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Elisha Ward Sr. & Jane Washington Neeland

by

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Elisha Ward was born on 21 February 1773 in Halifax County North Carolina, the son of David Ward Jr. and his wife, Mary. Elisha Ward's roots in eastern North Carolina run deep: his ancestor John Ward Sr. had first settled in northeastern North Carolina (Tyrrell County) by the 1720s, and John's son David Ward Sr. became an early settler of the Fishing Creek region of what was then Edgecombe County, now Halifax. The North Carolina colonial capital was located at New Bern near the coast, but when the Revolutionary fervor swept through North Carolina in the early 1770s, the provisional government dedicated to independence met in the town of Halifax near the Wards' residence. Thus, Elisha spent his early years near one of the most politically active cities in North America. In particular, the Halifax Resolves drafted in 1776 and approved by the provisional government of North Carolina was the first resolution passed by any American colony calling for independence from Great Britain. Elisha's father David served in the military for the patriots during the Revolutionary War, but we do not know the specifics of his service.

After the Revolutionary War, many residents of Virginia and the Carolinas migrated south towards Georgia, enticed by offers of cheap land from the new state government there. Elisha's parents David and Mary Ward sold their plantation in Halifax County North Carolina on 15 May 1785 and left the region soon afterwards. It appears they went directly to Georgia, where in 1789 David Ward witnessed a legal transaction recorded in Wilkes County. Wilkes neighbored Washington County, the region in which we think David Ward settled upon arriving in Georgia. Legal records indicate that David acquired land near the Burke/Washington County line, the area put into Jefferson County by the Georgia Legislature in February 1796.

On 6 April 1798, apparently in anticipation of his death, for £50 David Ward gave to his son Elisha Ward

*...all his stock Cattel and Hogs Housel [household] good beds and furnitude [furniture] bead [bed] Steads Chests tables and all pot Iron pough hows axes grubbing ho all my Iron and Iron tools carpenders tools Coper tools and all my puter and all my housel funitude...*

David died later that year. Elisha owned his father's old farm by 1799, and his father's close relative (brother or nephew) Elias Ward lived near Elisha that year. In early 1801, Elisha sold his brother David Ward 79 acres of their father's old plantation, and their families lived on these adjoining farms through 1805. Their brother Samuel purchased his own adjoining farm in 1804, and the Ward brothers' brother-in-law Aquilla Lowe also lived in this neighborhood between 1802 and 1807 (Lowe married a daughter of David and Mary Ward). So during the period immediately following David Ward's death, most of his children continued to reside on his old farm on the waters of the Ogeechee River in Jefferson County Georgia. David's daughter Elizabeth Ward and her husband Luke Bozeman left

Jefferson and moved to Montgomery County in 1802–1803, and David's widow Mary Ward lived there with them from about 1805 until her death a few years later.

Jane Washington Neeland was born on 15 October 1784, apparently in South Carolina. We do not know how she met Elisha Ward nor precisely where or even when they married; the only shred of evidence points to her family living in Washington County, just next to Jefferson. In any case, they were married no later than about 1803, for their eldest known child John J. Ward was born about 1804. On 25 January 1806 Elisha and Jane sold 200 acres of land in Jefferson County. As they did not pay taxes in Jefferson County for the year 1806 as they had in previous years, they must have left Jefferson soon after disposing of their farm. They moved west into the newly opened Creek Indian lands that the state dispersed to settlers via the 1805 Georgia Land Lottery. Elisha and Jane first settled in the portion of Wilkinson that became Laurens County on 10 December 1807. In August 1808, one of the Laurens County courts ordered Elisha to work on a road from the Oconee River to Little Rocky Creek. Ward did not remain in Laurens for long, for by February 1810 he had moved to Twiggs County, created by the Georgia Legislature on 14 December 1809. Elisha and Jane remained residents of Twiggs County until the winter of 1818–1819.

With General Andrew Jackson's subjugation of the Creek Nation at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on 27 March 1814 and the ensuing Treaty of Fort Jackson with the Creeks, the United States Government succeeded in forcibly acquiring the vast region of central Alabama. Surveying began by 1816, and in 1817, the government began the process of selling this region to white settlers. The government first made these lands available for sale to United States citizens on 4 August 1817 at Milledgeville, then the Georgia State Capital. Soon afterwards, a large group of white settlers traveled through the Creek territory of western Georgia and eastern Alabama along the Federal Road and settled in south/central Alabama, the region now known as northern Butler County Alabama. That winter, a small faction of renegade Indians who refused to accept the Fort Jackson Treaty began threatening the white settlers. In March 1818, incensed at the white invasion of their ancestral homeland, these renegade Indians attacked and massacred several white families. In response, the settlers began construction of Fort Dale, located several miles northwest of present-day Greenville, and many white families spent the summer inside the fort in anticipation of further attacks. However, United States troops drove the Indians out of the region by that fall, and they moved to Florida and joined the Seminoles.

On 14 September 1818, while still a resident of Twiggs County Georgia, Elisha Ward purchased land situated in what became Butler County Alabama in 1820. Undoubtedly Ward knew of the Indian problems in the region, and he selected property located very close to the existing settlements in the region. The modern northwestern city limits of Greenville, Alabama run about a mile due east of Ward's property. It is impossible to know if he traveled to Alabama prior to purchasing his Alabama property; many Georgia citizens purchased government land in Alabama sight unseen, so there is a good chance he never saw his new farm when he bought it.

Ward moved his family to Alabama Territory during the winter of 1818–1819, and the next spring, he purchased additional land from the government. For his second farm, Ward chose land located about two miles due north of the first, just about three miles northwest of the county seat of Greenville. In addition, the other major early settlement in the region, Fort Dale, lay less than two miles due east of his second Alabama property. In 1819, several merchants opened stores near Ward's new farms in the small communities of Fort Dale and Buttsville (the original name of Greenville). Thus, after settling in Alabama, Elisha Ward lived near several small villages and the Federal Road, the primary link connecting Alabama with Georgia. The newly created Butler County Alabama held its first election to

select a sheriff in August 1820, and Elisha Ward voted in that election as a citizen of the county. In 1821, the Alabama Legislature decided to make Buttsville the county seat, and soon afterwards the name was changed to Greenville.

On 10 March 1822, Elisha Ward purchased additional government land adjoining his existing farm in Butler County Alabama. He paid for this land with money in accounts in four different banks: the Bank of the United States, the Bank of South Carolina, the Bank of Alabama, and the Bank of Mobile. Ward made other purchases of government land in 1823 and 1825. Also in 1825, he paid off his debt to the government for the land he purchased on credit in 1818 and 1819. Elisha Ward served as a justice of the peace for Butler County for the period up to 1828, for in that year his replacement was appointed.

For some unknown reason, the government did not offer the extraordinarily rich bottom lands a few miles north of Ward's farm in southern Montgomery County for sale until the latter 1820s. Settlers purchased and moved onto this land as soon as it became available, causing a large increase in the population of southwestern Montgomery, southeastern Dallas, and northeastern Butler Counties. As a result, the Alabama Legislature created Lowndes County out of this region on 20 January 1830. Elisha Ward's old Butler County plantation lay only four miles south of the Butler/Montgomery County line.

Sometime in the latter 1820s, Elisha Ward left his Butler County farm and moved with many of his neighbors the short distance northeast into what soon became southern Lowndes County. However, he never purchased any Lowndes County farmland from the government; in fact, there is no evidence that he ever owned property there. Elisha's son David lived near him in Lowndes County in 1830. David had married Cynthia Seale about 1826; her father James Seale had settled near Fort Dale in 1821 on land located one-half of a mile from Elisha's home. In 1833 David Ward purchased a 40-acre farm from the United States located about seven miles northeast of Fort Deposit in southeastern Lowndes.

Records dating from his lifetime indicate that, like the vast majority of white Southerner men of his time, Elisha Ward was a middle-class farmer who owned between 200 and 400 acres most of his adult life. During his young adulthood, Elisha did not own any slaves, nor did his father David Ward Jr. or David Ward Sr. In 1818, Elisha paid taxes on one slave, but by 1830, no slaves lived in his household. In 1837, the year before his death, one adult slave couple lived with Elisha's family.

Elisha Ward and his family became acquainted with the family of John Fields Auld in the 1820s. Both families were Methodist, and in 1830 Elisha and Jane's daughter Margaret Jane Ward married Elijah Michael Auld, the son of John Fields Auld. The Aulds settled nearby in south/central Lowndes by 1831, probably earlier. The Ward and Auld families thereafter became closely linked, traveling west together and intermarrying for generations afterwards.

By the mid-1830s, the government began offering other virgin lands further west in Mississippi and Louisiana for sale, and the relentless westward drive again struck many residents of Lowndes and Butler Counties. John F. Auld apparently left first, for he sold his Lowndes County plantation on 15 November 1834. Either that winter or else in the fall of 1835, John F. Auld and his son James moved to Kemper County Mississippi, located in east/central Mississippi on the Alabama state line. They bought adjoining farms there in November 1835.

We do not know precisely when Elisha Ward left Alabama for Mississippi, but he was already making plans to do so by the end of the 1835 farming season (if not earlier). On 14 January 1836, Ward purchased government land located in Kemper County Mississippi at the Columbus, Mississippi Land Office as a resident of Kemper County. Ward chose property located less than one mile from the farms of John and James Auld. Two months later on March 8<sup>th</sup>,

Elisha's son David Ward and son-in-law Elijah Michael Auld both purchased their own farms nearby. However, the few available records indicate that neither Elisha Ward, his son David, nor Elijah M. Auld farmed their Kemper County land during the 1836 growing season. It appears that David Ward returned to Lowndes and planted his final crop there in 1836, and Elisha Ward and Elijah M. Auld either did the same or else they helped one of the other Auld men to cultivate their Kemper County farms in 1836. However, during the year 1837, both Elisha Ward and Elijah M. Auld resided in Kemper County.

As mentioned, we think that David Ward returned to Lowndes County Alabama for the year 1836 and never resided on the land he bought next to his father in Kemper County Mississippi. In early January 1837 he joined the group of citizens from his neighborhood who sold their plantations in Butler and Lowndes Counties Alabama and moved west of the Mississippi River, settling in northern Ouachita Parish Louisiana by mid-February 1837.

Elisha Ward did not tarry long in Mississippi. Sometime in the fall or winter of 1837, Ward and the Auld brothers, Elijah Michael and James Alexander, departed Kemper, leaving only the Auld's father John there. Elisha Ward and his son-in-law Elijah Auld continued westward and joined David Ward in what was then northern Ouachita Parish Louisiana (this region became Union Parish in 1839). It is not certain when they arrived in Louisiana, but the only available evidence points to their reaching there before the 1838 planting season.

On 29 July 1838, just a short while after coming to north Louisiana, Elisha Ward Sr.'s grandson Elisha Ward was born, the son of David and Cynthia Seale Ward. Merely six days later, on August 5<sup>th</sup>, Elisha Ward Sr. died at the age of sixty-five. He was likely buried on his son's farm east of Farmerville. David Ward's family graveyard soon became the community cemetery known as Ward's Chapel, so Elisha Ward is probably the first person buried at Ward's Chapel.

Elisha's widow Jane Washington Ward did not purchase her own farm in Union Parish, but she did maintain her own household for a while, apparently located on the plantations of either David Ward or Elijah M. Auld several miles east of Farmerville. Other than a lawsuit she filed in 1841 to collect a debt owed to her, Jane Washington Neeland Ward left no records in Union Parish. She lived there in David's household in 1850, and this is the last known record of her. Jane must have died between 1850 and 1860, presumably in Union Parish, Louisiana.



## Family of Elisha Ward Sr. & Jane Washington Neeland

No known single source gives the names of all of Elisha and Jane's children. However, the Bible records prove that David and Elisha Ward Jr. were their sons. Moreover, Union Parish court documents prove that Margaret Ward Auld and Mary Ward Gee Odom were Elisha and Jane's daughters. The 1880 census proves that John J. Ward born in about 1804 was Margaret Ward Auld's brother, hence a son of Elisha and Jane.

This means that we have documented evidence to establish that five of the seven children I have listed below for Elisha and Jane are indeed their children. Of the two remaining daughters, Elizabeth J. Ward and Harriett Ann Ward, I have not located any single document that conclusively identifies either woman as a daughter of Elisha and Jane. However, I have listed them as such herein due to what I feel is a preponderance of circumstantial evidence and family tradition for Elizabeth, and rather convincing evidence for Harty:

### **Elizabeth J. Ward**

1. When Elizabeth and her family moved to Union Parish from Covington County Alabama in the latter 1850s, they settled on property that adjoined the farms of David Ward, Margaret Jane Ward Auld, and David's son Elijah Hubbard Ward.
2. After Elizabeth's husband George W. Solomon died in 1863, David Ward paid off the mortgage on Solomon's farm with gold coins.
3. David's son Elijah Hubbard Ward administered Solomon's estate, whereas David's son John Thomas Ward appraised the estate.
4. David Ward paid the 1870 taxes on George W. Solomon's old farm.
5. Elizabeth's named her eldest known son "*David Ward Solomon*" according to Solomon descendants still in contact with Ward descendants in the 1930s and 1940s.
6. David Ward's grandsons Henry Wesley and Lee Andrew Ward knew with certainty that David and Elizabeth were siblings and freely spoke of this fact to their granddaughter and great-niece Geneva Ward Chevalier Auld, who reported these conversations to me in the 1980s.

### **Harriett Ann Ward**

1. In 1830, Elisha Ward's household included two females born between 1815 and 1820. One of them would have been his daughter, Mary Caroline Ward, but we have no record of another daughter born in that time period.
2. On 18 March 1834, Harty Ann Ward married Beckham Vaughn in Lowndes County, Elisha Ward's residence at the time.
3. When Elisha Ward's associate John Fields Auld sold his land in Lowndes County in 1835 in preparation for his removal to Kemper County, Mississippi, Beckham Vaughn witnessed the record.

Finally, in 1840 an unidentified Thomas J. Ward lived in Union Parish as a single man in his own household. While he could have been a son of Elisha and Jane's, at this time I have no proof of any connection between this Thomas J. Ward and the family of Elisha Ward Sr.



### Children of Elisha Ward Sr. and Jane Washington Neeland

1. **John J. Ward** (c1804–aft. 1880) married on 9 September in Talbot County, Georgia to Mary Ann Cogburn (1809/1812–aft. 1880), presumably the daughter of Cyrus Cogburn (c1782 – 1855). Details about his life are sparse, and it is unknown what prompted John J. Ward to leave his family in Alabama and then marry in Talbot County, Georgia. Cyrus Cogburn and his sons were potters, and this is the same occupation John J. Ward had in 1860 and 1870.

Three men named “John Ward” lived in Henry County Alabama in 1840, only one of whom matches the correct age of Elisha Ward’s son. In that year, he had two males aged 15–20 and one female aged 10–15 in his household. I cannot find this family in 1850, but in 1860 and 1870, John J. and Mary Ann Ward lived alone near the Otho Post Office in Henry County, Alabama. This suggests that they had no children to survive to adulthood.

Beginning about 1870, it appears that John J. and Mary Ann Ward decided to move closer to their relatives in Union Parish, Louisiana. John J. Ward purchased land in Union Parish in late 1870, but the tax records of the 1870s list him as a non-resident. His nephew Elijah H. Ward paid taxes on John J. Ward’s Union Parish property during the 1870s. In 1880, John and Mary Ann lived with his widowed sister, Margaret Jane Ward Auld, in the household of John’s nephew, Elijah F. Auld.

It appears that John J. and Mary Ann Ward died in the early 1880s, for in 1882, the Union Parish sheriff sold his land for nonpayment of taxes.

2. **David Ward** [Davy, Davi] (1806–4 May 1882) married about 1826, presumably in Butler County, Alabama, to Cynthia Seale (c1813–27 Mar 1857), daughter of James Seale (13 Feb 1769–4 Feb 1860) and Rachel Kelley. Between 1857 and 1860, David Ward married Roda ? (c1807–1860/1866), the widow of Ward’s neighbor, Thomas T. Ratcliff (c1804–11 Sep 1852). On 31 January 1867, David married in Union Parish, Louisiana to Ellen Brazeal (13 May 1804–21 Mar 1884), daughter of Benjamin Brazeal and widow of James McLelland Jr. (c1780–1834). David and Cynthia Ward are buried in the Wards Chapel Cemetery, Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana.
3. **Elizabeth J. Ward** (20 Feb 1810–26 Nov 1886) appears to have married three times. About 1827, probably in Butler County, Alabama, evidence indicates that she married John Reddock. Between about 1831 and 1833, also probably in Butler County, Alabama, Elizabeth married George Washington Solomon (12 Oct 1807–28 Mar 1863). On 21 March 1868 in Union Parish, Louisiana, Elizabeth married Sanders Worthington (1797/1800–1868/1880).

The late Mrs. Geneva Ward Chevalier Aulds was born in 1915, the great-granddaughter of Elijah Hubbard Ward, David Ward’s eldest son. Ms. Geneva maintained a life-long interest and fascination with her Ward ancestors, and she related to me many of her conversations with her Ward great-uncles and grandfather, all grandsons of David Ward. They confirmed to Ms. Geneva that George W. Solomon’s wife, Elizabeth, was David Ward’s sister.

In the 1930s or 1940s, Ms. Geneva and a descendent of Elizabeth Ward Solomon corresponded and exchanged family information on their respective families. This person sent Ms. Geneva the dates of birth and death for Elizabeth J. Ward Solomon, her husband George W. Solomon, and their son and daughter-in-law. According to this information, George Washington Solomon was born 12 October 1807 and died 28 March 1863, the son of Noah Solomon.

George W. and Elizabeth Ward Solomon remained in Alabama after her parents and siblings left for Louisiana. They lived in Butler County, Alabama in 1840, but by 1850 had moved south to Covington County, Alabama. They

left there in the latter 1850s and joined her brother, David, and sisters, Margaret and Mary Caroline, in eastern Union Parish. In 1860, Elizabeth lived a few households from her siblings.

In the latter part of 1869 or early 1870, Elizabeth's son, David W. Solomon, moved his family west to Freestone County, Texas. It appears that Elizabeth and her new husband, Sanders Worthington, also went to Texas, for they do not appear on the 1870 Union Parish Federal Census. Elizabeth's daughter, Jane Solomon/Reddock Rogers, and family also departed Union Parish for Texas and lived in Anderson County in 1870.

Sometimes in the 1870s, Sanders Worthington died, and Elizabeth and her daughter's family had returned to Union Parish. In 1880, the thrice-widowed Elizabeth resided with her grandson, James D. Rogers. She must have again returned to Texas in the early 1880s, for descendants later stated that she died near Teague, Freestone County, Texas, on 26 November 1886.

4. **Margaret Jane Ward** (c1812 – 1880/1893) married on 7 April 1830 in Montgomery County, Alabama to Elijah Michael Auld (c1811–1877/1880), son of John Fields Auld (6 May 1788–28 Aug 1859) and Mary (Kindrick) Jackson (1791–28 Aug 1859). Margaret and Elijah Auld are probably buried in the Wards Chapel Cemetery, Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana.
5. **Harriett Ann Ward** [Harty, Hattie] (1815/1816–aft. 1880) married on 18 March 1834 in Lowndes County, Alabama to Beckham Vaughn (c1806–aft. 1880). Hattie is only a presumed daughter of Elisha and Jane. No known documentation proves she was their daughter, but several pieces of circumstantial evidence imply it. Elisha's household in 1830 included an unidentified female born between 1815 and 1820. Her 1834 marriage in Lowndes County is a clue, for no other Ward families are documented as living there in the early 1830s. In 1835, Beckham Vaughn witnessed a deed of John F. Auld, and known associate of Elisha Ward and his family.

Hattie and Beckham Vaughn lived in Lowndes County, Alabama in 1840, Wilcox County, Alabama in 1850, and in Mobile, Alabama in 1860. Beckham worked as a cotton factor and merchant. Sometime between 1860 and 1880, they moved to Texas, and in 1880, they lived in Falls County, Texas.

6. **Mary Caroline Ward** (1 Feb 1818–15 May 1892) married about 1837, in either Alabama or perhaps Kemper County, Mississippi, to Richard Harrison Gee (c1808–27 Jul 1843). Mary Caroline Ward married in September 1845 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Pinckney Odom (17 Apr 1820–4 Dec 1894), supposedly the son of Michael Odom. Mary Caroline Ward Odom is buried in the Alabama/Weldon Cemetery near Bernice, Union/Claiborne Parish, Louisiana. Pinckney Odom is buried in the Farmerville Cemetery, Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana.
7. **Elisha Ward Jr.** (20 Apr 1823–3 Oct 1898) married on 28 September 1843 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Mary Elizabeth Meeks (21 Jun 1824–5/6 Feb 1916), daughter of Mark Meeks Sr. (12 Jul 1795–7 Mar 1891) and Ann Chambers (c1802–1 Apr 1857).

After their marriage, Elisha and Elizabeth Ward remained Union Parish residents until shortly after 1850, when they moved to Claiborne Parish. During the Civil War, Elisha Ward Jr. enlisted in Co. A, Claiborne Regiment, Louisiana Militia on 1 May 1863. The records of the Louisiana Militia are notoriously sparse, most having been purposely buried by the Confederate officials in Shreveport in June 1865 just prior to their surrender. The only record on file for this unit is a muster roll for 1 May through 21 June 1863. It states that Ward was absent without leave from May 19<sup>th</sup> through June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Elisha and Elizabeth Ward still lived in Claiborne Parish in 1870, but shortly afterwards they moved to Nevada County, Arkansas. He died there in 1898, and in 1900, she lived with her son, Nacy Evans Ward, in Nevada County.

In 1910, Elizabeth lived with her daughter Theodocia Ward McEachern in Webster Parish. Elizabeth is buried in the Old Shonglo Cemetery about seven miles from Springhill, Webster Parish Louisiana. Her tombstone gives her date of death as February 5<sup>th</sup>, but the Ward Bible gives her death as February 6<sup>th</sup>.

