

Reflections on a Ghost Town Window

Time was moving backward as I stood upon the porch of the general store. Squinting against a sun that seemed to want to drive even the tourists away, I tried to make sense of the scene within. Barrels, milk cans, desks, and even a then-sophisticated clock-safe—all of these, part of *Boone and Wright General Merchandise*.

The town of Bodie California has a post-apocalyptic feel to it. Bodie appears to have been instantly abandoned, even though its decline took several years. Boasting a population of more than 2000 in 1880, the final meager migration out of town was in 1942. In one small area restricted from tourist, the stuff of life—wagons, tools, beds, anything that refused to be wedged into a departing wagon—lay abandoned on thin grass straining to survive.

Gradually, my eyes became adjusted to the light. Gazing through that window, I found myself viewing the past as if it were today. I wanted to go back to when that store was a bustle of activity. I thought of what it must have been like, and I imagined myself watching. Paint became fresh and flour sacks full as, looking through that glass, it came to life in my imagination. Had I brought the past into the present; had I been transported to the past? I cared not.

Amid my reverie, movement caught my eye—a ghost...? No, not ghosts from the 19th century, but tourists from the 21st—a reflection in the glass reminding me that today, filled with camera toting sight-seers, was right behind me.

A profound reality emerged in the scene before me. As I focused on the window pane, the ghostly image of the inside of the store was only visible within my shadow upon the glass. In a visual way, the bygone era I longed for was real only within me, and to gaze upon it I had to turn my back toward life in present time.

Oh well...what does that have to do with anything? Too much thinking. Time to move on. As I turned from my reflection, a person looking down at his smart phone nearly crashed into me. Stopping, I turned and cast a parting glance at my window, and sighed....

I figure it is good to value the past and even grow a bit nostalgic from time to time. But if I stay there too long, I risk being run over by a here and now world. Value the past; live in the present; look to the future.

See you at church, --pastor tony