

SHAW FAMILY

by

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Duluth, Minnesota
1924

George Washington Shaw was born in Providence, Rhode Island, December 6, 1831, the only child of Dr. Joseph^{L.} and Mary Randal Shaw.

His father was born in Providence, October 14, 1800.

His mother was born in Providence September 4, 1801, and was married to Dr. Shaw December 12, 1830. She was the youngest daughter of Dr. Stephen Randal, a physician of Providence, who had been assistant to Dr. Jonathan Arnold in the Revolutionary War. Dr. Randal's chief services were those of assistant purveyor for the army.

Through his mother Mr. Shaw was a descendant in the sixth degree from Roger Williams, founder of the State of Rhode Island.

When their son George was three years old, his parents removed with him to Tremont, Tazewell County, Illinois, coming with a colony of sixty which founded the town.

The first rendezvous of the colonists was at New York. Thence up the Hudson to Albany. At Albany they took a little railroad to Schenectady, and thence the canal boat to Buffalo. The journey from Albany to Buffalo took eight days. At Buffalo part of the colonists took a lake boat at night and were blown ashore. Dr. and Mrs. Shaw were among those who waited till morning. Next morning those who had waited started for Cleveland, and as they were not sure they could get through the straits, because of the uncertainty of securing a steam boat, they went by canal to Portsmouth, on the Ohio, thence down to Cincinnati, frequently being aground. There they took a larger boat for St. Louis. At St. Louis they took wagons to Jacksonville. Dr. and Mrs. Shaw spent part of the winter there and part in Springfield.

The Colonists' committee found that they could not get

land as far south as Jacksonville. Josiah L. James, John Harris and Sampson located a hundred quartersections near Tremont and surveyed and allotted the land in the spring of 1835. A share in the colony cost \$225.00 and entitled the owner to a quarter section of land and a town lot.

In Tremont Dr. Shaw kept a drug store for a time, and practiced medicine. His son George grew up with the country, living all his life in Illinois, save the four years spent in Brown University between 1848 and 1852.

When he came home from college one summer, he took a fast packet boat on the canal between Chicago and La Salle, making the hundred miles in twenty four hours. His recollections of his childhood days in Tremont when the country was new, were unusually vivid and happy.

In college he devoted himself to his studies with ardor, and excelled in them all. His comrades in the debating society of his fraternity, Delta Kappa Epsilon, never forgot the eloquence with which he spoke.

He studied law in Springfield, Illinois, in 1853 - 4 in the office of Stewart and Edwards, the former an intimate friend of Abraham Lincoln, who often came to the office to chat. The table over which Mr. Lincoln's feet used to be hoisted, as he told stories, was later in the law office of Mr. Shaw, in Geneseo for fifty-five years, and is still in the office of his son, Joseph L. Shaw.

On May 1, 1855, George W. Shaw married Lucy Andrews, daughter of Rev. Wells Andrews, a Presbyterian minister of Washington, Illinois, whose earliest ancestor in this country was William Andrews, a schoolmaster. William Andrews was one of the first settlers of Hartford, Connecticut, coming there in the

colony led from Massachusetts by Rev. Thomas Hooker. The name of William Andrews is one in a list of the first settlers, on a monument to their memory in Hartford.

The young couple lived in Springfield for some months after their marriage. Mr. Shaw's name is found in the first Springfield directory. Their first child was born in Pekin, Illinois, where they lived for a year,- little Robert Andrews, who died in Geneseo in 1857, aged one year. In 1857 they removed to Geneseo, Illinois, where an uncle of Mrs. Shaw, Joshua Harper, a Virginian, and a brother, James Andrews, already lived. In Geneseo the rest of their lives was spent, and here their remaining children were born, viz: Mary Josephine, February 26, 1860, now wife of Alfred Jaques, now living in Duluth, Minnesota; Lucy Andrews, August 27, 1863, wife of Gustav Meyer, now living in Westerville, Ohio; Margaret Harlan, August 11, 1865, died in Geneseo where her life was spent, March 15, 1912; Eliza Harper, February 4, 1870, now wife of Dante M. Stamm, druggist, of Geneseo, Illinois, and Joseph L. Shaw, March 8, 1877, now an attorney in Geneseo, Illinois, like his father.

George W. Shaw died February 20, 1912, of pneumonia, after an illness of but four days, aged eighty years and two months. Mr. Shaw was a man of rather small stature, like his father, but of great strength and endurance and physical courage. He was always a man of most upright and resolute character, of keen mind and great learning. On a warm Sunday afternoon he was a unique figure, sitting on his front porch in the shade of a pine tree, in his linen suit of an olden style, with his large Hebrew Bible on a table before him, studying the Old Testament in the original, making historical comparison with other ancient records.

He was through life a student, and with his books his spare hours were spent. In addition to the Latin, Greek and German which he kept up from his college days, he studied Hebrew and Sanscrit in mature life, and always took intense interest in the discoveries of records of the past in Assyria, Babylon and Egypt.

From his diary kept the last six years of his life may be quoted: "Read some Isaiah (in Hebrew) and a little in Hammurabi's code (in German), which was a great work and shows that remote antiquity had dealt with the profoundest legal problems."

"Have been reading the inscription Gortyn (in Greek). The Doric dialect is quite an obstacle to clear understanding of the text."

"Have been reading Revillont on the derivation of Roman from Egyptian law."

"Am reading Hammurabi's code. It is becoming clear that ancient nations communicated their laws and customs to each other. The Jews borrowed largely from the Chaldeans, though they added a great deal peculiar to themselves."

"Had a good time investigating the origin of that collective ownership which prevails in early communities. My opinion is that it is always preceded by individual ownership, and does not arise until domestication of flocks and herds compels a community to assign its pasture lands by an exercise of collective authority."

"Read in Astronomy about comets."

"Read about the discoveries in Crete. When the records of the old Minoan Kingdom are successfully deciphered, what we call Ancient History will stand out in a new light, and many stories now condemned as myths will take their places in History."

quotations could be made indefinitely.

A High School teacher well informed in his department once said, "I can talk with Mr. Shaw on any branch of study and always learn something."

He valued learning more than adornment, saying, "Thousands for education but not a cent for jewelery."

Of active habits all his life, he was industrious to the end. One Thursday he was in his office, - the next was buried. He was interested in cultivation of the soil, and made garden with enthusiasm every year. His diary records many times, "Rose early and worked in the garden."

In public affairs he took lifelong interest, writing and speaking on questions of the day when he thought it might be useful.

He took part in the forming of the Republican party in the fifties. Referring to his acquaintance with Mr. Lincoln, he said, "I was a Republican before Abraham was."

Always a strong temperance man, though it cost him favor and business when that cause was unpopular, he voted with the Prohibition party since 1884. Of such are the bulwarks of the Republic.

He had little time for the frivolous things of life, but was a delightful companion and faithful friend.

His relations with his parents were unusually close. Every evening the gate latch clicked as he went to make them a little visit which his mother expected all day. During their last illnesses he watched over them devotedly. He wrote, "Father, Mother and I formed a small family, but we staid together till death has parted us."

As a son, as a husband and father, no words can do him

justice. He was adored by his children; from their infancy he cared for and taught them; his life's efforts were for their good and his wisdom their guide. The better he was known the more he was loved. Of his wife he wrote in his diary, May 1, 1906, "Fifty-one years ago Lucy and I were married. What should I have been without her tenderness and wisdom? I appreciate her more and more as time advances and the inevitable day of parting draws nearer."

The parting was not long. His wife survived him but ten days, and his beloved daughter Margaret but three weeks.

Mr. Shaw was of a deeply religious nature. In a Heavenly Father Almighty he put his trust, and his firm hope was in a life eternal.

It was fitting that one who bore the name of the father of his country, and who revered him above every other American, should be laid to rest on Washington's birthday

(Mrs)

Mary Josephine Jaques.

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Recollections of Mr. George W. Shaw of Geneseo, Illinois.

For many years, Mr. Shaw's law offices had been established in a modest two room, one story frame building of the period of the Civil War. These rooms were heated by a small cast iron stove, of the vintage of 1863, that was embellished on its sides by warlike trophies of flags and cannons. There were ten foot ceilings and the rooms were spacious, but every available square foot of the walls was covered by shelves that reached from floor to ceiling and bore the burden of a law library of some three thousand volumes, in which number were also contained both French and German law libraries. Other series of volumes were ranked upon the floor.

Passing by Mr. Shaw's office on a summer day, one might have seen him with back to the open door, deep in his Xenophon as it was said, and balanced in a common wooden chair with feet on his table. The writer was once asked to sign a will at this table. Mr. Shaw presented a quill pen, a steel pen and a gold fountain pen. Of course the quill pen was chosen for its novelty, and it had the feel of a delicate gold pen. Mr. Shaw habitually used a quill pen. This table had once graced the offices of Stuart and Edwards of Springfield, Illinois, with whom he read law in 1853, and he had frequently listened to Abraham Lincoln as the latter sat poised with feet upon that same table and recounted his anecdotes.

Mr. Shaw kindly favored an audience at the Unitarian Church of Geneseo, Illinois, with recollections of Lincoln. These he later elaborated and they were published by a friend as an original contribution to Lincoln's biography.

While at Springfield he became a student of the German language and to that end read the Illinois Staats Zeitung for many years, preserving the files. At the time of the Chicago fire in 1871, that Journal lost all of its own files, but Mr. Shaw was able and happy

to replace the entire series.

Mr. Henry Young, at one time a prominent citizen of Geneseo, who drove a fine team of very fast horses, related to the writer how he had once overtaken Mr. Shaw afoot on the way to Cambridge, the Countyseat. Mr. Shaw frequently made this trip in this way for the sake of the exercise. He once made the trip over and back, 24 miles, to report to the Court the single word "No". On the occasion mentioned, Mr. Young, in a spirit of compassion asked Mr. Shaw to ride with him. The latter politely excused himself, remarked that he "was in something of a hurry" and pursued his way. When Mr. Shaw's attention was called to this story, he recalled the Greek anecdote of a man who was leading an ass by a rope, and who, when asked in derision by his friends why he did not ride, replied that he was in a hurry and did not have the time.

Another form of exercise for Mr. Shaw was the woodpile. When the writer begged him to have his wood cut by machine he answered with energy that he would pay him to stay away.

What particularly attracted the writer was Mr. Shaw's great erudition, and his death brought a sense of the great loss of that ordered fund of information that was so readily available and so kindly given.

Mr. George E. Waite, a friend, and contemporary of Mr. Shaw in the practice of law, said of him referring to his love of the Classics, "Oh, he's been reading up on the subject", or "He's an old College professor", but the range of his mind and his ready information were much greater than that of many professors who fall into a groove.

In later life Mr. Shaw stimulated his intellect by the study and mastery of the Hebrew Language. The writer has occasionally seen him on a Sunday morning seated on the front porch of his residence reading a great Hebrew bible that was spread open on a small table before him.

Mr. Shaw's choice of language was remarkable for its simplicity and directness. His statements were concise and exact.

A historical contribution written by him, in beautiful language, at the time of the civil war, presented a deep analysis of certain phases of English History as throwing light upon problems arising during the war and forecasting their probable outcome. A chance remark of his on the capacity of the Norman conquerors stimulated the writer to a very profitable study of the conquest.

With all of his great learning Mr. Shaw was the most modest of men, suggesting his opinion with hesitation, but he was a man of independent character and conduct.

In the interest of preserving the rights of the individual under the Constitution he carried what was esteemed an unpopular cause to the Supreme Court of the State and won it for his poor client without expense to the latter.

Mr. Shaw was of a blond complexion and clean shaven. He never wore glasses. He told of the strong sight of the Indians about ^{Lake} Superior who could perceive with unaided eyes the moons of the planet Jupiter.

Dante M. Stamm.

