

The Town of Arlington During the 1950's

As you drive through Main Street today, you will see the general store, the Christian Church, and the Elementary School. East of Main Street you will find the Original Cab Factory. In the 1950's, the town had an elementary school, junior high and high school in one building. There were at least two restaurants, a barber shop, an appliance store, a grocery store, a bank, a post office, a telephone exchange, a hardware and lumber yard store, two elevators, three gas stations, four auto repair shops, at least one beauty shop, two churches, a blacksmith shop, a pie factory, a housing development, the Original Cab Factory, a Canning Factory and other small businesses, including a pool hall. The town had a very active Lions Club and an Odd Fellows Organization for the men and Home Ec Clubs for the women. The Volunteer Fire Department was organized to help protect the community.

There were several farmers in Posey Township. Many of them had dairy cows, feeder cattle, hogs, and chickens. The crops were mainly wheat, oats, corn, alfalfa, and some tomatoes. Many of the farmers had large gardens for vegetables. These farmers helped provide food for the community. They would sell eggs and chickens to the residents of the community, hire a livestock trucker to haul their cattle and hogs to the stock yards and sell them. They would hire a milk hauler to take their milk to the creamery and sell it. They would take their corn and oats to the elevator and have in ground into feed for their livestock. They would haul their wheat and excess corn to the elevator to sell. They would sell their tomatoes to the canning factory. In most cases, the wife would work along with their husband to operate the farm. In addition to working on the farm, she would wash the clothes on Monday, iron the clothes on Tuesday, cook large meals every day of the week, take care of the children, clean the house, shop for groceries, work on the garden, butcher and dress young chickens, along with many other jobs she had to do. The saying I heard was "a man's work is from sun to sun, a woman's work is never done".

The children that lived in town spent a lot of time together. They would ride their bicycles around town and go swimming in the river or gravel pit. They would go to the school and play basketball or baseball. In the winter, they would find a good hill and slide down it on their sleds, some of which were home made. At a very young age, some of them would get jobs mowing yards and delivering newspapers. When they became teenagers, they would get jobs in the auto repair shops, bale hay for the farmers in the area, work in the grocery store, or work with one of the other businesses. The children that lived on the farms would help with the farm chores, drive the tractor, mow yards, bale hay, and various other jobs that needed to be done. They would sometimes ride their bicycles to town to visit with their friends.

The school created an opportunity for the residents of the community to get acquainted. The children met other children their own age and they built lasting friendships. Many of them were together all twelve grades and continued to be friends and neighbors over the years. The high school basketball team was one of the most entertaining parts of the school. Basketball was big in Rush County and the rivalries between the seven county schools were intense. There were usually at least two games per week during the months of November through February. The County Tourney and the Sectional were two of the biggest events in the County. The gym in Rushville was packed.

As I look back on the 1950's, I realize that most families were just trying to survive. They had to work together to make it. The family was a very important unit in the day to day activities. The evening meal was a time when the entire family was together and would discuss the events of the day and enjoy each other's company, at least most of the time. It was a great time to grow up and learn.

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