

## **FROM SPELLING BEES TO LITTLE LEAGUE: THE YOUTH OF POWDER SPRINGS**

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NARRATOR: As members of a rural farming community, the children of early Powder Springs spent most of their time helping with farm and household chores. However, they still found time to play with their friends and enjoy their childhoods, often using their imaginations instead of toys.

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ABERNATHY: Well, we had chores to do at home, because Daddy was farming. We never did milk, but I would go out to the barn, and it was my job to hold the cow's tail so she didn't swish Mama in the face when she was milking!

NORRIS: Children just had to help out. We had chores to do when I was growing up...washed dishes, helped cook. I knew how to cook. Anything, housecleaning, anything that had to be done in the house, it was my responsibility.

NORRIS: When I was growing up, we used to get out, and we'd find broken dishes or we'd sweep us out a place and make our playhouses and have certain things. It might be a rock for some furniture or something in our playhouse; we didn't have to have toys...in fact in my early years, I don't remember getting anything for Christmas other than maybe an apple and an orange and a banana and maybe some nuts or something like that. We didn't know what it was to get all these toys that children get now.

ABERNATHY: Most of the children had chores to do, they didn't have that much free time to play like they do now with the TV and computers and things like that.

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NARRATOR: As Powder Springs developed from a farming community into a busy suburb, children were able to spend more time playing and less time helping around the house.

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J. COCHRAN: We went exploring in the woods, we played baseball with the tennis ball out in the middle of the cul-de-sac with all the little neighborhood kids.

BEAVERS: The main thing I remember is kids still played outside when my child was young; they'd go outside and play in the slip-n-slide, or play in the front yard, run back and forth to each others' houses, ride bikes.

J. COCHRAN: My two younger brothers were able to play baseball and they were in Little League for a while. They seemed to enjoy it, they were very good at it, they always made the All Star Teams and my dad of course either coached or co-coached all of their teams.

L. COCHRAN: Well, being that I'm a pediatric nurse, I see kids, and of course the things that they are involved in, with more electronics and things like that. It seems like a lot of kids, you know, to get their attention their parent has to tell them, 'can you turn off your iPod or your little hand held game and talk to the nurse?'

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NARRATOR: No matter the generation, school has always been an important part of life for Powder Springs children. From the Springville School of 1840, to the Powder Springs School which closed in 1988, to McEachern High School which still stands today, students in the town have always had access to a quality education.

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NORRIS: Back then, we didn't have buses to carry us. We had to walk to school, and I remember walking on the dirt roads, red clay roads, when the ice would be spewed up and your feet would just be frozen when you got to where you were going. You always wore as much clothes as you could to try to stay warm.

ABERNATHY: On Friday afternoons, in the afternoon we'd come back in from recess and we had a spelling bee very Friday. And our class was about equally divided with boys and girls, so we were competing against each other. We just thought that was great fun, to have a spelling bee. I don't guess we comprehended that she was really teaching us spelling at the same time, but we really enjoyed that, because us girls usually beat the boys!

J. COCHRAN: I remember my best friend and I, Brian, we would often skip school around lunchtime and head over to Johnny's Bar B Que, and he would always get the ribs and I would always get the pork sandwich. And there was even this one time where he had to fake sick and I had to pretend to be his dad over the phone so we could eat at Johnny's, because he would get a Johnny's craving quite often and that was the normal hangout for us, was Johnny's Bar B Que.

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NARRATOR: As children face a more challenging future, adults in Powder Springs remember their childhoods, and wish that their children could have experienced childhood the way that they did.

D. BODIFORD: Just hearing about his sons growing up and walking downtown to get an ice cream cone after dinner, things that you don't see anymore.

R. BODIFORD: It was a lot of fun growing up, and as I say, the kids today won't know anything like that.

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