

The Lone Ranger Club

Memories of Boyhood and Graham Weathers (As Best An 83-Year Old Can Remember)

Stanley was a very small town when we were growing up in the 1930s and 1940s. As best remembered, the population of Stanley did not reach 1,000 until 1940. Friends our age were very scarce. Most of the kids from the “North End” of the town tended to play together as did the group who lived on the “Mill Hill”. Then there were those of us who lived on the “South End”.

Hubert Craig's family lived in the “South End” and were located where Carothers Funeral Home is now. There was a severe epidemic of polio when we were young. Hubert's youngest daughter, Nancy, contracted that terrible disease. To please his stricken daughter, Hubert had a doll house constructed out back to play in when she became able. There was a radio in the doll house.

Listening to the radio was one of the main sources of entertainment back then. No one had even imagined anything like television. Actually, most homes in Stanley did not even have a telephone. Radio programs like “Amos and Andy” were eagerly awaited each week. Most of us boys favorite program was “The Lone Ranger” which came on once per week after we were home from school. The program became so popular that Lone Ranger clubs began to spring up all over the country.

Max Craig advanced the idea of starting a Long Ranger Club for those of us on the “South End”. He persuaded his father, Hubert, and sister, Nancy, to let us use the doll house once per week for a clubhouse. The idea was that there would be a “business meeting” each week before the program came on and then we would listen to the program and later discuss what we had heard. Occasionally, Hubert's wife, Beulah, would provide refreshments, mostly lemonade and cookies which were very scarce due to the sugar shortage.

The Club was formed in the fall as it was beginning to be too cold to do much playing outside. Max was elected President and Graham was elected Treasurer. Dues were set at 5 cents (one nickel) per week and were to be paid at each meeting. Club members in addition to Max, Graham and me were Forrest Armstrong, Andrew Armstrong and Bobby Hawley. Jimmy Smith met a few times with us but he was a good bit older than the rest so he was not really a factor. The club was an immediate hit with everyone. Those cold winter afternoons were just made for a group of boys to listen to the Lone Ranger.

As Winter began to turn to Spring, the Lone Ranger Club was severely tested. One meeting, Treasurer Graham Weathers told President, Max Craig, that he had not paid his dues for the previous week. Max claimed that he had paid and Graham had forgotten to mark it down. A full blown discussion between the two began and had to be stopped for us to listen to the program. When the 30-minute program was over, the discussion erupted again, neither would budge so the issue was not resolved.

With the coming of warmer weather, interest in listening to the Lone Ranger gave way to such things as playing ball outside. Members just quit coming. The Lone Ranger Club just faded into history with the 5 cent dues issue remaining unresolved to this day.

Bill Hawley
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