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The Family of Francis Marion Shaw Newsletter

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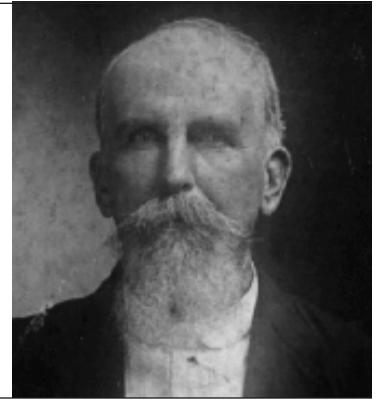
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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



FRANCIS ARTHUR SHAW 1866–1933

On a sloping hillside in the western section of Berrien County, Georgia, near New Lois, a variety of headstones dot the serene landscape of the Pleasant Cemetery. Some show the prominence of the deceased in the history of the local community. Many have obviously been there longer than others, and show the ravages of the weather and neglect. Among the more neglected markers is one that carries the name of Victoria Giddens Shaw. The faint inscription notes that Victoria died in 1889, at the youthful age of 22.

The grayish marble is broken in two, the top half leaning precariously against the base, and if one was familiar with Victoria's circumstance of birth and marriage, its condition is seemingly appropriate.

You see, Martha Victoria Giddens was the first born child of Jacob Ann "Annie" Giddens through an illicit relationship of Annie and Jonathan Knight. Annie had originally been a house helper of Jonathan's wife, Candacy Leaptrot, and found herself involved with master Jonathan. The relationship continued on after the birth of Victoria, much to the ire of Candacy and the Knight children, and five years later Annie gave birth to her second child by Jonathan, a daughter named Florence.

Now births of such circumstance were not so uncommon in those days, but the stigma attached to the innocent offspring of such a relationship was, unfortunately, quite common. You can imagine what glances and whispers these two young girls (*continued on page 2*)

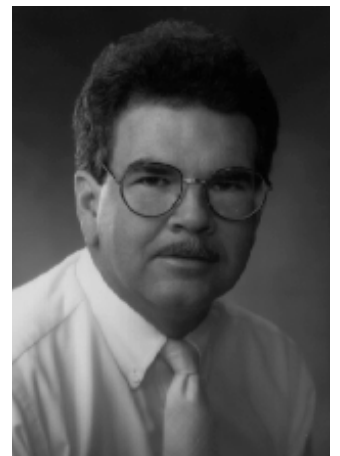


Volume 2 Number 1
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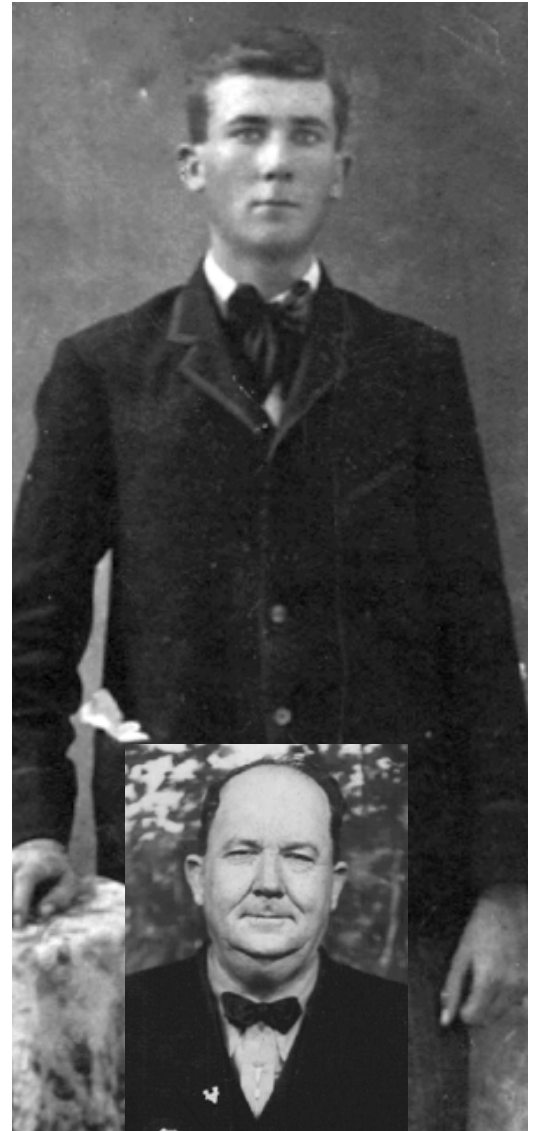
The Family of Francis Marion Shaw is a non-profit newsletter published semi-annually for the benefit of the descendants of Francis Marion Shaw and his wife, Rachel Moore Allen Shaw.

*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. Do not send the original photo unless you have no desire to have it returned. Send your non-returnable manuscripts and photo submissions to:
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Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor



This photo to the right, is of Francis Arthur Shaw, probably taken about the time his first wife Victoria Giddens Knight Shaw died, and before he married Gertrude Albritton, his second wife. He made his livelihood from the pitch of the Yellow Georgia pine woods. The inset shows a much older Arthur as he appeared in his later years while residing in Willacoochee, Georgia. Photos courtesy Paul Shaw.



The First Family

Pictured above is Martha Victoria Giddens Knight Shaw, Arthur's first wife. Center is Brodie Shaw about 20 years old, and in the inset, as he appeared later in life. Right is Bruner as an older teenager, and also as he appeared later in life. Brodie made his living working for the Southern Railroad and hauling furniture, while Bruner spent most of his adult life in law enforcement.

Mystery lady, a haunting image of romantic tragedy.

You may recall the photo above from the first issue of the Shaw Family newsletter. The identity of the lady was not known then. The photo came from a collection in the possession of Paul Shaw, grandson of Arthur Shaw, but unlike most of the photos in the collection this one had no identification. The family had no knowledge of who she was.

Then one evening last fall, in the home of Dorothy Gilbert, Kathleen Knight Swindle identified the lady as Arthur's first wife, Victoria Giddens Knight Shaw. Victoria was a sister-in-law to Kathleen's mother, Eliza Allen Knight.

This fortunate occasion should remind all of us to gather our photographs together and be sure they are each identified so they will be valued by the next generation and the generations after.

FRANCIS ARTHUR SHAW (continued)

must have endured as they grew up in the late 1800s, attending school, and worshipping at church services in the small rural community of Lois.

As Victoria grew to womanhood, she blossomed into a striking auburn-haired beauty. It was no wonder that she was noticed by many of the young suitors. Among those was Francis Arthur Shaw, the eldest son of Civil War veteran, Francis Marion Shaw and his wife Rachel Moore Allen Shaw.

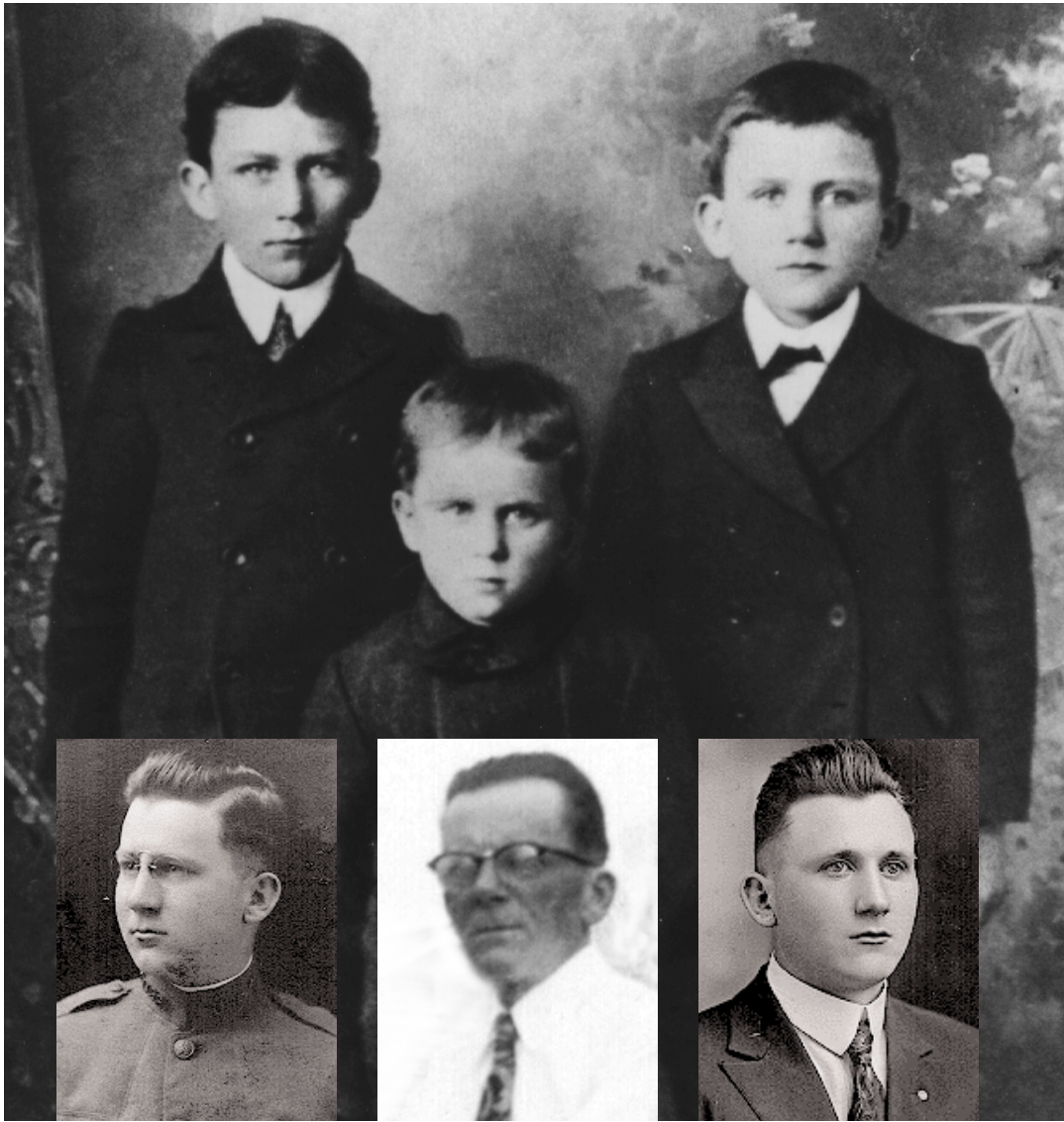
They were such a handsome couple and Victoria was so charming and captivating to Arthur's family. Their love was intense, and even though they were young, he 19 and she 18, they married on 12 October, 1885.

It was almost 2 years before they had their first child, Brodie, born August, 1887. Then on 7 November, 1888, they had their second son, Charles Bruner. But Victoria suffered through bouts of illness, including typhoid fever. And with her baby being only 10 months old, she fell ill again, never to recover. She died on

2 September, 1889, leaving Arthur a heart-broken man and the fender of two small children.

The immediate rearing of the boys fell upon the shoulders of Rachel and Marion. Arthur remained a widower for two years, finally taking the hand of Gertrude Albritton on 15 November 1891. Gertrude was a daughter of Hodge Albritton, and a sister to Tula Albritton, wife of Lacy Shaw, Arthur's brother. For whatever cause, whether it was a desire to put the memory of his dear Victoria behind him, or if the boys were too attached to the kindly grandparents, Arthur left Brodie and Bruner to be raised in the home of Marion and Rachel until their adulthood.

The second family of Francis Arthur was introduced with the birth of Lowndes Shaw on October 1892. Bernard Theodore Shaw was the second son of this marriage, born 9 July 1895. And the family was completed when Brooker Hodges Shaw was



born 23 November 1898.

The two families were not only separated by marriages, they were separated by distance as well. Sometime after their wedding, but prior to 1900 they moved to the north end of Berrien county, near Enigma, where Arthur was employed as a woodsman in a turpentine business. By 1910 he had invested in his own turpentine still, about 3 miles southeast of Willacoochee. The remains of the still have all but disappeared, but the huge live oak tree whose spreading branches sheltered the house nearby, still dominates the landscape.

He continued in the naval store business through out most of his remaining life, while maintaining a small farm which was located 2 miles west of Willacoochee on Highway 82. He was active in civic affairs, and served in the office of Mayor of Willacoochee for a time.

Arthur was a demanding husband, often bringing business acquaintances and politicians home for dinner without much notice. And Gertrude was a dedicated wife who was diligent in her efforts to please her husband.

On one occasion Arthur encountered a poor young black boy who was being processed by the courts. He felt sorry for the boy and took him home with him. He told Gertrude to take care of him and teach him how to cook so he could help around the house. This she did, and Clarence Eady became a regular inhabitant of the Shaw home. Much to Gertrude's credit, the cooking skills which Clarence learned in the Shaw home, served him professionally for the rest of his life.

In Arthur's later years he suffered from diabetes, and on 18 November 1933, he died from complications of that disease. Gertrude lived on for nearly twenty more years, passing away 11 July 1953.

She often told her children that as hard as she tried to please Arthur, she always lived in the shadow of the love that he had for Victoria. But Gertrude and Arthur now rest side by side in the Willacoochee cemetery, their prominent graves lovingly cared for by their children's family. While some 30 miles away the lonely, broken marker of Victoria Shaw is but only a reminder of a love that once was.

The Second Family

Pictured top right is a youthful Gertrude Albritton Shaw, and just above right is Gertrude with her step-granddaughter Juanita Shaw, Bruner's oldest daughter.

Above left are Gertrudes three young boys: Lowndes, left; Bernard, right; and Brooker, center. Lowndes practiced medicine in Savannah, while Bernard and Brooker both operated grocery businesses in Willacoochee, Georgia.

Photos courtesy of Paul Shaw and Maxine Shaw Webster.

RETURN TO GEORGIA

In October of 1993, I was able to return once again to the wonderful home of my Shaw ancestors. On my first visit in 1992, I had made several friends and acquaintances and had become somewhat familiar with the lay of the land. This time I was able to meet more of the family, listen to their fascinating accounts, and share in their priceless collections of photographs, post cards, letters and family Bibles. Some of these treasures are shown in this newsletter, and will be subjects of several more newsletters to come.

There were so many who set time aside to take a walk through their memories of family members long-past. *Ida Lou Fletcher, Minnie Allen, Betty Jean Hughes, Merle Sirmans, and Mary Idyll Ennis, among others, were more than gracious in their hospitality.*

Many of you, who were but names on our family tree for several months, I met for the first time. You were a sincere people who reached out and welcomed me into your home and family.

I am indebted to Dorothy Gilbert for the time she took from her daily routine to make phone calls, set up appointments, and help conduct interviews. Most of all, to drive the sandy roads, walk among the remains of communities and landmarks, and keep the energy alive that is essential to do this work of love.

To Gerald and Diana Shaw who have done so much to help me reach so many of you through this newsletter, I express heartfelt thanks. They suggested having a family reunion this summer for the descendants of Francis Marion and Rachel Allen Shaw. And not to let a great idea pass, they have organized the first reunion of the Francis Marion Shaw Family Organization, on Sunday July 24, 1994 (See notice attached). I believe such an event will give us all a sense of family pride and be the greatest gift we could give to those early ancestors if they were here to witness it.

To you all I am most grateful and consider myself fortunate to be a member of this family. Read and enjoy the results of your contributions.

Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor

FAMILY GROUP SHEET

FRANCIS MARION SHAW / Farmer
Born: 5 January 1846, Lowndes County, Ga
Died: 1 January 1922, Ray City, Berrien, Ga

Married: 1866
Buried: Pleasant Cemetery, near New Lois, Berrien, Ga

RACHEL MOORE ALLEN SHAW
Born: 1 December 1835, place unknown
Died: 15 April 1921, Ray City, Berrien, Ga

First marriage to Barzilla Allen
Buried: Pleasant Cemetery, near New Lois, Berrien, Ga

CHILDREN

Francis Arthur Shaw 1866-1933
Ida Jane Shaw 1868-1921
Jesse Shelby "Doc" Shaw 1869-1941

Effie C. Shaw 1871-
Lacy Lester Shaw 1873-
Chester D. Shaw 1875-1912

FAMILY GROUP SHEET

FRANCIS ARTHUR SHAW / Woodsman, Naval Store Operator, Farmer
Born: 8 December 1866, Ray City, Berrien, Ga
Died: 18 November 1933, Willacoochee, Atkinson, Ga Buried: Willacoochee, Atkinson, Ga

SPOUSES

MARTHA VICTORIA GIDDENS KNIGHT
Born: 29 July 1867, Berrien, Ga
Died: 2 September 1889, Berrien, Ga

Married: 12 October 1885
Buried: Pleasant Cemetery, New Lois, Berrien, Ga

GERTRUDE ALBRITTON
Born: 13 May 1871, Alabama
Died: 11 July 1953, Willacoochee, Atkinson, Ga

Married: 15 November 1891
Buried: Willacoochee, Atkinson, Ga

FRANCIS ARTHUR SHAW / MARTHA VICTORIA GIDDENS KNIGHT

CHILDREN

Brodie Shaw
Born: August 1887, Lois, Berrien, Ga
Died: 6 December 1942, Valdosta, Lowndes, Ga

Charles Bruner Shaw
Born: 7 November 1888, Lois, Berrien, Ga
Died: 15 November 1950, Sebring, Highlands, FL

SPOUSES

Charity Knight Married: 24 March 1907
Luella Kirk Married: 15 November 1921

Mollie Register Married: 30 December 1905
Charlie Ruth Griffin Married: 23 November 1913

FRANCIS ARTHUR SHAW / GERTRUDE ALBRITTON

CHILDREN

Lowndes Walton Shaw
Born: October 1892, Berrien, Ga
Died: 26 January 1950, Savannah, Ga

Bernard Theodore Shaw
Born: 9 July 1895, Berrien, Ga
Died: 24 January 1988, Willacoochee, Atkinson, Ga

Brooker Hodges Shaw
Born: 23 November 1898, Lois, Berrien, Ga
Died: 6 December 1961, Willacoochee, Atkinson, Ga

SPOUSES

Mildred Young Married: 27 November 1926

Mertyle Tyson Married: 8 December 1921

Marie Finley Married: 25 December 1937