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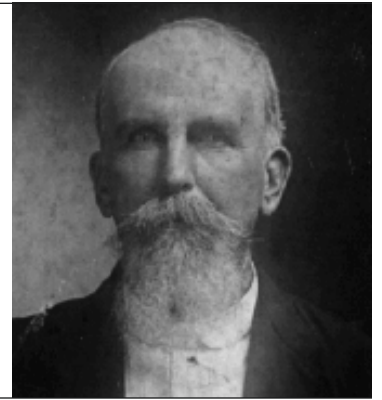
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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



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

MARION MANSFIELD "BUDDY" KNIGHT *Seeker of Elusive Dreams*



Researching the life of Mansfield Knight is an experience in

studying deeds, mortgages and sheriff sales.

Arguably, with the possible exception of the financial entrepreneur, Chester D. Shaw, no other child or grandchild of Francis Marion and Rachel Allen Shaw has such an

extensive trail of court proceedings as that which I encountered with Mansfield Knight. And, unfortunately, the trail leads only to the disappearance of his elusive dreams.

Marion Mansfield Knight, the first child of Sovin J. Knight and Ann Eliza Allen, was born in Berrien County near Ray City,

Georgia, on May 9, 1881. He was named after his grandfather Marion and possibly a cousin who lived adjacent to the Knight farm, Mansfield Shaw.

He was educated in the county, probably at Pleasant Vale School near the family farm. He was raised in the ways of a farmer, and in January, 1902, for the sum of \$237.50, he purchased 125 acres of land in the northwest corner of lot 375 in the 10th

district from his uncle, William B. Allen. He then apparently borrowed \$300 against the land for crop seed and equipment from his father.

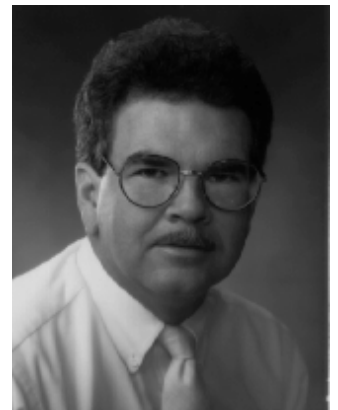
Young Mansfield was attracted to Mollie Gaskins, the daughter of neighbors Levi J. Gaskins and Mary Strickland, and on December 13, 1906 they were married.

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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
onearmshaw@mchsi.com
P.O. Box 417 Nashville, GA
31639-0417*

Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor





Young Dreamers

Firm determination and confidence are seen in the faces of Mansfield and Mollie Gaskins Knight, in this portrait probably taken shortly after their marriage. "Buddy," as he was commonly known in the Barney community, had one brief decade of successful farming, followed by another decade of financial setbacks and family discord. Their dreams slowly faded, but were eventually realized more fully through their extended posterity.

Mansfield appeared to be successful in working the farm, and also in starting his family with the birth of his daughter, Ida Belle on September 13, 1907. The couple completed their small family with the birth of their second daughter, Annie May on February 28, 1910. Though the 1910 census states that he owned his farm, it also states that he was working for hire, possibly for his father.

The following January, 1911, Mansfield purchased a farm of 230 acres from his cousin, Marcus L. Allen, for \$5,000. The property consisted of 50 acres on the south side of lot 328, and 180 acres on the north side of lot 363 in the 10th district, adjacent to the lands of William B. Allen and Marcus L. Allen. That same February, he borrowed \$2,200 against the land for seed and equipment.

In March, 1911, Mansfield's parents sold their Berrien County farm and moved to Brooks County. Mansfield seemed content on living and farming in the Allenville area. But suddenly on April 16, 1911, Sovin suffered a severe heart attack and died.

This tragic event would change the life of many of the Knight family members forever, especially Mansfield's.

Mansfield's brother, Thomas Leland, along with his young bride, Lillie Sirmans, had been living with his parents in Brooks County at the time of Sovin Knight's death. It appears that

Leland and his mother, Eliza, were convinced that they could not operate the 285 acre farm on their own, and Mansfield offered to move to Brooks County to oversee the property.

In January, 1912, Mansfield sold the Allenville farm to J. Q. McEachin for \$4,500 and assumption of the \$2,200 loan, and moved to the Brooks County farm. The 1913 tax records indicate that Mansfield, Leland, and Eliza were all living at the same farm, with each having personal property, but the estate of Sovin had not yet been probated.

By January, 1914, the estate was settled and two-thirds interest of the farm in the northwest corner of Brooks County was sold to Mansfield by his mother for \$5,000. Mansfield in turn sold one-third interest to Leland for \$2,500. Eliza retained one-third interest.

In October, 1914, Mansfield, Leland and Eliza jointly borrowed \$3,500 from the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company, using the 285 acre farm for security. They may have used the funds for farming seed and equipment, however in December that same year, they paid \$3,500 for the purchase of another 122 ^{1/2} acre farm in lot 327 of the 12th district, just 5 miles south of Sovin's farm. This may have been a farm and house that Leland and his family worked and resided in for a time. That same month the trio borrowed another \$10,000 against the Sovin property.

About this time, Eliza and her daughters, Rachel and Kathleen, moved back to Berrien County, living with Eliza's parents Francis Marion and Rachel Allen Shaw.

The main cash crop of the region at that time was the sea island or long staple cotton. However between 1914 and 1916 the boll weevil infestation made it impossible to produce that cotton, forcing Mansfield and other farmers like him to

rely on the less profitable short staple cotton or other marginal crops such as melons, tobacco, or peanuts.

It is possible that Mansfield and Leland were devastated by the setback in cotton, and continued to go deeper in debt trying



to reverse their losses. They borrowed against the 122 1/2 acres in 1915 and 1917.

Also in October, 1917, perhaps attempting to farm more acreage to make up for lost yields, the brothers purchased 400 acres in lot 518 in northeastern Brooks County adjacent to Little River from their uncle, William B. Allen, for \$6000. They quickly borrowed \$4,000 against it the following spring. In December, 1918, they purchased an additional 277 acres in lots 271 and 276 adjacent to the 400 acres for \$2,400. Again they borrowed against the acreage for \$3,255.

By November, 1919, Mansfield and Leland were trying to keep their heads above water. They borrowed \$9,500 from Harry Winter against all of their eastern county property and sold their 122 1/2 acre farm south of Barney. The 1920 census record shows that the families of Mansfield and Leland were living together in the same home. And things were starting to unravel.

In July, 1922, the partners had failed to meet the \$9,500 debt obligation. With the pleading of Mansfield, Mr. Winters extended the loan, but by June, 1923, the loan went into foreclosure proceedings and the sheriff put the 677 acres up for sale. Mr. Winters purchased the property for \$3,500.

Also in 1923, with the severe financial condition of Mansfield and Leland, Mollie Knight took out a second mortgage on the Sovin Knight farm for \$6,000.

During this same period, the Knight brothers were failing to pay their taxes on their property. By 1924, the Sheriff placed 40 acres on the Sovin farm for sale to satisfy the debts to the county. Mollie tried to secure a third mortgage on the Sovin farm, but could only get \$250.

Finally, in 1925, the financial partnership was more than Leland could cope with. He severed his ties with Mansfield and Brooks County, never to return.

By 1926, the only real property that Mansfield could claim was the triple-

The Sovin and Mansfield Knight Farmhouse

The recent photo shown above of the Knight farmhouse just west of Barney gives no indication of the financial struggles that the family went through to hold onto the farm. After the original farm was lost about 1931, another farm was purchased just northeast of this farm, which Mansfield worked until his death in 1940.

The farmhouse shown here has been extensively remodeled and is currently owned by the Burton family of Barney, Georgia.



Ida Bell Knight Levy



Annie May Knight Bowers

Raised in a Household of Women

Young Mac Bowers, above right, was raised primarily by Mansfield and Mollie Knight until Mansfield's death in 1940. Shortly after the death of Mansfield, Mollie and her 12-year-old grandson moved into a rented home in Barney and leased out the farm to sharecroppers. However the arrangement was not suitable, and in 1941 Mollie and Mac moved to Jacksonville, Florida. In 1944 the Barney farm was sold and Mollie, Ida Belle and Annie May purchased a home with the proceeds, and all three raised the grandson until the time that he went into the service.



McElroy "Mac" Marion Bowers about age 12

mortgaged farm of his father. The tax digest that year indicates that Mansfield had no farm animals or equipment.

It may be that this was the period of time that Mansfield reportedly operated a grocery store in Barney. If so, he probably leased the store or worked for wages, as there is no record of any Mansfield Knight commercial property purchase in Barney. However, by 1928, he was back in the farming business, trying to hold onto the Sovin farm.

In February, 1929, Mansfield no longer was able to secure loans on the Sovin Knight property. In his stead, Mollie assumed a loan made to Thomas M. Phillips (on the Knights behalf) in the amount of \$2821.64 from the Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company, mortgaging the Sovin property, even at the threat of bankruptcy.

In the details of the note is listed the following crops and acreage under cultiva-

tion, and identifies the financial plight of the Knight family as stated by Mollie:

My entire crop of cotton, corn and all other products to be raised by or for me during the present year consisting of 20 acres of tobacco, 20 acres of cotton, 15 acres of watermelons, one acre of beans, one acre of cane, two acres of potatoes and 65 acres of corn all now planted and growing on the lands of Andrew J. Lyndon.

This mortgage is given to secure the payment of the following items: Supplies, farming implements, fertilizers, etc., furnished and furnished me by payee to enable me to make a crop of the present year \$942.60. For taxes due by me for the year 1923 and paid by payee \$159.56. For balance taxes due by me for the year 1925 and paid by payee \$62.75. For taxes due by me for the year 1927 and paid by payee \$124.76. For taxes due by me for the year 1928 and paid by payee \$120.43. For interest due on the 1st day of October 1926 by me to payee \$205.08. For interest due on the 1st day of October 1928 by me to payee \$388.80. For interest due on the 1st day of October 1929 by me to payee \$360.00. For expenses of examining records, recording, etc., and paid by payee \$20.

The note was not cancelled, which it usually is when it is satisfied. The 1930 and 1931 tax digest of Brooks County shows the Sovin property still owned by Mollie, valued at \$2500.00 and \$2100.00 respectively.

It appears that some time between 1931 and 1932, Mansfield and Mollie Knight finally, after 20 years, lost the Sovin Knight farm, probably through defaulting on the 1929 mortgage. The 1932 tax digest does not even show Mansfield or Mollie as property owners.

However, Mansfield still had to provide for his family, and farming was probably the only business that he felt he could make a living on.

In late 1932, Mansfield possibly used what funds he could gather from the Sovin farm settlement and purchased a small house and 65 acres just east of the Sovin farm on the Little River, from Sarah E. Burton for \$325. He placed the property in the name of his 26-year-old daughter Ida Belle, and slowly began rebuilding the farm, with 2 horses, a mule, and 2 cows.

In August, 1933, an additional 27 acres adjacent to the original 65 acres was purchased from Ethel Carter Burton for just \$5. Then in October, 1934, Ethel Burton sold 55 acres more to Ida Bell for \$100.

By 1935 Mansfield had expanded the livestock to 7 hogs and a \$25 farm wagon. That same year Ida Belle signed over her power of attorney to Mansfield to "manage, control, cultivate, rent and or operate my farm in Brooks County, Georgia." But the property remained in her name.

The following year Mansfield had



Finally at peace together
 After a sudden stroke eventually claimed the life of Mansfield Knight, in 1940, Mollie lived another 40 years after her husband; more years than she spent living with him. The couple are buried at the Pleasant Cemetery in New Lois, Berrien, Georgia.

purchased an additional 2 mules, 2 cows, 3 hogs, and \$25 more in farm implements.

One morning in March, 1940, Mansfield, along with his grandson Mac, climbed into the family automobile and made their way down to Quitman, some 20 miles south of the farm near Barney. While there in town, the two stopped by the feed store for some farm business.

Suddenly, Mansfield was stricken by a massive stroke, rendering him incapable of operating a vehicle. It was Mansfield's

wish to immediately return home, calling upon his 12-year-old grandson to drive the car all the way back to Barney.

Though they arrived home safely, Mansfield lingered for a spell, then passed away on March 20, 1940. He was only 58.

After the death of Mansfield, Mollie moved to Jacksonville, Florida where she resided with her daughters for 40 years, until her death in 1980.

Ida Belle held onto the farm in Brooks County for four more years, finally selling the property in 1944, to H. G. Williams and J. D. Edmondson, thus ending the presence of the family of Mansfield Marion Knight in South Georgia, and leaving his legacy of dreams unfulfilled. —BLS



Charles Knight Levy

A limited posterity
 Mansfield and Mollie Knight had a relatively small family in early 1900 standards. With just two daughters, Mansfield may have seen the need for a partnership with his brother to meet the demands of operating his large land holdings. The two daughters had only one child each. Ida Belle had Charlie Levy, above, who died about the age of 3. Annie May had McElroy "Mac" Bowers, the only grandchild of Mansfield and Mollie who grew to adulthood and carried on the dreams of Mansfield and Mollie Knight.

FAMILY GROUP SHEET

MARION MANSFIELD "BUDDY" KNIGHT Farmer and grocery merchant
 Born: 9 May, 1881 Berrien County, Ga
 Died: 20 March, 1940 Barney, Brooks, Ga
 Buried: Pleasant Cemetery, New Lois, Berrien, Ga

SPOUSE

MOLLIE GASKINS
 Born: 27 July, 1889, Berrien County, Ga
 Died: 28 June, 1980, Jacksonville, Duval, Fl
 Married: 13 December, 1906, Berrien County, Ga
 Buried: Pleasant Cemetery, New Lois, Berrien, Ga

CHILDREN

Ida Belle Knight
 Born: 13 September, 1907, Berrien County, Ga
 Died: 30 October, 1991, Jacksonville, Duval, Fl
 Buried: Evergreen Cemetery, Jacksonville, Fl

Annie May Knight
 Born: 28 February, 1910, Berrien County, Ga
 Died: 27 April, 1970, Jacksonville, Duval, Fl
 Buried: Evergreen Cemetery, Jacksonville, Fl

Infant

One other child was born to this marriage but died in infancy.

SPOUSES

Charles Sullivan Levy Married: 28 December, 1935
 Born: about 1906, Pensacola, Fl
 Died: 23 November, 1939
 Buried: Jacksonville, Duval, Fl

James McElroy Bowers Married: 16 December, 1928
 Born: 1903
 Died: 3 October, 1945, Jacksonville, Duval, Fl
 Buried: Jacksonville, Duval, Fl

7TH ANNUAL
SHAW-ALLEN
REUNION—
SUNDAY,
AUGUST 13, 2000,
10:00 A.M.
RAY CITY, GA.
SENIOR CITIZEN
CENTER

GET TO KNOW YOUR PISTOL PACKIN', GATOR WRESTLIN', HORSESHOE PITCHIN' RELATIVES!

FAMILY JEOPARDY 2

1. This was the occupation of cousins John Allen, Bruner Shaw, Marcus Allen, Gus Clements, and Burie Clements.
 - a. Law enforcement officers
 - b. Farmers
 - c. Politicians
2. Rachel Allen Shaw witnessed and survived this horrible event.
 - a. A hurricane
 - b. A tornado
 - c. A murder
3. The actual date of death of Francis Marion Shaw.
 - a. January 1, 1922
 - b. September 23, 1922
 - c. April 15, 1921
4. As a teenager, he joined the circus and traveled across the country.
 - a. Mareldid Knight
 - b. Chester D. Shaw
 - c. Burie W. Clements
5. He sued his own sister and brother-in-law in a land dispute.
 - a. Francis Arthur Shaw
 - b. Jesse Shelby "Doc" Shaw
 - c. John L. Allen
6. He used his own sister and brother-in-law in a land dispute.
 - a. Francis Arthur Shaw
 - b. Jesse Shelby "Doc" Shaw
 - c. John L. Allen
7. The number of grand children that Francis Marion and Rachel Allen Shaw had.
 - a. 27
 - b. 37
 - c. 57
8. The number of grand children that Francis Marion and Rachel Allen Shaw had that lived to adulthood.
 - a. 16
 - b. 28
 - c. 48
9. Lacy Shaw was objected to his cousin by one.
 - a. Tax collector
 - b. Treasurer
 - c. Ran several times but was never elected
10. The number of known posed photographs taken of Francis Marion Shaw.
 - a. 2
 - b. 5
 - c. 30
11. The reason Francis Marion Shaw signed his Oath of Allegiance with an "X".
 - a. He was illiterate
 - b. He was forgetting the oath
 - c. He could not sign his signature with his left hand
12. Burie W. Clements had his reputation in the small central Florida town of France.
 - a. A great band leader
 - b. A champion horse shoe pitcher
 - c. A talented artist
13. After suffering a stroke while on a trip to the Good Stone, he was driven 20 miles back to his farm by his 12-year-old grandson.
 - a. Mareldid Knight
 - b. Burie Shaw
 - c. Guy Parrish
14. He ran a business that still, ran a hardware store, opened a grocery, and drove a battery truck in Valdosta.
 - a. Chester D. Shaw
 - b. William D. Clements
 - c. Lacy Lester Shaw
15. He died two months after purchasing a large farm in Brooks County, GA.
 - a. William B. Allen
 - b. Marcus L. Allen
 - c. Edwin I. Knight
16. They both have two of their homes still being occupied today.
 - a. Chester D. Shaw and Lacy L. Shaw
 - b. Ellis Shaw Clements and Ellis Allen Knight
 - c. Jesse Shelby "Doc" Shaw and William B. Allen
17. The historical event that John L. Allen was a participant in.
 - a. The Spanish American War
 - b. The Green-Caymer Federal bribery trial
 - c. The last hanging in Berrien County
18. He married his secret admirer after his first wife died.
 - a. Chester D. Shaw
 - b. Jeremiah Shaw, Jr.
 - c. Lacy Lester Shaw
19. He is buried next to two of his wives.
 - a. Francis Arthur Shaw
 - b. Lacy Lester Shaw
 - c. Chester D. Shaw

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New Handouts and Fun Stuff
This year's handouts include framable prints of the whole Francis Marion Shaw family. Also included in the new materials is a new Family Jeopardy quiz sheet. You better read up on your Francis Marion Shaw Newsletters if you don't want to find yourself outsmarted by some of our younger whiz kids.

Just when you thought you had heard of every questionable activity your great grandfather or great grandmother had been engaged in, along comes another Shaw-Allen Reunion. Suddenly you have one more chapter to add to your colorful family history.

Don't miss out on this year's Heritage Spotlights featuring Hazel Allen Lewis and Gwen Shaw Watson. It will be hard to top last year's colorful quotes from Mary Shaw Ennis or the charming wedding of Avanel Gaskins May in the headlights of a Model

A on a dusty Georgia road, but every life is a treasure to be shared.

There will be new handouts as well as reprints of past materials and videos. Be sure to bring all of your scrapbooks, and family binders to help inspire others in their family heritage organization.

And of course there will be those old timers who have dozens of stories to tell to those who will take the time to ask and to listen.

We will finish the morning's activities with what has become the most highly regarded potluck luncheon in Berrien County. Don't miss this year's event!