

I REMEMBER BAXTER

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I wish to tell you of my delight in reading the recent article about the resurgence of the town of Baxter. Baxter was my home for many years.



My children have asked me, “Mother, what on earth did you all (meaning teenagers) do for fun in this little town?”

(Picture: The Highlander Yearbook, Baxter Seminary, Senior Joyce Cole. “Eyes of Blue, Hair of Gold and a Smile”).

Baxter was not your usual small town. It was peopled by those whose roots grow deep and still live there today, and by those who care for one another, exhibit kindness and help by sharing the burdens when they hang heavily on the shoulders of friends and family.

We were so blessed to have attended Baxter Seminary – the best high school in the state. The faculty’s zeal, dedication and love taught and continuously inspired students, not only from books but also by being positive examples. We were introduced to history, science and the arts, especially music.

Dr. and Mrs. Upperman were gifts to us from God at Baxter Seminary and their influence and teaching are still evident there. Some of the finest teachers, musicians, carpenters and medical personnel come from Baxter.

In 1937, I graduated with a class of 25 students from Baxter Grammar School (yeah, green and gold!). In two years, I will have a lovely great-granddaughter, Sydney Elizabeth Howard, who will graduate from there.

Now to answer the question, “What did you do for fun in Baxter?” Well, there were many things.

1. On Sunday afternoons, the girls might walk from town out to Highway 70. This was the only route at the time between Knoxville and Nashville. Sometimes we would walk on down to Millis’ Hospital.
2. We would skate in front of the grammar school since it has the widest sidewalk in town.
3. We often checked out books from the library.
4. We would wade in Hughes’ Creek.
5. Sometimes we would play tennis on the courts by Ivy Hall or play croquet in front of the Uppermans’ house.
6. In the spring, we would pick huge bouquets of gorgeous purple violets on the hillside near Jane Myers Boyd’s home. The house is now gone but was near the I-40 Baxter exit.
7. The only thing we did that could be considered juvenile delinquency was to walk down the railroad track west of town, go under the tracks and sit below the trestle and smoke – both boys and girls.

We enjoyed what we had, and we never thought there was much that we needed. We obeyed our parents, played with our friends, attended church and sometimes gossiped (we had no television and few radios, so what else was there to be done for entertainment?).

So, children, that was your mother’s Baxter. It’s good to see beneficial changes.

Best wishes to the Baxter Bees!

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*See Schoolyard Tales: Baxter Elementary 1938 for picture.

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