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The Family of Francis Marion Shaw Newsletter

Special Civil War Edition

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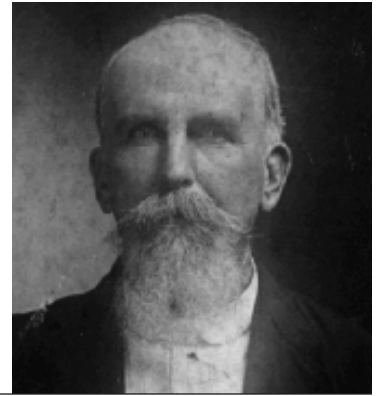
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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



FRANCIS MARION SHAW, PRIVATE, C.S.A.

A Moment of Battle, a Lifetime of Character



As you study a full figure photo of Francis Marion Shaw, the absence of his right arm is most noticeable. Like many men of the late 1800s, he carried the scars from his participation in the War of Rebellion. The price of his commitment to The Cause would be paid daily through the pain and hardship of his handicap, for the rest of his life.

Francis Marion was not born to be a soldier. He did not long to be one, or if he did, he was reluctant to become involved in the Confederacy. It was 1864. The war was almost at an end, or at least was going very badly for

the Southerners. President Lincoln hoped that a military expedition to the northern border of the peninsula state would find the population soft in its support of the Confederacy, and sensing the end of the war, there would be a groundswell of Union sympathizers. On the February 20, 1864, at Olustee, Florida, Lincoln found out how wrong he was.

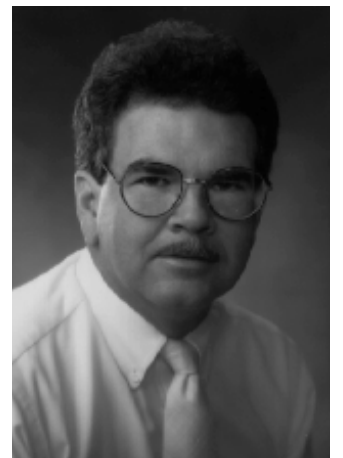
The Battle of Olustee near Lake City, Florida, was one of the biggest Confederate victories in the war. Over 1500 of the 5000 Union troops were wounded or killed. And even though the casualties were heavy for the Gray as well, the Federal army was driven back to Jacksonville, and eventually withdrew their forces and maintained their presence (*continued next page*)

*Special Civil War Issue
May 1993*

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:
Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor
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Murray, Utah 84123*

Bryan Lee Shaw, Editor





GLIMMER OF YOUTH

The photo above shows Francis Marion and Rachel Shaw at the youngest age known to be pictorialized. Marion's hairline is receding, but has not yet turned to gray. Rachel is not pictured here with her spectacles, which are ever present in later photos. This photo may have been taken in the early 1880's, which would make Marion in his mid 40's and Rachel in her mid 50's.

Thanks to Mary Sue Griffin Rountree for the use of this photo.

FRANCIS MARION SHAW, PRIVATE, C.S.A. (continued)

through coastal blockades throughout the remainder of the war.

When the Confederate military was made aware of the large troop landings in Jacksonville, after their initial movement inland towards Olustee, there was a call sent out to all volunteer soldiers and able bodied men from the surrounding Georgia and Florida counties to gather at Lake City, Florida. Whether Francis Marion heard of that call is not known, but if he did, it appears he arrived too late to participate in the Olustee action.

The scenario that seems to have more documentation and logical support begins three

days earlier than the Olustee action. The Confederate States Congress, under the pressure of a dwindling fighting force, on February 17, 1864 passed the third Confederate Conscription act, which required all able-bodied males 17 to 18-years-old, and 45 to 50-years-old (previous conscription laws included males 18 to 45-years-old), to report for military training at the nearest enlistment site. So probably with the news of Olustee fresh in his mind, and the force of conscription upon his shoulders, eighteen-year-old Marion Shaw set out for Gainesville, Florida. The earliest known enlistment of Francis Marion Shaw in the Confederate Florida Reserves was on April 30, 1864 in Gainesville. The enlisting officer was Captain J. J. Thompson. Francis Marion (his muster roll records his name as M. F. Shaw, but other details on that roll verifies that it is in fact Private Francis Marion Shaw) was assigned to Captain John Nichols' Company of the Florida Reserves. That company became Company A, First Infantry Regiment of the Florida Reserves.

While Private Shaw was caught up in the regimentation of military training, other forces of circumstance were being put into play. At first there were thoughts that the reservist might be spared immediate involvement. On May 30, 1864, Florida Governor Milton petitioned President Jefferson Davis to spare the local citizens from this conscription as the manpower was needed to bring in crops for the war effort as well as their very own survival from starvation. President Davis responded in a letter to Maj. General J. P. Anderson, that "the reserves should be left, as far as consistent with public safety, to follow their industrial pursuits. After being organized, they can be readily assembled in time of danger. The necessary guards should serve by reliefs for short tours." However, with that open-ended directive, Maj. General Anderson ordered General Braxton Bragg to call on the reserves to defend "Baldwin and other threatened points". That order sealed the fate of young Shaw, and brings us to the incident that he was undoubtedly involved in, the skirmish with Federal troops at Cedar Key on July 6, 1864.

Cedar Key had been connected to the east coast of Florida in 1860 with the completion of the Fernandina-Cedar Key Railroad. That connection helped transport cotton, turpentine products, and food stuffs to the coastal ports then on to the northern front for the Confederate cause. In 1862, when the Union naval blockade was established, Cedar Key was entered uncontested by Union troops, and was occupied to serve as a deterrent against the Confederate blockade runners. The Federals limited their activities to the coastal areas, in a defensive position in support of the blockade, while small units of Confederate troops spent most of their time attacking and harassing the vulnerable Union forces. That is the circumstance that put Francis Marion Shaw in harms way. (continued next page)

The Union 2nd Florida Cavalry, under the command of Major Edmund C. Weeks, had been in operations in the Florida west coast since early in 1864. They had been involved in skirmishes at Pease Creek, the attack on Fort Meyers, and an affair in Tampa,

Florida. They were in Bayport from 1 July to 4 July, and had just arrived in Cedar Key when Major Weeks received reports of Confederate forces operating in the Station 4 area. Station 4 was a shell and pole land bridge connecting the mainland with the Keys through a Gulf channel near Cedar Key, but was covered during high tide. The following two reports of Major Weeks best details the circumstances of the skirmish. It is from the perspective of the Union officer, and no Confederate reports are known to exist of this activity.

HEADQUARTERS U. S. FORCES.

Cedar Keys, July 8, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report, for the information of the commanding general:

Learning that there was a force concentrating at Station 4, I thought it best to try and discover in what force, and what their designs might be.

On the morning of the 6th instant, I took out 200 men, and advanced 3 miles beyond Station 4, found the enemy, skirmished with him until I discovered he had a large force, and then fell back to the bayou. The men behaved very well; marched back in good order. I remained at the bayou six hours, it being high water so that I could not cross. They assaulted us three times with about twice our number, and were handsomely whipped each time.

When the water fell, succeeded in crossing the bayou and returning to Day [Way] Key. Loss, 8 men wounded, 2 dangerously; no loss of arms.

Lieutenant Pease and men behaved well. I am much pleased with the conduct of my regiment.

The rebel force consisted of four companies of infantry, one company cavalry, and some home guards. Their loss was at least double our own.

Will write particulars by first opportunity.
Respectfully,

EDMUND C. WEEKS.

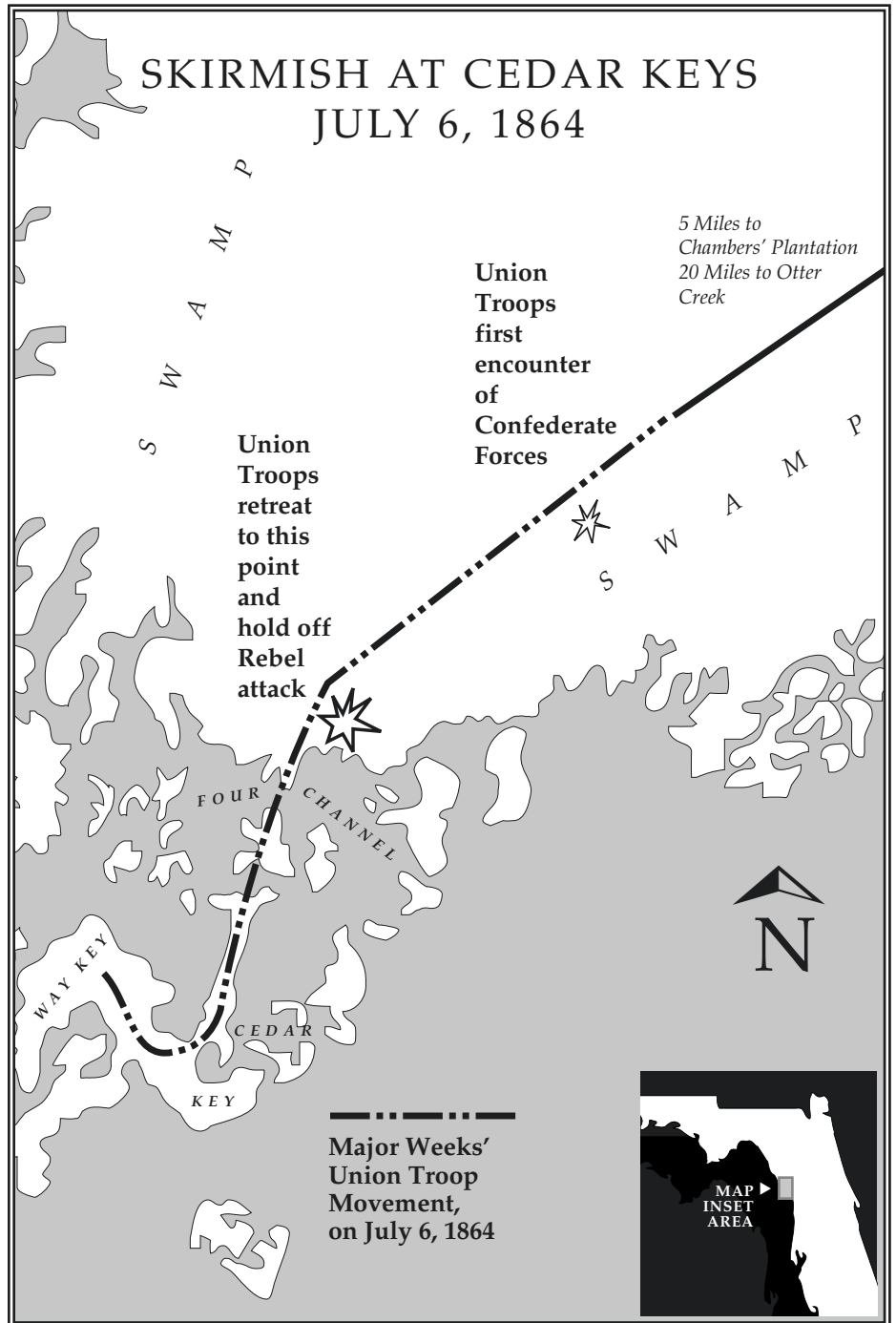
Major Second Florida Cavalry, Comdg.

HEADQUARTERS U. S. FORCES.

Cedar Keys, July 9, 1864.

GENERAL: My letter to you was necessarily brief for want of time. I will now explain my object in advancing up the railroad. I had been informed by quite a number of professed Union men that there was not a soldier this side of Baldwin, and that 200 men could go through the entire State.

Tuesday, quite an intelligent negro came in from a place called Sodom, near Otter Creek.



He reported four companies of infantry at Chambers' plantation (8 miles above Station 4), and a company of cavalry half way between the two places, and that the cars had commenced running down as far as Chambers'. From him I also learned that there were 74 bales of cotton at Otter Creek. I deemed it advisable to take all the force I could spare from here and push out as far as Chambers', and if I found that there was a force, discover its strength, and, if possible, its design. If I did not meet with a force, I intended to have pushed on to Otter Creek, and to have captured the cotton, to have sent it down the river, and then to have returned.

Lieutenant Pease led the advance with 50 men of his company, and had pushed on to about 3 miles beyond (continued next page)

THE BATTLE SITES

This map identifies the approximate locations of the Cedar Key, Station 4 battle sites, July 6, 1864, according to the details available in the Union army report. There were several skirmishes which occurred near Station 4 during the course of the war. The more noteworthy happened on February 13 1865, in which Confederate Captain James Dickison routed Union troops who were trying to force their way inland to capture Tallahassee. The Union troops were under the command of the same Major Edmund C. Weeks.



A SPECIAL ISSUE

The military involvement of Francis Marion Shaw in the Civil War has been frequently documented, mostly from his maimed soldier pension records. But as I tried to clarify the actions that he was involved in, I found that the events which surrounded his enlistment and the circumstances of the military activity of both armies in Florida, had not previously been compiled into a single account. The subsequent research gave me a better understanding of how this young 18-year-old farm boy found himself drawn into this historic confrontation and on the front side of a Union minnie-ball. The details were too interesting to edit, so as I considered how to present this information, I felt that the topic was better covered in a separate newsletter. So as a bit of a surprise, even to myself, I am presenting my findings in this special issue. I have taken to liberty to use a certain amount of conjecture to bring the facts together, but I do not feel that I have changed the basic underlying truths. I hope we all can gain a greater appreciation of the role that this ancestor played in our national heritage.

—Editor

Station 4, where he came upon a cavalry picket. They discovered him first and immediately sounded the alarm. I was some distance in the rear. Learning that he had met the enemy I sent him word to place his men in as good a position as possible, and to hold the enemy in check until I could come up. When I arrived he was falling back, being nearly surrounded. I threw my men behind the bank of the railroad, placing him on the right; the rebels dismounted and pushed up pretty sharply. I tried to restrain my men from firing till the enemy would come within short range, but through the eagerness of the negroes to engage them, the firing commenced before I gave the order. That rather alarmed them, and they fell back. I took advantage of this circumstance to fall back beyond a point where I knew the force of infantry from Chambers' could get into our rear. We fell back without haste and in good order; halted once ten minutes for the men to rest, and after placing my men in good position on the railroad, or rather behind the bank of it, ordered them to eat their dinners, thinking they would have about time to eat before the enemy would be down. I should have crossed the bayou immediately had it not been high water and therefore impassable. The men had scarcely finished their dinners when a force of infantry of about 150 on the left of the road, and about the same number on the right, were discovered advancing through the brush. I kept my men down, and when they were within short musket range I opened fire. They stood two rounds and then left. They tried this three times, my men behaving all the time with the utmost coolness. The third time they gained possession of a small portion of the railroad, on the left of Company E, Second U. S. Colored Infantry. I ordered the negroes to charge, which they did in fine style, led by Sergt. William Wilson, who behaved very bravely. The enemy broke and scattered in every direction and did not attempt to face us again. When the water had fallen enough to allow of crossing I made a feint of pushing up the railroad, and in that way succeeded in bringing more than half of my force across before the movement was discovered. It was then too late for them to do us much damage, though they wounded 3 men.

I think their intention was to have attacked this place. I know they have boats building on the Suwannee River. They can be placed upon cars and put into the water at Station 4 in six or eight hours. I do not apprehend any danger from them now. I am throwing up rifle-pits as fast as I can, and in a few days shall consider this place safe against any force that they may be able to bring, and also know that in any operations on this portion of the coast it will be necessary to move in pretty strong force. We have some 30 or 40 able-bodied negroes here. Shall I enlist them, and for what regiment?

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
EDMUND C. WEEKS,
Major Second Florida Cavalry, Comdg.

In the ensuing skirmish, Private Shaw received a minnie-ball wound to the right arm, just above the elbow, which shattered the bone. After the action (in Francis Marion's pension applications, the date of the skirmish varies from July 5th to the 6th, but the Federal report and the Confederate Muster Roll both verify that the action was on the 6th) he was taken back to Lake City for medical attention, a distance of over one hundred miles. Four days later, on July 10, at Lake City, his arm was amputated near the right shoulder joint. He was then furloughed to return home to recover. The Muster Roll dates the completion of his enlistment as August 31, 1864, however since he was still absent with furlough, he was not paid for his service at that time.

An interesting bit of information is still attached to his war record. On July 30, 1864, fearing further incursions into Florida's interior, Governor Milton reluctantly called upon all male citizens of Florida 16 years of age and older to report for immediate enlistment in a state reserve force. Since Private Shaw was in Ray's Mill, Georgia on furlough, his reenlistment may have taken place without his knowledge. A muster roll dated 14 May, 1865, a month after Lee's surrender, shows him reenlisting July 21, 1864 in Baldwin, Florida by J. B. Nichols in Company A 1st Regiment of Florida Reserves. It perhaps is not a wonder that when the muster was completed, he was listed as absent without leave, and was not paid.

The following year, in 1866, he married widow Rachel Moore Allen, whose husband, Barzilla Allen, had been killed in the war. In 1879 Francis Marion Shaw petitioned the State of Georgia for an Artificial Arm allowance. He was granted the standard \$60 allowance, which was renewable after five years. He petitioned for the same allowance in 1888, but perhaps because he indicated that he had not obtained the artificial arm, his allowance was reduced to \$30. The Georgia legislature authorized a Maimed Soldiers pension the next year, and from 1889 until 1907 he petitioned and received the annual \$100 voucher. There is no record of a grant after 1907.

For whatever reasons a man finds himself in the role of a soldier, there is always the reality of fate that makes his next breath possibly the beginning of a life dramatically different than before. That moment when a minnie-ball tore into the arm of Private Francis Marion Shaw, his life changed and the life of all his descendants changed. He gained a greater realization of the mortality of man, a greater compassion and patience for the circumstance and suffering of his friends, neighbors, and each member of his family. And perhaps we, his children, can see his life and have a greater appreciation for the hardships and sacrifices that made his character, and helped shape ours.

—Bryan Lee Shaw