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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

**JOHN THOMAS
ALLEN**

Grocer, Mail Carrier, Woodsman

Tracing the life of an early ancestor often reveals a series of events that shaped their future and the future of their posterity. Such is the life of John Thomas Allen, the third-born child of William B. and Rachel Futch Allen.

John Thomas "Tommy" Allen was born September 9, 1886 in a log house in the community of Allenville in southern Berrien County, Georgia. He probably received his education in the nearby two-room Pleasant Vale school.

He subsequently went to work at the Bullard Mercantile in Nashville, until he attended business school at Norman Park College in 1907-1908. While attending school there, he met Edna Golden, daughter of A. J. Golden, and after a brief



courtship, the couple were married on April 4, 1908.

"Mr. J. Thomas Allen and Miss Edna Golden were married last Sunday morning at ten o'clock, at the home of the bride's father, Mr. A. J. Golden, five miles north of Nashville. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Perry T. Knight of Milltown, and was witnessed by a large party of friends of the contracting parties. Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Allen, parents of the groom, gave them an elaborate reception when they reached their home in the afternoon. Tommy is one of the editor's best friends, and we wish him good luck, prosperity, success and everything else he needs or wants here below." *Nashville Herald, May 1, 1908*

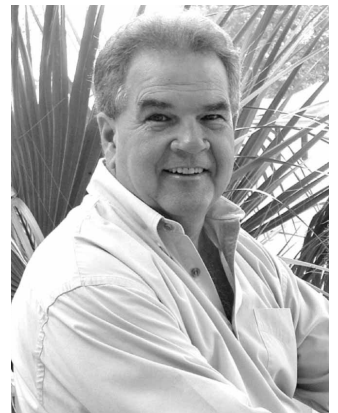
Shortly thereafter he started a grocery business in the community of Alapaha,

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*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 scan them at 300 dpi and send 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



Part of the Golden family: Edna Golden Allen on the left, and her father A. J. Golden on the right. Below are the children of Thomas and Edna Allen: Howard, Hazel, and Nell.



Georgia, but within a year he had sold out his interest. "Tommy Allen has sold out his grocery business at [Alapaha] and moving back to Nashville. He is working for Sol Hackerman." *Nashville Herald*, July 9, 1909.

Two months later on September 12, 1909 the Allen couple celebrated the birth of their first child, Howard.

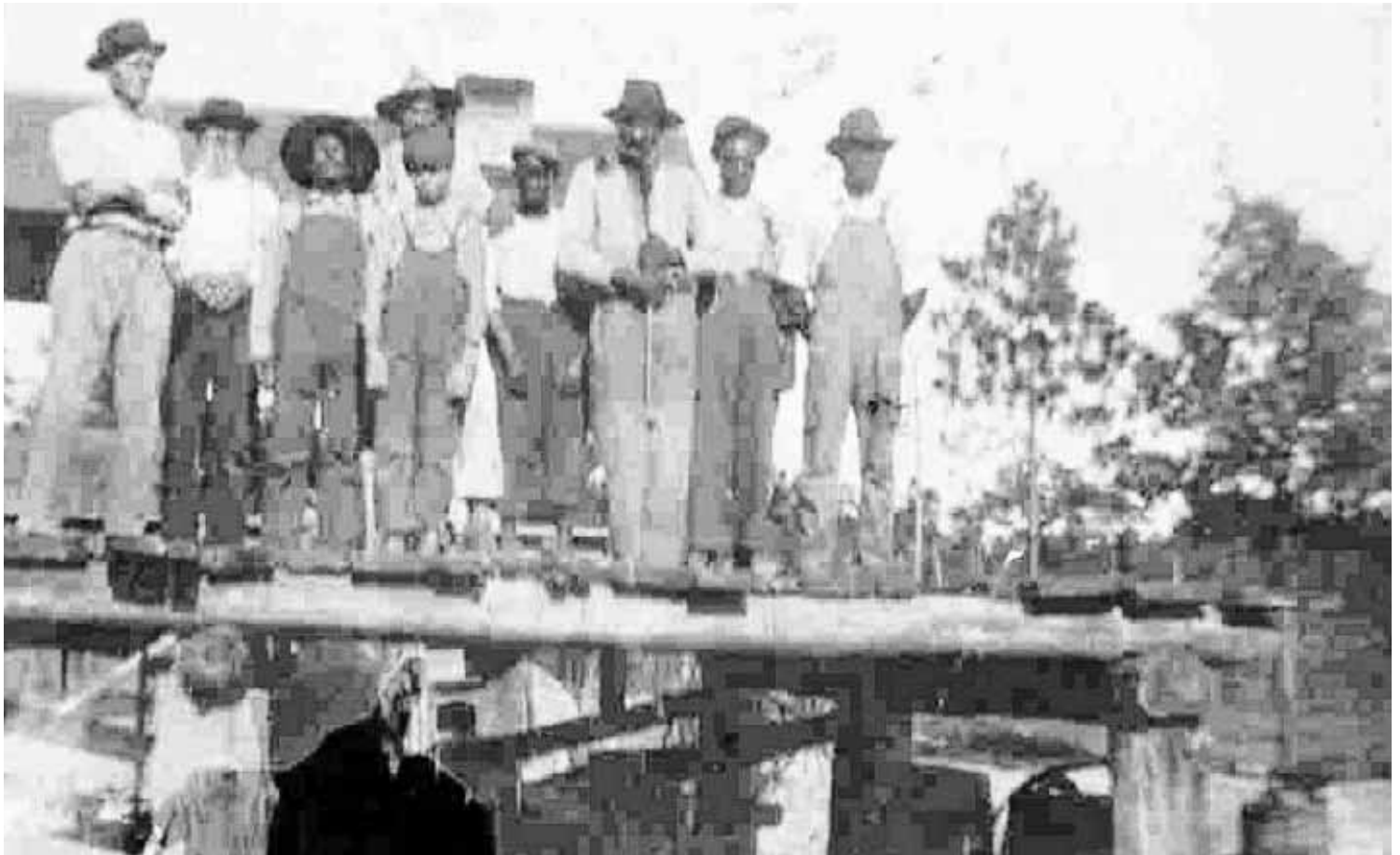
John Thomas remained employed with Mr. Hackerman until about 1910, when his father-in-law, hired him to ride the woods of their A. J. Golden & Son turpentine operation about 5 miles northwest of Nashville. The Goldens had purchased the turpentine operation from Tommy's uncle, Chester D. Shaw in 1905.

The young Allen family moved to the still site, living with the Goldens, and on December 4, 1911, their next child, Hazel, was born at the site. Things seemed to be going well with Tommy's steady employment, however the success of the still operation was shaken with a tragedy in the Golden family. The youngest child of the Goldens suddenly died, and A. J. went into a severe depression. The business fell greatly on the shoulders of his son, who did not have the business skills of his father. Soon the operation was in trouble,

and they were forced to sell their interests in 1915, putting Tommy out of a job. It also put them out of a home, so they moved in with Thomas's brother, Marcus, and his family on the east side of the railroad tracks in Allenville. There, in the Marcus Allen home, Edna gave birth to their last child, Mary Nell, on November 4, 1915.

In June 1917, the war in Europe was raging and the draft was instituted. John Thomas met the required registration, wherein he indicated that he was engaged in farming. But with 3 children and a wife at home, he was passed over for active duty. However, he did take a job at the Brunswick, Georgia shipyards until the end of WWI.

Shortly there after Tommy applied for and received the appointment of a rural postal carrier in Willacoochee, Georgia. The mail carrier car was a Model T which the Allen family used to make trips down to Allenville to visit the family. It had side curtains, which Edna would ask Tommy to roll down if there ever appeared to be a threat of rain. The mail route was a double route, one in the morning, one in the afternoon. Tommy would take a lunch break at noon, bringing his stamp box along with him. The young



Allen children could not understand why they could not have any of the money from the box.

However, at that time, the postal carrier position was a political one and when the administration became Republican, Dobbie Futch took over the rural carrier position and John Thomas was suddenly out of a job.

But Tommy's uncle, Arthur Shaw, was starting up a new turpentine still near Leliaton, just east of Willacoochee and Tommy was able to get on with the Shaw and Oberry Company.

About 1924, Tommy found employment with Henry Collier in his turpentine operation near Alapaha. However this position only lasted about one year then the family moved once again to the Ray City community, and then to Naylor, Georgia, where Tommy was again employed at a turpentine still operation.

In 1926 the family was on the move again when Tommy hired on at the Coleman still operation near Hahira. However the 1930 census finds the family living in Lake City, south of Valdosta, and shows that Tommy was still working as a woodsman in the turpentine industry, though it didn't state which company.



The rare photo above is believed to be of John Thomas, on the far left at one of the turpentine stills that he worked for about 1922. Also the gentleman next to him may be A. J. Golden, his father-in-law, and the young boy in front center may be Howard Allen, his son. Pictured to the left are the Allen children, Howard, Hazel, and Nell on the porch of their home in Willacoochee.

Edna and John Thomas Allen are pictured in front of their home in Ray City, shortly before his death. He died of a heart attack on June 20, 1946. Edna remained in the home until her death on October 22, 1951. They are buried at New Ramah Church Cemetery in Ray City, Georgia



Most of the details described in this newsletter came from my interview with Hazel Allen Lewis in her home in Columbus, Georgia on July 25, 1999. I did not realize at the time how valuable that interview would be when putting together the sequence of events in the lives of John Thomas and Edna Golden Allen. It brought to mind the urgency for us to sit down and spend an afternoon with our elderly loved ones, documenting their lives and the events of their days, and I encourage all of us to put that on a high priority in our busy lives.

—BLS

Shortly there after the family moved again. The 1930-31 *Miller's City Directory* indicates that the family resided at 504 East Alden Avenue in Valdosta. Besides Tommy and Edna, Hazel and Mary Nell were living in the home.

By 1936, Hazel had married Joe D. Lewis and had started her teaching career which would culminate in her being elected President of the Georgia Teachers Association. Mary Nell was married some-time later.

It appears that Tommy, continued to work in the naval stores industry until he moved to Ray City in 1944.

In October of that year, John Thomas, age 58, purchased a home on Park Street in Ray City from Bruce Johnson for \$1500.

About this period of time he was employed at the Moody Air Force Base, though his exact occupation is unknown by this editor.

On the morning of June 19, 1946, John Thomas got out up, put on his pants and socks and went into the kitchen to put a pot of coffee on the stove. When he came back into the bedroom he commented to Edna on how badly he felt, though he had already taken two glycerine tablets.

His daughter, Hazel was visiting that day and the two of them spent quite some time that evening visiting. He expressed that he was tired, stood up and tapped out

his pipe and laid it on the shadow box near the fireplace, then went to bed. When Hazel decided to retire for the evening, she went into her father's bedroom and tweaked his toe. He smiled at her. That was the last time she saw him alive.

The next morning, June 20, Hazel heard her mother scream. She ran up to the bedroom and saw her father lying between the bed and the window. He had suffered a heart attack. He died before they could retrieve a doctor.

Edna continued living at the Ray City home for almost 5 more years, finally passing away on October 22, 1951. She was 64. They are both buried in the New Ramah Cemetery in Ray City, Georgia.

John Thomas lived a life of hard work, following a family tradition of laboring in the naval stores business. Though his occupation caused him to move from one south Georgia community to another, he was always able to provide for his family's needs. And though the children were educated in one and two room school houses, he and Edna taught them the principles of hard work and determination. Those qualities each child exemplified throughout their lives. For a parent, no greater tribute can be offered.

—BLS