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BYC In The 1920s

How it all began

Special to The Times-Union

Baker **Youth Club** is looking back on its 85-plus years of history with a multi-part series that will appear once a month in the Times-Union.

In 1926, George Bramwell **Baker** challenged the Warsaw Rotary **Club** and the city of Warsaw to start a Boy's **Club** in Warsaw. Baker was an East Coast banker that summered in Winona Lake and was involved with Boy's **Clubs** of America in the Boston area.

He served on the board of directors and was president for his local chapter.

Baker pledged \$1,000 per year and the Rotary and City of Warsaw matched his pledge and Warsaw Boy's **Club** was founded. In August 1926 the first Board of Directors, JE Beyer, Lloyd Johnson, Chas H. Ker, James Laffel, Borr Maish, Dr. Angus McDonald hired Pete Thorn as **Baker Boy's Club's** first director and **Baker Boy's Club** was started. Thorn was a long-time teacher/truant officer and coach for Warsaw schools.

Thorn was a towering man that demanded respect while mentoring young boys through the involvement in activities.

If you were a young man and grew up in Warsaw from the 1920s through 1950s you attended BBC and were influenced by Pete Thorn in a positive way.

Baker Boy's **Club** was first housed on the top floor of Sharp's Hardware store downtown Warsaw.

In speaking with Robert "Coach" Lichtenwalter, the **Club** operated out of the hardware store where the boys played checkers, carom (a game played with their knuckles), bumper pool, read comic books, had a room where they painted mail boxes and bird houses and played basketball in a 10x10 area with 2x4's from the ceiling to the floor made out of chicken wire.

This is the first of six articles that will chronicle the history of **Baker Boy's Club** during their 86-year history.



Pictured are Baker Youth Club members in 1929. Eighty percent of boys in Warsaw were members of the club back then. Photo provided.



Pictured is the location of the first Baker Youth Club located at the former Sharp's Hardware building located on West Center Street across from the Kosciusko County Courthouse. Photo Provided.