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September 2008

# The Family of Francis Marion Shaw Newsletter

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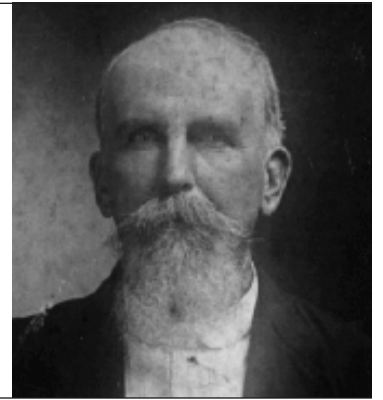
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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION  
**SHAW**  
AND RACHEL MOORE ALLEN SHAW

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**RURAL SCHOOLING**  
*Early education in the  
Shaw-Allen family*



**T**his past year, my time has been taken up in a large part by my involvement with the Berrien

County Historical Foundation and several of its projects. Though my research has taken me into other areas of Berrien County than were frequented by our early

*The only known photograph of the old Pine Grove School, which was one of the main institutes of learning for the children and grandchildren of Marion and Rachel Shaw. The photo actually shows upper-classman Chester D. Shaw at the far left back row with jacket and tie.*

ancestors, there has still been a healthy exposure to the history of the children and grandchildren of Marion and Rachel Shaw. More specifically the

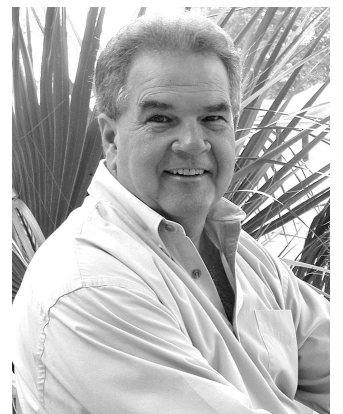
history of the social structure of the rural communities that they resided in, including their desire for their children to learn to read and write and be educated in

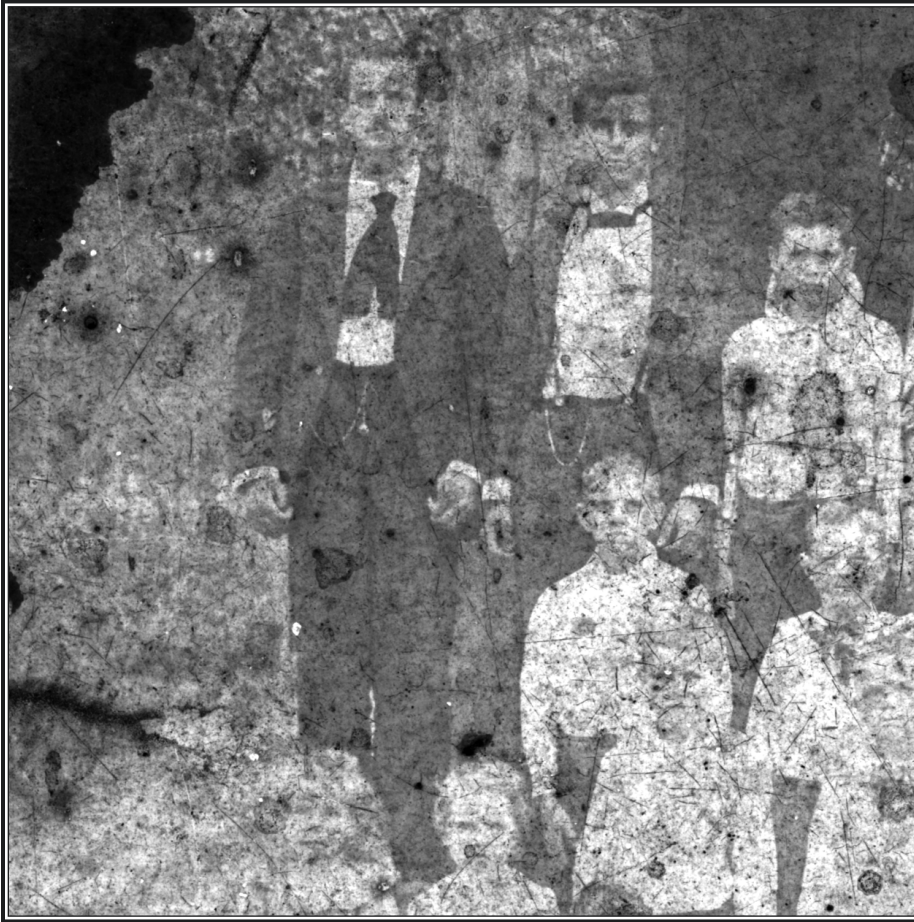
Volume 17 Number 3  
September 2008

*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. If original photos are sent, they will be carefully handled and returned, but editor cannot be responsible for loss or damage. Send your manuscripts and photo submissions to:*  
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Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor





**T**he details from the photograph appearing on the previous page was taken about 1894, in front of the Pine Grove Academy. Chester Shaw is shown in the photo above left, on the left back row. Note the age differences of the students in the photo. Often, the older students were used to teach the younger ones, often in exchange for some of the cost of their tuition.

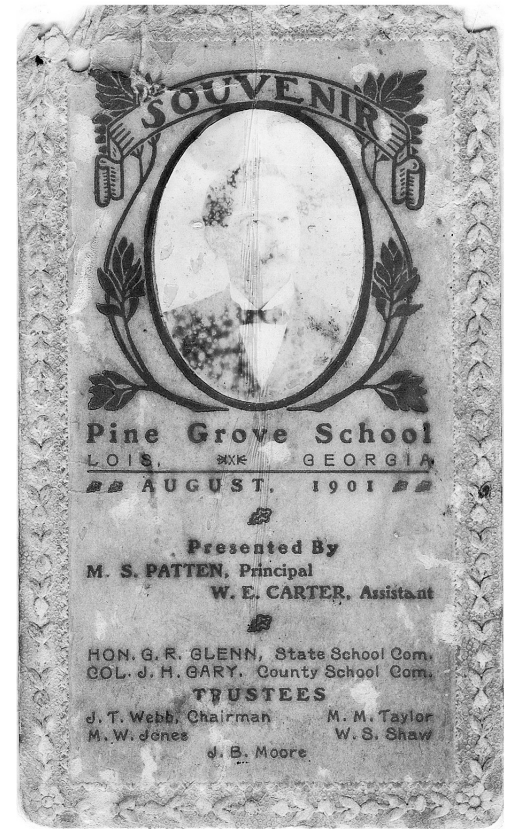
the practical application of math.

There is not a lot of information available about those earliest schools—their exact locations are unknown in many cases. But fortunately we do have a few writings and some photos which give us a peek into the early schooling years of the Shaw-Allen children and grandchildren.

**A**lmost certainly the children of Marion and Rachel were home taught in many of the earliest years. Marion and Rachel were both literate, often using the family Bible to hone the reading skills of their older children. They both could write as well, however Marion's ability to do so was limited with his loss of his right arm from his earlier involvement in the War Between the States.

The Lois community, where the Shaw farm was located, was quite spread out and often families would have contact with one another only at church gatherings or such activities. But it is also certain that it was not long before a community school was established in the Lois area.

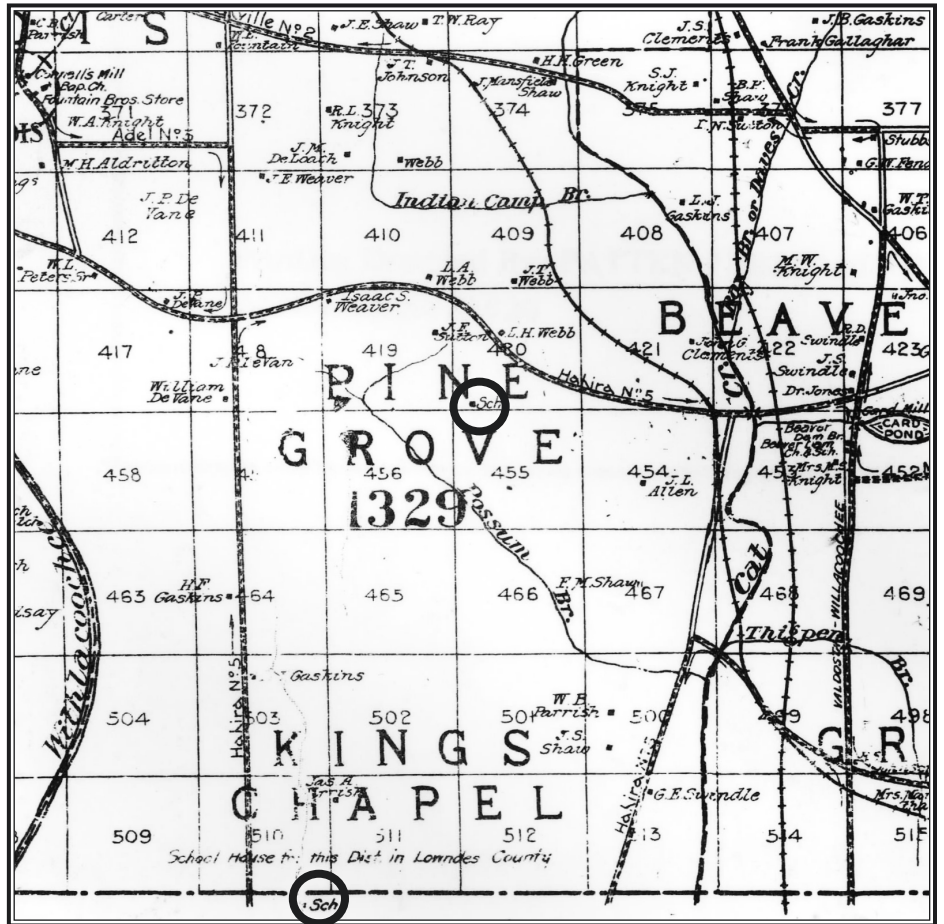
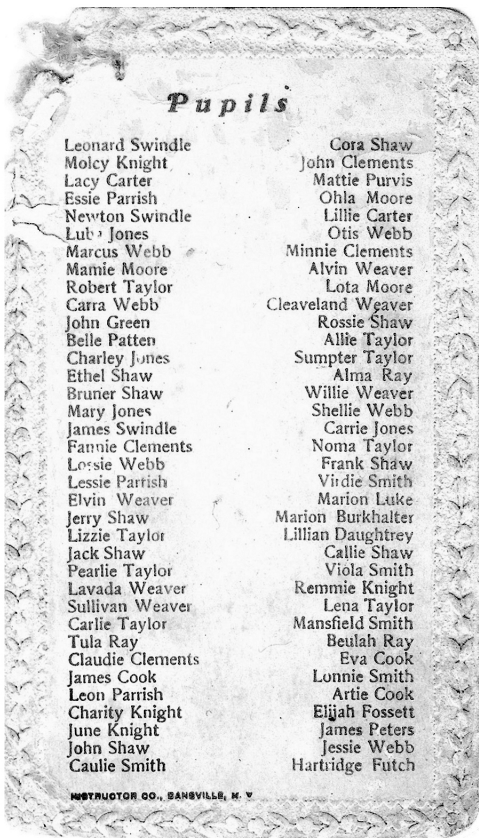
The Knight Academy appears to be one



of the earliest schools in the south end of Berrien County. The exact location of that school is not known, but was near Ray's Mill (now Ray City), not far from the Lois community. The term academy was often used in reference to a privately operated school, usually supported by parents of the children who patronized the school. Whether any of the children of Marion and Rachel ever attended this academy is not known, but is quite likely.

Berrien County did not have an organized school district until well after 1900. Before then an education commissioner was appointed to oversee as many as 70 separate school districts in the county, each independently funded.

**T**he first definitive proof of a particular school that the Shaw-Allen children attended was the Pine Grove Academy in the Lois community. In a letter written in 1896, by Chester Shaw, from Crowley, Louisiana, to his future wife, Luannie Webb, he inquires, "Miss Luannie, who is a going to teach school at the Pine Grove Academy this year? I would love to be



there and go to school.”

The question suggests that the school had been in existence for a while, that he had attended in the past, and that even though he was almost 21 years old, Chester was still considering attending the rural school.

The rural schools were often operated only about 6 or 7 months out of the year, with extended breaks to allow for planting in the spring, and then harvesting in the fall. And since all levels of education were taught in a one or two room school, it was not that unusual to have a person over the age of 18 attending classes if they could be spared from the labor of the farm..

In the only known photograph of the Pine Grove Academy, probably taken about 1894, Chester Shaw is clearly seen on the back row. He is markedly older than most of the students shown in the photograph.

So it is certainly possible, or even probable, that William, John and Eliza Allen, and Arthur, Ida Jane, “Dock”, Effie, and Lacy Shaw attended Knights Academy, or Pine Grove Academy, or both, sometime during their adolescent years. But more absolute is that the Old

Pine Grove Academy, then newly named Pine Grove School, also afforded many of their children a basic education.

**O**n a recently discovered 1901 souvenir card in the possession of Ken May, great grandson of Ida Jane Shaw, are listed the students that attended the Pine Grove School. Listed among the students are Essie and Lessie, and Leon Parrish, daughters and son of Ida Jane Shaw Parrish; Bruner Shaw, son of Arthur Shaw; and Cora and Ethel (Beatrice) Shaw, daughters of “Dock” Shaw. It also appears Claudie and Minnie Clements, son and daughter of Effie Shaw Clements, were attending the school that year, possibly while living at the home of their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. John G. Clements.

On the front of the card is pasted a photograph, probably the principal, M. S. Patten. W. S. Shaw, a nephew of Marion Shaw, is listed as a Trustee. Also listed on the card are other cousins of the Shaws and Allens alike.

Mary Idell Shaw Ennis, daughter of “Dock” Shaw, also attended the Pine Grove

**T**he detail of the 1908 Hudkins Co. map of Berrien County, above, locates the general school districts of the Pine Grove and Kings Chapel School. The circles have been added to assist in locating. Many of the roads that connected one farm to another, and to schools, were only three-track paths, rather than the “improved” roads depicted on the map. Note the many Shaw families, also Allens, Parrish, Clements, and Knights in the school district boundaries.



**T**he King's Chapel School, above, as it appears today, more than 100 years since its construction. The interior of the two-room school has portions of smoothed tongue-and-groove side-walls that were coated with egg whites and charcoal and served as blackboards. The blackboard in the school shown above is faintly seen behind the tool display, but the chalk rail at the bottom of the board, is clearly visible where it meets the verticle beaded board. Directly above is young Mary Idell Shaw, about the time she attended Kings Chapel School.

School about 1919 through 1922. She recalls riding in horse and buggy to the home of Barney Herring, where she would meet other children and together they would walk the half mile down the dirt lane to the one room school nestled in the thick woods. About 1922 she transferred to the Kings Chapel School where she finished the 8th grade, which was the highest grade offered in the two-room school.

**I**n 1929, my father, Charles B. Shaw, Jr., attended the 5th grade in the King's Chapel School. His teacher, Ina Weaver Brown, was a recent "graduate" of the school, and under the liberal employment rules of education at that time, that allowed graduate students to teach for two years without teaching certification. Her father, Ike Weaver, was the principal of the school at that time.

The school was also used as a polling place, and a meeting house for various community functions. The school was closed in 1933, and the Berrien County

students, along with those from Pine Grove School, then attended the New Lois Consolidated School.

The school and the land eventually became the property of the Fields family, who's daughter attended the school as a young girl, and later taught in the school before its closing.

**T**oday, it is used as a storage barn and the 100 year-old-plus structure is badly in need of repairs.

A walk through the interior gives the impression that the smaller room was used for the lower grades and the larger room for the upper grades. The blackboards, such as they are, were positioned at a lower level so that the small children could easily reach to write their lessons. In the larger room, the black boards were much higher and covered more area, probably to accomodate more grades. All 8 grades were usually taught by just two teachers.

A single pot-bellied stove heated the smaller classroom, while two stoves heated the larger room. Students vied for favorable seating about the stoves—not too close, and not too far away. Two doors, one on each end of each of the rooms, were prescribed as safety measures in case of fire and to also provide needed ventilation during the hotter days of the spring and fall terms.

Electricity was never connected to the school during the three decades it was in use. Large 6-over-6 pane windows provided light for reading and lessons on the boards. Of course there was no indoor plumbing either. Girls and boys outhouses were used throughout its existance. A shallow well provided water for drinking .

**O**ther rural schools in the county also played a similar role in educating many family connections— Pleasant Vale, Lois, Parrish, White Pond, and Beaver Dam. Also Live Oak School that operated in the turpentine region of Clinch county near the Berrien County line, was the foundation of learning for several Shaw-Allen families involved in that industry.

However, by 1936, the one and two room schools had closed their doors for good, and with them, the closing of an era of education in rural Berrien County. —BLS