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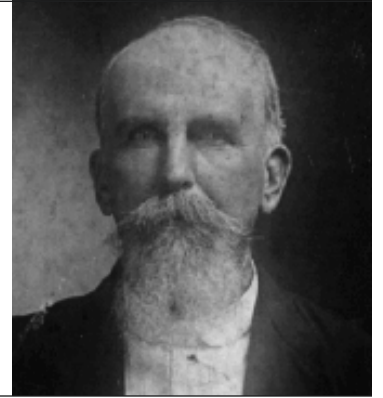
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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



JOHN LEVI ALLEN— RESPECTED FARMER, PROMINENT JUROR

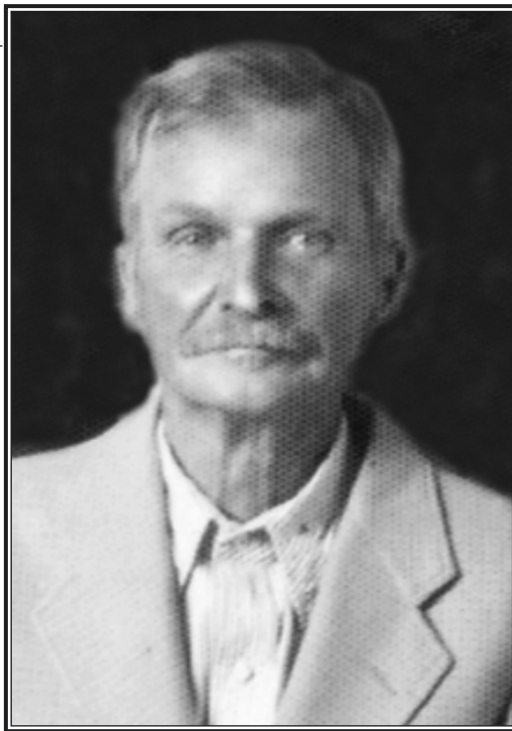
The details of the life and accomplishments of a loved

one in his obituary often indicates the pride and value that the family placed on that loved one's sojourn on earth.

Such is the case in the memorial entry on December 28, 1939, *Nashville Herald*, at the death of John Levi Allen:

"He was born and reared in Berrien County and had farmed all of his life near Ray City. He was highly esteemed and favorably known over a large area.

In his community he was prominent and outstanding and in his younger life took an active part in politics. On one occasion about thirty years ago, he was called as a juror at



Savannah, on one of the largest cases ever to be tried in the state, known as the Green-Gaynor case which lasted about three months."

John Allen indeed took pride in his farming success, as evidenced by another *Nashville Herald* item, May 15, 1908:

"John L. Allen, of the southern side of the county sends us the first long cotton blossom of the year. He has eight acres of the finest cotton in the county."

But it was his role as juror on the Green-Gaynor case that brought him great satisfaction. It brought him face to face with two Union military officers that had lined their pockets with spoils of the Civil War. The war that had taken the life of Barzilla Allen, father of John Allen.

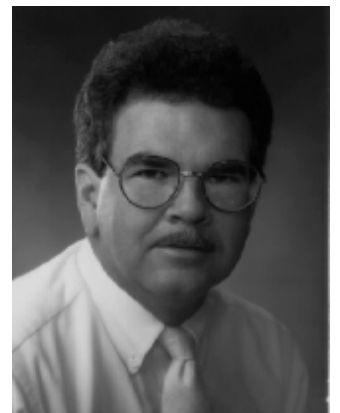
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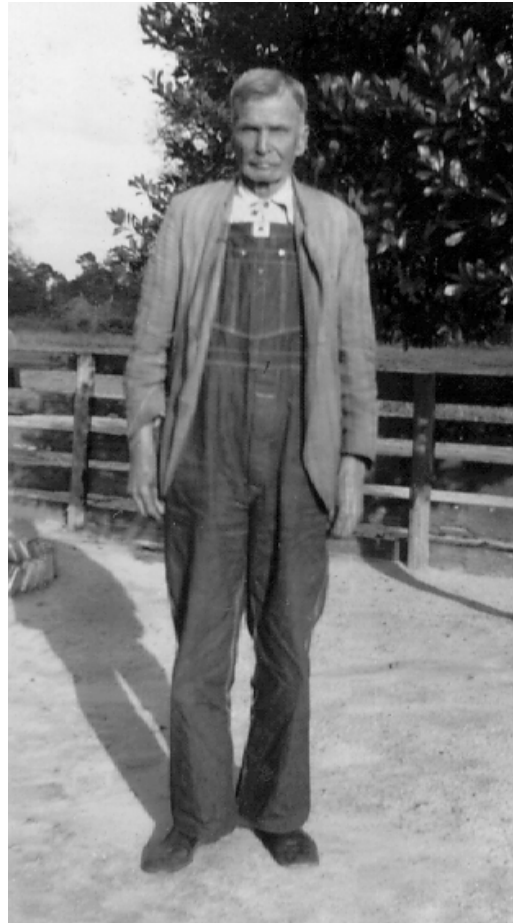
The Family of Francis Marion Shaw is a non-profit newsletter published semi-annually, or more frequently, for the benefit of the descendants of Francis Marion Shaw and his wife, Rachel Moore Allen Shaw.

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:

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

Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor





John Levi Allen was born August 3, 1859, the second son of Barzilla Allen and Rachel Moore. In early 1862, at the age of 2, John and his brother William kissed their father farewell, as Barzilla joined the Confederate forces gathered in Virginia. The boys never saw their father again.

By the close of the Civil War, Rachel Allen's family had grown to three with the birth of a daughter, Eliza. She soon thereafter began courting a young wounded Confederate veteran, Francis Marion Shaw. They were married the following year, and Marion became known as "Father" to seven-year-old John and his siblings.

John worked side-by-side with his one-armed stepfather on the Shaw farm near Possum Branch in lower Berrien County, learning the skills of farming, while receiving a rural education at the nearby Pine Grove school.

He remained on the family farm until about 1881 where he had accumulated \$100 in livestock, \$5 in plantation tools and \$40 cash.

During this period, John, 22, began courting Nancy Minerva Futch, daughter of Reuben and Sarah Mc Cranie Futch, and they were married on January 11, 1862.

The couple acquired 60 acres of land in

section 373 and adjoining 40 acres in section 364, in district 10. Their total property value was \$533. They worked the farm for two years, during which their first child, Chester T. was born.

However, by 1884 John had given up on the property, probably share cropping until 1886, when Minerva's father transferred 490 acres in section 328 near present-day Allenville to his daughter. That same year, Minerva gave birth to their second son, Frank Little.

John seemed to be making a pretty good effort on Minerva's farm, with total property value increasing to \$708 in 1887.

Things were looking good for the Allen family, but on January 22, 1890 they were devastated by the sudden death of their first-born son, Chester, probably to the scourge of fever sweeping the area.

Over the next six years, John and Minerva expanded their family with the births of Maye Belle in 1891, Collis C. in 1893, and Mittye Irene in 1896.

And the Allen farm was growing too. By 1899 the acreage had increased to 600, valued at \$1200; livestock, \$211; plantation tools, \$35; home furnishings, \$80; and cash at hand, \$500; for a total property value of \$2026. The tax assessed was \$20.95.

That same year, John sold the farm. He sold 85 acres to his brother William Allen, and the balance to Elbert M. Shaw.

It was during this time at the turn of the century that the Green-Gaynor case became a prominent topic in the southern corner of the United States.

In 1888 Captain Oberlin M. Carter of the United States Corp of Engineers was sent to Savannah to make improvements on the river and harbor damaged in the Civil War at the cost of more than \$3,000,000. Captain Carter entered into a fraudulent arrangement with The Atlantic Construction Company, operated by Col. John F. Gaynor and Captain Benjamin D. Green.

Captain Carter awarded contracts to The Atlantic Construction Company at inflated prices. Green and Gaynor in turn promised other bidders subcontracts if they would not bid on the larger contract.

Carter was brought before a court-marshal in 1897 and found guilty. He was fined, degraded, and imprisoned for his activities. It was during his trial that the involvement of Green and Gaynor came to light. They both were indicted on two counts in December, 1899.

Then began one of the longest appeals case in federal history. Greene and Gaynor were residing in New York at the time of the indictments and challenged the right of the courts to send them to Savannah for trial. They pursued their challenge to the United States Supreme Court, and lost each appeal.

As the defendants were about to be removed to Savannah in August, 1902, they skipped the country to Montreal, Canada. Upon their discovery there, they challenged their extradition to the Canadian Privy (Supreme) Court, then appealed to the Privy Court of England. Each appeal was found in favor of the United States. In late 1903, after expending more than \$1,000,000, Green and Gaynor were returned to the United States and then to Savannah, Georgia for trial.

However it was not until January, 1906 that the case was finally brought before the court. By that time, two additional counts had been added to the charges. (William B. Allen, John's brother, served on the Federal Grand Jury that handed down the last two counts in November, 1905.)

The jury was made up entirely of western Georgia residents, including John Allen. John was not new to court proceedings, having served on traverse and grand juries in Berrien County. But this trial was high profile, and the jury was sequestered most of the three months. His family could only follow the trial in the local newspapers.

Finally, on April 12, 1906, after only three hours of deliberation, the defendants were found guilty on all counts. They were



each fined \$575,749 and sentenced to four years in the federal prison in Atlanta.

John anxiously returned to the quieter rural life in Berrien County, working a new farm that he had purchased in 1902 from Jehu Patten. The farm consisted of a home and 260 acres in section 454 of the 10th district, located just southwest of Ray City, near the farms of his stepfather, Marion, his half-brothers, Lacy, and Jesse Shelby, and his half-sister Ida Jane Parrish. It was the last farm he purchased and he and Minerva finished raising their family there.

By his association with the Green-Gaynor case, he had become recognized as one of the prominent juristic citizens of the county, and served several terms as Jury Commissioner.

Ironically, in 1912, Minerva found herself involved in a legal dispute with Berrien County. She was involved in an accident where she was thrown from her carriage while crossing a bridge. Claiming the county was negligent in maintaining the bridge, she sued for \$1000. The jury found in her favor, but the county appealed the case, and her award was reduced to \$500.

In October of 1916, John was faced with increasing debt and took out a mortgage on the farm, which he repaid.

RESPITE FOR THE GREEN-GAYNOR JURY

Three weeks into the three-month-long trial, Judge Emory Speer instructed the marshal to see that the jurors had a pleasant break.

According to the February 1, 1906, Valdosta Times account, the jurors were to be "taken out for plenty of exercise, and that they be given all the benefits that could accrue to them from one of Savannah's balmy seasons.

"The jury dined on a fish spread at Barbee's at the Isle of Hope. They went out on a car and did not return until afternoon. The members of the jury who have been complaining for several days are all much better and all of them appear to be becoming accustomed to the changed conditions."

John Allen is identified in the photo above by the arrow.

THE JOHN ALLEN FAMILY

Pictured on the opposite page are the elderly John and Minerva Allen and their children, top to bottom: Frank L. Allen, Maye Belle Allen Clements, Collis C. Allen, and Mittye Irene Allen.



THE JOHN ALLEN FARM HOME

The home and farm of John Allen, shown above left and right, was the residence of the Allen family from 1902, though it was probably built sometime before, and occupied by the family until the death of Minerva in 1946 (note the split-rail fence behind the goat herd). The home still stands today, though it has been remodeled. The young girl in the picture is Mittye Allen with her dog Buddy.



However, he mortgaged the farm again in June, 1921, and again in October, 1923. Both loans were repaid.

In 1925, John was 65 years old and suffering from the hardships of farm life. He leased most of the farm to W. L. Fender in the fall of that same year, being content to maintain his small goat herd and share stories of his interesting life with his grandchildren. In January of the following year he transferred the ownership of the farm to his son, Collis, who then sold it to

his sister and brother-in-law, Maye and Claude Clements, in November, 1927.

On Christmas day, 1939, after living 80 years cultivating the land and serving his fellow citizens, John Levi Allen died at his farm home near Ray City.

Minerva continued to live on at the farm home until her death on April 29, 1946, age 88. Both were buried at the New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Georgia.

—BLS

MARION SHAW IS ON THE WEB!

Thanks to the effort and talent of Tom Shaw, Jr., great grandson of Lacy L. Shaw, the Family of Francis Marion Shaw is now on the world wide web, and has had several productive "hits" since it has been up and running. The challenge will be for the editor to keep Tom up-to-date with current newsletters. The web address is: <http://www.music.vt.edu/faculty/aq/sft/fmshaw.html>

FAMILY GROUP SHEET

JOHN LEVI ALLEN Farmer, Berrien County Jury Commissioner

Born: 3 August, 1859, Lowndes County, Ga

Died: 25 December, 1939, Ray City, Berrien, Ga

Buried: New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Berrien, Ga

SPOUSE

NANCY MINERVA FUTCH

Born: 13 March 1858, Berrien, Ga

Died: 29 April, 1946, Ray City, Berrien, Ga

Married: 11 January, 1882, Berrien, Ga

Buried: New Ramah Cemetery, Ray City, Berrien, Ga

CHILDREN

Chester T. Allen

Born: 26 August, 1883, Berrien County, Ga

Died: 22 January, 1890, Berrien County, Ga

Frank Little Allen

Born: 24 July, 1886, Berrien County, Ga

Died: , , Nashville, Berrien, Ga

Maye Belle Allen

Born: 24 March, 1891, Berrien County, Ga

Died: 18 February, 1969, Ft. Meade, Polk, Fl

Collis Chancery Allen

Born: 17 July, 1893, Berrien County, Ga

Died: 8 May, 1976, St. Petersburg, , Fl

Mittye Irene Allen

Born: 7 September, 1896, Berrien County, Ga

Died: 16 April, 1982, Berrien County, Ga

SPOUSES

Pearlie Taylor Married: 14 July, 1907

Born: 19 December, 1888, Berrien County, Ga

Died: , , Nashville, Berrien, Ga

Claude C. Clements Married: 9 October, 1909

Born: 16 December, 1889, Willacoochee, Berrien, Ga

Died: 20 March, 1946, Ft. Meade, Polk, Fl

Lola Matilda Mathis Married: 4 November, 1914

Born: 28 April, 1897, Berrien County, Ga

Died: 18 December, 1982, St. Petersburg, , Fl

Never Married