Elijah Michael Auld† & Margaret Jane Ward

by Timothy Dean Hudson

Margaret Jane Ward was the daughter of Elisha Ward Sr. (21 Feb 1773–5 Aug 1838) and Jane Washington Neeland (15 Oct 1784–aft. 1850). Margaret was born in about 1812, presumably on her parents' 202½-acre farm in Twiggs County, Georgia. When she was about six years old, her parents moved their family to Alabama Territory, settling a short distance northwest of present-day Greenville, Alabama, in Butler County. They remained there until the latter 1820s, when they followed yet another land rush and moved north into what soon became southern Lowndes County, Alabama.

Sometime either before they left the Greenville area or shortly afterwards, the Wards met John Fields Auld, a relatively wealthy planter from Anson County, North Carolina. He had made preparations for a trip west in December 1824, and so if he visited Butler County in 1825, Auld may have become acquainted with the Wards then. However, we have no actual evidence that Auld came to Alabama that early, and so the two families may have only met in the latter 1820s when the Aulds settled near them in Lowndes County, Alabama.

Although all evidence indicates that Elisha Ward had never met John Fields Auld until the latter 1820s, their ancestors had known one another back in the latter 1760s. Auld's grandfather, James Auld, moved from Maryland to Halifax County, North Carolina about 1765 and settled near David Ward Sr., Elisha's grandfather or great-grandfather. Records there suggest they were at least casually acquainted, but the Aulds soon left Halifax in eastern North Carolina and to Anson County in western North Carolina.

Already a family of considerable financial means for their era, the Auld family continued to prosper in western North Carolina. James Auld's son Michael Piper Auld fought for the Patriots during the Revolutionary War, and afterwards, he served as Anson's County Clerk. A rather sickly man his entire life, Michael Auld died of a sudden and *"violent"* illness in 1789, leaving only one infant son, John Fields Auld. Michael bequeathed his son a total of 860 acres and three enslaved people and left another 500 acres to his widow. Thus, John Fields Auld certainly grew up enjoying many comforts not available to most of his contemporaries.

†Elijah Michael Auld signed his name as *"Auld,"* as did his ancestors throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Surname spellings remained fluid during this period, not becoming standardized until around 1900. Since then, most family members, including virtually all of John J. Auld's descendants, have spelled their name as *"Aulds."* This biography uses *"Auld"* to remain true to the manner in which Elijah M. Auld identified himself during his lifetime.

John F. Auld married Mary Jackson about 1806, and they settled on the plantation given to John by his father. Their eldest surviving son was Elijah Michael Auld, born about 1811, followed by James Alexander Auld in about 1813. By about 1826, when John and Mary decided to leave North Carolina and move west. They departed from Anson County between 1826 and 1829 and settled in southwestern Montgomery County, Alabama. The Alabama Legislature placed this region into Lowndes County on 20 January 1830, and John Fields Auld purchased 160 acres of government land in southern Lowndes County in 1831. Judging by the incredible profit he made on this place when he sold it in 1834, Auld quickly established a profitable planting operation there.

Margaret Jane Ward married on 7 April 1830 to Elijah Michael Auld, son of John Fields Auld. Their marriage occurred just over two months after the creation of Lowndes County. The Methodist Episcopal minister who married them filed their marriage with the Montgomery County, Alabama clerk, probably because Lowndes did not yet have county offices set up for operation. Additionally, Methodist circuit preachers during this early statehood period were notorious for performing marriages and filing them with a county clerk in a nearby county rather than the county in which the minister actually performed the marriage.

For several years after their marriage, Elijah and Margaret lived in Lowndes County near their parents. The births of their two eldest sons occurred there in October 1831 and February 1833. On September 1831, John F. Auld gave a nineteen-year-old enslaved man named Albert to Elijah in consideration for John's *"Natural love and affection"* for his son, plus the sum of $1.00. As Elijah owned no land during this period, he undoubtedly worked on his father's plantation.

The federal government opened additional land markets farther west in the mid-1830s, enticing many Alabama residents to migrate. John Fields Auld sold his 160-acre Lowndes County plantation on 15 November 1834 to a South Carolina resident for $1000, a considerable profit on his original $200 investment only a few years earlier.

We have no clear indication where John Fields Auld spent the 1835 growing season; he could possibly have remained in Lowndes County, but he probably moved west and planted his 1835 crops in either Sumter County, Alabama or across the state line in Kemper County, Mississippi. Auld had become a resident of Kemper by 26 November 1835, when he purchased a 240-acre tract of government land $506.61 in cash.

Auld's second son James Alexander Auld, who had married in 1833 back in Lowndes County, accompanied his father to the government land office in Columbus, Mississippi on that same day, where he purchased his own 160-acre farm for $201.48. Some six weeks after the Aulds purchased

their farms in Mississippi, Margaret's father Elisha Ward joined them in Kemper County and purchased 40 acres of government land.

It is unclear where Elijah Michael and Margaret resided during the year 1835. Elijah did not purchase Mississippi property with his father and brother in November 1835, nor with Margaret's father in January 1836. Margaret's condition may have caused him to remain with her during this period; she was in about her ninth month of pregnancy in December 1835, and on Christmas Day 1835, Margaret gave birth to her only daughter, Harriett Ann E. Auld. The records give conflicting reports as to whether Harty's birth occurred in Alabama or Mississippi.

In any event, on 8 March 1836, Elijah Michael Auld and his brother-in-law David Ward went together to the government land office at Columbus, Mississippi and purchased land; Ward's new farm adjoined his father's, whereas Elijah purchased 80 acres located nearby. David Ward reported to the land officer in Mississippi that he still resided in Lowndes County, Alabama, which suggests that he raised his 1835 crops in Alabama rather than Mississippi. In fact, we have no evidence that David Ward ever resided upon his Mississippi property. Ward apparently went back to Alabama for the year 1836, and then in early 1837, he joined a group of Lowndes County families who migrated to north Louisiana.

Unlike Margaret's brother David Ward, the scanty available evidence suggests that Elijah and Margaret remained with their parents in Kemper County, Mississippi for the 1836 and 1837 seasons. In 1836, John F. Auld had 90 acres in cultivation that produced 18 bales of cotton, and his son James A. Auld had 19 acres in cultivation. However, neither Elijah Michael Auld nor Elisha Ward had any of their own acres in cultivation that year. This makes it difficult to determine whether they assisted John F. Auld in cultivating his property in 1836 or if Elijah and his father-in-law returned to Alabama for the year 1836 with David Ward. All that we do know for certain is that Margaret and Elijah, their parents, and his brother James A. Auld all resided in Kemper County, Mississippi during the bulk of the year 1837.

After the harvest of the 1837 crops, this family group broke up and went in various directions. John Fields Auld remained on his farm in Kemper for several more years, at least through 1840. James Alexander Auld went back eastward, across the state line into Sumter County, Alabama with Margaret's sister Mary Caroline Ward and her new husband, Richard H. Gee. Margaret and Elijah, along with her parents Elisha and Jane, went westward towards north Louisiana to where Margaret's brother David had migrated with others from Lowndes County, Alabama in February 1837. David Ward had settled in what was then northwestern Ouachita Parish, Louisiana.

Once again, the scarcity of records from this early period prevents us from knowing precisely when Margaret and Elijah arrived in the piney hills of north Louisiana. It appears that they reunited with David Ward during the winter of 1837–1838 and planted their 1838 crops between Bayous d'Arbonne and d'Loutre in what would soon become eastern Union Parish, Louisiana.

Elisha Ward Sr. died on 5 August 1838, and ten days later, on August 15th, Elijah Michael Auld appeared in person at the government land office in Monroe, Louisiana and purchased 80 acres of land a few miles south of David Ward's plantation. As mentioned above, Elijah's new farm lay midway between Bayous d'Arbonne and d'Loutre, then located in northern Ouachita Parish. However, the next spring on 13 March 1839, the Louisiana Legislature approved the creation of a new parish called *"Union"* from northwestern Ouachita. This put the Auld and Ward farms into eastern Union Parish, Louisiana.

Margaret and Elijah resided upon their 80-acre farm throughout the 1840s. By 1850, Elijah had cleared and improved 60 acres of his 80-acre farm, bringing its value to $700. In 1849 he harvested 500 bushels of corn, 13 bales of cotton, and 100 bushels of sweet potatoes.

Many of their relatives joined them in north Louisiana during this decade. Margaret's sister Mary Caroline Ward and her husband Richard H. Gee arrived in eastern Union Parish in 1841 or 1842. When Gee died prematurely in 1843, Elijah and David Ward assisted Mary in managing her husband's estate.

Elijah's father John Fields Auld also moved to north Louisiana in the early-1840s, initially settling in neighboring Claiborne Parish. Finally, Elijah's brother James Alexander Auld, who had moved back to Sumter County, Alabama in 1838 when Elijah left Mississippi for Louisiana, joined Elijah and Margaret in about 1846 and purchased a farm that adjoined his brother. In the early 1850s, John Fields Auld sold his farm in Claiborne Parish and retired to Union Parish, apparently settling near his sons Elijah and James. Several years later, on 29 August 1859, both John and his wife Mary Jackson Auld died on the same day of unknown causes.

On 2 May 1851, Elijah went to the land office in Monroe and purchased 120 acres of government land that adjoined his existing farm for $104.55. This land acquisition caused Elijah M. Auld problems with his nearby neighbor, Drury H. Mason. In 1850 Mason lived on the farm adjoining Margaret and Elijah, and he apparently occupied or placed in cultivation portions of the 80-acre tract of land Auld purchased.

Federal land laws protected settlers who rightfully established residence on land before they purchased it; had Mason built a cabin or placed some portion of that tract in cultivation, he would have automatically acquired the legal right of *"preemption"* over anyone else wishing to purchase

it. Since he did not claim this right, he either could not afford it or chose not to purchase the property from the government. In any case, Drury H. Mason refused to vacate the property, so on 10 March 1852, Elijah M. Auld's attorney Henry B. Essick filed Auld's suit against Mason in the Union Parish court. Auld claimed that Mason

> *…is in possession & now occupies…the property of your petitioner…that* [this] *tract of land and improvements thereon is his just and lawful property, that he entered and paid for said land at the town of Monroe, in the State of Louisiana, as will appear by the receipt of the receiver at Monroe…*

Auld further claimed that Mason *"…has been duly notified to deliver said property to your petitioner, and that he refuses to do so…"* Thus, Auld requested that

> *…the said Drury H. Mason may be duly cited to answer hereto, and that upon a final hearing of the Case, that he have judgment against the said Mason, for the above described tract of land & improvements thereon, and that it be declared to be the property of your petitioner. He prays for judgment also for fifty dollars, damages for the detention & injury of the property which defendant has caused…*

In response to Auld's suit, on that same day the court issued a summons to Mason, ordering him to file his answer to Auld's suit with the court. Union Parish Deputy Sheriff John Norsworthy served the summons on Mason by giving it to his wife their house about ten miles from Farmerville. Mason's answer does not survive, but the next week the court subpoenaed James M. Turner and Samuel Kirkpatrick to testify on Auld's behalf before the court. Deputy Norsworthy served both subpoenas within the next several weeks, delivering them to Turner at his house located about thirteen miles from Farmerville, and also to Kirkpatrick's wife at his house about eight miles from Farmerville.

Union Parish Judge R. W. Richardson did not issue his ruling in the case until late that fall. On November 11th, Richardson ordered that Elijah M. Auld be placed in possession of the disputed eighty acres of land, that Auld should be *"quieted in his possession,"* and that Mason should pay the costs of the suit. However, Richardson's judgment did not address Auld's claim for $50 in damages. Despite the court's ruling, apparently Mason still refused to vacate Auld's property, and so on November 25th, Auld again filed a protest before the court. In response, the court issued this order to the Union Parish sheriff:

> *…We command you… in the name of the State of Louisiana, that you command the said Mason to leave & depart from the said land within three days from notice & that you serve upon Drury H. Mason a copy of this writ, and that if he then refuse to obey the order and go off the said land & premises, within three days from the service of said copy of this writ, that you then proceed to put in full possession of said estate or land, the said Elijah M. Auld and that you force & compel*

> *the said Drury H. Mason to leave & depart from the said land, & that you use all legal means to effect said object or purpose–also that of the money or movable effects of the said Mason, situated in said Parish, at the value thereof you cause to be levied paid & satisfied unto the said Auld the aforesaid sum of Costs & also the costs of executing this writ….*

Union Parish Sheriff David B. Trousdale did not serve the above writ on Mason until 10 January 1853. On that day Sheriff Trousdale, accompanied by Elijah M. Auld, went to Mason's residence *"…for the purpose of dispossessing the said Drury H. Mason and giving possession to Elijah M. Auld…"* Trousdale reported to the court that upon

> *…the parties being brought together they amicably agreed upon a compromise which being affected I return this writ…*

Sheriff Trousdale charged Mason $5.00 for serving the above writ, together with the court costs of $7.10.

After the legal situation with Mason was resolved, Elijah Michael Auld participated in no further litigation in Union Parish, except in serving as a witness for his brother-in-law David Ward on a few occasions. Elijah and Margaret lived on their farm near Farmerville in eastern Union Parish near her relatives for the rest of their lives. Although all of their sons except the youngest one served in the Confederate Army, they all managed to survive the conflict unscathed. However, two of Elijah Michael Auld's nephews, sons of his brother James Alexander Auld, died of wounds received on battlefields in Mississippi and Georgia.

Elijah farmed each year into the mid-1870s, and apparently, he assisted Margaret's brother David Ward with the operation of Ward's cotton gin. As they grew up, most of the Auld children purchased their own farms in the neighborhood, although two sons moved to Texas in the late 1860s.

By 1876, Elijah Michael Auld apparently suffered from some type of physical impairment that prevented his travel to Farmerville. Perhaps foreseeing his impending demise, he placed his lands in his children's names, making transactions on January 5th at his eldest son John Jordan Auld's home, and another on January 26th at his nephew Elijah H. Ward's residence—Ward's farm adjoined Auld's.

The next year on 15 February 1877, Elijah's son Asbury C. Auld sold his brother James W. Auld a tract of land described as *"adjoining the lands of E. M. Auld,"* which implies that Elijah was still alive. However, Elijah had died by June 1880, when Margaret lived with her son Elijah Fields Auld. No record has yet been found to indicate when Margaret died. All we know is that her death

occurred by 16 January 1893, when her heirs sold the remaining portion of her old farm to their brother, Elijah F. Auld.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Children of Margaret Jane Ward & Elijah Michael Auld

The known children of Margaret Jane Ward and Elijah Michael Auld include:

1. **John Jordan Auld Sr.** [Jurd] (15 Oct 1831–3 Jan 1905) married in about 1854 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Louisa Ann Lee [Louann, Lucie Ann] (27 Sep 1837–26 Apr 1888), daughter of Martin Batte Lee (27 Apr 1798–28 Mar 1884) and Levincy Albritton (15 Mar 1800–12 Jun 1864). Jurd Auld married on 3 August 1890 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Ann Black Smith, with the ceremony performed by Elder Henry Archer. He married a third and final time on 3 April 1893 at Vernon, Louisiana to Artalissa A. Phillips [Artie] (19 Jan 1856–31 Mar 1918), daughter of Hayden Tillman Phillips (1818/1820–1870/1880) and Caroline C. Russell (c1827–aft. 1870). John J. Auld is buried in the Taylor/Liberty Hill Cemetery, near Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana. It is probable that Louisa A. Lee Auld is buried there with him.
2. **James Washington Auld** (5 Feb 1833–20 Feb 1900) married on 8 September 1853 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Sarah Jane Stokes (7 Sep 1830–4 Jun 1862/1863), daughter of John Stokes (2 Apr 1798–14 Feb 1838) and Mary Albritton (19 Sep 1804–15 Sep 1856). James W. Auld married on 8 March 1864 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Caroline Worthington (Apr 1835–25 Jan 1907), daughter of Sanders Worthington (1797/1800–1868/1880) and Elizabeth ? [Betsy] (c1800–1860/1868). James W. Auld and Caroline Worthington are buried in the Wards Chapel Cemetery, near Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana.
3. **Harriett Ann E. Auld** [Hartie, Harty, Hardy] (24/25 Dec 1835–27 Jan 1914) married on 24 December 1850 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Joseph Anderson Meeks (6 May 1830–19 Jan 1899), son of Mark Meeks Sr. (1795–1891) and Ann Chambers (1802–1857/1858). Harty Auld and Joseph Meeks are buried in the Shady Grove Cemetery a few miles southeast of Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana.
4. **Elisha M. Auld** (c1837–1870/1880) married on 25 December 1855 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Mary E. Slawson (Mar 1832–1909). After serving in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, Elisha and Mary moved to Texas, living in Anderson County in 1870. Mary is buried in the Riverside Cemetery, Mangum, Greer County, Oklahoma.
5. **Henry Harrison Auld** (10 Oct 1839–21 Dec 1912) married in 1862/1863 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Martha Ellen Gates (10 Nov 1844–13 Oct 1911), daughter of Joseph Gates (4 Mar 1814–2 Dec 1866) and Ann Rebecca Caver (17 Sep 1812–12 Feb 1904). Henry H. Auld and Martha Ellen Gates are buried in the Concord Cemetery, Anderson County, Texas.
6. **David Sherwood Auld** (6 June 1844–4 Dec 1910) married on 23 February 1868 at Downsville, Union Parish, Louisiana to Mary Elizabeth Hester (6 Feb 1852–14 Jul 1922), daughter of

Stephen Thompson Hester (11 Dec 1826–12/14 Sep 1863) and Angeline E. W. Dyson (died 1850s). David S. Auld and Mary E. Hester are buried in the Simsboro City Cemetery, in Lincoln Parish, Louisiana.

7. **Elijah Fields Auld** (6 Jan 1847–2 Jun 1927) married on 25 December 1873 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Rebecca Helen Phillips (c1851–1878/1879), daughter of Hayden Tillman Phillips (1818/1820–1870/1880) and Caroline C. Russell (c1827–aft. 1870). Elijah Fields Auld married about 1879 to Sarah Frances Auld [Sally] (3 Jul 1864–17 Dec 1904), daughter of his first cousins, John R. Auld and Rachel Jane Ward. Sarah F. Auld is buried in Antioch Cemetery. According to his death certificate, he is buried in Liberty Cemetery, although he has no marker.
8. **William Auld** (c1848–1850/1860) died young between 1850 and 1860.
9. **Asbury Cason Auld** (2 Apr 1851–24 Jun 1927) married about 1875 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Anastatia Meeks (27 Mar 1855–18 May 1936), daughter of Mark Meeks Jr. (c1836–12 Oct 1864) and Caroline Adams (16 Sep 1833–30 Nov 1917). Asbury C. Auld is buried in the Antioch Cemetery, but Anastatia is buried beside her mother in the Crossroads Cemetery, both located in eastern Union Parish, Louisiana.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦