

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

Do you ever sit back and remember the neighborhood you were raised in when you were a kid? I must say that my neighborhood included quite a variety of human beings. The family next door is a good place to start. I am not going to use real names as I don't want any problems. The Smith family included father and mother and five children. The father or an uncle was a World War One veteran. A German military helmet and a spent artillery shell was included in the kids toys (which were sparse). Father was a heavy drinker. He had a job as a local delivery truck driver and you could find his truck parked in the driveway of the house across the street when he was not making deliveries. The woman who lived there ran a very busy boot legging business which was no big secret. Her place was frequently raided by local police but it didn't slow down her business that much. We were aware of each raid as it was taking place due to one of the local police officers ability as very good whistler. This well liked officer was a happy fellow and whistled wherever he went. No secret codes or anything like that. When prohibition ended, she open a saloon downtown. Now back to the family. They were the happiest bunch of people you could ever know. I remember the father repairing the kids shoes one afternoon. He was sitting in the kitchen with a shoe repair kit, pounding nails into the shoes with great gusto and singing at the top of his voice. Money was scarce for the family and thanks to a number of uncles who were doing well there were treats occasionally. I remember one afternoon when the mother came home from grocery shopping. She had no sooner put the grocery bags down than they were emptied, the kids saw to that. She had bought some ground beef and that package was opened and a portion of the raw meat consumed before she could blink an eye. (Of course I didn't help matters any). They would brew their own root beer and the process was always fun to be a part of. In the evening, the family would gather and listen to some of the popular radio shows. I was included and had to be escorted home after programs such as "The Shadow Knows". I was scared to death. Many was the night when we would gather around their player piano and the whole family would sing song after song. I was heart broken when the family moved to San Francisco. I remember a trip to San Francisco to visit one of my sisters. We all headed for the family's new home and sang the afternoon away. All the family members grew and flourished with each one achieving success in his own right.

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