



The Stroller...

Good, Bad Old Days

By W. W. EDGAR

After a fellow has strolled along the journalistic trail for quite a spell and possibly is beginning to show signs of the exciting travel, he oftentimes is asked questions that take quite a bit of doing to answer.

For instance, a few days ago The Stroller was approached by a bright eyed young fellow who was just coming to the end of the emotional period of receiving his diploma and being part of the hallowed tradition of commencement exercises, who asked -

"What do they mean by the Good Old Days?"

Without waiting for an answer, he continued, "I've heard older folks talk of them - often with delight - but I never was told much, if anything, about them in school."

Well, The Stroller is a survivor of the days before radio and television - yes, even the days before black and white movies when indoor bathrooms and automobiles were luxuries.

The Good Old Days!

How do you describe them for a young fellow who has been exposed to nothing but the wonders of the modern age?

LET'S SEE, they could be divided into two parts - the bad side and the good side.

On the bad side was the tradition of the Saturday bath taken in an old wooden tub in the middle of the kitchen. Folks would look with horror on such a practice today - but it was a weekly scene in a vast majority of the homes in the "good old days." And one had to be careful not to get too close to the old wood - burning stove. To do so would bring dire results.

The old wooden tub was bad enough, but when in the course of the day's events one had to answer nature's call it meant the grabbing of a robe, especially on cold winter mornings, and racing "out back." It was a far cry from the cozy indoor bathrooms of today.

Meat, too, was a luxury in most families and it was served only once or twice a week. And there were no such things as buses to take the youngsters to school. They had to walk - even in the deep snow - to get to class. What's more, they had to study by the light of a kerosene lamp at home.

But the brighter side was most enjoyable, for the pace of life was much slower and much less expensive than we know now.

WITHOUT RADIO or television, entertainment was mostly built around family parties and such things as "box socials" - where the girls packed lunch for two and the boys had to bid for the various packages - hoping to get the one prepared by his "date."

Club dances were the vogue and it was always a bit of keen competition to get your partners chosen long before the music started. When it did, there were no such gyrations as we know now. Instead there were such beautiful numbers as the prize waltz, the faster two - step and schottische. And for real fun we'd go to the country hotels - five or six miles away - and enjoy square dancing.

Would you believe it? A fellow could get by on a date for two bucks and have an enjoyable time? Street car fares into the city were only six cents. Admission to the Keith vaudeville theater was only 35 cents. So you could take your "date" to the show in the city and spend little more than a single dollar.


Only the rich had automobiles, but the young folks reached their peak in the eyes of the girl friend when they'd rent a horse and carriage for a ride into the country of a Sunday afternoon.

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ROBERT W. HYMES.
27480 Goldengate, Lathrup Village, has been appointed manager of financial reports and records for the accounting department of American Motors Corp. Hymes was the supervisor of accounting since 1963. He joined the company in 1947 in the payroll department. Hymes is a graduate of Walsh College of Accountancy and the University of Detroit.

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