

MARGARET C. WILLIAMS

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Margaret C. Williams was more than just "a lady of leisure." She was a wife, a mother, and even a business woman. She was born in 1815, in Chatham County. Her life began I'm sure as most young girls lives do. She grew up and got married at the young age of 17. She had eight children, two girls and six boys. After the death of her husband she became the head of her house. Because of her ability to deal in business, she was able to take care of them.

April 28, 1812, David E. Adams married Mrs. Sarah Spencer Odingsell.<sup>1</sup> They were married on a Tuesday evening at Skidaway Island in Savannah, Georgia, by the Rev. Mr. Bartow.<sup>2</sup> This was Margaret's mother. Sarah had been married previously. She was the widow of Major Charles Odingsell.<sup>3</sup> Sarah and Charles had no children together. He died on June 25, 1806.<sup>4</sup> Charles Odingsell was obviously a very wealthy man. He owned a lot of land and slaves. In his will he left his slaves to many different people.<sup>5</sup> He left to his wife Sarah the house and all the furniture on the Skidaway Plantation, two horses named Bryan and Jack, and the stock of sheep and cattle.<sup>6</sup> He also left her five slaves; Joe, Fanny, Cupid, Pricilla, and Delilah.<sup>7</sup> These slaves were to remain with Sarah whether or not she remarried.<sup>8</sup> Charis wanted to make sure that if Sarah did remarry and have children that they would be well-looked after. When Sarah did remarry to David E. Adams they kept the Skidaway Island Plantation and started a family. David and Sarah had four children: Sarah Elizabeth, Margaret Goulding, Mary Augustus, and Frances Marion.<sup>10</sup> Margaret was the second oldest of the four girls. Margaret's father David was a very wealthy man. He owned land all over Chatham County. He also owned many slaves. Some slaves he inherited and some he bought and sold. On March 23, 1822, David's

brother, Samuel Adams, gave seven slaves to him and his family.<sup>11</sup> These slaves were to be used for David's children.<sup>12</sup> He also owned many other slaves. On April 23, 1819, he bought from Peter Guerard for \$6,500 seventeen negro slaves.<sup>13</sup> These slaves kept the Skidaway Plantation running. On January 21, 1859, Sarah Odingsell Adams died of paralysis.<sup>14</sup> She was 75 years old. She was buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery, in Savannah.<sup>15</sup> I found no record of David E. Adams' death.

On December 20, 1832, Margaret Goulding Adams married Ebenezer Hills Williams.<sup>16</sup> The Rev. W. Preston conducted the Independent Presbyterian ceremony.<sup>17</sup> Margaret was 17 years old and Eben was 19 years old. They had eight children together. They were: Thomas F., Clarence H., Mark E., Lydia M., Eben H., Sarah M., Clarence A., and Alexander J.<sup>19</sup>

Eben was also a very successful landowner. On January 31, 1833, Eben sold 50 acres of land to his brother, Richard F. Williams, for the Georgia Infirmary for the relief and protection of the aged and afflicted Negroes.<sup>20</sup> On April 1, 1834, Eben sold numbers 15, 16, and 18 Oglethorpe Ward to John Dews, the Sheriff of Chatham County, for \$4,000.<sup>21</sup> Eben bought land as often as he sold it. On December 22, 1835, George Glen of Savannah sold Eben some land on Skidaway Island in Chatham County for \$3,300.<sup>22</sup> The land totaled 400 acres.<sup>23</sup> This also included the land between Skidaway Island and Burnside Island, known as Redoubt Island.<sup>24</sup> Along with the land came the house, outhouse, the water courses, and any slaves.<sup>25</sup> This was formerly the property of General Lacklan.<sup>26</sup> On December 9, 1834, Sarah and George W. Owens sold numbers 7 and 8 Green Ward to Eben for \$2,500.<sup>27</sup> These houses were located at the corner of Price and Broughton Streets.<sup>28</sup>

It contained 90 feet on Price Street and 120 feet on Broughton street.<sup>29</sup> On December 22, 1835, George Glen sold to Eben one 40 year old Negro man named Peter for \$800.<sup>30</sup> This was the only record I found of Eben ever buying a slave.

Eben lived a short but productive life. He died on December 11, 1854.<sup>31</sup> He was buried on December 12, 1854, at Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah.<sup>32</sup> Records show that his body was to be removed from Laurel Grove and moved to Bonnaventure Cemetery because of the building of Interstate 16.<sup>33</sup> After going to Bonnaventure, I found that his body was never removed and that he is still buried under what is now I-16.<sup>34</sup> Eben H. Williams nominated his wife Margaret G. Williams as Executor of his last will and testament.<sup>35</sup> He specifically left Margaret the house and kitchen furniture.<sup>36</sup> He left to his first born son, Thomas F. Williams, his library.<sup>37</sup> He left his worldly goods and property to his wife and children.<sup>38</sup> This will was written on September 27, 1834.<sup>39</sup>

After the death of her husband, Margaret became the head of the household.<sup>40</sup> Along with herself and children lived her sisters, Sarah F. Adams and Frances Marion Adams .<sup>41</sup> Margaret wrote to the Honorable Justice of the Inferior Court of Chatham County to show that she was the Executor of her husband's last will and testament.<sup>42</sup> From his estate she received one Negro man, a few articles of personal property, and the following real estate: an undivided half of 350 acres at Laurel Green in Chatham County, 500 acres in Liberty County, 25 acres in Bryan County, 800 acres at Half Moon Bluff on the Altamaha River, 180 acres of Orphan House Track in Chatham County, lots 298 Wilkinson, 132 Baldwin, 7 and 8 Early Street, lots 12, 31, 36, and 37 in

Mount Crown, and lots and buildings numbers 13 and 14 Reynolds Street in Savannah.<sup>43</sup> All of this land and property was rented out. This is how Margaret came to support her family. Margaret sold some land to Isaac W. Morrell on June 15, 1860, for \$1,500 The land was all on White Bluff in Chatham County, eastward along the Vernon River.<sup>45</sup> Isaac had a total of 12 months to pay her.<sup>46</sup> Margaret stayed active in the buying and selling of her land until her death. Margaret G. Williams died on December 14, 1879.<sup>47</sup> She was 64 years old.<sup>48</sup> Her doctor, Dr. Corson, reported that she died of pneumonia.<sup>49</sup> Her funeral was held at her residence, 60 Liberty Street at 11:00 am. On December 1879.<sup>50</sup> She was buried at Laurel Grove Cemetery, but just like her husband, her body was to be removed, but it never was. She too is believed to still be buried in the same place, under I-16.<sup>51</sup>

Margaret G. Williams had no trade outside of her home; She became a businesswoman after the death of her young husband. She was "a lady of leisure in a sense, but her real purpose in life was to raise her eight children. From what I have uncovered, Margaret G. Williams was a very good mother.

The only living relative that I was able to locate was Anne Adams, a great-great granddaughter of Margaret G. Williams. Anne Adams married Mr. Lewis Colton on Saturday July 12, 1952, at the Christ Episcopal Church here in Savannah, Georgia. The couple moved to Tampa, Florida after their marriage. I did not have time to pursue the couple any further.

Endnotes

1.Chatham County Marriages 1805 .1852 Geneological Committee, Georgia Historical Society. Savannah, Georgia 1989; American Patriot 1812 Savannah, Georgia, May 5, 1812, pg. 3; Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser 1812 savannah, Georgia, May 4, 1812, pg. 3

2.Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser 1812 pg. 3

3.Chatham County Marriages 1805 .1852; Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser 1812 pg. 3

4.Deedbook 2E Chatham County Superior Court. Deed Room, Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Georgia pgs. 151 and 152

5.Ibid

6.Ibid

7.Ibid

8.Ibid

9.Ibid

10.Walter C. Hartridge, Jr. Papers Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia, Collection #1349, Box 1

11.Deedhook 2L pg. 472

12.Ibid

13.DeedboOk 21 pg. 222

14.Register of Deaths Chatham County Health Department, Savannah, Georgia

15.Ibid

16.Chatharn County Marriages 1806 .1851 Geneological Committee, Georgia Historical Society. Savannah, Georgia; The Georgian 1832 Savannah, Georgia, December 22, 1832 pg. 3

17.Ibid

18.Chatham County Marriages 1806 .1851

19.1850 census of Georgia Chatham County, pg. 228

20.Deedhook2R pg. 397

21.Deedbook2S pg. 325

22.Deedbook2T pg. 446

23.Ibid

24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. Ibid
27. Deed book 2T pg. 459
28. Ibid
29. Ibid
30. Deed book 2T pg. 446
  
31. Laurel Grove Cemetery Volume 4 Genealogical Committee Georgia  
Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia
32. Ibid
33. Ibid
34. Ibid
35. Chatham County Wills 1827 -1839 Genealogical Committee Georgia  
Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia; Chatham County Wills Chatham  
County Superior Court, Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Georgia
36. Chatham County Wills
37. Ibid
38. Ibid
39. Chatham County Wills 1827 -1839
40. 1850 Census of Chatham County
41. Ibid
42. Chatham County Wills
43. Ibid
44. Deed book 3T pg. 320
45. Ibid
46. Ibid
47. Register of Deaths Chatham County Health Department Savannah, Georgia
48. Ibid
49. Ibid

50. Savannah Morning News 1879 Savannah, Georgia, December  
15, 1879, pg. 3

51. Bonnaventure Cemetery Volume 4 Genealogical Committee Georgia  
Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia

## Sources

American patriot Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia  
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Chatham County Wills 1827 .1839 Georgia Historical Society,  
Savannah, Georgia pg. 22

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Society, Savannah, Georgia 1812

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Index to Deeds and Deed books Chatham County Superior Court, Deed Room,  
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Margaret G. Williams List of Persons buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery  
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Margaret G. Williams vertical File Georgia Historical Society, Savannah,  
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Register of Deaths 1833 .1847 Chatham County Health Department, Savannah,  
Georgia

Savannah City Directory 1879 Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia  
pg. 453

Savannah Morning News Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia, 1879

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Georgia, Collection #1349 Box 1