



The Hillsboro Story – Excerpts

Prosperity

Hillsboro, Ohio was prosperous in 1954. Dad owned Banyas Buick Company and employed a secretary, another salesman, a parts manager, and three mechanics. Earl Bowan, one of his mechanics, rode to work every morning on a Harley. The garage showroom was shiny and clean and had a large window that faced onto High Street. The service department was greasy and grimy. I looked up at the complicated bottom of a Buick when Earl had it up on a hoist and worried that the Buick would fall off onto my head or Earl's. Dad wouldn't let me stand on the hoist and ride it up. Too dangerous, he said. But he did let us put lawn chairs in the back of the Banyas Buick truck, which was a Chevrolet, which he wheeled around corners fast enough to throw us from one side of the truck to the other. Seat belts hadn't been invented, and no one cared if you stood up in the back of a truck and played Sky King with the wind.

Dad's best friend, Charlie, ran Limes Jewelry, the most modern store in town. Charlie was classy, a snappy dresser. He sat in the back of the store on a stool with a monocle in his eye, setting gems, using tiny little silver tools to adjust watches, flicking his cigarette. Charlie had fought at D-Day, played the stock market, and smoked a lot of cigarettes doing deals with his stockbroker.

The two dynamos started the Hillsboro Business Association to juice up the economy, encourage business owners in town to pay higher wages, and entice a couple of small factories into the area to employ folks. Dad wanted to sell Buicks and Charlie wanted to sell diamonds, but people couldn't buy them unless they made a decent living.