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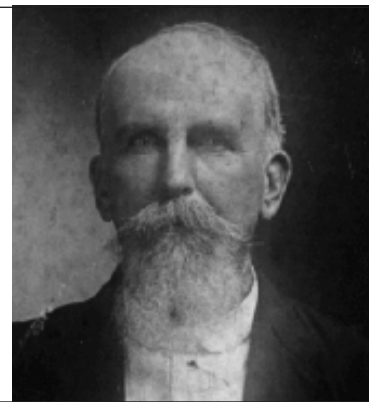
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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



ELIZA ALLEN KNIGHT THE LAST SURVIVOR

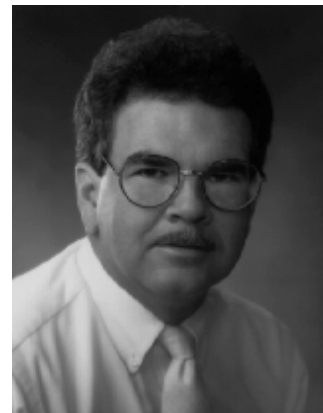
Volume 8 Number 2
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The Family of Francis Marion Shaw is a non-profit newsletter published semi-annually, or more frequently, for the benefit of the descendants of Francis Marion Shaw and his wife, Rachel Moore Allen Shaw.

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 non-returnable manuscripts and photo submissions to:

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Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor



There is a peculiar honor that falls upon one person

in every family, in every generation. That is the honor of being the "last survivor." It is a distinction that requires the bearer to be the oracle of three generations: her parents, her grandparents, and her own. She often lives the values and way of life that no longer exist. She does so using only the memory of a husband and siblings that have long since passed. And it carries with it a certain loneliness. Eliza Allen Knight was a "last survivor."

She was always a survivor in some ways. She was born October 31, 1862, four months after the death of her father, Barzilla Allen, who had died of measles while serving with the Confederate Army in Charlettsville, Virginia.

She was reared with her brothers, William B. and John L., for four years by her widow mother Rachel Moore Allen. Though living around her mother's 17 brothers and brothers-in-law, she did not truly know a father until Rachel married Francis Marion Shaw in 1866.

She was educated in the rural schools of the Lois, Georgia community, and attended the Pleasant Primitive Baptist Church with

her mother and siblings. And she was taught the lessons of homemaking under the loving hand of Rachel. At the age of 17, on June 6, 1880, she married Sullivan Jordan "Sovin" Knight, son of John W. Knight and Candacy Leaptrot.

The life of Eliza cannot be documented through newspaper accounts or court records, but through the records of her husband, we can get an idea of the rural movement of the Knight family.



SULLIVAN J. "SOVIN" KNIGHT AND FAMILY

Pictured above right, Sovin Knight, probably shortly before his death at age 52.

Eliza and Sovin Knight had 11 children; 9 of them matured to adulthood. Only six photos of the children were available at publishing. Shown above are: top to bottom, Marion Mansfield, Ada Virginia, and Rossie.



In 1878, Sovin Knight was a young farmer who owned 50 acres of land in section 375 of the 10th district, on the northeast bank of Cat Creek, in Berrien county, probably part of his father's holdings. The land was valued at \$250 and he had livestock valued at \$100.

About 1881, shortly after his marriage to Eliza, Sovin traded his property for 113 acres in lot 408, 10th district on Indian Camp Branch. The land was valued at \$300, and he had \$139 in livestock, \$100 out debt, and \$30 in plantation tools. Eliza had \$50 in household furnishings. That same year on May 9, 1881, the couples first child, Marion Mansfield was born, followed the next year by their first daughter, Effie J. "Sissy" on August 15, 1882.

In September, 1883, Sovin purchased an additional 15 acres from his father on the north bank of Indian Camp Branch, for \$10, however he sold the original 113 acres a year later for \$600, to John C. Clements, father-in-law of Eliza's sister, Effie.

In December 1884, he acquired 412 acres of land from his father and his brother, Ruben W., in lots 364 and 365 of the 10th district, with the boundary "starting in the northeast corner of the original land line of 364, south to Indian Camp Bay, west parallel to original land line to the

Nashville-Valdosta Road, north to original land line, then east to original corner." The land was valued at \$500, livestock at \$105, and plantation tools, \$15. Eliza's home furnishings were valued at \$35.

However, two years later in November, 1886, Sovin sold the same 412 acres back to his father for \$300. Unfortunately, John W. Knight was in failing health so Sovin and Eliza continued to work the farm in sections 364 and 365.

The couple must have been concerned about the slow growth of their family. Eliza gave birth to their second daughter, Lillie C. on February 2, 1885, However the sweet infant died less than two months later on March 12, 1885. In 1887, the Knights were expecting another child, but once again the young boy died shortly after birth.

Large families provided the labor for many farmers in post-Civil War Georgia. With increased land development a necessity, Sovin must have wondered if he and young Mansfield and "Sissy" would have to handle the planting, cultivating, and harvesting on their own.

But then Eliza bore three healthy children in three years: Leland Thomas on July 17, 1888; Ada Virginia on January 31, 1889; and Fannie K. on November 14, 1890.

That same year, Sovin's father died, leaving Sovin and his brother-in-law, Lott W. Sirmans, to administer his estate. Sovin, once again, acquired the holdings in 364 and 365, only to finally sell them to J. E. Shaw for \$700.

By 1892, Sovin had acquired 375 acres in lot 375 from his father's estate and from his brother, J. Bartow Knight. The land was valued at \$1000, livestock at \$185 and plantation tools at \$30. Eliza's household furnishings had increased to \$95, and her family had increased as well, with the birth of Rossie on August 28, 1892.

In 1894, the Knights had increased their personal property wealth to the highest level in their 14 year marriage, with the total value being \$1680.

But over the next several years there was a steady decrease in their holdings and Sovin began a regular pattern of borrowing money, securing the loans with his property, and finally mortgaging the property itself in 1898. One bright moment, during this period, came with the arrival of another daughter, Ida Lena, October 22, 1898.

The turn of the century brought the first wedding to the Knight household, with the marriage of "Sissy" and Eldrid Guthrie. But Sovin continued to borrow against the property, and though the value of the property steadily increased, he was forced to turn around and borrow again and again to keep the farm and family going.



Between 1894 and 1910, Sovin had borrowed against the farm, or sold off pieces of the property 13 different times. And even with the birth of their last two children, Rachel on May 1, 1901, and Ora Kathleen on May 16, 1904, and the marriages of four more of their children, Sovin and Eliza found their life filled with financial concerns as much as family celebrations.

For whatever reasons, Sovin felt he needed a fresh start, and in January, 1911 he sold the remaining farm property in Berrien county to P. H. Askew, and moved Eliza and their three remaining children to Brooks county, near Barney.

On March 21, 1911, he purchased a 280 acre farm in lots 490, 491, and 522 in district 9 from G. W. Alderman. The purchase price was \$7500 dollars, \$5000 of it paid from the sale of the Berrien county farm, and the rest he borrowed from the Chickamauga Trust Company, to be paid off by November 1, 1915.

Sovin, Eliza, and their children celebrated their new life on this beautiful farm with a fine dinner. However, shortly thereafter, on April 16, 1911, just 26 days after the purchase of the new farm, Sovin suffered a severe heart attack and died in his new home. He left his wife of 31 years, a widow with three children, a survivor once again.

Eliza was faced with the burden of financial decisions that left her and the younger children dependent on the advise of her son, Leland Thomas, and her son-in-law, Eldred Guthrie, administrators of Sovin's estate.

In January, 1914, she sold 2/3rd interest in the Brooks county farm to Mansfield for \$5000, retaining a 1/3rd interest for herself. Mansfield sold a 1/3rd interest to Leland Thomas for \$2500.

In October that same year, all three interested parties borrowed \$3500 from the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company, to be repaid by October, 1919. They put the farm property up as security. Records indicate that the loan was repaid in full.

It was clear that Eliza could not operate the farm on her own, so with the urging of her son, Mansfield, Eliza and her two daughters returned to Berrien county, where she moved into her parents' farm home just outside of Ray City, until they moved into town about 1914. She remained at their home, raising her last two children, until November, 1920, when the youngest daughter, Kathleen was married to Henry Swindle.

Henry and Kathleen took Eliza into their home, where she resided for the following 25 years, offering strong will and advice to the Swindles and their daughters, Carolyn



SISTERLY POSES

Shown above left, in a rare pose in front of Marion Shaw's Ray City home, are the three daughters of Rachel Allen Shaw: left to right, Effie Shaw Clements, Eliza Allen Knight, and Ida Jane Shaw Parrish. Shown above are the three youngest daughters of Eliza and Sovin Knight: top to bottom, Ida Lena, Rachel, and Ora Kathleen.

A NEW GENERATION

With the printing of this newsletter, combined with the other 19 previous issues, the lives of a whole generation of nine children of Marion and Rachel Shaw has been presented. Some of the sketches were more detailed than others because of the variety of information available through court records, newspapers, and personal accounts of their descendants. Research on the lives of these children has been more labored and less productive lately, and though there are still nuggets of information out there, future newsletters on these children will be published when there is enough interesting information available.

So now, we enter a new phase of research and publishing. Starting with the fall issue, the Family of Francis Marion Shaw Newsletter will be dedicated, for the most part, in sharing with you the lives and times of the grandchildren of Francis Marion Shaw and Rachel Moore Allen Shaw. There were 57 grandchildren born to Marion and Rachel through their 9 offspring. 48 of those children lived to adulthood, each with an interesting life, filled with adventures and anecdotes that I hope to bring to your awareness.

I plan to publish a newsletter on each grandchild, rotating families from one to the next as the information and photographs become available to me. My research time is limited and more difficult with more recent ancestors, believe it or not, because of lack of local newspapers, court records, and privacy restrictions. I will be depending heavily on your historical contributions.

The continued success of the Family of Francis Marion Shaw Newsletter depends more on your participation than ever before. Please help.

—Bryan Lee Shaw

and Barbara. She spent most of those years involved in the social and religious functions of the New Ramah Primitive Baptist Church in Ray City, an association which she dearly loved. She was so comfortable about her living arrangement with the Swindles, that she felt quite at ease offering, to every friend she would see at church, an invitation for dinner at the Swindle home.

Kathleen would simply return home and graciously prepare enough food for all of her mother's friends.

In her last few years, Eliza suffered from very poor health. Finally, on November 4, 1945, at the age of 83, Ann Eliza Allen Knight, the last surviving child of Francis Marion Shaw and Rachel Moore Allen Shaw, passed away. And with her, a whole generation. —BLS

FAMILY GROUP SHEET

ANN ELIZA ALLEN / Homemaker
Born: 31 October, 1862, Lowndes County, Ga
Married: 6 June, 1880
Died: 4 November, 1945, Ray City, Berrien, Ga
Buried: Pleasant Cemetery, New Lois, Berrien, Ga

SULLIVAN JORDAN "SOVIN" KNIGHT / Farmer
Born: 12 October 1858, Berrien County, Ga
Died: 16 April 1911, Barney, Brooks, Ga
Buried: Pleasant Cemetery, New Lois, Berrien, Ga

CHILDREN

Marion Mansfield Knight
Born: 9 May, 1881, Berrien County, Ga
Died: 20 March, 1940

Effie J. "Sissy" Knight
Born: 15 August, 1882, Berrien County, Ga
Died:

Lillie C. Knight
Born: 2 February, 1885, Berrien County, Ga
Died: 12 March, 1885

Infant son Knight
Born and died about 1887

Leland Thomas Knight
Born: 17 July, 1888, Berrien County, Ga
Died: 8 May, 1949

Ada Virginia Knight
Born: 31 January, 1889 Berrien County, Ga
Died: 5 March, 1964

Fannie K. Knight
Born: 14 November, 1890, Berrien County, Ga
Died: 16 May, 1969

Rossie Knight
Born: 28 August, 1892
Died: 16 November, 1963

Ida Lena Knight
Born: 22 October, 1898, Berrien County, Ga
Died: 17 February, 1977

Rachel Knight
Born: 1 May, 1901, Berrien County, Ga
Died: 7 January, 1985

Ora Kathleen Knight
Born: 16 May, 1904, Berrien County, Ga

SPOUSES

Mollie Gaskins Married: November, 1906
Born: 27 July, 1889
Died: 28 June, 1980

Eldrid "Dred" Guthrie Married: 17 October, 1900
Born: 13 April, 1881
Died: 25 September, 1935

Lillie Sirmans Married: 23 September, 1909
Born: 6 July, 1888
Died: 14 November, 1978

Joseph Redding "Buddy" Gaskins
Born: 29 December, 1881
Died: 15 May, 1937
Married: 1 September, 1907

Sanford Gideon Gaskins Married: About 1908
Born: 10 December, 1887
Died: 12 November, 1937

Never Married

Edgar Ezekiel Hickman Married: June, 1914
Born: 10 September, 1888
Died: 26 April, 1968

Robert Talmage Chism Married: About 1916
Born: 15 August, 1894
Died: 10 February, 1973

Henry Alexander Swindle
Born: 15 September, 1897
Died: 17 July, 1974
Married: 24 November, 1920

REMEMBERING GRANNY KNIGHT

by Carolyn Swindle Monroe
and Barbara Swindle Wood

I remember so many things about Granny Knight.

I always thought Granny was real old, but of course she wasn't when I was little. She wore long dresses, just like the style now. She was very pretty and had a lot of pride. She wore her hair long in a ball on the back of her head. She would let us do her hair and put a little powder on her sometimes. Mother helped her shop and she had pretty clothes. I especially liked her hats!

Granny Knight always lived with us and to tell you the truth, she was always the boss. She told all of us what to do, and generally we did it.

I remember that Granny decided that we had to have a cow in town, and neither Mother nor Daddy could milk. So she decided that I should learn. She sweetened the pot by telling me if I would learn to milk and get the job done, she would buy me a new bedroom suite. I did it but it was a job I never learned to like. Granny didn't like me playing basketball and wearing shorts, but that was one time she was overruled.

Granny was a member of the Primitive Baptist Church of New Ramah, just outside of Ray City. There would be several preachers, and church would last until three or four o'clock. I loved the way brother Vickers would heist a tune. I also remember the ritual of foot washing and being able to get up to get a drink of water during the service. Mother would always fix a big lunch and Granny would ask all of her friends to join us. We had to wait until everyone else had eaten, and sometimes we would eat lunch at 6:00 p.m.

Most of Granny's friends were widows. I loved listening to them. They had so many stories to tell. We thought they were really grand. And they thought we were, too.

It is funny the things you remember. Once, Mother and Daddy were away when a photographer came by. Granny decided to have all sorts of posed pictures of Barbara and me.

On another occasion, our next door neighbors house burned. We thought ours was going to burn also. So Granny just picked up her trunk and got it out of the house all by herself.



On her birthday, Barbara always gave Granny three cans of Navy snuff and cotton stockings that cost 29 cents. Barbara said that Granny would send her to the store for Navy snuff and if they were out of that she would get Three Thistle. Granny would give her a nickel to spend for doing the errand. Barbara always spent the nickel on a coconut flake candybar—it was a favorite of mine too.

Granny was a great cook. I especially remember her doughnuts and biscuit bread. Barbara loved her apple tarts.

We loved having Granny live with us. She was very special to Barbara and me. We learned so much from her. I think maybe her other grandchildren were a bit jealous of us.

I have always been sorry that she, Dave [Monroe], and James [Wood] didn't get to know each other. I think they would have been full chums. She loved Daddy like a son.

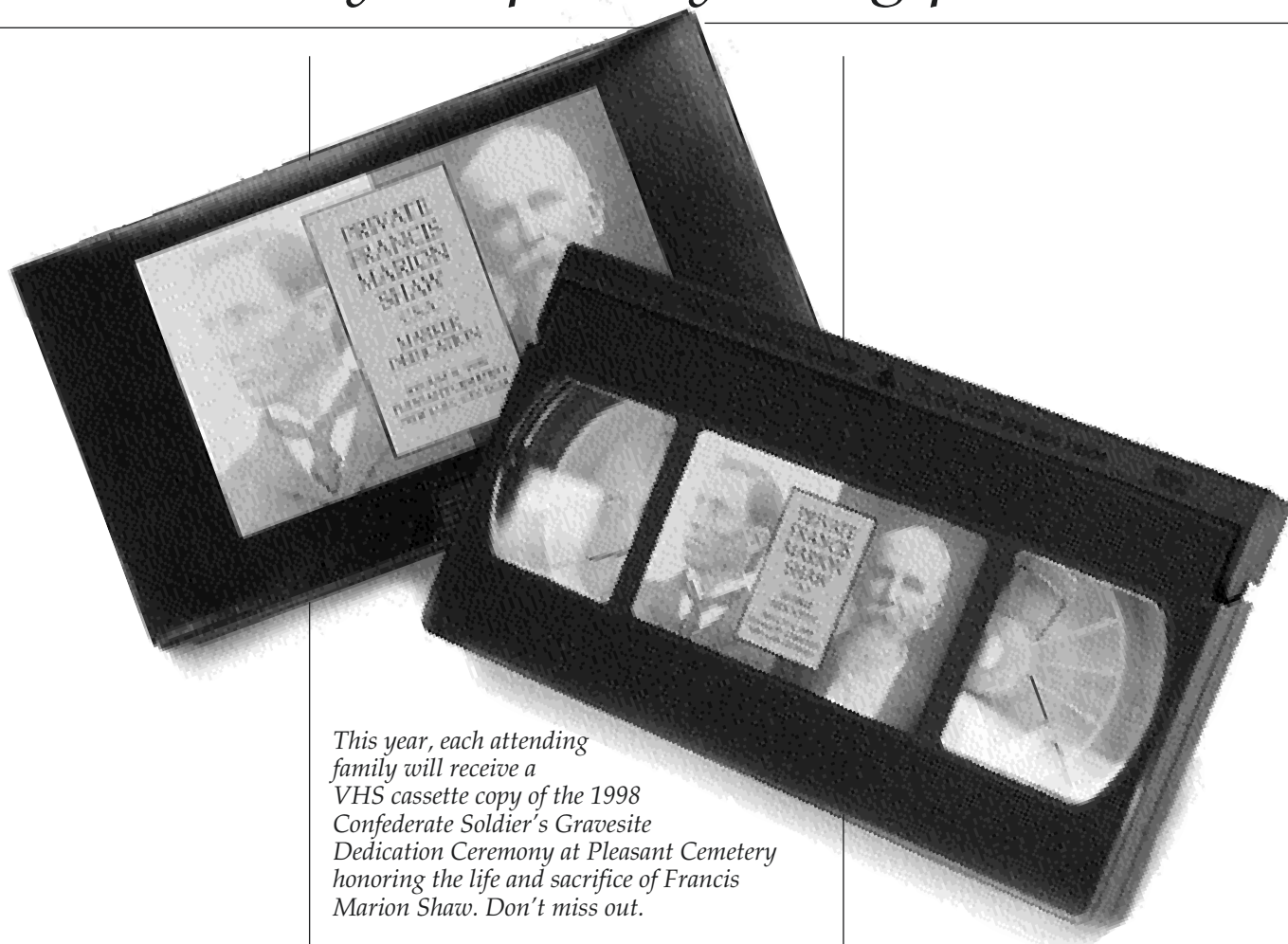
Granny was one great lady and I'm so glad that we had her wonderful influence.

A GRAND LADY AND A GRAND GRANNY

A special moment is captured above when Eliza Allen Knight lovingly smothers the hand of her granddaughter, Carolyn Swindle, in front of the Swindle home about 1930. About the same period of time, Eliza is dressed in one of her "special" hats as she prepares to take a ride in George Sirman's touring car.

SHAW FAMILY REUNION 1999

Honor your past by being present!



This year, each attending family will receive a VHS cassette copy of the 1998 Confederate Soldier's Gravesite Dedication Ceremony at Pleasant Cemetery honoring the life and sacrifice of Francis Marion Shaw. Don't miss out.

The Family of Francis Marion Shaw 6th Annual Reunion

***Sunday,
August 8, 1999
10:00 A.M.***

***Ray City, Georgia
Senior Citizen
Center***

Yes, it is that time of year again when you gather your children together and return to the heartland of their American roots. To honor the memory of those whose names are not just an entry in the family bible but whose

lives are the very essence of who we are and what we may become.

The Family of Francis Marion Shaw Reunion is fast becoming the largest and most successful Shaw reunion in Southern Georgia.

Descendants of the nine Shaw-Allen children, and the 57 grandchildren now number in the thousands, and each year as new faces enter the door of the Ray City Senior Citizens Center, a most familiar comment can be heard, "I had no idea that I had so many cousins."

Other comments include, "There is so much information available here for my family to learn about our heritage."

"Every year I walk away from here thinking, 'I am a very special person, fortunate to be from this very special family.' I am so proud of my great-grandparents, my grandparents, and my parents. I hope my own children and grandchildren will honor us this way some day."

This year the reunion is a one day event, Sunday, August 8, with registration beginning at 10:00 A.M. Tables will be available to display your family scrapbooks and everyone is encouraged to bring unidentifiable photos and family history questions. We will be paying tribute to a couple of our most distinguished senior family members. And of course there will be the usual new and back-issue handouts on a variety of Shaw family history subjects.

The terrific potluck luncheon follows about noon, with plates and utensils provided by the family association.

Make your plans now to attend. Questions? Call Bryan Shaw (801) 240-2516.