

America in the 60's. I don't know how it was where you were, but let me tell you about where I was. This ain't candy-coated, so hang onto your hat. There was an old pool hall on the main drag, and it was the place to be for every unemployed, bored, restless, or just plain wild kid in town.

I was eleven when I swindled the old man into signing for me to go in the place; about three months later I was in jail with three other boys who were all sixteen for breaking into the candy-stand at the fairgrounds and swiping around forty pounds of candy. Took us a week to eat all that shit.

The guys on the street were driving ten to fifteen-year-old cars, '56 Fords, '53 Oldsmobiles, fast-back '49

Chevies, '50 Merc hot rods, Harleys, and stuff they had drug out of the junkyard in New Diggin's. Someone was always lighting up the street in front of the pool hall.

Leather. Denim. Ducktails. Brylcream. Girls had this thing for rat-tail combs and beehive hair. 1960 was the year it started for me, although I had been paying attention to the Fifties Flash rumbling by on the highway in front of the house for about five years. Chrome. Fender skirts. Dual burnt-out Walker Continental glasspacks. Rag-tops. Hard-tops. Stripped-down tudor sedans, Indian motorcycles, and every summer, the Gypsy caravans. I don't know where they came from or where they went, but every summer eight or ten of them went

through town, sometimes with as many as a hundred damn strange lookin' vehicles, carryin' everything they owned tied to them. The next week an army convoy would slide through on a mission to somewhere.

The old man lost jobs off and on, and we moved around town in someone's old farm truck three times before moving into the downtown area when I was nine or so. I begged him ever since to let me go to the pool hall, and one day when he was fried he thought it was cool and signed me up.

Was it my downfall? I don't think so, but I could be wrong. I wasn't old enough to be in a place like that; all the other kids were fifteen to twenty years old, but my pal Abe went there

Dad, sign me up for the pool hall, will ya?



Why, sure.  
That'd be a  
good place for  
ya to hang  
out!



and that was that. The smoke hung low in the eighty by thirty-foot dark green room, and domes of light broke the gloom above the card, pool, and billiard tables. The jukebox and pinball machines glowed in the dark and the noise rolled out into the street every time Boze threw some asshole out the door. No cussin' allowed! The Rules Of The Game were prominently displayed on the wall above the billiard table, and allowed for no debate.

In 1957 when we still lived on the highway, I would watch the guys change the ads on the billboards and bug the hell out of them with “why” questions until they left, the new sign sparkling in the sun. Downtown, every morning I looked out my window at the

Bull Durham sign on the next building, and all the rest of the ghosts of signs on that old wall, and wondered about the men who had painted them, and then scurry off to school. I had been showing my teachers and classmates impressive artwork and poetry since second grade, and those signs intrigued me. One day I would be a famous artist and sign painter.

But, my old daddy wanted me to be a tough guy. He had this thing about “only sissies draw pictures” runnin’ thru his head, and would whap me in mine when the subject came up. I wouldn’t know until I was twenty-eight, always holding it against him, what he had meant. He had some relatives who spent their entire life goin’ to art school to

avoid life, the Army, and anything else disturbing, and they were indeed sissies! Could they draw? Not a stick man! I was younger than the bunch of them, a real artist, and they always liked and admired me for that, so I can't blame them for the way their mother ruined them. After many turbulent years as a tough guy, to make my daddy proud of me, I sat across the room from him and drew a picture of him as he was watching TV. He framed it and hung it above the TV so he could glance up and admire it from time to time. I was the head bouncer at the Palace Dancehall, one of the toughest assholes in the Tri-States, and he knew damn well I wasn't no sissy, so it was just fine for me to be the best damn Artist in town, too!



500 South Bench. I studied the old signs from my window and the porch. The apartment building was demolished during Urban Renewal. Our family lived here for ten years, where the Galena Cellars and city parking area is now located.



Back at the pool hall, fifteen years earlier, Louie, Dutch, Meat, Eddie, Spider, Big Daddy, Larry, Leo, Tube, and the rest of the crew shot pool and played cards in the gloom under the low fluorescent light until Boze threw them out when he locked up for the night. There were guys up into their forties hangin' out in that place, and Bromo was his biggest seller on Saturday and Sunday morning. The Root Beer in the frosted mugs was made right here in town, as well as the Blum's soda pop that every place in town carried.

I didn't spend all my time there of course. I had other friends who were not allowed in the pool hall, and we raised hell all over town. Our favorite hangouts were the Cozy Café and

Burbach's Restaurant on the main drag. That's where all the girls hung out, with the fancy hair, bobby sox, and nice butts. My buddy Tom's mother bought Burbach's, and had good free food for us boys, and a damn good jukebox. We had to work all summer for nothin' to get fed, but it was fun.

The Cozy was the best though; great sounding old Wurlitzer Jukebox, private booths, and all the grease you could choke down. The owner, old Pus-Gut, asked everyone who ordered hashbrowns; "You want cheese on them?" You should have seen the apron the old fella wore. It had a little bit of everything he had ever cooked on it, and had never seen a laundry. Him and another home-town fella got real

creative a few years later and cooked up a bushel basket of phony twenty dollar bills, giving them an authentic look by soakin' them in gallons of Pus-Gut's coffee from the Cozy.

I don't remember what brand it was. It didn't work; the Feds knew about it and busted them before they could spend a dime. Whoever had sold them the plates, which were actually pretty good ratted on them, I heard. Maybe Pus-Gut did it to himself. Anytime someone asked how he was doin', he said, "Makin' money hand over fist!"

When I was almost twelve this asshole I ran around with for a couple of years decided to steal a car from the lot on backstreet. He was fifteen and thought he could drive (couldn't) and



Burbach's Restaurant, where  
the Eagles Club now resides  
when Tom's ma owned it.  
(plhc)

picked me up. Being a chickenshit deep in his heart, he wouldn't drive up Franklin Street 'cause his stepmother might catch him, so he drove up the hill at Meeker Street, where the County Jail was located. That old Chevy six didn't like hills or the creature driving it and stopped dead in front of the jail. There we were, big dumb Andy cranking that stolen car over until the battery went dead, me scared nearly to the point of crapping, three deputies suddenly surrounding us sayin' "Fokyadoon?"

We were kids but they shook us down like big guys and found a blank-shooting twenty-two in stupid Andy's sock. Well, I told you he was stupid. I was in a cell upstairs on the fourth floor for three weeks by myself before they let

me go. My second time. Eleven years old. Damn.

When I got out, me 'n Abe and Dick decided to go fishin' down at Turtle Pond, about five miles down the train tracks from the Black Bridge, and while we hiked along, I told them the story of my dad and two uncles, Tom and Jim, who had rode the rails across the country and back, back in the thirties before pop met mom. They jumped on and off slow movin' trains, went to all the hobo jungles, got drunk nearly everywhere in the USA that a train went to, workin' for the Civilian Conservation Corps, a huge bunch of young men from all over the country that built dams, bridges, state parks, and gawd only knows what else. Mainly they raised hell

and had a good time. Abe says; “We could save a damn long walk if we jump that sucker goin’ by right now.” It wasn’t as easy as it sounds. That train was pickin’ up speed and startin’ to roll, maybe fifteen miles an hour and more all the time, but we threw our poles and shit in the first open door and ran like hell to catch up. Nobody got killed but we got banged all to hell by the time we were sittin’ in the door lookin’ back the way we had come. “Damn, that was fun.” We both looked at Dick like he was nuts, and then all laughed. Yeah. By gawd, it WAS! We rode that sumbitch back and forth from the Galena Junction and Turtle Pond a lot of times, and a few other brave souls we told about it did too.



The Dime Store, next to Boze  
'n Maggie's Pool Hall...



Any day you can walk into Burbach's Restaurant and find one or all of your friends, cigarette smoke hangin' low, cokes, fries, and half-eaten burgers forgotten in the excitement of a new song pounding out of the 'box, pinball machine next to it damn near drowning it out causing sparks and fries to fly.

The Stanley Theater was in the center of town on Main Street, about two hundred feet from Boze and Maggie's, and the Cozy Café was midway between them, the Edmar café strait across the street, the Paradise and Silver Dollar Saloon sandwiching that restaurant. Burbach's was right across from the historic Desoto House Hotel, and the Dime Store was directly across from yet another small café. This was the heart of

the downtown area, and Boze and Maggie's was in the center of it all.

Every storefront in this area had a business that had been there for many years. There was Millhouse Hardware, diagonal from the Theater, across from the Clingman Drug Store, kitty-cornered from the VFW, zigzag from Addabo's Grocery, and Ducky's famous Grease Pit Grill four doors down from the hardware store, that took up two entire buildings. By dodging the old farm trucks and Forties and Fifties cars, you could jog over to Walter Schmidt's Men's Clothing Store, or stay on the same side of the street and shop for shoes at Albaugh's. In the evening, when the old time street lights came on, the neon from the honkytonks warmed the night. Hank

Williams, Lefty Frizzell, Red Foley, Patsy Cline and other bygone hero's music wafted up and down the drag.

When I was still eleven I got a job cleaning and dusting the shelves at the jewelry store, where the old clock still hangs, and often helped unload semis down at Mclaughlin's for a quarter a load. At this same time, my old daddy was runnin' the Sportsman Tavern, and had me 'n my brother John down there cleaning up the mess the drunks had made the night before, and stockin' the coolers and stuff for the next run. One day I stocked the inside pockets of my uncle's old World War Two army jacket with two half-pints of whisky and damn near killed myself down at the Light Plant. I was out like a light for three



Boze and Maggie's Pool Hall  
It was a damned good place to  
hang out in back in the 60's  
and 70's, as were the steps  
right next to it going up to  
Bench Street. (plhc)

days. I never drank that shit again until the summer of 76, and never again after THAT! Knocked a cop's hat off. You gotta know the whole story, I guess. See, this cop was the same age as the rest of us, and had run with us for several years, and everybody liked him all right. One night though, at The Pub on Highway Eleven out of Hazel Green, a big bar-fight broke out in 1967. He used to ride with us all the time in the '57 Chevy on the cover of this book, and was slammed into the windshield and cut hell out of his head, the night the drunk driver crossed over into our lane on the Dubuque Bridge and damn near killed us all. The asshole hit another car after smashing in the whole side and front end of the Chevy, totaling it out. I was

drivin' but didn't get hurt. Dave, who owned the car and had lost his Driver's License, and his girl were all right; they were in the back seat. The girl in the yellow Volkswagen behind us wasn't as lucky as we were. She was paralyzed for life, I later heard. People stopped and helped us all, and several of the older men present nearly threw the drunk off the bridge for what he had done.

Anyway, this night at the Pub, our friend showed what he was made of, cowering in a corner with two guys kickin' the supreme shit out of him. He was my friend, so I jumped in and rescued him. He never forgave me for knowin' how chicken he was, and when he got the badge went power crazy. I'm not the only one he waved that gun at. Ask

around. When he told me that he was chargin' me with a felony for dobbin' his hat, I told him to write up two of them, and put him on the other side of the desk, which he never touched, and he laid on the floor screamin', "HALP! HALP ME! HALP!" Eighteen months. The Indian part of me don't like whisky. He was invited to leave town later, after messin' with too many of the citizens.

The janitor at St. Michael's, old Pete Snyder, liked me and hired me at a quarter an hour to help him at the school on Bench Street and at the church. Every boy I knew either had a paper route or job on a farm or at a gas station, or cut grass for the rich guys on the hill. Felt Manor. When I was twelve, I saw a fellow named Irvin Lieb painting a sign



## *Bandits!*



I'm seventeen  
an' already been  
to Reform  
School twice so  
don't gimme no  
shit!



on the plate glass window of the Bakery across from the theater, and watched him for an hour, finally deciding to go over and talk to him. I had always been interested in signs, as you may have guessed, and told the man; “Someday I’m gonna be a Sign Painter too.” Thirty years later I went to his shop in Elizabeth, introduced myself, and told him I was that little boy, and he said, “I’ve heard of you.” That was fine praise from an old master, who had started paintin’ way back in 1940.

Any part of town could have been called ‘Dogpatch’, but the area I’m referring to was near the Hospital on Summit Street, where numerous small shacks, in a later day named Miner’s Cottages, were scattered along the

winding tree-lined dirt roads, and rusted hulks of old cars dating back to the thirties and forties sat in every yard, near the tree from which the old tire swing swang. Motors that had once propelled them littered the high weeds leading to the front doors, pieces and stems of a fading past. Did every house in town look like this? Not all of them. The closer you got to Downtown, of course, the better kept they became, but I'm tellin' you, there were some damn poor people here in those days.

Along with the old cars and parts, many of the yards contained a smoke-blackened burn barrel for the garbage, next to the ones that had already rotted and dumped their burden on the ground, and an outhouse leaning

this way or that, that got a little assistance come Halloween to finish its tilt. The kids ran wild through this jungle playground, every other parcel of land overgrown with ten foot high weeds and pockets of deep woods, never knowing when they would trip over an old tin cistern pump and drop down through the rotted boards into the stagnant slime. I had my first experience with this when I was six years old, across the street from 604 Franklin, falling into one that out of pure luck had a dome of dirt and rocks in the center that kept me out of the water. I screamed for hours and cried like the baby I still was, and nobody came. After struggling for most of the day I had managed to drag enough of the shit into a pile that I could reach the top of the



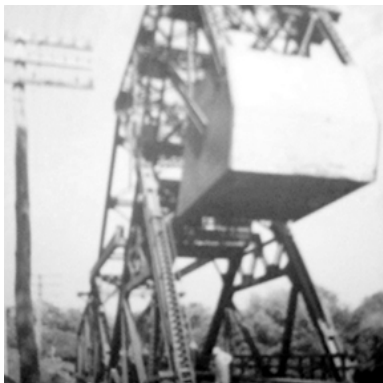
Playin' in the back yards and ditches of Galena was a lot of fun in the 'good old days' and we never had a shortage of toys...

hole and pull myself out. That next week some kid from up the street broke my head with one of the famous Galena bricks and I damn near bled to death and had a severe concussion. Bob Blum, the pop maker, and his main man Jim Wickler, saved my life with cold towels and left-over Sulpha powder from the Second World war. While healing up from that, I cut the end of my finger off in the screen door hinge and had a fine cast to use as a hammer for weeks. My Great Adventure had begun.

Any boy worth a damn raised pigeons and a few chickens in the scabrous pens tucked away in the woods and backyards and there were well-worn pathways connecting them, from the boys visiting back and forth, or

gathering to go pigeon hunting after dark. They were regular expeditions; bags of supplies and snacks, flashlights, ropes, band-aids, and sometimes, stolen booze. The favored places to catch the pigeons were the rooftops of Main Street, and the boarded-up buildings under them, many of which had broken windows, and the pigeons lived in them by the thousands. The Black Bridge, the old train trestle that had opened up for the steamboats in the mining days, and the Light Plant just south of town, were the other two best spots, though incredibly dangerous to climb. There were walkways high above the floor, maybe sixty or seventy feet, that were home to hundreds of nests in the Light Plant, rotten from close to a hundred

years of neglect and most of the roof being gone, where we caught the best birds. In the dark. I still can picture Denny hangin' from the broken catwalk with all of our lights shinin' to see who had screamed. The train bridge, a real challenge, became the hangout of The Black Bridge Boys, a band of young outlaws from town, and the cops would come down and try to chase us off the old relic, fearing one of us would fall to our death, but none of them were brave enough to climb the rusted frame and run the two-inch beams to catch us. That was fun. The pigeons that lived up there in the heights became so used to our presence among them that, after we began throwing corn to them, became nearly tame and would allow us to get



The Black Bridge, that the boys from town who were a little adventurous claimed for their own and ran wild on...  
(plhc)



close and pet them and handle their young. It was fun to jump off the platform halfway up into the river below, but if you landed wrong, like Nicky did, you could easily drown. We told him not to jump wearing those hip boots, but he jumped anyway and got them planted in the soft bottom mud. The only thing we could see was the very top of his head just under the surface. By the time we got down to the water and dragged his sorry ass out, he was all done swimmin'. Never saw him in the water again.

A lot of the ol' boys around town did some serious fishin', and had nets strung all over their yards near the flat-bottom boats, and close by, an old refrigerator that had been cobbled into a

smoker. Smoked carp, impossible to eat any other way, was a delicacy that, wrapped in greasy old newspapers, was sold all over town and enjoyed by most of the citizens. Those with a strong stomach.

Huntin' was popular, bein' a small town close to so many patches of deep timber, wooded islands along the mighty Mrs. Sip, and the ravines and steeply wooded ridges of the county. We still had wolves and mountain lions, I shit you not, and beaver that had built stupendous dams across many of the creeks and backwater sloughs, creating ponds and small lakes which were fished heavily in the winter when the ice became thick enough to drive the old truck on. Some o' them hunters, wantin'

to check their sights before loading the beer and homemade wine in the truck, would line up on the clock at Central School or the statue of Grant in the Park and let one fly. Yep. She's right on.

Arrows flew across the street from the Sportsman's Tavern to the wooden door on the electrical box on the building across the street at any given time. Next to the Galena State Bank, today. It had hundreds of pocks in it. I saw 'em do it! One day Lorne forgot his shotgun when him and the boys were off to the hunt, and swam across the river to get it, then waded back carryin' it through the three feet of water and several feet of mud behind the Galena River Wine and Cheese shop, which at that time had Andy's Welding Shop in



Hidden in the weeds just off Summit Street, a '58 Chevy rotted away...

the basement level, a fine little ballroom on the third floor that hadn't been used much since the forties, and a bunch of apartments that had seen better days, and the office of the road commissioner, an ol' boy the like of which will never be seen again. Jack Gill. He had eyes like an old bloodhound dog from rubbing the sweat from them with a rag that had been soaked in nitro from the highly unstable dynamite he was always playin' with, and the bib overalls he lived in could tell a story of their own. Nice guy. One of his pals, Merle Gaber, told me one day that when he was construction boss of the Galena Dike project, they moved most of an old junk yard that had been right next to the downtown Post office, a big one, into a line and buried

it, for a base for the floodwall, and further north, just to the left of the original location of the old Blacksmith shop, they buried an old steam locomotive that was still sitting on the side tracks. You can still see the remains of one of the bridges the trains rolled on just over the Dike by the big tree just behind the Blacksmith shop.

I met that semi driver when I was ten that delivered stuff from Dubuque to McLoughlin's, a depot on south main, where the famous Bull Durham sign is located, that had some fine old oil and grease saturated loading docks, a weigh station with a roof where the State Bank Drive-thru now is, gas and diesel fuel tanks and pumps, a warehouse with a sagging roof that fronted the scales, and

bins of coal, that were sold and delivered to most of the businesses and residences in town. Got kind of black lookin' around town in the winter. I met him down there every day in the summer, and he gave me a quarter every time I helped him unload the truck. I was getting strong as hell by the time I was eleven. So, I got in these fights, to see how tough I was, ya know, and got the shit beat out of me a few times. Guess I didn't have to pick on bigger older boys, but how else ya gonna learn? Kids my own age didn't know jack. Ya gotta go to the source. Abe told me one day down at Boze's, "You better stop that shit or you're gonna hurt yourself one of these days."



Main Street paving blocks,  
when they were used for  
streets instead of sidewalk  
trim; Ed-Mar Cafe (plhc)



I decided he was right, and he said, “Let’s go down to the river for a few days.” We took some sandwiches and stuff and went down to the junction and swam across to the islands and went exploring and found the old trading post from the fur trappin’ days of the 1800’s and a few old tumbled-down dwellings here and there, a bunch of tin cans and trash, but no treasure or anything like it except for an old tin lantern that was still in one piece and a bunch of rotten clothes left behind by a transient long ago. When we got back I got a good beatin’ from the old man and ol’ Pete Henrichs kicked me out of school for a week for skippin’. Told me not to come back until I had done an ink drawing of Turner Hall and the Fire House. I did the

picture the first day, then me an' Abe went back down to the islands for a week. Pete was madder than hell when I finally showed up. I said, "Well you told me not to come back 'til the picture was done. Here it is." I handed it to him and he smiled and told me, "Well, you get back to class now son. Nice job." He had it framed and owns it to this day, having it hanging in his office at school for more than twenty years.

We built a two story clubhouse on the high rocks behind St. Michael's school on Bench Street, utilizing lumber and nails and tarpaper found at an abandoned lumberyard on Commerce Street, where the USBank now squats. Adjacent to this was an old hotel and saloon that had been converted to a

Laundromat and four other buildings. One of them was a garage with a gas pump that still had the glass globe and a handle that pumped the gas into a see-through tank so you knew you were getting the good stuff, for 12 point nine cents. It had been closed for years and had several junk cars sitting in the weeds alongside it, and there was a little frame house behind it that had the biggest chicken coop in town. We caught this stoop shouldered old fella who should have wore a glass eye in that empty socket stealin' chickens in there one night and every time we saw him on Main Street would yell. "Hey, Chickenthief!" He started answering to the name after a few years, but never liked it, always looking over his



After Confirmation at the church; I didn't even know how to cuss yet! Spring and High streets, Galena, 1957; yeah, that's a **brand new** '57 Chevy wagon goin' down the road.

shoulder first. Old Bill, the man who kept Galena clean, would look up from his push broom and wheelbarrow over in the gutter and look around too. Maybe we had two chicken thieves.

Down at Burbach's Restaurant, Tom's mom's place, we always saw this guy dressed in bib overalls, a long coat, and a slouch hat like Indiana Jones', standin' by the steps goin' up to Bench street, eyeballin' the young ladies like he hadn't had nothin' to eat or somethin', and made it a game to see what he was up to. Several days went by with nothin' happenin' then, a Saturday, he flagged this girl we knew over and had a whispered conversation with her, after which she went up the steps and across Bench. This guy looked around

nervously for a few minutes, then went up the steps. We followed from a distance, thinkin' he was one of them perverts you hear about and never see in person, and the girl, a few years older than us but still way under eighteen, climbed the steps toward Central school and so did the perv. So did we. She went to the left. So did he. Two of our friends came down the road from up in Dogpatch and said, "What's goin' on?" We told them what we suspected, and they too had noticed the guy downtown, and we all four went to the left. There was an old abandoned two-story brick house in the woods, almost all of the roof gone, the second floor sagging badly and partially in the basement, and no windows or doors remained, even the

casements gone, and the girl was waiting for him there, in a basement window. He was grinnin' like a dawg eatin' shit and peeled his coat off and climbed in with her and they disappeared. We were regular gawd-damned commandos, and each of us picked a window, on both sides of the house so he couldn't escape, and leaped into action and caught him with his pants down. Her too.

I don't think I have to tell you how they reacted to our abrupt appearance out of nowhere, do I.

We were about eleven or twelve then, the bunch of us, and had some idea of what they were up to. But, to see someone we knew selling her young ass to this guy who had to be at least fifty was a shock to us. Hell, she only lived



Steakburger Restaurant...



about a block from where I did at the time! Geraldine. I knew what her name was. But this old guy, who the hell was he? “Who the hell are you, ya ol’ sumbitch?” Tom says. “Aw, you boys know me. You see me around all the time! Look; ya ain’t gonna tell on me are ya?” He had taken his wallet out and was fingering some green, the bib overalls down around his ankles, and Tom, the oldest of us by two years, asked Geraldine, “You want us to turn him in to the cops?” She didn’t, and hadn’t bothered covering herself up. She was proud as hell, seein’ how us young fellas was lookin’ at her nekkid like that. Hell, she was havin’ fun! Now they call that place the Fabulous Linmar Gardens. We used a lot of the floor boards and joists

to build a tree house right behind the building a year later.

Cliff, and I won't tell you his last name, gave us all five bucks apiece not to rat on him. Never did. None of us. Geraldine didn't want us to. Some of us got to be real good friends with her a few years later. Every time we saw ol' Cliff downtown, until he quit comin', he would grin and slip us five. I got to like the old bastard after a while and quit takin' his money. What the hell, I thought.

Two pals, brothers Mel and John, ran the Stanley Theater for the rich guy in the mansion on Bench Street who was always out of town, and we eased our way into a select club that took over the theater and would hang out there until

we were nearly twenty years old. People stood in long lines waiting to buy tickets, just like they did in big cities like Chicago and New York, when there was a good one playin', and the hot buttered popcorn smell had them salivatin' by the time they finally got through the door and they bought so much candy and corn they couldn't eat it all, and left half of it on the floor for Emo Joe to sweep up that night. Emo was a nice little guy about five foot tall whose head was only half the size of everyone else's and took his portion of shit from people because of it, but everyone liked him and he came to no harm. In today's world McDonald's wouldn't even have given him a job, but he did alright for himself back then, making it on his own.



The Theater; our teenage party place and clubhouse!

Boo and his little brother, and I do mean little, Peanuts, lived in a small trailer with their mother and step-dad. No water, no heat, and very little food or I completely miss the mark. The trailer was twelve feet long, and how four people lived in it is incredible. The parents were drunks, of course, and the boys had literally nothing to their name. Their step-dad did them a huge favor the day he signed them up to get in Boze's Pool Hall, though. There, they were able to use a real bath room for the first time, and kept themselves clean as possible with their one set of clothes. They were good boys, and went to school regularly and tried to make life a little better by doin' odd jobs for people they had met when their parents drug them around to

the bars. Peanuts was only four foot ten and weighed about sixty pounds, and stayed that way his entire life. One day the poor little shit slipped through the seat on the toilet at Saint Michael's School and my pal John had a hell of a time gettin' him out, and told me he was a stinkin' mess the rest of that day in school. Boo was a little bigger but not by much, and it was hard to talk to him 'cause he spoke in a language that he had made up for himself, unable to learn a real one. You had to know him. Not only that, he talked so fast that anyone who took the time to listen kept sayin', "What? What did you say/?" This would happen thirty or forty times during the course of a ten minute conversation, and got a lot worse when Boo was old

enough to drink booze. They are both long gone, their hearts and general health shot by the malnutrition and filth they were raised in, but they were part of Galena and liked by everyone. Both of them excelled at the pool table. I don't know if it was their close proximity to the ground, being on eye level with the balls so to speak, or magic, but they both could shoot pool and got in on a lot of play.

When I was ten I saw this wrinkled up old fella about five feet tall with one arm goin' up the steps into a house just down the street from mine every day. He looked like he was a hundred years old or more, and gravity had caused his ears to sag so bad they nearly touched his collar. He walked



Peanuts and Boo lived in this tiny trailer with their mother and step-dad for more than ten years. We felt bad for them then, but lookin' back, it was horrible. Every dime went for booze.





pretty good for his age, and went out for a couple of hours every day, and one day, curious as hell, I decided to become his pal 'cause he looked like he didn't have one. "Hi. My name's Frank. What's yours?" "Why, I'm Jake Gunn, boy." "Like in the book?" "What book?" "You know; Treasure Island!" "What?" "Oh, wait, that guy's name was Ben! Well, hey, I see you all the time and we're neighbors, see? I live right down there at 500." "Yeah. I've seen you boys tearin' up an' down the street. Pretty noisy." "We're just playin'." "Yeah." "Well, that's a real big watch and chain you got there on your vest. Where did you ever find one that big? Is it real gold?" "Rail Road give her to me." We were sitting on the old wooden steps

leadin from Bench street to Main across from where Galena Trolley Depot now resides, watching the coal trucks weighing in down at McLoughlin's, and he said, "Fifty years." I looked at him and asked, "What's that mean?" "They give it to me for fifty years on the job. Switch man. Over there across the river." He was pointing toward the decrepit Train Station on the East Side, where a rusted steam locomotive sat on a side rail along with numerous abandoned freight cars on the eight tracks that were no longer in use. There were a dozen old warehouses tucked in among them and all sorts of trash that had accumulated through the years, and I looked at the scene and could picture the old guy out there throwing the long weighted lever

to route the trains this way or that. “Must have been tough with just one arm.” “I had two when I started.” “Well, what happened? Ya only got one now.” “Well, look over there; you see how them there cars hook together? Well, part of my job was to hook ‘em up when the engine moved ‘em from track to track. Got caught.” “Ripped it right off, huh?” “Yeah. Thought I’d bleed to death. Passed out.” “Gawd, that must’ve hurt!” “Well. Yeah. Hurt like hell.” I sat there imagining the scene. Arm caught in the clasp and tore loose. Little guy like that, and those huge boxcars, smoke from the locomotive chokin’ the shit out of everyone, people runnin’ all over the place yellin’ and tryin’ to save the poor old bastard’s life, and him layin’ there



Old Jake could tell stories but hardly anyone ever took the time to listen...

bleedin' like a stuck hog. "Wow. You're lucky ya didn't die right there!" "That's what they tell me." As time went on that summer I went down and sat with Jake on the old wooden steps every time I saw him there and one day I said, "How old are you Jake? You look like a hundred years old." "Not yet. Ninety three." "Geezus! No shit? You must have seen everything that ever happened in this old town!" "Well, yeah, I guess I've seen a little." "Well, tell me! What happened? Were you in the War?" "Which one? I remember two or three of 'em." "The Civil War!" "Naw. Before my time by a few years. Saw Grant though." "You mean President Grant?" "Mmm. Wasn't much bigger 'n me. Lived here off 'n on, so he did.

Drunker'n hell most of the time. Played cards at the Logan, and had to be helped home most nights. That's why they built the sidewalks, you know." "Why?" "Why, he kept fallin' in the mud on his way home. Hurt himself a number o' times." General Grant. The President of the whole damn country. Right here in Galena. Wow. "Did ya ever talk to him?" "Naw. I was younger than you last time he was here. Saw him, though. People talked about him all the time. Laughed at him, mostly. Drunk."

It didn't surprise me about what Jake said about Grant bein' a drunk. Hell, every time I walked up Main Street to Boze's I had to step over some poor sumbitch layin' in his own puke in front of one of the honkytonks. Galena

seemed to do that to a lot of people. I bet we had more drunks to the square mile than any other part of the country.

Probably had somethin' to do with the mines closin' down. All we had left was the Kraft cheese place on Back street and a couple of lung-pukin' foundries smokin' the shit out of the town. Derelict cars were everywhere, even on the main drag, and old freight trucks lay where their drivers had quit and walked away years before. Half the stores in the downtown area were closed due to a lack of payin' customers, and many of the stores had boards over the broken glass to keep out the varmints, but 'coon and pigeons invaded at will. There was 'coon shit on Main Street all the time and you had to watch where you walked.



Old drunks passed out on  
Main Street were a common  
sight in the 50' and 60's.  
(plhc)



The theater was clean though, and ornate as hell, from the days when Galena was in it's prime, and the boys kept it up as best they could, ol' Emo spit shinin' brass and mirrors and sweepin' 'til the sun don't shine. He kept the sidewalk out front just as clean. The only place in town you didn't have to watch your step. Upstairs was the 'Cry Room', next to the projection room that was Mel's domain, and Art, the old man who sometimes did a little part-time work who was teaching him how to run the thing. There were two projectors, monster-size, so that there was no noticeable stop in between reels. Sometimes. Mel was gettin' better, but it was slow goin' there for a while. Once in a while the cartoons would run

backwards, but nobody complained. Wouldn't have done any good anyhow. If you wanted to see something really good, why, Dubuque wasn't that far away. That cry room was the place where a lot of kids took their girlfriends, and I thought that was a little strange 'til I saw how dark it was up there, and what they were doin' in the dark. Took a few girls up there myself as time went by. It was supposed to be where the mothers took their unruly kids so they didn't disrupt the movie, but they no longer used it because of what the 'teens were doin' to the place. After the movie was over and everyone had left the theater, we took over. Mel would drag out any movie we wanted to watch and sometimes we would see four or five of

them before goin' home around midnight. Some of our families had a television in the house, but none of us needed them.

All of the kids that were a little older than us took their gals to the movies on the weekend, and they sat close together, the guy's arm nearly chokin' the shit out of his sweetie in his desperate attempt to lay hands on her without anyone noticing. Hell, everyone knew he was playin' with her boobs, except the boob doin' it. Sometimes you would see someone crawl out from under one of the seats with a glistening smile.

I forget which movie was playin' the night those four guys from Dubuque showed up. Uncle Tony, Chats, Jim, and

**STANLEY**

Fri. and Sat., March 1 and 2

The ROOF'S OFF!  
And the FLOTT'S  
GONE!

Majorie MAIN  
Ferry KILBIDE

with  
Richard  
LONG  
and  
RAY  
BANDALL

**MA and PA  
KETTIE**

— And —

the Savage  
Guns

SUN. and MON., MAR. 3 and 4

(gga 1966)

Clyde. They were good guys, and hung around bullshittin' with a bunch of us in front of the Theater for a while, and then the party was on. They adopted us, bein' they were all older by a few years, and came over from Dubuque every weekend for more than five years, also attending the all night parties at Sam's cabin down at Aiken, where some really great poker games took place. We had a harmonious group that included people from Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Never any fights, for we did not invite the assholes, and I can't remember anyone gettin' seriously hurt when they ditched their cars on occasion on the way home.

At the Cozy one Friday night in 1961 when I was twelve, while Tom 'n

me enjoyed one of Pus Gut's fine greezeburgers and fries, I watched as three of the beehive adorned local beauties took their seats in the booth across from me, and couldn't help noticing how succulent they looked, and was hooked. Damn. I had to get me one of those! I was damn shy when it came to girls yet though, and when they kept teasing us with a flash of thigh and impish smiles it embarrassed hell out of me. Tom says, "Let's go over and sit with them." When we had squeezed in with them, Tom knowing them as he was two years older, the little dark-haired one, Judy, says to me, "You're so cute! You look like Elvis!" and started givin' me a hard time. I had sprouted whiskers that year and my sideburns were lookin'

good. Every Monday the Sister at St. Michael's would send me home across the street to shave, but I managed to keep the sideburns, and people were beginning to think I was older than my years. The fact that I had learned to comb my hair in a fashion similar to the big rock 'n roll star added to the effect, I suppose, and I got ribbed a lot. Hell, every one I knew slicked back their hair and let that little curl hang in their eyes. Go look in the pool hall! She wasn't jokin' though. She did think I was cute, and we got to be good friends, though not in the way you are thinkin'. She was sweet and pretty, and innocent, as was I, and our greatest moments were sitting across from each other at the Cozy, holding hands and bein' in love. It didn't



The Cozy Café, with the big  
Meadow Gold Ice Cream  
sign on the side wall...



last though. One day Tom and I were ridin' our bikes up on the hill above the old jail toward Trottwein's, a pair of brothers we hung out with, and this incredibly beautiful young girl was sitting on the rock wall near her house. She looked lonesome and sad, and we stopped.

Forty-five years have passed and I remember her like it was yesterday. Now I knew what real love was. Judy was immediately forgotten as if she had never existed at all, and this girl took over every cell of my young brain. I could think of nothing but her, and got slapped awake several times in school, dreaming about her. Still very shy, I wouldn't go see her unless Tom went along, but that wasn't a problem; he

loved her too. She went to a different school, somewhere in Dubuque. Rich parents. We only saw her on weekends until, suddenly, school was out for the summer.

Every day we spent sitting on the rock wall at her house talking and just being near her, and still she was sad, and even with our company seemed lonesome and lost. One day she told us she had leukemia and would soon die. Then one day she wasn't there waiting for us, and we never saw her again. Can a twelve year old boy have his heart broken? Absolutely. Horribly. The house was empty. The parents had moved away, after burying their only child somewhere in Wisconsin.

Tom and I were hired by his step-dad, Don, to crawl under the house and dig a full basement under it. It had none at all, sitting on four corner stones with cement blocks filling the rest of the holes, and we dug an entrance hole and started excavating. It took us the rest of that summer, and we nearly lost the house a couple of times, but we got the job done. Don did the supports himself, after the kitchen started to lean, and in that way we got over the loss of our dear friend, and became damned muscular in the process, though a little pale from all of the time spent under the house. About that time, we began to explore the area at the end of Dewey Avenue, Harney's Creek.



Damn...can't get the points  
set right....maybe the old  
sumbitch jumped time....

We had taken to going on long hikes, instead of ridin' our bikes, thinkin' we were gettin' too old to be on them any longer, and discovered a lost city up the gulch at the end of Dewey, complete with an old brewery, blacksmith shop, brick house with a spring flowing through a cement tank in the supposed kitchen, and lots of old mine diggings. There were collapsing bunk houses, sheds, outbuildings, and a couple of huge barns that were rotten and falling down, and the road leading to the place had totally disappeared. Immediately, we laid claim to it, and would go there several times a week, climbing trees and crawling in and out of the ancient mine holes in the hillsides. Found all kinds of stuff. Shovels, picks,

rusted tracks where the ore carts had been pulled out into the sunlight by a skinny mule. Bones. Animal, not human!

Abe liked the place too, but he was workin' on gettin' a driver's license. His uncle, the Colonel, had given him a '49 Ford that needed a motor slapped into it, and he was all fired up. "Got my own wheels, man! Me and that silly ass brother who's always goin' to jail got it runnin' over the weekend! She smokes but goes like hell. You guys want to go to New Diggin's?"

We didn't go up Harney's Creek much after that. Don Keane, the ol' boy who owned the junkyard and tavern in New Diggin's, took a liking to us, and before long we were sittin' at the bar drinkin' good cold beer right along with

the miners and truck drivers who frequented the place. I was still twelve, but goin' on thirteen. Had them sideburns an' swooping hair with the ducktail. Looked twenty at the very least. I started to commence to have a good time.

They had a live country band at the bar in New Diggin's on Friday and Saturday night. Tom was kinda quiet and tame so we left him behind a lot, and me and Abe, who was sixteen then, went stompin'. Got in all kinds of trouble. Fights. Drag races. Started haulin' junk up to Keene's Junk Yard to finance our Diggin's runs to the bar. Wrecked the old Ford a couple of times, then Abe swapped it to Keene for a '52 Chevy ragtop, without the rag. Wrecked that,



I'll give you one guess as to which one was the bandit!  
Me and brother John right before I went to the Reform School at Saint Charles... the first time!



too, one Saturday night comin' home through Council hill on the gravel. We were lucky, and too drunk to get hurt, and left it layin' in the ditch. Abe had never licensed it so nobody knew it was his, and we never did find out where it disappeared to.

A lot of girls seemed to live up there in New Diggin's for some reason. Cheap rent, probably. There wasn't a single house that had runnin' water or a bathroom. Some still probably don't. They didn't smell bad or nothin' though, and looked a lot like the gals in Galena but without the beehives. Probably hadn't ever seen a TV or a magazine. Who knows? Couldn't they have found someone to give 'em a ride to Galena to the theater or somethin'? Damn!

Wonders never cease. By gawd, they did discover Galena! One day a whole carload of them sauntered into the Cozy! As luck would have it, me 'n Abe had been seen by the girls in their little home town on a number of occasions, and they came right over to our booth and flopped into it with us like they were old friends, which they rapidly became. Our world was growing by leaps and bounds. Dick, my pal since we were about six years old, wandered in. "What're you guys doin'?" he asked, leanin' on the back of the booth so he got a clear look down the front of the nearest blouse. "Gonna git somethin' ta eat," Abe says, matching him grin for grin. Half a dozen other guys from the pool hall steps, sixty feet away, came in shortly after he did, all of

them comin' over to see what me 'n Abe was doin', all of them wearin' that pool hall grin, all of them waitin' for Dick to get the hell out of the way so they could grab his vantage point. It got noisy, and the girls were having a fine time. They had never been so popular! They ended up being part of our theater club and came to town every weekend for years.

Wilkie had just come home from his third trip to the reform school over in Saint Charles. Abe knew him pretty well since they were the same age. He had some bad luck growin' up, and spent some considerable time because of it. A little light fingered, not too many of the older folk around town trusted him much, but he had a good heart and his friends stood by him. I knew him, of

course, but had never run with him since the candy stand. He soon became a member of the club, watching the old movies and cartoons with us in the evenings, and hangin' out at Boze's with the other bandits. They all looked up to him 'cause he had been to reform school so much and could box like a real graduate of the place. He was a tough sumbitch, and we became damn good friends. I, too, had seen a little of jail, you gotta remember, and would see a whole lot more.

Not all of my friends were older bandits. A lot of them, as I have mentioned, weren't allowed in the pool hall, that den of iniquity, and I spent a lot of time with them too. Ted's Grampa had owned the Desoto Hotel for fifty-



The Desoto Hotel, when Ted's  
Grampaw owned the place.  
(gga)

five years, and his mama Irene was the clerk and also the very first person to start the tourism industry in Galena, hauling people around town in a 1955 Buick Special for two dollars a car load and tellin' them all about it, and aunt Ginny owned the corner news stand and bookstore, where the Green Street Tavern is today. With Burbach's Restaurant just across the street, where the Eagle's Club is now, John and Mel livin' right around the corner in the ratty apartment that became a Laundromat, several antique and junk shops and finally a nice little restaurant, and myself livin' a block down where the city pay parkin' lot now takes your money, Alvin upstairs on the second floor above the modern-day cigar shop, and Tom always

at his mom's diner, none of us ever got lonesome. Greg and Doug moved in next to the old grocery store that sports the Copper Garden store soon after, and Tom and Jerry, no shit, lived on the first floor of the building I was in, a four story structure that never should have been torn down. In the late sixties Urban Renewal took out the buildings on Commerce where the meat locker was, five good old brick store and warehouse buildings for the parking lot, most of the fabulous old paving block streets we had loved learning to drive on, that whispered as you passed above them, and the buildings where ol' Chickenthief had made a name for himself. Sadly, a bunch of the young men that grew up hangin' out at Boze 'n Maggie's helped

in that destruction, myself included. We ‘salvaged’ them. You can find all of the stuff we hauled away in the once rat-infested dump and garbage pit behind the new swimming pool at the Alice T. Virtue memorial park. The Fair Grounds.

Now, at the Fair Grounds, there at the edge of town on the newly re-named Stagecoach Trail, we had the finest, biggest, best damn circuses and carnivals Illinois ever saw. This is no bullshit. People from all over the Tri-States made a pilgrimage to Galena in those days. It was the most exciting events in their humble lives, and when the yearly Corn Boil came around, it got crazy with traffic and throngs of people. I can’t imagine the old time World Fairs





At the Fairgrounds in Galena  
300 feet from where the big  
Carnivals & Corn Boil took  
place...the City Dump.

being any more boisterous or lively, or having any more attractions or wild rides and live entertainment. The very last one was aborted by a horde of bikers from the Chicago area. There were over ten thousand people there having a fine time when they arrived, and only three hundred bikers. I don't know why the people didn't stand up for themselves to this day. The town was taken over by the invaders, bars torn up, and folks hurt, property smashed. Cops came in from all over the state, and the following year, the sheriff, having a captive audience, asked me through the bars if I wanted to be part of his new Riot Squad. I was twenty then, but I'm gettin' ahead of myself.

We had a room of our own at the Desoto Hotel, which was called the Meeting Room. Forty feet by twenty, it had a long polished walnut table and chairs and some damn fine antiques from Galena's heyday in the river trade. In the windows facing Main Street, which, today, are not the authentic plate glass of that once really splendid structure we played in, was the biggest collection of Galena memorabilia in the city. Pictures. Tools. Huge slabs of quartz-laden lead ore. Pieces and stems of ancient riverboats. Stuff! We got to handle and jack with all of it!

We carried armloads of books and magazines back and forth to Ginny's news stand and became the best self-educated little demons you were likely to

find out here in the woods in those days. I think the biggest reason many of us got in trouble was we were movin' a lot faster than the rest of the town. Curious about everything! Ted was the first guy in the Midwest to know what weed was, bringin' some home from California when he was fifteen. That night he got back I had to CLIMB over the cracks in the sidewalk to get home. Whew.

The stereo in the Meeting Room, I'm sure now that I look back on it, must have annoyed the hell out of the guests upstairs, blastin' out Ventures tunes, Beach Boys surfin' trash, Sugar Shack, and a whole lot more with a loud steady beat. No wonder they had to nearly tear the place down to restore it! I know we must have shaken the foundations loose



The Coatsworth building with windows boarded up to keep the 'coons and pigeons out.  
(plhc)

from the mud encased walnut logs the Hotel was built on! Why, the whole back wall sagged and was in danger of fallin' right off the building for years! You should have seen it, when the whole back wall of the Coatsworth building DID fall off! Some inventive person placed a couple of clothing store dummies up on the third floor in a bathroom that was now hangin' out of the wall. One on the stool. It was up there for five years for folk to admire, and then, the city stepped in and boarded the place up, including all the windows and doors on Main Street. Another friend, who had just come back to town after walkin' across America paintin' signs, Paul O'rourke, was hired by the city to paint life-size portraits of the nine

Civil War Generals that came from Galena, and General Grant, on the plywood window coverings on Main. He did a fine job, right down to the unlaced tennis shoes they all wore! You can believe that he got a ration of shit from them for that, but that's the way they remained.

Across the street ol' Pus-Gut was still fryin' shit and foistin' it off as food but he was fadin' fast. Him an' his pal had found that new friend, who was gonna make 'em rich. Well, he had worked damn hard, him 'n the ol' lady, and they deserved a little more out of life, so the pair of them went ahead and bought the plates. Twenty dollar bills. All with the same number. Dipped in coffee. The restaurant was sold. We all

could see the end of an era was fast approaching. The Ed-Mar was already gone. The Silver Dollar had folded up and closed it's doors. Ceasar bought the building where the Ed-Mar had been and suddenly Galena had its first Antique shop since 1937. Oh, sure, there were places like Doc Coates' and a few others that sold used appliances and junk to the needy, but that was a whole different thing. They were a necessity for Galena in that period of time and a lot of people were helped to actually survive by their kindness and trust in them, allowing them credit where no one else would. Pus-Gut, though! We LIKED him! Poor dumb sumbitch. I forget who had the Cozy for the next few years, but my sister Vi and her husband Denny bought





Back of the Coatsworth building in the Sixties and Seventies. Yeah, the front looked just as nice.

it in the seventies and gave it a few more good years of life. Yes, they had a jukebox and booths, but they were not the ones we had loved as the young outlaws of Galena.

Why do I say ‘outlaws’?

Well...I mean...that’s what we were! I myself went to the academy at Saint Charles for the (ahem) first time in 1964, and arrived there in chains again in 1966. The prison farm at Vandalia in 1968 for four months. So many Saturday nights and Sundays in jail, along with the ninety-day and six-months sentences that they added up to three and a half years in the old jail and two in the new one by 1977. Twelve years altogether on probation and parole. Outlaws. Now, that was just me. I won’t go into details;

the town-folk know me well, and I'm not gonna rat on my pals either, so get that out of your head! We were just tryin' to have a good time, ya know? You must have heard THAT excuse somewhere along the line. Well, you know, I told you that we started drinkin' and runnin' wild at an early age. Hell, there wasn't anything else we could do, if we didn't want to be a bunch of stay-at-home sissies. Any excuse for a keg party was good enough, and a collection was taken, even to the point of stoppin' traffic on Main Street in front of Boze 'n Maggie's and takin' donations. We even told 'em what the money was for, and they threw it in the hat anyway. It was **WONDERFUL!** We had found a lonesome hermit livin' in the wilds out

at Council Hill, deep down in the old dirt back roads, through these amazing, dark, echoing tunnels, across sagging ancient iron bridges with rotting and loose floorboards, who liked to PARTY! He was seventy-five years old, and had come from Liverpool England as a boy and worked for the Rail Road for fifty years, just like Jake Gunn had done, only the Rail Road gave Al Bailey a ten-foot camper and dropped off mail and a little food for him once a month, in the little secluded valley on their frontage property. When we happened across him one day road-drinkin', it changed our lives!

He talked just like The Beatles! Had an old accordian he played the shit out of! Sang really cool for such an old



Al Bailey. You can read all  
about him in my books titled  
Galena Grafitti!

fella! Could out-drink ANY of us young sumbitches! He loved us like we were all his own children, and in turn, he became like a grandfather to us all. Hundreds of young people from all over the Tri-States became his welcome friends, and he was treated lovingly by all but two. In the mid seventies he was robbed and smacked around by those two, and though I could never find the one, I slapped the other one so hard upside his head at the Shiloh one night that I broke his ear drum. I feel bad about that yet, but at the time, that's what he had comin'.

When I was fourteen I started goin' to the nightclubs in East Dubuque with my brother-in-law, the bass player in the hottest band in the Tri-States of

that time, the Rockin' Shades, helping set up their equipment and then sitting at the Hi Hat bar suckin' down cold beer while they jammed the night away. Met a whole bunch of go-go girls. Met Artie, the Elvis of Dubuque, a damn fine man and the best Elvis impersonator in America. Couldn't hardly tell 'em apart. Still can't. I kept goin' back for twenty years it was so much fun

Now, don't start thinkin' that we had ever started neglecting the Stanley Theater! Oh no! John and Mel ran that place for YEARS! We had graduated though, and now when we watched the movies and cartoons, we did it in style! Booze! We carried it in on a catwalk to the roof from Bench Street in the dark of night. First, it was just six-packs and the

like, snuck in under our jackets, and Howard, when he got out of the Navy after bein' an honor guard at President Kennedy's funeral, started bringin' in jugs of brandy and a bottle of wine now and then. I forget when the first case of beer was ferried across to the back door above the big screen, but a whole lot of 'em followed in the next few years. Then one night, when Hawk, that joke-tellin' fool, got home from the service on leave, the first keg appeared as if by magic, in front of the velvet drapes framing the stage up there by the movie screen. I had a job in Freeport buildin' tires by then, drivin' back and forth in my '57 Bel Air Sport Coupe, that I bought a lot of parts for from George, at the junkyard on Spring Street that has been there since





The Tri-States' hottest Rock band in the Sixties was the Rockin' Shades, members in the Iowa Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame.

I was at the Hi-Hat when they played...cool, man.

the thirties. First time I went there with my dad I was eight years old. His boys Mike and Tim were always there tearin' shit apart, practicin' for when they got older and would put it together again, and every night when I got home from work I boogied across the catwalk. I never had to worry that there would be no one to greet me. There ALWAYS was! The cops were onto us, though, and laid in wait on many a night tryin' to catch us, and we knew it was comin' to a sudden halt real soon. Well, we had given it a good run. Nobody had gotten killed yet, though Greg was in a coma from a wreck near New Diggin's and, six long months later slept his life away. I won't say who was drivin', for the poor sumbitch has suffered enough.

The Hippie generation had come into full swing by now, and we were throwbacks, I guess, 'cause none of us thought much of all that dope and free love shit. No one ever caught the clap or got a shit load of bugs from one of our girls. They only loved you when they loved you.

In August of 1977, as you well know, Elvis Presley died. That same month the Telegraph Herald approached Sheriff Marlo Specht in Galena, and asked if they could do a feature story about the new jail and its work release program, that was at the time in its infancy. They found me, doin' that eighteen months, and the feature story had this for a title; 'Painting a New Life; His Last Time in Jail.' Nice big picture

on the bottom of the front page, and inside a whole page full of them along with a ration of shit from Marlo sayin' I had spent half my life in jail, "but is basically a good boy."

A lot of our young men from the tri-states were damaged by Vietnam in the sixties, and suffered the rest of their lives from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, which took years to diagnose, and some few of them died over there, nothing left of them now but their name on a stone.

When 1970 rolled around, I turned twenty-one, and Boze, from the pool hall, bought me my first legal beer at the Paradise across the street. His birthday was the same as mine, and he had known me for ten years. We talked



My brother John on his way to  
Viet Nam, across the street  
from St. Michael's school '67

about that little eleven year old bandit that had suckered ol' dad into signing for him to get in where the big guys were, and had a few good laughs that day. He knew I was an Altar boy when I was twelve, at Saint Michael's Church, as were Pat and Dan, and we talked about that, and the boys that hung out at the train bridge when we invented that new game. There were zillions of saplings and assorted thirty to fifty foot high trees down south of the bridge on the east side of the river. Tree Tag!

They would bend and sway once we got them rockin', up there as high as we could climb, and when the sucker got way back we would ride it forward and get slingshot from that one to the next thirty or forty feet away, and chase one

another through the woods like that. It was GREAT!

One day, that stupid Andy that you have already met drifted down to the bridge and joined the game of tag. He was fifteen, remember, but was already six foot four and weighed in the area of two hundred and forty pounds. He wasn't real good at it, failing to have a tree lined up to jump to, and got that tree he was on goin' back an' forth like a marthadobber with the weight he was carryin' and let go and got shot through the air like a monkey out of a cannon. Flew like Superman!  
YeeeeeeHawwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww.  
Came down out of the sky like a fuckin' meteor! Landed just like one!.....sssSPLAaaatttt! We

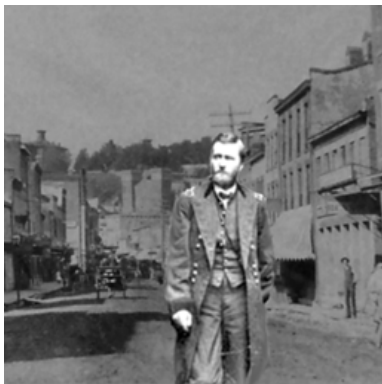
thought for sure he had killed himself, and even while we were thinkin' that, we were laughin' like hell! You shoulda SEEN him! Arms spread out and hands movin' this way an' that to control his flight, and a big shit-eatin' grin catchin' flies on the way down. We called him 'Bucky', by the way. Well, he lived, but his ribcage was jacked back nearly to his spine and he kept a hell of a dent there for as long as I knew him, that a football fit right into.

Boze said, "When you get older you can write a book about Galena in the sixties, from an outlaw's point of view." "Yeah, Boze. Maybe I will. If I make it through the seventies!"





My playground; Galena's old Main Street. Photo taken from Boze's Pool Hall. (plhc)



Grant standin' in front of the  
Logan House wonderin'  
where the fuck he was...



PARKING PROBLEM! Not really, but the number of vehicles in Recreation Park on Sunday for the annual VFW Corn Peel could have posed serious parking and traffic problems. Both were well supervised, however, resulting in the orderly sea of cars shown in the photo and a moderately rapid-moving line of vehicles to and from the grounds.

(Wally Phoned)

## **Crowd Of 17,500 Attracted**

Galena Gazette archives, Galena  
Library Historical Collections dept



1960 Comet I bought from Elmer for a C-note; had to beat the valves open with a ball peen hammer...only broke one of 'em.

TWENTIETH ANNUAL

# CORN BOIL

Sponsored by U. S. Great Post 2665 - Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U. S.

## SUNDAY, SEPT. 4

GALENA RECREATION PARK ILLINOIS

12 Tons Fresh Golden  
**FREE SWEET CORN FREE**

Dipped in buckets of Rich MEADOW GOLD Butter



Open  
Trap Shooting  
All Day - Starting 10 A.M.



Must fetch your own gun

### GAMES - REFRESHMENTS - RIDES

Prizes and Fun for All  
Adult Admission 10¢ Children Free



We did too; mixed in with brandy, whisky, aspirin, or whatever else was handy.



The old iron bridge near the Council Hill Station that led to the tunnels that led to Al Bailey's and the infamous *Abley Ghost House!* ...

Where the man hung his wife from the tree, shot the dawg, and stood off vigilantes for a week while starving himself to death...or somethin' ...



The Abley Ghost house, one of our haunts near old Al Bailey's in Council Hill, not far from the famed **Council Hill Station**, where good cold beer is available along with great music!





The old Banana Express at  
Chestnut Mountain Lodge...



Husking corn at the Corn Boil  
(plhc)

NEW BRIDGES

PH. SHALABINE 565 2133

**DEW DROP INN**  
 DON KEANE, PROP.  
 HEAT — GROCERY — GAS

WISCONSIN

1964		APRIL							1964
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FR	SAT			
			1	2	3	4			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
26	27	28	29	30					

# Burbach's Cafe

OPEN DAILY AT 7 A.M.

## Serving:

BREAKFAST SPECIAL - Daily for 60c

COMPLETE DINNER - 6 days a week 90c

COLD PLATE - only 75c

Home Made Pies - Cookies - Soup - Chili

PIE and COFFEE only 25c from 2 to 5 P.M.

Monday thru Friday

SUNDAY DINNERS only. . . . . \$1.25

Chicken and Dressing or two other meal choices every Sunday. Children's plates 75c.

## ORDERS AND MEALS PACKED TO GO!

Our Menu is posted in the window daily for your dining convenience.

**OPEN** Monday thru Thursday 7 A.M. to 10 P.M.  
Saturday and Sunday 7 A.M. to 2 A.M.

People could afford to eat on  
Main Street in the Sixties!

(gga)



Have burger and fries or onion rings with your malt, \$2.00, corner of Franklin and US 20.



Watching the '66 Corn Boil crowd comin' in the gate.  
(galena gazette archives)



The 1966 Corn Boil...*damn*,  
this stuff is good! (gga)



The Corn Boil... an *event*.  
(plhc)



More Flavor  
Less Filling  
More Fun!

You get  
all 3 only  
from  
**Big D**

*Premium-brewed...  
yet sold at local price!*

**DREWRY'S**

Drewrys Ltd. U.S.A. Inc., South Bend, Ind.

Believe it or not, a lot of people drank this stuff! A whole case for \$2.85 and \$0.75 cooperage was a deal if I *ever* saw one! Puked a few times, but we got used to it...



Galena's Main Street the way you'll never see it again! As a young boy I climbed all over the old machinery in this lot. Look at all the *downtown parking spaces* that disappeared when they put that out-of-place '60's building next to the Steakburger Restaurant! (plhc)



Did *your* neighbor have trash like this in his yard?  
Sometimes it only became visible after a good grass fire ran through the area...



See how the fronts of these old buildin's are pukin' out? That's why there is a parkin' lot next to Galena Cellars Winery by the flood gates. I lived upstairs...



I got free used oil here from Ritchie and he rarely had too much water in the gas... the Galena Trolley Depot today.  
gga



The old gasoline pump at the Dew Drop In; Keane always forgot to shut it off when he was tired and it got sucked dry so many times he had to call the supplier twice a week sometimes...



Steakburger Restaurant...



The Marina at Ferry Landing  
sold more beer than gas to the  
boaters, when the party was on  
at the Galena Hydro's club out  
on the island. (plhc)



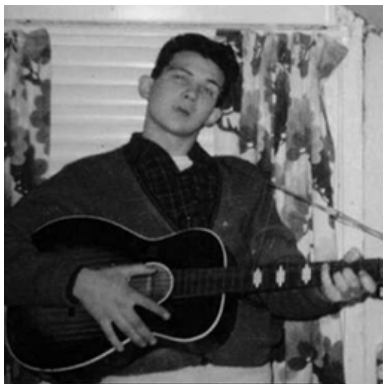
**FISH FRY**

 Enjoy A Real  
**CATFISH  
FILLET PLATE**  
Only **85c**

 ... of a  
**SHRIMP  
PLATE**  
Only **\$1.00**

at the  
**Little Chef Drive-In**  
Highway 20 East of Galena

The Little Chef was located where the Irish Inn Hotel is sitting as you enter town from the east. Very popular with the kids in the hot rods, it was busy all the time. (gga)



When I was 14 I dreamed of being a songwriter, a story teller like Lefty Frizell and Hank Williams, but I knew I had to live hard, nearly die a few times, and have my heart ripped out to do it *right*, so that's what I did...



Me and Ma when I graduated from St. Michael's 8<sup>th</sup> grade. That's a '57 Ford behind me.



Me and Bernie at the little rock house on Franklin where I got my head broke, cut the end of my finger off, and fell in the well on the hill across the street. Dillons Tavern behind Bernie. May of 1956



The cubbyhole under the old  
Firehouse steps was mine and  
Tony's clubhouse until we met  
Abe and started raisin' hell.  
(plhc)



Dad and brother John on Poplar Avenue, a dead-end street in Galena's 'dogpatch'.



Pat Molitor and me at 13; he was in the Civil Air Patrol Cadets. Pat died tragically from severe complications of Viet Nam's Agent Orange after an incredible amount of suffering. He was a good man and a fine friend.



The old Dew Drop Inn, as it appears today, in the famous Lead Mining town of New Diggings Wisconsin; a cool destination for bikers and the cruisers of the back roads.





One of our mayors killed the great flocks of pigeons that were part of our town because they shit on the sidewalks. They were beautiful, friendly and smart, and ate out of a stranger's hand...



**COUNTERFEIT \$20s** - Stacks of counterfeit \$20 bills were found in a cardboard box in the apartment used on the Kankakee Avenue property last week.

The bills, printed on white stock, date to a time, were described by Richard A. Jordan, who led the team, as "not very good ones."

## Two Galena Men Charged With Possession Of Counterfeit Notes

Two Galena men were arrested by police officers last night about 8:30 p.m. on Saturday on an apartment used as headquarters and charged with possession of counterfeit

notes, were apprehended by police officers last night, according to a city police officer, in a raid on the Kankakee Avenue property where last week police found \$100,000 in counterfeit

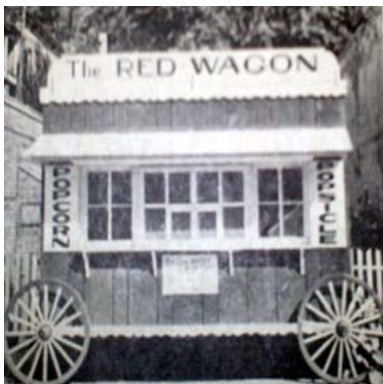
particular issue to December of the year, but authorities said that the press was not in operation at the time of the raid.

Michael Torres, special agent in charge of the U. S.

office, and were described by Jordan as being "not very good ones." He said that counterfeiters usually use their money to make it appear old and that it would be difficult to see and that it would be difficult

Yeah...makin' money hand over fist...

plhc



The hot dog stand after it was restored and before it was demolished forever, taking a large part of the fun of the downtown area with it. (plhc)



In 1963 a rollover occurred right in the Dairy Dream parking lot; girl-watching is not recommended when you are drunker'n hell at a busy intersection! (gga)



Nobody got killed anyway...  
Nath's Garage hauled the  
smashed cars in to where he  
piled shit like that until it was  
sent off to the boneyard for  
salvage. gga 1963



Council Hill Station. I took this photo in 1965; today it is OPEN and has a *liquor license* and LIVE MUSIC!