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November 2001

# The Family of Francis Marion Shaw Newsletter

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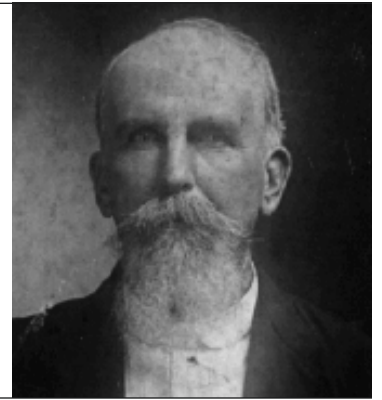
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# THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



T H E G R A N D C H I L D R E N

## WILLIE MARION ALLEN

*Simply, a good farmer, a good man*

**F**ew, if any, qualities of human endeavor are greater than for a man to love the land, his family, and his fellow man. So when you reflect on the life of Willie Marion Allen, no more needs to be said than he was, simply, a good farmer and a good man.

Willie Marion Allen, 5th-born child of William B. and Rachel Futch Allen, entered this life on April 12, 1891. He was raised in the rural setting of Berrien County, now known as Allenville. He was nurtured in the Primitive Baptist faith, and though he never joined the church in his lifetime, the social activities introduced



him to attractive Mary Futch. They were married January 11, 1914, in the home of Judge J. H. Hull, Nashville, Georgia. The event was recorded in the *Nashville Herald*:

*Miss Mary Futch, daughter of Mr. Aaron Futch [and Georgia Griffin], and Mr. Willie M. Allen, son of W. B. Allen of Allenville, were united in marriage here Sunday afternoon. Judge J. H. Hull tied the nuptial knot.*

After a brief residency in a log cabin on the property of Willie's

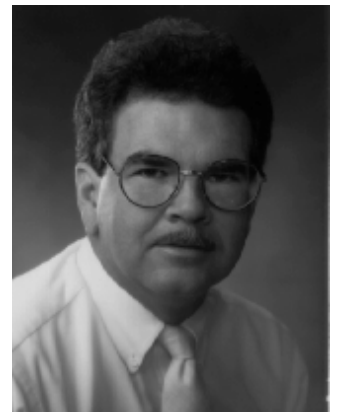
parents, the couple settled into the same small, four-room house that Willie had been born in. It too was located on his parent's farm in section 329 of the 10th district, just southeast of the present

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





*The start of a simple life  
This formal pose taken about the  
time of their wedding in 1914,  
presents Willie Allen as a young  
farm boy, serious about his role as  
provider, and Mary Futch, a loving  
supporter of her new spouse.*

crossroad of Allenville and the Ray City-Nashville railroad bed.

They started their family with the birth of their son, Willie Herbert, on 20 April, 1916. All of their 6 children were born and raised most of their adolescent years in that small farm home. Almost two years later, on December 4, 1917, their second

son, Roy Aaron, was born.

By February, 1917, Willie had done well enough on the family farm to buy 67 acres outright from his mother, for \$300.

Their first daughter, Mary Blanche, was born almost 6 years later, on January 20, 1924. And their second daughter, Elva Lee, was born more than 3 years later, on 2 October, 1927.

In the mean time, Willie added more property to his farm with the purchase of 75 additional acres from his mother, once again for \$300. His farm remained at 142 acres until January, 1930, when he purchased 90 acres to the north of his existing property from Charlton Spell, for \$1500. The purchase included Spell's hogs, mules, wagons, cattle, plow tools and implements. However, the deal must have not set well with one of the parties, as Willie reversed the deed 9 months later on October 1, for the same price.

One month later Mary gave birth to their fifth child with this announcement in the *Nashville Herald*:

*Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Allen of Allenville announce the birth of a son on Sunday, Nov. 2. He will be called Wesley Burie.*

Their family was completed on June 24, 1935, with the birth of their 6th child, announced once again in the *Nashville Herald*:

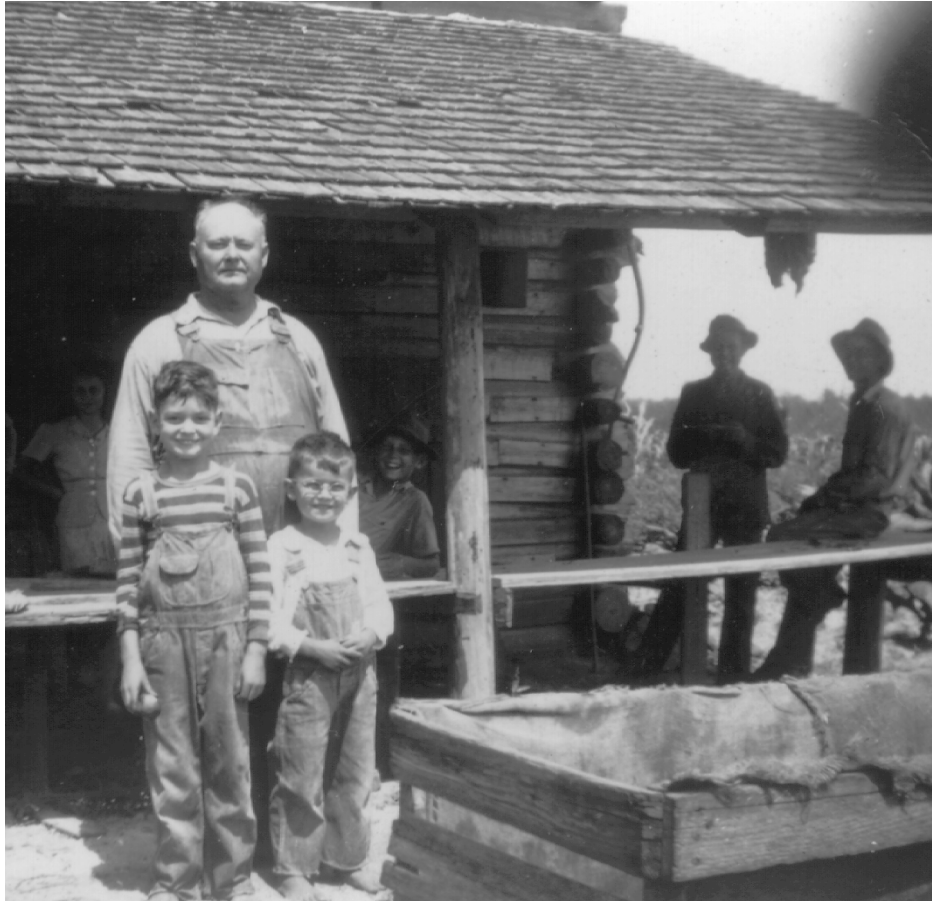
*Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Allen of Allenville, announce the birth of an eight and one-half pound son at their home Tuesday, June 24. The little one has been named Charles Donald.*

**D**aily life on the Allen farm was much like life on other farms in Berrien county. The mornings started early with a breakfast prepared earlier by Mary Allen. All family members attended, young men in shirt sleeves and the girls always in dresses.

Most of the time field work was done by Willie and the boys, while house work was tended to by Mary and the girls. However Blanche did learn to milk cows and loved being outside with her father. And on most occasions, the harvesting effort was shared by the entire family. Work was not shirked by anyone. If Willie said, "Boys, a path," a path was made.

Tobacco, cotton, corn, and peanuts were the principle crops of the Allen farm. In the February 25, 1937 *Nashville Herald*, under the heading of "What Farmers Are Doin'," Willie reported this forecast:

*"I will plant three and one-half acres of tobacco about March 20, provided things continue to move along alright. All of my land is now ready. Will also plant three acres in cotton, fourteen acres in corn and peanuts, one*



acre in potatoes, on or two in cucumbers, and a half acre of cane and a garden. I am having bad luck with hogs dying, however, I have plenty of meat and lard, also syrup and other supplies. I tend 22 acres in all, with 118 acres in timberland. I have seven head of cows, including two head of nice milkers. I made money on tobacco, cotton and corn last year, and believe that things will be alright again this year."

Tobacco is primarily a summer crop. At one time, seeds were purchased and planted in a bed, with a fine mesh cloth placed over it to protect the seedlings from birds, rabbits, and the elements. In later years, Willie received his seedlings from a Florida grower. When the seedlings were large enough, they were pulled up and placed in plant rows about 18 inches apart. As the plants developed, "suckers" were removed from the bottom of the plant to stimulate growth in the remainder of the plant.

When "gathering" started, it was a sunup-to-sundown operation, often starting as early as 4:00 A.M. The tobacco leaves were stripped from the plant and 3 or 4 leaves were tied together, called "handing," then put on a skinny stick, or "stringer" and hung in the tobacco barns.

There, for nearly a week, the leaves were heat cured by a furnace "fired" by Willie and boys. When the leaves were a

proper shade of gold, they were removed from the curing barn and stacked in a storage barn until they could be graded.

Grading was a family affair, and consisted of sorting leaves by their length and color. "Sandlugs" were the lowest grade, and the long, bright-golden leaves or "tips" were the finest grade. Then there was the "trash" pile where the darkest leaves went, which was probably used for snuff boxes.

Crop days were often shared among family and neighbors as "exchange work." The gathering also served as a social occasion, and was especially enjoyed by the children. A sumptuous meal was prepared for dinner, consisting of fried chicken, peas, butter beans, corn, ochre, sliced tomatoes, biscuits or cornbread, and sausages, dried ham or ribs "brought back to life" in a frying pan from storage in grease-filled crockpots. And at the end of the day everyone was invited to stay and help finish the leftovers.

Willie preferred to sell his tobacco at the local market in Nashville, when the Carolina buyers came to town. And though the event was often celebrated by the townfolk as a whole, Willie never felt it was necessary for his family to be present, so they stayed home.

In the fall, the children would come home from the Pleasant Vale school, pick

#### **Family photo**

With the onset of World War II, the Willie Allen children crowd in front of the family automobile. Left to right in the back: Elva, Herbert, Roy, and Blanche. In front: Burie and Donald. Herbert and Roy would enter the service shortly thereafter.

#### **Helpful gathering**

Neighbors gathered together to help bring in the harvest of tobacco. Here Willie takes time to pose with his son Donald, on the left and Edward Fountain, a neighbor boy.



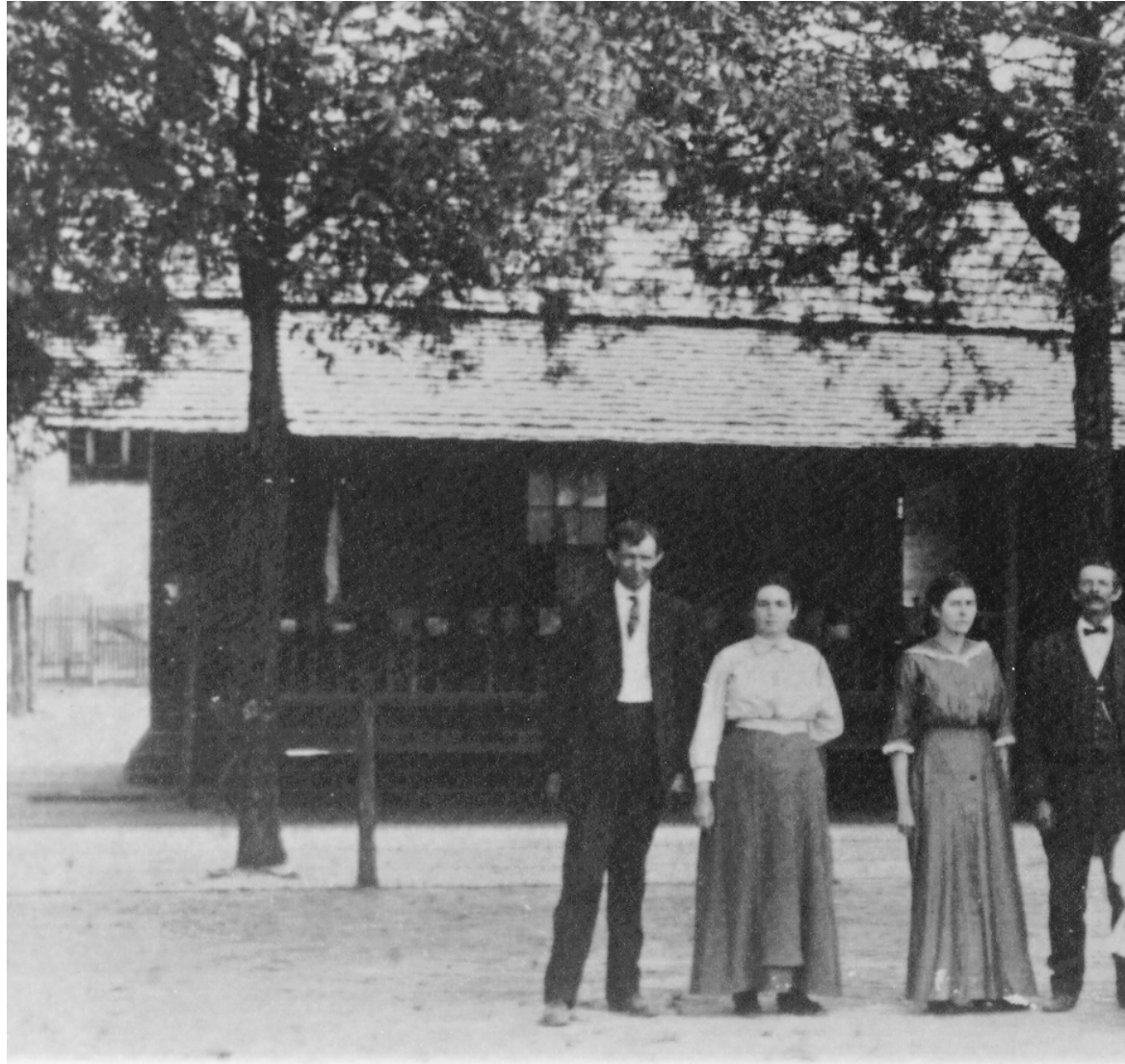
*Willie Herbert Allen*



*Roy Aaron Allen*



*Mary Blanche Allen Ganey*



up their cotton sacks and march off to the field to help their father with the picking. Though they were often pricked by a pesky boll, the children were just happy to be "doing what Daddy was doing." As they got older the children would strive to pick a hundred pounds of cotton in a day, often working feverishly to get a sack big enough to use as a seat to "sneak a rest."

Cane grindings and peanut shellings were wonderful social gatherings as well. But just working with family members in the field created a wonderful bonding experience, singing, hoeing, and making light of things about them.

**I**n the early spring of 1937, the country was in a deep financial depression, and only those farmers who were self-sustaining were keeping their property in tact and their families fed. About this same time, Mary's father was in failing health and was finding difficulty keeping the payments up on mortgages of

his large farm near Nashville.

In August, 1937, Willie and Mary absorbed a \$1200 lien owed by Aaron Futch against 90 acres of his farm, to the Land Bank of Columbia, South Carolina. In addition, Willie purchased 135 more acres from the Futch estate for \$400.

In order to raise funds for this large investment, in October, 1937, Willie sold his Allenville holdings; 75 acres to C. S. Parham for \$550, and 67 acres to M. W. Eunies for \$1200, which included the home where Willie and his six children were all born.

Herbert Allen had been driving a school bus for the Ray City school (Willie had been driving it for a short time also, but the noisy children got on his nerves). So the family loaded their belongings into the school bus and their model A Ford, and moved to what had been the Aaron Futch home, and took over the care of the elderly patriarch.

Willie now had more acreage to farm and his sons were getting old enough to



help with the 2-mule team (They didn't get their first tractor, an Allis-Chalmers, until 1952).

It is of some interest that about this same time there was a suspicion that there may be oil deposits in the Berrien County area. Several oil companies were considering the possibility of drilling test wells, and purchasing mineral leases from local farmers. Willie Allen, in fact, leased mineral rights to Gulf Oil on 280 acres for .25 per acre, or \$70. No wells were ever drilled, nor was any oil ever found in Berrien County.

**T**he Futch home was much more comfortable for the family. It was still only a four room home, but much larger and had a kitchen as well.

Water was drawn from a shallow well until electricity came to the rural areas of the county, so trips to the privy on a path lined with "four o'clocks" was still a ritual.

Bath water was heated in a tub that sat in the sun during the summer months, and on a wood stove in the winter.

Laundry was done by hand on a scrubbing board in a watering trough by Mary and the girls, and wrung out by Willie's strong arms, then hung out on the clothes line to dry. Mary never had a wringer or automatic washer her entire life. In later years, they took their laundry into town to wash at the laundromat.

There was still a closeness that the family enjoyed in this home as well. When Willie would come in from the field from plowing, he would take off his shoes on the porch and shake the dirt out of his pant cuffs. Then the girls would get a footpan of warm water and affectionately bath his feet.

On some occasions after a special meal, Grandpa Aaron Futch would bring out his fiddle and Mary would sit down at the pump organ and



*Elva Lee Allen Mills*



*Wesley Burie Allen*



*Charles Donald Allen*



**The old and the new**

For almost 40 years the Allen farm was worked with manpower and mulepower. Above, Roy and his tag-along dogs take a moment from the daily chores to pose for this photo. It was not until 1952 that the Allens benefited from the use of "modern" machinery to work the farm. The inset pictures Burie as he proudly hooks a harvester up to the Allis-Chalmers tractor.

At right, Mary displays one of the few modern conveniences that she allowed herself in the Futch-Allen home. She preferred her treadle sewing machine over an electric, and never owned an electric wringer washer or an automatic washer.

together they would create a musical jubilee that would soon have the boys rolling back the rug and a rhythmic foot stomping would ensue.

**B**esides establishing a successful farm, Willie was a respected citizen in the community as well. He often served on petit and grand juries in Berrien County, and also sat on several juries for federal cases in Valdosta. The family loved those all-too-rare occasions when they could afford to go to Valdosta to do shopping for school or other necessities.

Willie was also a Mason in the Duncan Lodge, along with his brother, Edgar. On one occasion Willie, Edgar, and other lodge members made a noteworthy trip to meet with fellow Masons in Jacksonville. The May 26, 1938 *Nashville Herald* reported:

*The party returned to Nashville early Friday morning, loud in their praise of the hospitality shown by Jacksonville masons and the impressiveness of the ceremony as a whole.*

With the onset of World War II, Herbert and Roy both enlisted in the service, Herbert in the Navy, Roy in the Army. But within just a few weeks, Roy returned to help his father and the other young boys run the farm. Roy and Burie would stay on the farm for the remainder of Willie's life.



**I**n March, 1956, Willie signed over the deed to the farm to his lifelong companion, perhaps in consideration of his possible health concerns.

On the morning of January 16, 1958, Willie sat down to his regular breakfast, and gazed out the

window at the crisp winter day. He had a new set of piglets down at the sow's lot at the end of the lane, and they needed tending. He rose from the table, picked up a pail with feed for the piglets, and walked out the door onto the porch. The trip down to the pig lot was just a short walk, and it was a nice way to start the day. He had only walked but half the distance when he was struck by a sudden cerebral hemorrhage. He set the pail down on the road, and collapsed face first. He died instantly. He was 67 years old.

Mary survived him by 22 years. She stayed on at the farm with Roy until her death in 1980.

There are rich and famous people in the world and even some who have been well known and well-to-do in the Shaw-Allen family. But most of the kin folk, indeed most of the people in the world are just

simple people who live simple lives. They raise good children. They teach them to live good lives and they do their best to show them the way through their own example. They do all of these things. The simple, good things. And then they die.

What they leave behind is a tribute to who they were and what they became. You can see their hand print in the lives of their children. You can hear the love that emotes from those offspring when you sit down and listen to the stories they tell and the fondness that tears up in their eyes.

Willie and Mary were simple folks who lived simple, good lives. What greater tribute can be offered than that.—BLS

*Thanks to Elva Allen Mills who shared so many details and gave such vivid descriptions of her early life on the Allen farm. The editor has liberally used many of her colorful expressions.*



## FAMILY GROUP SHEET

### **WILLIE MARION ALLEN** Farmer

*Born: 12 April, 1891, Berrien County, Ga  
Died: 16 January, 1958, Berrien County, Ga*

*Buried: New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Berrien, Ga*

### SPOUSE

### **MARY A. FUTCH**

*Born: 11 January, 1894, Berrien County, Ga  
Died: 6 October, 1980, Berrien County, Ga*

*Married: 11 January, 1914, Nashville, Berrien, Ga  
Buried: New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Berrien, Ga*

### CHILDREN

#### **Willie Herbert Allen**

*Born: 20 April, 1916, Berrien County, Ga  
Died: 1 April, 1984, Valdosta, Lowndes, Ga  
Buried: Westview Cemetery, Nashville, Ga*

#### **Roy Aaron Allen**

*Born: 4 December, 1917, Berrien County, Ga  
Died: 1 January, 1996, Valdosta, Berrien, Ga  
Buried: New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Ga*

#### **Mary Blanche Allen**

*Born: 20 January, 1924, Berrien County, Ga  
Died:  
Buried:*

#### **Elva Lee Allen**

*Born: 2 October, 1927, Berrien County, Ga  
Died:  
Buried:*

#### **Wesley Burie Allen**

*Born: 2 November, 1930, Berrien County, Ga  
Died:  
Buried:*

#### **Charles Donald Allen**

*Born: 25 June, 1935, Berrien County, Ga  
Died:  
Buried:*

### SPOUSE

#### **Floy Harrell** Married: 11 August, 1946

*Born: 16 January, 1912, Berrien County, Ga  
Died: 7 December, 1997, Hahira, Lowndes, Ga  
Buried: Westview Cemetery, Nashville, Ga*

*Never Married*

#### **John Lenton Ganey** Married: 6 April, 1946

*Born: 10 November, 1922, Toombs County, Ga  
Died:  
Buried:*

#### **Jerry McLean Mills** Married: 15 June, 1952

*Born: 8 October, 1925, Candler County, Ga  
Died:  
Buried:*

#### **Frances Eileen Hall** Married: 10 November, 1951

*Born: 26 November, 1926, Berrien County, Ga  
Died:  
Buried:*

#### **Della Kay Sutton** Married: 12 April, 1959

*Born: 24 September, 1939, Nashville, Berrien, Ga  
Died:  
Buried:*

**W**ith the publishing of this newsletter on the life of Willie Marion Allen, I have familiarized you with the lives of 6

of Marion and Rachel's 48 surviving grandchildren.

I have tried to interview as thoroughly as time would permit, and have attempted to research the documented life of each individual. However, I have been able to spend but a few days in the homes of their descendants, and a little more than that thumbing through brittle court records or straining my eyes in darkened rooms reading faded microfilm. I am sure that there are nuggets of information that I have missed in my effort to complete the task. But what I have presented, has been faithful to the record, as far as I can be reasonably sure.

With my anticipated move to Georgia this next summer, I hope that my skills will be sharpened, my search more diligent, and my record more complete on the remaining 42 grandchildren. I hope you will continue to open your doors, your albums, and your memories, so that the rest of your large extended family may learn of the unique heritage that we all have in common.

—Bryan Lee Shaw



***Dedication by a dedicated descendant***

*Two new government markers were placed at the graves of Jeremiah Shaw, Jr. and his wife, Rachel Horne Shaw, through the efforts of Julian and Carol Shaw Causey Harper. Carol is shown above with the two new markers. Rachel's marker on the right still has the lettering accent to be added. The original markers remain in place immediately behind the new markers.*

*The markers were purchased at the cost of several hundred dollars from personal contributions by the Harpers and other family members. If you would care to help in covering the cost of these fine markers, please send your contribution to:*  
 Carol Shaw Causey Harper  
 10030 East Dewey Robbins Road  
 Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737  
*Any contribution will be welcomed, and you are encouraged to visit the Burnt Church Cemetery to see the tributes to the Shaw pioneers.*

## PARENTS OF MARION SHAW HONORED AT DEDICATION OF NEW MARKERS.

**O**n a pleasant morning of November 3, 2001, at Burnt Church Cemetery near Lakeland, Georgia, the final resting places of Jeremiah Shaw, Jr. and Rachel Horne Shaw were once again dedicated, and their lives and sacrifices recognized by their descendants.

The occasion was the placing of new government markers, backed by their original markers, through the efforts of Julian and Carol Shaw Causey Harper of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida. Carol is the 3rd great granddaughter of Jeremiah Shaw, Jr., and the 2nd great grandniece of Francis Marion Shaw.

Carol read the biographies of Jeremiah Shaw and Rachel Horne, and gave some background on the circumstances that

brought the Scot-Irish Shaw families to the American shores.

The tombstones were unveiled by John and Frances Shaw, descendants of John Shaw, Jeremiah Shaw's brother. The ceremony was filled with the somber melodies of "Amazing Grace," and "Going Home," played on bagpipes by the Harpers.

A time capsule was also buried between the two markers, containing the Shaw biographies, and a listing of the other markers at the Burnt Church Cemetery.

All those in attendance then placed a handful of dirt upon the capsule, and it was covered. It is anticipated that the descendants of the pioneer couple will open the capsule in 100 years.

Other family connections were also honored by the Harpers. They are to be commended for their dedication to the Shaw family heritage.—BLS