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THE PLAINFIELD NEWS-LEADER

**"CHATTIN" WITH THE HOME FOLKS'**

## MRS. LULU BARKER IS ONE OF FIRST AVON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Mrs. Lulu McCalment Barker can boast that she was one of the six pupils who made up the first graduating class of Avon High School in 1901. The school then had an enrollment of about 100.

Mrs. Barker and her brother, Viri McCalment, live the third house from the top of the big hill on the Old Rockville Road. She has lived all her life on the same farm except for the first year after she was married.

Mrs. Barker was born in 1881 and started to school at the age of five at the old King School located on the north side of U.S. 36 east of Abners Creek. The teacher, Sadie Dickerson, rode a horse to school and would leave it at the McCalment's. Lulu's mother said she might as

well start to school since she could go along with the teacher.

Lulu attended the King School until the 7th grade when she transferred to Avon. She walked the two miles to Avon School when the mud was so deep that the children would go single file and hold onto the fence in order to walk.

In 1918, Lulu married Charles Barker from Valley Mills. Mr. Barker, who passed away in 1961, was a carpenter by trade. She has two children, Mary Jane Beeman of Indianapolis and Warren Barker of Andrews Addition, and three grandchildren.

Mrs. Barker's grandparents, John and Laura Barnett, settled on 100 acres west of Avon in 1849. Her parents were Thomas

and Sidney Barnett McCalment. Mrs. Barker's father was an expert speller at the time when words were spelled in syllables. He went to all the spelling contests, even walking to Mooresville to participate. Mr. McCalment usually won the contests and thought everyone should be a good speller.

In recalling memories of her youth, Mrs. Barker told of a man with long white whiskers, nicknamed Coaloil Johnny, who drove a horsedrawn wagon with a tank and peddled kerosene from farm to farm at 25¢ for 5 gallons.

Living along Rockville Road brought many experiences. Tollgates were in operation at Hardscrabble and at Walker's place east of Danville with the toll being 3¢. Jane Foggarty who was in charge of the Hardscrabble Tollgate, used a hand crank to raise the pole from across the road.

U.S. 36 was the route for freight wagons from Indianapolis to Danville. Many nights her father had to hitch up his horses to help pull the freight wagons up the hill after the freight wagons had stalled.

Bill Adams, an elderly man from Hardscrabble, would drive 50 to 60 head of cattle from Indianapolis to Danville and North Salem with just two dogs to help him. The cattle were being taken to farms for fattening; then later he would drive them back. Often times he would drive them into the McCalment barn lot and stay overnight.