

## HISTORICAL GHOST TALES OF ODD FELLOWS CEMETERY

Putnam Co., TN

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<http://www.ajlambert.com>

As you enter the city limits of Baxter, travelling west on Buffalo Valley Road, there is a



large cemetery on the right. When you notice the cemetery, you see that it has three paved entrances, and the grounds look well maintained. Right up front is a large granite sign that reads Odd Fellows Cemetery. You think to yourself that this is an unusual name for a cemetery. We researched what Odd Fellows mean. Odd Fellows Fraternity started 300 years ago in England. It came to the United States in the early 1800's. Before the Civil War almost every state had an Odd Fellows Lodge. When

the Civil War was over, most of the southern lodges closed because the business people lost most of their money from the war and didn't have extra money to be charitable to others.

A few years later, lodges sprang up again because the communities needed help. The organizations would help widows, orphans, and people who just needed assistance. Right after World War II these organizations declined membership; possibly because of the Social Security services and people stopped socializing and started doing activities at home. The command of the IOOF is to visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead, and educate the orphans.

In 1918 a very influential minister named Joseph Daniel Harris purchased many acres on the west side of the cemetery and later purchased all the land around it. J.D. Harris was the founder of the Baxter Seminary. Many prominent people are buried at the Odd



Fellows Cemetery. Dr. Harry Upperman and his wife, Elma, are buried there, along with Thomas J. Stowers, the lone survivor of Custer's Last Stand of the 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary; many past Baxter business owners are buried there.

There are 1,065 graves; the earliest known grave is Martha Shanks Gentry who is buried in 1905. There are 58 American Veterans' graves there.

Jim Sherrell oversees the cemetery and plans to continue as long as he is able.

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\*Read more about the people and places in Putnam Co., & surrounding areas at:  
<http://www.ajlambert.com>