

Home Used to Be a Cozy Place

Think back, if you can, to the emotional quality of life in the 1940s and 1950s. If you're not that young, try to sense the mood of the times.

Back in those long-gone days, when the home was the centerpiece of family entertainment, it was... well, claustrophobic, by today's standards. At least it was peaceful: regular, ordered, and predictable. You could take quite a few things for granted.

Were you born on a farm? Then chances were you were expected to grow up and work your family land someday. Were you a small-town kid? Then you saw your future in that self-same town, or nearby. You were *from* somewhere, and that shaped your identity, your loyalties, and even the way you talked.

If you were a boy, you probably looked up to your father or some other male relative, for vocational guidance. He worked for the steel mill? Then maybe you would follow in his footsteps. He sold insurance. Then he could probably guide you to that line of work. He was a lawyer? Then you had a good chance you would follow in his footsteps.

If you were a girl, your mother shaped your own future. You would marry, probably within a few years of finishing your schooling, and begin your own life.

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