

Soldier, KS



Lena Loretta (Hittle) Baxter, 94, passed away Sunday, January 13, 2019, at Plaza West Care Center, Topeka, Kansas after a long illness. Lena was born June 11, 1924, near Goff, Kansas, the sixth daughter of Robert Abraham and Bessie (Curtis) Hittle. She was the last of thirteen siblings. Lena attended Bancroft and Goff Schools until her senior year and later succeeded in obtaining her GED when she was in her 50's. She married Fred Baxter on October 10, 1942. Just short of 60 years of marriage, Fred passed away on February 14, 2002.

Lena was a lifetime homemaker, worked at Slimaker Dress Factory in Holton, Kansas from 1956 to 1963, a nurses aid at Holton Hospital from 1963 to 1969, and at Pyramid Manufacturing in Onaga from 1970-1975. Her health caused her to quit outside employment, although as her health permitted she was a cook and cleaned houses for many years, and for many years had been a caregiver outside the home. Her early work ethic was shown when, at age 9, she was a caregiver outside the home to assure that she had food and clothing. Lena was always busy with crafts, baking and helping anyone who needed help. Her cinnamon rolls were enjoyed by all who knew her.

Fred and Lena had three children, Jim and his wife, Beverly, of Holton, Kansas; Herb (who passed away in 2002) and his wife, Linda, of Onaga, Kansas; and Barbara and her husband Dan (who passed away in 2018) of Topeka, Kansas. She had seven grandchildren: Michael, Christi, Matthew, Lucas, Brock, Brandi and Heather, and fifteen great-grandchildren. Her greatest joy in life was her family.

Lena, Fred and Fred's mother, Christianna, lived on a farm outside of Goff until 1966 when they moved to Soldier. Fred's mother passed away in 1981 and lived with them until the last three years of her life when a fall caused her to live in a nursing home. While living in Soldier, Lena was a very active member of the community. In 1981, she was responsible for the idea and the beginning of the annual Memorial Day lunches at the Soldier City Hall, with the assistance of the So & So Club, 4-H and other Soldier residents. She was a member of the So & So Club for nearly 70 years and a very active member of the Soldier Methodist Church Unit. She and Fred moved to Southern Heights in Holton in 1990, but she continued to return to Soldier to help with community functions and always to help with the annual Memorial Day lunches.

In 2006 her health was failing, requiring her to move to assisted living; she took up residence at the Red Bud Assisted Living in Onaga until 2013 when as a result of a fall, she was required to go to long term care in Topeka and give up her independence. While living in Onaga she became a member of the St. Paul's Lutheran Church at Duluth, Kansas, where she was baptized. She returned to Soldier when her health permitted to help with community projects.

All who were acquainted with Lena knew her as one who would always do anything for anyone but never expected help in return. She had a genuine love for people, especially her family, and as long as her body would permit, continued to complete crocheting and sewing projects for her family and friends. She was a strong believer that you never give up and until her last breath continued that passion. All who knew her considered it a privilege to have had the opportunity to be part of her life; she will be greatly missed. She gave so much to many. She was a caregiver in the true sense of the word and never liked having to be the one receiving the care.

Funeral Services will be 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, January 16, 2019 at the Mercer Funeral Home in Holton. Burial will follow in the Fairview Cemetery, Goff, Kansas. Family will greet friends from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. until service time. Memorials may be given to either St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Duluth, Kansas or Words and Memories, a group at Plaza West Care Center to which Lena belonged since its beginning, c/o Mercer Funeral Home, P.O. Box 270, Holton, KS 66436. To leave a special message for the family, please visit www.mercerfuneralhomes.com.