



What generation do you belong to? It's not an easy question to answer since all around are people of every age from new-born to octogenarian, and the generations can't be separated by specific calendar years.

Yours may be the group that remembers the horse and buggy as the commonest form of transportation. Symbols of those years might be a barnful of working horses, milk cows in the meadow, a pig sty behind the barn, and a flock of sheep in the fields.

If that's where you fit into the picture, you've early memories of drawing well water with a bucket or hand pump. You bathed on Saturday night and changed your clothes once a week. News of the outside world came more often by word-of-mouth from itinerant peddlers than by conventional news media.

You slept in a featherbed in an unheated chamber, studied by kerosene lamplight, kept warm in winter with woodstoves, and your food was cooked on a wood-fired kitchen range of cast iron that had to be "blackened" regularly to prevent its rusting.

If you lived in the country, you walked to and from school for the first nine grades, used an outhouse at home and away, were fortunate indeed if you finished high school. You learned to read, write and figure before you were ten years old. By the time you were twelve or fourteen you probably had a job paying less than \$1 a day, worked ten or twelve hours a day, six days a week.

If you lived in the city, you might have ridden a trolley car to school and back. Some of you may have had advantages of a college education, and some may have taken a train to classes.

You addressed your elders as "Sir" and "Ma'am". Young ladies wore high-button shoes, long skirts, put their hair "up" at sixteen, and often married very young and produced a dozen or more offspring.

Young gentlemen wore high celluloid collars, straw hats, and spats, when they gussied up. And carried a cane. At dances, everyone wore gloves and waltzing was considered immoral.

If you're younger, you may belong to the generation that remembers when the automobile was replacing the horse and buggy, inside plumbing was piped into newly-built houses, electric lights supplanted kerosene lamps, and kerosene stoves displaced wood-burning kitchen ranges.

Train travel was the most reliable transportation since automobiles were chancy; tires blew frequently, engines stalled and died, and roads became impassable in inclement weather. Aircraft were seldom seen aloft, and when one flew overhead, everyone rushed outside to look.

You attended school for twelve years from 8:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. five days a week, and were expected to finish high school; 'most everyone did. If you were fortunate and showed promise, you anticipated going to college. You could, if you were industrious, work your way through most colleges with part-time jobs.

You addressed your elders as Mr. So-and-So, or Mrs. Such-and-Such, and some close friends of your parents were called Aunt This, or Uncle That, even though they were no relation.

You slept in a bed with an iron spring supporting a cotton and hair mattress, studied by electric light, and your home was centrally heated with a coal furnace in the cellar. In kitchens and bathrooms, hot and cold water ran at the turn of a faucet; you could bathe oftener than once a week if you wanted, and change your clothing daily if necessary.

In summer, you found a job for \$15 or \$20 a week, worked eight or ten hours a day, six days a week, and from the time you were twelve or fourteen, you bought all your own clothing, earned all your own spending money, and saved half of what you earned for college expenses to come.

You wore corduroy knickers, with knee-high socks, if you were a boy. On your head you wore a cap. Your shirts were stiffly starched, your tan shoes laced up around your ankles, and when you went out in cold weather you had a double-breasted leather or lined wool plaid jacket

that buttoned.

Little girls wore navy blue pleated skirts with white sailor shirts and navy blue scarves tied under the square flap of the collar. On their feet they wore laced-up-to-the-ankle shoes like their brothers', over long brown cotton lisle stockings, or for Sundays, long white cotton lisle stockings and black patent leather Mary Janes.

Bigger girls wore jumpers or skirts with shoulder straps to hold them up. Some skirts buttoned onto the bottom of blouses. The hems of your dresses always came below your knees. Silk stockings were a luxury only grown-up ladies could enjoy.

Boys had short haircuts, sometimes called "whiffles", and girls wore braids or their hair was Dutch cut, with bangs, to keep the wisps out of their eyes. Lucky was the girl with curly hair.

Radio provided contact with the outside world and children's programs were aired between 4:00 and 6:00 at night, to keep youngsters entertained before the dinner hour. After dinner dishes were done by the children, they studied and completed their homework. When that was finished, they went to bed.

If you're younger still, you were born into a world of instant everything — from communication to coffee. Almost everything has almost always been automatic, all your life.

You learned to zip zippers before mastering tying a shoe lace or buttoning a button. Your shoes probably were loafers and didn't need to be tied.

Laundry no longer took two full days of work each week since washing and drying were performed by machines and practically nothing needed ironing. Dishwashing was a matter of stacking them in a basket, pushing a switch, and removing them later spotless and dry. Dust mop and broom were efficiently replaced by vacuum cleaners.

Boys let their hair grow and girls grew theirs even longer. Clothing styles no longer differentiated the sexes. Everyone wore pants and T-shirts, boots in winter, and went barefoot in summer. For a while bathing, except at public beaches, seemed out of fashion altogether — at least for a large number of young people.

So did school. So did working. So did using titles when speaking to older people. So did lots of things earlier generations think of as normal behavior.

In between the generations, of course, are the thousands "in the middle", in the transition stages between the broad changes that seem to mark the generations from my viewpoint.

What changed? How did the changes come about? It certainly wasn't sudden. The changes were so gradual no one seemed to notice them as they began, and no one was capable of stopping them as the movements gathered steam.

And what of the next generation? What will they do? What changes will come to society as people, now babies, grow to maturity? Will the pendulum swing even further? Or will it reverse and swing back toward stricter codes of behavior?

All we can do is stick around, watch, and see, for none of us has a crystal ball to foretell the future. All of us have memories, however — some of them marvelously good — and if we could but incorporate the good we remember with the many good things in today's world, it almost seems possible the Golden Age is yet to come.

Our destiny is, at least to some extent, within our power to control — if we will.