

## REV. STANLEY PEURIFOY AND MARTHA NEAL PERSONS

On June 14, 1827, twenty-six-year-old **Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)** married eighteen-year-old **Martha Neal Persons (1809–1889)** in the town of Yatesville, sixty-three miles south of Atlanta, in Upson County, Georgia. They were married by the local justice of the peace, Joseph Sturges (1799–1854).

Neville's Purifoy heritage<sup>1</sup> is deeply rooted in the English Midlands. This lineage enables us to trace Neville's ancestry to notable characters of ancient history, including **Mark Antony (83–30 BCE)**, **Charlemagne (c. 742–814)**, and **William the Conqueror (c. 1028–1087)**.<sup>2</sup>

It was Neville's eighth great-grandfather **Captain Thomas Purefoy Sr. (1578–1639)** who first came to America in 1621.<sup>3</sup> He settled at the mouth of the James River in Virginia. The settlement, called Elizabeth City, is now in the city of Hampton, Virginia. Captain Thomas Purefoy Sr.'s great-grandson **Rev. Nicholas Purifoy (1679–1770)**,<sup>4</sup> a Baptist, moved to New Bern in Craven County, North Carolina, where he became an important figure on behalf of religious freedom. In about 1795, Rev. Nicholas Purifoy's grandson **Rev. William Dixon Peurifoy (1771–1829)**, a Methodist, changed the spelling of his name to the old French version after a family squabble. He then moved with two of his brothers from North Carolina to central Georgia. The Peurifoyes in Georgia<sup>5</sup> were Methodist preachers.

Rev. William Dixon Peurifoy's fourth son was Rev. Stanley Peurifoy, who was born in Warfield, a small town in Putnam County, Georgia. He and his wife, Martha Neal Persons Peurifoy, had six children<sup>6</sup> and established a plantation near Yatesville. It remained in his family for at least 120 years.<sup>7</sup>

Rev. Stanley Peurifoy died in May 1864, at age sixty-three, on his plantation. His death came less than five months before the capture of Atlanta on September 2, 1864, during the Civil War. Rev. Stanley Peurifoy's will,<sup>8</sup> dated April 15, 1864, was mostly concerned with the allocation and distribution of his slaves, even though the Emancipation Proclamation had been issued over a year earlier and slavery would be ruled unconstitutional in 1865.



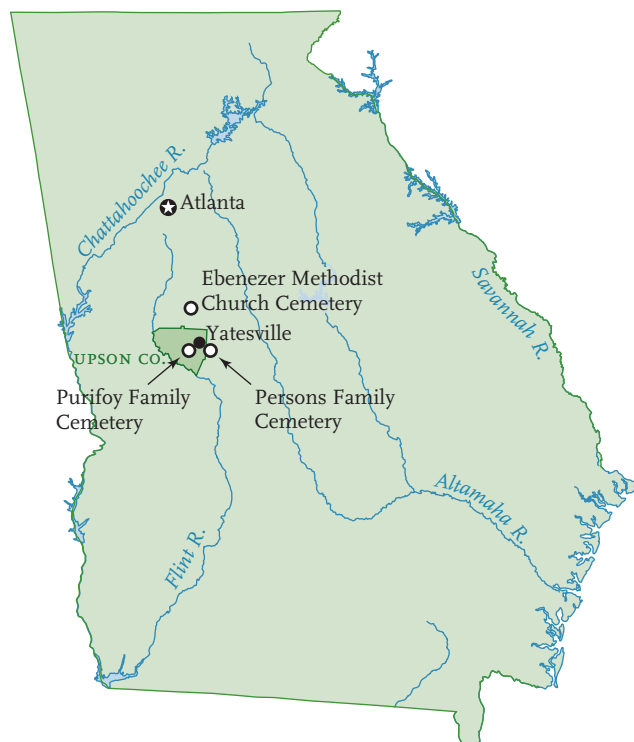
Martha Neal Persons's family, like her husband's, was deeply rooted in colonial Virginia. Her ancestor **William Cooke (1615–1679)**<sup>9</sup> came to America in 1635, and his son-in-law **John Person Sr. (1630–1707)**<sup>10</sup> arrived in 1648. The next two generations in her Person lineage included **John Person Jr. (1660–1738)** and his son, **Francis Person (1697–1758)**.<sup>11</sup> They were Anglican planters who lived in counties south of the James River in the Tidewater region of Virginia.

Martha Neal Persons's grandfather **John Person II (1730–1786)**<sup>12</sup> migrated south to Granville County, North Carolina, in about 1750. He fought in the French and Indian War (1754–63). His son, **Jones Persons (1760–1850)**,<sup>13</sup> was a Revolutionary War soldier who received bounty land in Georgia and moved there in about 1788. He was the first in this ancestral line to add an *s* to his surname. Jones Persons was married to **Dianna Neal (1774–1859)** for sixty years, and they had eleven children. He accumulated vast land holdings in central Georgia.

Dianna Neal, Martha Neal Persons's mother, was the daughter of **Thomas Neal Jr. (1758–1807)** and the granddaughter of **Thomas Neal Sr. (1735–1799)**. Through this Neal heritage, Martha Neal Persons was a second cousin of **Rev. Patrick Neal Maddux (1801–1870)**, another of Neville's great-great-grandfathers.

Martha Neal Persons Peurifoy was fifty-five years old when her husband, Rev. Stanley Peurifoy, died in 1864. She remarried, and in the 1870 and 1880 U.S. Federal censuses, she is listed as Martha Simmons, living in the household of her son, **Charles Hardy Peurifoy (1838–1900)**. Martha Neal Persons Peurifoy Simmons died at age eighty, almost twenty-six years after her first husband. They are buried together in the Purifoy Family Cemetery, just south of Yatesville. This cemetery is only about three miles from the Persons Family Cemetery, where Martha Neal's parents, Jones and Dianna Neal Persons, are believed to be interred.

*Neville's great-great-grandparents Stanley and Martha Neal Persons Peurifoy are buried in the Purifoy Family Cemetery in Upson County, Georgia, about seventy miles south of Atlanta. Martha Neal's parents, Jones Persons and Dianna Neal Persons, are interred in the Persons Family Cemetery nearby. Another set of Neville's great-great-grandparents, Patrick Neal and Martha Neville Maddux, are buried in the Ebenezer Methodist Church Cemetery, eighteen miles northeast of Yatesville.*





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### 1. NEVILLE'S PURIFOY HERITAGE

Thomas Purefoy (1472–1539)	m.	Margaret Fitzherbert (1474–1539)
Sir Nicholas Purefoy (1520–1590)	m.	Joyce Hardwick (1533–1585)
Humphrie Purefoy (c. 1555–1598)	m. 1580	Alice Faunt (1559–1625)
Capt. Thomas Purefoy Sr. (1578–1639)	m. 1620	Lucy Ransom (1598–1658)
Thomas Purefoy Jr. (1621–1675)	m. 1650	Anne (1624–1686)
Thomas N. Purefoy (1657–1687)	m. 1678	Judith Searles (1661–1715)
Rev. Nicholas Purifoy (1679–1770)	m. 1711	( –before 1736)
Thomas N. Purifoy (1716–1802)	m. c.1766	Sallie Arrington (1740–1807)
Rev. William Peurifoy (1771–1829)	m. 1795	Mary Brothers (1779–1838)
Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)	m. 1827	Martha N. Persons (1809–1889)
John Whitfield Purifoy (1829–1900)	m. 1871	Esther A. Maddux (1839–1909)
Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)	m. 1904	Ola F. Gillespie (1881–1934)
Margaret Purifoy (1908–1973)	m. 1931	Charles D. Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)

The name Purifoy has had many different spellings over time, often even for the same person. The most commonly used variations are Purefoy, Peurifoy, Purefrey, Purify, Purafy, and Purfry. For this book, we have adopted the spelling most often used during the lifetime of the Purifoy ancestor under discussion.

The name Purifoy is derived from Old French and means “pure or true faith.” The French word for faith is *foi*. Today the name Purifoy remains in our family as the given middle name of our daughter Margaret Purifoy Bryan (b. 1963).

Neville’s Purifoy ancestors can be traced back as far as 1257 in the English Midlands\* counties of Leistershire (pronounced “LESS-ter-sheer”) and Warwickshire (pronounced “WAR-ick-sheer”). In family records, there are, in fact, twelve generations of Purefoys recorded prior to those listed above. In 1397 the family acquired an estate called Drayton in Leistershire.

\*The Midlands is an informal designation for contiguous counties that transect the middle of England.

Neville's eleventh great-grandfather **Thomas Purefoy (1472–1539)** is particularly notable because of his marriage to **Margaret Fitzherbert (1474–1539)** of Norbury (pronounced “NAW-bree”) in Derbyshire (pronounced “DAR-be-sheer”). It is Margaret Fitzherbert Purefoy who provides Neville's ancestry with its link to famous historic characters and royalty from around the beginning of the Roman Empire\* through the Middle Ages.\*\*

The first Purifoy immigrant to America was **Capt. Thomas Purefoy Sr. (1578–1639)**, Neville's eighth great-grandfather, who came to Virginia in America in 1621. He is, thus, one of Neville's earliest recorded colonial ancestors. The Purefoys lived in the Tidewater region of Virginia for the next one hundred years. They are recorded as landowners and members of the Episcopal Church.

In the early eighteenth century, Neville's fifth great-grandfather **Rev. Nicholas Purifoy (1679–1770)** moved from Virginia to New Bern in Craven County, North Carolina, where he attempted—but failed—to establish the first Baptist church in North Carolina.

Neville's third great-grandfather **Rev. William Dixon Peurifoy (1771–1829)** left North Carolina in the late 1790s and migrated to Hancock County, Georgia. He was a Methodist minister. It is said that he changed the spelling of his name because of a family dispute that occurred when he and his brother left the Baptist Church and became Methodists. Two of William Dixon Peurifoy's other brothers retained the Purifoy spelling of the name and migrated to Alabama.

William Dixon Peurifoy's son, **Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)**, was also a Methodist minister and used the Peurifoy spelling. But after two generations, Neville's great-grandfather **John Whitfield Purifoy (1829–1900)** returned to spelling the family name Purifoy.

\*The Roman Empire officially began in 27 BCE. The three major figures of its creation are Julius Caesar (100–44 BCE), Mark Antony (83–30 BCE) and Augustus Caesar (63 BCE–14 CE).

\*\*Generally speaking, the Middle Ages lasted from the 5th century to the 15th century. It began with the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 CE.

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## 2. MARK ANTONY, CHARLEMAGNE, AND WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

In Neville’s genealogical records, there are numerous documents that trace her ancestry directly to important historical figures who lived in the Western World during the past two millennia, and earlier. Two of these documents are entitled “Purefoy Royal Line: Through Mark Antony, the Triumvirate” and “Alabama Woman, Descendant of Purefoys, Traces Line Back to Charlemagne.”

These documents and other related genealogy information appear to be mostly the work of Alma Gibson Burgamy (1868–1939), a second cousin of Neville’s grandfather **Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)**. Alma Gibson Burgamy and Stanley Neville Purifoy were both great-grandchildren of **Rev. William Dixon Peurifoy (1771–1829)**, Neville’s fourth great-grandfather. As a result of her work, Alma Gibson Burgamy was accepted as a member of numerous societies, including Americans of Royal Descent, Colonial Dames of America, First Families of Virginia, and the Magna Carta Society.

The Purifoy genealogical gateway into recorded Roman and medieval ancestry is **Margaret Fitzherbert (1474–1539)**, the wife of **Thomas Purefoy (1472–1539)**. The couple lived in the English Midlands and are Neville’s eleventh great-grandparents.

- **MARK ANTONY (83–30 BCE)**, or Marcus Antonius, was an important Roman general and politician under Julius Caesar (100–44 BCE). He is mostly remembered for his love affair with Queen Cleopatra (69–30 BCE), the last pharaoh of Egypt, with whom he committed suicide. Mark Antony was also immortalized in a play entitled *Julius Caesar*, written in about 1599 by William Shakespeare (1564–1616). Mark Antony’s eulogy of Caesar begins, “*Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.*”



A nineteenth-century marble bust of Mark Antony, Neville’s seventy-third great-grandfather. This sculpture is in the Vatican Museum in Vatican City.

Neville is descended from Mark Antony through his daughter, **Antonia Minor (36 BCE–37 CE)**, and his grandson, the emperor of Rome, **Claudius (10 BCE–54 CE)**. It has now been almost 2,100 years since Mark Antony was born, and there are seventy-five generations between him and Neville, with an average of twenty-eight years per generation. Mark Antony is Neville’s seventy-third great-grandfather.



*A detail from a nineteenth-century oil painting of Charlemagne, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and Neville's fortieth great-grandfather. Charlemagne is holding a model of the Palatine Chapel, which is today a component of Charlemagne's Palace of Aachen in Germany. The chapel was completed in 804. This painting is by Caspar Johann Nepomuk Scheuren (1810–1887) and is in the collection of the Charlemagne Center in Aachen, Germany.*

• **CHARLEMAGNE (c. 742–814)**, or Charles the Great, united Europe and was crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 800. He is considered the founder of the Holy Roman Empire, a loose confederation of French, German, and Italian territories that lasted from 800 to 1806, when it was abolished by Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821). Charlemagne is Neville's fortieth great-grandfather.

• **WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR (c. 1028–1087)**, also known as William the Bastard, was the illegitimate son of **Robert I, Duke of Normandy (1000–1035)**, who was the eighth great-grandson of Charlemagne. In 1066 William the Conqueror invaded England and defeated Harold Godwinson (1022–1066), the Anglo-Saxon king of England, at the Battle of Hastings in what is now East Sussex. He, thus, became the first Norman king of England. William the Conqueror is Neville's thirty-first great-grandfather.



*An oil painting of William the Conqueror, the first Norman king of England and Neville's thirty-first great-grandfather. The portrait is by an unknown artist and is related to a woodblock print dated 1597. It was executed between 1597 and 1618, and is in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery in London.*

Lest these revelations cause some of Neville's family to be overcome with ancestral pride or a sense of distinction, I would like to state this fact: it is a virtual certainty that all people with European ancestry are descendants of these notable figures of history. Interbreeding and mathematics combine to assure that to be true. If there is a point of distinction, it is in being able to trace one's genealogical path to such notable characters of history.

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### 3. CAPTAIN THOMAS PUREFOY SR., THE IMMIGRANT AND PROGENITOR

**Thomas Purefoy Sr. (1578–1639)**, Neville’s eighth great-grandfather, was born in the English Midlands in 1578, during the time of Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603), who ruled from 1558 to 1603. He was the sixth son in his family and the grandson of a nobleman, **Sir Nicholas Purifoy (1520–1590)**.

At about age forty-two, in 1620, Thomas Purefoy Sr. married a widow, **Lucy Ransom (1598–1658)**, in England, and in 1621 he is recorded as Lieutenant Thomas Purfry aboard the sailing ship *George*, which arrived in Elizabeth City, Virginia. Thomas Purefoy Sr. is among the earliest original settlers to inhabit America, and he is the progenitor of Neville’s American Purifoy family.

The first permanent English settlement in America was established at Jamestown, on the James River, in 1607, during the reign of England’s King James I (1566–1625), who ruled from 1603 to 1625. Jamestown was actually settled by a private stock company, the Virginia Company of London (chartered in 1606). In 1619 the Virginia Company divided its American property into four geographic divisions, called “citties” at that time. In 1624, after the Virginia Company went broke, its assets were taken over by King James I, and Virginia was declared a royal colony. In 1634 Virginia was reorganized into eight shires.

*The four Virginia peninsula settlements, as organized by the Virginia Company of London in 1619. Thomas Purefoy Sr., Neville’s eighth great-grandfather, landed at Elizabeth City (present-day Hampton) in the colony of Virginia in 1621.*



Thomas Purefoy Sr. is listed in the Virginia census of 1624 and in a 1625 muster, which records him as “*Purfry, Lt. Thomas, 1621 voyage, aged 43 at muster at Elizabeth City.*” At that time, he was one of only 1,232 surviving inhabitants out of the 7,000 who had come from England to Virginia between 1607 and 1624. Elizabeth City was located at the tip of the Virginia peninsula, and that location is now in the center of the city of Hampton, Virginia. In 1629 Thomas Purefoy Sr.’s wife, Lucy Ransom Purefoy, and their eight-year-old son, **Thomas Purefoy Jr. (1621–1675)**, immigrated to Virginia to join him.

Thomas Purefoy Sr. became a significant landowner after arriving in Virginia. He patented\* one hundred acres in 1621, 1625, and 1628; in 1631 he patented five hundred acres; and in 1635 two thousand acres. He then built a large brick house on his estate and gave it the name Drayton, the same name as his ancestral home in Leicestershire, England.

Thomas Purefoy Sr. also had a significant political career. He was a commissioner of Elizabeth City County in 1628, a Burgess of the county in 1629 and 1630, and a member of the King’s Council in 1631. He led expeditions against the Nansemonds (NAN-seh-muns), a Powhatan Indian tribe, in 1627. He was appointed principal commander for Elizabeth City in 1628–29 and became a captain sometime before 1637. Several sources cite a quotation about him: “*He is a soldier and a man of open heart, hating, for all I can perceive, all kinds of dissimulation [pretense] and baseness.*”\*\*

Captain Thomas Purefoy Sr.’s only son, Thomas Purefoy Jr., inherited his father’s properties. In 1650 he was a justice of Elizabeth City County. In 1655 he patented two thousand acres of land near the Rappahannock River on the Middle Peninsula, and he is recorded as a member of the Abingdon Episcopal Church in Gloucester County, Virginia. Thomas Purefoy Jr. died at age fifty-four, in 1675, in Gloucester County.

One of Thomas Purefoy Jr.’s children was **Thomas Nicholas Purefoy (1657–1687)**, who in 1678 married **Judith Searles (1661–1715)**, who was born in Wales. Family tradition says that he met her on a boat when he was returning from Oxford, England, where he had been sent to study. Thomas Nicholas Purefoy died at age thirty, after siring seven children. His oldest child was **Rev. Nicholas Purifoy (1679–1770)**, Neville’s fifth great-grandfather, who left Virginia and moved to North Carolina.

\*Land patents were essentially government grants of virgin land. In the early seventeenth century, these patents were given to people who qualified as planters. In practice, these patents went to people who had paid the transportation costs for immigrants. This was called the headright system. Patents granted to Captain Thomas Purefoy Sr. and his son, Thomas Purefoy Jr., are available in volume two of the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography for the year ending June 1895.

\*\*Information about Captain Thomas Purefoy Sr. and his son, Thomas Purefoy Jr., is derived from a footnote on pages 417–18 of volume one of the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography for the year ending June 1894.



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### 4. REVEREND NICHOLAS PURIFOY: A PIONEERING ANCESTOR IN NORTH CAROLINA

Neville's fifth great-grandfather **Rev. Nicholas Purifoy (1679–1770)** is a seminal figure in the Purifoy family lineage. In the early eighteenth century, Nicholas Purifoy moved the family's locus from the Tidewater region\* of Virginia to New Bern (pronounced "NEW-brn") in Craven County, which lies on the Neuse (pronounced "Noos") River in the coastal plain of North Carolina.\*\*



*In the early eighteenth century, Neville's Purifoy ancestors moved from the Tidewater region of eastern Virginia to New Bern in the Coastal Plain region of eastern North Carolina.*

\*The Tidewater region of Virginia is the eastern portion of the state. It is the area in which the water level is affected by tides.

\*\*The Coastal Plain of North Carolina is the eastern part of the state. It is the area of flat, low-lying land adjacent to the seacoast.

New Bern was founded by Swiss and German settlers who landed there in 1710 and named the town for Bern, Switzerland. Coincidentally, among those settlers was my fifth great-grandfather George Kornegay (1700–1773). New Bern was the colonial capital of North Carolina in the eighteenth century.

Rev. Nicholas Purifoy is historically notable for his role in the establishment of religious freedom in America and for his attempts to establish the Baptist Church in North Carolina. The Baptist denomination is rooted in early seventeenth-century England and Holland. Baptists differ from other Protestants in their beliefs in “believer baptism” (as opposed to infant baptism) and baptism by total immersion. Undoubtedly, Nicholas became a Baptist because of the influence of his mother, **Judith Searles (1661–1715)**. In fact, family lore says that she gave him a Welsh Baptist prayer book that she had brought to America from Wales, where she had faced religious persecution. This book remained in the family until it was stolen by Union soldiers during the Civil War.

The events that mostly define Rev. Nicholas Purifoy’s life are recorded in the 1984 book *In the Beginning—Baptists* by Edna Avery Cook (1909–1997). According to this text, in June 1740, Reverend Purifoy was among six people arrested for dissension from the king’s religion; their bail was set at forty pounds sterling. It should be noted that in 1740 the Church of England (Anglican) was the established church of Colonial America; in fact, Americans paid taxes for the upkeep of the Church. In September 1740, Nicholas Purifoy and four of the other men arrested with him were labeled by the courts as “*dissenting Protestants*.”

In 1741 Rev. Nicholas Purifoy and two other men requested permission to build a Baptist church in New Bern; their request was denied. They were charged with a misdemeanor and jailed for three months. They were then publicly whipped before being sent home. It was sixty-eight years later, in 1809, that the first Baptist Church was founded in New Bern.

Rev. Nicholas Purifoy received a land grant in Craven County in 1744, and he bought two hundred acres that same year. His land transactions are recorded as late as 1770. He died in New Bern in that year at age ninety-one.

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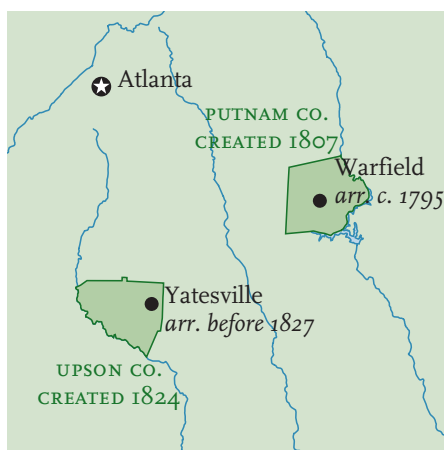
### 5. THE PEURIFOYS/PURIFOYS IN GEORGIA: METHODIST PREACHERS

**Rev. William Dixon Peurifoy (1771–1829)**, Neville’s third great-grandfather, was born in New Bern, Craven County, North Carolina. At age twenty-four, in 1795, he married sixteen-year-old **Mary Brothers (1779–1838)**, who was probably also from Craven County.

In about 1795, with his brothers, **Arrington Peurifoy (1782–1826)\*** and **John Purifoy (1787–1839)\*\***, William Dixon Peurifoy migrated to Hancock County, Georgia, which had been created in 1793. He lived in an area near the town of Warfield in what is now Putnam County (created in 1807). Around that time, William Dixon Peurifoy converted from his Primitive Baptist upbringing to Methodism and changed the spelling of his name from Purifoy to Peurifoy. That spelling remained in use by Neville’s ancestors for two generations. Rev. William Dixon Peurifoy died in Putnam County, Georgia, on May 9, 1829.

Rev. William Dixon Peurifoy’s third son was **Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)**, who was born in Warfield, Georgia, in 1800. In 1827 Rev. Stanley Peurifoy moved to Upson County, Georgia, when he married **Martha Neal Persons (1809–1889)**. Three generations of Neville’s Purifoy ancestors thus lived in two central Georgia counties south and west of Atlanta for almost seventy-seven years—from 1795 until 1871, when **John Whitfield Purifoy (1829–1900)**, Rev. Stanley Peurifoy’s son, moved to Mississippi.

*Three generations of Neville’s Purifoy ancestors lived in two central Georgia counties from 1795 to 1871.*



\*Arrington Purifoy changed the spelling of his last name to Peurifoy and remained in Georgia. He died there in 1826 in Monticello, Jasper County, just southeast of Atlanta.

\*\*John Purifoy moved from Georgia to Alabama in January 1824. He did not change the spelling of his last name. John was living in Dallas County (county seat, Selma) when he died on August 25, 1839.

The Peurifoy family in Georgia are defined and remembered today mostly for their participation in the explosive growth of Methodism, which occurred in the United States between 1776 and 1850. The Methodist movement was especially ignited during a historic period called the Second Great Awakening, a Protestant Revival movement that swept the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1776 only about two percent of religious adherents in the United States were Methodist, but by the mid-nineteenth century, one-third were Methodists. In fact, in 1850 the Methodist Church was by far the largest denomination in the United States, with a market share of 34.2%. The Baptists were second, with a share of 20.5%.\*

In Georgia the membership of Methodist congregations rose from about 2,000 in 1790 to 100,000 by 1860. The Methodist movement was led by preachers, and for many of them, preaching was a part-time occupation. Other leaders were circuit riders, who organized evangelical camp meetings that lasted for several days and had multiple speakers.



*This colored print by Edward Williams Clay and Henry R. Robinson depicts a Methodist camp meeting, 1836.*

Rev. William Dixon Peurifoy and his wife had eight children; six of them became Methodist ministers or married Methodist ministers.

- **DR. ARCHIBALD PEURIFOY (1796–1866)** was a physician, druggist, and Methodist circuit-riding minister who lived in Charleston, South Carolina.

\*Today in the United States, about twenty-five percent of the population identifies as Catholic; about sixteen percent as Baptist; and about seven percent as Methodist.

- **DR. TILLMAN PEURIFOY (1798–1872)** was a physician and a Methodist circuit-riding minister who lived in South Carolina. In 1838 his two children and several of his slaves were massacred by Florida Indians while he was away doing missionary work. Dr. Tillman's wife, Louisa Ann Bird (1816–1878), survived the attack, and they went on to have many more children.
- **REV. STANLEY PEURIFOY (1800–1864)**, Neville's great-great-grandfather, was a Methodist minister. A book about the history of Lamar County, Georgia, which borders Upson County, notes that "*Stanley Peurifoy, a staunch Methodist, built and almost alone supported Friendship Church at Yatesville, Georgia. He belonged to a family of preachers and teachers.*"
- **DR. MCCARROLL PEURIFOY (1802–1859)** was a physician, druggist, and Methodist circuit-riding minister. He married Caroline Killebrew (1804–1892) in 1830. They had seven children. In 1842/43 Dr. McCarroll Peurifoy was the pastor of the Methodist Church in the town of Forsyth in Monroe County, Georgia.
- **PIERCY PEURIFOY (1804–1860)** married Rev. William B. Gause (1778–1860) in 1827; they lived in North Carolina.
- **SIDNEY BEXLEY PEURIFOY (1809–1881)** married Rev. Ivey Finch Steagall (1806–1848), a Methodist preacher, in 1826.
- **FRANCES PEURIFOY (1811–1840)** married Eli Gray (1811–1888) in Georgia in 1831 and had two sons. After she died, Eli Gray remarried and moved to Texas.
- **MARTHA DAVIS PEURIFOY (1814–1857)** married John Burgamy (1809–1861) at age sixteen, in 1830. They had twelve children. Martha Davis died at age forty-two, and John Burgamy then married her widowed sister, Sidney Bexley Peurifoy Steagall (1809–1881).

Martha Davis Peurifoy Burgamy's oldest son was Tillman Peurifoy Burgamy (1833–1891), who moved from Georgia to Alabama. His daughter, Alma Gibson Burgamy (1868–1939), who lived in Birmingham, Alabama, undertook important Purifoy research. She is a second cousin of Neville's grandfather **Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)**.



*Alma Gibson Burgamy conducted extensive genealogical research on her Purifoy lineage. She is a second cousin of Stanley Neville Purifoy, Neville's grandfather.*

## 6. THE SIX CHILDREN OF REVEREND STANLEY PEURIFOY AND MARTHA NEAL PERSONS

Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864) and his wife, Martha Neal Persons (1809–1889), were the parents of six children, all born in Upson County, Georgia. Two of the children predeceased their parents.

- **SARAH ANN PEURIFOY (1828–1893)** was born on April 23, 1828. At age fifteen, on December 14, 1843, she married Ambrose Murphy (1826–1903) of adjoining Monroe County, Georgia. Ambrose was a druggist, had a livery stable, and was a farmer. In 1850 he is recorded as the owner of twenty-four slaves. In the 1860 census, he is listed as owning twenty-seven slaves. The progeny of Ambrose and Sarah Ann Peurifoy Murphy were prominent in several Georgia counties in the nineteenth century. Sarah Ann Peurifoy Murphy died at age sixty-five, and her husband died at age seventy-seven. They are buried in the Greenwood Cemetery in Barnesville, Lamar County, Georgia.

- **JOHN WHITFIELD PURIFOY (1829–1900)** first married Mary Lucinda Greene (1835–c. 1863) in Georgia sometime around 1853. They lived in Russell County, Alabama, and had four children before she died in about 1863. On January 21, 1871, at age forty-one, John Whitfield Purifoy married **Esther Ann “Hettie” Maddux (1839–1909)** in Barnesville, Pike County, Georgia. She was the thirty-one-year-old daughter of a Methodist minister. With his wife and two of his daughters from his first marriage, John Whitfield Purifoy moved in 1871 to Union Church, a town in Jefferson County in southwestern Mississippi. Some years later, the family moved to Crystal Springs in nearby Copiah County, Mississippi. John Whitfield and Hettie Purifoy had six children, the youngest of whom was **Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)**, Neville’s grandfather. John Whitfield Purifoy died in Crystal Springs, Mississippi, in 1900, at age seventy.

- **ELIZABETH VIRGINIA PEURIFOY (1832–1852)** was born on March 17, 1832. At age seventeen, on November 15, 1849, she married a plantation overseer, Nathaniel Freeman Walker (1830–1864), who was nineteen years old. They had one daughter, Sarah F. “Sallie” Walker (1851–1923), who is named in the will of her grandfather Rev. Stanley Peurifoy. Elizabeth Virginia Walker died at age twenty, on November 14, 1852, and is buried in the Peurifoy/Purifoy Family Cemetery near Yatesville, Upson County, Georgia. Nathaniel Freeman Walker enlisted on March 4, 1862, in Company K of the 27th Georgia Infantry Regiment and rose to the rank of second lieutenant. He died on June 27, 1864, at the Siege of Petersburg, a series of battles that began on June 9, 1864, and lasted until March 25, 1865.

- **AMOS JONES PEURIFOY (1834–1901)** married Mary C. Matthews (1842–c. 1860) on October 18, 1858 in Upson County, Georgia; she died within a year or so after they married. Amos Jones Peurifoy then moved to Cass County, near Texarkana in eastern Texas. On January 5, 1861, he married eighteen-year-old Lucinda McCoy (1844–1903), who was born in Upson County. They had five children between 1865 and 1874.

Amos Jones Peurifoy served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War (1861–65). He enlisted as a private on May 14, 1862, at Minden, Rusk County, Texas. According to records, he was hospitalized on several occasions during the war, but it is unlikely that he ever fought in a major battle. At the end of the war, he was serving as a security guard in Shreveport, Louisiana.

In his will, written on April 15, 1864, Rev. Stanley Peurifoy appointed Fielding Friar Matthews (1816–1891), Amos Jones Peurifoy's former father-in-law, as sole executor of his estate and trustee for all property inherited by Amos Peurifoy. The will left to Amos Peurifoy all of Rev. Stanley Peurifoy's land in Rusk County.

Amos Jones Peurifoy died in Montague County (north of Dallas), Texas, at age sixty-six, on February 22, 1901. It seems likely that most of his life was spent in Texas.

- **CHARLES “CHARLEY” HARDY PEURIFOY (1838–1900)** was born on June 30, 1838. In the 1860 census, he is enumerated as a twenty-two-year-old overseer living with his parents at the Peurifoy plantation in Upson County. On July 6, 1861, at age twenty-three, he volunteered as a private in the Holloway Grays at The Rock\* in Upson County. On August 8, this group became Company E of the 3rd Georgia Infantry Battalion.

In 1863 Charley Peurifoy fought at the Battle of Murfreesboro (December 31, 1862–January 2, 1863) in Tennessee; at the Battle of Chickamauga (September 18–20, 1863) in northwest Georgia; and at the Battle of Missionary Ridge (November 25, 1863) in Chattanooga, Tennessee. His regiment participated in the Atlanta and Tennessee campaigns in 1864. He became the 3rd Sergeant of Company G of the 54th Georgia Infantry Regiment in early 1865.

On November 23, 1869, at age thirty-one, Charley Peurifoy married eighteen-year-old Virginia “Jennie” Rogers Fryer (1851–1940) in Upson County. They had seven children. Charley died at age sixty-two at the Peurifoy plantation on October 8, 1900, and he is buried in the Peurifoy/Purifoy Family Cemetery.

The oldest son of Charley and Jennie Fryer Peurifoy was Benjamin “Bennie” Stanley Purifoy (1873–1950), a first cousin of Neville's grandfather Stanley Neville Purifoy. Bennie inherited the family plantation in Upson County. It remained in the Purifoy family for well over one hundred years.

\*Holloway was the surname of a local Upson County family. The Rock is an unincorporated community in Upson County.

• **ROBERT S. PEURIFOY (1844–1862)** was born on February 10, 1844. As a seventeen-year-old, he volunteered on July 6, 1861, along with his brother Charley Peurifoy, to join the Holloway Grays at The Rock in Upson County. In September, after his unit had become Company E of the 3rd Georgia Infantry Battalion, he left Georgia by train for Richmond, Virginia. In late September 1861, his battalion was diverted and sent to eastern Tennessee.

In January 1862, while his company was guarding bridges in eastern Tennessee, Robert S. Peurifoy suddenly took ill. He was sent home on a furlough, and he died at home of a fever on January 24, 1862. Like many soldiers of the Civil War, he died without ever firing a shot at an enemy soldier.

Six months later, on July 24, 1862, Robert S. Peurifoy's commanding officer filed affidavits regarding his death. The affidavits describe Robert as seventeen years old and 5'10" tall, with a fair complexion, hazel eyes, and dark hair; he is listed as a farmer by occupation. Further, the affidavits state that Robert owed nothing to the Confederate government for clothing or equipment, and that he was owed twenty-four days' pay (about \$10). Robert S. Peurifoy is buried in the Peurifoy/Purifoy Family Cemetery near Yatesville.



*A c. 1861 photograph (probably an ambrotype) was found on the wall of a closet in the Upson County house where Robert S. Peurifoy's grandparents Jones and Dianna Persons lived before the Civil War. Robert's parents, Martha Neal Persons and Rev. Stanley Peurifoy, lived nearby during and after the Civil War. The photograph is, thus, possibly a portrait of seventeen-year-old Robert. The photograph is courtesy of Suzan Persons of Marietta, Georgia.*



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### 7. THE PEURIFOY/PURIFOY PLANTATION IN UPSON COUNTY, GEORGIA

Neville's great-great-grandfather **Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)**, his son **Charles “Charley” Hardy Peurifoy (1838–1900)**, and his grandson Benjamin “Bennie” Stanley Purifoy (1873–1950) owned and lived at the Puerifoy/Purifoy plantation in Upson County, Georgia. The plantation began around 1827, when Stanley Peurifoy married **Martha Neal Persons (1809–1889)**. United States census data from 1840 to 1940 give us insight into the history of the plantation.

#### 1840 CENSUS

Rev. Stanley Peurifoy is recorded in Upson County living with ten free white persons and eighteen slaves. His home was near the plantation of his father-in-law, **Jones Persons (1760–1850)**.

#### 1850 CENSUS

Rev. Stanley Peurifoy is recorded in Upson County as a fifty-year-old farmer with his wife, Martha Peurifoy. Also listed in his household are **Amos Jones Peurifoy (1834–1901)** (age sixteen); Charley Peurifoy (age twelve); **Robert S. Peurifoy (1844–1862)** (age six); and **Elizabeth Virginia Peurifoy (1832–1852)** (age eighteen) and her husband, Nathaniel Freeman Walker (1830–1864) (age twenty).

#### 1860 CENSUS

Rev. Stanley Peurifoy is recorded in Upson County as a sixty-year-old farmer with a fifty-two-year-old wife, Martha Neal Persons Peurifoy. The other members of the household are C. W. (presumably Charley) Peurifoy (age twenty-two), Robert S. Peurifoy (age sixteen), and Sarah Walker (1851–1923) (age nine), Stanley's granddaughter. Sarah's mother, Elizabeth Virginia Peurifoy Walker, had died in 1852. Stanley is listed as a farmer, and his son Charley is listed as an overseer.

#### 1870 CENSUS

Charley Peurifoy is recorded in Upson County as a thirty-one-year-old farmer with a nineteen-year-old wife, Virginia “Jennie” Rogers Fryer (1851–1940). His mother, Martha Neal Persons Peurifoy, is recorded as sixty-year-old Martha Simmons (she had remarried after her husband's death in 1864).

Other members of the household enumerated in the 1870 census are eleven-year-old **Mary Lucinda Peurifoy (1859–1927)** and nine-year-old **Julia Peurifoy (1861–1949)**, the daughters of **John Whitfield Purifoy (1829–1900)** and his first wife, Mary Lucinda Greene (1835–c. 1863). These children were living with their grandmother at the time of the census and were recorded with the Peurifoy spelling of their last name. They returned to live with their father in 1871 and then used the name Purifoy.

### 1880 CENSUS

Charley Peurifoy is recorded in Upson County as a forty-two-year-old farmer with a twenty-eight-year-old wife, Virginia Fryer Peurifoy. According to census records, they were still living with Charley's seventy-one-year-old mother, enumerated as Martha Simmons, and their two children, seven-year-old Benjamin Stanley Peurifoy and nine-month-old Frances Stafford Peurifoy (1879–1964). Martha Neal Persons Peurifoy Simmons died in 1889, at age eighty.

### 1890 CENSUS

In 1890 sixty-three million people were enumerated in the United States. However, in 1921 a fire at the Commerce Building in Washington, D.C., destroyed most all census records.

### 1900 CENSUS

Charley Peurifoy is recorded as a sixty-one-year-old landlord in Upson County with a forty-nine-year-old wife, Virginia Fryer Peurifoy. They had seven children, of whom six were living. Charley died a few months after the 1900 census data was collected; he was sixty-two years old.

### 1910 CENSUS

Charley Peurifoy's widow, Virginia Fryer Peurifoy, is enumerated in 1910 as a fifty-eight-year-old in Early County, Georgia (a few counties south of Upson County). She was living with five of her children, ages seventeen to thirty-one, at the time. Benjamin S. Purifoy is listed as a thirty-seven-year-old married to Florence "Flossie" Harp (1886–1979), a twenty-four-year-old. They married at the Purifoy plantation in 1905 and had one son, Charles Stanley Purifoy (1907–1959), and one daughter, Mary Ella Purifoy (1916–1930), who died in her early teens.

### 1920, 1930, AND 1940 CENSUSES

In 1920, 1930, and 1940, Benjamin S. and Flossie Purifoy were living at the Purifoy plantation in Upson County. Benjamin S. Purifoy, a first cousin of Neville's grandfather **Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)**, died at age seventy-seven, on May 25, 1950. Benjamin S. Purifoy's only son, Charles Stanley Purifoy, served in the United States Navy and lived for many years on Long Island in New York. He returned to the Purifoy plantation in the 1950s, after his father died. He died a few years later, at age fifty-two, in 1959. Flossie Purifoy lived to the age of ninety-three and died in 1979; she was presumably the last person to live at the Purifoy plantation. She is buried with her husband and her son at the Southview Cemetery in Thomaston, Upson County. Interestingly, their surnames are all spelled Purifoy on their tombstones.

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#### 8. SLAVES IN THE WILL OF REVEREND STANLEY PEURIFOY

Although it is viewed today as a hideous stain on our heritage, slavery played a central role in the history of the Peurifoy/Purifoy family. Especially in the early nineteenth century, slaves were considered to be an essential part of the South's economy. Even among pious Methodist preachers, slaves were simply considered property; they were highly valued, more so than houses or land.

In 1860 **Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)**, Neville's great-great-grandfather, owned twenty to twenty-five slaves at his plantation. In the census from that year, his land is valued at \$7,200, and his personal property (mostly slaves) is valued at \$28,477. The value of slaves was near an all-time-high in the year before the outbreak of the Civil War (1861–65).

In his will, dated April 15, 1864, Rev. Stanley Peurifoy made the following bequests of his slaves to his family. To his wife, **Martha Neal Persons (1809–1889)**:

*I also give to my wife, Martha Purifoy, five negroes, namely: Patsey, a woman about sixty-five years of age; Kitt, a man about twenty-five years of age, Matt, a boy about seventeen years of age, Viny, a girl about twelve years of age and Eady, a girl about ten years of age and after her [Martha Neal Persons Peurifoy's] death, Kitt will revert to my son, John W. Purifoy; Matt will revert to my son Amos Purifoy; Viny will revert to my granddaughter Sarah Walker. . . . At the death of my wife, I wish Patsey to live with my children where ever she may prefer to stay.*

To his oldest daughter, **Sarah Ann Peurifoy (1828–1893)**: *"I also give to my daughter, Sarah Ann Murphy, a negro girl, Ceney, about seven years of age."*

To his oldest son, **John Whitfield Purifoy (1829–1900)**: *"I give to my son, John W. Purifoy two negro girls, namely Antinette a girl about seven years of age and Allis about five years of age. . . . And that he is to have no interest in the drawing for the remainder of my negroes."*

To his son **Charles "Charley" Hardy Purifoy (1838–1900)**: *"I give to my son, Charles H. Purifoy, a negro boy, Jim Henry, and Pass, his wife and their three youngest children, namely Asa, about four years of age, Henry, about five years of age and Sophronia about seven months old."*

For the remainder of the slaves, Rev. Stanley Peurifoy planned that they should *"be appraised and put in four lots, having regard to families and drawn for, making each lot equal in money."*

On January 1, 1863, more than one year before this will was written, President Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) issued an executive order called the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that “*all persons held as slaves*” within the states of the Confederacy “*are, and henceforward shall be free.*”

On December 18, 1865, over one year after Rev. Stanley Peurifoy wrote his will, the thirteenth amendment to the United States Constitution was adopted. It reads, “*Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*”

On July 2, 1964, almost exactly one hundred years after Rev. Stanley Peurifoy’s will was written, the United States Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act, which outlawed legal segregation based upon race. That legislation occurred during an era known as the Civil Rights Movement (1954–68), a social revolution that made freedom a reality for the descendants of the slaves of Rev. Stanley Peurifoy.

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### 9. WILLIAM COOKE: IMMIGRANT ANCESTOR AND LANDED PROPRIETOR

William Cooke (1615–1679)	m. 1638	Mary (c. 1615– )
Frances Cooke (1640–1721)	m. 1658	John Person Sr. (1630–1707)
John Person Jr. (1660–1738)	m. 1692	Mary Partridge (1670–c. 1721)
Francis Person (1697–1758)	m. 1720	Mary Turner (1703–1761)
John Person II (1730–1786)	m. 1756	Prudence Jones (1740–1798)
Jones Persons (1760–1850)	m. 1790	Dianna Neal (1774–1859)
Martha N. Persons (1809–1889)	m. 1827	Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)
John Whitfield Purifoy (1829–1900)	m. 1871	Esther A. Maddux (1839–1909)
Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)	m. 1904	Ola F. Gillespie (1881–1934)
Margaret Purifoy (1908–1973)	m. 1931	Charles D. Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)

**William Cooke (1615–1679)**, Neville’s eighth great-grandfather, was a landed proprietor, a term used to define large landowners in colonial times. He is one of Neville’s earliest recorded immigrant ancestors. William Cooke was born in Bristol, Somerset, England, during the reign of King James I (1566–1625). On July 4, 1635, William Cooke sailed from London, England, on a ship called *The Transport*. Passenger records state that he was twenty years old and a member of the Church of England. When William Cooke arrived in America, the colony of Virginia was twenty-eight years old and had about eight thousand inhabitants.

William Cooke established himself in Isle of Wight County, and in about 1638, he married **Mary (c. 1615– )**, who likely was his second wife. In 1640 they had a daughter named **Frances Cooke (1640–1721)**, who married **John Person Sr. (1630–1707)** in 1658. William Cooke was a tobacco planter. Growing tobacco in Virginia and shipping it to England became the economic engine of Virginia.

The growth of the tobacco industry in Virginia was enabled by the creation of a headright system in 1618 and later by the importation of African slaves. Headrights were legal grants of land to colonists who paid for the transportation of indentured servants and slaves to America. Generally speaking, the cost of sailing to America was about six British pounds, an amount that earned one headright and a grant of fifty acres of land. Indentured servants, usually white Europeans, were men whose passage to America was repaid by working for a colonist employer for a fixed term of years, commonly around seven years. About half of all white immigrants to America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came as indentured servants.



A poster encouraging people to sign up to be indentured servants in Virginia in the seventeenth century.

One of William Cooke's recorded land transactions, documented in the Virginia Land Office Patents, is related in the 1951 book *Person(s) Lineage* by George Fuller Walker (1910–1989):

*For having paid the passage of twenty-two persons from England in the Virginia colony, William Cook, Sr., received (jointly with William Miles) a patent of 1100 acres of land "on the second branch of the Blackwater River at the upper corner of John Oliver's land and running down to Mr. Englands". The patent was granted on September 29, 1664, during the reign of Charles II.*

*On April 10, 1665, a part of this land was presented through a deed of gift by William and Mary Cook to John Person, Jr. [(1660–1738), their grandson], at that time about five years old. The stipulation was made that the property was to remain in possession of John Person's parents, John Person the Elder [Sr.] and his wife Frances, "until ye said John Person [Jr.] their sonne be of full age".*

African slaves were first brought to America by Dutch traders around 1619, about twelve years after Jamestown was settled in 1607. Initially, these slaves were treated as indentured servants. However, in the second half of the seventeenth century, as the supply of British indentured servants declined, severe labor shortages occurred. As a result, wealthy Virginia planters began to buy slaves, and demand soared. By the end of the seventeenth century, slavery spread, especially in the colonies of Virginia, Maryland, and Carolina. In 1700 the total population in the American colonies was about 250,000 persons, and about ten percent, 25,000 of them, were slaves.\*



*A depiction of slaves processing tobacco in seventeenth-century colonial Virginia by an unknown artist. William Cooke and his Person family descendants were large tobacco farmers in colonial Virginia for over one hundred years.*

*\*In 1776, when the United States declared its independence from Great Britain, African slaves represented almost twenty percent of the colonial American population, which had grown to 2.5 million persons. In 1860, shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War, there were almost 4 million slaves in America, representing about 12% of the United States' population of 31.5 million.*

## 10. PERSON(S)\* HERITAGE: JOHN PERSON SR., THE IMMIGRANT

John Person Sr. (1630–1707)	m. 1658	Frances Cooke (1640–1721)
John Person Jr. (1660–1738)	m. 1692	Mary Partridge (1670–c. 1721)
Francis Person (1697–1758)	m. 1720	Mary Turner (1703–1761)
John Person II (1730–1786)	m. 1756	Prudence Jones (1740–1798)
Jones Persons (1760–1850)	m. 1790	Dianna Neal (1774–1859)
Martha N. Persons (1809–1889)	m. 1827	Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)
John Whitfield Purifoy (1829–1900)	m. 1871	Esther A. Maddux (1839–1909)
Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)	m. 1904	Ola F. Gillespie (1881–1934)
Margaret Purifoy (1908–1973)	m. 1931	Charles D. Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)

Neville's Person heritage originates with her seventh great-grandfather **John Person Sr. (1630–1707)**, an Englishman who immigrated to America in 1648. He and his descendants for the next two hundred years are extensively documented in *Person(s) Lineage*, written in 1951 by Georgia Tech history professor George Fuller Walker (1910–1989).\*\*

At age eighteen, John Person Sr., who lived in the southwestern coastal county of Somerset, England, sailed to America. His departure from England occurred during the time of the English Civil War (1642–51) and one year before the beheading of King Charles I (1600–1649). John Person Sr. landed in 1648 at Jamestown, which was, at that time, the capital of the colony of Virginia. He later settled in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, just across the James River from Jamestown.

For the next 110 years, the first 3 generations of Neville's Person ancestors lived in Isle of Wight and Surry Counties, located between the James River and the Blackwater River in Virginia. These ancestors were successful tobacco planters. In 1750 they bought land in Granville County, North Carolina (now Warren County), and the family's locus moved to that area.

\*The spelling of this name was changed in the late eighteenth century. John Person II was the last to spell his surname without an s. The added s was adopted by those of his children, including Jones Persons, who migrated to Warren County, Georgia. The children who stayed in North Carolina did not add the s.

\*\*The entire research collection of George Fuller Walker, along with a copy of his book, is available at the Washington Memorial Library in Macon, Georgia.





*Neville's earliest Person ancestors arrived at Jamestown in the colony of Virginia in 1648 and soon moved to live in Isle of Wight County, Virginia. The family migrated to Warren County in North Carolina in the mid-eighteenth century.*

In 1658, at age twenty-eight, John Person Sr. married **Frances Cooke (1640–1721)**, the eighteen-year-old daughter of his friend and neighboring planter **William Cooke (1615–1679)**. Frances and John Person Sr. had only one child, **John Person Jr. (1660–1738)**, who was born in the year that the exiled Charles II (1630–1685) became the king of England. That coronation marked the beginning of an era that is called the Restoration Period (1660–88) in English history.

Meanwhile, in Virginia, settlers and planters were living in fear of massacres and raids by the Native American tribes, and the British colonial government was doing nothing about these attacks. In fact, William Berkeley (1605–1677), the colonial governor of Virginia, enacted friendly policies toward the Native Americans and was “*bitterly hostile*” to planters, particularly those who were Quakers and Puritans. In March 1676, John Person Sr., an Anglican planter, signed a petition that declared loyalty to the king but called for attention to be paid to the settlers’ grievances.

*John Person Sr.'s signature on a petition asking the British government to address American settlers' grievances. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, writers often substituted the long s (which looks like a lowercase f) for the letter s. This practice began during the Middle Ages and ended in the nineteenth century; it was thought to be somewhat artsy.*

Later in 1676, John Person Sr. and his father-in-law, William Cooke, were among the planters sympathetic to and supportive of Nathaniel Bacon (1647–1676), who led about one thousand settlers in an armed uprising against the colonial British government. The immediate cause of this event, called Bacon’s Rebellion, was the failure of the government to retaliate against the Native Americans. In September 1676, Bacon’s followers burned to the ground Jamestown, the capital of colonial Virginia. In October 1676, the rebellion essentially ended when the colorful twenty-nine-year-old Nathaniel Bacon died of the “*Bloody Flux*” (dysentery) and “*Lousey Disease*” (body lice).

One outgrowth of Bacon’s Rebellion is a house known as Bacon’s Castle in Surry County, Virginia. The house, also called Allen’s Brick House, was built in 1665, and it is the only surviving “high style” seventeenth-century house in America. The house was occupied as a fort or “castle” by Nathaniel Bacon’s followers during the rebellion. Interestingly, Nathaniel Bacon never lived there or even visited there.



*Bacon's Castle in Surry County, Virginia, was occupied as a fort during Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. It is the most significant example of Jacobean architecture from seventeenth-century America.*

So why is Bacon’s Rebellion an important event in American history? Some historians view this uprising as the first stirring of revolutionary sentiment in America. Other historians simply see Bacon’s Rebellion as a power struggle between two stubborn seventeenth-century leaders, Governor Berkeley and Nathaniel Bacon. Whatever may be the case, the event is important to us because John Person Sr. is a recorded supporter of Bacon’s Rebellion.

John Person Sr. lived for over thirty years after Bacon’s Rebellion. He left a will dated October 2, 1707, and recorded in Isle of Wight County. It reads, “*I give and bequeath my whole estate real and personal to be equally divided between my loving wife, Frances and my only son John.*” Frances Cooke Person continued to live at the family’s plantation in Isle of Wight County until her death in 1721.

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### 11. JOHN PERSON JR. AND HIS SON FRANCIS PERSON, VIRGINIA PLANTERS

**John Person Jr. (1660–1738)**, Neville’s sixth great-grandfather, was the only son of **John Person Sr. (1630–1707)**, who emigrated from England to America in 1648. John Person Jr. was born in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, and raised in the tobacco plantation culture of the late seventeenth century. He vastly expanded his family’s land holdings.

Virginia records show that John Person Jr. received seven land patents for land in Isle of Wight County and the adjoining Surry County. The two earliest of these patents are for land in Surry County; they are dated 1684 and were granted by King Charles II (1630–1685). Three land patents were granted to John Person Jr. by King George I (1660–1727) in 1717 and 1722. Another two patents were granted to him by King George II (1683–1760) in 1734 and 1736.

On January 10, 1692, thirty-one-year old John Person Jr. married **Mary Partridge (1670–c. 1721)**. They had at least ten children, eight sons and two daughters. Mary Partridge Person died at about age fifty, in or before 1721, and John Person Jr. is said to have married a woman named Sarah after her death.

John Person Jr., like his ancestors, was a member of the Church of England. He was a vestryman\* in the Old Brick Church in Isle of Wight County from 1724 until his death in 1738. The Old Brick Church, officially known as St. Luke’s Church, is located near Smithfield, Virginia; it is said to have been built in 1632 and is the oldest extant brick church building in the American colonies.



*St. Luke’s Church in Isle of Wight County is the oldest brick church in Virginia. Neville’s sixth great-grandfather John Person Jr. was a vestryman at this church.*

\*A vestryman is a member of the vestry, the leadership body of a local church. This is a term used in the Episcopal Church. It is not a term for a clergyman.

John Person Jr. wrote his will in 1721, and it was proved on March 21, 1738, after his death earlier that year. He left property to his second wife, Sarah Person, who renounced her claim at his death. He also left numerous plantations and slaves to eight named sons; he left one of his two daughters a “*large black trunk*” and the other one a “*small black trunk, wherein I keep my papers.*”

**Francis Person (1697–1758)** was the third son of John Person Jr., whose 1721 will stated that his son Francis Person would inherit “*certain slaves and ye plantation in Isle of Wight County whereon my mother [Frances Cooke (1640–1721)] now lives.*” Francis Person was obviously named for his grandmother Frances Cooke Person, and he was closely associated with her. The plantation that he inherited from his father, located on the Blackwater River, was part of a patent of 1,100 acres granted to **William Cooke (1615–1679)**, his great-grandfather, on September 29, 1664. Francis Person represented the third generation of Neville’s Person ancestors to work as planters in the area of Jamestown, Virginia.

In 1720, at age twenty-three, Francis Person married seventeen-year-old **Mary Turner (1703–1761)**. They had twelve children, eight boys and four girls, who were born between 1721 and 1747, a period of twenty-six years. The fifth of their sons was **John Person II (1730–1786)**, Neville’s fourth great-grandfather.

In 1750 Francis Person purchased land in north-central North Carolina, in a county that was called Granville at the time. Today the land is in Warren County, North Carolina, and is located in the piedmont (foothills) area of the state. This land is about 120 miles southwest of Francis’s other Virginia properties, and its purchase foreshadowed the migration of the Person family away from coastal Virginia. Around this same time, large numbers of coastal settlers were moving inland.

Francis Person died in Surry County, Virginia, in 1758; his wife subsequently moved to North Carolina and lived with some of her family there. Mary Turner Person died in Granville County in 1761. In her will, dated May 20, 1761, she gave to two of her children “*the household goods that I left in North Carolina.*” She willed to her daughter Martha “*the household goods that I left in Virginia.*” Her son John Person II, Neville’s fourth great-grandfather, was a witness to the will, but he was not a devisee.\*

\*Devisee is a eighteenth-century legal term for a person who inherits property in a will.

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### 12. JOHN PERSON II: NORTH CAROLINA PLANTER AND COLONIAL SOLDIER

Neville's fourth great-grandfather **John Person II (1730–1786)** was born in Isle of Wight County, Virginia. He moved to North Carolina, where he became a planter and a soldier in the North Carolina militia during the French and Indian War (1754–63). In 1752 John is recorded as living in the area between Sandy Creek and Fishing Creek in Granville (now Warren) County, North Carolina.

John Person II served in the Colonial Militia of North Carolina during the French and Indian War. He is recorded on October 8, 1754, in a muster list of 734 soldiers in the Granville Regiment. The list likely included every able-bodied male in Granville County at that time; there were five blacks and two mulattoes on the list.

The French and Indian War was a nine-year conflict between the British and the French, who had many Indians as their allies. The British, who greatly outnumbered the French, were the victors in the war. By the time the war ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763, England had vastly expanded the size of its North American territory.



Map of North America before the French and Indian War (1754–63).



Map of North America after the Treaty of Paris, which ended the French and Indian War in 1763.

\*The territory known as Louisiana was lost to Spain after the Treaty of Paris in 1763. In 1800 the French regained Louisiana and sold it to the United States in 1803 for fifteen million dollars.

In 1756, at age twenty-six, John Person II married sixteen-year-old **Prudence Jones (1740–1798)**. John and Prudence Person had seven children, including Neville’s third great-grandfather **Jones Persons (1760–1850)** and a daughter named Obedience. Prudence and Obedience are examples of virtuous names often given to girls in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

John Person II owned land in both Warren County, North Carolina, and neighboring Franklin County (northeast of Raleigh), where he died in 1786, at age fifty-six. After John’s death, his wife, Prudence Jones Person, married a family friend, Jacob Bass Sr. (1740–c. 1791), a widower who lived in Franklin County; he died in either 1791 or 1792. After settling the estates of her two husbands in Franklin County, twice-widowed Prudence moved in 1792 to an area that became Warren County, Georgia. By 1793 four of Prudence Person’s children, Jones Persons, **Holly Berry Persons (1765–1846)**, **Turner Persons (1766–1827)**, and **Obedience Persons (1767–c. 1855)**, were living there.

In Warren County, Georgia, Prudence Jones Person Bass became a member of the Williams Creek Baptist Church, where her children were members. The church was founded in 1787, and Prudence was buried in 1798 in the original church cemetery “*down by the creek.*” In about 1840, the existing church and another burial ground were relocated to higher ground. Unable to find the original tombstones, Prudence Jones Persons’s descendants placed a large granite stone marker in memory of Prudence and some of her family near the church in 2014.



*The Williams Creek Baptist Church in Warren County, Georgia, was founded in 1787. Prudence Jones Person Bass was an early member and is memorialized on the large granite gravestone in the foreground of this photograph.*



*The engraved name on the granite cemetery marker for Prudence Jones Person Bass, who is remembered as the mother of Holly Berry Persons Walker (H.B.P.W.).*

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### 13. JONES PERSONS: SOLDIER, JUSTICE, AND PLANTER IN NORTH CAROLINA AND GEORGIA

**Jones Persons (1760–1850)**, Neville's third great-grandfather, lived a long and active life. He fought in the American Revolutionary War (1775–83), was an inferior court justice in two Georgia counties, and owned plantations in eleven Georgia counties during the Antebellum Period.

Jones Persons was the second son of **John Person II (1730–1786)** and **Prudence Jones (1740–1798)**. He was born in Granville County, North Carolina. His birth occurred less than ten years after the Person family left Virginia.

On July 30, 1778, at age eighteen, Jones Persons enlisted in the North Carolina militia; he served for nine months. Jones Persons is also documented in Georgia records as having served in the regiment of Colonel Elijah Clarke (1742–1799), who was one of the few American Revolutionary War heroes from Georgia. Before 1951 at least twelve of Jones Persons's descendants had used this service record to qualify for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution.

On May 24, 1784, Jones Persons received a Revolutionary War bounty land grant for 287.5 acres of land in Franklin County, Georgia, which was over 300 miles southwest of his home in North Carolina. On October 3, 1787, he received a 12.5-acre land grant in Wilkes County, Georgia. In about 1788, he moved to a part of Wilkes County that in 1793 became Warren County.

It was in Georgia that Jones Persons met and married **Dianna Neal (1774–1859)** in 1790; she was sixteen years old, and he was thirty. Their marriage lasted for sixty years, and they lived in at least five Georgia counties over that time.

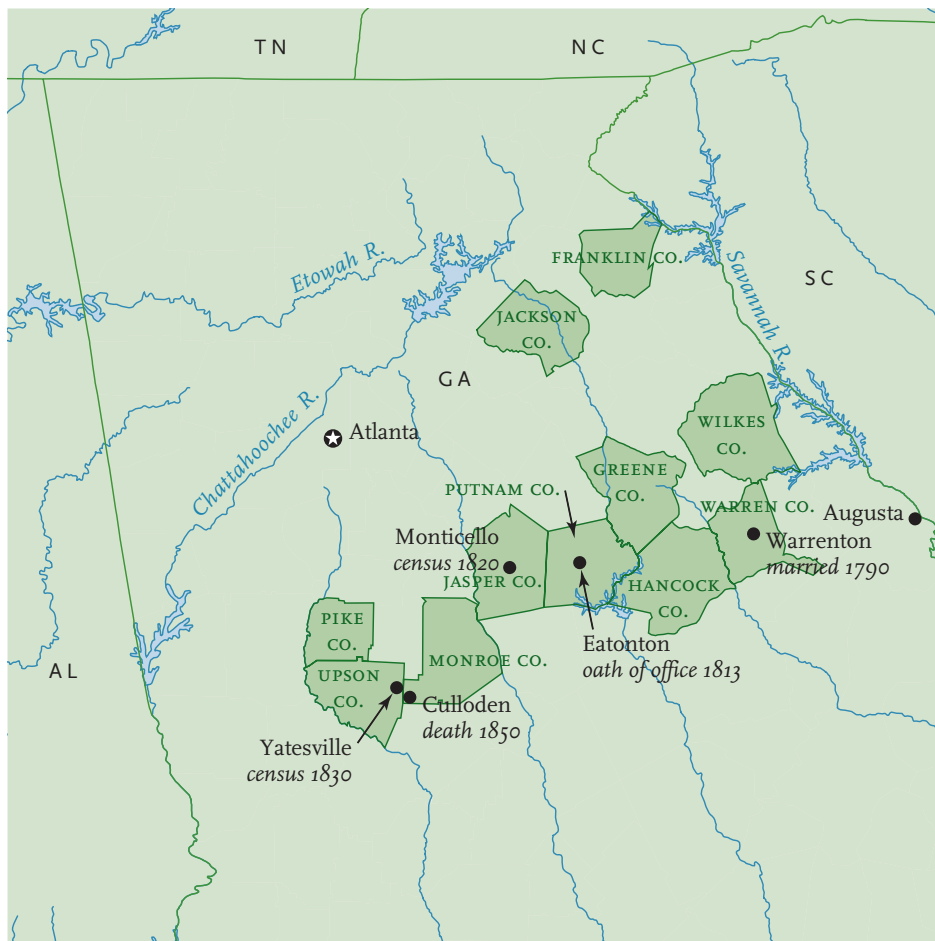
#### THE NEAL HERITAGE OF DIANNA NEAL

<b>Capt. Thomas Neal Sr. (1735–1799)</b>	m. 1754	<b>Sarah Harrell (1736–c. 1758)</b>
<b>Thomas Neal Jr. (1758–1807)</b>	m. c. 1772	<b>Sarah Perkins (c. 1755–1814)*</b>
<b>Dianna Neal (1774–1859)</b>	m. 1790	<b>Jones Persons (1760–1850)</b>
<b>Martha Neal Persons (1809–1889)</b>	m. 1827	<b>Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)</b>
<b>John Whitfield Purifoy (1829–1900)</b>	m. 1871	<b>Esther A. Maddux (1839–1909)</b>
<b>Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)</b>	m. 1904	<b>Ola F. Gillespie (1881–1934)</b>
<b>Margaret Purifoy (1908–1973)</b>	m. 1931	<b>Charles D. Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)</b>

\**Genealogist Suzan Persons (b. 1953) recorded Sarah Perkins as Sarah Ann Batts Lawless Neal Perkins (1748–1814).*

Dianna Neal was the granddaughter of Neville's double fifth great-grandfather, **Captain Thomas Neal Sr. (1735–1799)**, whose two eldest sons were **David Neal (1755–1811)** and **Thomas Neal Jr. (1758–1807)**, Neville's fourth great-grandfathers. Dianna Neal is, thus, a first cousin of **Mary Ann "Polly" Neal (1782–1854)**, and they are both Neville's third great-grandmothers. From ages sixteen to thirty-nine, Dianna had eleven children, eight boys and three girls. The ninth child and last girl was **Martha Neal Persons (1809–1889)**, Neville's great-great-grandmother.

Jones Persons, Dianna Neal Persons's husband, is recorded as a landowner in eleven Georgia counties during his lifetime. He and his sons are also recorded as owners of a sizeable number of slaves. Tobacco and cotton were the principal crops in Georgia during the years between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War (1861–65). The cotton industry grew explosively, especially after the cotton gin was invented near Savannah, Georgia, by Eli Whitney (1765–1825) in 1793.



*This map highlights the eleven Georgia counties in which Neville's third great-grandfather Jones Persons owned land between 1787 and 1850.*



In 1813–15 Jones Persons was a justice of the inferior court in Putnam County, Georgia, and in 1824 he was the first justice of the inferior court in Upson County, Georgia. Inferior courts are lower courts that usually handle minor civil and criminal cases. Two examples of Jones Persons's signature are preserved at the Georgia Department of Archives and History: The first is dated November 1, 1813, the day he took his oath of office. The second was written on November 7, 1825.

*Jones Persons was the first of his ancestral line to consistently add an s to his surname.  
The initials after the second signature are "JIC," denoting his title, Justice of the Inferior Court.*

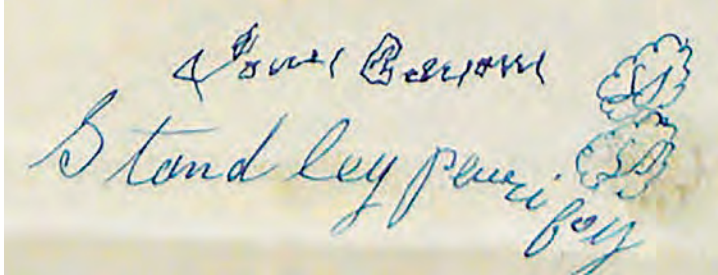
The 1820 census enumerates Jones Persons as a resident of Monticello in Jasper County, Georgia. He is listed as owning twenty-one slaves. Sometime between 1820 and 1824, Jones moved from Jasper County to Upson County. In the 1830 census, he is recorded in Upson County with eighteen slaves, and in 1840 with twenty-five slaves.

In 1824 Jones Persons is recorded as one of the eight founders of the New Hope Primitive Baptist Church in Yatesville, Upson County. That church is still active. In around 1840, Jones Persons built a home on his three-hundred-acre plantation near Yatesville. The land is in both Upson and Monroe Counties. The house was occupied by his descendants until about 1918.



*A twentieth-century view of the house believed to have been built by Jones Persons in the late 1830s or 1840s on his plantation, one mile east of Yatesville, Upson County, Georgia. This photograph is courtesy of Suzan Persons (b. 1953) of Marietta, Georgia. Suzan is an accomplished genealogist, who has been most helpful with our research of the Persons and Peurifoy families in Georgia.*

In the Thomaston-Upson Archives in Thomaston, Georgia (county seat of Upson County), there is an 1849 document that bears the signatures of eighty-nine-year-old Jones Persons and his forty-nine-year-old son-in-law, **Rev. Stanley Peurifoy (1800–1864)**.



*The shaky signature of Jones Persons, along with that of his son-in-law, Stanley Peurifoy, who signed his name Standley instead of Stanley. I cannot imagine why he did that.*

In 1850 Jones Persons died near Culloden, Monroe County, Georgia, at age ninety. His wife, Dianna Neal Persons, died on July 16, 1859, at age eighty-four, in Strouds, Monroe County. In an appraisal of her estate, her most valuable assets were five named slaves: “1st, Henry, a Negro man about 23 years Valued at \$1,300.00 [\$28,600 today]. 2. Bidda, a woman age about 21 years and her three children, viz. Fanny a girl about 5 years old, Ivy a boy about 3 years old and Warren a boy about 1 year old Valued at 2,100.00 [\$46,200 today].” The average price of a slave peaked in 1859 at \$900, having risen from \$300 in 1804. In March 1859, there was a major slave auction in Savannah, Georgia; there 429 men, women, and children were sold for \$303,850 (\$6.7 million today).

Jones and Dianna Neal Persons are most likely buried in the Persons Family Cemetery between Yatesville and Culloden. The cemetery, one mile east of Yatesville, is on the right side of the Macon highway, just before the Monroe County line. Recently, some Persons descendants cleaned the cemetery. They discovered that many stones had been stolen, and only three could be identified: those of Jones and Dianna Persons’s youngest son, **Lovett Persons (1814–1862)**; his wife, Melinda A. Lyon Persons (1825–1908); and their infant son, James Persons (1855–1856).



*The Persons Family Cemetery in Upson County, Georgia. The cemetery is about one hundred yards from the Jones Persons house. This photograph was taken shortly after the cemetery was cleaned by Persons descendants in April 2012. This photograph is courtesy of Suzan Persons.*