

## Hooligans

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For miles around the small town of North Adams, Michigan, with a population of only five hundred, it was the place to be on Halloween night, back in the mid-nineteen hundreds. The Schneider boys lived five miles from town, but come Halloween we would have walked to town if we had to rather than miss out on all the mischief!

For the younger kids, Halloween meant getting all dressed up in their costumes and going door to door yelling “Trick or Treat”, with hopes of getting homemade cookies or candy. But, if you were now a teenager in high school you had other plans!

The center of this small town has a four-way stop. It was where everything that was not cemented in, bolted down, or guarded would end up when all the hooligans came out to play! As I remember it seemed like Mother Nature was always on our side, with warm fall evenings and a full moon, which made running around in the night much easier!

This was a time when outhouses, or privies, were still around. The bigger boys seemed to focus on these first. If a privy was anywhere near the center of town, it quite often would end up being carried to the four corners, and now would be in the center of the intersection! Some of the privies in town were made of brick which was a smart idea, because if not, they could be tipped over, unless someone was standing guard.

Junk cars, old row boats, bath tubs, worn out tires, shocks of corn, pumpkins, you name it , if it was sitting outdoors it was probably now in the center of town! This pile would continue to grow until about midnight. Most of the store front windows would now be well soaped.

If an Amish buggy had been left in town on Halloween night, it could probably be found the next morning on the school’s shop building roof, still all in one piece.

After midnight all the hooligans would have gone home. The night’s fun was now over. The folks from town would have returned to their homes, as well as the folks who came from nearby towns to watch the mess these kids would make.

The following day at the high school the principal would announce that all the boys were to go cleanup the mess downtown, and that meant even if you had not been involved with Halloween night, you were still expected to help with the clean-up!

The privies were to be set back up and repaired if damaged. The junk on the corner was to be returned to its proper owners, and the store front windows cleaned. But the first thing the principal wanted done was to make sure nothing was on the roofs of any of the school buildings!

This was a great time to be a teenager and have as much fun as you wanted one night of the year, and then go back and set everything right again the next day!

As I look back, I think because of this once a year event, allowing kids to do whatever they wanted and yet knowing very well that they would still have to clean up after themselves, helped keep many kids from getting into trouble the rest of the year.