**The Lives of**

# Elisha Ward Sr.

**(21 Feb 1773–5 Aug 1838)**

**&**

# Jane Washington Neeland

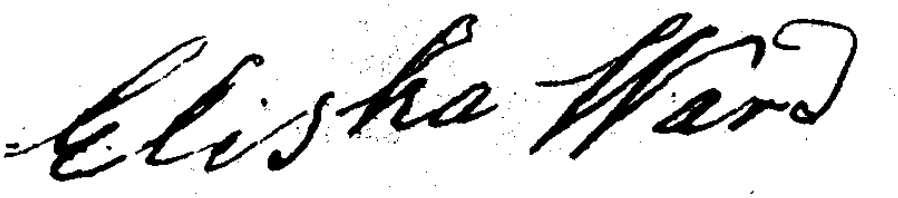
**(15 Oct 1784–aft. 1850)**

**of**

**North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi,**

**&**

**Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana**



**by Timothy Dean Hudson**

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## Elisha Ward's Early Life in North Carolina & Georgia

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 Ward 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 a North Carolina Militia company during the Revolutionary War in support of the Patriots, but the specifics of his service are unknown.

David and Mary Ward followed the post-Revolutionary War migration from Virginia and the Carolinas into Georgia. They sold their Halifax County farm on 15 May 1785 and left the region soon afterward. It appears they went directly to Georgia, where in 1789 David Ward witnessed a legal transaction recorded in Wilkes County. Wilkes adjoined Washington County, where it appears Ward settled upon his arrival in Georgia. Legal records indicate that David acquired land near the Burke/Washington County line, the region that the Georgia Legislature designated as Jefferson County in February 1796.

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

> *…all his stock Cattel and Hogs Housel* [household] g*ood 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, for in 1799, Elisha owned his father's old farm. In early 1801, Elisha sold his brother, David Ward, 79 acres of their father's land, and their families lived on these adjoining farms through 1805. Their brother, Samuel Ward, purchased his own adjoining farm in 1804, and their brother-in-law, Aquilla Lowe—who had married a daughter of David and Mary Ward—also lived in this neighborhood between 1802 and 1807.

This shows that the extended Ward family maintained a tight-knit kin network surrounding David Ward's old farm on the waters of the Ogeechee River in Jefferson County, Georgia for several years after his death. His daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, Luke Bozeman, left Jefferson and moved to Montgomery County in 1802–1803, and David's widow Mary lived there with them from about 1805 until her death a few years later.

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## Married Life in Georgia & Alabama

Jane Washington Neeland was born on 15 October 1784, apparently in South Carolina. Nothing is known of her family background or how she met Elisha Ward. Slight evidence suggests that her family lived in Washington County, located along Jefferson's western border. Although no marriage record has been located, Elisha and Jane 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 Ward sold 200 acres of land in Jefferson County. As they did not pay taxes in Jefferson County for the year 1806 as in previous years, they must have left Jefferson soon after disposing of their farm.

They left to follow the general westward white migration into the newly opened Creek Indian lands that the state dispersed to settlers via the 1805 Georgia Land Lottery. Elisha and Jane initially 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 Ward 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.

The Treaty of Fort Jackson that ended the Creek War of 1813–1814 dispossessed the Creeks of the vast region of central Alabama. The government almost immediately began surveying the region in preparation for white settlement. In August 1817, they offered the first tracks for sale to citizens.

On 14 September 1818, while still a resident of Twiggs County, Georgia, Elisha Ward purchased land located in what became Butler County, Alabama in 1820. Ward chose 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 across the Creek Nation via the Federal Road to Alabama prior to purchasing his Alabama property or bought it sight unseen.

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 what later became 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 Butler County, Alabama farm. 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.

The government initially focused on surveying and cataloging lands surrounding the Federal Road for sale to citizens. The extraordinarily rich bottom lands located a few miles north of Elisha Ward's farm in southern Montgomery County had to wait and were not offered for sale to citizens until the latter 1820s. Once the lands in this region were put on the market for sale, the influx of citizens caused 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 land from the government, and there is no evidence that he ever owned property there. Elisha's son, David Ward, 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 Southern 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 was not a slaveholder, nor did his father David Ward Jr. or David Ward Sr. In 1818, Elisha paid taxes on one enslaved person, but by 1830, no

slaves lived in his household. In 1837, the year before his death, one adult enslaved 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 about 1830 or 1831. The Ward and Auld families thereafter became closely linked, traveling west together and intermarrying for generations afterwards.

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## Westward to Mississippi & Louisiana

By the mid-1830s, the government began offering lands further west in Mississippi and Louisiana for sale to citizens, enticing many residents of central Alabama to head westward. John F. Auld 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 Alexander Auld, 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. On 14 January 1836, Ward went to the Columbus, Mississippi Land Office, and as a resident of Kemper County, he purchased a tract of government land located less than one mile from the farms of John and James Auld.

Two months later, on March 8th, Elisha's son, David Ward, and his son-in-law, Elijah Michael Auld, both purchased their own farms nearby. However, the 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.

David Ward appears to have returned to Lowndes County, Alabama for the year 1836, never residing 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 farms 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 Fields Auld, there. Elisha Ward and his son-in-law, Elijah Michael Auld continued westward and joined David Ward in what was then northern Ouachita Parish, Louisiana. It is not certain when they arrived in Louisiana, but the available evidence points to their reaching there before the 1838 planting season.

On 29 July 1838, shortly after Elisha and Jane arrived in north Louisiana, their grandson Elisha Ward was born, the son of David Ward. Merely six days later, on August 5th, 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 Wards Chapel, so Elisha Ward is likely the first person buried in the Wards Chapel Cemetery.

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 farms 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.

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

The known children of Elisha Ward Sr. and Jane Washington Neeland include:

1. **John J. Ward** (c1804–aft. 1880) married Mary Ann Cogburn (1809/1812–aft. 1880).
2. **David Ward** [Davy, Davi] (1806–4 May 1882) married Cynthia Seale (c1813–27 Mar 1857), Roda ? (c1807–1860/1866), and Ellen Brazeal (13 May 1804–21 Mar 1884).
3. **Elizabeth J. Ward** (20 Feb 1810–26 Nov 1886) married John Reddock, George Washington Solomon (12 Oct 1807–28 Mar 1863), and Sanders Worthington (1797/1800–1868/1880).
4. **Margaret Jane Ward** (c1812–1880/1893) married Elijah Michael Auld (c1811–1877/1880).
5. **Harriett Ann Ward** [Harty, Hattie] (1815/1816–aft. 1880) Beckham Vaughn (c1806–aft. 1880).
6. **Mary Caroline Ward** (1 Feb 1818–15 May 1892) married Richard Harrison Gee (c1808–27 Jul 1843) and Pinckney Odom (17 Apr 1820–4 Dec 1894).
7. **Elisha Ward Jr.** (20 Apr 1823–3 Oct 1898) married Mary Elizabeth Meeks (21 Jun 1824–5/6 Feb 1916),

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## Biographical Sketches of Elisha & Jane's Children

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 sparce, 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 who survived 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) married about 1827, probably in Butler County, Alabama, to John Reddock. Between about 1831 and 1833, also in Butler County, Alabama, Elizabeth married George Washington Solomon (12 Oct 1807–28 Mar 1863).

   Elizabeth and George W. Solomon remained in Alabama after her parents and siblings left for Louisiana in the mid-1830s. 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.

Elizabeth married on 21 March 1868 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Sanders Worthington (1797/1800–1868/1880). 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 her family also left Union Parish for Texas and lived in Anderson County in 1870.

Sanders Worthington died in the 1870s, and by 1880, Elizabeth and her daughter's family had to Union Parish. In 1880, 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 Ward 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 a presumed daughter of Elisha and Jane. No known documentation proves she was their daughter, but several pieces of circumstantial evidence imply it.

   Elisha Ward's 1830 household included an unidentified female born between 1815 and 1820. Harty's 1834 Lowndes County marriage 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, a known associate of Elisha Ward.

   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 nortoriously sparse, most having been purposely burned 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 19th through June 1st.

   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 Meeks Ward is buried in the Old Shonglo Cemetery about seven miles from Springhill, Webster Parish, Louisiana. Her tombstone gives her date of death as February 5th, but the Ward Bible gives her death as February 6th.

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## Documentation of the Elisha Ward Sr. & Jane Washington Neeland's Children

No known single source gives the names of all of Elisha and Jane's children. The Ward Family Bibles records prove that David and Elisha Ward Jr. were their sons, and 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 another son of Elisha and Jane.

This means that we have documented evidence to establish that five of the seven children of Elisha and Jane Ward listed above. Of the two remaining daughters, Elizabeth J. Ward and Harriett Ann Ward, no single document that conclusively identifies either woman as a daughter of Elisha and Jane is known. However, a preponderance of circumstantial evidence and family tradition makes it seem clear that Elizabeth was their daughter. The evidence for Harty is less clear.

### Elizabeth J. Ward

The late Mrs. Geneva Ward Chevalier Aulds, the great-granddaughter of Elijah Hubbard Ward, David Ward's eldest son, was born in 1915. Ms. Geneva maintained a life-long interest and fascination with her Ward ancestors, and she related to me many of her conversations with her grandfather and great-uncle, Henry Wesley and Lee Andrew (Leander) Ward. Both men knew with certainty that David and Elizabeth were siblings, that she was the wife of George W. Solomon, and they frequently spoke of this family connection to Ms. Geneva.

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.

Ms. Geneva relayed these conversations and information she had received from decades earlier to me in the 1980s during a series of visits. At that time, she had a very mind, instantly recalling the precise family relationships and conversations from a half-century earlier.

Other pieces of circumstantial evidence verifying that Elizabeth was the daughter of Elisha Ward Sr. and Jane Washington Neeland:

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.

**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 Thomas J. Ward and the family of Elisha Ward Sr.

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