

Exploring the 1960's



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As an archeologist I have seen many things while traveling the world. But I recently came across an interesting time capsule in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I would have never thought the 60's were an eventful decade, since it was way before my time, but boy was I amazed at what I found. The invention and distribution of birth control pills gave a new freedom to women and their sexuality. The assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, a young president that had a promising future, along with many other high profile men who had a large support following.

Woodstock in upstate New York 1969 was a huge event that spawned many other festivals featuring several day events and equally rowdy crowds throughout the U. S. And my all-time favorite movie, debuted in 1968, George Romero's Night of the Living Dead. In centuries past there have been many forms of birth control. In Egypt 1550 B. C, women would mix berries, herbs and honey as a vaginal suppository to kill sperm during intercourse.

1700's Giovanni Casanova, and Italian adventurer and author, attempted a form of female condom with sheep intestine and lemon juice. In 1839, Charles Goodyear who vulcanized rubber, created the first true condom, douche syringes, and a womb veil or a form of a diaphragm, which was later officially called a diaphragm in 1880. But, it was not until 1960 that the first birth control pill, Envid was created, and almost half a million women were taking it for actual medical purposes other than a form of not getting pregnant.

The creation of the birth control pill allowed a new freedom for women to explore their sexuality and not get pregnant, but it did not and still does not prevent sexually transmitted diseases. John Fitzgerald Kennedy, born on May
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29, 1917, was not a very healthy child. Suffering from typically ailments such as whooping cough, chicken pox, and measles, almost did not make it after a battle with scarlet fever before the age of he grew up as an Irish Catholic in Massachusetts. Though a sickly and slightly clumsy kid, being one of nine kids, he had a very dominant personality.

In 1936 he entered Harvard University playing football alongside his older brother Joe; however he was not as good of a player as his brother and suffered a back injury that would never fully heal. His brother Joe was the one with the aspirations to become the first Irish President. His senior year at Harvard, he wrote his thesis based on why Great Britain was not ready to take on Germany. It was later published, called Why England Slept. Joining the Navy after graduating, he served as Captain on a PT-109 to keep the Japanese from delivering supplies to their soldiers.

He was awarded the Medal of Honor from both the Navy and Marine Corps for his courage and bravery after a Japanese destroyer rammed the ship he was on, splitting it in 2, killing two of the twelve crew members. JFK rescued one of his shipmates who was severely burned, as well as the rest of the crew when he wrote a note on a coconut shell that was found by natives days later. In 1946, after his service time, he ran for congress in Massachusetts and won a seat. He went on to serve 3 terms and was then elected to the Senate.

He wrote a book in 1957 regarding U. S. Senators who fought for what they believed in called Profiles of Courage, which won him a Pulitzer Prize. On July 13, 1960 he was nominated by the Democratic Party to run for President of the United States, making him the youngest President (43), and was elected

the 35th President on January 20, 1961. On November 22, 1963 John Fitzgerald Kennedy, also known as Jack, was riding in a motorcade on his way to a luncheon when he was hit in the head and neck passing by the Texas School Depository in Dallas, Texas.

Also hit was the Governor, who later recovered from his serious chest wound. John F. Kennedy was an advocate for fighting poverty, racial discrimination, disease, war and wanted to be the first country to put a man on the moon. His assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, who also killed a police officer the same day, was himself assassinated by Jack Ruby, silencing the only man who could answer questions as to why Kennedy was killed. The assassination of JFK has been a controversial topic for many years and

until any documents and or photos come to light on who or what was behind his assassination we may never know. Kennedy was a big pusher for space exploration, and though he was not present to see his dream come true, on July 16, 1969, a team of three men were catapulted into space to be the first men on the moon. There have been many speculations as to whether this event even happened, even though there is video footage of the event, many question if it was actually just filmed on a Hollywood back lot.

Since that first landing there has not been another U. S. man or woman on the moon, but there have been many who have entered space for further exploration, and it is expected that there will once again be a man/woman on the moon in the future, but for a longer period of time. Music makes the world go round. No matter what race, religion, gender or age, music can make us smile, laugh, love, cry, or calm us down. So what could bring the world together to send a message of peace, cultural expression, and openness?

In 1969, more than half a million people travelled to Bethel, NY for a music festival that made sure many generations would be heard. In August 1969, over a 4 day period of time, 32 acts performed on a 600 acre dairy farm to bring awareness regarding the environment, universal human rights, free trade, and creative expression among other things. Performances by the great artists like Jimi Hendrix, the Who, Creedance Clearwater Revival and Crosby, Stiles and Nash. Many other music festivals have been established over the years but none have rivaled the original.

The Woodstock Festival has been repeated two more times over the years, once in 1994 featuring bands such as repeat performer Joe Cocker, new bands of the time like Blues Travelers, as well as established bands like Metallica, Aerosmith, and also a repeat performance by Crosby, Stiles and Nash. Again, five years later, featuring Punk bands such as George Clinton and the P. Funk Band, The Offspring, and many others. Still maintaining the education of the importance of keeping our earth clean, trade among countries, and the importance of creative expression. Another form of expression is filmography.

Over the years there have been a variety of movies created for our entertainment from comedy, drama, sciencefiction, documentaries, action and my favorite, horror. In my opinion, one of the best horror movies created was in 1968. George Romero's Night of the Living Dead was awesome. Writer and Director George Romero went on to write many other horror movies after Night of the Living Dead, such as The Crazies (1973), Dawn of the Dead (1978), Day of the Dead (1985), the screen play for Stephen Kings

Monkey Shines (1988), and two remakes of Dawn of the Dead (2004) and The Crazies (2010).

The original Night of the Living Dead, did not have a well-known cast, and they did not go on to have a lucrative movie careers. The storyline is of siblings Barbara and Johnny traveling to Pennsylvania to visit the gravesite of their father. Attacked on their trip by a strange individual, Johnny is killed and Barbara runs to a nearby abandoned farmhouse or so she believes. Inside, she meets Ben, who is also trying to escape the unusual creatures that are attempting to attack them. Survival becoming key, they search the house for items they can use to keep themselves safe.

Upon their search, they find a radio, and able find a working radio station they find out that radiation from a satellite that returned to Earth from Venus, is affecting the dead, and reanimating them, however it causes them to attack the living. Over the decades since the original screenplay, it has been reworked by many, but nothing Romero's by far is my favorite. Our future is ever changing and if we have learned anything since the beginning of time is progress is important for an ever evolving world. Upon discovering the time capsule from the 1960's, I am getting a better realization on how important change is to our future.

The evolution of birth control, from Egyptians using an all-natural vaginal suppository to the creation of the pill to give women a freedom to have more sexual experiences without the consequences of pregnancy. The progress John F Kennedy tried to push, space exploration, a peaceful cohabitation between cultures and races within the United States and trying to make a difference in the poverty stricken areas in the U. S. Being the first country to

put men on the moon and constantly exploring the universe, perhaps we are not the only ones here. And exploring the infinite creativeness of music and film, the possibilities are endless.