

## Phone Booths and Mailboxes

Times change and we change with them. Television, movies, clothing, food; you could probably name your own list. Technology has probably been the most significant catalyst of change. Think about the cell phone, digital camera and the Internet. Joey was one of those people who resisted change, someone still looking for phone booths and mailboxes in 2013.

“I’d like a roll of stamps please,” said Joey.

“Sorry, we don’t sell stamps anymore” replied the pretty teenager.

“But it’s Sunday. The post office is closed.”

“You can always email,” said the grocery store clerk.

“I don’t have a computer,” said Joey. The girl just shrugged a little, not knowing what to say.

*Guess I’ll just go to the library.* Tony figured he could get a book to spend time with. As he drove into the library parking lot, he noticed designated spaces for *fuel-efficient vehicles*, *school vans* and *compact cars* along the front entrance. His 1978 Cadillac didn’t fit any of these categories, so he parked in the back and walked up.

When he arrived, he saw the modern, grey Formica desks in neat rows, at least 50 of them, with black computer keyboards and monitors. No computer boxes, just thin coated wires running into the floor. He looked for the library card catalog, but he didn’t see it, not even a Dewey Decimal system sign to direct him to the non-fiction history titles he liked to read. *Hmm. How about that?*

He walked up to the checkout counter, but no one was there. *What kind of library is this?* He saw people checking out their books by scanning their cell phone over the bar code. Joey didn’t have a cell phone; in fact he still had a rotary dial phone at home. *Guess I’m just a dinosaur.* The woman walked up to the checkout counter.

“May I help you?”

“Yes, I’m looking for books on The Civil War. I didn’t see the card catalog.”

“No, sorry. We replaced those years ago. You can use the terminals over there.”

“I don’t know how. Can you just point me to the right aisle please?”

“C’mon. I’ll walk you over to it. We don’t have many people looking for American history anymore. It’s good to know someone does.” The Asian beauty didn’t look like any librarian he remembered. “Here we are. Civil War books are on this shelf here.”

“Thank you” and he watched her walk away. The books were older, some with broken spines and several with dust on them. *Oh, let’s see. ‘The Red Badge of Courage’ by Stephen Crane. I’ve read that. Maybe something about Lincoln. What’s this one? ‘Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America’.* Joey took the book out, hoping the librarian was back at the check out counter.

She was. “Hey, you found one. Yes, this is a very good book. Give me your library card.” Joey handed her the card and the librarian quickly scanned the book. “Here you go. It’s due in three weeks.”

“Thank you again,” said Joey. He walked out of the library, admiring his new book.

Turning the corner, he heard a loud honk. He looked up just as a motorcycle hit him. Joey fell hard and hit his head. The next sound he heard was an ambulance siren.

“Just lie still sir; don’t try to get up,” said an EMT. He scanned Joey’s head with some space age gadget. Joey heard beeps and other sounds. “You’re going to be fine sir. But we’re going to take you to the hospital to make sure.”

Joey went in and out of consciousness during the ride in the ambulance. Meanwhile the EMT monitored his blood pressure and breathing. He slipped away again as they rolled him into the emergency room.

A nurse attached an IV bag of fluids to his arm and an oxygen clip to his index finger. The doctor examined his eyes, pulse rate and other vital signs. “Do a CBC and keep salts and fluids in him. His breathing is fine, but let him rest. Call me when you get the blood count.”

The nurse stayed with Joey as he slept, monitoring the heart rate and oxygen levels. Another nurse returned with the doctor as he scanned the blood count numbers. He walked over to Joey, just as he was waking up.

“Mr. Wilson, I’m doctor Rivera. You were lucky it was a motorcycle. Otherwise you might be looking at broken bones or worse. It looks like you just have a concussion, and we’re going to keep you here overnight for observation. If everything is OK in the morning, we’ll release you and you can rest at home.”

Joey looked up, trying to focus his eyes on the doctor, still hazy from the bump on his head. His speech was soft but understandable.

“Do you sell stamps?”