

THOSE WERE THE DAYS!

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I was raised in a town called Miamisburg, Ohio, near Dayton. Train tracks are everywhere, and a river called The Great Miami flows through. I was raised during a time when most everyone treated each other with respect.

We didn't eat a lot of fast food because it was considered a treat, not a food group. We drank Kool-Aid and iced tea made from water that came from our kitchen sink. We ate bologna sandwiches, or even tuna (which was in a can, not a pouch), peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, grilled cheese sandwiches, hot dogs, pot pies, but mostly homemade meals consisting of mainly meat, potatoes, vegetables, bread & butter and homemade dessert. We took our lunches to school in brown paper bags or lunch boxes.

We grew up during a time when we would collect glass bottles to take to the local grocery store and use the deposit money to buy penny candy. (We even got a brown paper bag to put the candy in). You could get a lot for just 25 cents. We would all run when we heard the Ice Cream Truck coming down the street. We could buy a Fudgesicle for a nickel or get a cardboard cup of ice cream that had a photo of an actress on the lid!

We mowed lawns, babysat, helped neighbors with chores, and worked with our dads in the summer. We went outside a lot to play games, ride bikes, run with siblings and friends, played hide and seek, kick the can, jump rope, hopscotch, Red Rover, red light, Mother May I, kickball, basketball and even dodge ball. We drank water from the hose outside... bottled water was unheard of.

You had to be close enough to home to hear your mom yelling or dad whistling to tell you it's time to come home for dinner. We ate around the dinner table and talked to each other as a family unit. In school we said the Pledge of Allegiance and daily prayer. We stood for the National Anthem and listened to our teachers.

There was no cable TV, just 3 channels! Yes, THREE!! And if the President was on...that was the ONLY THING ON! We had no cell phones—just one house phone that was a party-line with neighbors.

We ate hot and cold cereal at the breakfast table before going to school. We watched TV shows as a family: Gunsmoke, Gilligan's Island, Wonderful World of Disney, Grizzly Adams, Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom, Sky King, Rin Tin Tin, Ed Sullivan. Art Linkletter, and Captain Kangaroo. After school, we came home and did homework and chores before going outside or having friends over. We could only watch cartoons on Saturday morning. When we were teenagers, we watched American Bandstand with Dick Clark after school.

If you got in trouble at school, you got in trouble there and when you got home you got in trouble again because your parents already knew. Paddling was allowed in school, and you behaved yourself!

We would ride our bikes for hours and talk with our neighborhood friends until the lightning bugs came out. We would make lanterns with the lightning bugs and even pick 4-leaf clovers.

Not every 16-year-old automatically expected a brand-new car from their parents that they didn't have to worry about paying for. If you had a car, you worked for it!! And whether you did pay for it yourself or not--if it was misused in any way whatsoever--doing ANYTHING that you were told NOT to do with it...IT WAS TAKEN AWAY until you could prove you could be responsible and obey the rules!

You learned from your parents and grandparents instead of disrespecting them and treating them as if they knew absolutely nothing. What they said was Law!!

If someone had a fight, that's what it was--a fistfight, and you were back to being friends afterwards and the bullying pretty much ceased. Kids that were around guns were taught how to properly use them and to respect them and never thought of taking a life.

We watched what we said around our elders because we knew if we DISRESPECTED any grown up, we would get our behinds whipped. It wasn't called abuse; it was called discipline! We held doors open, carried groceries and gave up our seat for an older person without being asked.

You didn't hear curse words on the radio in songs or on TV. If you cursed and got caught, you had a bar of soap stuck in your mouth and had to stand in the corner for quite some time.

"Please, Thank You, Yes, Mam and Yes, Sir" were part of our daily vocabulary!

Wouldn't it be nice if it were possible to get back to this way of life? Those were the days!