

Lifelong Resident Recalls A Different Atchison

(KAIR)--It can be easy for most of us to forget that the Atchison we know today was much different fifty, ten, or even five years ago. Atchison native Jo Hildman however, is not one to easily forget what the city was like when she was a child in the 30's and 40's. She says that in that time, Atchison was a thriving little town, with Benedictine College not nearly as large as it is today. The city's population was just over fifteen thousand, and that did not include students. Benedictine just having one administration building.

Hildman also says that as a child she did not have the kind of entertainment that kids today enjoy and take for granted. She and her friends had to make their own kinds of entertainment, and since there was a depression, there was no money to spare for toys. So they did things like go to the local YMCA for crafts and to take a dip in the pool.

Hildman even recalls an instance when, as a small child, she caught a glimpse of Amelia Earhart when she came into her father's restaurant to sample his famous chili. She says she was amazed at how Amelia dressed in slacks and an aviator jacket, as this was unheard of for women to do at the time.

Hildman says that people in town did recognize and know Amelia, and were very proud of her, but she did not have the fame that she has now until her last flight.

She further states that the biggest difference in Atchison between the time she grew up and now, is that there is a lack of hometown places where people can earn their living. Today, larger companies have come into the city and have taken just a little bit of that small town feel.

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