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The Family of Francis Marion Shaw Newsletter

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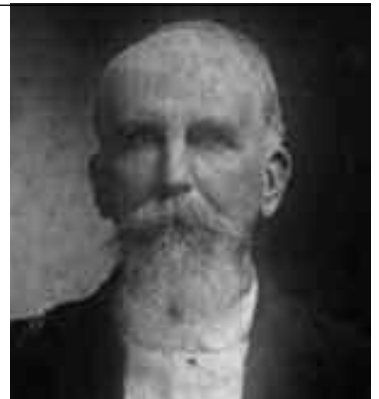
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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION
SHAW
AND RACHEL MOORE ALLEN



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

**LENA KNIGHT
HICKMAN**
“A Farmer’s Wife”

Similar to the infatuations today when a nice looking man in a new sports car catches the eye of a young lady, so was the impression that Lena Knight had when she first saw young Edgar Hickman ride into town with his fancy buggy and beautiful horse. It was a life-changing event. Just a short time later, the couple began their long journey together that would span over 50 some years—The journey of a farmer’s wife.



room school near the present-day community of Allenville.

Though her father was a successful farmer in the county, he often had farming setbacks and hardships which tested the financial stability of the family.

On Monday, January 4, 1909, while Sovin was doing business in Valdosta, the

family home caught fire and burned to the ground. Only a few of their household goods were saved. The origin of the fire was not determined,

Possibly as a result of this sudden loss of property, Sovin sold the five-horse farm to Dr. P. H. Askew for \$7050. The Knight family started their new beginning near the small community of Barney, Georgia

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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
400 East Avera Avenue
Nashville, GA 31639
onearnshaw@mchsi.com*

Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor





An early photo of Lena and Edgar taken in the Purvis cabin, on the occasion of Joann's wedding to C. B. Yates. It prompts a story told of Edgar's father who ran a grocery store for a time. He stored his inventory at the home of Lena and Edgar. On one occasion as a dinner guest of Lena and Edgar, the senior Hickman commented on how good catsup would be with the meal. Edgar went to the storage room and got a bottle of catsup and sat it on the table. Edgar's father quipped quite seriously, "I will make a note on that." Lena sharply responded, "No you wont. If you are going to make a note of that, Edgar can put it right back in there." The catsup stayed on the table.

The optimism of the move to Barney was short-lived however. On Saturday, April 20, 1911, Sovin was called to testify as a witness in a Nashville City Court trial. Upon completing his testimony, he drove back over to Brooks County, where he enjoyed a late evening meal with his family. As he completed his meal, he suddenly suffered a heart attack and by 2:00 on Sunday morning, he passed away.

This tragic loss created a huge burden on the resources of the Knight household. The oldest boys, Mansfield and Leland took over operations of the farm. However it was quite evident that they were not able to adequately provide for their own families, as well as their mother and remaining children residing in the home. Eventually Eliza and the younger girls moved to Ray City, where they lived with Francis Marion and Rachel Shaw, Eliza's parents.

It was about this time that young Edgar E. Hickman and Lena found themselves in close proximity to one another, possibly at a church meeting. Edgar's horse and buggy turned her head and a courtship began. On June 21, 1914, Lena and Edgar

rode over to the home of Justice of the Peace, J. H. Culpepper, and were married standing beside that fine horse and buggy. Lena was just 15 years-old, and Edgar ten years her senior.

For the first few years, the young couple lived with Edgar's parents William and Mary E. Hickman in south eastern Colquitt County, where he was employed as a farm hand by M. W. Norman. During this time their first two children were born; Edna in 1915, and James in 1919. At the age of six, Edna began attending the nearby two-room Union school.

However, with a new family outgrowing the household of the senior Hickmans, on January 2, 1920, Edgar made a down payment on 192 acres in land lot 302 of the 8th District in Colquitt County, owned by his employer. In the condition of sale, Edgar purchased the property for \$3000 principal sum, with a \$150 down payment, and interest payments of \$171 due January 1, 1921, January 1, 1922, January 1, 1923, January 1, 1924, and finally the total principal \$3021 on January 1, 1925.

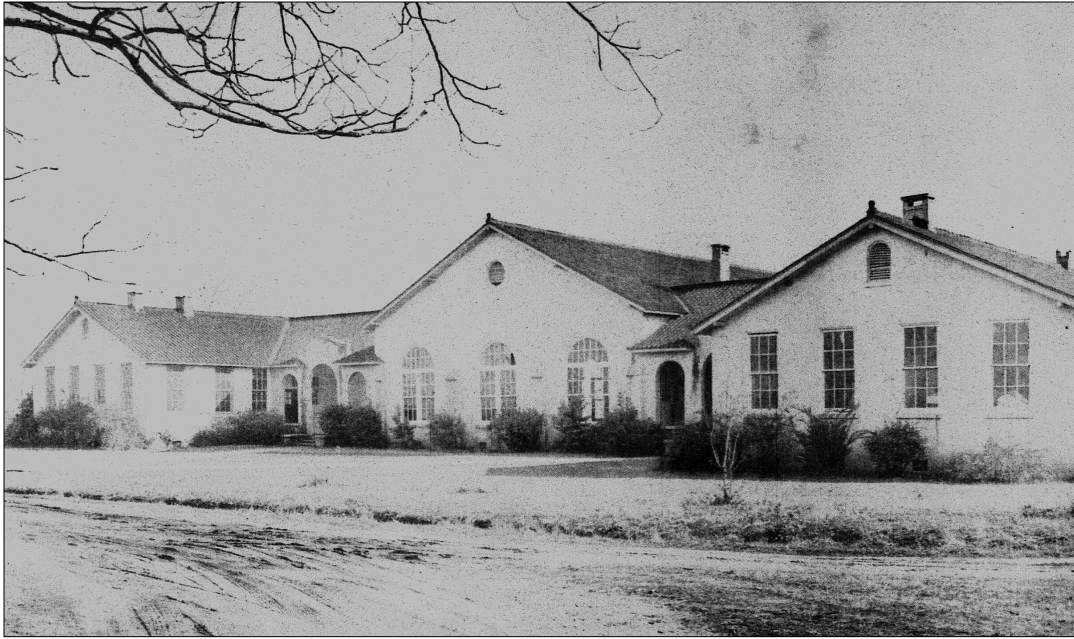
The property, on the Old Moultrie-Adel Road about 6 miles east of Moultrie, was mostly uncleared woods and rolling hills, which required a great deal of tree cutting and stump removal to make the land suitable for cultivation. This often took Edgar some distance from the house and left Lena at home tending the children. As a signalling device, Edgar purchased a pearl-handle pistol for Lena to fire if there was an emergency at home.

Though he struggled to clear the land suitable enough to cultivate, Edgar was able to make improvements and met his obligation early, paying off the mortgage by December 20, 1923.

But like so many farmers of that period, he needed seed money and probably living expenses for the following season, and immediately indebted himself again to Mr. Norman for \$1500, using the farm as collateral. It appears he had difficulty repaying the loan and eventually the note was only satisfied when Edgar turned the property back to Mr. Norman in September, 1924.

The Hickman family moved to Barney shortly thereafter, where Edgar engaged in a life-long endeavor of share-cropping.

The family moved into a sharecropper's cabin on the property of Daniel H. Purvis, about 2 miles northwest of Barney. The home was typical of "cropper" cabins,



This Mission-style school house in Barney, top left, was built in 1923, shortly before the Hickman family moved to Brooks County. It was the educational campus for all of the Hickman children for most or part of their formal schooling. About the time that their youngest child turned school age in 1947, Lena started working at the school cafeteria where she single-handedly cooked and kept the cafeteria for about 60 students.

In 1959, the school in Barney closed its doors and the students were sent to Morven for their schooling, bottom left. Lena was asked to share her culinary talents at the Morven school and oversee a staff of 5 or 6 women in the cafeteria. She remained there until her heart attack forced her to resign about 1964.



Edgar Hickman became almost a father figure to his grandsons, David Yates on the left and Chuck Yates on the right.

originally built with logs, then covered with clapboard siding. There was a large bedroom that extended the full width of the back of the house, with the interior log wall exposed where it met the addition.

Though their 3rd child, Fannie Lou, was born in Berrien County, October, 1926, possibly at the home of one of Lena's sisters or her grandparents, the remainder of the Hickman children were born in that share-cropper cabin; Joann in 1934, Faith in 1938, and Jane in 1941.

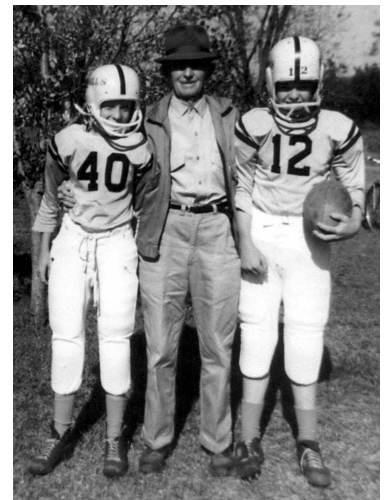
Edgar worked the Purvis property for more than two decades using mule labor and depending on any other assistance his son and five daughters could give. Everyone on the Hickman farm worked long, hard days. In addition the family shared their labor with the nearby Tidwell family in exchange for that family's assis-

tance during the labor intensive seasons. It was not until the late 1940s that Edgar finally purchased a Ferguson tractor to help in the plowing and cultivation of the property.

In order to have extra spending money, Edgar raised laying hens. Every Saturday he would drive their converted flatbed Model A truck over to Hahira and sell eggs to two or three restaurants in town.

It was about 1947, when Jane, the last child started school that Lena hired on at the Barney school to operate the cafeteria at the school. She cooked all of the meals and cleaned and maintained the kitchen and lunchroom for over 60 students.

With this new employment the Hickmans looked at moving into town and reducing the work load on Edgar.





Last family photo of Lena and Edgar Hickman on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary in 1964. Left to right: Joann, Faith, Fannie Lou, Lena, James, Edgar, Jane, and Edna.



In her later years, Lena enjoyed a twice-a-month visit to the beauty parlor to have her long hair coiffed. Her daughter, Joann would then do her mother's hair every other week.

In March, 1951, Lena and Edgar purchased two lots and a home in Barney from Sallie Rozier for \$1100. Finally, after almost 30 years, Lena and Edgar owned their own home on their own property.

Edgar gave up working the Purvis farm, however he did continue to work the adjacent Andrew Ellis farm for a couple more years before giving up on share-cropping altogether. But working the soil was too much a part of Edgar's life and a year later the couple purchased three additional lots in Barney for \$175, and four more lots for \$400. With this additional land, Edgar planted garden crops for sale, once again reverting to mule power.

In 1959, Edgar and Lena's daughter, Joann, lost her husband and they convinced her to move her home onto the property adjacent to theirs. Edgar became the father figure to Joann's two sons, Chuck and Dave Yates, teaching them the work ethic of a farmer.

That same year the school district closed the Barney school and moved all the students to Morven. Lena was asked by the principal to take over the Morven school cafeteria, cooking and managing the kitchen staff of 5 or 6 others. She loved her position there, and the staff and students loved her, and her cooking.

However the demands of the increased responsibility may have taken its toll on Lena. About 1964 she suddenly experienced a heart attack while at home. She was taken to Smith Hospital in Hahira where she was stabilized and recuperated for 30 days. Though she did not suffer any further heart problems, she was advised not to continue working.

The Hickmans were faithful members of the Friendship Baptist Church in Barney. Much of their social life revolved around their membership. Edgar also served as a Deacon and Lena readily offered her culinary skills. If a family was in need or faced with hardship they would find Lena and Edgar at their doorstep with a delicious meal in hand.

In April, 1968, Edgar developed intense abdominal pain and Lena took him to the Hahira hospital. The pain became severe and the staff could not immediately respond, so Lena drove him to the Adel hospital. They treated him with some success and sent him home. That same evening he tried to eat something and the pain became unbearable.

This time Joann personally called Dr. Acree in advance and rushed Edgar back to the Smith Hospital in Hahira. He was diagnosed with intestinal peritonitis. Though they temporarily stabilized him and treated him with pain killers, his condition continued to deteriorate for over three weeks. He never returned home to Barney. Edgar passed away on April 26, 1968.

With Joann living next door, and Fanny Lou living across the street, the sisters were able to give Lena daily attention, and the boys helped with mowing lawns and doing chores around the property.

On February 17, 1977 after a sudden and brief illness, Lena passed peacefully away at the Smith Hospital. She was buried at the Campground Cemetery in Brooks County, side by side with her husband—The farmer Edgar Hickman and Lena Knight Hickman, wife of a farmer.

—Bryan Shaw