



Isham Rowland (Rody) Williams

SOLDIER, LAWYER, FRIEND

June 19, 1891—April 23, 1959

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by

Lenoir Mercer Williams Tucker

March, 2011

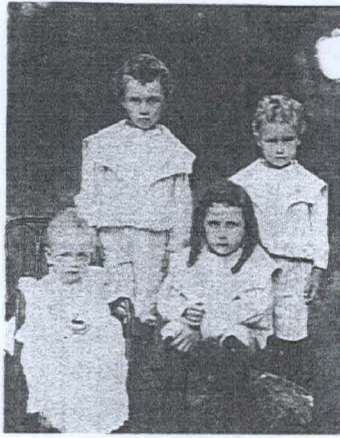
This article is written for the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of Isham Rowland (Rody) Williams who did not have the opportunity of knowing this outstanding man. I want to tell some of the stories of his life so that you will know of his life and his work.

Isham Rowland Williams was the second son of Marshall and Mary Lyde Hicks Williams. He was born in Spout Springs, Harnett County, North Carolina, on June 19, 1891, where his father was the manager of the family mill. Mary Lyde and Marshall were married in Faison, North Carolina on February 13, 1889, and moved to Spout Springs. In Cumberland County, his family owned a large farm near Fayetteville, North Carolina and several mills. Mary Lyde had returned to her home in Faison for the birth of her first son, Hicks, who was born on January 29, 1890, but decided to stay in Spout Springs for the birth of her second child. My father always laughed and said that he was the odd son because he was not born in Faison.

Sometime after his birth, the mill burned and Uncle Isham Rowland Faison, for whom my father was named, asked Mary Lyde and Marshall to return to Faison and live with him and his wife Virginia and to help look after them in their old age. Mary Lyde was the daughter of Louis Thomas Hicks who had grown up in the Faison homeplace. After being captured at Gettysburg and imprisoned for two years, he returned from the Civil War to the homeplace, married his childhood sweetheart Rachel McIver, and his five children were born in the homeplace with Mary Lyde being the oldest of the five. The family had lived in the home until Mary Lyde was 12 years old and her mother wanted to have her own home. Mary Lyde and Marshall decided to accept the offer of Uncle Isham. They returned to live in Faison where Marshall was employed at the Bank of Faison. The other two sons were born at the homeplace. Marshall, on February 21, 1893, and Virginus, on February 2, 1895.



Faison Homeplace



(l-r) Virginius, Rowland,
Hicks, Marshall

During that time, after the birth of her sons, she was encouraged to study art and went to Washington, DC, and later when her sister married in 1895 and moved to New York, she went to New York City and studied for three months at a time. It's interesting that she was able to go and leave four little boys at home, but they did have the care of nurses, her husband, and family members. As

written in so many other articles, she became an outstanding professional portrait painter. Her husband, Marshall, became a gentleman farmer as well as president of the Faison Bank.

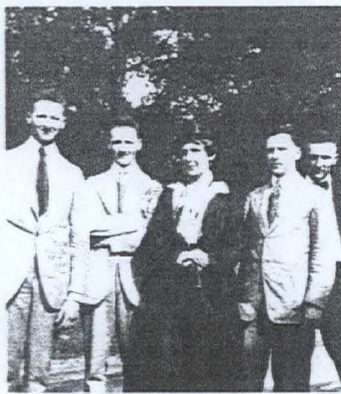
A block down the street Mary Lyde's sister Annie who had married Ben Witherington had two sons within the ages of Mary Lyde's four boys. Later she had a daughter, Rachel, who became the little sister of all six of them. All of the boys were educated in Faison schools and then Horner Military Academy before going to college. They had wonderful times growing up in the town of Faison. Baseball was one of their biggest sports. In fact the Faison baseball team was so good that they would go by train to play in other towns. Many of the team went to college and played on the varsity teams of their colleges. Hicks, Rowland and Marshall as well as Faison Witherington were all on the varsity baseball teams at Chapel Hill during their four years at the university. Hicks graduated in 1911 and went to Johns Hopkins Medical School and then entered the Navy. Rowland finished in 1913 at Chapel Hill where he was editor of the year book, president of the Phi Society, chief ball manager, and at graduation, he was the chief marshal for his class. Marshall, the third son, who graduated in 1915, was such an outstanding pitcher that he was asked by Connie Mack of the Philadelphia Athletics to come to Philadelphia to play which he did for a year



Rowland in college

before he entered the US Army. Virginius graduated in 1917, studied at Harvard Law School for a year and then served in the US Navy as a Seaman Second Class. He had a nose injury as a child and was not as athletic as his brothers.

Rowland taught at Bingham School in Asheville for three years. He taught history and coached the baseball team. During that time he decided to study law and would go back to Chapel Hill in the summers to study. After two years of work on his law degree he took the North Carolina State Bar and passed it so he did not return for his third year. Instead, he was offered a position in Dunn, North Carolina, where his uncle, Dr. Isham Faison Hicks was practicing medicine. He went to work with the law firm of R. L. Godwin, but after several months World War I had begun.



Marshall, Virginius, Mary
Lyde, Hicks, Rowland

With two of his brothers already in the service, he volunteered for the regular army and after training was sent to France. In France he had an interesting career and was promoted from second lieutenant all the way up to captain. At the Battle on the Marne he was recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor which he did not receive but you will see the recommendation in the back of this article. He received the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart from the US government and the Croix de Guerre from the French government. He was in hospitals in Vichy, Maupon, and Biarritz for many months recovering from the injuries he received in this battle. After his recovery he was in the Army of Occupation in Germany. During this time he was awarded a scholarship to Jesus College in Oxford, England and spent several months there studying law. He returned to Fort Dix, New Jersey, and had to make the decision of whether to stay in the regular army or to return to his



Rowland and Hicks in
France

practice in law. With the encouragement of his family, he went back to Dunn to really begin his practice of law. He practiced law then in North Carolina from that time until his death in 1959. After several years with the Godwin firm, he went to work with Judge J. C. Clifford who was a great influence on him and became a very dear friend. He was active in the American Legion and in the 1930s was nominated to be the State Commander of the American Legion. In a close vote he did not receive it which he said was the best thing that he could have done during that time.

In October of 1923 he was an usher in David and Mary Sentner's wedding in Mount Olive, North Carolina, and there he met his future bride, Lenoir Mercer, who was the soloist and a bridesmaid. After a whirlwind courtship they were married on January 24, 1924, in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. They began their home in Dunn. Lenoir was the daughter of Dr. William Parker and Mary Speed Jones Mercer of Edgecombe County where her father was a well known country doctor. Both of them were from old North Carolina families. Lenoir who was the youngest of five children was born on June 11, 1899, attended Peace College, and then studied music at King-Smith Studios in Washington, DC. After the death of her father in 1919, her mother and her only brother made some bad financial decisions and they lost the Mercer homeplace which consisted of their family home and the 3000 acres around it. They had to move to Rocky Mount to live in a rental home the rest of their lives. Her mother was amazing how well she accepted what had happened, but it was a rude shock to all the family after all these years of having a good lifestyle to be down to the rental property. The young couple made a lot of friends in Dunn. Among them were Henry and Florence Tyler who had moved there from Virginia and lived near them. The two couples became very good friends and were able to help each other out during difficult times. The Tylers had two daughters, Florence Lyle and Emma Rogers.



Lenoir and baby Rody



Rody and Lenoir with Daddy



Rody and Lenoir

Rowland and Lenoir's first child was a son, Isham Rowland Williams, Jr., who was born January 8, 1926, in Rocky Mount because there was no hospital in Dunn and the doctors felt that Lenoir should be nearer one for the birth of her child. Thus Rody, as he was called with his dad—big Rody and little Rody, his first weeks were in Rocky Mount. Then their daughter, Lenoir Mercer Williams, was born November 27, 1928, in Rocky Mount. Before her birth the family had employed

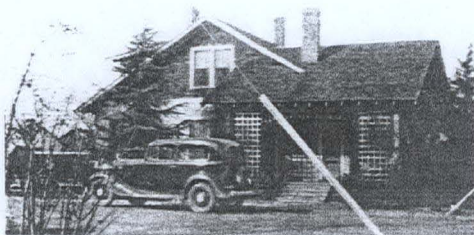
Edith Faison to come to work and live in the home with them. Rody and Lenoir gave Edith the

nickname of "Deede."

Edith's mother, Mary Lyde Faison, was the family cook in Faison. Ironically when Lyde was born, Mary Lyde

Hicks was asked to go name the new baby and she named her for herself when she was only 10 years old. Little did she know that Lyde and her two daughters would become housekeepers for her. Edith would work for her son and Julia would come to work for her for 40 years. There was a close relationship of friendship with the family. Edith was a wonderful person who came to be a very important part of the family and during the years when Lenoir, Sr. was ill. During the times when Lenoir was ill, Edith was able to manage the family and keep everything straight. We were always so grateful to have her as a dear family member. During this time the Great Depression hit, and of course everyone had a rough time with it. Rowland when he had worked in the Godwin firm a big debt had been laid upon him by the firm because of a business deal that

he was not responsible for but he felt that he should pay it off. He had this problem of paying that off along with his own practice and then the Depression hit. Then in the 1930s there was a lot of sadness in the family due to deaths of young family members. The oldest of the four boys, Hicks Williams, died in January of 1931. He was only 41 years old and had continued as a navy surgeon after World War I. He had gone to Faison to recuperate from what he thought was the flu and died unexpectedly of a brain tumor. He left his wife, Elmire, and four children. Then in 1935, the third son, Marshall (42), who was gassed in WWI and was an outstanding athlete, died from complications of his being gassed. He and his family lived in Texas. He left his wife, Lucy, and two elementary aged boys. Lenoir's brother and mother died in 1937. During that time also there were two or three other deaths of family members, and then in January 1938, his favorite brother-in-law, Lewis Thorp, died in Rocky Mount leaving his wife, Routh, and three young boys. The next week his uncle Dr. Faison Hicks who had retired from practicing medicine in Dunn and had a young family of a boy and a girl died suddenly. During this time his own wife Lenoir had been ill. On April 6, 1938, she



Our second home in the early 1930s

died at age 38 in the Rocky Mount hospital.

Thus there were so many families that were affected by deaths during that time. Edith, fortunately, was still living in the home and looking after Rody and Lenoir. But later that

summer she married Ed Smith and moved to a

home within walking distance of our house. It was decided during that time in 1938 that Faison and Alice Hicks would not stay in Dunn with their step-mother but come live in Faison with their Aunt Mary Lyde and Uncle Marshall Williams who were then 72 years of age. During that summer it was decided that Rody and Lenoir should also go to Faison but Rody wanted to go to Rocky Mount and be with the three Thorp cousins. He was 12 and Lenoir was 9. She was taken to Faison and started 4th grade there. Then in July Grandfather Marshall Williams

died leaving Mary Lyde the guardian of the children. Rody decided that he wanted to return to Dunn. He was 13 and wanted to go to school in Dunn with his friends and not go to Faison.

During all these years Rowland Sr. had an alcohol problem and after the death of his wife it became a very difficult situation. With the encouragement of family, friends did an intervention and took him to a VA hospital for treatment. Rody went to stay with the Tyler family whose daughter Florence was his age and their younger daughter Rogie was 7 years younger. He stayed there for the 2 or 3 months that Rowland Sr. was in treatment which gave him security that he needed. Lenoir stayed with her grandmother in Faison. The next year Florence Tyler died and Henry Tyler moved nearer Rowland's home. Rowland Sr. returned from the hospital, began his practice of law again and as he said many years later it was one of the hardest things he ever had to do but he was prouder of his AA disc that he received every year for not drinking for the rest of his life. It was much harder to earn than the awards that he won in combat. The disadvantage of his not taking a drink was that he did not enjoy going to social gatherings in Dunn because he was so afraid he would be tempted to drink again. We found out years later that he had taken many friends to this VA hospital for treatment and knew that they had to have it.



Rowland and his mother

Rowland was an outstanding lawyer and after Judge Clifford retired he practiced law the rest of his life by himself. He did not want a partner. He had a wonderful staff in that Mallie Jackson was his first secretary and then Lillian Smith and Ruth Fowler ran the office for him. He was well known in the county and state for his work, particularly in corporate law. He did some criminal work but he preferred doing the corporate law and built up a great reputation. He also served as county attorney and city attorney. He was very active in the Democratic Party being chairman and co-chairman but would not run for office. He was asked

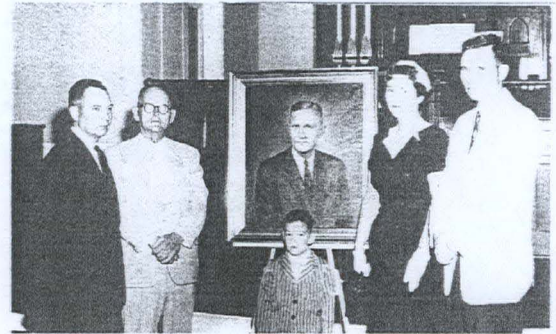
to be a judge several times but he said "no I do not want to be a travelling person having to go to court I prefer staying in Dunn." He also began teaching the men's Bible class at the First Presbyterian Church in Dunn. He taught that class for over 30 years. That was back when people really went to Sunday school and he would sometimes have 50 and 60 men in the Sunday school class. He was on the radio at different times and I only got to hear him on the radio because girls were not allowed in the Sunday school class. He taught Sunday School the Sunday before his sudden death. Soon after the class voted to have his portrait painted for their Vanguard Sunday School class and it hung in the Vanguard class in the First Presbyterian Church for 40 years. It was given to Lenoir when the class disbanded as there were only two members left in the class.

Rowland's way of life became that of a workaholic and yet he still loved baseball. At the time Dunn had a professional baseball team in the summer and you could find him

in the stands watching the game every time they played at home. He didn't take time off to go to other games except if he happened to be in Washington or



Mary Lyde's 85th birthday celebration



PORTRAIT OF RODY—North Carolina artist Connelly Pridgen did this portrait of city attorney I. R. Williams, whose sudden death a few weeks ago was a mournful event for hundreds of friends. The portrait will hang in the meeting-room of the Vanguard Class at the Presbyterian Church, which Williams taught for no less than 32 years. Seen here are Locke Muse, president of the Vanguard class, Franklin T. Dupree, Sr., dean of the Harnett bar, Locke Muse, Jr., Williams' daughter, Mrs. Leslie C. Tucker, and his son and namesake, I. R. Williams, Jr. (Record Photo.)

Baltimore to see a professional game.

But he never lost his love for baseball.

His routine was to work all week, teach Sunday School on Sunday morning then

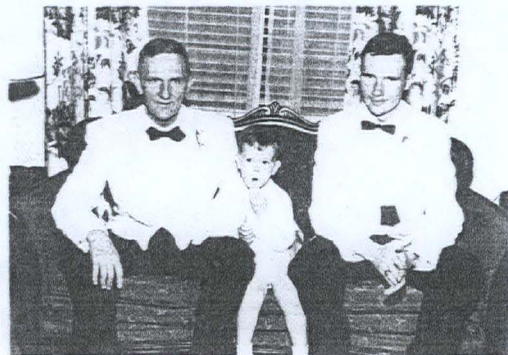
come to Faison to see the family, have

Sunday dinner, bring Edith if she

wanted a ride to go see her family. And

when Rody was still at home of course he came with his dad. Then he would go out to check with the tenant farmer at the Sampson farm and conduct any other business he had. That was his routine on Sunday and then return to Dunn for work the next week. Whenever family members were coming to Faison to visit he always made sure there was plenty of extra good food in the house. He would find time to come over and see everyone. He was very fond of the children and would even take them to see the train come through town if he was there.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the US entered World War II, Rowland came to his mother and asked would she look after his children because he was going to volunteer for the war. Of course at the age of 50 and with the injuries from World War I, he was not accepted in the army, but he did do a lot of civil work in connection with the service in Dunn. But he was ready to return if he had been eligible. During that time, his son, Rody, finished high school, went to Chapel Hill for one year and then went to the Naval Academy. After graduating from the Naval Academy, he spent 14 years in the Air Force. While he was in the Air Force, he would come by to see the Tylers who had moved to the house next door to where our family lived. He and Rogie became good buddies. When Rogie graduated from Hollins in 1955 they were married at the First Presbyterian Church in Dunn on June 18, 1955, and were stationed first in California and Maine and other places. It was a happy time for all of us when Rogie and Rody were married.



Rody, Sr., Rody Miller, and Rody, Jr., at
Rody and Rogie's wedding

Lenoir went to school in Faison, then to St. Mary's high school and St. Mary's Junior College and then University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and began teaching school in eastern North Carolina. Over the years she spent many weekends and summers with Daddy and Rody in Dunn. While she was teaching she met the new minister of the First Presbyterian Church who moved to Dunn in



Lenoir, Edith, and Rowland
Edith still taking care of "her little girl"

September of 1955, and after knowing him for 18 months they were married in the Faison Presbyterian Church April 27, 1957. Soon after that time Virginus, the youngest brother who had worked in Washington DC for many years as a government lawyer, retired to Faison.

Mary Lyde was aging and going to Faison on Sundays was not the relaxing thing that Rowland had enjoyed before. His mother died at the age of 93 on January 13, 1959, and there were a lot of adjustments after that for Rowland Sr.

Rody and Rogie were in California when they adopted their first child, Kathe, who was born November 4, 1957. Then Lenoir and Leslie had a son, Campbell Tucker, who was born October 15, 1958 in Dunn. Rowland enjoyed coming by the manse to see his grandson and would always put a quarter in his piggy bank. We have a letter that he wrote when Campbell was 6 months old written about 3 days before he died expressing his love and concern for his grandson. Rody and Rogie brought Kathe home to North Carolina for us to meet when she was a year old. She was an adorable baby, and her grandfather enjoyed seeing and playing with her. He always enjoyed children and made special time for them. Then in April of 1959 Rody and Rogie and baby Kathe were temporarily stationed in Florida. Lenoir and Leslie and baby Campbell had gone to Mississippi to visit his family. Unknown to all of us, Rowland became ill and a friend went by his house after he hadn't been at work in two days and found him almost unconscious and got him to the hospital. Lenoir was called to come home and to get in touch with Rody. Leslie called Dr. Dewey Dorsett, Alice's husband, in Chapel Hill to go check on Rowland. During the night Rowland was taken to Chapel Hill. While driving back to Dunn, Leslie made the call to the Dunn hospital to find out about his condition, he learned that Rowland had died a few minutes before. It was April 23, 1959. Unfortunately, neither of his children were

with him when he died. It was a shock to the town and to his family because he was only 67 and he was gone so quickly. His service was held in the First Presbyterian Church in Dunn and he was buried next to his wife in the family plot in the Faison cemetery. The church was filled at his service and his law practice came to a grinding halt. He had not been one to charge his clients very much. People thought that he left a big estate but he did not because he felt like he would rather do the work and not be charging them that much. He left a lot of land that he had inherited from the family but he did not have a big bank account. The tributes to him were beautiful. It was a real sad day when we had to say goodbye to him. We're not sure whether it was heart problems or heart attack but it was sudden death.

He was a well known and well respected person in his community and in his family he was someone that you would always have been proud of. He had a wonderful sense of humor. He did have a temper but he could control it. He was a student of the Bible and history, and a wonderful storyteller. He looked after his mother and she really depended on him particularly in her old age. He did so much for all those who came to visit. We used to laugh and say that his car knew the road between Faison and Dunn so well that it could probably travel by itself because he went back and forth so much. He kept his home open for his children with the help of Edith and always made sure that his brother's children when they came to Faison knew that they were very important and he'd love to see them.

He was an outstanding person.

Lenoir Williams Tucker

Appendix

1. Copy of Recommendation for Congressional Medal of Honor
2. Copy of Recommendation for Distinguished Service Cross
3. Williams-Mercer Wedding Write-up
4. Double Reception at Faison
5. Obituary of Lenoir Williams—Dunn Dispatch
6. Newspaper article Rowland's Death—Dunn Daily Record
7. Newspaper article Rowland's Death—Dunn Dispatch
8. Memorial in Dunn Dispatch
9. In Memoriam from North Carolina Bar
10. Biography from North Carolina: the Old North State and the New
1941

COPY OF RECOMMENDATION.

7th Infantry,
American E. F., 1 Aug. 1918

From : 1st Lieut. Joseph J. Brown, I.R.C., 7th Infantry, American E.F.
To : Commanding Officer, 7th Infantry, American E.F.
Subject: Recommendation for Medal of Honor.

1. On the afternoon of July 21, 1918, Lt Isham R. Williams, U.S., crossed the Marne River near Fossoy, in a boat with a reconnaissance patrol of two squads. It was the first patrol to cross the Marne on that date and the crossing was made under heavy machine gun fire from Germans on the crest of the opposite hill.

2. The machine gun fire was so intense that the advance of the patrol was halted about 150 yards from the river and the boat in which the patrol had crossed was shot full of holes and made useless.

3. Lt. Williams placed his men behind the best cover at hand and he himself went back and swam the river and led a platoon to the southern bank of the river and indicated the objectives upon which the platoon was to direct fire to cover the withdrawal of the patrol.

4. Lt. Williams then swam to the north side of the river, searched for and found another boat, rejoined his patrol and led them to that boat and paddled them back across the river.

5. While swimming the river upon both occasions, and in his activities upon the north bank of the Marne, Lt. Williams was the special mark of the German machine gunners and was constantly in the midst of a hail of machine gun bullets.

6. Lt. Williams has also distinguished himself upon other occasions. He was recommended by his company commander for a Distinguished Service Cross for his exceptional gallantry in the Belleau Woods during the period between 15-22 June 1918. On July 23, 1918, he led a platoon through the Bois de l'Evique and was largely instrumental in clearing a party of some fifty German machine gunners and snipers from that woods. He is absolutely fearless in action and is deserving of the highest honor the Government has at its disposal.

Joseph J. Brown, I.R.C.
1st Lieut., 7th Infantry

Company "C" 7th Infantry,
American E. F. 26 June 1918.

From : Captain F. H. Cartter, Company C, 7th Infantry,
To : Commanding Office 7th Infantry.
Subject: Recommendation for promotion and D. S. C.

1. I would report that Second Lieutenant Isham R. Williams was commissioned a Second Lieutenant Regular Army October 26, 1918, and has served with the 7th Infantry, from date of commission, and has on two occasions been in command of Company C, 7th Infantry.

2. From June 16th to June 23, 1918 he occupied with his platoon a very important sector of the American lines in the Bois De Belleau.

3. During that period he exercised the utmost bravery and good judgment winning the esteem and confidence of his men and fellow Officers.

4. In one night attack in which he was engaged after two thirds of his Platoon as put out of action by the enemy's machine guns, and grenades he continued his advance with three men and personally silenced an enemy machine gun.

5. At all times Lieutenant Williams was an example of courage and fortitude to all with whom he came in contact.

F. H. CARRTER.
Captain 7th Inf. R.C.

Miss Lenoir Cook Mercer Becomes Bride of Rowland Williams

The most notable wedding of the winter was that of Miss Lenoir Cook Mercer, of this city, and Mr. Rowland Williams of Dunn, which took place Thursday afternoon at 3 o'clock, in a ceremony characterized by extreme charm and impressiveness.

The interior of the First Methodist church was exquisitely decorated with a mass of palms and ferns. At intervals were placed tall baskets of Easter lilies, and candlesticks with white tapers.

The wedding music was beautifully rendered by Mrs. William L. Thorpe and Mrs. Thomas B. Suiter, organist. Mrs. Thorpe sang "Because" and "Calm as the Night." Just before the ceremony, Mrs. Suiter rendered selections from Lohengrin leading into the processional.

As the first notes were sounded the ushers entered as follows: Mr. W. H. Horne, Jr., Pittsfield, Mass.; Mr. William Erwin, Duke; Mr. Robert W. Winston, Raleigh; Mr. James Davis, Dunn; Mr. Robert Witherington, Mount Olive; Mr. Virginius Williams, Elizabeth City.

R. S. Wells, young son of Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Wells, of Elm City; was ring bearer. Next to enter was the little flower girl, Charlotte Williams, little daughter of Dr. and Mrs. L. H. Hicks, of Faison. She wore a quaint velvet and lace dress and carried an old-fashioned nosegay.

Mrs. Lewis S. Thorpe, sister of the bride, was dame of honor. She wore a cocoa colored crepe with beaded lace trimming and large hat of brown straw. She carried and arm spray of Russell roses.

Miss Sallie Mercer Jones was maid of honor. She was gowned in green georgette with bronze beading. Her hat was a new spring model of brown straw and she carried a colonial bouquet of Russell roses.

The bride entered with her brother-in-law, Mr. Lewis S. Thorpe, by whom she was given in marriage. She wore a rosewood colored travelling dress with fur trimmings with two toned silk hat to match. She carried a shower of orchids and lilies of the valley.

The bride groom was attended by his brother, Dr. L. Hicks Williams, of New York, as best man.

The wedding ceremony, which was beautifully impressive was performed by Rev. C. L. Reid, and Rev. Peter McIntyre, of Goldsboro.

The wedding of yesterday joined two of the state's most prominent families. The bride is the daughter of Mrs. W. P. Mercer and the late Dr. Mercer, the latter for years one of the most beloved physicians of Edgecombe county. She was graduated from Peace Institute and studied music at the King-Smith studio in Washington. She is both cultured and charming with a winning personality and will be a distinct addition to the social life of Dunn.

Mr. Williams is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Williams of Faison. Is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and of Oxford University, England. He has a very brilliant war record having served with the 3rd division. He is a prominent young lawyer of Dunn.

Wednesday evening following the wedding rehearsal an informal reception and dance was given by Mr. and Mrs. W. Henry Horne and W. H. Horne, Jr., in honor of the bridal party and out-of-town guests. Thursday at noon, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis S. Thorpe

gave a lovely buffet luncheon for the large number of out-of-town guests preceding the wedding ceremony on Thursday.

Among those here from a distance were: Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Williams, Miss Winnifred Faison, Mrs. Annie Witherington, Miss Georgia Hicks, Mrs. I. F. Faison, Miss Rachel Witherington, all of Faison; Mrs. D. E. Best, Mrs. E. B. Gibson, Mr. Dudley Hill, Warsaw; Mr. Jim Hines, Greenville; Mrs. Faison Thompson, Mrs. Paul Edmondson, Miss Hattie May Morrissey, Goldsboro; Mr. W. A. Erwin, Durham; Miss Elizabeth Anderson, Graham; Mrs. R. S. Wells, Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Wells, Mrs. Clyde Tilghman, Elm City; Mr. William M. Tilghman, Suffolk, Va.; Mrs. Annie Burwell and Miss Mary Burwell, Warrenton; Mrs. James Phillips, New York; Mrs. Frank Gibbs, Mrs. John Mitchell, Mrs. M. P. Jones, Mrs. Brodie Jones, Mr. William Polk, Mrs. John Graham, Warrenton.

DOUBLE RECEPTION AT FAISON

Faison, February 20.—On Friday evening, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Williams entertained at their beautiful country home, "Pinakion Hall," Faison, N. C., in honor of their 35th wedding anniversary, and of their son, Roland Williams and his bride, nee Miss Lenoir Mercer, of Rocky Mount, who have recently returned from their honeymoon in southern Texas.

The entire lower floor of this colonial home, beautifully decorated with ivy, pine and cedar and cut flowers sent from friends, was a veritable garden of beauty. Over the doors of the drawing room and studio banked against green were large letters of "1924" and "1889," respectively.

Receiving with Captain and Mrs. I. Rowland Williams were Mr. and Mrs. Louis Thorpe, Miss Sallie Mercer Jones and Miss Anrington of Rocky Mount; Mr. W. A. Erwin, Duke; V. E. Williams, Elizabeth City; Mr. James Davis, Dr. and Mrs. I. F. Hicks, Dunn; Mr. R. S. Witherington, Mt. Olive; Miss Catherine Taylor, Wilmington; Judge Horton, Mrs. Henry Grady, Clinton; Mrs. C. C. Phillips, New York; Mrs. Rust-Smith, Washington, D. C.; Mr. and Mrs. James Kyle, Goldsboro, and Mrs. S. H. Isler, Greensboro.

Across the hall receiving in the studio were Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Williams and a number of their bridal party of long ago. Mr. and Mrs. I. F. Hill, of Durham; Rev. Peter McIntyre, Goldsboro; Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Faison, Mrs. A. H. Witherington and Mrs. C. E. Weatherby, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Faison, and Mr. W. M. Faison, of Faison, Mrs. James H. Hill, Ocala, Fla., Mrs. R. W. Hicks, Wilmington; Colonel and Mrs. Philip Hinesberger also of Wilmington.

In the far end of the studio punch was served and in the dining room the table was unusually pretty with its crystal candelabra, sweet peas, smilax and the added charm of a bridal cake made of candy flower blossoms in the form of a large corsage, a gift to the bride of 1889, sent from her son and daughter, Maj. and Mrs. Marshall Williams, Jr., of San Antonio, Texas. In the lower second hall, coffee was served. Music was rendered by an orchestra of local talent.

Some four hundred or more visitors called between the hours of 8 and 11, motoring over from Durham, Wilmington, Fayetteville, Dunn, Duke, Warsaw, Clinton, Mount Olive, Goldsboro, Calypso and Rocky Mount.

Captain Rowland Williams is a popular attorney of Dunn, and has a distinguished war record, having been awarded the Croix de Guerre, Distinguished Service Cross and recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor. He is an alumnus of the University of North Carolina and of Jesus College, Oxford, England. Mrs. Williams is the lovely, attractive daughter of the late Dr. Mercer of Rocky Mount and has many friends over the State.

MRS. I. R. WILLIAMS DIES IN ROCKY MOUNT

Wife of Prominent Dunn Attorney Had Been Critically Ill Several Weeks

Rocky Mount, April 6.—Mrs. Lenoir Mercer Williams, wife of Captain I. R. Williams and one of Dunn's most prominent women leaders, died this afternoon in the Parkview Hospital. She was 38 years old.

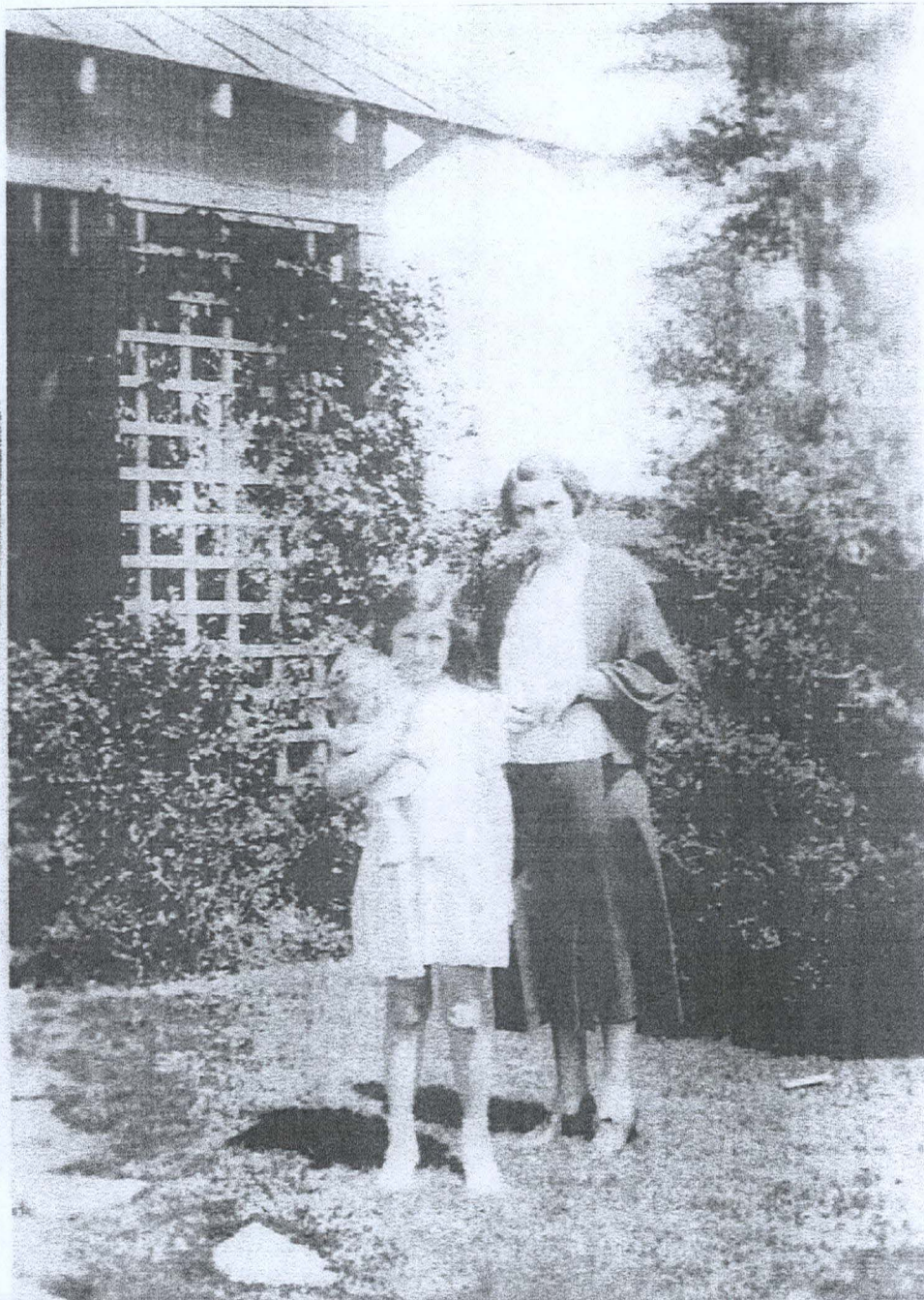
Her husband, a prominent local attorney, was at her side when death came. She had been in ill health for more than a year and critically ill for the past several weeks.

A member of one of Eastern Carolina's most distinguished families, Mrs. Williams was the daughter of the late Dr. and Mrs. W. T. Mercer of Rocky Mount. The family is widely known throughout the State.

After graduating from Peace College, she was married to Captain Williams in 1924 and they moved to Dunn, where he became a partner of the late Judge John C. Clifford.

She was a leading member of the Dunn Presbyterian Church, the American Legion Auxiliary, and took a prominent part in the other civic, social, and religious affairs of the town.

The body was sent to Dunn tonight. Tomorrow morning the fu-



neral party will then go to Faison, the home of her husband, for funeral services and burial.

Funeral services will be held at the home of Col. and Mrs. Marshall Williams at 3:30 o'clock. Dr. Angus R. McQueen of Dunn will assist two

ministers of that city in conducting the services. Burial will follow in the Faison cemetery.

Surviving are her husband; two children, Rowland, Jr., and Lenoir Mercer Williams; a brother, Howard F. Jones of Warrenton; and

three sisters, Mrs. Lewis Thorpe and Mrs. Ernest Tilghman of Rocky Mount and Mrs. T. C. Tilghman of Norfolk.

Captain Rhodie' Dies This Morning

Heart Attack Takes Distinguished Att'ny



CAPTAIN I. R. WILLIAMS
DIES SUDDENLY AT 68

Captain Isham Rowland Williams —to most of Dunn he was simply "Rhodie" or "Captain Rhodie"—died at 9:30 this morning in the Chapel Hill hospital to which he had been removed a few hours earlier.

The shocking suddenness of his death was a thunder-bolt to friends throughout the state and nation—old comrades of World War I, clients in his exceptional law practice, friends from a dozen areas of life.

A widely-known corporation law-

yer and a distinguished combat veteran of the first war, he had won the Distinguished Service Cross and served in France with some of the nation's top military leaders.

The military title stayed with him long after he settled into his accustomed role as an attorney of great ability whose homespun manner never concealed the skill of his methods.

He was, among many other things, the town attorney for Dunn and a fellow official in the city

administration said today. "He was the most exceptional man I've ever known."

LIKENED TO LINCOLN

"The moment I learned of his death, I thought of that phrase about Lincoln, 'Now he belongs to the ages.'"

Ill since Saturday, the 68-year-old attorney was out of bed by Tuesday but back by Wednesday. Late yesterday, Mayor Ralph Haulma went by his home where he lived alone and found him ill. He

(Continued On Page Eight)



WATCHING BASEBALL was favorite recreation for Captain Rhodie (right, in typical pipe-in-hand pose) and his expression was always reflective of gentle, penetrating interest—never a yawn.

Williams

(Continued From Page One)

summoned a doctor. At 5 a.m. today he was removed to Memorial Hospital at Chapel Hill to be under the care of his nephew, Dr. Dewey Dorsett, one of the leading physicians there.

At first report, the cause of death was given as a heart attack.

A civic leader and churchman and one of this section's most influential leaders, he was a native of Faison and the son of Mrs. Marshall Williams, noted North Carolina portrait artist who preceded him in death by a few months. He had attended the University of North Carolina.

Fellow lawyers doubted that he had left a large estate—largely because he did not treat an attorneyship as primarily an office for the collection of fees.

SHUNNED CRIMINAL CASES

Only a few days ago, making one of his rare appearances in criminal court as a personal favor to a friend, he had remarked, "I have a good law practice but it's expensive." A judge said he had seen Captain Rhodie take on a client, donate his services to the cause and complete the circle by paying a fine for him.

As a civil attorney he had few peers and his clients included the largest business corporations of the area—including Erwin Mills, Johnson Cotton Co., Wellons Candy Co., ACL Railroad, First Citizens Bank, Godwin Building Supply and scores of others. He was a director and attorney for the Home Savings and Loan Association.

A friend did not hesitate to dub him today, "Probably Harnett's most influential citizen. He knew everybody of prominence in the state." Said tax collector J. E. Williams, who served with him in the town administration, "He had a way of making you feel important, regardless of how high or low your status might be."

Captain Rhodie had been everywhere including Oxford University, studying there while he was in England. In France during the war, he was described as a daring leader of his men and he was believed to be the most decorated of any Harnett County veteran. He was wounded in battle during that war and had a fund of stories about his experiences.

SPOKE ON APOSTLES

Another set of stories which built his reputation was his locally famous speech on the wickedness of the apostles before they turned to a brighter leaf.

Several terms the Harnett Democratic chairman, he had served as county attorney and was the long-time city attorney here, helping negotiate such contracts as Dunn's recent agreement with the distributors of natural gas.

His path crossed many times with other distinguished persons. At UNC he was a roommate of the late William B. Umstead, governor and U.S. Senator. He was a close friend of such notables as U. S. Senator Sam Ervin, Lt. General Thomas Burke of the Marine Corps and General of the Army Thomas Handy, chief of Army operations in Washington.

One of the state's leading lawyers, he was a member of the ethics committee of the North Carolina Bar Council and had held other offices in the State Bar. He had served as president of the Harnett County and District Bar Associations.

Early in life, he taught school at Bingham Military Academy in Asheville. And he was still teaching to the end—serving for many years as instructor of the Men's Bible Class of the First Presbyterian Church.

Mrs. Leslie Tucker, his daughter

and the wife of the pastor of Dunn's First Presbyterian Church, is en route from Canton, Miss., and Captain I. R. Williams, Jr., his son, will come here from his Air Force post in Florida. Funeral details will not be settled until the arrival of his family.

Captain Rhodie was proud of the fact that for 36 years—including the 21 years that his wife, the former Lenora Mercer, had been dead—his housekeeper, Edith Smith, had helped to raise the children and had never left his employ.

His mainstays in his legal work were Mrs. Lillian Benson Smith and Mrs. Wesley Fowler.

"He was a dear father and a dear man," said one of his relatives today. "And it's true that if he'd charged what most lawyers do—and used his position that way—he'd have been a millionaire."

Attorney I. R. Williams

Dies: Rites Incomplete



ISHAM ROLAND WILLIAMS, SR.

Isham Roland Williams, age 67, one of this area's most prominent members of the Bar, died this morning around 9:30 at N. C. Memorial Hospital in Chapel Hill after becoming ill at his home on N. Ellis Ave. Wednesday morning.

Attorney Williams was carried to Chapel Hill around 5:30 this morning after his condition became critical. Death was believed due to a heart attack. His death was unexpected and came as a great shock to his many friends and associates.

Funeral arrangements were incomplete this afternoon pending the arrival of his daughter, Mrs. Leslie C. Tucker, Jr., and his son, Lt. I. R. Williams, Jr. At the time of her father's death Mrs. Tucker was visiting in Mississippi and is expected to arrive late this (Thursday) afternoon. Lt. Williams is stationed with the Air Force at Cape Canaveral, Florida and is also expected home by car this afternoon.

Cromartie Funeral Home has charge of the arrangements.

Mr. Williams was born in Faison, N. C., in June of 1891, the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Marshall McDade Williams. He received his law Degree at the University of North Carolina and came to Dunn in 1917 to practice law.

In 1919 he joined the Army and served for two years during World War I during which time he received the second highest award given in the Army, the Distinguished Service Cross for outstanding service in time of combat.

He was a member of the First

Presbyterian Church where he was a teacher in the Vanguard Bible Class for many years. He was a past president of the Harnett Bar Association and past president of the District Bar Association, former county attorney for Harnett and served as town attorney for Dunn for nearly fourteen years, having succeeded Robert Young to this post.

He was also attorney here for the Atlantic Coast Line and Johnson Cotton Company. Attorney Williams was very active in American Legion affairs, having served in top offices in the Legion and attended the first Legion convention ever held in North Carolina in 1921 in the company of Ralph Wade of Dunn, one of his lifelong friends.

He was a Mason, a charter member of the Board of Directors of the Home Savings and Loan Association of Dunn, and served as attorney for the association since 1922.

His mother, Mrs. Marshall Williams, one of North Carolina's most noted artists, died in January of this year.

Funeral arrangements, survivors and other details will be announced as soon as the family arrives.

NOON, APRIL 27, 1951

Little Things

THINGAMAJIGS: Village Open Air Market has received a shipment of nice big Florida water melons. They're real good and Manager T. R. Hardy reports they're selling, too. The crowd at Capt. Rody Williams' funeral Saturday was the largest to attend a funeral service here in years. The church was filled to overflowing a half hour before the service started and loudspeakers were used to carry the service to the large crowd outside. Police Chief Alton Cobb assigned about a half dozen officers to direct traffic. It was a very impressive service and there weren't many dry eyes in the whole big crowd of mourners. Capt. Roy was a man loved by all, the high and mighty and the meek and humble as well.

IN MEMORIAM
ISHAM ROWLAND WILLIAMS
1891-1959

Isham Rowland Williams, one-time member of the Council of the North Carolina State Bar and past President of the Eleventh District of the North Carolina Bar Association, able lawyer, leader in affairs of church and state, and who was held in the highest esteem by his contemporaries in the legal profession, departed this life on April 23, 1959, at the age of sixty-seven years, after having practiced law in this state for forty-two years, with time out of his practice for his distinguished military service in World War I.

With his passing, the legal profession lost one of its ablest members.

Rowland Williams enjoyed a large corporate practice, but his greater delight was in a large following of individual clients composed of all colors, classes, and conditions of men and women who carried to him their problems of consequence affecting their lives and fortunes. These clients were also his personal friends, and he gave them all his talents without measuring his time and talent in terms of financial returns.

If he had practiced his profession on an objective basis by charging fees according to the legal services rendered by him, he would have become a wealthy man; but he chose to render service where it was needed regardless of personal reward. And so, he was loved and respected, but not rewarded, according to his due.

He regarded his profession as the medium through which he could best serve his day and generation, and he lived up to that ideal all of his days.

Isham Rowland Williams, the second son of Marshall M. and Mary Lyde Williams, was educated in the Faison Public Schools and in Horner Military School from which he was graduated in 1908, and from the University of North Carolina, from which he was graduated in 1913.

From 1913 to 1915, he taught in Bingham Military School in Asheville. In 1917, after studying law for two years in the University of North Carolina Law School, he was admitted to the Bar and began the practice of law in Dunn; but in that same year he volunteered for service in the United States Army. After taking training in Washington,

D. C. for examination for a commissioned officer, he received a commission in the regular Army on October 2, 1917. He served successfully as Second Lieutenant, First Lieutenant, and Captain, receiving the last promotion May 6, 1919, as a member of the Seventh Infantry, Third Division. He was wounded at Fossoy Springs on July 21, 1917, while serving as Second Lieutenant. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross January 18, 1919, and also the Croix de Guerre and Purple Heart. He resigned August 5, 1919, as Captain of Infantry at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

At the close of his military experience, Captain Williams resumed his law practice in Dunn and continuously followed his profession in both civil and criminal practice. He was associated with Judge J. C. Clifford, under the firm styled of Clifford and Williams. For many years he served as county attorney and as city attorney.

On January 24, 1924, at Rocky Mount, Rowland Williams was married to Lenoir Mercer, a daughter of Dr. W. D. and Mary Jones Mercer of Edgecombe County. To this union were born two children, Isham Rowland, Jr., born January 28, 1926, now a Captain in the United States Air Force; and Lenoir, born November 27, 1928, now married to the Reverend Leslie Campbell Tucker, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Dunn, North Carolina. The wife of Isham Rowland Williams, Sr., died April 6, 1938.

Captain Williams served as the chairman of the county Democratic Executive Committee for Harnett County for many years.

He was twice Commander of the American Legion Post, also a member of the Masonic Fraternal Order and a life-long member of the Presbyterian Church, having served for more than thirty years as teacher of the Men's Bible Class of the First Presbyterian Church of Dunn, North Carolina.

The life of Isham Rowland Williams constituted an outstanding contribution to his profession, and to his community, state, and nation.

The name of Isham Rowland Williams will ever be cherished by those who knew him as a symbol of ability, integrity, and unselfish service.

North Carolina: The Old North State and the New 1941

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CAPTAIN ISHAM ROWLAND WILLIAMS, a member of the bar practicing at Dunn, was born at Spout Springs, Harnett County, North Carolina, June 19, 1891, a son of Marshall McDiarmid and Mary Lyde (Hicks) Williams. The father was born and reared in Cumberland County, North Carolina, and is a son of Captain J. Marshall Williams, who was born in Cumberland County in 1838, the family removing to that county from Virginia, where their ancestors had settled on coming from Scotland in 1689. Captain Williams was a son of Joel and Jane (Elliot) Williams and was the owner of a large plantation near Fayetteville, as was his father who was well known as an extensive planter and slave owner and prominent business man. Captain Williams enlisted in April, 1861, in the Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry and was under fire in the battle near Bethel. He became one of the organizers of Company C of the Fifty-fourth Regiment of North Carolina Troops, was made a lieutenant and later promoted to the rank of captain. At Fredricksburg he was wounded and captured by Federal officers but managed to effect his escape. He served in various engagements in Virginia and also in the battle of Gettysburg, and after the war he became one of the leading farmers of Cumberland County. His first wife was in her maidenhood Janie McDiarmid, of Cumberland County, and they had one son, Marshall McDiarmid Williams. His second wife bore the maiden name of Martitia McNeill and was a granddaughter of Governor Jonathan Worth.

Marshall McDiarmid Williams, who is now living retired in Faison, was for more than a quarter of a century engaged in the banking business as cashier and later as president of the Bank of Faison and also extensively engaged in agricultural pursuits. His wife, Mary Lyde (Hicks) Williams, has been president of the Daughters of the American Revolution in North Carolina and is an outstanding portrait painter of this state. She is a daughter of Captain Louis Thomas Hicks, of one of the prominent families of the state, closely connected with North Carolina's history. He served as captain of Company E, Twentieth North Carolina Infantry, for two years, was taken prisoner at Gettysburg and was sent to Johnson's Island. He was born and reared at Faison, Duplin County, and became a merchant and planter there. To Marshall M. and Mary L. Williams were born four sons, all of whom won degrees at the University of North Carolina and made splendid military records.

Louis Hicks Williams, the eldest, a naval officer, was born at Faison, January 29, 1890, and died February 17, 1931. He was graduated from the University of North Carolina with the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1911 and from Johns Hopkins University with the M. D. degree in 1915. He was at the Navy Medical School in 1916-1917 and at the Mayo Graduate School in 1923. He became a lieutenant in the Medical Corps, United States Navy, in 1916 and was in the submarine warfare service at Queenstown, Ireland, from 1917 to 1919. From the latter year until 1931 he was medical officer of the Bureau of Navigation in the Navy Department at Washington and surgeon of the United States Naval Hospital at Boston, Massachusetts, with the rank of lieutenant commander, U. S. N. He belonged to the Presbyterian church, the Masonic fraternity, the Phi Society and the Phi Beta Pi. He was married September 5, 1922 to Elmire Dowdell.

Major Marshall McDiarmid Williams, third son of Marshall M. and Mary L. Williams, was born at Faison, February 21, 1893, and attended the North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering in 1911-12. He won the Bachelor of Science degree at the University of North Carolina in 1916 and during his student days there became a member of the Phi Society, the Sigma Alpha Epsilon and also of the varsity baseball team. He then engaged in professional playing as pitcher of the Philadelphia Athletics in 1916. Later that year he became a second lieutenant, then first lieutenant, captain and major in the United States Army. He was captain and major of the Forty-eighth Coast Artillery Corps of the American Expeditionary Forces from 1917 to 1919. On the 26th of April, 1922, he married Lucy Lazenby. He was both a Mason and a Presbyterian and he died at Tucson, Arizona, February 22, 1935, as a major of the United States Army, retired.

Virginius Williams, the youngest son, was born at Faison, February 2, 1895, and won his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of North Carolina in 1917. He served as a seaman, second class, in the United States Navy in the World War. He afterward attended the Harvard University Law School, won his LL. B degree at George Washington University in 1921 and received from the same institution his Master of Laws degree in 1922. From 1921 until 1923 he was claims examiner of the United States Veterans Bureau at Washington and afterward became assistant to the general counsel of the Virginia-Carolina Joint Stock Land Bank at Winston-Salem, thus serving in 1923 and 1924, and since the latter year has been with the United States Veterans Bureau of Cleveland, Ohio.

Captain Isham R. Williams, the second son of Marshall M. and Mary L. Williams, was educated in the Faison schools, in the Horner Military School, from which he was graduated in 1908, and the University of North Carolina, which conferred upon him his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1913. In his college days he was third baseman on the varsity team, was editor of the *Yakity Yack* and in 1913 was president of the Phi Society and chief ball manager. From 1913 until 1916 he taught history at the Bingham School in Asheville and then concentrated his attention upon reading law, winning admission to the bar in 1917. In that year he began practice in Dunn but in the same year volunteered for service in the United States Army, going to military school at Washington for examination and receiving a commission in the regular army on the 26th of October, 1917. He served successively as second lieutenant, first lieutenant and captain, receiving the last promotion May 6, 1919, as a member of the Seventh Infantry, Third Division. He was wounded near Fossoy Springs, July 21, 1917, while serving as second lieutenant. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (G. O. 44) January 18, 1919 and also the Croix de Guerre and Purple Heart. "He led a patrol across Marne river under intense machine gun fire, and when his boat sank, twice swam the river to correct the fire of his covering detachment and to bring his patrol to safety after their mission had been accomplished." He was hospitalized in Base Hospital No 23 at Vichy, in Base Hospital No. 4 at Maupöñ and at Red Cross Hospital No. 2 at Biarritz. He was with the American Expeditionary Forces and the Army of Occupation in Germany with the Seventh Infantry of the Third (regular) Division until February, 1919, when he went to Jesus College of Oxford University, England, as a law student. He resigned August 15, 1919 as captain of infantry at Camp Dix, New Jersey.

At the close of his military experience Captain Williams resumed his law practice in Dunn and has continuously followed his profession in both general civil and criminal practice, largely giving his attention, however, to corporation work. He was associated with Judge J. C. Clifford, under the firm style of Clifford & Williams, for six years but now practices independently. For five terms he has served as county attorney, has been solicitor of the Recorder's Court and is an ex-city attorney. He belongs to both the Harnett County Bar Association and the North Carolina State Bar Association.

On the 24th of January, 1924, at Rocky Mount, Captain Williams was married to Lenoir Mercer, a daughter of Dr. W. D. and Mary (Jones) Mercer, of Edgecombe County. Her father, who devoted his life to the practice of medicine, died in 1919. Captain and Mrs. Williams have two children: Isham Rowland Jr., born January 8, 1926; and Lenoir, born November 27, 1928. Mrs. Williams died April 6, 1938.

Captain Williams is a Democrat and has served as chairman of the central committee of Harnett County. He has been twice commander of the American Legion Post, belongs to the Kappa Sigma and to the Masonic fraternity, and is a member of the Presbyterian church, as was also his wife. Mrs. Williams was also identified with the American Legion Auxiliary, the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Colonial Dames.