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November 1997

# The Family of Francis Marion Shaw Newsletter

Vol 06, No. 03.

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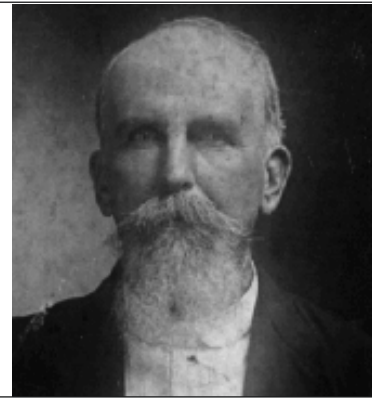
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# THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



## CHESTER D. SHAW WEALTH & TRAGEDY

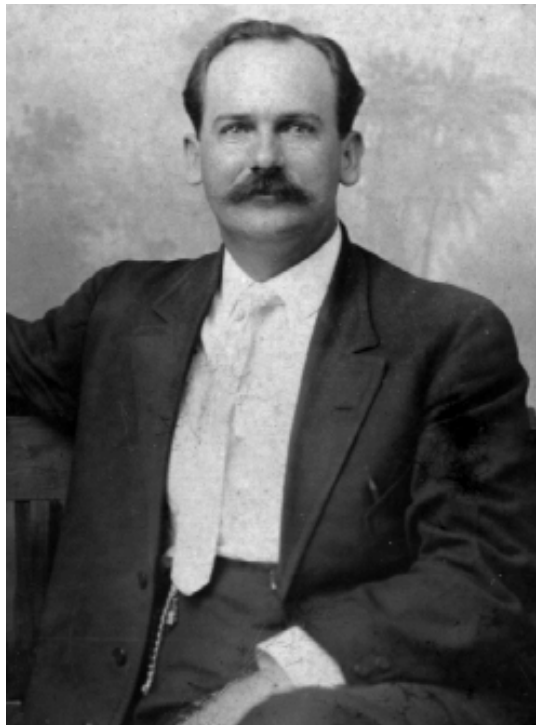
**O**f all the children of Francis Marion and Rachel Allen Shaw, arguably the most handsome, charming, and successful was their youngest son, Chester David Shaw. And perhaps no other had a life filled with so much tragedy.

Chester, was the ninth child born to Rachel, the sixth in her union with Francis Marion Shaw. He was born 5 February, 1875, in the family home in Lois, Berrien, Georgia.

It appears that he was raised as most youngsters of rural Lois were raised, learning the principle applications of farming, while receiving a basic education in the one-room Pine Grove schoolhouse. Though his adolescent years were not documented, the last seventeen years of his life were uniquely recorded in a handful of love letters, numerous court records, and over fifty newspaper accounts. (*See Shaw Newsletter, April 1994, Vol. 2 No. 2, Love Letters of Chester D. Shaw.*)

In December of 1895, at the age of 20, he made a decision to travel to Crowley, Louisiana, where he hoped to establish his financial base. However he was discouraged by several setbacks and a pining heart. While there in Crowley, he corresponded with several of his friends back in Georgia, including Luannie Webb, the pretty fifteen-year-old daughter of John Webb. Chester's affections for Luannie, along with his homesick heart, caused him to return to Berrien County sometime between June and November of 1896. That same fall, he went to work in a livery business in Adel, possibly with his brother-in-law, William Clements.

For the next year he made frequent trips by buggy to the Lois community with his sister, Effie Clements, and attended prayer



*Chester David Shaw about 1907, age 32*

meetings at Pleasant Church, where he continued to court Miss Luannie.

On 16 March, 1898, Chester and Luannie were married, and made their residence in Adel, renting a home adjacent to the Clements. The couple lived mostly on love as Chester's worth in a 1898 tax digest was \$37, his only possessions being a watch, a few household items, and a bicycle valued at \$8. However on 5 November, 1898, Mary and John Webb deeded 350 acres in section 412 of land district 9 (presently under water at the southwest end of Boyette's Pond in Cook County) to Luannie as a wedding gift.

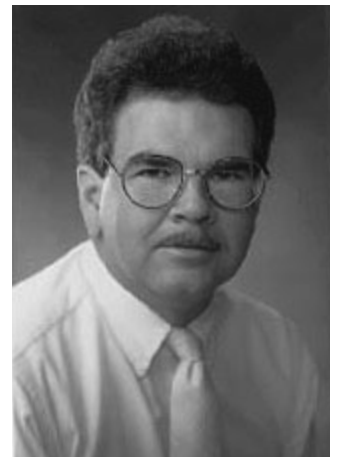
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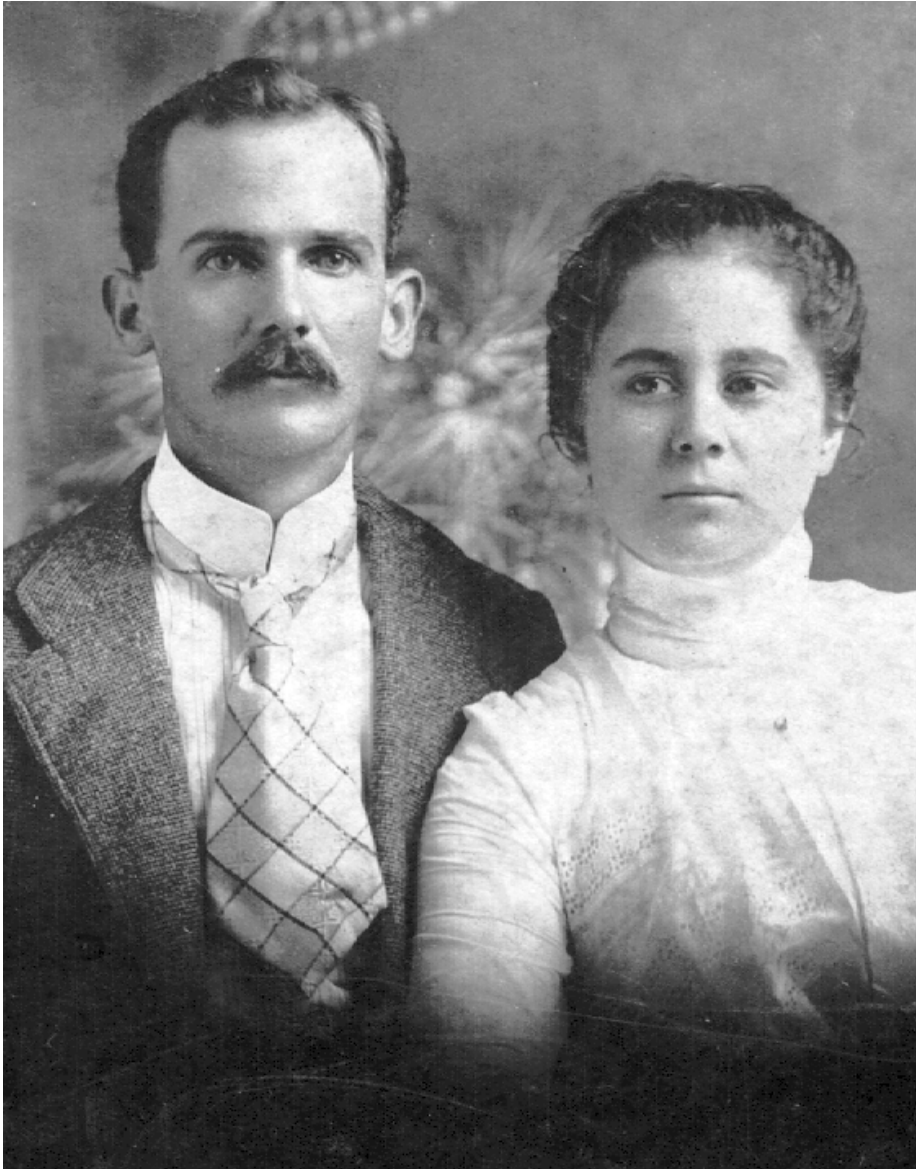
*Volume 6 Number 3  
November 1997*

*The Family of Francis Marion Shaw is a non-profit newsletter published semi-annually or more frequently for the benefit of the descendants of Francis Marion Shaw and his wife, Rachel Moore Allen Shaw.*

*Historical contributions are requested. Your family histories including character traits, religious affiliations, professional pursuits and vital information such as birth dates and places, marriage dates and places, and death dates and places, are all welcome. Photographs help make the newsletter come alive. If you have some special photos of your ancestors which you would like to share with all of the family, please make a copy print of it and send it on to the address below. Do not send the original photo unless you have no desire to have it returned. Send your non-returnable manuscripts and photo submissions to:  
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*Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor*





**Young Chester D. Shaw and Luannie Webb**

*The earliest known photo of Chester, and the only of Luannie, was probably taken about 1898, after the couple had culminated a three-year courtship with their wedding on 16 March, 1898.*

*Though his love for Luannie was unquestionable, and her sudden death a devastating loss for the young Shaw, the receipt of her estate helped Chester on his way to financial success and prominence.*

*Chester remained close to the Webb family for the rest of his life.*

**A** little over a year later on 9 February, 1900, Chester purchased 40 acres on the west side of the branch adjacent to the property that Luannie owned. Whether the couple built a home on the property is not known, but an Adel newspaper records this account:

*Horse racing was a weekly diversion for the farmers and townspeople. The first race track was a stretch of road from C. D. Shaw's place to that of Tom Adams. [The road referred to is the Valdel Highway, about 3 1/2 miles east of the Woodlawn Memorial Gardens south of Adel.]*

About this same time, Chester entered into a business partnership with his brothers Arthur and Lacy, primarily operating naval stores (turpentine). The business seemed to be well on its way to providing a stable living for Chester and Luannie, and by the summer of 1902 they were residing in a new home in Lennox. However there was an epidemic of typhoid fever spreading through

the rural counties, and Chester's lovely Luannie was stricken about May 30, suffered for ten days, and died on Sunday, 8 June, 1902 at 11:00 A.M.. The funeral was the following day at Pleasant Cemetery. Her headstone still bears Chester's pain and affection with this inscription: "The fairest flower we fondly love. How soon it fades."

Though the death of Luannie left Chester with a deep loss, it also left him in sole possession of their assets, which provided Chester with the means to expand his business ventures. His increased wealth and good looks made him a sought-after gentleman. Within a year after Luannie's death he began courting Ava E. Moore, also of Lennox, and on 5 December, 1903, they were married by Elder J. B. Luke at the home of R. J. Griffin, her uncle.

The couple moved to Willacoochee, Georgia, where Chester was operating a turpentine still with Lacy and Arthur. About every two weeks, Chester would board the 11:40 A.M. train in Willacoochee and make the hour-and-a-half journey to Nashville where he would conduct business and get the latest reading on the political climate.

He would be accompanied by one of his brothers, a cousin, or on occasion, by his wife, Ava. But regardless of his companion, his arrival would be an occasion of note in the local newspaper, *The Nashville Herald*. For the remainder of his life, his public and personal life was a frequent subject of the publication (noted by italics throughout the following).

On 15 April, 1904 the Shaw couple's visit to Nashville was noted:

*Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Shaw of Willacoochee visited in the city this week.*

It was the last visit that Ava would make to Nashville. On the 2nd of July, 1904, Chester made a trip to Nashville, and upon his return to Willacoochee, found his Ava consumed with fever. On 13 July, 1904, a little less than eight months after their wedding, Chester lost his second wife.

*Mrs. Chester Shaw Dead.*

*Mrs. Chester D. Shaw died of typhoid fever at her home, near Willacoochee, Wednesday afternoon at 3:30 o'clock. The remains were interred at Pleasant churchyard yesterday afternoon. A number of relatives and friends from Nashville attended the funeral. Mr. Shaw is a well known turpentine operator of this county. The deceased lady was a niece of R. J. Griffin of Lenox. She was married to Mr. Shaw at Sparks last November (sic). Her maiden name was Avy Moore.—15 July, 1904*

She was laid to rest the following day, adjacent to Luannie, with the following inscription engraved upon her marker: "In love she lived, In peace she died. Her life was craved, But God denied." (See *Shaw Newsletter*, November 1996, Vol. 5 No. 3, *Family Feuds*.)

Chester returned to Willacoochee and tried to put the pain of his tremendous losses behind him. But whether the memories of Ava were too fresh there, or business differences with Arthur came to a head, or if it was merely a matter of wishing to be closer to Nashville, six weeks after the funeral, Chester sold his interest in the Shaw & Brothers naval business.

*Chester D. Shaw has sold his interest in the naval stores business of Shaw & Bro., eight miles south of Willacoochee, to Dr. S. L. McElroy. The firm has been reorganized and will hereafter be known as Shaw, Oberry & Co. The deal was closed Monday.—26 August, 1904*

Each time Chester made a business move, he profited from it in a very material way. With the sale of his share of the Willacoochee site, he was able to expand his interests in other naval store ventures. By mid October, 1904 he started up a turpentine operation near Nashville with his brother, Lacy.

*C. D. and L. L. Shaw have bought about four thousand acres of timber from Hamp McNabb and George Griffin, near Nashville, and will locate a turpentine farm thereon.—21 October, 1904*

For the next several months Chester and Lacy were deeply involved with establishing the new naval stores and making business contacts.

*Geo P. Griffin and Ches and Lacy Shaw made a business trip to Savannah this week.—4 November, 1904*

By March, 1905 there were other pursuits in Chester's life besides his business interests. He was found in the company of Mimmie Parrish whenever she would make visits to Nashville to see her friends.

*Misses Louella Cox and Mimmie Parrish were the guests of Miss Maud Patterson Saturday.—24 March, 1905*

Less than a year after the death of Ava, Chester and Mimmie Parrish were married 29 June, 1905.

*Mr. Chester D. Shaw, a prominent naval stores operator of near Nashville, and Miss Mimmie Parrish, the beautiful accomplished daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert A. Parrish, were united in the holy bonds of Matrimony at the home of the bride, near Adel, on Thursday afternoon of last week at 3 o'clock, Elder J. B. Luke of Nashville officiating. The Herald extends congratulations and best wishes.—7 July, 1905*

Two months after the wedding, Chester and Lacy sold their naval stores near Nashville, and Chester immediately went about acquiring property for a new home for Mimmie, who was now expecting Chester's first child.

*C. D. Shaw & Co. sold their turpentine still and location last Tuesday to A. J. Golden and Co. of Ty Ty, consideration \$20,000. W. L. Golden has taken charge and will run the business. The deal was closed here in Nashville. This location is a good one, and while the purchasers have paid a*



*handsome price for it, they will, no doubt, make good money out of it.—8 September, 1905*

*Chester D. Shaw has invested in a nice residence lot and will build a home in Nashville. We are especially proud of this for Ches is one of the best men alive.—30 September, 1905*

*Ches and Lace Shaw have bought lots, near Solicitor Buie's, will erect nice homes thereon.—13 October, 1905*

With his new home under construction, Chester turned his attention back to his enterprises.

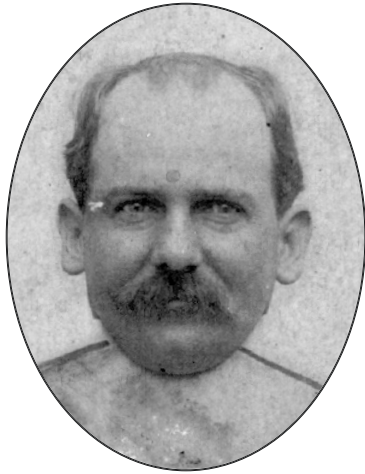
*C. D. Shaw made a business trip through Florida last week in search of turpentine timber.—20 October, 1905*

*C. D. and L. L. Shaw have bought back their old turpentine location near Willacoochee.—17 November, 1905*

*A. E. Bullard has sold his stock of dry goods to C. D. Shaw & Co., and will embark in the turpentine business, at Rays Mill, in partnership with W. D. Brown.—15 December, 1905*

***Chester D. Shaw and his third wife, Mimmie Parrish***

*The photo above was believed to have been taken shortly after the wedding of the couple on 29 June, 1905. With Chester being a "prominent" businessman and "one of the best men alive", and Mimmie being the "beautiful accomplished" daughter of a successful farmer of Berrien County, they were both considered a "good catch".*

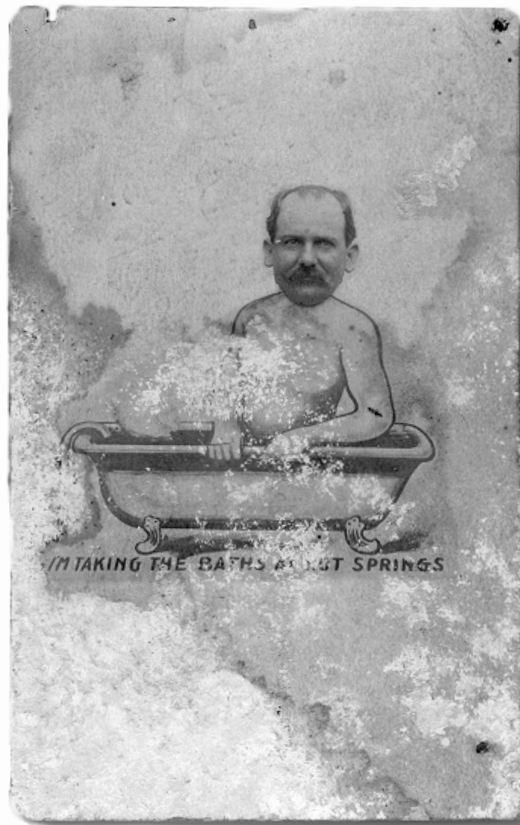


**A Questionable Business Trip to Hot Springs, Arkansas**

In June 1907, Chester and his brother Arthur Shaw and his half-brother William B. Allen were among several Nashville investors who made a journey to Ashdown, Arkansas with the professed intentions of seeking business contacts.

Though the results of the trip were questionable, it seems that a fine time was had by all. Arthur and Chester took time out from their intended business to visit Hot Springs, Arkansas, where the brothers had their pictures taken in the cardboard cut-outs shown to the right.

Chester was fond enough of his novelty card to mail it home to Mimmie as a post card. Arthur, on the other hand, thought that his was not suited to be mailed and gave the card to Chester as a souvenir. (Courtesy of Betty Jean Shaw Hughes, Chester's granddaughter)



Above: 1907 novelty card of Chester D. Shaw during his trip to Hot Springs, Arkansas

Below: 1907 novelty card of Arthur Shaw during same visit to Hot Springs, Arkansas



By the end of the year Mimmie and Chester's home was nearing completion.

*Ches. Shaw's new house in the northeastern part of town is looming up. It will be an ornament to that part of town.—22 December, 1905*

Upon completion of the home in the spring of 1906, Chester and Mimmie were blessed with the arrival of their only child, Chester D. Jr. on 25 March, 1906. The family was one of the most prominent in the community, enjoying the finest comforts of life. Their home was one of the first in Nashville to be equipped with a telephone, especially so that Mimmie could keep in touch with Chester at the office, which also was one of the first businesses to receive the service.

Chester was involved in the civic activities, including Woodman of the World and Odd Fellows. In June, 1907, several members of the Berrien community departed for Hot Springs, Arkansas, in hopes of making new business contacts.

*Dr. W. B. Goodman, W. B. Allen, C. D. Shaw and Arthur Shaw left Tuesday evening for Ashdown, Ark. They went to look after some business interests. Mrs. Goodman accompanied the Doctor and will spend some time at Hot Springs before returning.—7 June, 1907*

*Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Goodman, C. D. Shaw and Arthur Shaw and W. B. Allen, arrived Monday from their trip to Ashdown Ark., and other points in the west.—21 June, 1907*

Whether their contacts were successful is not stated, but their junket was not without its skeptics.

*A big delegation of Nashville investors had just returned from a trip to Ashdown, Ark., where several thousand dollars were wasted.—21 June, 1907*

**B**ut aside from a few detractors, Chester was establishing himself as one of the most financially astute citizens in the county. He always had an interest in politics and saw his popularity around the community as a good omen to step into the political arena. In January, 1908 Chester D. Shaw announced his candidacy for County Treasurer.

*To The Voters of Berrien County:*

*I hereby announce myself a candidate for the office of Treasurer of Berrien subject to the usual primary. If elected I promise a faithful performance of the duties of the office, and will appreciate the votes of the people.*

*Chester D. Shaw—17 January, 1908*

After two months of campaigning, the Democratic primary election was held, the winner being virtually assured of the office as the Republican candidates were nonexistent. Chester narrowly defeated J. E. B. Luke by 80 votes in a seven man race.

*Of course you will find some people who are ready to say, "I told you so." But to be honest*

about it we were surprised at the outcome of some of the races. . . . Ches Shaw won in the Treasurer's race but it was a hard fight. Joe Brown Luke and Walter Bates had him scared, all right.—13 March, 1908

With the elections behind him and being referred to as Treasurer-elect Shaw, Chester found himself in other political circles.

About fifty citizens responded to the call for a mass meeting Saturday to select delegates to the senatorial convention. Hon. J. P. Knight was made chairman of the meeting. Following is a list of the delegates selected: T. L. Adams, R. J. Griffin, W. B. Allen, J. D. Lovett, A. C. Sweat, E. W. Overstreet, C. D. Shaw, J. H. Gaskins, W. M. Conner and Bartow Parrish.—24 April, 1908

And always politicking.

Treasurer-elect Chester D. Shaw presented the Herald the granddaddy tomato Friday. It is the biggest one we've ever seen.—10 July, 1908

In January, 1909 Chester D. Shaw took office. By that spring he found that his office would face challenges that made demands of his time and talents.

County Treasurer Shaw says the county is out of money, and will have to borrow all along from now till October. The monthly payroll takes from \$1,500 to \$2,000.—1 April, 1909

Sheriff I. C. Avera, County Commissioner J. H. Hutchinson, Clerk Linton C. Turner and Treasurer C. D. Shaw attended the county officer's convention in Fitzgerald Wednesday. They drove over in Mr. Vickers' automobile.—18 June, 1909

Hon. Jon. P. Knight and County Treasurer C. D. Shaw went to Atlanta Tuesday night to help sing the Doxology at the closing of the Georgia Legislature.—13 August, 1909

While much of his time was taken up by commitments to the Treasurer's office, Chester was still active in his business pursuits.

Messrs. C. D. Shaw, A. L. Taylor and Jos. A. Sirmans have formed a partnership and will open a wholesale feed store in the old McLamb store in a few days. The style of the firm will be The Nashville Hay and Grain Company.—17 April, 1908

Two months later.

Messrs. C. D. Shaw and J. A. Sirmans have sold their interest in the Nashville Hay & Grain Co. to Mr. A. L. Taylor.—12 June, 1908

In the fall of 1909, Chester converted his penchant for dapper appearance into the tonsorial business, operated by Henry Mathis and Sam Wills.

County Treasurer C. D. Shaw has bought the Marion Hotel Barber Shop from Mr. Jos. A. Sirmans.—24 September, 1909

In January, 1910, Chester announced his intentions for re-election as Treasurer.

I hereby announce myself for re-election as Treasurer of Berrien County, subject to the regular primary to be held this year.

(continued next page)



**Marion Hotel  
Barber Shop**

Under new management, everything neat and clean. Henry Mathis and Sam Wills will be pleased to wait on you at any time. GIVE US A CALL.

**C. D. Shaw, Prop.**



### Signs of Success

Shown above in a 1995 photograph is the Chester Shaw home on Avera Street in Nashville. Still a stately home today, it was quite a symbol of the financial stature of the youngest son of Francis Marion and Rachel Shaw.

To the left is a small newspaper advertisement placed by Chester upon acquisition of the business in 1909. Though it is only one of the small enterprises of the many that he made successful (he also owned and operated a clothier and dry goods store), it indicates how progressive and imaginative he was.

The photograph below, shows Chester and another gentleman seated in a mirror-like pose, probably about 1905. The other gentleman may be one of Chester's several business partners. Since the photograph came to the attention of the editor through the descendants of Lacy Lester Shaw, Chester's brother and most constant business partner, it is reasonable to assume that the person is in fact, Lacy Shaw. However, more research is needed for this conclusion to be verified.



### **Chester D. Shaw Farm Home**

The farm home of Chester and Mimmie, shown above as it looked in 1995, was built in 1910-11, and was occupied by Chester for less than two years until his untimely death.

Mimmie occupied the home until June, 1915 when she married Isaac Newton Futch. The wedding was a brief ceremony held on the evening of the 15th in the home that was the pride of Chester's life.

Mimmie and Newton Futch then made their residence in Cecil, where he operated a large ginnery.

So sudden and tragic was the death of Chester, that a legend was born that the ghosts of Chester and Mimmie still resided within the home. Eula Mae Devane, wife of Kissam Parrish Devane, a cousin of Mimmie, was in the home on one occasion when she heard closet doors open and close on their own and then footsteps of the two previous occupants moving about.

*Thanking one and all for past favors, I respectfully solicit your votes for a second term.*  
C. D. Shaw—7 January, 1910

*Mr. Chester D. Shaw announces for re-election as Treasurer of the county. Mr. Shaw has held the office one term, and his friends claim that he is entitled to a second term. Ches is very popular with all our people and will make a fine race.*—7 January, 1910

His only opponent was the runner-up candidate in the 1908 election, J. E. B. Luke. However, the primary, held the first week of February, was a shock to Chester. Luke was the winner garnering 1134 votes to 1027 for Shaw. Chester failed to carry Cecil, the home of his wife Luannie, or Lennox, the home of his wife Ava. But perhaps the most difficult for him was that he failed to carry Nashville.

The defeat may have caused Chester to rethink his values. He decided to buy a large farm out near his father's place in Lois.

*County Treasurer C. D. Shaw has bought the Mally Jones farm, a few miles below here. It is one of the prettiest places in the county, two hundred acres, splendid buildings and ideal surroundings. He paid \$4,500 for it.*—13 May, 1910

But his heart was still in politics.

*County Treasurer C. D. Shaw, who recently bought the Mally Jones place a few miles southeast of Nashville, is spending a good deal of his time out there these days. He is having a handsome home built, and says when the candidates come to see him next year he will be ready to entertain them.*—14 October, 1910

The farm home was completed shortly thereafter.

*Mr. J. G. Morton has bought Mr. C. D. Shaw's residence on Avera Street, consideration, \$1800.*—24 February, 1911

With the completion of the farm home, and Chester's term of Treasurer ended, the role of citizen Shaw reduced the notoriety he received in *The Nashville Herald*.

He and Lacy served on the September, 1911 term of the Grand Jury. One year later he was appointed road tax collector in the Lois, Rays Mill, and Milltown districts, where he was still highly respected and held in favor by family and friends.

**B**y early December, 1912, winter was in the air. Sitting down at a meal of quail, biscuits and gravy, surrounded by a loving wife and son, discussing future political aspirations, seemed like the beginning of the "best of times" for Chester Shaw. But instead, it was the last meal of his 37-year life.

*Mr. Chester D. Shaw, ex-treasurer of Berrien County and a popular and well-known citizen of the Rays Mill district, is desperately ill and is not expected to live. He was barely alive Friday morning, as we go to press with the Herald. He is suffering from gangrene caused from swallowing a bird bone which lodged in his lower bowels. Dr. Headrick of Tifton was called to assist the local physicians, but they all say there is no chance for him.*—13 December, 1912

He died that same day.

*In Memoriam*

*With a heavy heart we would drop a tear to the memory of Chester D. Shaw, who died at his home near Rays Mill on Friday morning, December 13th, 1912. The interment was at Lois, the funeral ceremony was conducted by Nashville camp of Woodman of the World of which he was a member of long standing. His death has brought the bitter cup of sorrow to the lips of friends and relatives. His was a heart of gold. He was one of nature's noblemen in its truest sense—brave, generous, manly. His friends and his friendships were sacred to him. Ches Shaw, the subject of this simple memorial was born in this county.*

*To the broken-hearted wife, father, mother, brothers and sisters, who sit in sorrow where his footsteps shall never echo, we extend the sympathy of one who loved him as a brother. When they have drained the cup may the peace that passeth all understanding come to them from One who cares for each little sparrow that falls.*—20 December, 1912

Chester had but brief savors of life. He was married to three beautiful women, but for 4 years, 8 months, and 7 years respectfully. He owned many businesses but bought and sold frequently. He desired the political limelight, but served but one term. Owned several homes, but lived in each as briefly as his companions. His accomplishments in life were as numerous as most achieve in twice the years. And his sorrows as well.—BLS

*Thanking one and all for past favors, I respectfully solicit your votes for a second term. C. D. Shaw—7 January, 1910*

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