

George Hamlin Shaw
1890-1956

Florence B. Shaw
1898-1963

Founders of the
Shaw Foundation in

The New York Community Trust
909 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

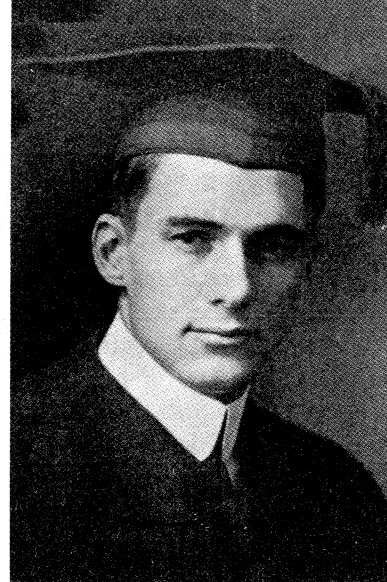
In 1944, George Hamlin Shaw and Florence B. Shaw established the Shaw Foundation, Inc., which was later assigned to The New York Community Trust to be administered for charitable purposes.

Should college students who wait on tables at a local boarding house organize themselves into their own labor union?

Most youths in 1909 would have said no. But George Shaw, attending the University of Colorado at Boulder, thought otherwise. This strong opinion produced only one of his many successful enterprises on his way through college and law school.

He was not fond of working in the boarding house, known as Ma Hathaway's, which was described as a "Victorian giant with fumed oak furniture, beaded lampshades and watered-down milk." He preferred the drycleaning establishment he later operated for students.

George Hamlin Shaw was born in Houlton, Maine, on August 3, 1890, the son of Ranford W. and Mary Drake Shaw. His father served as Attorney General for the State of Maine. George spent his boyhood in Houlton, but he was a sickly child who suffered from asthma. When he was fourteen and it appeared that he might not survive the New England climate, his parents made the difficult decision to send him to the West, hoping that the change of climate would relieve his suffering. The gamble was successful, and, although George was never completely free of his allergies, his condition did improve. But there was a price to be paid:



George and his parents did not see each other for seven years.

In 1908, George entered the University of Colorado in Boulder. While he was a sophomore, he organized Ma's other student waiters into the "Intercollegiate Waiters Union, Boulder Local No. 1." Shaw, a handsome and disarming six-footer, conceded that he had no grievance against his employer — he simply wanted to practice his organizing ability. (Two years earlier he had won an interscholastic oratorical contest in Southern California on the subject, "A Plea for the Open Shop.")

In December of 1913, while still a student, George married May Harding. The couple had three children: Richard, Mary, and Dora. The marriage was, ultimately, an unhappy one. It was to end in divorce after twenty years.

George was twenty-five when he received his LL.B. from the University of Colorado and was admitted to the Colorado Bar. With another young lawyer, he opened a law office the same year in Fort Collins, Colorado. It did not take him long to plunge into politics, and he was soon holding down the jobs of county attorney and Republican State Chairman. At

the same time he was handling an increasing number of cases for public utilities companies. One client was the North Colorado Power Company. Another was the Public Service Company of Denver. Representing this firm against those who advocated municipal ownership of Denver's gas and electric facilities, he successfully convinced the people and the city council of the advantages of private ownership. As a result of this victory, Shaw was chosen to represent the Cities Service Company in pipeline rate cases in Kansas and Oklahoma.

In 1927, Shaw moved to Denver. Three years later he ran as Republican candidate for the U. S. Senate and was defeated. Then in 1933 he left the West and joined the Cities Service Company as industrial relations adviser in New York. There he met Florence Berlowitz.

Unlike George Shaw, whose early years were marked by struggle, Florence was the daughter of a wealthy businessman. She was born in Lafayette, Indiana, on January 14, 1898, the only child of Julius and Mayme Newman Berlowitz. Her father had made a fortune in the Chicago hide market and had interests in public transportation and banking in Lafayette. He became president of the Lafayette Street Railway Company (later the Lafayette Transit Company) and was a director of the First Merchants National Bank.

Mr. Berlowitz was a Russian immigrant. He was a legendary figure among his contemporaries, for, although he was fluent in several languages, English was not one of them. Apparently his inability to read or write English was no handicap; with his acute business sense he became a wealthy man.

Flo attended public elementary school in Lafayette and then went on to the Julia Landers School for Girls in Indianapolis. Soon discovering that history and politics were her field, she

enrolled as a special student at Purdue University in her home town. Although she never obtained a degree, Flo was always an active student, taking courses that interested her whenever and wherever she could.

Flo studied for a time at the Sorbonne in Paris and at Columbia University's Institute of Government and Politics. While in New York, she met George Hamlin Shaw. By now Flo had married unhappily and George's marriage had come to an unhappy end. Flo and George were married in 1936, when she was 38 years old and he was 46. Their marriage marked the beginning of a fruitful and rewarding period for each of them.

In 1928, Flo Shaw had begun working as a volunteer for New York Travelers Aid (now called Travelers Aid Society of New York City). One aspect of her job was to wait on the piers to meet the mail-order brides, some of whom expected their bridegrooms to look like



the pictures of John Barrymore which had been sent to them by less attractive suitors as pictures of themselves. As World War II began, Flo helped originate and direct the servicemen's lounges in New York's Pennsylvania Station and Grand Central Terminal. The lounges became havens for some ten million members of the armed forces. From 1950 to 1954, Flo served as President of the National Travelers Aid Association (now called Travelers Aid Association of America) and she was chairman of the board from 1954 to 1956. She was the first woman to serve in that position.

President Harry S Truman appointed her to the Committee for Religion and Welfare in the U. S. Armed Forces, which recommended in 1950 the reactivation of the USO (United Service Organizations). She then served as vice president and member of the board and of the executive committee.

After people, music was Flo's great passion. For more than twenty-five years she was a faithful volunteer for the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1952 she was appointed to the Board of Directors. Flo was chairman of the subscription committee and headed the committees for the successful pension fund concerts. As vice chairman of the Stadium Concerts Committee, she worked closely with Mrs. Charles ("Minnie") Guggenheimer in bringing the Philharmonic to Lewisohn Stadium. In 1959, she traveled to Moscow for the Orchestra's concerts under the direction of Leonard Bernstein.

Her work with Travelers Aid and her love for music brought Flo into UNESCO, in which her first experience was with the exchange of artists, students, and scholars. Appointed by the State Department, she was a member of the executive committee from 1954 to 1957. In

1959 she visited India as a delegate to the ninth International Conference in New Delhi and was a guest of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Meanwhile, George Shaw was rising rapidly within the Cities Service organization. In 1936 he was made a director of the company. He had what was described by company executives as "a genius for getting along with people, and for helping them get along with each other. His ready quips have leavened with laughter many a solemn conclave of management and labor, resulting in a quicker meeting of the minds."

The Shaws traveled abroad each year, often on trips connected with one of Flo's projects, visiting friends in many countries. They had toured Russia as early as 1937. "It was a fascinating trip but a rather frightening one," Flo recalled later. "The war clouds were gathering and the signs were ominous." When the war was over, they often visited England and Monaco, but Flo's favorite away-from-home spot was Bangkok, where she was fascinated by the coexistence of the ancient and the modern.

Two or three times each year, George and Flo visited Flo's home town, Lafayette, Indiana. There she owned "Shaw Farms," the largest combination of livestock and grain farming lands in Tippecanoe County, and there she enjoyed the dubious honor of paying more real estate taxes than anyone else in that prosperous agricultural center.

On January 19, 1956, George Shaw was elected Vice President of the Cities Service Company. He served in his new post for only three months. On April 24 of the same year he suffered a heart attack and died suddenly at Dover, Delaware, where he had gone with other executives that day to attend the com-

pany's annual meeting of stockholders. He was 66 years old.

A memorial written for the company magazine had this to say about George Hamlin Shaw: "Throughout these years of service, he brought to his duties a sound judgment and a sincerity of purpose which won for him the deepest respect of everyone with whom he came in contact."

Grieved as she was at George's death, Flo Shaw was not the sort of woman to remain in seclusion. She forced herself to work even harder in her many projects. "People need help all the time," she said.

A few years later, Mrs. Shaw became ill and her disease was diagnosed as leukemia. For two years she battled the disease, always believing that she would win but prepared to accept the fact that she might not. Then on December 19, 1963, at the age of 65, Florence Shaw lost the fight.

As early as 1944, George and Florence Shaw set up the Shaw Foundation, for philanthropies that would benefit their fellow men down through the years to come. Well established during their lifetimes, it continues today as a component part of The New York Community Trust.



The New York Community Trust is a publicly supported community foundation that provides centralized management for many charitable funds. New York's major banks serve as trustees. Trustee for the Shaw Foundation is the Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York.