

Yesterday and Today

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As a youngster, Sept 1935 to June 1939 I attended High School in Erie, Pennsylvania. For those four consecutive I never missed a school day. Excepting as a Senior, spring 1935, the day when three others and I skipped school, drove to Cleveland to see the Yankees play the Indians, first game following the Detroit series, where Lou Gehrig benched himself, breaking his amazing string of playing 2130 consecutive, a record surpassed only by Cal Ripkin, 56 years later. We four knew this was important. Went with our parents permission, not that of Prep's Principal. Our chastisement was insignificant, the Principal young enough to believe he would have done the same.

All days of the same four years I delivered the Erie Daily Times newspaper published daily except Sunday. Again I delivered the paper every day, except that skipped for watching Gehrig chase flies before the game and sit the bench the remainder. Yes a friend substituted for my route that day.

If there was any change in the Erie Daily Times those years it escaped my attention. All four year delivery was pegged at 12 cents a week. Weekly the Carrier paid the Times Office one cent a day for every paper carried. Those weeks I had 100 plus customers, and my bill as never less than \$5.00 a week. Collecting from everyone, I would have made \$5.00.

In time, four of our children Delivered the Denver morning paper by bicycle.

Then every newsboy (there were no Newsgirls then) was a small businessman, in High School, They were never without money, change in their pants pockets, no wallet. Remembering his route, customers, responsible for every facet of deliver, collection and payment to the paper. All this requiring about an hour daily, three Saturdays.

In a short time the route is memorized. Every customer is known by name, as they know us. At Saturday morning collection, the typical home had their Customer card ready with 12 cents, have payment recorded by the carrier's distinctive Punch mark. These boys, almost an extension of the family of those customers. That friendship reciprocated.

The friendship of the carriers, noncompetitive in anything but faithful daily caring for their customers. Meet at the southeast Erie distribution garage, after three daily, comparing notes, some gambling between friends in craps and penny pitching.

On the arrival of bundles clearly marked by route, the binding cord cut, and the papers folded three quick times, allowing the delivery piece to be about 6 inch on three sides, flat by cramming them each the Times Paper Bag. The bag arranged with the same number on each side of the handle bar for balance. Then pedal to the route, tossing to the appointed porches.

On a good day, one hundred delivered by bike in 15 minutes.
When it rained, the delivery to each porch a dry paper more than doubled this.
One education lost to today's youth.

