



DEATH OF MR. JOHN G. WILLIAMS

We regret to have to announce to our readers the sad intelligence of the death of this worthy citizen. He died at his residence, in this city, yesterday morning, a few minutes before five o'clock.

MR. WILLIAMS was born in the city of New York, on the 25th day of December, 1827. He was, therefore, in the 52d year of his age. He was of Welsh parentage. His parents, with his only brother, EVA WILLIAMS, now deceased, settled in Raleigh in 1833. MR. WILLIAMS had, therefore, been a resident of Raleigh from his childhood. When a lad he was employed in the confectionary store of Mr. S. L. TUCKER, and afterwards, Mr. TUCKER having opened a branch of his business in Rolesville, and being postmaster at Rolesville, JOHN--as his friends loved to call him--was put in charge of this business and was the clerk in the post office. But Mr. TUCKER, having failed in his business, Mr. WILLIAMS found a friend in that noble old gentleman, CAPT. THOMAS G. SCOTT, then postmaster in Raleigh. CAPTAIN SCOTT employed the bright faced, intelligent youth, and he remained with him until he was succeeded as postmaster by WILLIAM WHITE, ESQ. He remained for some time with Mr. WHITE, winning the favor of all by his strict attention to his duties, and his patient courtesy to the patrons of the office. He next engaged in mercantile business with Mr. H. L. EVANS, for one year, in the house now occupied by MR. WEIKEL, on Fayetteville street; and at the end of this year he entered the employment of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, which had its rooms on the second floor of the building erected by, and then the property of, B. B. SMITH, ESQ. By this time he was regarded as one of the best accountants in Raleigh, and his time at night was occupied in posting books and making out accounts for some of our merchants and editors. About this time a number of Virginia merchants, accustomed to attend our courts and sell goods to our merchants, made his acquaintance, learned to appreciate his worth, and placed bills in his hands for collection. And this little event in his life, as it would seem, though

really a large one, led to his engaging in the business of broker, which laid the foundation of his future wealth and usefulness.

During all these years of obscurity and toil, from his childhood to early manhood he was studious, honest, very industrious and economical, and grew "in favor with God and man." The elders among us remember him during these years as one apt to learn, ingenuous and candid, faithful to every trust confided to him, and scrupulously honest and honorable in his principles. His opportunities for acquiring an education were very limited, though he went to school for awhile to Mr. L. B. JOHNSON and Mr. THOMAS B. HAYWOOD, in the old Raleigh Academy. But he had an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and was constantly learning something valuable. He was a punctual attendant on the Sunday School, and thus learned much that was beneficial to both his mind and heart. It was his habit, especially in his youth, to listen to the conversation of scholars, and learned and sensible men in every department of life, and thus gather and treasure up knowledge for future help and guidance. He loved especially to listen to such men as Mr. BADGER, Mr. WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, Jr., General R. M. SAUNDERS, Mr. DEWEY and Mr. MORDECAI, while in Mr. WHITE, the Postmaster, under whom he was serving, he had a friend who was very thoughtful, sensible and sagacious.

By the close of the war, in 1865, he had already accumulated a handsome fortune as broker and banker. In May, 1865, he was one of the number of gentlemen invited by President JOHNSON to visit Washington City. He was treated by the President with much consideration, and in the conversations which occurred between the President and the delegation Mr. WILLIAMS bore a useful and valuable part. "See the man diligent in business; he shall not stand before common men; he shall stand before kings". Soon after this he established the State National Bank of this city, one of the soundest banks in the country, over which he presided with

signal ability and skill up to the day of his death.

In his mature manhood, as in his boyhood and youth, Mr. WILLIAMS had the good will and confidence of all. He combined, in a happy degree, suavity of manner and firmness of purpose. He seemed always to be in a good humor. He was gentle in his manners, considerate of the wants and feelings of others, and never judged or censured any one. No idle or malicious word ever escaped his lips in relation to business matters, towards his employees, or towards his neighbors. In business matters, and touching the affairs of common life, he had that self-control, and, at times, that reticence or silence which is the daughter of wisdom. He always held the reign tightly on his tongue. His hand, too, was "open as the day to melting charity". He seemed never to forget the rock out of which he had himself been hewn, nor the friends of his early days. He had been poor himself; he had toiled for his daily bread; he knew what it was to need and to receive a helping hand; and while he was cautious and prudent in his business, yet he never oppressed or distressed his debtors, and was always loaning small sums to the needy and deserving. He had learned human nature and the run of business so thoroughly that he seldom lost money by his loans, whether the amount was forty or forty thousand dollars. When called on to give to the poor, he usually placed himself in the hands of the friend who approached him, and would ask, "how much do you think I ought to give?" He was so also in regard to his church. He would say, "Put me down for what you think I ought to give" and when the sum was named, he would say, "that's all right, but I will give more if you think the case requires it." But, perhaps, the crowning act of Mr. Williams' liberality and of his love for his church, was his contribution for the erection of the Science Hall at Wake Forest College. He has thus aided essentially in a work for the good of both the present generation and of posterity, and has linked his name for coming ages with that institution. It was thus reserved for the unlettered boy, and afterwards for the well informed, experienced, and large hearted man, who had grown into general

usefulness and into the possession of wealth without the help of colleges or schools, to show himself one of the foremost and heartiest of the friends of learning in North Carolina.

"Few know of life's beginnings. Men behold The goal achieved."

We have already referred to his boyhood and his youth, when he was thirsting for knowledge, and fitting himself slowly but surely for the enlarged sphere in life which he was destined to occupy. The modest and unassuming youth, thus sitting at the feet of his wise seniors, imbibing useful information of all kinds; incurring additional labor at night, that he might snatch in the day time these opportunities for mental and moral improvement; learning without adequate help the principles of book-keeping and the rudiments of that financial knowledge and skill which he afterwards so ably exhibited in practical life, was laying foundations for future respectability and usefulness which few observed in these, his "life's beginnings." An example like this, of modest, patient perseverance in the acquisition of knowledge; of comparatively unobserved and uncheered labor and self-denial in his youth and early manhood; of devotion to business with a steadiness and constancy seldom surpassed, joined to the most incorruptible integrity and honesty, should be commended to the youth of this day as worthy of all imitation, and constitutes, indeed, an inheritance for his family beside which fine gold itself grows dim.

Mr. Williams was an earnest Baptist, but his loving nature went out in sympathy and regard for all the churches, and for all who name the name of CHRIST. Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Episcopalians alike visited him during his last days, to show their affection for him, and to comfort, as far as it was possible to do so, his bereaved and stricken family.

Mr. Williams was married on the 5th day of February, 1852, to Miss Marian Carson White, of this city; and it is a singular and noteworthy circumstance, that

as his moral life was slowly ebbing away on the night of the 5th of February, 1879 two of the watchers in the room were the only waiters on his bride and himself, just twenty-seven years before. Mr. Williams leaves surviving him his wife and seven children. STERNE never wrote anything so beautiful or so true as that immortal saying of his, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

If Mr. Williams had his frailties, so have all of us. It is our business to record the virtues of the good citizen, of the honest and upright man, of the tender husband, and the affectionate and loving father. He was gentle in life, and deeply mourned in death. We would write his virtues in marble, and his frailties in the dust to which his mortal body must soon be consigned.

BIBLICAL RECORDER, February 12, 1879.

Page: 2:2-4

1512 Canterbury Road
Raleigh, North Carolina 27608
April 29, 1985

Mr. John R. Woodard, Director
Baptist Historical Collection
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, NC 27109

Dear Mr. Woodard:

Thank you for taking the time to show my cousin, Miriam Williams of Evanston, IL, the portrait of John G. Williams by Garle Browne. We are all very proud of this portrait and the gift he made with Mr. Heck of a building to Wake Forest College when the College was at Wake Forest.

Wake Forest College is very special to us also because my brother-in-law, Francis Paschal, was raised there, went to school there, and his father, George Washington Paschal, was a long-time professor at the College.

In 1980 and 1981 you expressed interest to Miss Williams in receiving any historical information that we might have relating to Mr. Williams.

Attached are some copies of newspaper articles and other items which we feel might be of interest. Now that I am retired I have found time to look at microfilm copies of old newspapers and have had copies made of items of interest.

I hope you will retain these in your Collection as well as this letter for any interested person concerning this remarkable man and his wife. Both stood out in their time as outstanding leaders. In this letter I will include some material about Mr. Williams, Mrs. Williams, and others.

He was the son of John Griffith Williams and Ellen Evans Williams. He was born December 25, 1827 and died at the age of 52 on February 6, 1879.

A family Bible states after a record of his birth, "He is at liberty to select his own middle name as his father did." He selected Griffith as did his father. Griffith is a Welsh name.

His father, mother, and John came to Raleigh via New York from Wales about 1833. The grave marker of his mother indicates she was from Carnarven-Shire, Wales. The purpose of coming to Raleigh was for his

father to work on the State Capitol building as a stonemason. Upon completion of the building his father went to Washington, D.C. to find employment, and insofar as we know, nothing was heard from him again. The family seemed to feel he died from an illness or had some other misfortune.

We visited Caernarfon while in Wales in the summer of 1984. While having lunch in a small inn, a lady eating next to us--who was formerly a Williams--directed us to the Caernarfon Area Archives.

At the Archives we were directed to the Book of Marriages. On Page 130 of Book No. 390 we were amazed to find the following:

John Williams of this parish and Ellen Evans
of the parish were married on the 24th of April
1821 by John William Trevor, Vicar, in the
presence of John Lloyd and Evan Williams.

From the Book of Christenings we found that "Ellen daughter of Robert Evans, Yeoman, and wife Margaret was christened July 1, 1811, Llanbebley Parish."

John's mother died at the age of 35 in 1845. He was 18 years old at this time. Family tradition says that he bought a grave marker for his mother from the first money he earned.

As a child, age nine, he recorded in the family Bible:

John Williams is my name,
Wales is my nation,
New York is my dwelling place
And Christ is my Salvation.

When you see this remember me.

While he lived a rather short life, as we measure life today, he lived a very full and useful one without any family help until his marriage to Miriam Carson White February 15, 1857. He had a distinguished business career, was a faithful churchman, highly regarded by those who knew him, called upon for advice by a president of the United States, and generous to worthy causes.

At his death his wife followed him as President of the State National Bank of Raleigh for some time; as such she was the first woman president of a national bank in the U.S.

Mr. John R. Woodard

-3-

April 29, 1985

Should we find any more material which will help complete the picture,
we will forward it to you for the Collection.

With best regards, I am

Cordially yours,

William P. McPherson

William P. McPherson
Great-Grandson of
Mr. and Mrs. Williams

WPM:edo

Attachments

OLD COUNCIL TREE
BOND
100% COTTON FIBER

The Observer.

RALEIGH, N. C.

FRIDAY.....FEBRUARY 3, 1879.

DEATH OF MR. JOHN G. WILLIAMS.

We regret to have to announce to our readers the sad intelligence of the death of this worthy citizen. He died at his residence, in this city, yesterday morning, a few minutes before five o'clock.

Mr. WILLIAMS was born in the city of New York, on the 25th day of December, 1827. He was, therefore, in the 50th year of his age. He was of Welsh parentage. His parents, with his only brother, EVA WILLIAMS, now deceased, settled in Raleigh in 1838. Mr. WILLIAMS had, therefore, been a resident of Raleigh from his childhood. When a lad he was employed in the confectionery store of Mr. S. L. TUCKER, and afterwards, Mr. TUCKER having opened a branch of his business in Rolesville, and being postmaster at Rolesville, JOHN—as his friends loved to call him—was put in charge of this business, and was the clerk in the post office. But Mr. TUCKER, having failed in his business, Mr. WILLIAMS found a friend in that noble old gentleman, CAPT. THOMAS G. SCOTT, then postmaster in Raleigh. CAPTAIN SCOTT employed the bright-faced, intelligent youth, and he remained with him until he was succeeded as postmaster by WILLIAM WHITE, Esq. He remained for some time with Mr. WHITE, winning the favor of all by his strict attention to his duties, and his patient courtesy to the patrons of the office. He next engaged in mercantile business with Mr. H. L. EVANS, for one year, in the house now occupied by Mr. WEIKEL, on Fayetteville street; and at the end of this year he entered the employment of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, which had its rooms on the second floor of the building erected by, and then the property of, B. B. SMITH, Esq. By this time he was regarded as one of the best accountants in Raleigh, and his time at night was occupied in posting books and making out accounts for some of our merchants and editors. About this time a number of Virginia merchants, accustomed to attend our courts and sell goods to our merchants, made his acquaintance, learned to appreciate his worth, and placed bills in his hands for collection. And this little event in his life, as it would seem, though really a large one, led to his engaging in the business of broker, which laid the foundation of his future wealth and usefulness.

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men in every department of life, and thus gather and treasure up knowledge for future help and guidance. He loved especially to listen to such men as Mr. BADGER, Mr. WILLIAM H. HAYWOOD, Jr., General R. M. SAUNDERS, Mr. DEWEY and Mr. MCKINNON, while in Mr. WHITE, the Postmaster, under whom he was serving, he had a friend who was very thoughtful, sensible and sagacious.

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In his mature manhood, as in his boyhood and youth, Mr. WILLIAMS had the good will and confidence of all. He combined, in a happy degree, suavity of manner and firmness of purpose. He seemed always to be in a good humor. He was gentle in his manners, considerate of the wants and feelings of others, and never judged or censured any one. No idle or malicious word ever escaped his lips in relation to business matters, towards his employees, or towards his neighbors. In business matters, and touching the affairs of common life, he had that self-control, and, at times, that reticence or silence which is the daughter of wisdom. He always held the reins tightly on his tongue. His hand, too, was "open as the day to melting charity." He seemed never to forget the rock out of which he had himself been hewn, nor the friends of his early days. He had been poor himself; he had toiled for his daily bread; he knew what it was to need and to receive a helping hand; and while he was cautious and prudent in his business, yet the never oppressed or distressed his debtors, and was always loaning small sums to the needy and deserving. He had learned human nature and the run of business so thoroughly that he seldom lost money by his loans, whether the amount was forty or forty thousand dollars. When called on to give to the poor, he usually placed himself in the hands of the friend who approached him, and would ask, "how much do you think I ought to give?" He was so also in regard to all church matters. He would say, "Put me down for what you think I ought to give?" and when the sum was named, he would say, "that's all right, but I will give more if you think the case requires it." But, perhaps, the crowning act of Mr. WILLIAMS' liberality and of his love for his Church, was his contribution for the erection of Science Hall at Wake Forest College. He has thus aided essentially in a work for the good of both the present generation and of posterity, and has linked his name for coming ages with that institution. It was thus that he, the orphaned boy, and afterwards the well-informed, experienced, and large-hearted man, who had grown into general usefulness and into the possession of wealth without the help of colleges or schools, had become one of the foremost and best of our friends of learning in North Carolina.

"You know of life's beginnings. Men behold the dawn of life's journey." We have already referred to his boyhood and his youth, when he was thirsting for knowledge, and fitting himself slowly but surely for the enlarged sphere in life which he was destined to occupy. The modest and unassuming youth, thus sitting at the feet of his wise seniors, absorbing useful information of all kinds, securing additional labor at night that he might snatch in the day time these opportunities for mental and moral improvement, searching without adequate help the principles of book-keeping and the rudiments of that financial knowledge and skill which he afterwards so ably exhibited in practical life, was laying foundations for future respectability and usefulness which few observed to shun, his "life's beginnings." His example like this, of modest, patient perseverance in the acquisition of knowledge; of comparatively unobserved and uncheered labor and self-denial in his youth and early manhood; of devotion to business with a steadiness and constancy seldom surpassed, joined to the most incorruptible integrity and honesty, should be commended to the youth of this day as worthy of all imitation, and constitutes, indeed, an inheritance for his family beside which fine gold itself grows dim.

Mr. WILLIAMS was a earnest Baptist, but his loving nature went out in sympathy and regard for all the churches, and for all who name the name of CHRIST. Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Episcopalians alike visited him during his last days, to show their affection for him, and to bid him farewell. It was possible to do so in his bereaved and stricken family. Mr. WILLIAMS was married on the 6th day of February, 1852, to Miss MARIAM CARSON WHITE, of this city; and it is a singular and noteworthy circumstance, that as his mortal life was slowly ebbing away on the night of the 5th of February, 1879, two of the waiters in the room were the only waiters on his bride and himself, just twenty-seven years before. Mr. WILLIAMS leaves behind him his wife and seven children. Strangely never wrote anything so beautiful as the true and that immortal saying of his, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

If Mr. WILLIAMS had his frailties, so have all of us. It is our business to record the virtues of the good citizen, of the honest and upright man, of the tender husband, and the affectionate and loving father. He was gentle in life, and deeply mourned in death. We would write his virtues in marble, and his frailties in the dust to which his mortal body must soon be consigned.

THE LATE JOHN G. WILLIAMS.—At a meeting of St. John's Guild, held Wednesday evening, Feb. 12 h. inst., a committee was appointed to draft resolutions of respect to the memory of the late John G. Williams, Esq., and the committee reported as follows:

Resolved, 1st. That in common with the whole community of the city of Raleigh, St. John's Guild has sustained a great loss in the death of the late John G. Williams, one of its esteemed members.

2d. That Mr. Williams' uniform courtesy and kindness in his bearing towards his associates, his sound judgment and wisdom in counsel, and his constant readiness to contribute of his means to every worthy object of charity, made him a member of the Guild of whom we all had good reason to be proud; and that we deeply mourn his departure from among us.

3d. That these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of this meeting, and that copies be sent to the bereaved family of the deceased, and handed to the daily newspapers of the city for publication.

R. H. BATTLE, } Com.
Geo. W. WYNNE, }

The Observer
Feb 11 1879

THE LATE JOHN G. WILLIAMS.—At a meeting of the Directors of the State National Bank, of Raleigh, N. C., it was—

Resolved, That in the death of John G. Williams, Esq., late President of said Bank, society has lost an ever genial and useful member, the Bank an able financier, and this community an enterprising, charitable and generous citizen.

Resolved, That Mr. Williams's remarkable success as a business man, as manifested in his conduct of the Bank, attests his good judgment and extraordinary financial ability.

The Observer
Feb 8, 1879

THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE JOHN G. WILLIAMS.—The funeral of the late Mr. Williams took place from the First Baptist Church yesterday afternoon at 8:30 o'clock, and was attended by a large concourse of every class of the citizens of Raleigh. The pall bearers were Hon. D. G. Fowle, Maj. R. S. Tucker, and Messrs. P. A. Wiley, D. C. Murray, W. W. Vass, A. Creech, Wm. Holleman, A. P. Bryan and P. F. Pescud, Sr. The officers and attaches of the several Banks in the city attended in a body to show their respect for their distinguished and cherished friend. Rev. Dr. Pritchard preached an earnest discourse from St. John, 11th chapter and 25th verse, and alluded in affecting terms to the amiable and excellent character of the deceased. The music by the choir was appropriate and well rendered; the solo in a touching hymn being especially well and expressively sung by Mrs. A. D. Jenkins, who has an exquisite voice. A large procession attended the concluding services at Oakwood Cemetery, which was made the last resting place of the popular banker and useful citizen.

News & Observer
Nov 17, 1910

FUNERAL OF MRS. WILLIAMS.

From the First Baptist Church at 3 O'clock This Afternoon.

The funeral of Mrs. John G. Williams, who passed away Thursday night at 9 o'clock at the home of her daughter, Mrs. W. S. Primrose, on West Morgan street, will be conducted from the First Baptist church this afternoon at 3 o'clock by Rev. R. T. Vann, D. D.

The pall-bearers will be Messrs. Henry E. Litchford, Thomas H. Briggs, Edgar Haywood, E. N. Spencer, Leo D. Heartt, W. C. Riddick, Carey J. Hunter, James A. Briggs, V. C. Royster and Joseph G. Brown.

The interment will be made in Oakwood cemetery.

The Old Lake Forest Road of the Stage Coach days was located several hundred feet west of the present location.

When my Mother and Father moved to Raleigh, they lived at the Yarborough House, on Fayetteville Street, the first year before buying a home. They decided on the house at 305 New Berne Avenue. It was owned by Mr. Edroe Stamps, Mrs. Williams's son in law. It was a beautiful place on a corner lot facing South. The house occupied the center of the lot. To the east was a rose garden. To the west two rows of mature Elms- four trees in each row.

Mama noticed that if it rained on the porch, upper or lower or both she would have to sweep it off. Mrs. Williams pointed out the fact, that when she came to Raleigh at the age of ten in eighteen forty that there was not a house in all of Raleigh that had a porch. The house, like some others was a tremendous box. Ceilings twelve feet high, hall twelve feet wide, ran clear through the house; four rooms 16 plus x 16 plus upstairs and the same down stairs. Each floor having a closet twelve ft. x twelve feet at each corner of the house, making eight such closets.

In order to get porches and not make the house any larger, they tore out the outside walls and the hallway on the southside, both upstairs and downstairs. They created beautiful porches. They did nothing to the floors. Being perfectly level, the water did not run off completely, until it was swept off. I think it interesting that Raleigh had not one house in 1840 that had a porch. Williams's

I think that Mrs. Husband was the President of a National Bank. When he died she became President. I do not know how it came about, but I do know that she was the President of a National Bank at a time when no other woman held such a position. ^{IN U.S.}

Sylvester Dibble was mentioned in Mrs. Reade's Will. She mentioned as her "Old Servant". ²⁵She left him a sum of money. He was popular among the white people. Was always a Democrat, Chief of the Fier Department, foremost barber, also ran a Ladies barber shop-by appointment.

About 1904 in July or August the colored firemen from a number of towns in the State held a Firemans Tournament on New Berne Avenue in Raleigh. On an afternoon during the tournament there drove up to my mother home, drawn by two high stepping horses ~~drawn~~ driven by a black man a ~~handsome~~ handsome Landau with its top back. The passenger was a mulatto, dressed in the uniform of a fire chief, decorated with several medals and ribbons. This important looking man stepped out like a man used to such elegance and walked up to our front door. I was there in the front yard and saw it all. Mama and Mrs. Williams both met him at the front door.

They took Sylvester to the dining room and served him ice cream. They questioned Sylvester about every body in Beaufort County. When Sylvester left, he had to walk through or between two wide groups of baby carriages and nurses plus people that had gathered from both directions.

Sylvester had been to Mrs. Williams home Oakwood Avenue and was told there where he would find Mrs. Williams. If he had found Mrs. William on Oakwood he ~~would not~~ would not have had such an appreciative audience.

The Old Wake Forest Road of the Stage Coach days was located several hundred feet west of the present location.

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Sylvester had been to Mrs. Williams home Oakwood Avenue and was told there where he would find Mrs. Williams. If he had found Mrs. William on Oakwood he ~~would not~~ would not have had such an appreciative audience.

The Raleigh Times
Nov. 18, 1910

MRS. JOHN G. WILLIAMS.

One of Raleigh's Oldest and Best Known Citizens, Died Last Night at the Home of Her Daughter.

Born in Wake county, November 7, 1831, the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. William White, Mrs. John G. Williams, after seventy-nine years of life in this city, passed away last night at nine o'clock at the home of her daughter, Mrs. W. S. Primrose, on West Morgan street. She leaves many friends and acquaintances to mourn her death, for as one of Raleigh's oldest citizens, having passed practically all of her life here, she was well known and liked by all and especially the older residents.

As Miss Marion Carson White she was married to Mr. John G. Williams in 1852. Upon his death in 1879 she continued his work for some time as president of the State National Bank, then located in the old law building, which has lately been removed to make room for the new auditorium. At that time she was the only known woman president of a national bank.

Mrs. Williams' health had been gradually falling but her condition became serious only last Sunday, since that time she had been growing weaker. Of six children she was surrounded by all but one daughter at the time of her death. They are Mr. John G. Williams, of Washington, Mrs. W. V. Savage, of Churchland, Va., Mrs. C. E. Cross, of Portsmouth, Va., Mrs. W. S. Primrose and Mrs. K. H. Hays, of this city; Mrs. W. H. Hays, of Branford, Conn., will arrive this afternoon. Besides these children Mrs. Williams is survived by eighteen grandchildren, and seven great-grand children. The funeral will be held from the First Baptist Church, of which she had long been a member, tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock, conducted by Dr. K. T. Vann. The interment will be in Oakwood cemetery.

copy

Apartment A-4
230 Swimming Point Walk
Portsmouth, VA 23704

October 3, 1983

Dear Mrs. Murray,

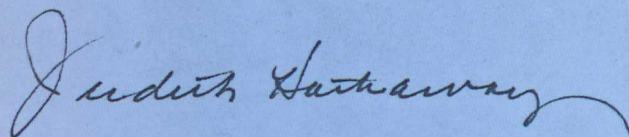
I was in Raleigh on the trip made by the docents from the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk last Friday and was trying to get some information on an itinerant portrait painter who was in Raleigh about 1850-60. Some of the N.C. Museum docents thought you might be able to help because of your work as a docent and because of your interest in the history of Wake County.

My family has three portraits done by an itinerant painter named (I believe) Garl Browne. The North Carolina Museum owns a portrait by this artist, but it is not currently on exhibit. Since I have been working as a docent at the Chrysler, I have been more interested in the subject, and would like to learn more about the artist.

The family portraits are of John Griffeth Williams, his wife Miriam, and a daughter (who died about age 6 of scarlet fever). The portrait of John G. Williams is owned by Wake Forest College (he gave a building at the old college in Wake Forest, N.C.), the one of his wife is owned by a cousin, Miss Miriam Williams of Evanston, Illinois, and I have the portrait of the young girl.

ERN X About 15 years ago, my mother talked with someone at the museum about the portraits (she was visiting relatives in Raleigh). They requested that she send a photograph of the portrait she owned to the museum for their records, since they knew of no other portrait of a child made by this artist. In fact, they suggested that she give the portrait to the museum, but she was unwilling to part with it. I am enclosing a recent photograph I made of the portrait, which might be of some use in identifying the artist.

If you have any information at all on this subject, I would appreciate hearing from you.



Miss Judith Hathaway

copy from carbon copy

Post Office Box 26064
Raleigh, N.C. 27611
13 October 1983

Miss Judith Hathaway
Apartment A-4
230 Swimming Point Walk
Portsmouth, Virginia 23704

Dear Miss Hathaway:

Your letter of inquiry concerning the artist William Carl Browne has delighted me because, happily, we know a good bit about him in North Carolina. He not only designed our state flag in 1861, but also painted literally dozens of portraits of North Carolinians during the mid-19th century. Although he is not listed in Fielding's Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers, he is included in Groce and Wallace, and is certainly well known among both North and South Carolina families who own portraits executed by him. I am enclosing a photostatic copy of Ruth Little-Stokes's sketch of Browne from Volume 1 of the Dictionary of North Carolina Biography. In addition to his sitters listed therein, the North Carolina Portrait Index (1963) lists and pictures numerous others of his portraits in this state, but does not name the Wake Forest portrait of your John C. Williams. In addition to these, Peace College in Raleigh owns Browne's portrait of its namesake, William Peace; and our Mordecai House (centerpiece of our Mordecai Historic Park) has his portraits of Henry Mordecai and his copy of John Wesley Jarvis's portrait of the Mordecai patriarch, Jacob Mordecai, as well as some other members of the Mordecai family.

Among the North Carolina "notables" whose likenesses he captured on canvas during his stay in our state are George Edmund Badger, James Smith Battle, William Smith Battle, Nathaniel Boyden, Alexander Brevard II, Robert Alfred Brevard, Edward Travis Brodnax, Mrs. Robert Brodnax, Mrs. John D. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas William Brown, Susan Cobb Bullock, Duncan Cameron, Mr. and Mrs. James Harvey Carson, Josiah Collins III, Richard Spaight Donnell, Governor Edward Bishop Dudley, Mrs. John Enders, Sr., Governor and Mrs. William Alexander Graham, Mrs. (Governor) James Iredell, Jr., Mrs. Edward Kidder, Alexander MacRae, U.S. Senator Willie Person Mangum, Mrs. Thomas Davis Meares, James Mebane, George Washington Mordecai, Governor John Motley Morehead, James Phillips, William Hawkins Polk, Samuel Randolph Potter, Henry Russell Savage, Mrs. Thomas Edmund Skinner, Mrs. Eli Springs, Judge Robert Strange, Joseph John Summerall, Governor and UNC President David Lowry Swain, Joseph Henry Watters, Thomas White, Mr. and Mrs. William Elliott White, and Mrs. Bartlett Yancey. These are all adult subjects; the Index lists, however, three portraits of children. That of Sally Rogers Haywood, about six, is in the collection of Haywood Hall, a historic Raleigh home. Those of Ada and Florence Camilla Latta, aged about eight and six, respectively, attributed by the Frick Library to Browne, are owned by an Asheville family. The latter two are oval, 3/4-portraits, very

similar in appearance to yours, both in terms of pose and of dress. The former (Sally Haywood) is a full-length, standing portrait. And yours is absolutely charming. What a shame medicine's knowledge of the control of scarlet fever came too late for her. Is your portrait signed on the reverse, as are the several that we have at Mordecai House?

The portrait by Browne owned by the North Carolina Museum of Art is that of Perrin Busbee, a nineteenth-century Raleigh resident. Its accession number is G74.3.1, in case you are ever in search of information here about it.

Your John G. Williams family portraits are of particular interest to me because of my research and published history about Wake County. May I assume that the father is the Williams who was principal owner and first president of the State National Bank in Raleigh, organized in 1868 in Raleigh as successor to his antebellum private banking house called John G. Williams & Co., and who died in 1879 and was succeeded by his wife as North Carolina's first woman bank president? By the way, I find her named Merriam, the former Merriam G. White, rather than Miriam, as apparently your family spells the name. At the moment I am referring to a short paragraph on page 575 of my recently published history of Wake County, in a section on postwar banking. I used several other references to JGW and and to the bank, which failed in 1888. Assuming we are discussing the same couple, I would be ever so interested to know how you are related to them, as well as the cousin you mentioned as owning the portrait of Miriam/Merriam.

I have no specific information about the JGW portrait at Wake Forest University. There are numerous references to JGW as a trustee and benefactor of that institution, and his gift with J. M. Heck of the Heck-Williams Building on the campus, in George W. Paschal's History of Wake Forest College. These include Vol. 2, pp. 74, 89, 97, 112, and 156; and Vol. 3, pp. 192-196, 228, and 236.

On tomorrow, I leave to join my husband abroad, but would enjoy exchanging further information with you after we return October 26. I am sorry I was not on duty at our Art Museum on the day you and the other Chrysler Museum docents visited us. In the meantime, I hope some of the above may prove of interest or assistance to you, and I look forward to the possibility of meeting you on some future trip to Raleigh.

Cordially yours,

Elizabeth Reid Murray

Enclosure

Copy
Apartment A-4
230 Swimming Point Walk
Portsmouth, VA 23704
October 28, 1983

Mrs. Elizabeth Reid Murray
P. O. Box 26064
Raleigh, NC 27611

Dear Mrs. Murray,

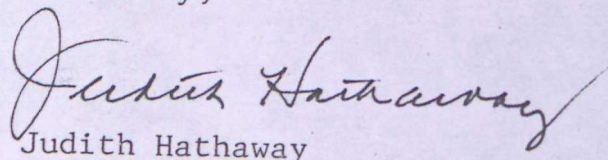
It was exciting to receive the wonderfully detailed information you were able to furnish on the painter William Garl Browne. And his biography made such interesting reading. I am sending copies of your letter and the biography to my cousin Miss Miriam Williams (1422 Judson Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201), who is the granddaughter and namesake of Miriam Williams and the daughter of the only Williams son, also named John G. She may be able to clear up the question of the spelling of Miriam's name and she is also the owner of the portrait of that Miriam Williams. I am furnishing the same information to my cousin in Raleigh, Mr. William McPherson (1512 Canterbury, Raleigh, NC 27608). He is the greatgrandson of John G. and Miriam Williams.

As you can gather, the John G. Williams family I referred to is indeed the Williams who was first president of the State National Bank in Raleigh. My grandmother, Mattie Williams Savage, was the youngest of the Williams daughters. She married a Wake Forest graduate, William Vann Savage, who was first headmaster of a private school and later a Baptist minister in North Carolina and then here in Virginia. You may also be familiar with his family--his cousin Richard Vann was president of Meredith College at the time my mother attended Meredith (around 1906). My mother, also named Mattie, married T. Carleton Hathaway, a Virginian. My portrait came to me from her. The portrait of John G. Williams originally hung in the Heck-Williams Building of Wake Forest College and I believe was taken to the new campus and at one time was hung in the library.

You asked if my portrait is signed on the reverse. It is faded and difficult to read; you can barely distinguish the William Garl Browne (by knowing what it is) and the date appears to be Jan. 1863. There is more written on the reverse, but the only other thing I can make out is "New York" at the very bottom.

Thank you for being so helpful. And if I do manage another trip to Raleigh in the future, I would love to meet you and thank you in person.

Sincerely,


Judith Hathaway

JOHN G. WILLIAMS, ESQ.,

Has died since the last Convention. He was for several years Treasurer of this body, and often used his own means to meet its obligations, without interest. He was also a most liberal contributor to the various enterprises of the Convention. One of his last acts of beneficence was the gift of nearly five thousand dollars to aid in the erection of the new Wait Memorial Building at Wake Forest College. This and many other liberal gifts to our benevolent movements proclaimed him a man of generous heart and noble impulses.

F. H. IVEY,
J. S. PUREFOY,
W. H. JORDAN.

N. C. BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION MINUTES, 1879, page 39

Subject, Specific

For Chapter

Subject, General

Author or Authors

Title

Publisher, Place, Date

John G Williams

Raleigh

Along with J.M. Heath gave money for
for first Lib at Wake Forest

Explanation of Symbols, P—Facts Secured From Primary Sources: S—From Secondary Sources:
Q—Quota From Primary Sources: QQ—Quota From Quota.

Symbols

Page

M.A. Huggins

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Subject, Specific

For Chapter

Subject, General

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Explanation of Symbols, P—Facts Secured From Primary Sources; S—From Secondary Sources:
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