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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION
SHAW



**GRAVE SITE OF JOHN
& NANCY MOORE**

*Parents of
Rachel Moore Allen Shaw*

From article by Jesse Felma Moore



This year, 2017, marks the 150th anniversary of the death of John Moore (1790-1867), son of Caleb. In this landmark year, we wish to honor John and his wife Nancy Osteen Moore (1797-1875) by distributing to all their known living descendants this document setting forth the history of the pioneering couple's unique burial site in

Lowndes County, Georgia.

John and Nancy helped settle not just one, but three south Georgia areas, moving roughly 50 miles westward each time as the state of Georgia opened up additional lands ceded under treaty by the Creek Indian Nation. John, along with his parents and siblings, first settled in Wayne County around 1803-1805, with Nancy's family settling nearby at roughly the same time. John and Nancy were married in 1811 and

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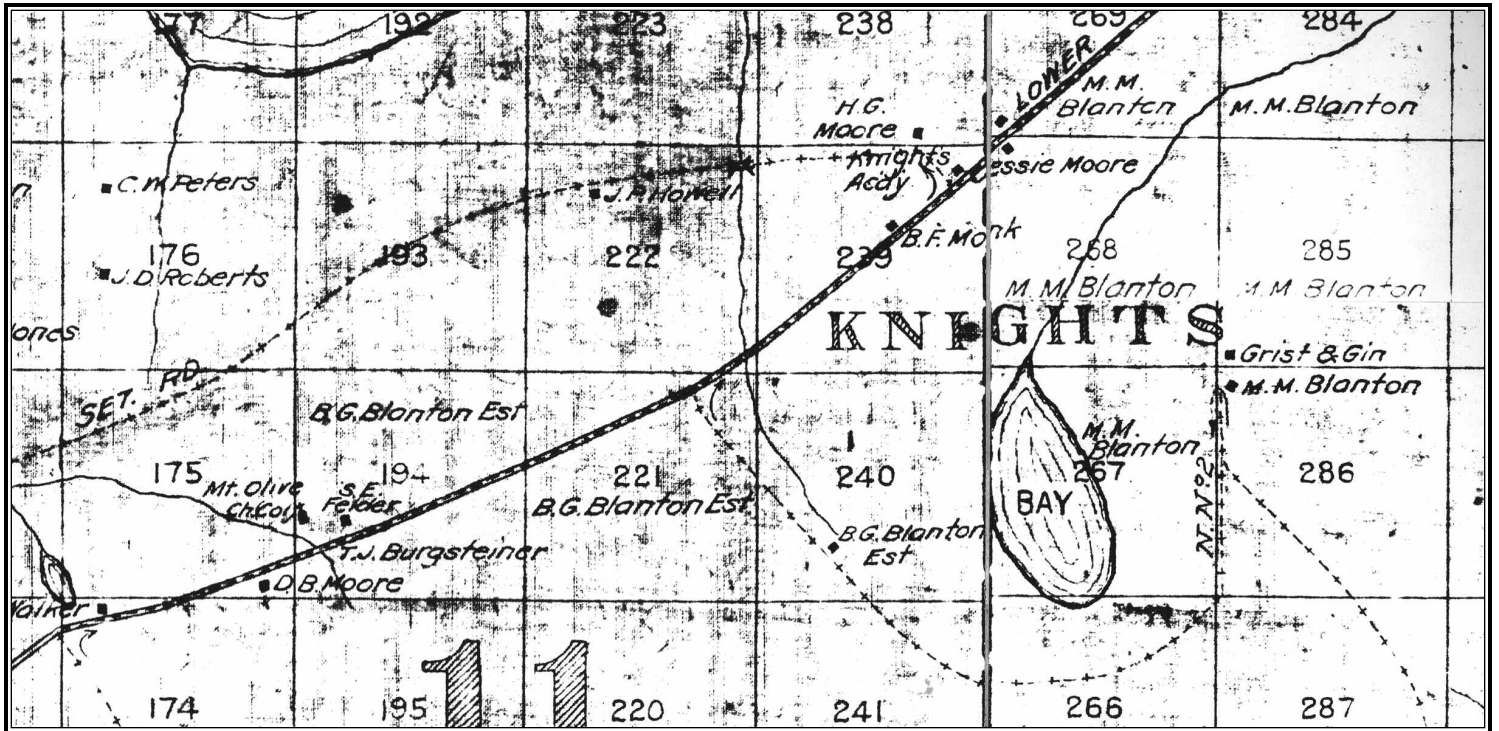
The Family of Francis Marion Shaw is a non-profit newsletter published semi-annually, or more frequently, for the benefit of the descendants of Francis Marion Shaw and his wife, Rachel Moore Allen Shaw.

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:

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Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor





1908 map detail of Moore farm
 The detail of the map above shows land lots 239 and 240 in the 11th district of Lowdes County. The farm house of John and Nancy Moore is located in the northeastern corner of land lot 239. Jesse Moore was the occupant of the home in 1908. The grave site of John and Nancy is located approximately in the center of land lot 240. Note the other Moores and kinfolk in the nearby properties.

remained in Wayne County for the next six years. The War of 1812 took place while they were there, and John was called into active military service.

They next helped settle Ware County, where they made their home from 1817 to 1829, except for a two-year sojourn into Florida. Apparently the Florida adventure was a disappointment, as they returned to Ware County and picked up where they had left off.

Lowndes County was the third area this adventurous couple helped settle. In 1833, John bought a 490-acre tract (land lot 239), in the northeastern region of that county, very close to where he and his family had been living for the past four years. The tract's northeast corner would later become the intersection of Knights Academy Road and the Valdosta-to-Lakeland Highway. Here, John and Nancy built a log house in which they lived for the remainder of their lives, and where the last eight of their 18 children were born. It would be more than 25 years after they had settled into their final home before the town of Valdosta would spring up eight miles to the southwest. By then, John had expanded his farming operations to over 2,500 acres.

The place John and Nancy chose to be buried was about a mile from their house, on the second 490-acre tract of land John bought (land lot 240, hereinafter referred to as lot 240). Why they chose this particular site we can only

guess. Even if they had purposely avoided picking a spot under cultivation, there was an abundance of other land to choose from. There must have been something special about the site, and most likely, that special something was the presence of a stately live oak tree. This conclusion is based on the presence of several live oaks currently surrounding their graves, some close enough to shade the gravesite. While none of these trees are old enough to have existed during the couple's lifetime, chances are good that they are seedlings of the live oak that made the spot so appealing to the couple.

There is no way of knowing how well John and Nancy's graves were maintained during the first 50 or so years following their deaths. Possibly the earliest information we have on the gravesite came from Leland Moore, Jr., great-great-grandson of John and Nancy, whose father, Leland Moore, Sr. (1904-1958), "farmed the land around the cemetery" in 1935 and 1936. Leland, who was born in 1936 in a log house on lot 240, recalled his mother, Leola Dorminey Moore (1913-2004), saying that she thought she remembered seeing a fence around the gravesite when she was a young girl. That probably would have been sometime between 1920 and 1935, when she lived on an adjoining farm.

Will Davis Burgsteiner (1922-2005), great-great-grandson of John and Nancy, was a second source of information for roughly the same period. Will Davis, in a conversation with this author in 2002, said that when he was six or seven years old



Cousin Clean-up Crew 2015
 Pictured left is the John and Nancy Osteen Moore clean-up crew in 2015. Left to right: Jesse Moore, Bryan Shaw, Ed Hightower, Nancy Burns, Walter Moore, Larry Moore, and Randall Jones, all descendants of John and Nancy Moore. Bryan is the only descendant from Rachel Moore Allen Shaw that has been present at the clean-ups.

(that would have been 1928 or 1929), he went to the burial site with his grandfather Haley Gardner Moore (1868-1942), who was going to attempt to find John and Nancy's graves. Apparently, whatever grave marker there had been had disappeared. Will Davis said he watched several of his grandfather's farm hands dig very deep all around for several hours until the two sets of bones were found.

Iris Moore Poole, great-great-granddaughter of John and Nancy, remembers seeing a headstone at John and Nancy's burial site in the early 1930's, when at a very young age she began accompanying her father, Philip Moore (1898-1970) on his periodic visits to maintain the gravesite. In those early visits, Iris remembers the burial site being "surrounded by planted fields," and that there were "tenant houses where people lived, some tobacco barns as well as mule barns and other sheds" on the property. Iris said her father continued to look after the graves as long as he lived. Upon his death in 1970, his wife Alma Cowart Moore (1906-1992) took over that responsibility and continued to do so until her death.

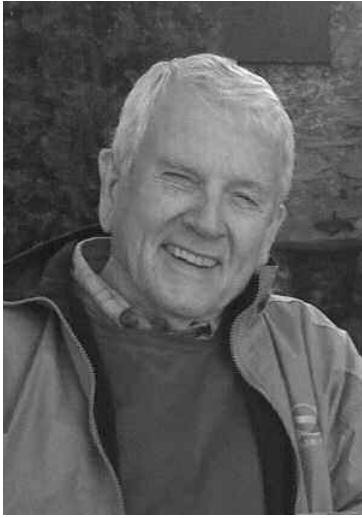
With mechanized farming rapidly spreading throughout the nation in the 1940's and 1950's, a significant part of the farm population migrated to urban areas in search of jobs. The situation on lot 240 was a reflection of this

rural transformation. By the time this author paid his first visit to John and Nancy's gravesite in the late 1970's, it was apparent that no one had lived on the property for some time. The house where Leland Moore, Jr. was born in 1936 and the farm buildings that surrounded it were still standing, but in a severe state of decay. However, all the fields were still being cultivated, and with the foreknowledge that the gravesite was located just a few feet away from one particular field, it was easy to find.

In the early 1980's, Jerry Franklin Moore (1919- 1995), great-grandson of John and Nancy, made major improvements to the gravesite. First, he replaced the granite headstone with one made of marble. Second, a concrete slab was poured that encompassed both the graves and the new marble headstone. Third, the burial site was enlarged by clearing surrounding brush and, finally, a chain held in place by granite posts was installed around its perimeter.

In 1991, all fields on lot 240 were planted to pines. This would eventually pose a challenge in finding the burial site due to it being an estimated one-half mile from the closest graded road, in a now-completely forested area with few landmarks for orientation. But as long as the planted trees were young enough to be differentiated from the surrounding natural pine forest, the burial site remained easy to find.

Luckily, before the distinction between



Jesse Felma Moore, author

Jesse Felma Moore was born and raised on a farm near Valdosta, Georgia. The sixth of nine children of Staten Felma and Tressie Copeland Moore, he graduated in 1949 from Pine Grove School, located in the northern part of Lowndes County near Bemiss. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from the University of Georgia, and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University. After a four-year tour of duty in the U.S. Air force, he joined the professional ranks of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, spending the major part of his 37-year career with that agency at its Washington, D.C. headquarters. In 2016, he authored the book, "The Seven Moores of Company H", a 327 page account of the Civil War actions of the five boys of John and Nancy Moore and their two cousins. Jesse and his wife, Nancy, currently reside in Gainesville, Virginia.

planted trees and natural forest completely disappeared, the tract was leased to a hunting club who developed trails throughout the property wide enough for moving the members' vehicles about. One of these trails passes within a few feet of the burial site.

During the decade following the death of Alma Cowart Moore in 1992, the maintenance task was performed from time to time by various descendants of John and Nancy. But during this period, it became apparent that a more reliable system was needed. The key components of the system that evolved were (1) establishment of an every-other-year cleaning cycle with a specific day of the year for the gravesite to be cleaned); (2) establishment of a voluntary group large enough to ensure that at least some individuals would be available for cleaning the gravesite on the established schedule; and (3) the designation of a leader from among the volunteers whose primary function would be to remind everyone of the upcoming cleaning date and to ensure that the various tools and equipment needed for the project would be included among those brought by the volunteers.

This system has been in place for 15 years now, and there has never been a shortage of volunteers.

One of the more interesting aspects of the land that constitutes lot 240 is that, ever since John and Nancy were buried there, one or more of their descendants has always had a personal stake in the property. That unbroken connection is explained below.

Mary Elizabeth Sellers Moore (1834-1921), widow of John and Nancy's son Stephen, was living on and farming lot 240 at the time of John's death. John had deeded the tract in 1853 jointly to Stephen (1834-1862) and a second son, Irwin (1842-1862). But in 1862, Stephen and Irwin were drawn into the Civil war as Confederate soldiers, and in less than six months both were dead. Mary, left to fend for herself and three small children, had no choice but to tough it out on the farm. She apparently was up to the challenge, however, for genealogist Folks Huxford said in his Volume 7 of *Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia* that she "reared the children to maturity and lived to be 87 years old, dying on December 3, 1921."

Stephen and Mary's oldest child, Amanda (1856-1935), was in position to continue the John and Nancy Moore family connection to the property well before her

mother died. In 1880, Amanda married Berry G. Blanton (1852-1904), and they established their home and raised 10 children right there on lot 240. Berry died in 1904, but Amanda continued to live there until 1924 when she sold the property and moved to the nearby thriving town of Valdosta, which by then was the marketing center for Sea Island cotton, a premium fiber. Amanda bought a home at 1211 North Ashley Street, and she and three of her children took up residence there.

Amanda sold most of lot 240, including the land on which John and Nancy were buried, to her deceased husband's cousin, Mose M. Blanton (1861-1930). By then Mose's first wife, Sarah Wetherington Blanton (1867-1897) had died and Mose had married Leticia Moore (1872-1967), granddaughter of John and Nancy. Mose and Leticia had no children. Eventually, through sales and inheritance, Chandler H. Blanton (1918-1971), grandson of Mose and Sarah, and son of Claude H. (1889-1951) and Ellie Robinson Blanton (1896-1992), owned lot 240. Ellie was a great-great-granddaughter of John and Nancy. Today, the lot is owned by Chandler's daughter, Kay Blanton Coleman. Thus, the connection of John and Nancy's descendants to lot 240 remains unbroken.

Speaking of connections, John Moore was born into this world just one year after the Constitution of the United States went into effect and George Washington became its first president; Nancy was born eight years later. Thus, this pioneering couple is the direct link between the birth of this great nation and all of their descendants – past, present and future. What an inspiring reason for all of us to keep John and Nancy's burial site forever beautiful.

On behalf of all of John and Nancy's living descendants, the author wishes to express his sincere appreciation to Kay Blanton Coleman for her full and continuing cooperation and support in the maintenance of this historic burial site.

Jesse F. Moore

The author, Jesse Felma Moore, is a great-great-grandson of John and Nancy Osteen Moore. Comments pertaining to this document may be mailed to him at 6595 Alderwood Way, Gainesville VA 20155, or emailed to him at jmoore1448@gmail.com.