

## Country Club of the South and the Jones Family Connection

Written and researched by Charlie Enscoe

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Beginning in 1805 the state of Georgia made land available to white settlers through a lottery system and other land grant systems. The State acquired these vast expanses of land by removing the indigenous Indians. By 1832 nearly every Georgian, white adult male was eligible to participate in the draw for a portion of the 3.3 million total acres of the Cherokee and Gold Lot Lotteries. The 1832 Lottery included all land north of the Chattahoochee River to the state lines with North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama. Among others who qualified were widows, widowers, orphans, veterans, and those that assisted the Country in wars, along with those who paid travel fees for workers from other countries. Some wealthy lottery winners eventually acquired thousands of acres for farming and timber. Thus began the division of wealth and property in Georgia. During the Civil War many of these same landowners would lose their land and wealth.

The State divided the land into seven counties initially; these counties were redrawn as the population grew. The Country Club of the South (CCS) was at first Cherokee, then Forsyth, Milton and finally Fulton county. One hundred and sixty acres was the designated lot size of the parcel. In 1830, gold was discovered near Dahlonega, lots thought to contain the gold were called gold lots. The twenty-eight lots of CCS are 40-acre gold lots, except for the river frontage land. For \$18 a settler could take a chance to have his name drawn from a drum. He was allowed to sell it immediately, sight unseen, after registering his ownership with the State. There were no requirements to work the land or live on it.

In 1824 Archibald William Martin, a Georgia native, acquired 1000 acres of land in Wayne County in eastern Georgia under the Headright and Bounty Land Grant System. Martin became a major Georgian landowner in several counties including Gwinnett and (old) Milton. Ann Smith and Archibald W. Martin were married in 1833 and lived in Macon, Georgia for the remainder of their lives. They had nine children; Ann Elizabeth Martin was their eldest daughter.

George Hoyle Jones, of Pinckneyville, Gwinnett County, an attorney, and penitentiary superintendent, began purchasing land in Milton County in the early 1870s. He was also a large landowner in multiple counties. Jones served as a State Legislator and Senator and was known as "a well-to-do and a progressive farmer." Anna Elizabeth Martin and George H. Jones were married in 1857 and resided in Pinckneyville—just south of the Chattahoochee. By 1877 Jones owned over half of the lots that would later become Country Club of the South, including Chattahoochee River access and a ferry that crossed to Gwinnett County. The area was designated Newtown, Milton County, and Militia District 1172. Additional early owners of this specific part of Milton County were Autrey, Garman, Buice, Summerour, and Vaughn.

In 1895, George Jones sold various lots to each of his four children for \$1.00. The deeds included 1/6th of the income from Jones Ferry. Over the years Reps Hardaway Jones, George and Anna's second son, bought more land adjacent to his own, eventually purchasing lots belonging to his siblings. The area became known as Reps Jones Farm in later deeds. The well-respected Jones family maintained a small family cemetery on a bluff overlooking the Chattahoochee; however, the graves were moved to Norcross Cemetery years later and no evidence remains of the plots. Placement of the farm building as well as the path of Jones Ferry Road can be seen on maps of the time.

Reps Jones bought and sold land over the next several years, but always retained ownership of access to the River at the ferry location. It wasn't until 1927 that Louisa Jones, Reps' widow, sold the remaining 380 acres of farmland and river access. The twenty-eight land lots in CCS passed through numerous hands following the Jones family ownership. In 1984 James H Cowart and others sold over 800 acres to the Jack Nicklaus Development Corp. for construction of the club, golf course and gated community.

The former location of Jones Ferry and the terminus of Jones Ferry/Bridge Road are located in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area off Barnwell Road. The previous owners of Jones Ferry will continue to be researched. Jones Ferry/Bridge Road ran from the point where Jones Bridge Road and Barnwell Road connect today, just outside the neighborhood, and continued diagonally across CCS to the River. This portion of Jones Ferry Road no longer exists; it has been covered over with homes and modern roads. In 1906 a steel toll bridge was built over the River at the ferry location; however, it was dismantled years later because neither Gwinnett County nor Milton County was able to maintain it. Pieces of the former bridge structure can still be seen on the south side of the River from the Recreational Area.

The Johns Creek Historical Society (JCHS) has been studying the historic ownership of the lots in Johns Creek as they were numbered and laid out for the 1832 Land Lottery. When the JCHS moves to a permanent location researches will be able to use Deed Tables to identify former owners of their property. Currently, the property ID number found on the Fulton County Tax bill includes the original lot number in the third set of numbers. The accompanying map displays the lot numbers, the path of Jones Ferry Road and the streets of CCS.

The Johns Creek Historical Society is a volunteer organization that engages in research and education of the area.

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