

MARY JO LAW JOHNSON
635 First Avenue So., Baxter, Putnam Co., TN



Mary Jo (Law) Johnson a graduate of Baxter Seminary in 1941, Mary Jo came from the Masonic Home in Nashville for four years. Still a resident of Baxter today, she can remember making cornbread for sixty people. She said, “Most of the kids in the dormitory were from the Putnam County area. In those days, teenagers didn’t have buses.

(Pictured left: Mary Jo (Law) Johnson, 1941 Highlander Yearbook, senior, Baxter Seminary, Baxter, Putnam Co., TN. “She tells you flatly what her mind is.”)

In order to get an education, you had to stay in the dormitory. Many would have been deprived of a high school education had it not been for the school’s allowing students to work their way through.

“The education given was equivalent to a college education today. This was during the Depression. Teachers were glad to get jobs. Some teachers had their PhD’s but they were willing to work for their room and board, and receive a salary of \$50 a month.

“The boys and girls on campus didn’t gumble with their work. Everybody knew what they had to do, and they did it! There was no point in grumbling—nobody to complain to!

“One year after coming home from a class picnic, I became very ill, later to be diagnosed with scarlet fever. Miss Hill became my nurse. She moved me to the old Bain house, set up a bed for me, and a bed, table, and chair for herself. For two weeks, she nursed me, fed me, changed my clothes and linens, and made sure I recuperated! She even sewed (by hand) a dress while I was resting and getting well.

“I remember traveling with Dr. Upperman to functions where he spoke and my quartet sang specials. Dr. Harry like to keep time to our music on the steering wheel as he drove along.

“At one time, Dr. Harry owned a Bible belonging to a survivor of the sunken Titanic. He gave it to the Seminary library. Later it was donated to the Upper Room, Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Church, Nashville, near Scarritt College. (*The Bible was owned by Rev. R. J. Bateman*).

“A few years ago, an A. C. L. U. committee saw a portrait of Jesus Christ hanging in the old Upperman High School, now renamed Cornerstone Middle School. Pressure was exerted to make a change. Now the painting is located in the Baxter Methodist Church.

“The original charter which formed the Baxter Seminary establishment in 1910 is framed and hanging in the 1999 Upperman High School, Highway 70, Baxter.”



Note: Mary Jo Law married John T. Johnson (J. T.), Baxter Seminary 1937. J. T. was the brother of Louis and Willard Johnson. She served as the Baxter Seminary Secretary for many years. Mary Jo has two daughters. At present, her daughter Helen Daniels is the Alumni Secretary.

(Pictured: John T. Johnson, Highlander Yearbook, Baxter Seminary, 1937 senior, Baxter, Putnam Co., TN. John T. Johnson was married 1st to Frances Elizabeth Maddux, born 20 August 1920 – died 21 May 1942, buried in the Maddux Cemetery, Buffalo Valley, Putnam Co., TN).

Source: All Roads Lead to Baxter by Anita Cunningham Mitchell, pg. 256 & 257.

*See The Titanic and the Bateman Bible: Schoolyard Tales at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>