

Williams, Marmaduke ^[1]

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by James D. Gillespie, 1996

6 Apr. 1772–29 Oct. 1850

See also: [Williams, Robert](#) ^[2]; [Williams, Lewis](#) ^[3]

Marmaduke Williams, congressman, legislator, and judge, was born in [Caswell County](#) ^[4], the son of Nathaniel, a member of the [Provincial Congress](#) ^[5], and Mary Ann Williamson Williams. Educated locally, he read law, was admitted to the bar, and established his practice in Caswell County. On Christmas Day 1798 he married Mrs. Agnes Payne Harris, a cousin of Dolley Payne Madison, wife of President [James Madison](#) ^[6]. They had eight children.

Elected to the [state senate](#) ^[7], Williams represented Caswell County in the 1802 session. In the same year he was also named to the board of trustees of Caswell Academy. When his brother Robert was appointed governor of the Mississippi Territory by President [Thomas Jefferson](#) ^[8], Marmaduke succeeded him as a member of Congress. He then served three terms in Congress from October 1803 to March 1809.

Williams moved in 1810 to the Mississippi Territory and the following year to Huntsville, Madison County, Ala., where he remained until 1818, when he settled in Tuscaloosa. In 1819 he was a delegate to the state constitutional convention and with the adoption of the new constitution became a candidate for governor. He lost the election to former territorial governor William W. Bibb by a vote of 8,341 to 7,140.

In 1821 he won a seat in the Alabama House of Representatives. Reelected eleven times, he served until 1839. In the house he was known for his "character for usefulness and practical worth" and for his "inoffensive and business qualifications." During the period 1821–40 Williams was also secretary of the board of trustees of the University of Alabama.

In 1826 he was made one of the commissioners to adjust the unsettled accounts between Mississippi and Alabama dating from the time when both were claimed by Spain. In 1832 he was elected judge of Tuscaloosa County, a position he held until obliged to retire at the constitutionally mandated age of seventy.

In his later years Williams continued to practice law but restricted his services to that of counsellor and conveyancer. A member of the Methodist church, he died in Tuscaloosa and was buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

Additional information from NCpedia editors at the State Library of North Carolina:

NCpedia staff note that there may be some inconsistency in the record of Marmaduke Williams's genealogy. This entry lists him as the son of Nathaniel and Mary Ann Williams, also indicated as the parents of Robert Williams who is also listed as his brother in his entry in the Dictionary of North Carolina Biography (entry by Lindley S. Butler, 1996). The Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress entry for Marmaduke Williams indicates he is a cousin of Robert Williams and a cousin of Lewis Williams.

References:

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L. L. Polk, *Handbook of North Carolina* (1869).

Thomas Owen, *Annals of Alabama* (1900) and *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (1921).

John H. Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina* ^[9] (1851) and ed., *Reminiscences and Memoirs of North Carolina and Eminent North Carolinians* ^[10] (1884).

Additional Resources:

"Williams, Marmaduke, (1774 - 1850)." *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*. Washington, D.C.: The Congress. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=W000529> ^[11] (accessed March 10, 2014).

Ellsworth, Alexandra. "Plantation home to 175 years of history." *The Crimson White* (Tuscaloosa, AL), .August 21, 2013. <http://cw.ua.edu/2013/08/21/plantation-home-to-175-years-of-history/> ^[12] (accessed March 10, 2014).

"Marmaduke Williams House." Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society, Historic Tuscaloosa. <http://www.historictuscaloosa.org/index.php?page=marmaduke-williams-house> ^[13] (accessed March 10, 2014).

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Authors:

Gillespie, James D. ^[18]

Origin - location:

Caswell County ^[19]

From:

Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press. ^[20]

1 January 1996 | Gillespie, James D.

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