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April 1997

# The Family of Francis Marion Shaw Newsletter

Vol 06, No. 01.

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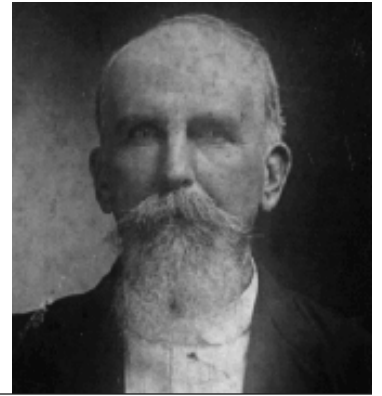
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# THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



## FRANCIS MARION SHAW, A PHOTOGRAPHIC PROFILE

If you were to choose just five photographs of yourself to depict your entire life, you may not be able to choose any that would be any more revealing than the five only-known photos of Francis Marion Shaw.

Though his life and trials coincided with the rapid development of the photographic process, it appears that over the span of nine decades, he only posed for two individual portraits, two spousal portraits, and one portrait in front of his farm home with his wife, Rachel and his grandson, Brodie.

His earliest portrait appears to have been taken shortly after the close of the Civil War. It depicts a young clean-shaven Marion Shaw, still gaunt from the recovery from his wounds and hardships of the war. The photo is about 1 1/2" x 2", trimmed and pasted on an embossed card frame 2 1/2" x 3 1/2". His right shoulder is conspicuously trimmed off, concealing his disfigurement, though the photo is awkwardly off-center. His hair is parted on the left, which was probably his pre-war appearance. Observing the later photos, he gradually moved his part to the right, per-



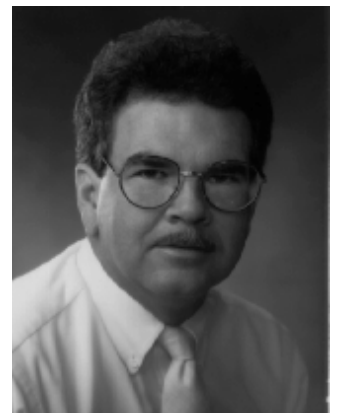
*This photograph of young Francis Marion Shaw was taken shortly after the end of the Civil War, perhaps before his marriage to Rachel Moore Allen. The photo was mounted as shown here, with the right shoulder conspicuously cropped off, concealing his war-caused disfigurement. The photograph was recently found in the collection of Betty Jean Shaw Hughes, granddaughter of Chester D. Shaw.*

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*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:*  
Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor  
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P.O. Box 417 Nashville, GA  
31639-0417

Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor





*The photo shown above is the most prolific version of all of the photos of Francis Marion and Rachel, as it was widely distributed amongst family members. Several copies remain today throughout the family, ranging in quality from very good to very faded, depending on exposure to light and moisture.*

haps as a result of the constant use of the left hand.

The next photographic occurrence brought Marion and Rachel together in a formal portrait for the first time. This photo shows Marion standing at the side of Rachel, seated in front of a painted backdrop. These backdrops were common near the turn of century and were brought to the couple's home where the portrait was usually taken.

The date is probably around 1885 which would place Marion in his early 40s and Rachel in her early 50s. The couple are seemingly comfortable with their appearance and station in life. Marion openly pins his arm-less sleeve to the front

of his jacket. In his left hand he holds the hat of a gentleman farmer. Though his life has been hard, he has been successful. He has filled the hollows of his cheeks with Rachel's good cooking. His hair is receding some, but still holds its color. He now sports a distinguished mustache and beard.

Rachel is starting to fill out her rotund stature that will remain with her the rest of her life. She rests a magazine, probably a photographer's prop, on her lap and appears to be holding her glasses in her right hand. Two of her children are married, and she hasn't had the grandsons, Brodie and Bruner to contend with yet.

**T**he remaining three photographs are more difficult to put in chronological order, though it seems that Marion's beard is not so full in the oval mounted portrait as in the individual portrait, suggesting that the oval portrait is earlier.

The oval portrait was specifically posed and photographed to be cropped and mounted on an oval mortised frame, though I have seen a rectangular version of the same pose. It was also the trend at the turn of the century to lightly print the photographic image and then have the photograph hand colored then mounted in an oval bubble-glass frame. Such was the case in this photograph. The hand-painted version is in the possession of Kathleen Knight Swindle. Rachel is full-faced and is wearing spectacles that seems to add to her round features. Her open-eyed stare and dour facial expression are characteristic of poses that were held for the long photographic exposure that was required at that time. Any movement of eyes or mouth could blur or distort the image.

Though Marion did not seek out public office or desire to be involved in public decision making, he was still a prominent resident of Berrien County. Perhaps in recognition of 50th anniversary of the War Between the States, Marion posed for the portrait that impresses most descendants as being the most dignified and patriarchal image of all. His eyes are penetrating and his manner seems most self-assured.

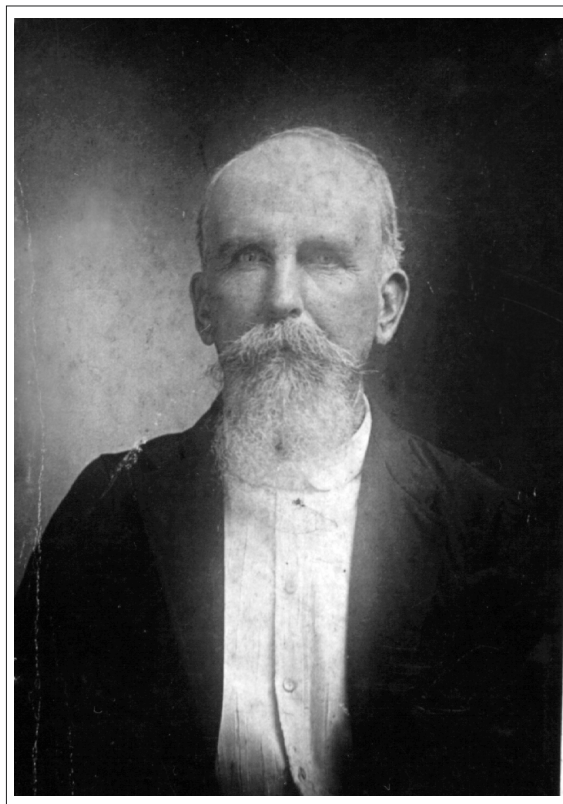
Finally, there is the photo of the elderly Shaws in front of their farm home, just west of Ray City. The photograph, taken about 1905 by a traveling photographer, is the only image that lets us see the full physical stature of Marion and Rachel. It once again clearly depicts the armless right sleeve pinned to the front of Marion's coat. The couple are short in comparison to their grandson, Brodie, who was well over 6 foot. It appears the couple and their grandson were on their way to or from church



meeting, as evidenced by their dress clothes and the scriptures in Rachel's hand. Marion and Rachel opened their hearts and their home to their extended family, raising Brodie and Bruner, children of Francis Arthur, to adulthood. Then for over ten years they provided a home for Rachel's daughter, Eliza Allen Knight and her daughter, Kathleen.

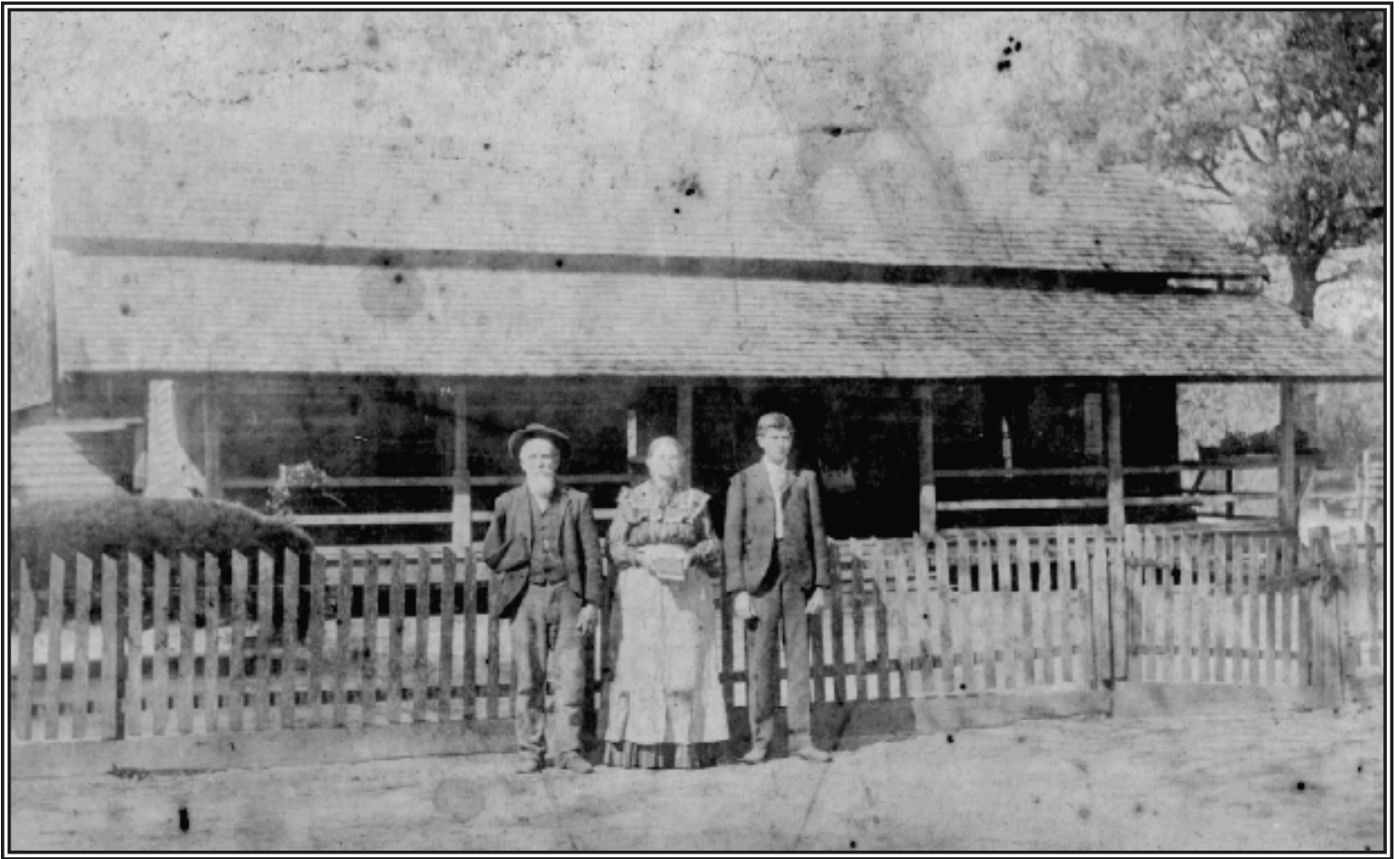
I have only seen two copies of this photograph. One was a small portion, broken apart from the full image, showing just the family members. In the inaugural Shaw newsletter, the photograph was erroneously identified as the Ray City home. But when I saw the full image in possession of Mary Shaw Ennis, I realized it was the farm home.

Which makes the point that when we analyze these photographs, conclusions are based only upon information that is available at the time. Tomorrow a new photograph or a revealing bit of information may clarify or even drastically alter our current opinion. So in the meantime, don't discard any of those unidentified photographs. They may be a hidden treasure! —Bryan Lee Shaw



*The photographs shown on this page were both trimmed and mounted on heavy dark card stock. The chemicals that were used in the photographic process at the time these prints were made, as well as the papers that they were printed on, give these images better definition and will help them weather the ravages of time and light. However, it is sad to say, if we continue to openly display the original photographs of this period, the images will eventually fade beyond recognition.*

*If you have photographs dating back to the turn of the century in your collection, they should be placed in acid-free sleeves and stored in a cool, dark, acid-free box. It would be wise to have negatives made from these prints. Then you can have multiple prints made for display and inclusion in family albums.*



*About 1905, a traveling photographer interrupted the Church activities of the senior Shaws and their grandson, Brodie and snapped this charming photograph.*

## 1997 REUNION DATE SET

Sunday, August 10, 1997  
10:00 A.M.

Reserved for 4th Annual  
Francis Marion Shaw  
Family Reunion.

Ray City Senior  
Citizens' Center

*Set this date aside in your  
summer plans. It will be  
as rewarding and enjoyable  
as last year!*

## "I Remember Grandfather and Grandmother Shaw"

**A**fter Grandfather [Francis Marion Shaw] and Grandmother [Rachel Shaw] were married they cleared and settled a plantation. After living on this place for several years, they sold it and bought another which they cleared and settled. It was on this second place they raised their family. They lived on it until about 1917. This old place is about three miles southwest of Ray City, Georgia. At this writing it is still in good repair. It has the old original house and several of the out houses on it. In fact, it looks very much like it did when I was a small boy. At this writing, Aaron Futch owns it. *(Editor: The home has since burned and no buildings remain from the original farm.)*

Grandfather Shaw had as much vim and courage as any man that ever lived. With his right arm off just below the shoulder, he cleared and settled two plantations, split rails to fence them, cut the timber off the fields, cut and hewed the logs to build his

houses and barns. In fact, these tasks are unbelievable for a man with both arms and hands. I have heard men say who had worked with him that it takes an extra good man to pull him down with a hand stick. It also takes a hustler to beat him pulling fodder. He could hitch or unhitch his mule to the buggy, husk corn, plow, cut wood or do any chores on the farm as good as any one with two hands. I would go visiting as a boy and every evening when the mules were to be fed, I would help him and try my best to beat him husking corn but never could. I remember a remark he made to us boys one day. "Boys, if you had to start life as a young man like I did with one arm, how many of you would make it?" especially under the conditions he started with, very little education.

Every grandchild of Grandfather and Grandmother Shaw was always very fond of them because they were always given everything they wanted while at their house.

Approximately two or three years before they died, they moved to Ray City, at the request of their children. Their deaths brought to a close two very useful and happy lives.

B. W. Clements, Sr.

*From notes penned by Burie Webster Clements, Sr. in 1932, courtesy of B. W. Clements, Jr.*