

Meekins, Isaac Melson ^[1]

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Meekins, Isaac Melson

by William C. Meekins, Jr., 1991

13 Feb. 1875–21 Nov. 1946



A photograph of Isaac Melson Meekins published in 1919. Image from the Internet Archive.

^[2]Isaac Melson Meekins, mayor, postmaster, general counsel for Alien Property Custodian, general counsel and manager of Enemy Insurance Companies, and U.S. district court judge, was born at Gum Neck, near Columbia in [Tyrrell County](#) ^[3]. The son of Jeremiah Charles and Mahalah Melson Meekins, he was a member of the First Baptist Church, Elizabeth City. His father was a merchant, farmer, and banker in Tyrrell County.

In 1896 he was graduated from [Wake Forest College](#) ^[4] with an A.B. degree. Before completing his degree, he had begun to read law, and in the year of his graduation he was admitted to the North Carolina bar and began a practice in Elizabeth City. He received an honorary doctor of laws degree from Wake Forest College in 1932.

Meekins entered the political scene at an early age, serving as mayor of Elizabeth City in 1897 and as city attorney in 1898. He was appointed postmaster in 1903. From 1910 to 1914 he was the assistant U.S. attorney of the Eastern District. A member of the Republican state committee from 1900 to 1918, he was the Republican candidate for governor in 1924. In 1936 the Republican state committee endorsed his nomination for president of the United States.

On 23 Nov. 1924 Meekins was appointed district judge of the U.S. Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina by President Calvin Coolidge and served until 13 Feb. 1945. He was a special U.S. district judge in New York, Illinois, and other states by order of Chief Justice William Howard Taft. Judge Meekins traveled with Taft as a speaker after the latter became president.

Meekins married Lena Allen of Wake Forest on 4 June 1896. They had five children: William Charles (d. 1967; buried at Calvary Episcopal Church, Fletcher), Mahalah Melson (d. 1925; buried at Old Hollywood Cemetery, Elizabeth City), Jeremiah Charles (drowned in 1912; buried at Old Hollywood Cemetery, Elizabeth City); Isabella James (m. Dr. Joseph J. Combs, Raleigh), and Mary Purefoy (m. Oliver F. Gilbert, Elizabeth City). Meekins and his wife were buried at Old Hollywood Cemetery, Elizabeth City.

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