

Who is Cynthia Dillard's Father?

Phase 4: Discovering a Candidate in Cass County, Georgia

RLP Study Group 11

October 2025

OBJECTIVE

Discover a candidate for Cynthia (Dillard) Royston's father residing in Cass County, Georgia, during the 1830s. Cynthia was born about 1815 in Georgia and died on 2 August 1882 in Collin County, Texas. Cynthia married Thomas B. Royston about 1833 or 1834, possibly in Cass County, Georgia.

LIMITATIONS

- The research and writing took place between September and November 2025.
- Research was limited to online records and those accessible at the FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City.
- The earliest deed books for Cass(now Bartow) County, Georgia, are missing. Deed records only begin in 1837, limiting access to land transactions during the crucial period when Cynthia's father would have been acquiring property.
- This research phase did not include DNA analysis.

RESULTS SUMMARY¹

- Established Cass County as the most probable marriage location for Cynthia Dillard and Thomas B. Royston around 1833-1834. Documentation of Thomas B. Royston's residence in Morgan and Cass Counties during the early 1830s, combined with the absence of marriage records (which only begin in 1836 for Cass County), supports the hypothesis that their marriage occurred in this newly settled territory. The timing aligns with Cass County's formation in December 1832 from Cherokee Nation lands.
- Identified four Dillard households in Cass County, Georgia, in the 1840 census as potential candidates for Cynthia's family. John Dillard, William Dillard, Elijah Dillard, and Elizabeth

¹ "Cynthia Dillard Father Candidate Report Review," Claude, Version 4.5 Sonnet, chat with user Diana Elder, 30 October 2025, *Anthropic* (<https://claude.ai/new/> : 30 October 2025). Prompt: write a summary of results based on the research report.

Dillard may have resided in Cass County during the critical period when Cynthia likely married Thomas B. Royston around 1833-1834. John and Elizabeth headed separate households, and each was old enough to be Cynthia's parent based on their calculated birth years.

- Eliminated Elizabeth Dillard based on her South Carolina origins and distinct migration pattern. Research traced Elizabeth Dillard to Laurens County, South Carolina, in the 1830 census, where she served as administratrix of John Dillard's estate in 1824. Her migration pattern from South Carolina to Cass County, Georgia, bringing enslaved individuals, placed her in a different census district and family network than the other Cass County Dillards.
- Eliminated the John Dillard family line through documentary evidence tracing their migration from North Carolina to Tennessee to Georgia. Analysis of an 1849 Monroe County, Tennessee, deed and 1853 court records naming the heirs of John Dillard confirmed that William and Elijah Dillard were his sons, and Cynthia was not listed among the heirs. This family originated in North Carolina and migrated through Monroe County, Tennessee, before settling in Cass County, eliminating them as potential relatives of Cynthia.
- Confirmed that the Elijah Dillard living in Cass County in 1840 was not the same Elijah Dillard identified through DNA analysis. The Cass County Elijah Dillard was born between 1801 and 1810 in North Carolina and was another son of John Dillard, whereas the genetically connected Elijah Dillard was born around 1814 to 1816 in Georgia. The 1850 census for Gordon County showed the Cass County Elijah with a North Carolina birthplace and children born in Georgia by 1836, confirming they were two different individuals.
- Analyzed the 1832 Cherokee Land Lottery and Gold Lottery systems to identify additional Dillard families acquiring land in Cass County. Research examined Georgia's lottery distribution mechanism following Cherokee removal, which distributed 160-acre land lots through the Cherokee Land Lottery and 40-acre gold lots through the separate Gold Lottery. This analysis revealed the settlement patterns and economic opportunities that drew families to the newly opened territory in the early 1830s.
- Identified three high-priority Dillard candidates who drew gold lottery lots specifically in Cass County. James Dillard of Pulaski County (Lot 1119, District 3, Section 3), Joseph B. Dillard of Oglethorpe County (Lot 969, District 2, Section 3), and Roliver (possibly Toliver) Dillard of Burke County (Lot 893, District 3, Section 3) all received 40-acre gold lots in Cass County. Their land lottery draws in 1832 provide a tie to the correct geographic location and timeframe for Cynthia's marriage to Thomas B. Royston.
- Created a prioritized research strategy focused on the three Cass County gold lottery winners and neighboring county lottery winners. The systematic examination of lottery records produced a ranked list of Dillard fortunate drawers based on their land lot locations, with Cass County residents receiving highest priority, followed by those in adjacent counties Cherokee, Paulding, and Walker. This approach provides a focused methodology for the next research phase.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cynthia (Dillard) Royston Project Overview

Cynthia (Dillard) Royston was born approximately 1815 in Georgia and died on 2 August 1882 in Collin County, Texas.² Her maiden name of Dillard is known only from the death certificates of three of her fourteen children.³ She married Thomas Beverly Royston about 1833 in Georgia or Alabama, and first appears by name in the 1850 census of Chambers County, Alabama.⁴ The research objective has been to identify her father, who would have been born before 1795, likely in Virginia, and residing in Georgia during the 1820s and 1830s.⁵ Three research phases have yet to find a solid candidate for Cynthia's father.

Cynthia's Life and Migration

Cynthia had fourteen children with Thomas B. Royston, including three sons who died in the Civil War (Ulysses Franklin, Charles Baldwin, and Benjamin).⁶ Thomas settled in DeKalb

² For birth, see 1850 U.S. Census, Chambers County, Alabama, population schedule, 19th District, p. 318 (stamped), dwelling 749, family 749, Thomas B Royston household, Cynthia born about 1815. Also, 1860 U.S. Census, Chambers County, Alabama, population schedule, Northern Division, Milltown Post Office, page 130 (penned), dwelling 915, family 895, Thomas B. Royston household, Cynthia born about 1816. Also, 1870 U.S. Census, Chambers County, Alabama, population schedule, Beat No 2, p. 4 (penned), p.22 (stamped), dwelling 24, family 24, Cynthia Royston household, Cynthia born about 1817. Also, 1880 U.S. Census, Collin County, Texas, population schedule, Precinct 5, enumeration district (ED) 26, p.11 (penned), dwelling 93, family 95, Thomas L Royston household, Cynthia born about 1818.

For her death, see Chambers County, Alabama Estates, box 26 folder 24, Thomas Beverly Royston, for account papers, 1 November 1882; images, "Alabama, Wills and Probate Records, 1753-1999," case file for Thos B Royston, 1867-1883, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 22 October 2025), digital image 165.

³ Three of Cynthia's children provide her maiden name of Dillard. Texas State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, death certificates no. 27410, Mrs. Adline Spears, 19 August 1920, no. 50544, R. Royston, 14 November 1928, and no. 27410, Mrs. Adline Spears, 19 August 1920; *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2272>).

⁴ The oldest child, Mary Elizabeth, was born in 1835 in Alabama, per the 1850 US census, pop. sch., Chambers Co., Al., p. 318, (stamped), dwelling 749, family 749, Thomas B Royston household. For broad negative marriage searches, see Pauline M.J. Gandrud and Lucille S. Craddock, *Marriage, Death and Legal Notices From Early Alabama Newspapers, 1819-1893*, (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1981). Also, "Georgia, County Marriages, 1785-1950," *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1927197). For specific negative searches in identified Royston Georgia locations from 1830-1835 see Clarke Co., Marriage Licenses 1800-1923, Pittman-Self, *FamilySearch*, IGN 7730679. Also, Clarke Co., Marriage Licenses Book B 1821-1838, index, *FamilySearch*, IGN 7725047, image 180. Also, Morgan Co., Marriage Record 1822-1836, index, *FamilySearch*, IGN 4848904, image 182. Morgan Co., Marriage Record 1834-1854, index, *FamilySearch*, IGN 4848904, image 345. Also, Cass/Bartow Co., Georgia, Marriages Book B 1836-1843, *FamilySearch*, IGN 5190994, images 8-36. For specific negative searches, see DeKalb Co., Alabama, Marriage Records 1836-1850, *FamilySearch*, IGN 7622388, full-text search.

1850 U.S. Census, Chambers County, Alabama, population schedule, 19th District, p. 318 (stamped), dwelling 749, family 749, Thomas B Royston household.

⁵ The 1880 census names Cynthia's parents' place of Virginia. All censuses of her life name Georgia as her birthplace.

⁶ For Mary, Ulysses, Charles Baldwin, Adeline, Sarah, Joseph, Benjamin, Robert, and Thomas, see the 1850 US census, pop. sch., Chambers Co., Al., p. 318, (stamped), dwelling 749, family 749, Thomas B Royston household. For Margaret, Richard, and Leonidas, see 1860 US census, Chambers Co., Al., pop. sch., p. 130, (penned), dwelling 915, family 895, Thomas B. Royston household. For Maria and Martha, see the 1870 US census, Chambers Co., Al, p. 4, (penned), p. 22 (stamped), dwelling 24, family 24, Cynthia Royston household.

County, in northeast Alabama, by January 1837 and erected a dwelling house in which he lived with his wife and children until 1840.⁷ DeKalb County was formed on 9 January 1836 after the Cherokee Nation ceded its tribal lands in the Treaty of New Echota.⁸ Settlers, primarily from Georgia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas, moved into the area following the removal of the Cherokee families. Most followed subsistence farming, and few practiced slavery.⁹ In contrast, Thomas enslaved nine people in 1840.¹⁰ His status as an enslaver suggests he may have originated from a family of similar economic standing. No deed in DeKalb County holds a bill of sale for his enslaved individuals.¹¹ He likely acquired them in Georgia, either by purchase or by inheritance from a family member.

By 1842, Thomas and Cynthia had moved south to Chambers County, Alabama, where he paid a poll tax and property tax on five enslaved people, as well as a tax on a metal clock, studs, and jacks.¹² Located in the Alabama Piedmont Upland, this area provided better land for growing the cash crop of cotton and ready access to the Chattahoochee River for shipping.¹³

Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, Thomas acquired several landholdings and operated a plantation with those he enslaved.¹⁴ In probate papers dated 29 September 1868, Cynthia stated that Thomas died on 21 September 1868 in Chambers County, Alabama.¹⁵ She listed eleven

⁷ Thomas B. Royston (DeKalb Co.) cash entry file, certificate no. 5969 (1842), Lebanon, Alabama, Land Office; Land Entry Papers 1800-1908, Record Group 49: Records of the Bureau of Land Management; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Thomas received his final patent in 1845 and assigned it to John Graves. Thomas B. Royston, (DeKalb Co., Al., Lebanon Land Office, accession AL3080_.429; Bureau of Land Management, *General Land Office Records* (www.glorecords.blm.gov)). For the family makeup in 1840 see the 1840 US census, DeKalb Co., Al, p. 7, (penned), line 31, F.B. Royston household.

⁸ "DeKalb County, *Encyclopedia of Alabama* (<https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/dekalb-county/>).

⁹ "The History of DeKalb County," *Landmarks Dekalb* (<https://www.landmarksdekalbal.org/historic-dekalb-county-alabama-history/>).

¹⁰ 1840 US census, DeKalb Co., Al., p. 7, (penned), line 31, F.B. Royston household. Nine enslaved people are listed, four children under ten and five people between ten and twenty-four.

¹¹ Negative search for Royston in DeKalb Co. Judge of Probate, Direct Index to Deeds and Mortgages, 1835-1897, *FamilySearch*, Image Group Number (IGN) 8134412, images 146-154. See also DeKalb Co. Judge of Probate, Reverse Index to Deeds and Mortgages, 1835-1897, *FamilySearch*, IGN 8134412, images 339-347.

¹² Chambers Co., Al., Tax Book, 1842, Beat 16, p. 146 Thomas B. Royston, Alabama Dept. of Archives & History, LG 4976, Montgomery, Al.

¹³ Komanduri S. Murty, "Cotton Economy and Slavery in Alabama During the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Comprehensive Social Science Research* Vol. 1 (2023); *Gexin Publications* (<https://gexinonline.com/uploads/articles/article-jcssr-101.pdf>).

¹⁴ For residence, see 1850 US census, pop. sch., Chambers Co., Al., p. 318, (stamped), dwelling 749, family 749, Thomas B Royston household. For slave holdings, see 1850 US census, slave sch. Chambers Co., Al, dist. 19, p. 457, (penned), col. 2, line 10, Thomas B. Royston owner, thirteen enslaved people listed ages two to thirty-seven. See also 1860 US census, slave sch., Chambers Co., Al., Northern Div. p. 48, co. 2, line 11, Thos. B. Royston owner, sixteen enslaved people listed ages two to forty-six. For land transactions see Chambers Co., Deeds 11:256, William & Sarah Ingram to Thomas Beverly Royston, 6 October 1852, also 11:326, James H. Meritt to Thomas B. Royston, 30 June 1853, also 11:639, Thomas B. Royston to John Daniels, 19 July 1853 also 12:46, Thomas B. Royston to Joseph Slagle, 23 December 1854; *FamilySearch*, IGN 8193157. Digital images are currently unavailable for viewing.

¹⁵ Chambers County, Alabama Estates, box 26 folder 24, case file for Thos B Royston, 1867-1883; "Alabama, Wills and Probate Records, 1753-1999," *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 19 August 2016), petition papers 29 September 1868, images 145-146.

living children as heirs. Administration papers from 1875 indicate that Cynthia "removed to the State of Texas," and an account paper of 1 November 1882 states that "Cynthia Royston departed this life in the state of Texas on or about the 2nd day of August 1882."¹⁶

Phase 1: Testing George W. Dillard as Cynthia's Father Hypothesis

Initial research focused on George W. Dillard (born about 1781 in Virginia, died 1854 in Lee County, Alabama) as a strong candidate for Cynthia's father.¹⁷ George W. Dillard first appeared on the 1820 census in Greene County, Georgia.¹⁸ The 1820 and 1830 census records for George W. Dillard showed females of appropriate ages to be Cynthia in his household.¹⁹ George W. Dillard later resided in Russell and Lee counties, Alabama, near Chambers County, where the Roystons settled.²⁰

This hypothesis was definitively disproven with the discovery of a Mahone Family Bible listing marriages for the children of George W. Dillard.²¹ The bible pages revealed that the Dillard female born in 1815 was Mariah L. Dillard (born 21 May 1815), who married James Kivlin on 8 April 1830—not Cynthia.

Phase 2: Elimination of Other Georgia Candidates

The next research phase systematically examined ten Dillard candidates from the 1820 Georgia census who had females of appropriate age in their households.²² All were eliminated based on probate records, marriage records, wills, and census analysis:

- **Arthur Dillard** (Jones County, then Monroe County): Eliminated based on his will naming only two daughters—Nancy Harmon and Elizabeth Joslin.
- **Edmund Dillard** (Washington County, then Gwinnett County): Eliminated as his daughter was identified as Lucy Ann Dillard (born 1814).

¹⁶ Chambers County, Alabama Estates, box 26 folder 24, Thomas Beverly Royston, account paper of 1882, image 165.

¹⁷ Diana Elder, "Is George W. Dillard the Father of Cynthia (Dillard) Royston?" research report, *Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide* (Highland, Utah: Family Locket Books, 2018), 156.

¹⁸ 1820 U.S. Census, Greene County, Georgia, Capt. E Woodhams District, population schedule, p. 202, line 2, George W. Dillard household; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 June 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M33, roll 8.

¹⁹ 1830 U.S. Census, Muscogee County, Georgia, population schedule, p. 277 (penned), line 2, G.W. Dillard household; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 June 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M19, roll 19.

²⁰ For all supporting documentation, see Elder, "Is George W. Dillard the Father of Cynthia (Dillard) Royston?" research report, *Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide*.

²¹ Mahone Family Bible, photocopy of pages, sent via email on 27 May 2020, Rita Schimpff to Diana Elder.

²² For all supporting documentation, see Diana Elder, "Determining a Father for Cynthia," research report, 8 December 2018.

- **John Dillard** (Jones County): Eliminated based on marriage records.
- **Nathan Dillard** (Washington County): Eliminated based on probate and marriage records.
- **Owen Dillard** (Emanuel County): Eliminated based on will and marriage records.
- **Phillip Dillard** (Burke County): Eliminated based on marriage records.
- **Samson Dillard** (Emanuel County): Eliminated based on his 1848 will naming four daughters (Nancy Yeaman, Phoebe Durdin, Mary Davis, and Zilpha Yeoman).
- **Thomas Dillard** (Jones County, then Hancock County): Eliminated based on probate and marriage records.
- **Theophilus Dillard** (Jefferson County): Eliminated based on marriage records identifying his only daughter as Nancy Dillard, who married John Thompson on 14 December 1834.
- **Susan Dillard** (Muscogee County, Georgia, 1830): Eliminated per new research findings that Thomas B. Royston resided in Morgan and Cass Counties during the early 1830s and moved to Chambers County, Alabama, between 1840 and 1842. He likely would not have been present in Muscogee County in 1833-1834, his approximate marriage date.

Phase 3: DNA Analysis: The Elijah Dillard Hypothesis

With documentary research failing to conclusively identify Cynthia's father, DNA analysis opened a new research avenue. Victor Parker, Cynthia's great-grandson, tested his autosomal DNA at Ancestry and shared DNA with more than 63,000 people. A Gephi network graph analysis of Victor's DNA matches revealed a distinct cluster (the "peach cluster") that appeared to originate with Elijah Dillard (born about 1814-1816 in Georgia, died 6 September 1886 in Pike County, Alabama), leading to the hypothesis that Elijah Dillard could be Cynthia's brother.²³

Documentary research documented Elijah's life in southeastern Alabama, with land patents in Macon County (1848), Barbour County (1852), and Dale County (1854), his marriage to Winny Grubbs in Pike County (1855), Civil War service (1863), and residences in Barbour County (1870) and Pike County (1880, 1886).²⁴

²³ Diana Elder, "Is Elijah Dillard the Brother of Cynthia (Dillard) Royston?" research report, 2021.

²⁴ Elijah Dillard, Lee, Macon Counties, Alabama, cash entry patent no. 9349, "Land Patent Search," images, General Land Office Records (www.glorerecords.blm.gov: accessed 3 October 2021); "Alabama, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1805-1967," Pike > 1809-1885, Dillard-Grubbs, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 2 October 2021); FHL 001033193; "Alabama, U.S., Civil War Muster Rolls, 1861-1865," 57th Alabama Infantry Regiment > Company H, entry for Elijah Dillard, 1863, image, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 3 October 2021); 1870 U.S. Census, Barbour County, Alabama, population schedule, Township 10 Range 25, sheet 402B (stamped), p. 171 (penned), dwelling 1345, family 1437, Elijah Dillard; digital image, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 2 October 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 2; 1880 U.S. Census, Pike County, Alabama, population schedule, enumeration district (ED) 149, sheet 190B (stamped), p. 69 (penned), dwelling 479, family 480,

Members of the George W. Dillard family appeared in Macon County records, suggesting he could have been an uncle or cousin to both Cynthia and Elijah, and an Edmond Dillard was found in Pike County probate records. The DNA hypothesis was strengthened by the identification of matches descending from two independent lines of Elijah Dillard—descendants of his sons Josiah Dillard and James Monroe Dillard—with James Monroe's residence in Escambia County, Florida, possibly explaining why Mariah (Royston) Lovelady reported Florida as Cynthia's birthplace.

Current Status and Research Gaps

The research has not yet definitively identified Cynthia's father. The DNA evidence strongly suggests Elijah Dillard was Cynthia's brother, sharing the same unknown parents. However, neither documentary research nor DNA analysis has yet revealed the identity of these parents. Possibilities include:

- An unknown Dillard male who may have died early, leaving no probate records
- A connection to the George W. Dillard family (possibly as an uncle or cousin rather than father)
- A yet-undiscovered Dillard family in Georgia

The dearth of early records for both Cynthia and Elijah could indicate several scenarios: a father's early death with no probate records, children left orphaned and raised in different households, or record loss due to courthouse fires.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Following Phase 3 of the Dillard research, new evidence came to light revealing Thomas B. Royston's residence in Cass County, Georgia, in 1833 and 1834, providing a new research location. Cynthia and Thomas married about 1833, and she may have moved to Cass County with her Dillard family, where she met Thomas B. Royston. He moved to Cass County by 26 June 1833 when he received his commission as a 1st Lieutenant in 1833. He also served as a deputy sheriff in 1834.²⁵ In 1835, Thomas still had ties to Cass County as his name was among

Elijah Dillard; digital image, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 2 October 2021); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 29; Pike County, Alabama, Births, 1881-1937; deaths, 1881-1929, Death register, E. Dillard, 6 September 1886, p. 12, cert. 21, digitized image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3SC-DH9W>: accessed 2 November 2021), film 008497822, image 577.

²⁵ "Cass Sheriff's Sales for April," Thomas B. Royston DS, *Cherokee Intelligencer* (Cherokee County, Georgia), 8 March 1834, p. 4, col. 1. The same notice was placed in *The Miners Recorder and Spy in the West* (Lumpkin County, Georgia), Thomas B. Royston DS, 29 March 1834, p. 4, col. 1 para. 4. See also "Cass Sheriff's Sales for June," *Miners*

those listed in the *Cassville Gazette* with letters left at the Cassville post office.²⁶ Sometime after 1834 or 1835, Thomas and family moved across the Georgia-Alabama border and settled in DeKalb County by 1837.²⁷

Cass County History²⁸

The history of Cass County is essential in understanding why Cynthia's family may have moved to the area in the early 1830s.

Formation and Naming

Cass County was created on 3 December 1832, from Cherokee County territory. The county was named for General Lewis Cass, U.S. Secretary of War under President Andrew Jackson, who was instrumental in implementing Cherokee removal policies. Cassville was surveyed and established as the county seat in July 1833.

In 1861, following the start of the Civil War, General Lewis Cass's Unionist leanings made his name unpopular in Confederate Georgia. On December 6, 1861, the state legislature renamed Cass County to Bartow County in honor of Col. Francis S. Bartow, a Georgia officer killed at First Manassas.

Cherokee Removal and Land Distribution

Before 1832, the area was inhabited by the Cherokee Nation, who had developed an agricultural society. In 1830, Cherokee territory was placed under Georgia jurisdiction. The area that became Cass County was distributed through the 1832 Cherokee Land Lottery, the largest and most significant of Georgia's land lotteries. Over 85,000 people competed for 18,309 land lots in this lottery, with lots typically 160 acres in size.

The Treaty of New Echota was signed in 1835, finalizing Cherokee removal. The Cherokee were forcibly removed via the Trail of Tears, with removal completed by 1838-1839.

Recorder and Spy in the West (Lumpkin County, Georgia), Thomas B. Royston DS, 10 May 1834, p. 4, col. 2 para. 6. This notice was repeated on three consecutive weeks: 17 May, 24 May, and 31 May.

²⁶ "List of Letters," *Cassville Gazette* (Cassville, Georgia), Thomas B. Royston, 14 April 1835, p. 4, col. 4, para. 3.

²⁷ Thomas B. Royston (DeKalb Co.) cash entry file, certificate no. 5969 (1842), Lebanon, Alabama, Land Office.

²⁸ "History of Cass County, Georgia (1832-1861)," Claude, Version 4.5 Sonnet, chat with user Diana Elder, *Anthropic* (<https://claude.ai/new/> : accessed 23 October 2025). Sources include Cass County, Georgia (1832-1870) Locality Guide, ChatGPT, Version 5 Deep Research, chat with user Diana Elder, *OpenAI* (<https://chatgpt.com/> : accessed 23 October 2025). Also, Lucy Josephine Cunyus, *The History of Bartow County : Formerly Cass* (Easley, South Carolina : Georgia Genealogical Reprints, n.d.), 17. Also Joseph B. Mahan, Jr., *A History of Old Cassville 1833-1864, rev. ed.* (Cartersville, Georgia : Etowah Valley Historical Society, 2006); summary by Claude 4.5 Sonnet, chat with user, Diana Elder, 18 October 2025, *Anthropic* (<https://claude.ai/chat/2c0ab450-a789-42a3-9c30-6cb66922060d> : accessed 18 October 2025).

Early Settlement

Settlers came primarily from Tennessee, Kentucky, the Carolinas, and Mississippi. The 1860 census showed only five foreign-born residents in Cass County (four from Ireland, one from Germany), indicating that migration into the county was primarily internal from other southern states. Settlement patterns initially concentrated along river valleys and lottery land lots.

Geography and Boundaries

Cass County is located in the ridge-and-valley region of northwest Georgia, along the Etowah River, about 40-50 miles northwest of Atlanta. The county's terrain includes fertile river valleys (Etowah and its tributaries, such as Allatoona Creek and Salacoa Creek) and portions of the Appalachian foothills, including the Allatoona Mountains in the south.

In 1850, the northern portion of Cass County was used to create Gordon County (along with part of Floyd County). During the period 1832-1860, Cass County was bordered by Cherokee County (later portions became Pickens County) to the north and east, Paulding County and Cobb County to the south, and Floyd County and Polk County to the west.

Civil War Impact

The war brought severe destruction to Cass County. In 1864, Union troops burned Cassville—including the courthouse—during Sherman's Atlanta Campaign on October 30. However, many official records were saved by the quick actions of the county clerk, Tom Word, who evacuated marriage, deed, and probate books before the courthouse was destroyed. According to local history, Word “loaded his buggy with county records and some of the files of the county paper when he heard that the town was to be burned and rode away just before the courthouse building was destroyed.”²⁹

After the war, the ruined Cassville never recovered. In 1867, the county government relocated to Cartersville, a railroad town that became the permanent Bartow County seat.

Dillards in the 1840 Census

Because Cass County wasn't created until 1832, the first federal census to list residents was 1840. Four Dillard individuals were named: Elizabeth in district 951 and John, William, and

²⁹ Joe Mahan, “Cassville Destroyed Seventy-Five Years Ago,” *The Tribune News*, Cartersville, Ga., Thursday, November 2, 1939; cited in *Cassville Historical Society* (<https://www.cassvillehistoricalsociety.com/history/> : accessed 23 October 2025).

Elijah in district 973. Could any of these Dillards be connected to Cynthia? Each will be examined in turn.

District 951: Elizabeth Dillard

Elizabeth Dillard headed a household comprising two young males, a possible couple in their thirties, and a woman in her twenties. She was likely a widow, and her children and grandchildren lived with her.³⁰ The presence of two young male slaves points to her economic status as a woman of modest wealth.

- Free White Males, ages 5-9: 2
- Free White Males, ages 30-39: 1
- Free White Females, ages 20-29: 1
- Free White Females, age 30-39 -
- Free White Females, ages 50-59: 1

Enslaved Persons:

- Male Slaves, under 10: 2

The enumerator appears to have incorrectly marked several columns, then changed those to zeros. Born about 1780-1790, Elizabeth would be of the right age to be Cynthia's mother.

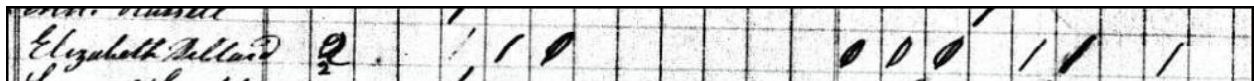


Figure 1. 1840 Census, Cass County, Elizabeth Dillard

Identifying Elizabeth Dillard (1784-1841)

Research discovered the origins of Elizabeth Dillard from the 1840 census. She died on 7 March 1841 in Cassville, Cass County, Georgia, and was buried in the Cassville Cemetery. The headstone inscription reads:

³⁰ 1840 U.S. census, Cass County, Georgia, District 951, p. 115 (penned), line 20, Elizabeth Dillard; imaged, "1840 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8057/> : accessed 31 August 2025).



Figure 2 Headstone of Elizabeth Dillard

IN
memory of
MRS. ELIZABETH DILLARD
who departed this
life March the 7th A.D.
1841 aged 57 years
and 21 days³¹

Following Elizabeth's death, *The Georgia Pioneer*, the local Cassville newspaper, ran a notice that property from her estate was to be sold. The mention of enslaved people correlates with the 1840 census.

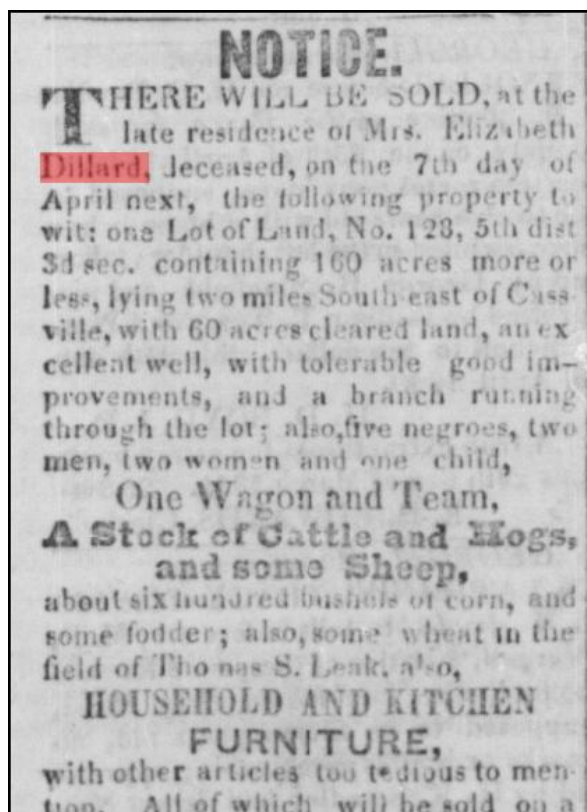


Figure 3. Newspaper Clipping for estate sale of Mrs. Elizabeth Dillard

"NOTICE.
THERE WILL BE SOLD, at the
late residence of Mrs. Elizabeth
Dillard, deceased, on the 7th day of
April next, the following property to
wit: one Lot of Land, No. 123, 5th dist
3d sec. containing 160 acres more or
less, lying two miles South-east of Cass-
ville, with 60 acres cleared land, an ex-
cellent well, with tolerable good im-
provements, and a branch running
through the lot; also, five negroes, two
men, two women and one child,
One Wagon and Team,
A Stock of Cattle and Hogs,
and some Sheep,
about six hundred bushels of corn, and
some fodder; also, some wheat in the
field of Thomas S. Leak, also,
HOUSEHOLD AND KITCHEN
FURNITURE,
with other articles too tedious to men-
tion. All of which will be sold on a
credit till the first day of January next.
March 17, 1841. tds

³¹ database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/65517142/elizabeth-dillard>: accessed October 16, 2025), memorial page for Elizabeth Pearson Dillard (16 Feb 1784–7 Mar 1841), Find a Grave Memorial ID 65517142, citing Cassville Cemetery, Cassville, Bartow County, Georgia, USA; Maintained by Paul Dietrich (contributor 47359622).

Because of the record loss, no other probate documents for Elizabeth are extant.

Tracking Elizabeth Dillard to her residence before Cass County, Georgia, found her in Laurens County, South Carolina. The FindAGrave Memorial provides the clue linking her to Laurens County and the 1830 census listed an Elizabeth Dillard in that county. Her birth of 1780-1790 correlates with her calculated birth year of 1784 from her headstone. The presence of enslaved individuals in the household also shows that this is likely the same person. Her 1830 household consisted of five white persons and ten enslaved people.³²

- Free White Persons – Males – ages 10–14: 2
- Free White Persons – Females – ages 10–14: 1
- Free White Persons – Females – ages 15–19: 1
- **Free White Persons – Females – ages 40–49: 1 [Elizabeth Dillard]**
- Slaves – Males – under 10: 4
- Slaves – Males – ages 24–35: 1
- Slaves – Females – ages 10–23: 3
- Slaves – Females – ages 24–35: 2
- Slaves – Females – ages 36–54: 1

As the head of household in 1830, Elizabeth was likely a widow. An 1824 Laurens County estate record for John Dillard, deceased, names her as the administratrix, a role appointed by the court when there was no will. The estate appraisal and sale bill show Elizabeth Dillard buying most of the items; other Dillards who purchased were Simonian Dillard, John Dillard, Anna Dillard, and George Dillard.³³

Elizabeth probably moved west to Cass County seeking new land and purchased her 160-acre lot number 123 in the 5th district, 3rd section. Since she wasn't eligible to participate in the 1832 land lottery (being ineligible due to not residing in the state for at least three years), she would have bought the land from someone who was chosen in the lottery.

Cynthia Dillard, born in Georgia, wouldn't fit into this Laurens County, South Carolina, family. Although she could have been the female aged 15-19 in the 1830 household, Cynthia is

³² 1830 U.S. census, Laurens County, South Carolina, p. 253 (penned), column 1, line 1, Eliz Dillard head of household; imaged, "1830 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8058/> : accessed 23 October 2025).

³³ Laurens District, South Carolina, Estate Record 1818-1830 E: 389-391, Elizabeth Dillard, administratrix of John Dillard, deceased ; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939L-JX7T-9> : accessed 23 October 2025), IGN, 4754155, images 195-6 of 860.

not named anywhere in the probate for John Dillard. Also, Elizabeth likely moved to Cass County after the 1833 window when Cynthia was living there. Unclaimed land lots were not sold for a few years after the initial lottery.

District 973: John, William, and Elijah Dillard

Also residing in Cass County in 1840 were three men: John, William, and Elijah Dillard, see figures 4 and 5. In contrast to Elizabeth Dillard's household, none of these men enslaved people, suggesting either a reduced economic status or opposition to slavery.

John and William are listed next to each other, with Elijah a few lines further down. See figures 2 and 3. Of interest is Elijah Dillard. Previous research found an Elijah Dillard, born about 1814-1816 in Georgia, and died 6 September 1886 in Pike County, Alabama, genetically related to Cynthia, perhaps as a brother. Could this be the same man? Researching this group of Dillards could identify them and any possible connection to Cynthia.

John Dillard	.	.	.	.	/	.	.	/	.	.	.	.	.	.	/	2	/	.	.	/	.	.	.	.
William Dillard	2	1	2	1	.	/	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	1	.	.	/	.	.	.	.	.	.

Figure 4. 1840 Census, Cass County, John and William Dillard Households

Elijah Dillard	2	.	.	/	/	/	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	/	.	.	/	.	.	.	.	.	.
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Figure 5. 1840 Census, Cass County, Elijah Dillard Household

John Dillard's household appears to include an older couple and potentially a younger couple. The three females, aged 10 to 19, could be daughters of either couple. Cynthia might be a daughter of John Dillard, considering his birth between 1770 and 1780.³⁴

- Free White Males, ages 30-39: 1
- **Free White Males, ages 60-69: 1**
- Free White Females, ages 10-14: 1
- Free White Females, ages 15-19: 2
- Free White Females, ages 20-29: 1
- Free White Females, ages 50-59: 1

³⁴ 1840 U.S. census, Cass County, Georgia, District 973, p. 78 (penned), line 4, John Dillard; imaged, "1840 United States Federal Census" *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8057/> : accessed 31 August 2025).

William Dillard's household includes himself, an inferred wife, and their inferred eight children under 19. His birth range of 1801-1810 places him as a possible older brother to Cynthia.³⁵

- Free White Males, under 5: 2
- Free White Males, ages 5-9: 1
- Free White Males, ages 10-14: 2
- Free White Males, ages 15-19: 1
- **Free White Males, ages 30-39: 1**
- Free White Females, under 5: 2
- Free White Females, ages 5-9: 1
- Free White Females, ages 30-39: 1

Elijah Dillard's household included himself, his inferred wife, a male in his twenties, and four children under 19. Elijah's birth between 1801 and 1810 makes him older than the Elijah Dillard of Alabama, who was born about 1814-1816.³⁶

- Free White Males, under 5: 2
- Free White Males, ages 15-19: 1
- Free White Males, ages 20-29: 1
- **Free White Males, ages 30-39: 1**
- Free White Females, ages 10-14: 1
- Free White Females, ages 30-39: 1

Identifying John, William, and Elijah Dillard

John Dillard was old enough to be Cynthia Dillard's father. Could she be part of a family group headed by John?

Deed and Court Record

Research found that this group of Dillards moved south from their previous residence in Monroe County, Tennessee, to Cass County, Georgia. An 1849 deed and an 1853 court record of Monroe identify the heirs of John Dillard Jr. as William Dillard, Elijah Dillard, Reuben

³⁵ 1840 U.S. census, Cass County, Georgia, District 973, p. 78 (penned), line 5, William Dillard; imaged, "1840 United States Federal Census" *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8057/> : accessed 31 August 2025).

³⁶ 1840 U.S. census, Cass County, Georgia, District 973, p. 78 (penned), line 16, Elijah Dillard; imaged, "1840 United States Federal Census" *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8057/> : accessed 31 August 2025).

Campbell and wife Dolly Campbell, Joseph Bowman and wife Fanny Bowman, William Hoskins and wife Lotty Hoskins, Joseph B. McSpadden and wife Edy McSpadden, and Evan Campbell and wife Sarah.

John Dillard had sold his land in Monroe County in 1834 with a promise to provide a title to the property to the purchaser, Carter Hudgens. In 1849, his sons and sons-in-law formally executed the deed acknowledging that Hudgens had paid their father, John Dillard, the full \$3,500 price years earlier.

The deed was signed only by the men. While this may have been sufficient in some jurisdictions or for transferring their own interests, it was legally inadequate under Tennessee law at the time to convey the property rights of their wives, who were also direct heirs. The legal doctrine of "coverture" required a separate, specific legal process (a privy examination) for a married woman to sell her inherited land, and this was not done. Therefore, the 1849 deed successfully transferred the men's shares but left the ownership interests of the female heirs (Dolly, Fanny, Lotty, Edy, Sarah) still attached to the land, creating a "clouded" title for Hudgens. Having received the 1849 deed, Carter Hudgens or his lawyer must have realized it was legally defective in Tennessee. This led directly to the Chancery Court complaint filed in Madisonville around 1853. This lawsuit was not about forcing the heirs to act for the first time; it was about legally perfecting the flawed title he had received in 1849.³⁷

1850 Census

On 13 February 1850, Gordon County, Georgia, was created from the northern section of Cass County.³⁸ William Dillard, age 45, born in North Carolina, lived in Gordon County with his inferred wife, Nancy, and eight inferred children. The birthplace of each child reveals the family's migration from Tennessee to Georgia between 1837 and 1840.³⁹

- William Dillard – Age 45 born North Carolina
- Nancy Dillard, Age 45 born Tennessee

³⁷ Monroe County, Tennessee, Deeds, O:134, Heirs of John Dillard to Carter Hudgens, 1849; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSKX-KSL1-Y> : accessed 12 October 2025), IGN 8151332, image 75 of 651.

Also, Monroe County, Tennessee Chancery court, transcripts 1849-1853, loose papers, deposition heirs of John Dillard and Carter Hudges, loose paper, no date, likely 1853 ; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C39N-29WH-W> : accessed 23 October 2025), IGN 8478649, images 961-2 of 975.

³⁸ Jane Powers Weldon, "Gordon County, *New Georgia Encyclopedia* (<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/counties-cities-neighborhoods/gordon-county/> : accessed 23 October 2025).

³⁹ 1850 U.S. Census, Gordon County, Georgia, population schedule, Division 12, p. 58a (penned), dwelling 678, family 675, William Dillard; imaged, "1850 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8054/> : accessed 8 October 2025).

- Samuel Dillard — Age 21 born Tennessee
- Green Dillard — Age 19 born Tennessee
- Lucinda Dillard — Age 17 born Tennessee
- Bradley Dillard — Age 15 born Tennessee
- Evans Dillard — Age 13 born Tennessee
- Rhoda Dillard — Age 11 born Georgia
- Charlotte Dillard — Age 9 born Georgia
- Moses M. Dillard — Age 7 born Georgia

This is almost certainly the William Dillard of the 1840 census and a son of John Dillard. Next to his household is that of Reuben and Mary Campbell, his sister and brother-in-law. A few households away lived brother Elijah Dillard and his family.⁴⁰ Elijah was also born in North Carolina, and by the birthplace of his children, appears to have moved to Georgia by 1836. This Elijah Dillard does not fit the profile for the Elijah previously studied, who is genetically connected to Cynthia (Dillard) Royston.

- Elijah Dillard, 48, farmer, born NC
- Pamela Dillard, 45 born Virginia
- William Dillard, 14 born Georgia
- E L Dillard, 11 born Georgia

The FamilySearch Family Tree displays this family along with a migration pattern from North Carolina to Kentucky and then to Tennessee based on the children's birthplaces.

Cynthia Dillard, involved in this study, was born in Georgia and does not align with the John Dillard family. Additionally, she was not listed as an heir in the deeds. This candidate can therefore be eliminated as a potential father.

⁴⁰ 1850 U.S. Census, Gordon County, Georgia, population schedule, Division 12, p. 61a (penned), dwelling 710, family 716, Elijah Dillard; imaged, "1850 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8054/> : accessed 8 October 2025).

Georgia Cherokee Land Lottery of 1832

History⁴¹

The 1832 Georgia Land Lottery was the largest and most significant of Georgia's land lotteries, representing the culmination of Georgia's decades-long effort to claim the lands of the Cherokee Nation. The Georgia General Assembly authorized it through acts passed in 1830 and 1831.

Between 1805 and 1833, Georgia held eight land lotteries as a method to transparently distribute land to citizens, designed to prevent the fraud scandals that had plagued previous land distribution systems. The lottery system was unique to Georgia in its scale and distributed approximately three-quarters of the state's land to around 100,000 families and individuals.

The 1832 lottery specifically targeted Cherokee Nation lands that Georgia had organized into Cherokee County. Despite the Supreme Court's 1832 decision in *Worcester v. Georgia* that upheld Cherokee sovereignty, Georgia proceeded with surveying and distributing Cherokee lands through the lottery system, leaving the problem of removing the Native Americans "in the hands of the United States Government."

Dillard Fortunate Drawers

Several Dillard men were fortunate drawers in the 1832 Cherokee Land Lottery, and the prospect of land may have been an incentive for them to move to the area. However, not all fortunate drawers moved to the area. Many Georgians chose to either sell their lots or not claim them. The state eventually resold any unclaimed lot. Cynthia's father could be among these fortunate drawers, particularly one who chose to move and settle in the Cass County area.

Table 1 lists the district and section of the land lot, the name of the fortunate drawer, the militia district and county of the drawer's residence, the county of the land lot, and the page number from Smith's book listing all fortunate drawers. All names marked with an * were granted land before the first day of January 1838.⁴²

Figure 6, immediately following table 1, illustrates the approximate locations of the various land lots.⁴³ None of the Dillard fortunate drawers drew a land lot in Cass County.

⁴¹ James F. Smith, *The Cherokee Land Lottery of Georgia: Containing a Numerical List of the Names of the Fortunate Drawers in Said Lottery; with an Engraved Map of Each District* (Greenville, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1991, c1968); summary by Claude 4.5 Sonnet, chat with user, Diana Elder, 28 October 2025, Anthropic (<https://claude.ai/>): accessed 28 October 2025.

⁴² Smith, *The Cherokee Land Lottery of Georgia*. The page number for each drawer is indicated in the table.

⁴³ Smith, *The Cherokee Land Lottery of Georgia*. The map appears in the forward section.

However, William Dillard's lot was located in neighboring Cherokee County, so he would be useful to research further.

Table 1 Dillard Fortunate Drawers of the 1832 Cherokee Land Lottery

District & Section ^a	Name	Militia District	County	Book Page
17th District, First Section, Cherokee	William Dillard	249th, Walton*	Union County	52
25th District, Second Section, Cherokee	A. and S. Dillard, ors. [orphans]	70th, Burke	Murray & Gilmer Counties	175
13th District, Second Section, Cherokee	William Dillard	249th, Walton	Cherokee County	132
27th District, Third Section, Cherokee	Thomas M. Dillard	Howell's, Elbert*	Walker County	312
7th District, Fourth Section, Cherokee	Isaac Dillard	Howell's, Elbert	Walker County	351
8th District, Fourth Section, Cherokee	James Dillard	Howell's, Elbert*	Walker County	359
11th District, Fourth Section, Cherokee	Bethsheba Dillard, w. [widow]	Williams's, Washington	Walker County	379
a. James F. Smith, <i>The Cherokee Land Lottery of Georgia: Containing a Numerical List of the Names of the Fortunate Drawers in Said Lottery; with an Engraved Map of Each District</i> (Greenville, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1991, c1968). The page number for each drawer is indicated in the table. Immediately after the lottery, Cherokee County was divided into ten counties, but the original survey and grant records use the original name, Cherokee, as noted in the first column.				

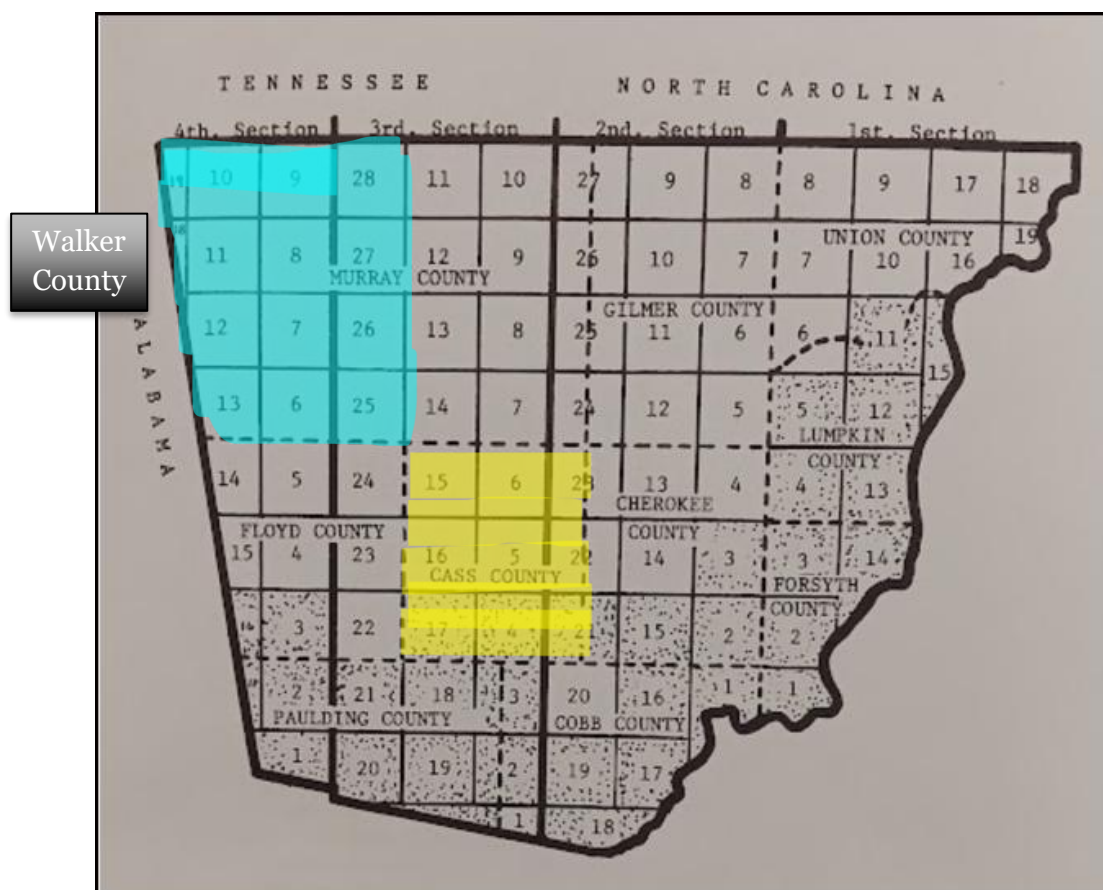


Figure 6. Map showing the land area of the Cherokee Lottery. The squares showing dots are the gold districts. Cass County is highlighted. Walker is not shown on the map and is highlighted in blue.

Georgia Gold Lottery of 1832

History⁴⁴

The 1832 Gold Lottery was conducted separately from, but concurrent with, the 1832 Cherokee Land Lottery. Both lotteries distributed lands of the Cherokee Nation, which the state had organized into Cherokee County. The Georgia General Assembly authorized the Gold Lottery through acts passed in 1830 and 1831.

While the regular 1832 Cherokee Land Lottery distributed standard land lots of 160 acres, the Gold Lottery specifically addressed parcels in gold-bearing areas. These gold lots were significantly smaller, measuring only 40 acres instead of the standard 160 acres.

⁴⁴ S. Emmett Lucas Jr., *The 1832 Gold Lottery of Georgia: Containing a List of the Fortunate Drawers in Said Lottery* (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1988) ; summary by Claude 4.5 Sonnet, chat with user, Diana Elder, 28 October 2025, *Anthropic* (<https://claude.ai/>) : accessed 28 October 2025.

The discovery of gold in Cherokee territory in the late 1820s attracted prospectors and increased pressure to remove the Cherokee people. The gold-bearing lands were particularly valuable, which explains why the state created a separate lottery system for these parcels and reduced their size to 40 acres, allowing more individuals to participate in the wealth from gold mining.

The lottery was open to most white male residents of Georgia, with extra chances given to:

- Veterans
- Widows
- Orphans

Certain individuals were specifically excluded from participation:

- Those who had previously won land in earlier lotteries
- Those who had mined for gold in Cherokee territory
- Those convicted of a felony

Dillard Fortunate Drawers

Dillard men from various Georgia counties drew lots for land in one of the counties of the gold lottery. Three men drew lots in Cass County – James Dillard of Pulaski, Joseph B. Dillard of Oglethorpe, and Roliver [Toliver] Dillard of Burke. Since Cass County is identified as a likely marriage location for Cynthia Dillard and Thomas B. Royston, further research should focus on each of the Cass County Dillard lottery winners. One of these three could be Cynthia's father. Table 2 shows the name, county and militia district of residence, lot and section number of the land, and the county where the lot was located.

Table 2 1832 Georgia Gold Lottery Fortunate Drawers

Name ^a	County	Militia District	Lot/District	Section	Resulting County
Dillard's, Reuben (Orph.)	Oglethorpe	Hargroves	73/15	1	Lumpkin Co.
Dillard, James	Elbert	Howells	1023/14	1	Forsythe Co.
Dillard, James	Elbert	Howells	765/3	2	Cherokee Co.
Dillard, James	Gwinnett	Bridges	668/11	2	? Lumpkin/Union Co.
Dillard, James	Pulaski	Odams	1119/3	3	Cass Co.
Dillard, John	Burke	Polhills	1077/17	2	Cobb Co.

Dillard, John	Walton	250	337/16	4	Cobb Co.
Dillard, Joseph B.	Oglethorpe	Hargroves	969/2	3	Cass Co.
Dillard, Sampson	Emanuel	4B	1106/3	2	Cherokee Co.
Dillard, Willis	Monroe	Hills	648/3	2	Cherokee Co.
Dillard, Almerin	Washington	Williams	226/19	3	Paulding Co.
Dillard, Dempsey	Washington	Robisons	1056/16	2	Cobb Co.
Dillard, Roliver [Toliver?]	Burke	68	893/3	3	Cass Co.
a. S. Emmett Lucas Jr., <i>The 1832 Gold Lottery of Georgia: Containing a List of the Fortunate Drawers in Said Lottery</i> (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1988)					

Prioritized List for Future Research

Grouping the Dillard men by the county where their land lot was located creates a prioritized list for future research. The Dillards in Cass County are the top priority, then those in neighboring counties. The last priority will be those Dillards farther from Cass County.

Table 3 Consolidated List of Dillards in the 1832 Lottery, Prioritized by Proximity to Cass County

Name	Lottery Type	County of Origin	Militia District	Lot/District or District & Section	Lot Location County
Dillard, James	Gold	Pulaski	Odams	1119/3, Section 3	Cass County
Dillard, Joseph B.	Gold	Oglethorpe	Hargroves	969/2, Section 3	Cass County
Dillard, Roliver	Gold	Burke	68	893/3, Section 3	Cass County
Dillard, William	Land	Walton	249th, Walton	13th District, Section 2	Cherokee County
Dillard, James	Gold	Elbert	Howells	765/3, Section 2	Cherokee County
Dillard, Sampson	Gold	Emanuel	4B	1106/3, Section 2	Cherokee County
Dillard, Willis	Gold	Monroe	Hills	648/3, Section 2	Cherokee County
Dillard, John	Gold	Burke	Polhills	1077/17, Section 2	Cobb County
Dillard, John	Gold	Walton	250	337/16, Section 4	Cobb County
Dillard, Dempsey	Gold	Washington	Robisons	1056/16, Section 2	Cobb County
Dillard, James	Gold	Elbert	Howells	1023/14, Section 1	Forsythe County
Dillard's, Reuben (Orph.)	Gold	Oglethorpe	Hargroves	73/15, Section 1	Lumpkin County
Dillard, James	Gold	Gwinnett	Bridges	668/11, Section 2	Lumpkin/Union County

A. and S. Dillard, ors.	Land	Burke	70th, Burke	25th District, Section 2, Cherokee	Murray & Gilmer Co.
Dillard, Almerin	Gold	Washington	Williams	226/19, Section 3	Paulding County
Dillard, William	Land	Walton	249th, Walton*	17th District, First Section, Cherokee	Union County
Dillard, Thomas M.	Land	Elbert	Howell's, Elbert*	27th District, Third Section, Cherokee	Walker County
Dillard, Isaac	Land	Elbert	Howell's, Elbert	7th District, Fourth Section, Cherokee	Walker County
Dillard, James	Land	Elbert	Howell's, Elbert*	8th District, Fourth Section, Cherokee	Walker County
Dillard, Bethsheba (w.)	Land	Washington	Williams's, Washington	11th District, Fourth Section, Cherokee	Walker County

CONCLUSION⁴⁵

This research phase successfully narrowed the geographic focus to Cass County, Georgia, as the likely marriage location for Cynthia Dillard and Thomas B. Royston around 1833-1834. Building on three previous research phases that systematically eliminated thirteen Georgia Dillard candidates, this research focused on identifying Dillard families with direct ties to Cass County during the critical period when Cynthia likely married or shortly thereafter.

Census research for the 1840 enumeration identified four Dillard households in Cass County: John Dillard, William Dillard, Elijah Dillard, and Elizabeth Dillard, with John and Elizabeth old enough to be Cynthia's parent. Further research showed that William and Elijah Dillard were sons of John Dillard (deceased by 1841), who had migrated from North Carolina through Monroe County, Tennessee, before settling in Cass County. Documentary evidence, including deed records naming John Dillard's heirs, indicated that Cynthia was not among them, ruling out this family line. Elizabeth Dillard was traced to Laurens County, South Carolina, with a migration pattern and census district distinct from the other Dillards in Cass County, and was thus eliminated as a relative. Elijah Dillard, living in Cass County in 1840, was confirmed to be another son of John Dillard from North Carolina, not the Elijah Dillard (born circa 1814-1816) identified through DNA analysis as Cynthia's probable brother.

The background research established the historical context of Cass County's formation on 3 December 1832 from Cherokee Nation lands during Georgia's land lottery system. This

⁴⁵ "Cynthia Dillard Father Candidate Report Review," Claude, Version 4.5 Sonnet, chat with user Diana Elder, 30 October 2025, *Anthropic* (<https://claude.ai/new/> : 30 October 2025).

timing aligned perfectly with the estimated marriage date of Cynthia and Thomas B. Royston. Understanding the settlement patterns following the Cherokee removal provided crucial context for identifying which Dillard families migrated to this newly opened territory and when they arrived.

Analysis of the 1832 land lottery system—both the Cherokee Land Lottery and the separate Gold Lottery—revealed the mechanism by which settlers acquired land in the newly formed Cass County. The Gold Lottery specifically distributed 40-acre parcels in gold-bearing areas to white Georgia residents, with extra chances given to veterans, widows, and orphans. This research identified all Dillard fortunate drawers from both lotteries and created a prioritized list based on the county where their land lots were located, with Cass County Dillards receiving top priority, followed by those in neighboring counties.

Three Dillard men drew gold lottery lots specifically in Cass County: James Dillard of Pulaski County (Lot 1119/3, Section 3), Joseph B. Dillard of Oglethorpe County (Lot 969/2, Section 3), and Roliver (possibly Toliver) Dillard of Burke County (Lot 893/3, Section 3). These three fortunate drawers represent the highest-priority candidates for future investigation as Cynthia's potential father. Their presence in Cass County through land ownership during the early 1830s places them in the correct geographic location and time period for Cynthia's marriage to Thomas B. Royston.

However, documentary research on these three specific men has not yet been conducted. The earliest deed books for Cass County (later Bartow County) were lost, preventing access to land transactions during the critical period of the early-to-mid 1830s when these men would have been claiming their lottery lots, acquiring additional property, and establishing residency. This significant gap in the record will challenge efforts to trace these three gold lottery winners and their families through traditional documentary sources.

The central research question—"Who is Cynthia Dillard's father?"—remains unresolved. The DNA hypothesis from earlier research suggesting Elijah Dillard (born circa 1814-1816 in Georgia, died 1886 in Pike County, Alabama) as Cynthia's brother remains the most promising lead, but neither documentary research nor DNA analysis has yet identified their shared parents. The identification of three Cass County gold lottery winners—James Dillard, Joseph B. Dillard, and Roliver [Toliver] Dillard—provides specific, named candidates for future targeted research, offering the most promising path forward for identifying Cynthia's parents.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Priority 1: Cass County Gold Lottery Winners

The three Dillard men who drew gold lottery lots specifically in Cass County represent the most promising candidates for Cynthia's father:

- James Dillard of Pulaski County, Georgia (Lot 1119, District 3, Section 3)
- Joseph B. Dillard of Oglethorpe County, Georgia (Lot 969, District 2, Section 3)
- Roliver (possibly Toliver) Dillard of Burke County, Georgia (Lot 893, District 3, Section 3)

Research Strategy for All Three Candidates:

- Conduct exhaustive research in their counties of origin. Examine census records (1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860), marriage records, tax digests, deed records, and probate records to establish family composition, identify wives and children, determine birth locations, and trace parental origins.
- Trace their movements and determine lottery lot disposition. Search Cass/Bartow County deed records from 1837 forward to determine whether each man occupied his gold lot, sold it immediately, or retained ownership while residing elsewhere. Examine tax records to establish residency patterns in Cass County during the 1830s-1840s.
- Investigate connections to southeastern Alabama. Search for evidence that any of these three men or their family members migrated to Macon County, Barbour County, Dale County, or Pike County, Alabama—areas where Elijah Dillard (Cynthia's probable brother) later resided. Look for land transactions, tax records, or family members in these Alabama locations.

Priority 2: Neighboring County Lottery Winners

- Research Cherokee County lottery winners. Examine Dillard fortunate drawers in Cherokee County (William Dillard of Walton, Sampson Dillard of Emanuel, Willis Dillard of Monroe, and James Dillard of Elbert) to determine if any maintained connections to Cass County or had family ties to the three Cass County winners.
- Research Cobb County lottery winners. Investigate John Dillard of Burke and John Dillard of Walton, along with Dempsey Dillard of Washington, who drew lots in Cobb County, as these individuals may have had connections to adjacent Cass County.
- Research Paulding County lottery winner. Examine Almerin Dillard of Washington County, who drew a lot in Paulding County, which borders Cass County, to determine any family connections.

Priority 3: DNA Testing and Analysis

- Review autosomal DNA matches. Compare test results to Victor Parker's matches to determine if any share DNA segments with any Dillards identified in the land lottery research, finding a possible biological relationship to Cynthia (Dillard) Royston.

- Continue analyzing Victor Parker's DNA matches for additional independent lines descending from Elijah Dillard. Focus on identifying matches from lines other than Josiah Dillard and James Monroe Dillard to strengthen the sibling hypothesis further.
- Find a Y-DNA tester from descendants of Elijah Dillard to start comparing with other Dillard lines.