's bathing suit doesn't contain as much material as the stockings her mother had to wear.

The baker wagon came down the street soon after daylight in the morning ringing a bell and the folks would run out to get their supply of bread and rolls.

"Hen" Train , "Gil" Peterson , "Tom Let Roe" , "Happy Chase" used to peddle meat from a butcher wagon and the kids would hang around till their mothers got the soup meat to get the inevitable piece of bologna . Boy, that was sweeter to us then any porterhouse steak has been since .

Tom and Ed Smith and Mr. Davis would drive down from Coram, and Cad and his father, Sam Dare, from Selden, with the first loads of watermelon, sold for 15 cents and a quarter each. No watermelon in May or June then.

The big gang of colored brick-layers laid the bricks on upper Ocean Avenue and Main Street. They were paid by the thousand. Many a kid had to stay after school at night for stopping to long at noon time to watch that fascinating sight.

A popular columnist recently remarked that a lot of water has run under the bridges in the last four years. Yes, a lot of water has run under the old bridge in Patchogue, where Tim Newton's blacksmith shop used to stand on West Main Street, opposite the Patchogue-Plymouth Mill, in the last 35 years. So, let's go down Memory Lane and note some of the changes in Little Ol' Patchogue. In 1900 there were not more than ten autos in Patchogue. Today, Steve Smith of Roe Court is Patchogue's sole surviving blacksmith. He recalls when there used to be six or seven "smithies" and tells how his family has been in the business for 65 consecutive years. Gone are the horse days, for I counted 27 autos parked within sight of my window as I am turning out my "column". In 1900 there were four blacksmiths; Dode Marvin, Tom Bush, Tim Newton and Bill Shaw, with a long line of horses waiting in line on icy mornings to be "sharp shod". In 1900, if there was snow on the ground, we would hitch up one of our grocery wagon horses and take Annie, Minnie or George for a sleigh ride. We usually towed three or four kids on their sleds behind our horse drawn sleighs. Today, George or Johnnie more likely will borrow dad's Ford or Packard and take their girls to some inn where there is music and some dancing. In those days we never kicked about having to walk uptown to the post office for mail, even if all we received was a mail order house catalogue. It was a chance to do some fancy hand holding in the post office lobby with the girls.