

# LAURA JOHNSON

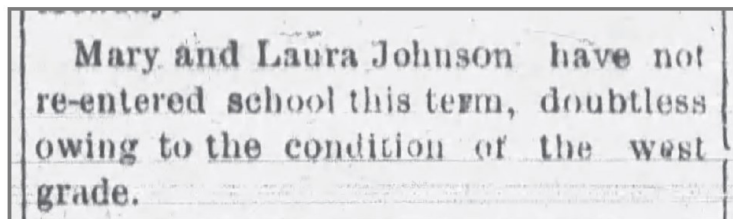
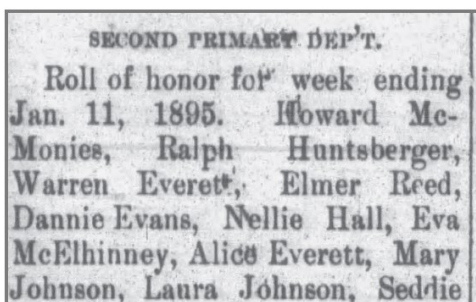


- **Laura Johnson** was born in May 1883 in Chalco Co. NE, died in 1956 in Dalton, Cheyenne Co. NE at age 73, and was buried in Dalton Cemetery. She married Abner Sharp. They had no children, but adopted Emily Speakman's children. Laurence Speakman was adopted by Laura and Abner and took Sharp as his last name. It is not clear if Lila (Lola) Speakman was also adopted, although she probably was.

"Laura Johnson was born at Chalco Nebr. May 1883, was the first child of John Johnson and Margaret Curley. Moved to farm in 1894 with father, mother, sister Mary, Bro. James, sister Emily, Bro Oliver and Archie. She went to Lyons public school through the eighth grade." Laura and Mary were both regularly on the honor roll at the Lyons school.

**08 Apr 1897, Lyons Mirror**

**17 Jan 1895, 4 - Lyons Mirror**



Laura and Mary did not return to school right after their father died. Laura was 14, Mary was 12.

"Laura went to Lyons and stayed with J. Shumways."

## **1899-and later:**

"Laura was 16 when she saw an add(sic) for waitress in the paper at Sturgis S.D. She met and married Curley White there, and moved to Deadwood. Curley White was a very good cowboy. They came to visit mother at the farm and Curley and Mother's second husband, Denver Harris, got into a fight. Curley licked Harris, but him and Laura went back to Deadwood.

"Also a couple of years (later) she divorced Curley and came to Bancroft and bought the restaurant mother was running. While operating the restaurant she met Abner Sharp who was carrying mail on horseback North and West of Bancroft. She married him, sold the restaurant and moved to a house in the northeast part of town. Mother and the rest of the family were in Bancroft, so Abe and bro Jim bought a livery barn in partnership. Abe still carried mail.

"The next spring Jim and Mother moved to the eighty taking Emily, Oliver, Archie, and Bert too. Mary had married Lee Senter and moved to Hobart Okla. Abe quit the mail route. They owned the house they lived in. The livery barn burned down. Abe started to learn auctioneering from Milt Night of West Point [near Bancroft] but hadn't cried any sales of his own yet, when he bought a 160 acre claim in Cheyenne Co. 10 miles s.west of Dalton Nebr \$500.00. They sold the house, put their belongings in a spring wagon, one team of horses and drove out there. Built a grainery 12x16 one slant roof and put 16 inches of sod all around up to the roof and lived in that until they built the new cement house in the fall of 1912. Oliver, Archie, Ab's bro. Walter, Frank Torry, Ab, and a carpenter from Dalton built it.

"Ab had 700 acres of crop that year, so was needing those men for harvest. Archie and Walt helped Ab put in the crop. The first year Laura and Ab were there, they broke what the one team could do. That winter Ab got some sales to cry and made good. He got to be the best auctioneer for miles around. Ab would break sod for \$250 an acre and get the first crop. Made enough to buy 310 acres more land. Laura bought 160 acres with the money she inherited (\$4000.00) from home, sold it for enough to buy 1200 acres and have it

## LAURA JOHNSON—CONTINUED

clear.

“In 1916 Ab and Laura came to visit me, Oliver. I was on the eighty. Ab said he was worth \$75,000.00 when he came to visit me in 1920. I was on the quarter then 1½ miles NW of Lyons. Ab said he was worth \$175,000.00. He had bought more land and a share in the Bank and a home in Sidney and was living there.

“*Laura and Ab adopted Emily’s boy Laurence Speakman, gave him the name of Sharp. Gave him band lessons. Laurence played in the band at Sidney. Ab started running around, going to Bank conferences and spending money.*

“When the crash came in 1921 he started losing money. He put in a year traveling around trying to collect notes for the bank. Had to mortgage his land to help the bank. He had bought an oil lease for \$500.00. I don’t know what became of that. I think he had started Laurence in the trucking business. Ab and Laura lost all the land except Laura’s 200 acres and it had a mortgage on it and was about lose it but Russ Jordan helped them sell it. So they saved \$5,000.00 on the deal and then went to Gering Neb. and bought a 10 acre place.”



Laura and Abner Sharp



Abner A Sharp; Birth: 18 Mar 1883, Iowa. Death: 1945 (aged 61–62). Laura A Sharp, Birth: May 1883, Chalco, Sarpy County, Nebraska. Death: 1956 (aged 72–73). Burial: Dalton Cemetery, Dalton, Cheyenne County, Nebraska.



Laura with Lila and Lawrence Speakman