

A Slight Centennial

By Jeane Smitherman

Shave a hundred years off Salem Academy and College history . . . return to the days when gentlemen signed a flourishing "Esq." to their names . . . when ladies were encased in corsets, and then puffed out in billowy blouses, sweeping skirts, and bustles . . . return to the days when Indian Territory was open for settlement . . . when Southern tempers were growing warm . . . and Salem girls came to school in great family carriages . . .

Salem would not be changed much from the 1956 year; for we would still have:

Payment of fees—Mr. Babington, "Esq." will be sorely pressed in sending both his daughters to Salem . . . The total cost, including board, tuition, clothes (!) and laundry, is 250 dollars per year for each girl. Of course, Helen may not be able to remain because of her unseemly short hair. A foreign student—Christy Menzel, who in this year of 1856, rode all the way from Indian Territory to come to Salem . . .

Construction in progress—This is the year we remove ourselves into Main Hall, complete with the gymnasium in the basement . . .

Faculty advisers—the students are divided into little "families" of several girls who are supervised by "Tutoresses." Tutor Africa has become a favorite with Deep

South girls.

Nights out—Lu Adams, Beth Goodwin, and Gay Lynn Smith are the envy of their less adventurous classmates. They have wheedled and cajoled Tutoress Austin to accompany them on three walks to the cemetery after dinner.

Class and registration difficulties—Puddin' Van Avery and Sis Bridgers viscously vying for the last vacancy in Tutoress Byrd's early afternoon Embroidery Class . . . Ann Luttrell and Betsy Geurant clashing over Tutor Cosby's astronomy and Tutor Campbell's Taxidermy . . .

Boots Cahoon and Bebe Johns on the outs with Tutor Shewmake because he insists they should be in the Painting Class rather than the Monochromatic Drawing Course . . .

Tutor Sandresky pulling his handsome beard because Rosemary Laney gave up pinafore for lessons on the melodeon under Tutor Mueller . . .

Nancy Jean Carroll causing Tutor Peterson great loss of joviality and weight by threatening to register for Guitar lessons under Tutor Heidemann . . .

We would have all these things, but we couldn't have:

Tom's, the post office, the student center, bridge games in Clewell basement, . . . a music building with an elevator in it to get Abby Davis lodged between third and fourth floors . . . Dr. Gramley censoring all our mail . . . Heavens, let's get back to 1956, and lock our stationery boxes!

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Looking back over the past century, to Salem as she was in 1856, produces some giggles from Mary Avera, (left), and the Babington twins, Helen and Robin. Even though the lace shirtwaists and bustles of "the good old days" may seem romantic, and courses like Embroidery and Melodeon more attractive than Trig and Organic Chemistry at the moment—who would trade college weekends and sweaters and skirts?

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