

It Happened Last Night

By Earl Wilson

I LEARN TO WALK . . .

NEW, YORK—I invited myself walking the other night with New York's No. 1 Pedestrian, Henry Blackman Sell, 67, who hoofs our pavements and parks 5 to 10 miles a day.

It was a mistake . . . because now he's got me doing it.

"How much have you walked today?" I had just asked the distinguished editor, food-packer and gourmet, a Whitewater, Wis., boy.

"Five miles," he announced. We were at the Colony, 61st and Madison.



WILSON

"Well, I think I'll walk with you—to the corner," I said.

Making it those 60 paces left me worn out. "Where are you going now?" he inquired.

"To '21,'" I lied. I mentioned the famous restaurant on 52d off 5th

Av.—nine blocks distant, thinking that would be too far for him.

"I'll walk with you!" he sang out.

Huffing and puffing while trotting beside my young chum with the Chevalier Legion of Honor ribbon and the bow tie, I found that he prefers Central Park.

"Don't your friends stop you and slow you up?" I asked . . . hopefully, after about five blocks.

"I don't meet many of my friends in the park except the squirrels. They're good friends of mine," he said.

"Squirrels are great comedians," he assured me. "I found out something about them—they don't hide nuts for the winter. They bury them in the ground to soften them so they can eat them. I'm nuts about squirrels."

He talked so excitedly of the other pedestrians — Phil Silvers, Jack Pearl, Bernard Baruch, and Bugs Baer, that I determined to become a walker myself.

Si Seadler, the MGM ad genius, another hiker, once went to El Morocco with a pedometer in his pocket — and danced three miles.

So I walked all over town hunting pedometers.

One clerk said rather sheepishly to me, "Not many people care to know how much they walk—they'd rather not know."

I walked more miles to find out how many miles I walked than anybody. And after buying one, I discovered my son Slugger already had one. So if you see somebody walking along very briskly, with a 10-mile look in his eye, that won't be me . . . that'll be Henry Sell.

Me, I'll settle for two miles a day.

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