

Baxter, Tennessee 1924
By Quimby Dyer, Cookeville, TN
(Putnam Co. Library, Cookeville, TN)

Baxter Tennessee

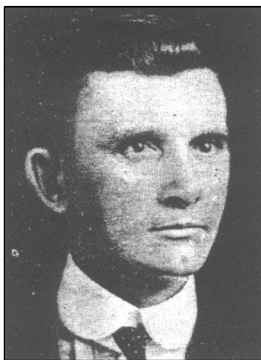
Location:

Baxter has a population of nine hundred people and is the principal town in the western section of Putnam County, located on the Tennessee Central Railroad eighty-one-miles east of Nashville and one hundred and twenty-nine miles west of Knoxville. The town is well situated, as there are six public roads leading in every direction; also a good pike leading to Nashville and all intermediate points. It is the trade center for parts of Jackson, DeKalb, Smith and the western end of Putnam County. The business men are progressive, wide-awake and honest in their dealings, which is of inestimable value in the building of any town.

Climate:

Baxter has a climate not excelled anywhere in the South. Its water is the best and purest freestone and chalybeate that runs from "Mother Earth." The cool breeze from Caney Fork river and the valley below make the Spring and Summer delightful. The nights are so cool in mid-summer that covering is necessary. In fact all the seasons of the year are as good as you will find in the world.

Municipality:



Hon. Van D. Nunally, Mayor

Baxter was incorporated in 1915. Hon. J.E. Oliver was the first mayor and under his administration most of the ordinances governing the town were formulated. Hon. V.D. Nunally, the present mayor, is serving his second term. He is progressive and doing much toward the building and improvement of the town. At present he is having a beautiful park made in the business part of the town which will add much to the comfort of the citizens. The mayor is ably assisted in his work by V.B. York, recorder, W.R. Bradford, Lawrence Grace, D.B. Boyd and Jas. L. Sadler, Aldermen.

Baxter was formerly known as Mine Lick, but the name was changed in 1902 in honor of Jere Baxter, the builder of the Tennessee Central.

Business Enterprises and Factories:

Baxter is a great shipping point. Last year there was shipped to various parts of the United States and Europe 125 cars of pulp wood, 100 cars of acid wood, 150

cars of poles, 200 cars of crossties, 50 cars of lumber and spokes, 35 cars of handles, 30 cars of eggs, 40 cars of poultry, and 25 cars of hogs and cattle. Baxter has one bank, electric light plant, two wholesale produce houses, one wholesale grocery store, one hotel, and a number of boarding houses; one telephone exchange, one long distance service with copper circuit, one Western Union Telegraph office, with money order service to all parts of the United States and Canada; one express and freight office, six general stores, two hardware stores, two grocery stores, one drug store, one millinery store, one flour exchange, two wholesale and retail crosstie and pole companies, one large handle factory that exports goods to all parts of Europe; one large saw and planing mill, one garage, Standard Oil station, cotton gin, two restaurants, one barber shop, and several other enterprises. Baxter has a live Business Mens Club and this club is at all times willing and anxious to have good people locate within their midst.

Land Adjacent to Baxter:

The land adjacent to Baxter is well adapted to the raising of corn, cotton and tobacco. Vegetables of all kinds grow well and a ready market is to be had for everything grown. There are several nurseries near Baxter, the Baxter Nursery being the largest and doing a business of \$30,000 annually. All of the nurseries do a business of \$75,000 per annum. The dairy business is just beginning to be developed and will in a short time be the greatest source of income that the farmer has. For the raising of chickens the country surrounding Baxter is unsurpassed.

Social Life of Baxter:

The citizens of Baxter are a high type of pure Anglo-Saxon, law abiding and moral. The Masons, Odd Fellows and other secret orders are fully represented, with large memberships. Church clubs, societies, get-together meetings and other forms of social relationship are to be found. In all social gatherings you will find perfect harmony and good feeling.

Churches:

Baxter is a town of deep religious environments. There are three fine churches: The Methodist, Church of Christ, and Presbyterian. All have regular services and are growing in membership. The Sunday schools are well attended and interesting in every particular. Perfect harmony and good fellowship exist among the churches.

Grammer School:

Baxter is considered one of the best educational towns of its size in the state. The grammar school is in session nine months in the year and free to all children living in the corporate limits. The school has a sufficient number of efficient teachers to give individual attention to the pupils. The school has an enrollment of over three hundred. A large and beautiful building with modern class rooms and practically fire proof has recently been completed.



Rev. Harry L.
Upperman
President

Baxter Seminary:

Fifteen years ago Rev. J.D. Harris, one of the leading citizens, advanced the idea of establishing a school of higher education, and with the co-operation of the citizens Baxter Seminary was founded in the year 1910 by the joint action of the Central Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Board of Education of said church. While it was located by the Conference, that action was endorsed by the Board of Education, and the school is under its direction and control. The majority of the Trustees are elected by the Central Tennessee Conference, but the majority of them must be laymen. The institution is chartered by the State of Tennessee. It is

recognized by the State as a Standard Four Year High School.

Baxter Seminary has served the people all through this part of Tennessee without regard to denomination or church membership, and has sought to give the best education possible to all. The Seminary now has the following department: Fully certified and equipped High School department, of A grade, giving standard diplomas and certificates; Religious education department, also giving standard work and certificates; Home Economic department, giving standard certificates; Smith-Hughes Agriculture department and Extension Work, with standard equipment; Teacher Training classes, giving standard teachers' certificates; Music department with large studio and well qualified instructor; Commercial department with the same rating; Physical Education, including athletic teams and equipment, with standard rating coach.

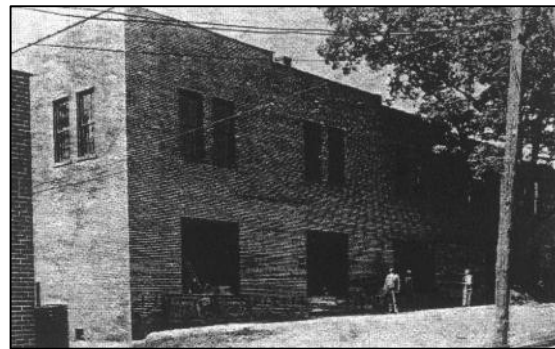
Baxter Seminary graduates its students so that they are able to enter college or go out and earn a living without feeling inferior to any one else and its graduates are now known though the country. The Seminary has a Boy's Dormitory, well equipped with a large number of students and teachers in it; also a Girls' Dormitory likewise equipped, while the Boarding department is under a capable Supervisor and Matron, and the boys and girls who live at the Seminary are able to work a large part of their way through school. No boy or girl is ever turned away because of poverty.

The campus of the Seminary is very beautiful, being twelve acres in extent, part of which is wooded, the rest being cleared. There are two large main buildings, one being the regular school rooms and Girls' Dormitory, the other being the apartments for various teachers and the Boy's Dormitory. There are also houses for cars, coal house, chicken houses, and much of the cleared land is under cultivation for raising food for winter use. The Board of Trustees and the President hope to be able to materially increase the room for the use of students and have other buildings needed badly on the campus. Many of the improvements of the Seminary have been and are being made through gifts of friends in all parts of the United States. Several organizations in various parts of the country have been formed to promote the welfare of Baxter Seminary.

President Harry Lee Upperman is one of the most untiring workers to be found in any school in the country. Through his efforts the Seminary is becoming widely known. Prof. Upperman is a graduate of Syracuse University, has traveled and studied abroad, making him well equipped for the building of a great school.



Baxter Grammar School



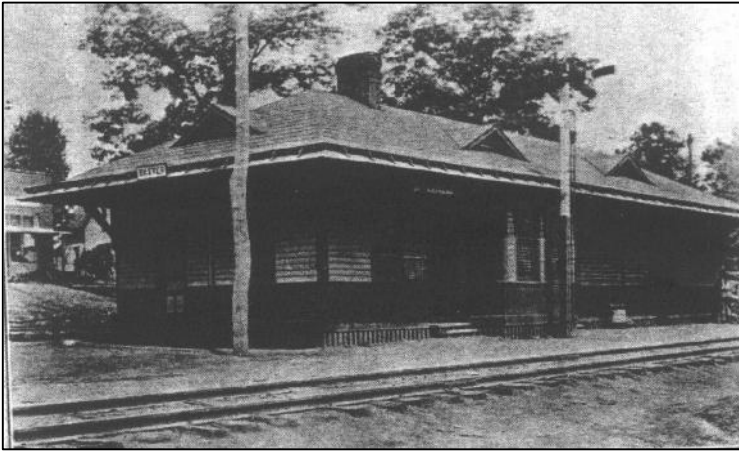
William Grover & W. T. Anderson Hardware Company Building
Picture courtesy of Charles Nunally



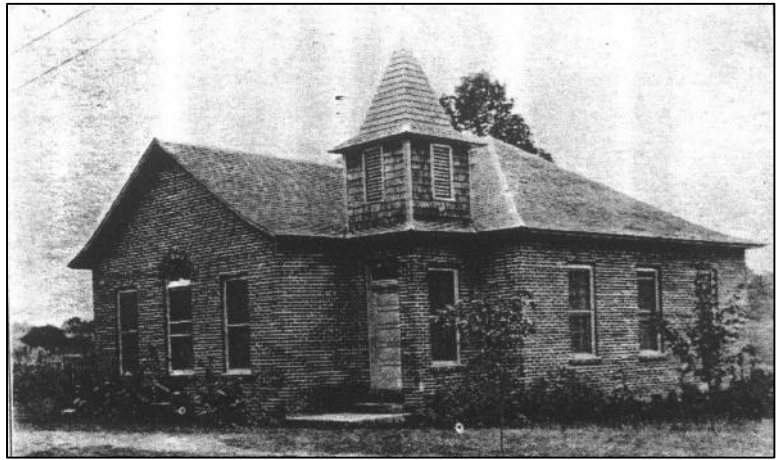
Baxter Bank & Trust Co. Building
Picture courtesy of Charles Nunally



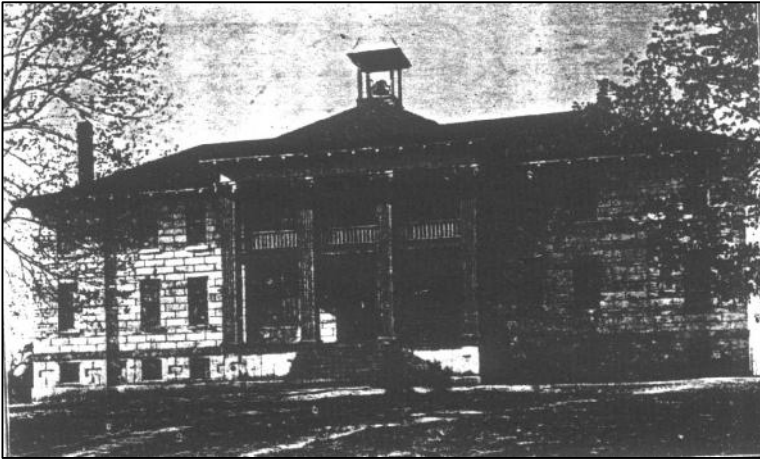
Prospective customers examine the John Deere farm equipment display in front of the William Grover & W. T. Anderson Hardware Store in Baxter in 1919. William Grover was at one time a cashier at the Baxter Bank & Trust shown in this picture right-hand corner. William Grover is the man standing in front of the door to the building next to the Baxter Bank & Trust.
*See Family Sheet for Lewis Monroe Anderson.



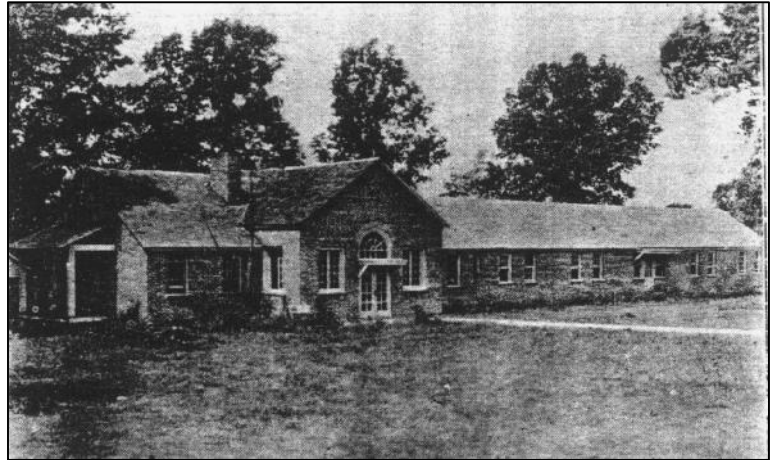
Railroad Station, Baxter
Picture courtesy of Charles Nunally



Church of Christ Baxter



Main Building, Baxter Seminary



Dormitory, Baxter Seminary



Baxter Hotel
Photo courtesy of Charles Nunally



Baxter Hotel was built in 1905 by Cham Vestal. It closed in 1928, but was used for several years as a home for various families.
Photo courtesy of Jim Heard

The Tennessee Central Railroad
pg. 97 & 98
Putnam Count Tennessee 1850 –1870 by Mary DeLozier

The Crawfords pioneered in railroading in the Upper Cumberland and continued to own the N&K until 1902. Jere Baxter, scion of a respected Tennessee family, trained in the law, dabbler in mining and rails, by connecting their small line with larger rail networks, completed the Crawfords' work

Known as the "silver-tongued promoter," Baxter chartered the Tennessee Central (TC) in 1893. Ambitiously, he planned to build a railroad from the north-flowing Tennessee River in West Tennessee to Harriman, an important stop on the Southern Railroad. Such a line would give the Upper Cumberland access to markets throughout the East. Primarily because the L&N and the NC&StL held a monopoly on track out of Nashville, Baxter faced nearly insurmountable obstacles. First, following a national recession in 1893, financial difficulties forced the TC into receivership. Baxter, however, formed a new company and quickly bought the enterprise back. But he was unable to acquire rails west of Nashville or the NC&StL road from Nashville to Lebanon. Eventually the TC built its own track on that latter stretch.

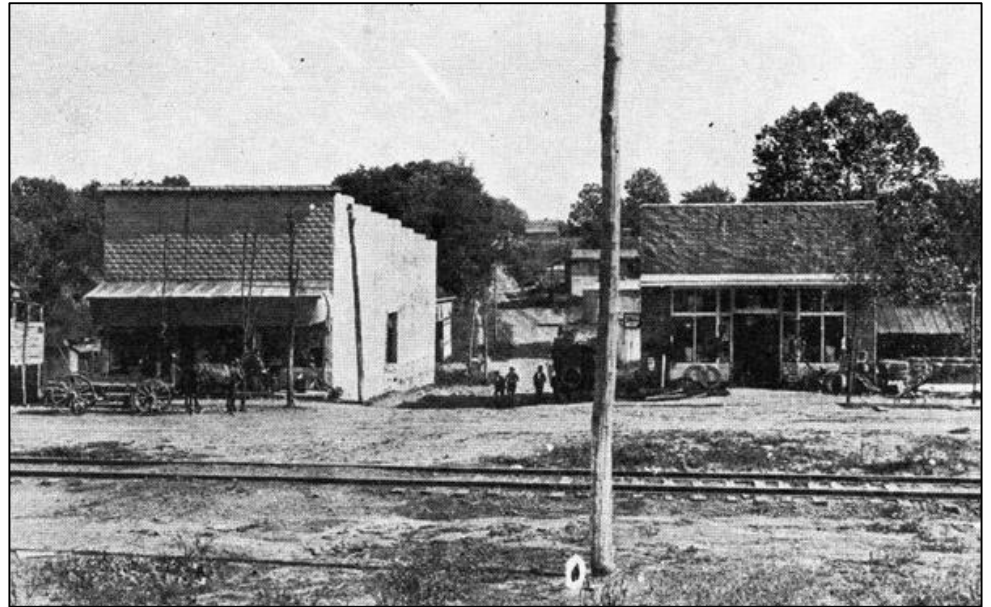
Baxter was more successful on the eastern end of the line. When he began building his road from Monterey to Harriman in 1893, he was determined and ruthless. He persuaded Cumberland and Roane counties to buy \$200,000 worth of TC bonds. He leased convicts from the Tennessee State Prison to lay the track, housed them at Monterey, and exploited them inhumanely. They worked for one dollar a day, plus food, which consisted primarily of dried beans and sowbelly. Dr. Robert Lee Ray, who had just begun his medical practice in the mountain town and had a contract with the railroad company to care for the construction workers, insisted that the diet be supplemented with greens. One morning in 1894 Dr. Ray heard the crew boss berating the men for tardiness. He examined the workers and diagnosed their "laziness" as smallpox. Over the objections of the engineer, he sent a train back to Nashville for vaccine. In spite of the medical efforts of the physician and the humanitarian work of his wife, who took food to the quarters of the sick, many died before the epidemic ran its course.

By 1898 the TC completed track from Monterey to Emory Gap, near Harriman, in 1900 to Harriman, and by 1901 to Knoxville. In 1902 Baxter bought the N&K. Eventually the TC comprised 251 miles of rails, connecting with the Southern at Harriman; the Illinois Central at Hopkinsville, Kentucky; and the L&N at Clarksville. Baxter became the hero of the Upper Cumberland. Putnam Countians named a town for him, and in 1902, when a group unsuccessfully attempted to form a new county from portions of Putnam, Overton, Fentress, and Cumberland, it proposed naming it "Baxter."



Putnam County Herald Newspaper – 3/2/1904. Vol. II, No. 4, Page 6:
JERE BAXTER: Col. Jere Baxter died in a hospital at Nashville February 29,
from kidney disease. We hope to publish a sketch of his brilliant career, in our
next issue.

Colonel Jere Baxter, President of Tennessee Central
Railroad for whom Baxter was named.
He died in 1904 at age 52.



Street scene about 1920, downtown, Baxter.
Notice the railroad tracks in the front of the town.
Picture courtesy of Charles Nunally



Nunally's Drug Store in Baxter in 1953. This drug store took over the Baxter Bank & Trust building.
People pictured,
Van D. Nunally Sr., man standing on the left. The little boy could be Charles Nunally or his brother
Van D. Nunally Jr. The woman and little girl is probably his wife and daughter.
Photo courtesy of Charles Nunally

Mine Lick, Putnam Co, TN
by G.W. Brown
Baxter Beacon – Vol. 5 #39 – July 1996

The town know as Mine Lick started around a general store located as a stop for the Railroad. As it grew its name became Ai (pronounced as Ay-Eye) then Baxter in honor of Jere Baxter, an influential leader with the railroad. In the 30's it was a rural community of around 600 population. As its number grew so did the city. Cham Vestel built the hotel Baxter. In the forties that was Baxter Seminary that became Upperman. Restaurants, roller rink and movie theater followed.

Today Baxter is a nice little town. There are three restaurants the Bee-Hive, First Run Barbecue and Wagonwheel. Around town at each corner churches of all denominations are found. There is an elementary and a high school through rumor has it that it may soon close. There are two factories, two grocers, druggist, two funeral homes, two banks, laundry, auto parts, barber, movie rental, game room, senior center and a flea market on the edge of town. Ai, you have come a long way since Mine Lick.

Baxter

Putnam County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Across the Blue Ridge Mountains, pioneers from North Carolina came in covered wagons to see what the "West" had to offer. Those who chose to stay in what in now Baxter saw that the surrounding land promised both livelihood and respite.

Over the years, the settlers' land became their children's land, fields became farms, and trails became roads. The railroad left its mark; ties and beams remain to tell an outsider's recollection of a quaint little town in Putnam County. Still, many descendants of the original settler remain because Baxter is still "Off the beaten path," but accessible.

The Dispatch, Cookeville, TN, July 22, 1976



This picture made on March 25, 1918, is of W.G. & W.T. Anderson's Store and of Baxter Bank & Trust Co. in Baxter. Anderson's store was displaying its John Deere farm equipment. The two building occupied by the farm supply store became, on the left, Anderson's Department Store and on the right, Three Big Stores in One, 1919. At the present time Baxter Recreation

Center, owned by Silas Anderson, occupies the two W.G. and W.T. Anderson's buildings; and Nunally's Drugs is located at the Baxter Bank and Trust Building.

William Thomas Anderson – b. 1 November 1874, Boma, Putnam Co., TN
d. 24 December 1926, TN – *Eye Cancer.*

s/o Riley Anderson & Elizabeth Gentry – b/o Lewis Monroe Anderson – William Grover was the s/o Lewis Monroe Anderson & Matilda Wallace.

md 11 November 1900, Nota "Notie" Florence Kinnard –

b. 8 October 1883, Indian Creek, Silver Pt., TN – d. 14 July 1973, Boma, TN
d/o Pleasant Bohanan "Pleas" & Margaret Elizabeth (Lowe) Kinnard

Both Buried: + Smellage Cemetery, Boma, TN – *Simplicity * Loyathy*

Own a grocery store in Boma, TN, 1951. His nephew, William Grover Anderson worked for him as a young man. They became partners & opened a department store in Baxter, said to be the largest in Putnam Co., TN. They then became undertakers & sold farm equipment.

**See Chapter 2 for complete family listings.*

Source: Siftings from Putnam County Tennessee by Mary Hopson: pg. 13.

HISTORY OF BAXTER by Solon Wayne Lowe

Sometime, during the 1850's the state of Tennessee granted Quinton Lowe, the grandfather of Jasper Davis and great grandfather of Solon Grover Lowe, a large acreage of land for assistance in the war of 1812. This grant was signed by governor William Trousdale Lowe, a soldier, had furnished his own guns and horses during the war. His homeplace was located where the Baxter Elementary School now stands.

For years the land where the town of Baxter situated was known as Lowe Lands. It was first called Aiyee, A-I. However, sometime before the grant the name had been changed to Mine Lick, and this territory was considered to be part of Jackson County. The Lowe property was recorded as including the west fork of Mine lick and crossing the Buffalo Valley Road.

In 1870 Betty Wade bought one hundred acres upon which she and Tobe Wade each built log cabins. After a few years they abandoned the property and went west. They later sold it to Giles Bradford for \$80 plus court cost.

After the establishment of the railroad in 1890, Joe Gentry bought a lot upon he operated a general store. A little later Robert "Bob" Oscar Gentry, s/o William Newton "Esq. Bill" Gentry & Elizabeth "Eliza" Ann Taylor, did likewise. These were the first business houses in town. Next, Joe Jones purchased three or four acres from a Mr. Elder and established a sawmill and distillery. Soon after, Mr. Brusher located an axe handle factory, the largest establishment which James A. Isbell later purchased and concluded. Cham Vestal established a furniture

factory. The sawmill and lumber business of Hill and Route was another big industry. Mr. John E. Oliver built a large frame hotel. The first school was a small frame building constructed in 1895.

In 1902 the town changed its name to Baxter in honor of Jere Baxter, an engineer with the Tennessee Central Railroad. Baxter was incorporated in 1915 with John Oliver as its first mayor. The town became a trade center of several businesses. The main crops were corn, cotton, and tobacco as well as dairy and poultry farming.

The first church in Baxter was the Presbyterian Church, followed by the Methodist Church and then the Church of Christ in 1905. There were several doctors in Baxter at this time. The town was also served by a traveling dentist who visited several times a year. His name was Dr. Lime, and his office was located above what is now Campbell's grocery.

V.D. Nunally, the father of our local druggist, Charles Nunally, was the second mayor of Baxter. He served two consecutive terms.

The high school, Baxter Seminary, was founded in 1910 by the joint action of the Central Tennessee Conference and Methodist Church.

All of this plus more began with Quinton Lowe, a man who made history not only in war but also a town. Today Lowe lies buried in a cemetery just below the school.

Quinton Lowe

b. 1806, NC

d. 1857, Baxter, Putnam Co., TN

Wife: Elizabeth Williams

Father: Nathan or Aaron Lowe

Mother: Martha Jackson

Buried: Quinton Lowe Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN

Elizabeth (Williams) Lowe

b. 1809, NC

d. 1870, Boma, Putnam Co., TN

Husband: Quinton Lowe

Father:

Mother:

Buried: Quinton Lowe Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN

I. Alfred Lowe

b. 8 June 1827, NC

d. 30 May 1894, Baxter, Putnam Co., TN

Wife: Mary Clark

Father: Quiton Lowe
Mother: Elizabeth Williams
Quinton Lowe Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN

Mary (Clark) Lowe
b. ca. 1827, NC
d. ca. 1890/before July 1902, Boma, Putnam Co., TN
Husband: I. Alfred Lowe
Father:
Mother:
Buried: Quinton Lowe Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN

Jasper Davis Lowe
b. 17 November 1861, Baxter, Putnam Co., TN
d. 19 December 1950
Wife: Margaret E.
Father: I. Alfred Lowe
Mother: Mary Clark
Buried: Boma Cemetery, Boma, Putnam Co., TN

Margaret Ellen (Conway) Lowe
b. 30 July 1861
d. 28 December 1939
Husband: Jasper Davis Lowe
Father:
Mother:
Buried: Boma Cemetery, Boma, Putnam Co., TN

Solon Grover Lowe
b. 10 September 1892, Boma, TN
d. 11 December 1980, Boma, TN
Wife: Vianna Elizabeth Parker
Father: Jasper Davis Lowe
Mother: Margaret Ellen Conway
Buried: Boma Cemetery, Boma, Putnam Co., TN

Vianna Elizabeth (Parker) Lowe
b. 10 December 1894
d. 24 December 1981
Husband: Solon Grover Lowe
Father: Johnnie Benjamin Parker
Mother: Mary Lou Ashe
Buried: Boma Cemetery, Boma, Putnam Co., TN