



# The Burge Story - First Generation

Welcome to the Burge Story. These acres have seen American Indian settlement, subsistence farming, nineteenth century agrarian life, civil war strife and emancipation, reconstruction, tenant farming, row crops, forestry, dairy and cattle operations, hunting and organic farming. Burge has remained in the same family since 1809. Family members have been farmers, planters, preachers, architects, economists, inventors, teachers, salesmen, writers, entrepreneurs, broadcasters, homemakers, musicians, consultants, business executives, stock brokers, club managers, and preachers again – yet always with a hand in the dirt keeping the farm alive. This history is dedicated to the hope that the tradition will continue.

## Early Settlement

Before European settlement, Burge was Indian land. Artifacts found in one area of Burge suggest a hunting camp or small semi-permanent Indian village. In the late 1700s and early 1800s whites, many with black slaves, arrived and pushed this American Indian population, primarily Creek, farther and farther west.

The majority of the new settlers in the area came from Connecticut, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas after the American Revolution, taking up bounty grants, joining in the land lotteries, and settling lands surrendered in the Indian treaties. These early residents found a vast forest of hardwoods with abundant stands of pine and some open areas. Subsistence agriculture, primarily food and fiber for personal use, supported these settlers. Principal products were corn, wheat, poultry and hogs, as well as household gardens for vegetables and fruit.

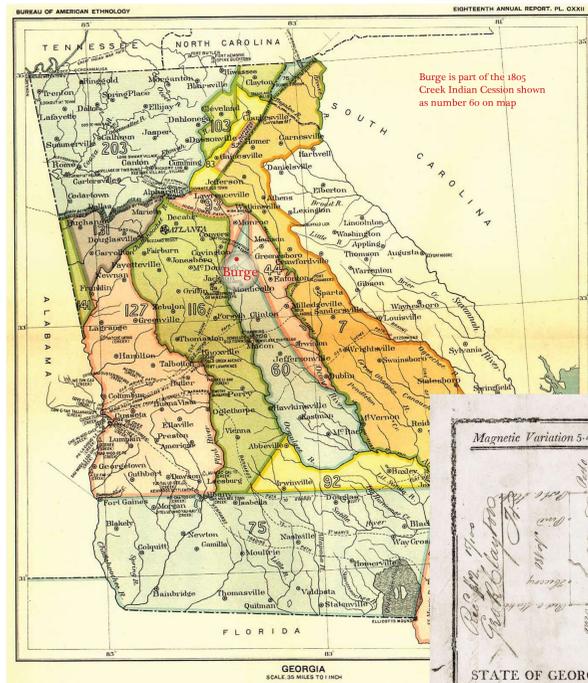
Wiley Burge (1752-1822), Jackson Harwell (1773-1852), and Richard Fretwell (1752-1842) all came to Georgia from Virginia in the late 1700s and settled in Hancock County, near Sparta – all owned land there. They may have been acquainted in Virginia; they were definitely acquainted in Hancock County. Wiley Burge married Richard Fretwell's daughter Nancy in Hancock County about 1800 – he significantly older than she, being the same age as his father-in-law Richard. Jackson Harwell married Patsy Fretwell, another daughter of Richard Fretwell. All three moved to what would become Newton County in the early 1800s, and their family ties in the frontier land remained strong throughout their lives and the lives of their children and grandchildren.

Wiley Burge's father-in-law, Richard Fretwell, a Revolutionary War veteran, drew Land Lot 152 (202.5 acres) in the 19th district of Newton County (at that time Baldwin County, later Jasper County) in the 1807 land lottery and at the same time or perhaps later purchased fractional Land Lot 153 (182.25 acres). On November 18, 1809, Wiley Burge purchased adjacent Land Lot 155 (202.5 acres) from Arthur Lott, who drew it in the 1807 lottery, and added another 80 contiguous acres from 1817-20. Jackson Harwell in the late 1820s and 1830s purchased significant tracts of land nearby or adjacent to that owned by Burge and Fretwell.

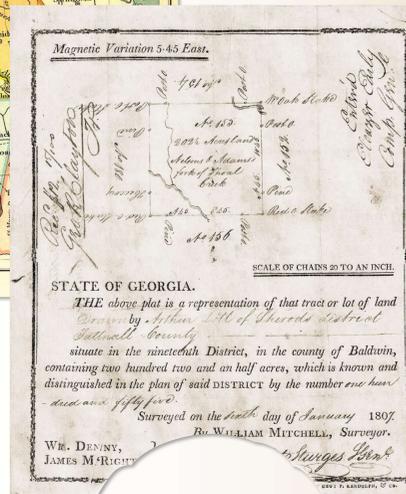
Wiley Burge built a house on land lot 155, the first piece of land he purchased, sometime between 1809 and 1813. This house was near the family cemetery and the apparent Indian settlement site. There are no traces left of that house but entries in Dolly Burge's diary refer to "the old house place" near the family cemetery.

Wiley and Nancy Burge had seven children: Martha Patsy, Hamilton, Eliza, Thomas, Wiley, Nancy, and James – the first five were born in Hancock County, the last two were probably born on the new family land in Newton County. All lived some part of their lives on the Burge lands.

Wiley Burge died in 1822, leaving his estate to his wife Nancy and property or cash valued at \$1000 to his five younger children upon their reaching the age of 21, having already given his two older married children \$1000 before his death. The executors of his will were his son Hamilton Burge, his son-in-law Richard Lane, and Andrew Hodge, son-in-law of Jackson Harwell. Nancy Fretwell Burge lived until after 1842. Thomas Burge was 16 at the time of his father's death; the youngest child was nine.



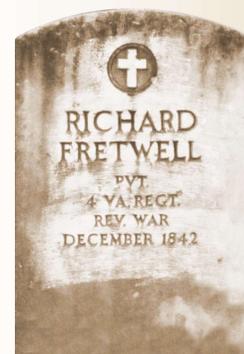
A map showing Creek Indian Cessions. Burge is located in the far northern end of the 1805 cession marked as number 60.



Survey plat made in 1807 of Land Lot 155, which Wiley Burge purchased in 1809. The center of the Land Lot lies near what today is the junction of Morehouse Road and Sewell Road.



Burge family cemetery

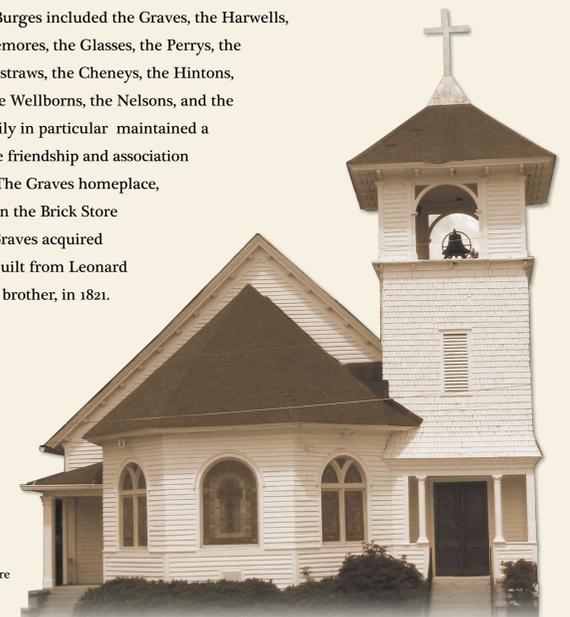


Richard Fretwell, Wiley Burge's father-in-law, drew Land Lot 152 in what would become Newton County in the 1807 land lottery. Two years later, his son-in-law Wiley Burge purchased adjacent land lot 155.

## The Community

The small towns of Newborn (then Sandtown or Crossroads) and Brick Store (then Winton) were established around 1818, providing social, religious, and mercantile centers for the Burges and others in the sparsely populated area. In 1820 Richard Fretwell sold 25 acres in Newborn to a group of five trustees including Jackson Harwell and Wiley Burge, to build a small log church, the original Newborn Methodist Church. Jackson Harwell served as the church's first pastor and as a trustee for 35 years.

Early neighbors of the Burges included the Graves, the Harwells, the Fretwells, the Roquemores, the Glasses, the Perrys, the Montgomerys, the Rakestraws, the Cheneys, the Hintons, the Pitts, the Parkers, the Wellborns, the Nelsons, and the Guices. The Graves family in particular maintained a multi-generational close friendship and association with the Burge family. The Graves homeplace, Mt. Pleasant, is located in the Brick Store community; Solomon Graves acquired the land on which it is built from Leonard Fretwell, Nancy Burge's brother, in 1821.



Newborn Methodist Church today. The original log structure was built on land sold to the trustees by Richard Fretwell.



Brick Store, which ultimately lent its name to the community, near the junction of present highways 11 and 278 was built in 1822 and still remains at its original site in Newton County.