

## HAWARDEN...HOW IT ALL BEGAN

### DO YOU REMEMBER THE '50'S?

Chapter 28

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The 1950's, fondly referred to by those of us now on Social Security as America's Favorite Decade.

If you were lucky enough to be a teenager during the '50's, you cannot remember a time as carefree and magical as that decade. Life was "simple" back then. Not "simple" in terms that nothing happened, but "simple" as America was a safer place. It was the age of "Leave it to Beaver", and the "Cleavers" and "Father knows Best." The family unit was basically intact, and normal was the rule, not the exception. Divorce was hardly heard of, and living together before marriage was taboo. The '50's were a time of conformity and without 24/7 Cable news channels, the alternatives were just a distant rumor.



The decade of the '50s contributed more to our modern lifestyle than any other time period in the 20th century. Some of the most dearly loved icons of pop culture had their best years in the '50's. Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Lucille Ball, Buddy Holly. Prize winning novels that we still read and quote: "*Catcher in the Rye*,

*Caine Mutiny, Anne Frank, Diary of a Young Girl*”, “*Dr. Zhivago*” even the first copy of “*Lord of the Rings*”, by J.R.R. Tolkien.

Television came into its own in the ‘50s and we still love to watch “*I Love Lucy*” “*Ozzie and Harriet*” “*The Honeyymooners*” and “*Gun smoke*”.

In the 1950’s Papermate introduced the first ballpoint pen that didn’t leak! Diners Club issued the first Credit Card with American Express and Visa to follow. Swanson thrilled everyone with their individual CHICKEN POT PIES in the nifty tin foil baking dishes. Would you believe my mother served them at our wedding reception in the late ‘50’s! Everyone thought they were the greatest thing they had seen. (Note: Back then they actually had chicken in them and the vegetables were easy to recognize and not crunchy); sometimes progress goes backwards.

Tupperware was introduced in the ‘50’s as well as Saran Wrap and Radial Tires. The first 3-D movie was shown: *BWANA DEVIL*. This decade gave us Area Codes on the telephone, Holiday Inns, Mr. Potato Head and Kellogg Frosted Flakes (the beginning of the sugar craze), and two new states, Alaska and Hawaii.

It was a perfect decade to be a kid. Playing outside was in; no fear of abductions by strangers. Toys were affordable, such as hula hoops, boomerangs, bats and balls, Silly Putty, etc. Teenagers were still kids, and dared to do such radical things as see how many could cram into a phone booth, or the trunk of a car going to the Wigwam drive in movie. Some teenagers were even bold enough to go to neighboring communities on scavenger hunts and ask for tulips. College age students invented “panty raids”, and the local teenagers wore bobby socks and Saddle Shoes with “rolled up jeans” or Poodle Skirts and starched petticoats. Girls had ponytails and boys either had crew cuts or greased-back “Duck Butt” hairstyles. “*Bryl creme: A little dab will do ya! You’ll look so debonair. The girls will all pursue you...they love to run their fingers through your hair.*” was a favorite jingle on the radio and TV.

Riding our bikes to Oak Grove for a day of exploring was a summer tradition, and climbing to Big Rock was the goal of the day. Sometimes these outings were well remembered....especially if you happened to encounter some poison ivy on the trip.

The 1950’s had some unsettling times as well. In 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea. President Truman sent United States Soldiers to war. The Soviet Union announced that they had an Atomic Bomb. The 1951 Hawarden Independent reported that the Draft Call for Sioux County had doubled. The war even got closer to Hawarden when the call went out asking for volunteers to man Observer Posts around the nation. This group of volunteers was called the Ground Observer Corps and next week’s article will deal with this little known fact about Hawarden’s call to service to help protect our Nation.

1952 also brought tragedy and suffering to our community with the unbelievable Polio Epidemic that struck some of our youngest children. Pictures of parents on the outside of the Sioux City Hospital trying to look in windows to get a glimpse of their child lying helpless in an iron lung were published in the Sioux city Journal and haunt me to this day. Classmates were stricken and several passed away. My parents kept me very close to home during that period and for a time I did not even attend school. One of the miracles of the 20th century was Jonas Salk’s discovery of a polio vaccine which has saved countless lives and all but eradicated the disease.

Life moves on. Gone are the days of innocence and tight censorship on TV, gone is the norm of a traditional family, and the days of uncomplicated heroes like The Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, Gene Autry and Sky King. These times have faded, but the contributions to our society will continue to be remembered. The 50's gave us Rosa Parks who refused to give her seat on a bus in Alabama to a white man...breaking the law, but ushering in the Civil Rights movement. It gave us the first state to issue a Seat Belt Law. The Soviets launched their satellite Sputnik, beginning the international space race. Velcro was patented, the Edsel was born (and later died), President Eisenhower inserted "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Presidential plane was named Air Force One, for clarity and security. We were blessed with Mc Donald's, Burger King, Disneyland, Peanut M & Ms, Butterball Turkey, and TV dinners. JFK married Jackie, Marilyn Monroe married Pulitzer Prize winner Arthur Miller, Jackie Robinson retired from baseball, and Grace Kelly married her Prince Ranier of Monaco.

And so goes the 1950's.....good and bad....a decade of progress and a lifetime of memories.  
Next week: Hawarden's Ground Observer Corp.