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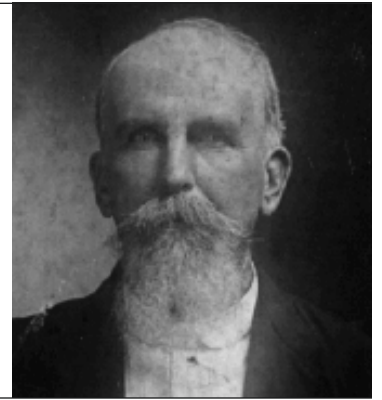
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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



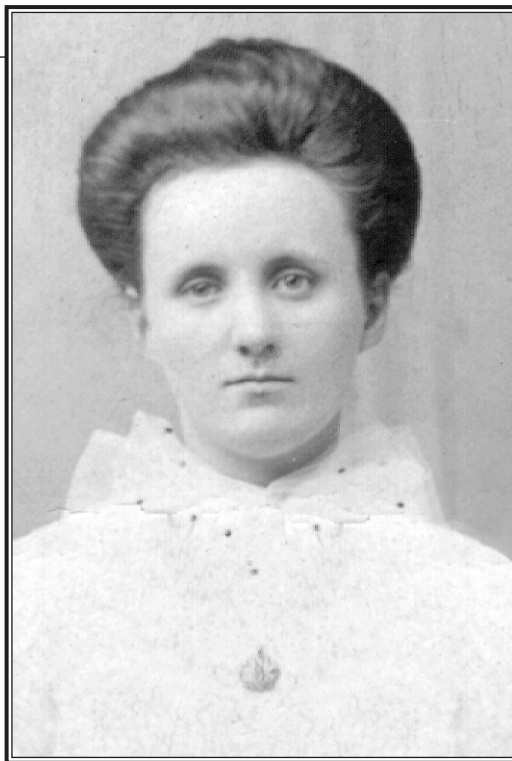
T H E G R A N D C H I L D R E N

MARY ELLEN "MINNIE" CLEMENTS SIRMANS

A Primitive Baptist Methodist

She spent her lifetime living Christian values, but Minnie Clements

Sirmans made little distinction between the Primitive Baptist faith that she was raised in and the Methodist faith that she married into. She attended the Methodist meetings with her family almost every Sunday, except once a month when she went to the Baptist preaching at Salem Church in Adel. And she was known to have cooked more dinners for the Methodist fold than for her Baptist congregation. So it is not so surprising that



when asked about her religious affiliation, she would matter-of-factly respond, "Primitive Baptist Methodist."

Born December 28, 1891, Mary Ellen "Minnie" Clements was the second child and first daughter of William D. and Effie Shaw Clements. She was born in Adel, Georgia. Her father had relocated there from Willacoochee, Georgia just the year before, where he had operated a turpentine still. She attended Adel schools through out

her youthful years, and dutifully attended the Salem Primitive Baptist Church with her mother.

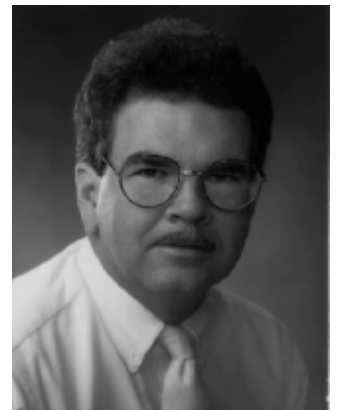
While visiting relatives in Willacoochee

Volume 11 Number 1
March 2002

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





Youthful cousins and in-laws
The photo on top was taken at the home of Minnie's parents, William D. and Effie Shaw Clements, in Adel. Standing behind the fence is her brother Claude, her cousin and future sister-in-law Maybel Allen, Minnie, and her cousin Lowndes Shaw. Immediately above, Minnie poses, probably for her graduation picture.

in the spring of 1910, Minnie attended a social at the Live Oak Methodist Church in the "roundabout" area near Willacoochee. There at the well by the church she met young Pleamon N. Sirmans, son of William T. and Mary Moore Sirmans. After a short courtship the couple were married August 23, 1910 by Pleamon's uncle, E. F. Moore.

Pleamon first supported his family by farming on his father's place near Willacoochee. More than a year later the couple celebrated the arrival of their first child, William Ralph, on August 1, 1911. They were blessed with another son the following year when Francis Burns was born on September 13, 1912.

Sometime prior to 1918, the Sirmans family moved to a farm owned by C. A. Sirmans, south of Nashville near Lois in lot 321 of the 10th district, just east of the W. J. Parrish property.

On May 12, 1918, Minnie gave birth to their first daughter, Geraldine. Not only was their family growing but their farm as well, when Minnie purchased 3 1/2 acres from W. J. Parrish on December 18, 1918.

Just as the Sirmans family felt they were getting established in the Lois community, their little daughter Geraldine suddenly

grew ill and died June 8, 1919.

By January, 1921, Pleamon was struggling with the farm. He probably felt that he needed a larger acreage to work, and a larger home for their growing family, as Minnie was expecting once again. On January 4, 1921, Pleamon purchased the 50 acre Lacy Shaw farm in lot 457 near Ray City for \$2000.

But then legal troubles began to plague them. First, they lost their property in lot 321 in a fi fa court action in May, 1921. Then through some misunderstanding, Pleamon was forced to sell the lot 457 farm to H. L. Forehand, to satisfy past debts. They were allowed to stay in the home until after their second daughter, Mary Hazel was born on October 5, 1921. Then Pleamon gave up on farming for good.

Minnie and Pleamon then moved into Ray City, where Pleamon had secured a job as a butcher at the Clements Lumber Company commissary. The Sirmans family lived in a company-owned house across the street from the commissary, and on October 8, 1923, their third daughter, Minnie Merle, was born. One month later, on November 6, the lumber company suffered a severe fire,



and Pleamon found himself looking for another job.

He took a salesman position with the B. H. Crum Chevrolet dealership in Nashville, Georgia. He was provided a car to drive to work, and moved his family into their first of many Ray City homes.

EIGHTEEN months later, a tragedy struck that would pain Minnie and Pleamon for the rest of their lives.

On May 7, 1925, young Ralph Sirmans, their thirteen-year-old son, had been working at the Jackson lumber mill near Ray City, and was on his way home for dinner when he attempted to catch a ride on the logging train into town. The details are carried in these accounts of the *Adel News*:

RALPH SIRMANS HAD HIS FOOT MASHED BY TRAIN

Ralph Sirmans, [thirteen]-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Pleman Sirmans, had his foot mashed badly a few days ago when he attempted to catch a log train near Ray City. He was carried to Valdosta to a hospital for surgical attention and it is hoped that he will not lose his foot, although it appears probable that a portion of it will have to be amputated.

However, amputation was not the worst to be feared. One week later the *Adel News* carried this devastating report:

**RALPH SIRMANS DIED OF BLOOD POISON
Popular Youth Had His Foot
Crushed by Engine**

Ralph Sirmans, son of Mr. and Mrs. Pleman N. Sirmans, died at a local hospital early Sunday morning from blood poison resulting from a crushed foot ten days before when a tram engine ran over it at a saw mill at Ray City. His foot was badly mangled and after surgical attention at his home he was later brought to the hospital. All that possibly could be done was done for him here but he continued to grow worse until death relieved his sufferings. Ralph was a bright boy and well grown for his age. He was popular with many friends and his death brought sorrow not only to the members of his family but to many others as well. He suffered greatly but was patient and thoughtful of others as the end drew near, being particularly solicitous about his mother and father and brother and sisters.

Minnie and Pleamon were never quite the same after this tragic loss. But they grew closer through their faith. Nine months later their last child, a daughter named Hilda Marie, was born on February 22, 1926.



Pleamon N. Sirmans, salesman and grocer.

This early photograph (above) of Pleamon Sirmans reflects his formal religious upbringing, and desire to always be presentable and properly attired. Still appropriately dressed (top), Pleamon and his daughter Merle, pose for this photograph in their grocery store in Ray City. Though all of his family helped out in the store, Pleamon specially trained Merle to butcher meat.



William Ralph Sirmans



Francis Burns Sirmans

The Lacy Shaw-Pleamon Sirmans Residence

The home shown above was the residence of not only Pleamon and Minnie Sirmans for most of their married life, it also was the former home of Lacy Shaw, Minnie's uncle. Francis Marion Shaw was living in this home with his son, Lacy when Marion passed away in 1922. After the death of her parents, Merle Sirmans continued to occupy the home until 1999.



And through their faith they devoted themselves to the service of others. Pleamon joined the Ray's Mill Lodge, and was elected Junior Steward in December, 1931.

Minnie was always involved in preparing a wedding shower, baby shower, or special birthday, making sure that just the right culinary delight was presented, and with special attention to detail that seemed to be Minnie's trademark. Reported in the July 12, 1934, *Nashville Herald*:

STORK SHOWER

Mrs. Pleman Sirmans and Mrs. L. C. Guthrie were hostess at a lovely Stork Shower given for Mrs. J. A. Purvis at Ray City. . . . He (the stork) was all dressed in his best blue and white suit, and rode on a wagon all loaded with gifts. . . . Mrs. Sirmans and Guthrie proved their hospitality was not surpassed by serving a most delicious ice course.

And she would put forth just as much effort for her own children. Again in the *Nashville Herald*, March 7, 1935:

To the very young set was a Birthday Party given for Hilda Sirmans by her mother, Mrs. Pleman Sirmans. She was 9 years of age on the 22nd of February. The color scheme was red, white and blue. The little folks had a real delightful time.

And all during this time she continued to provide dinners for both the Methodists and the Baptists. But since she cooked more meals for the Methodists and needed her family to help deliver the meals, they were raised as Methodists.

Minnie did, however, inherit the strict, disciplinarian qualities of her mother. Pleamon on the other hand was the more tender, soft spoken arbitrator.

In March, 1936, Minnie received a settlement in the estate of her mother, who had passed away in 1932. The following year, October, 1937, the Sirmans family once again purchased the former home of Lacy Shaw, this time his Ray City home on North Street. They would live in that home the remainder of their lives.

In March, 1939, Minnie took out a small mortgage on their home and Pleamon established a grocery business, located behind the old drug store in Ray City.

During his residency in Ray City, Pleamon had been active in civic affairs, serving as school district trustee for several years. He also ran for elective office on several occasions, but failed to win. But in 1938, he was finally elected mayor of Ray City, succeeding W. M. Creech. Pleamon only served two years as mayor and was defeated in his reelection bid in 1940 by



J. L. Moore. However, he did run for Ray City council several times after that and was elected.

For the next ten years Sirman's Grocery was one of three markets operating in the little Ray City community. The store also provided employment for his son, daughters, and son-in-law, W. H. Bradham.

About 1950, Hap Yarbrough built a block building adjacent to the drug-store, facing the railroad, and Pleamon moved his grocery over to that location.

And though, he made enough money to maintain their livelihood, Pleamon was not a particularly successful merchant. He extended credit to many in the community, knowing full well that he would not see the full repayment. It was often stated that if he had collected on all of his outstanding accounts, he would have died a rich man. But he continued to extend credit for promissory notes, security deeds on property, and borrowing against his own security to keep the business going.

By 1956, Pleamon and Minnie both were suffering from heart ailments. Pleamon tried to limit the time he spent at the grocery, but finally in 1960, it was necessary for him to sell the stock of the

store to Guy Lindsey and he retired. However, it was too little, too late, as Pleamon suffered a severe heart attack on February 21, 1961. He was rushed to the Smith Hospital in Hahira, but died the next morning.

Minnie and her daughter Merle continued to live on in the old Lacy Shaw home for 9 more years. Then on the evening of March 21, 1970, Merle asked her sisters, Hazel and Hilda, to stay overnight with her as Minnie was not feeling very well. When Merle went in to check on her mother, she found that she had passed away.

Uniquely, the funeral was held at the Ray City Methodist Church. The services were conducted by ministers and elders from both the Methodist and the Primitive Baptist churches. She was surrounded by the many friends and neighbors that she and Pleamon had given assistance to and shared of their own sustenance when others were in need.

Then the "Primitive Baptist Methodist" was laid to rest with her loving husband at the New Ramah Primitive Baptist Cemetery.

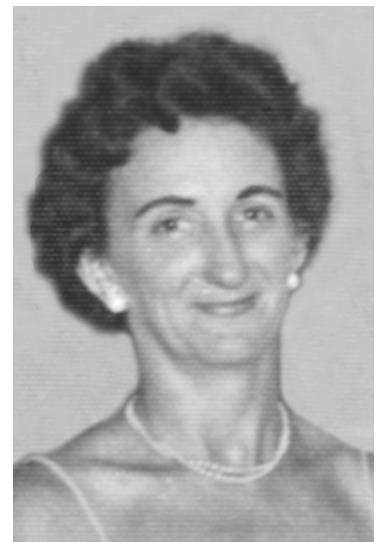
—BLS



Mary Hazel Sirmans Bradham



Minnie Merle Sirmans



Hilda Marie Featherstone

NEW DATE!

FOR THE
9TH ANNUAL
SHAW-ALLEN
REUNION—

SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 29,
2002

10:00 A.M.
RAY CITY, GA.
SENIOR CITIZEN
CENTER

MARK YOUR
CALENDARS
NOW—

FAMILY GROUP SHEET

MARY ELLEN "MINNIE" CLEMENTS Homemaker

Born: 28 December, 1891, Adel, Berrien, Ga
Died: 21 March, 1970, Ray City, Berrien, Ga

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

SPOUSE

PLEAMON NICHOLS SIRMANS Salesman, Grocery Merchant

Born: 29 February, 1892, Willacoochee, Coffee, Georgia

Died: 23 February, 1961, Hahira, Lowndes, Ga

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

CHILDREN

William Ralph Sirmans

Born: 1 August, 1911, Willacoochee, Coffee, Ga

Died: 17 May, 1925, Adel, Cook, Ga

Buried: Lime Sink Cemetery, Adel, Cook, Ga

Francis Burns Sirmans

Born: 13 September, 1912, Willacoochee, Ga

Died: 28 November, 1985

Buried: New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Ga

Ethel Geraldine Sirmans

Born: 12 May, 1918, Berrien County, Ga

Died: 8 June, 1919

Buried: Lime Sink Cemetery, Adel, Cook, Ga

Mary Hazel Sirmans

Born: 5 October, 1921, Lois, Berrien, Ga

Died: 1 January, 1999, Valdosta, Ga

Buried: New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Ga

Minnie Merle Sirmans

Born: 8 October, 1923, Ray City, Berrien, Ga

Died: 27 February, 2002, Nashville, Berrien, Ga

Buried: New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Ga

Hilda Marie Sirmans

Born: 22 February, 1926, Ray City, Berrien, Ga

SPOUSE

Mary Lou Knight Married: 24 April, 1932

Born: 5 March, 1911

Died: 4 May, 1947

Juanell Griffin Married and divorced

Willis Henry Bradham Married: 12 April, 1942

Born: 25 October, 1915

Died: 12 January, 1971

Buried: New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Ga

Never Married

Joseph Henry Featherstone, Jr.

Married: 31 October, 1944

Born: 20 March, 1920, Hudson County, NJ

Died: 1 March, 2002, Lake City, FL

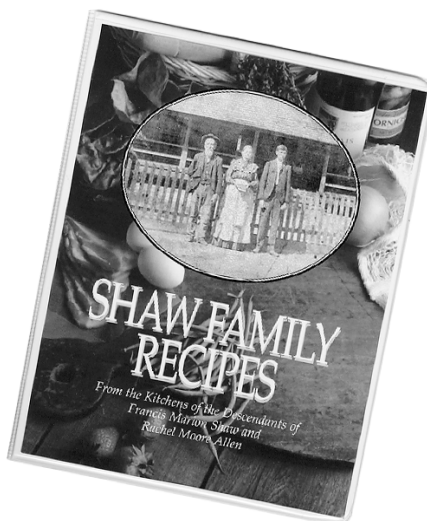
Buried: Andersonville National Cemetery, Ga

YOUR RECIPES ARE NEEDED!

At last year's Shaw-Allen reunion, the inaugural issue of the Shaw Family Recipes was distributed to all those in attendance. It consisted of a three ring binder with the initial installment of 12 delicious family recipes. It will eventually contain over 80 of the finest recipes in the Shaw-Allen family tradition.

The second installment will be handed out at this year's reunion in September (note the date change), and will consist of 18 new recipes.

Many of you inquired of the selection process for the recipes to be included. Quite frankly, they are all



accepted as they are submitted. However, I am in need of more recipe submissions. I would like to have a good representation from all of the descendants of the children of Marion and Rachel Allen Shaw.

Each recipe card has a vintage photograph of one of the family ancestors that is related to the submitting person. I have a pretty good supply of photographs for most family branches, but can always use more. So if you have some nice old photographs of your parents or grandparents, please feel free to send them along with your recipes.

I need to get these new recipe cards printed up right away, so please send your submissions now, before my mailing address changes May 1, 2002.

—BLS