

John D. Greer

By William N. Greer

John D. Greer — father of Nathaniel Hunt Greer — was born January 19, 1761, one of as many as 11 children born to Thomas Greer and Jane Dunlap. The site was once reported as Wake Co, NC, but modern research suggests York Co, PA — possibly in the portion later made into Adams Co. John's middle name is uncertain — some think it was David, others believe it was Dunlap, but no record has ever been found to confirm one or the other. Soon after John's birth, Thomas moved the family to Rowan Co, NC. John grew up in this beautiful area that would later be made into Iredell, Co.

When war broke out, Thomas fought for independence, but John was not old enough to fight until 1778 when he enlisted as a private in the SC militia under Col. Anderson. John might also have briefly served, from June 1 to August 2, 1779, in Capt. John Peake's company of militia, Lower Battalion of Richmond Co, GA, but of this we are unsure. He participated in the reduction of Charlestown and was honorably discharged in 1781. On June 18, 1785, he was paid "Seventy two pounds one Shilling and five pence Sterling for Duty done in the Militia."

After the war, John wed Sarah Hunt, daughter of Nathaniel Hunt and Nancy Reddick — and an alleged descendant of Pocahontas. The ceremony occurred on Sarah's native soil in Edgefield District, SC, on February 14, 1782, just 12 days shy of her 17th birthday.

John and Sarah settled near her relatives in Wilkes Co, GA, where in 1782 the first of their 11 children was born. Nearly 5 years later, on June 19, 1787, John paid Abraham and Hannah Reddick for the 125 acres on which he and Sarah appear to have been living, although by that date it was situated in the newly created Greene Co. (The sellers were very probably Sarah's relatives — quite possibly her maternal grandparents.) Their property bordered the Beaverdam Creek of the Ogeechee River (there are other creeks named Beaverdam). Just a few months later on January 21, 1788, John sold the land — possibly to avoid the new taxes that were soon to be exacted — but John and Sarah continued to live in that portion of Greene Co. from which Hancock Co. was created in 1793.

John and Sarah became well established in their community. Records indicate that John served on the Grand Jury in September 1797, and again in September 1814. In 1811, he was listed as a Co-Administrator of the estate of a man named James Orrich, and a year later was called upon to sell that property which was situated in the adjacent county of Putnam.

The State of Georgia grew tremendously as more and more Indian land was acquired, and over the years several lotteries were held to distribute this land to white citizens. In 1805 John qualified (as a married man) for two draws in the state's first land lottery, but both draws were blank. In the lottery of 1820, he was more fortunate — drawing Land Lot 243, Section 13, in Irwin Co. Then in 1832, he drew Land Lot 809, District 2, Section 1, in the newly created Cherokee Co. John kept this last lot, and after his death his son Gilbert claimed it.

We know from the records of the foregoing events that all of John and Sarah's children were born on their land along Beaverdam Creek and that two of their children died there. According to John's testimony, the family still resided in Hancock Co. at the time of the 1805 lottery. In 1807 Jasper Co. was created and the family soon relocated there. They probably moved by 1811, when their son Thomas wed Amy Foreman in Jasper Co. — and certainly before 1814 when John performed his jury duty there. The census of 1830 tells us that John and Sarah still resided in Jasper Co. But in the 1832 lottery two years later, John listed his home as Troup Co. (created in 1827) where he would spend the remainder of his life.

John owned slaves — even in his early years along Beaverdam Creek when he owned no land. In 1785 he had 1 slave, in 1788 he owned 2, and a tax digest of 1789 showed 3. The 1830 census listed 8 slaves, and his will of 1840¹ named 15!

Sarah died in 1835, possibly in Jasper Co. in the home of her son Thomas, but she could have died in Troup Co. where John passed away in 1843, asking to be buried beside his wife. The location of their graves remains a mystery.

1) The last Will & Testament of John Greer deceased

[This is from Will Book 1, pp 183-186, of Troup Co., GA.]

**Georgia
Troup County. }**

I John Greer being of strong mind and memory knowing that man is born to die and after death to judgement and having been blessed with many years know that my time of departure is not far distant and having been blessed with a loving companion who has borne to me nine children and who has been called from me by the hand of providence and having been blessed with a small portion of this worlds goods I feel it a duty incumbent on me to make such distribution of the same as seems meet to me and according to my own will and pleasure and to appoint such Guardians and such Executors as seems meet to me to act each in their sphere and to carry this my last will and testament into effect in all its form — revoking all others heretofore made by me — I do therefore appoint Gilbert D. Greer and William D. Greer my true and lawfull Executors who is fully authorized to carry into effects this my will and to settle the same with all my heirs & Guardians according to the provissions of this my will —

First — I commit and commend my flesh to its mother dust from whence it came to be burried in a decent manner by the side of my beloved wife companion and my spirit home to God who gave it there to enjoy eternal bliss —

Secondly — That immediately after my death that my Executor proceed to execute this my will by first paying all my just debts and collecting all that may be due me either by note or open account thence to proceed to have all my Estate legally appraised advertised and sold at a credit of twelve months free for all persons to bid who will comply with the terms of sale which shall

be small notes with good security, Dave and Fillis his wife and their youngest child shall be sold in one lot the ballance of my stock of negroes shall be by the appraisement divided into nine lots as near equal as possible and drawn for by my heirs as follows to Thomas Greer one lot, to Jane Mangham one lot, after deducting out any demand which I now hold or may hereafter hold against James A. Greer at the time of my death out of the one ninth part of my Estate I give and bequeath unto the offspring of Sarah Greer wife of said James A. Greer the ballance of the aforesaid one ninth part of my estate and I further appoint James A Greer Guardian to said children, and his receipt for the aforesaid share as described to my Executors shall be a sufficient shewing for the court — To Gilbert D Greer one lot after deducting out the demand I hold against Absalom Irvin I give unto Sarah Irvin wife of Absalom Irvin the ballance of the one ninth part of my Estate and Sarah Irvin's receipt for the same shall be a sufficient shewing to the court — To Thomas F Nolan & Hannah Nolan his wife one lot — after deducting the amount I may hold against William D. Greer I give to him said William D. Greer one lot — after deducting the amount I hold against Nathaniel H Greer out of the one ninth part of my Estate I give and bequeath unto the offspring of Nancy Greer wife of Nathaniel H Greer the ballance of the aforesaid one ninth part of my Estate and I further appoint Nathaniel H. Greer Guardian of said children & his receipt for the aforesaid share as described to my Executors shall be a sufficient shewing for the court — after deducting the amount I may hold against Willis Johnson out of the one ninth part of my Estate I give and bequeath unto Nancy Johnson wife of Willis Johnson the remaining portion of said ninth part of my Estate and Nancy Johnson's Receipt for the same shall be a sufficient shewing to the court — and the remaining parts of all my Estate both real and personal shall be sold as above described

Acknowledged signed and sealed this the sixteenth day of November in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and forty in presence of

Herndon Haralson
Henry Boyd &
Wm M McCutchin

his
John x Greer SS
mark

Georgia
Troup County. }

Inferior Court of Troup County sitting for ordinary purposes met in chambers this 20th day of January 1843

Present their Honors

James M Peale
& Peter W Lesley, Justices

The within last will and testament of John Greer late of this county deceased was this day

produced before the above named Justices of the Inferior Court in chambers and duly and lawfully proven upon the oaths of Herndon Haralson, Henry Boyd & William M McCutchin the subscribing witnesses to the same — the same being, produced by Gilbert D. Greer the surviving Executor therein named

W. Wilson C Co
Georgia Inferior Court of Troup County sitting for ordinary purposes March Term 1843

Present their Honors

James M Peale
Daniel Ware
John Greer, Justices

The within last will and testament of John Greer late of this county deceased having been produced before James M Peale and Peter W Lesley two of the Justices of the Inferior Court of said County on the 20th day of January in the present year in vacation and then and there duly & lawfully proven by the subscribing witnesses to the same. It is now ordered that the same be admitted to Record this being a regular term of said court —

Wiley Wilson C Co
Recorded 9th March 1843