

**William Purvis**  
**c 1785 c 1837**

According to researcher Nancy Sandahl, the William Purvis of this paper (there were numerous) was born either in South Carolina or Georgia around 1785. This information was handed down to her from Sarah Lenore Purvis (1877-1945) who "did a lot of family history back in her day and wrote things down that her father had told her." Her father was William Purvis (1841-1921), grandson (through Jephtha 1810-1885) of the stated William Purvis. Some records indicate the Purvis' came from England, others from Scotland. Either way, William was of northern European descent.

Family

Sarah Lenore's records (including a Purvis family Bible) indicate that William married Margaret Darby (c. 1785 to bef 1840), probably in Georgia around 1809 and had six sons and four daughters. The six sons have solid verification, but it is less clear about the daughters:

- Jephtha Purvis 1810 - 1885
- Jincy Margaret Purvis 1815 - ?
- Mary Polly Purvis 1816 - 1889
- Henry Purvis 1818 - 1858
- Pharoah Purvis 1821 - 1910
- Emanuel J. Purvis 1824 - ?
- Sarah Purvis 1827 - 1900
- Elizabeth Purvis 1828 - ?
- Stephen Ashley Purvis 1829 - 1887
- Lafayette Purvis 1834 - 1885

NOTE: Original info from Nancy indicated William born 1757 and Margaret 1765, with children born from 1784 to 1810. But further research proved this incorrect. Later census records on the sons indicate they were all born in Georgia.

Emanuel County

Emanuel County, located in southeast Georgia's Wiregrass region was created in 1812. According to the Emanuel County Land Plat Index, William Purvis obtained 56 acres on Sculls Creek on August 5, 1815 and an additional 105 acres on September 22 (location not noted). It is possible that William and Margaret obtained the 161 acres through the land grant:

Under the headright system of land granting, which was in effect over much of Georgia in the early 1800's, each head of a family was entitled to a grant of two hundred acres plus fifty additional acres for each family member or slave. To obtain the grant the applicant would appear before the land court in the county in which the land he desired was located and take a simple, oral oath attesting to the fact that he was entitled to a grant... [T]he applicant paid for the survey, the paper work, and a nominal fee for the land.

By 1812 William was already married and had at least one child. If he had purchased his land with money, it would seem William came from a comfortable life to be able to afford such a purchase.

Sculls Creek

Sculls Creek, a tributary of the Ogeechee River, is currently located in Jenkins County, created in 1905 partly from Emanuel County. The closest identifiable point to William's property in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the Sculls Creek Baptist Church (near Hunting Rd. E. Old Savannah Rd.), south of Millen, the county seat.

SCULLS CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH (now identified as "Skull Creek Baptist Church") is to have been in existence when William moved onto the land as the church was established on October 4, 1804, in Bulloch County, Georgia, on land given the church by Abraham Shepard Lane. It is now in Emanuel County (this county created in 1812 partially from Bulloch County.)

so possibly it was the church which William and his family attended.

Currently there is a cemetery attached to the church, with 44 internments. However, findagrave.com states "There are also 24 unmarked/illegible graves here" so it is quite possible William and Margaret are buried there.

### Court Records

Few records have been found on William, but in 1819 we find that he agreed to be the guarantor for the estate of John Kirkland:

KIRKLAND, John, decd, Simon Banks, admr, William Purvis, John Clifton, sur, 1/4/1819, Emanuel, AB.

as shown by the abbreviation "sur".

That same day, he became one of three guardians for two orphans:

William Purvis, Simon Banks, Wm. Davis guardians for orphans Prudence and Stephen, orphans of Abraham. 01-14-1819 Emanuel A.B. (IBID)

Two years before William died, he was the administrator to James Purvis' estate in Bullock County.

James Purvis, dec'd, William Purvis, admr to sel real est 1836Bullock MIC.

It's quite probable that this James was a relative.

### 1820 Census

By the 1820 census, William and Margaret had a family of five children: two males and three females. The males were: one under 10, one 10-16 which correspond to the two oldest boys:

1. HENRY - 1818 (under 10 born 1810-1820)
2. JEPHTHA - 1810 (10-16 born 1804-1810)

And of course, there's William as the male head of household:

WILLIAM - 1785 (26-45 born 1775-1794)

The three female minors in the household were two under 10 and one 10-16. The two younger ones line up with Jincy and Mary:

1. JINCY MARGARET - 1815 (under 10 born 1810-1820)
2. MARY POLLY - 1816 (under 10 born 1810-1820)
3. The female age 10-16 (born 1804-1810) doesn't fit anywhere in William and Margaret's family. (The 1820 census never recorded the relationship of a household member to the head.) Since the Purvis family bible didn't show a daughter this age, she may have been another family member, a child taken in or even young woman (she could have been 16) to help Margaret with the household and care of the younger children.

The adult female easily fits Margaret:

MARGARET - 1785 (26-45 born 1775-1794)

### 1827 Land Lottery

The next mention we find of him in the records is in the 1827 Land Lottery where William Purvis, "a resident of Emanuel County," drew for land in Carroll County, Georgia (Section 11, District 5), 7th Day's Drawing - 14th March. Each winner of a draw was entitled to 202 ½ acres, but nothing has ever been found that William claimed his land. Since he was the only William Purvis in Emanuel County in 1820 (and in 1830), I believe this is our William.

An interesting side note is that the word "soldier" is listed after William's name. The information would have come from William himself, not official records. The only war he could have been involved in was the War of 1812 (aka Creek Wars in Georgia). No service record has ever been found for a William Purvis in that War. He could have been "self-appointed." There are some (unresearched) records for a William Purvis having served in

the Revolutionary War, but the War was over before William was born. Maybe it was a relative, or not.

### 1830 Census

William's family had grown to five sons and three daughters (?) in the 1830 census in district 173. Again, the males listed fit neatly into Nancy's research of the William Purvis family:

1. STEVEN ASHLEY - 1828 (one male 0-5 born 1825-1830)
  2. EMMANUEL - 1824 (one male 0-5 born 1825-1830)
  3. PHAROAH -1822 (one male 5-10 born 1820-1825)
  4. HENRY - 1818 (one male 10-15 born 1815-1820)
  5. JEPHTHA - 1810 (one male 20-26 born 1810-1814)
- and  
WILLIAM - 1785 (one male 40-50 born 1780-1790)

LAFAYETTE - the sixth son born in 1834 according to family records, was not included in the census.

However, the females in the household aren't so clear as to who they are:

1. SARAH - 1827 (one female 0-5 born 1825-1830)
  2. MARY POLLY - 1816 (one female 10-15 born 1815-1820)
  3. The unknown female (one female 20-26 born 1804-1810) who can't be placed in the Purvis family history.
- and  
MARGARET - c. 1785 (one female 40-50 born 1780-1790)

Sarah was added to the family. Jincy Margaret could very well have been married by age 15 as it was not uncommon for such an early age for marriage at the time.

I have the most difficulty fitting in Elizabeth who was to have been born in 1828. Because of the sloppiness of how the censuses were recorded, this list could be wrong, but two census' back to back do coordinate the male line with the family records. Of course, there's no guarantee that my interpretation of the females in the family is correct, but further research could possibly clarify the discrepancies in the household.

NOTE: The 1830 census also indicated the number of slaves. William's household had none.

### Death of William

There is no clear record of the death of William but the Emanuel County "Index to Appraisement of Estates 1812-1841" lists Williams' estate was appraised in 1837:

<b>Estate</b>	<b>Date Recorded</b>	<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
PURVIS, William	Nov. 22, 1837	Lewis Beacham, J.P.	134-135, 142-143

which would indicate a death prior to November 22, 1837, probably sometime earlier that year. His age would have been approximately fifty-two, rather young, even for that era. It is very possible that an accident took his life, but we will never know.

The following year (1838), his estate was sold on August 11, according to the original "Sale of the Estate of William Pervis" record. The original record is difficult to read, but it appears that the total raised in the sale of the estate was a figure similar to \$1,398.72 (not including the land he owned). William was not a poor man, but landed gentry of what we would call middle-class today since the money would amount to around \$28,300 today.

In the record of sale the family names, Jeptha, Henry and Manner/Manning, appear multiple times. Whether these are the sons (Jeptha age 28, Henry age 20, Manning age 14) or other close relatives with the same name is unknown.

Of the names on the list of purchasers of the estate, nine of them were listed in either the 1830 or 1840 census, so it was made up of many of his neighbors.

Also on the list of purchasers were surnames that married into the family, according to the Purvis family Bible: Aycock (Mary Polly), Bird (Sarah), Miller (Elizabeth) and Newton (Jincy Margaret).

NOTE: The fact that there was an estate sale shows that William died intestate - he didn't have a will.

#### Death of Margaret

There is even less evidence of when Margaret died, but it is clear that by 1840, she was no longer living since by November of that year Jeptha became Pharoah's guardian (age 19), and Jeptha and Bird L. Newton had to pay the court \$1,000 for the process (as far as I can understand - but then I don't read "ye olde" legalese).

Know all men by their presents that we Jeshta Pervis and Bird L. Newton are held and firmly bound into the Justices of the Inferior Court siting as a court of Ordinary and their successors in office in the just sum one thousand dollars for the payment of which sum to the said Justices and their Successors we bind our heirs executors and administrators in the whole and for the sum jointly and severally and firmly by these presents sealed with our seals and dated this seventh day of September Eighteen hundred and forty.

The conditions of the above obligations is such that if the above bound Jeshta Pervis this day appointed guardian of the person and property of Pharro Pervis orphan and minor of William Pervis deceased shall do and perform all of the duties of guardianship for said ward as required by him by law then this obligation to be void else otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

/s/ Jestha Perves /s/ Bird L. Newton attest: Jordan Flanders Clk.

Other minor children of William and Margaret would have been:

Emanuel/Manning (16)  
Sarah (13)  
Elizabeth (12)  
Stephen (11)  
Lafayette Purvis (6)

but no documentation regarding their guardianship has been found. However, as will be noted under their separate section, both Stephen and Lafayette ended up living with other families.

#### Children of William and Margaret

Most of the following is from the research of Nancy Sandahl and found on Ancestry.com.

Jeptha Purvis was born 10 Apr, 1810 Emanuel County, GA and living in Emanuel County in 1840 and 1850. He married Cassie Katharine Bonnell (1813-1850) in 1827 and had twelve children and in 1852 he married Martha Bell (1835-1938) in 1852 and had eight more children. He moved to Orange County Florida by 1860 was still living there in 1870, purchasing 80 acres in 1878. By 1880 he had moved to Hillsborough, Florida where he died in 1885 and was buried on private land.

Jincy Margaret Purvis was born 1815 Emanuel County, GA - ? No further information other than she was to have married a Mr. Newton.

Mary Polly Purvis was born 1816 Emanuel County, GA and married Benjamin Aycock (1810-1895) and had nine children. She lived in Bulloch County, GA until her death in 1889.

Henry Purvis was born 17 August 1818 Emanuel County, GA and about 1840 he married Serency A. Dell (Feb 22, 1825 - Sept 17, 1903) and had eight children. By 1850 he had moved to Sumter County, GA where he died 29 November 1858. Serency and their children had moved to Lafayette County, Florida by 1860.

Pharoah Purvis was born May 18, 1821 in Emanuel County, Georgia. After the death of his parents he moved west and at some point lived (stopped?) in Jasper County he married

Emily Crabtree (January 1826-bef 1910) on February 8, 1849. They were the parents of six children. He had moved to Sumter County by 1850. Pharoah joined CSA as a private Sept. 18, 1863, in Sumter County, Georgia, serving in Company H 64th Regiment Georgia Volunteer Infantry, Army of Virginia. He surrendered at Appomattox, Virginia. Pharoah and his family were living in Schley County in 1870 and moved to Terrell County by 1880. By 1896 Pharoah had moved to Appling County where he first appeared in the 1896 Tax Digest. He applied for an Indigent Pension in 1897 (as a Confederate veteran) but was ultimately denied on a technicality. He was listed in the 1906 Confederate Veteran's roster of Appling County, but not on the 1908 tax list. It is presumed he died between 1907 and 1908 in Appling County. Pharoah's son James had sons William, Henry, and Manning. (Research on Pharoah supplied by Shalane J. Sheley-Cruz.)

Emanuel J. Purvis (aka Manning, Manner, Mannen) was born 1824 Emanuel County, GA. According to the Purvis family records, he married Lucretia Wiggins (1826-1850) about 1840, but the date is suspicious since he would have only been 16 (and she 14) - rare but not an unheard age for marriage of a male. Emanuel Purvis, age 32 married to Lucretia was found in the 1850 census in Emanuel County, when he would have only been 26. About 1860 he married Martha Walters (1830-?) and had two children. He then married (date unknown) Elizabeth Shuman (1836-1900) and had six more children. He was living in Bryan County, GA in 1870 and 1880. Death date for Emanuel is unknown.

Sarah Purvis was born 1827 Emanuel County, GA and married Lewis J. Byrd (1813 - 1900) and had twelve children by him. By 1880, she had moved to Appling County with her family. No further record has been found of Sarah.

Elizabeth Purvis was born 1828 in Emanuel County, GA and married Robert Miller (1820-1870) about 1847 and had seven children by him. She lived in Emanuel County, GA in the 1850 census, but the family moved to Bulloch County, GA in 1860, where she resided at least until the 1900 census. Her death date is unknown.

Stephen Ashley Purvis was born 1829 in Emanuel County, GA where he was living in 1850 with the Edward Lane family. In about 1856 he married Elizabeth Williamson (1832- ?) and they had seven children. Sometime after their marriage, they moved to Appling County, GA where he lived until his death in 1887. Stephen Ashley served in Company K, 54<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of Georgia, enlisting 5 May 1862 in the Confederate Army, and served in the War between the States (aka Civil War).

Lafayette Purvis was born 11 March 1834 in Emanuel County, GA. In the 1850 census he was living with the Duberly family in Tattnall County, GA, being orphaned at age 6. He remained in Tattnall County until his death in 1885. Around 1859 he married Mary Ann Purcell (1837-1926) and they had nine children. Lafayette served in the Confederate Army, 5th Regiment, Georgia Cavalry, Company H.

Research by Shalane Sheley-Cruz, 2012.