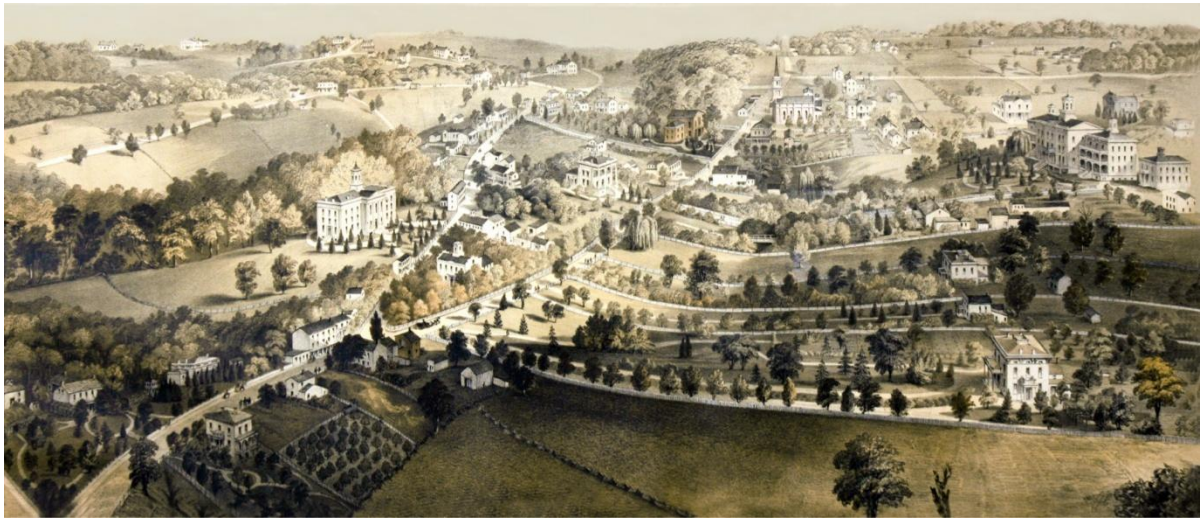


Dr. Mathias C. Williams:

Early Settler of College Hill & Abolitionist



The Strobridge Lithograph of College Hill c1860, showing the home and grounds of Dr. Mathias C. Williams in College Hill (lower right), as it would have appeared prior to being consumed in a fire in 1864. At left is the Farmers' College and Cary's Academy Buildings.

Introduction

When I was three years old, my parents purchased what was known as the Daniel B Pierson home, and later the Orville Simpson home. Growing up in an old house with a rolling landscape around it was a true joy. The old place, since christened as Tanglewood, has always held a special position for me. As an adult, this eventually meant delving into the history of the home and the families who inhabited it and shaped the landscape and architecture of which I have become the steward. Most all of the material began with Daniel B. Pierson and went forward; but I want to know what was there before that? Well, William Cary purchased 491 acres in Section 30 of Millcreek Township in 1813 at \$7 per acre and that became the core of College Hill. Of these acres, he later sold 56 of them in 1819 to his half-brother John Strong, and a decade later the southernmost portion of that tract was made into a ten acre lot that would hold its form for nearly a century and become the residence of Daniel B. Pierson.

In the recorded history of College Hill we have found that there have been many omissions. This is not due to historians wishing to blot out certain segments of its past but rather a lack of a running chronicle from its earliest days of settlement to the present time. With the creation of the College Hill Historical Society in 1979 there was for the first time a broad-based community effort to research, write and record the community's early history, which had since 1813 (and even in the decades prior to that) run through so many interesting scenes from early pioneer life, to an educational and reformist center, to a neighborhood marked by the homes of many Cincinnati industrialists, and a pathway to freedom for many escaping the oppression of slavery on the southern side of the Ohio River, a mere six miles away.

Among these omissions has been the life and contributions of Dr. Mathias Clark Williams; an early resident of College Hill who died here in the spring of 1853. His family was gone from the community before the Civil War, and the Titus Atlas of 1869, which would become the frame of reference for the next several generations and a starting point for most histories. Other than Dr. Williams appearing in the 1850 census in College Hill and the "Williams Estate" being shown in the 1857 plat map of the community, his name and deeds were entirely unknown. As access to digitized records has become widely available, however, his story has begun to take shape and is one that should be added to the collective memory of College Hill.

There have been quite a number of "discoveries" in recent years as we continue to scroll through the annals of times past and clip out long forgotten anecdotes of College Hill. Of these, the journey of discovery regarding the good Dr. Williams is quite close to home—literally. It is with a sense of gratitude that I can now add an earlier chapter to the story that took place on the grounds I call home.

Ed Loyd
President, College Hill Historical Society
May 2016

Dr. Mathias Clark Williams

Dr. Mathias Clark Williams, son of Dr. Ephraim & Phoebe Clark, was born at Westfield, Essex county, New Jersey in 1801, and he died at his residence in College Hill (now part of the City of Cincinnati), Ohio 11 February 1853 of paralysis. His father, Ephraim Williams (7 Feb 1773-13 March 1808) who was the son of Benjamin (1740-1789) and Sarah E Williams, was married June 7, 1798 to Phoebe Clark (1777-1 June 1850) and they are buried in the Presbyterian Church Burial Grounds, Westfield, New Jersey.¹

Dr. Williams settled in Ohio in his early 20s, likely arriving fresh from medical school and would have been associated with the early prominent physicians in Cincinnati such as Dr. Nathaniel Crookshank and Dr. Daniel Drake in the mid-1820s. Mathias Williams was married in Hamilton County, Ohio 31 January 1827 to Juliette Mariah Crookshank, who was born in New York and was the daughter of Dr. Nathaniel C. & Mary Dickerson Crookshank, one of the first physicians in Cincinnati.² Juliette Crookshank Williams died at the home of her daughter in Columbus, Ohio 4 March 1866 and both are buried at Spring Grove Cemetery (Sec. 42, Lot 15—no marker exists but a lovely dogwood tree).

Dr. Crookshank was a native of Scotland who arrived in New York in 1800 and arrived on the Cincinnati frontier in 1811. In L. A. Williams History of Hamilton County it says of him that he was, “a man fond of letters and scientific researches, making the subject of natural history a specialty. He gave the subject of geology particular attention, and prepared manuscripts that should be put into book form. The inconveniences of the printing business in his day precluded the luxury of making many books; otherwise we have something probably more tangible relating to the man. He also became proficient in mathematics, and after his coming to Hamilton County we hear of his making scientific surveys. He also surveyed ground for the Cincinnati, Brookville and Harrison pike.”

By the 1840s he had settled at College Hill where he purchased a 10 acre estate that had been part of the initial land purchase in 1813 by William Cary, who founded College Hill and through his sons had given the community its name. Williams built a fine Italianate country villa facing west towards the Hamilton Pike, which was the main road through the community on some of the finest rolling grounds in the area. Across the street from his home was Cary's Academy, which later became the Farmers' College in 1846—the first school in the nation devoted to practical science and agriculture; nearly a generation ahead of the land grant system, all



The home and grounds of Dr. Mathias C. Williams, College Hill, while the Samuel and Sally Nesmith Wilson House, the second house above, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places specifically for the activity of the Wilson family in the Underground Railroad.

¹ Buried with the Ephraim Williams are their daughter, Lavina B Williams (1806-1837). They also had a daughter Polly Williams, born March 31, 1803.

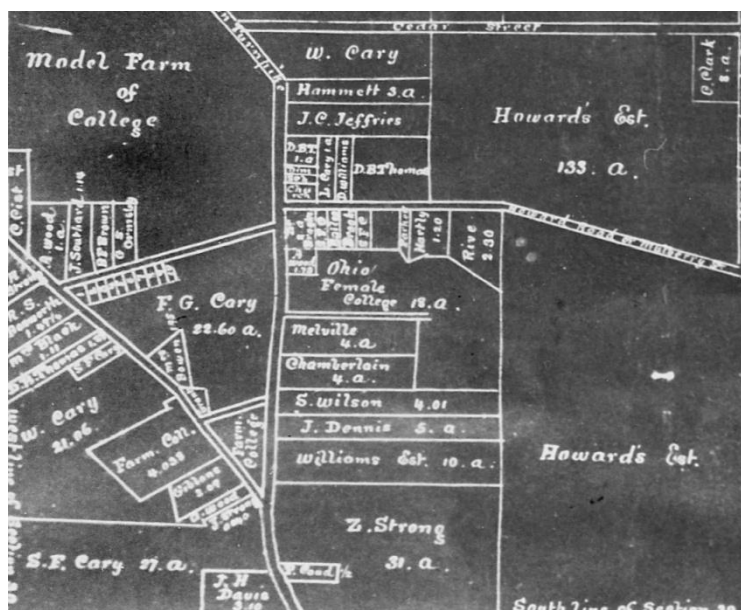
² Dr. Nathaniel Crookshank was born in Scotland September 27, 1772 and married Mary Dickerson of Ulster County, Pennsylvania. They were also the parents of seven children in all: Jane Crookshank Wiley; Fidelia Crookshank; William Cullum Crookshank, who served in the Mexican War; Nathaniel Crookshank, a lawyer at Sullivan, Illinois; Dr. Erasmus D. Crookshank (1807-1876) who lived in Cheviot, Ohio and was Treasurer of Hamilton County, Ohio at the beginning of the Civil War; Martha Crookshank and Juliette Crookshank Williams.

founded by his friend and neighbor, Freeman G. Cary, a son of William Cary.

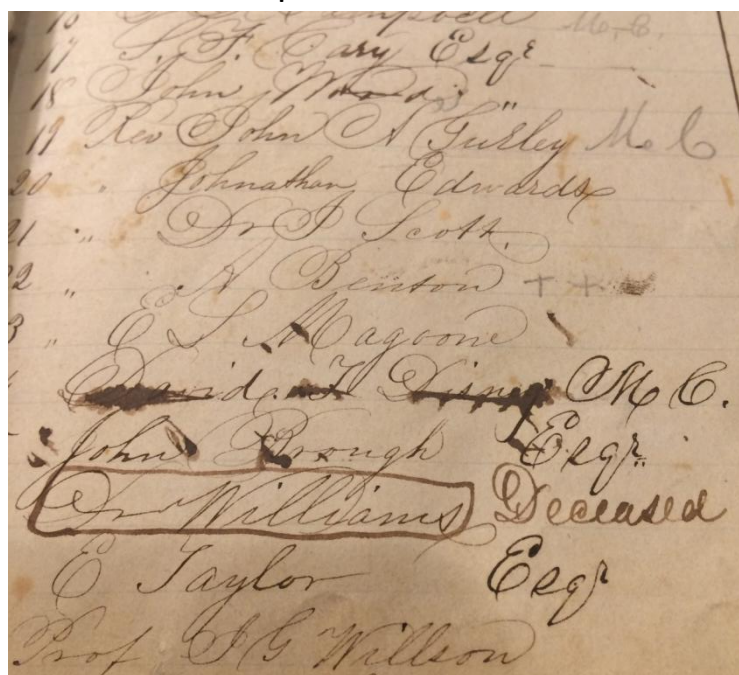
In a letter written by Henry Charles, a student at Farmers' College on July 2, 1848, we learn that Dr. Williams had been invited to speak to one of the literary societies of Farmers' College: "We were favored with lectures from Dr. Williams and Dr. Scott. Dr. Williams is one of the most eminent physicians in this vicinity and a man deservedly esteemed as a good citizen. He is a thoroughgoing abolitionist and his address last evening was a strong and an eloquent appeal in behalf of the oppressed. His remarks were received by the Hall with cheers and continued applause."

The Dr. Scott referenced was John Witherspoon Scott, who had come to teach at Farmers' College upon leaving Miami University in 1846 and whose daughter Caroline Scott met and later married Farmers' College student Benjamin Harrison, later the 23rd President of the United States.³

Dr. Mathias Williams, it would seem, had become an abolitionist prior to 1842, when he names his son after William Wilberforce, the great English leader who led the complete abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833. The first extant record we find of his views dates to May 1845 when the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church was held at Cincinnati. Williams was one of the signatories to the following dissent on account of the Church's motion on slavery: "From the action of the General Assembly



The Williams Estate (center), shown in a plat map of College Hill drawn August 17, 1857 when the community was first applying for recognition as a village, which would not be ascertained until 1866. Below, Dr. Williams earned a place on the roll of honorary members of the Pleasant Hill Literary Society of Farmers' College. Among the names listed near his are Gen. S. F. Cary, Rev. John Gurley, Dr. Scott, A. Benton and Prof. Joseph G. Wilson, all of whom were involved in the temperance or abolitionist causes with him.



³ **Rev. John Witherspoon Scott** (1808-1892), who like his friend, Dr. Robert H. Bishop, had left Miami University due to his abolitionist views and for several years taught in College Hill at Farmers' College and the Pleasant Hill Female Seminary. Scott returned to Oxford, Ohio in 1849 to become President of the Oxford Female College. His daughter Caroline Scott graduated there in 1852 and the following year married Benjamin Harrison, whom she had first met at College Hill when he was a Farmers' College student. When Dr. Scott retired from his educational activities, he received a clerkship at the Department of the Interior in Washington, until the election of his son-in-law as President when he moved into the White House with the Harrisons. He died in the White House November 29, 1892 and was interred at his native Washington, Pennsylvania.

on adopting the report of the committee on overture No. 6 on the memorial on the subject of slavery, we the subscribers ask leave respectfully to dissent because we think some parts of the report seem to contravene the standing testimony of the Presbyterian Church on the subject of slavery, particularly the testimony uttered in the year 1818.”⁴

Liberty Party

Dr. Williams was politically part of the Free Soil Party and the Liberty Party. In the following letter he wrote to the *National Era* of Washington, D.C. one week after Henry Clay had introduced to the Senate his ideas that would lead to the formation of the Compromise of 1850 and makes clear his opposition to what he terms “the bargain and sale going on in some Legislatures at this time.” Clay’s Compromise, which would be achieved in September of 1850, achieved five objectives: 1) admitted California to the Union as a free state 2) in the Utah and New Mexico Territories the slavery question would be decided by a plebiscite 3) Texas’ state boundaries were set 4) the slave trade was abolished in Washington, D.C. (though not holding slaves) and 5) the Fugitive Slave Act was strengthened. In response, Williams wrote:

REORGANIZATION OF THE LIBERTY PARTY.

To the Editor of the *National Era*: As the friends of the Slave Power have formed a Union party, on the basis of strict adherence to the settlement of the Compromise acts passed at the last session of Congress, and have declared their intention to maintain the settlement inviolate, and to resist all attempts to repeal or alter the acts aforesaid, unless by general consent of the friends of the measure; and they further declare that they will not support for the office of President or Vice President, or Senator or Representative in Congress, or as member of the State Legislature, any man, of whatever party, who is not known to be opposed to the disturbance of the settlement of said acts, and to the renewal in any form of agitation upon the subject of slavery is it not time for the friends of Freedom to be at their post, and resist, with all the power that God has given them, this wicked faction? The object of this short communication is to suggest the propriety of holding a Convention in Cleveland, or Buffalo, sometime in May next, to reorganize the old Liberty party. All antislavery men could unite in carrying out the principles of that party. The cause has lost much by being merged in the Free Soil movement. Many are disgusted with the bargain and sale going on in some Legislatures at this time. I hope this will meet with the approbation of the friends of Freedom.

Yours, etc, M.C. WILLIAMS

College Hill, Hamilton County, Ohio, February 5, 1850.

The Liberty Party was the first antislavery party. Formed at a national convention in Albany, New York, in April 1840, the party sought to achieve abolitionist goals through political means. Its first presidential candidate was a former Alabama slave holder, James G. Birney. The party drew a scant 7,000 votes nationally in that election, a figure that increased to approximately 62,000 in 1844. Although numerically small, the Liberty party exerted considerable influence in a number of northern states, and some historians attribute Henry Clay’s loss of the presidency in 1844 to the Liberty party, which took Whig votes away from Clay in New York State. In 1848, with the rise of northern concern about the expansion of slavery in the territories, most Liberty party members joined the more moderate Free Soil party, which appealed primarily to northern fears about the expansion of slavery.

⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 23 May 1845, 2.

One of the early activists in the Party was Salmon P. Chase, who had joined the Liberty Party in 1841, and had a significant influence on the Liberty Party platform of 1843/1844, as well as organizing the “Southern and Western Liberty Convention” in Cincinnati in 1845, where a number of delegates from the Midwest and upper south met. It would be hard to imagine that M.C. Williams was not among those delegates of the Liberty Party in Cincinnati.

In order to broaden the appeal of the party, Chase advocated supplementing the almost purely religious and moral Liberty Party rhetoric of the 1840 election with political and constitutional analysis, and wished the party to emphasize that its immediate goal was to withdraw all direct federal government support and recognition of slavery (or to “divorce” the federal government from slavery), as opposed to simply demanding the abolition of slavery everywhere in the United States (something which was beyond the legal power of the federal government to accomplish as the U. S. constitution then existed). In 1847–1848, Chase was a strong supporter of the fusion movement which resulted in the formation of the Free Soil Party.

The Liberty Party continued to exist many years afterwards, despite most of its supporters having left to join less-religiously-motivated parties. In the absence of Chase, religious rhetoric in the party’s official addresses and platforms increased. The 1848 platform strongly condemned the perceived attempts to moderate the party. That same year, the party began openly advocating various general moralistic policies, such as prohibitions on alcohol, gambling, and prostitution. Other than these religiously motivated restrictions on market activity, the party largely favored free trade, and opposed tariffs. Thus, in 1850, as the specter of Henry Clay’s Compromise of 1850 looms, Dr. Williams takes his pen to advocate on behalf of an effort, “to reorganize the old Liberty party,” by bringing together, “All antislavery men...in carrying out the principles of that party.”

Abolitionist Movement in Cincinnati and College Hill

Additionally, Dr. Williams was associated with many of the prominent abolitionists in Cincinnati, who were actively participating in the Underground Railroad activities that occurred in College Hill, such as Levi Coffin, known as the “President of the Underground Railroad” and Rev. Jonathan Cable,⁵ who was also based in College Hill during this time, as well as B. P. Aydelott, President of Woodward College and a writer of temperance reform, William Henry Brisbane⁶ and Charles B. Boynton, who

⁵ **Rev. Jonathan Cable** (1799-1884) was a Presbyterian minister who had been active in the abolitionist movement since the late 1820s. He began the New School Presbyterian Church in Sharon, Ohio (Sharonville)—near Cincinnati in the early 1840s and was active in the anti-slavery synod and conventions held in Cincinnati, as well as at Liberty meetings. By 1850 he was living in College Hill next to the Witherby farm on Belmont Avenue, about half a mile from Dr. Williams home and his sons attended the Farmers’ College. During the next five years he is active from College Hill and mentioned by name is Levi Coffin’s *Reminiscence*. Cable later relocated to Albany, Ohio in 1856 and later spent the balance of his life in Iowa.

⁶ **William Henry Brisbane** (1806-1875) a native of South Carolina, who settled in Ohio and Wisconsin, was a physician, a minister, an editor and author, and a national leader in the temperance and abolition movements. In 1835 he became editor of the *Southern Baptist*. Until 1835 Brisbane held firmly to his pro-slavery beliefs, secure in the possession of his plantation and slaves and he wrote pro-slavery essays for the *Charleston Mercury*. In July, 1835 he received an anti-slavery pamphlet with an extract from *Elements of Moral Science* by Francis Wayland. According to notes in his journal, Brisbane found that in attempting to refute Wayland’s arguments, he realized that he must give up his republican principles or admit that slavery was wrong. He sold all but three slaves, each for about \$200 less than market price, and moved to Cincinnati. In 1841 he bought back his former slaves, took them to Cincinnati, and freed them along with the three he had previously retained. At Cincinnati, Brisbane continued his preaching as well as his part-time practice of medicine. During his stay in that city he edited the *Christian Abolition*, the *Philanthropist*, and *Crisis*. In August, 1844, he was nominated by the Liberty Committee

later became the first President of Howard University. With other near neighbors, such as the Samuel and Sally Wilsons to his north, the Strong family to his south, and Carys to the west, it appears very likely that Dr. Williams and his family would have also actively participated to help conceal escaping slaves in their home—as was being done all around his.

The letter that Harriet N Wilson⁷ wrote in 1892 expertly recounts many of the scenes and incidents of this period in College Hill, which are extensively excerpted here to provide a sense of the spirit in the community: “The position of College Hill only six miles from the city on a high eminence making it a point of observation from the surrounding country, the only direct road leading to it being a narrow, dusty turnpike up the steep hill: the only conveyance being an omnibus, which, with all other vehicles, could be seen for a long distance. The two educational institutions located on the hill drew students from far and near, while nearly all the families residing on the hill were connected in some way with the two colleges, all helping to make it a very suitable place for anything requiring secrecy and prompt action, but in some way never fully explained or understood, fugitives had begun coming, through whom or by whose influence was never known—having come they were cared for and sent on their way rejoicing, others followed and thus the work continued to grow and increase until it became quite a heavy financial burden on the few who so long carried on the work.



Though the fugitives were not really led by a cloud by day or a pillar of fire at night, yet a protecting power certainly led them by strange and devious ways to the long wished for haven. They seemed gifted with a kind of magnetic power, which, with their grips and pass words, drew those of different localities together, making them choose the least travelled ways and the deep shadowed ravines and valleys lying on each side of our beautiful hill, soon seemed to be the popular route chosen by the wayfarers.

A few colored families lived in small cabins in the sequestered places, were stopping places until the benevolent people of the Hill could be secretly notified, “that more people had come, and that help was

as a candidate for Congress. In his diary he wrote that he was unwilling to suffer the reproaches and defamation of a political candidate, yet he was unwilling to decline “lest I do injury to our holy enterprise.” On a trip to New York and Boston in April, 1845, became acquainted with Horace Greeley, and he preached at a number of churches in Boston. In 1846 and 1847 he was in Philadelphia, editing the *American Citizen*, returning later to Cincinnati, where he operated a farm in addition to his other interests. In 1853 he moved to Wisconsin to lay out a town site on the Wisconsin River in partnership with his friend Edward Harwood. He purchased land with a tavern and barn in Arena, where he also operated a ferry. He accepted the position of clerk of the Senate in Madison in 1854.

⁷ **Harriet Nesmith Wilson** (1825-1920), was the daughter of Samuel and Sally Nesmith Wilson, who moved to College Hill in 1848 and would have been Dr. Williams’ neighbors, friends and colleagues in abolitionism and temperance. Wilson was for generations known by the children of College Hill as their teacher and principal, and would have been the last person living in the community who had directly known Dr. Williams. Her letter, dated April 14, 1892 to William H. Seibert of the Ohio State University (now in the Ohio Historical Society Seibert Collection), provides one of the rare comprehensive source material for documentation of Underground Railroad activities in College Hill. As a result, the Wilson Home is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places specifically for its association to the Underground Railroad.

needed.” Stealthily creeping along to the well known house of Mr. G, a tap on the window would arouse him. After a whispered consultation they would proceed to Mr. C’s and Mr. W’s and the sturdy gray haired men who knew no such word as fear and were equal to every emergency would leave their beds and go out into the darkness and have all of the newcomers provided with temporary quarters before the morning dawn. Many times did the tired but kind hearted women, though weary with the toils and cares of the previous day, leave their couches to help arrange safe hiding places, prepare food for the hungry and clothes for the almost naked, for in that plight were many who came through the briers and bushes which necessarily bordered the Underground R.R. There are names of true hearted, unselfish men and women on the unwritten records of that road, but their reward is sure from him that said “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, etc.” Some of these kind hearted women did it without the hearty co-operation of their husbands. Two such bearing names well known and honored have long since gone to their reward.

The runaways of those days were generally of the brighter and better sort of slaves, possessing tact and energy which made them dare to risk everything to gain their freedom. Some who lived in the free states had been freed by their masters and then sent North, and had made homes and friends among the whites, yet often either the husband or wife would lack the necessary papers from their former master. The hated “Fugitive Slave Law” was a new terror to them. We had one such case on College Hill, that of quite an intelligent colored man, with a kind hearted wife. He was for some years a janitor at the College and by his uniform politeness, fidelity, and industry, commanded the esteem, not only of the students, but of the residents of the Hill. They were well posted in the workings of the road, which brought so many of the race from the land of bondage and were ever ready and willing to lend a helping hand to all such and frequently there would be several concealed in his humble house, which was indeed a veritable “Cave of Adullum” to them, they did everything so wisely and so well that no “outsiders” suspected them of being engaged in such a work. Originally from South Carolina, the wife had been given her freedom, but without her “Free Paper.” After the enactment of the fugitive slave law, which sent alarm and consternation into hundreds of such families, they lived in a constant state of fear and dread of what might come to them. The kind old master was dead and the spendthrift sons needed money and would not be conscientious as to how it was obtained, so they felt they were no longer safe to remain where the grasping and unscrupulous heirs could seize her, so to the regret of all on the Hill, they reluctantly went to Canada, where after a few years both succumbed to the severity of the climate and died of consumption.

“In the published “Reminiscences of Levi Coffin,” p304 to 309, he speaks of John Fairfield the Virginian, who did efficient work as conductor of numerous trains over the Underground R.R. He was on the Hill several times, making this a sort of “function” but was very careful not to be seen or known by any outsiders, so, of course, his calls were very brief. To despoil the slaveholders seemed to be his impelling motive, but it was said that he never lost a single passenger of the many that he brought from all parts of the South, but engineered all the trains “safe across the line into Canada.” My sister, Mrs. Pyle, saw the large (28) company mentioned in those pages when they were hurriedly gathered, scared and trembling into the 3 janitor’s house, waiting for the wagons to come to take them across the Ohio boundary into the safer Quaker settlements in Indiana. Some daring students from those peaceful homes had with others, made all the necessary arrangements and with youthful ardor and courage were on the alert to “see them off,” yet careful not to be seen or known by any of their fellow students. The dangers to be avoided added yet to their interest and excitement. Cautiously and singly the inmates had been gathered and with darkened windows and watched doors, there was no sign of what was transpiring within.

The venerable Doctor Bishop, the Scotch Divine and scholar, so long president of Miami University,

but in his last years connected with Farmers' College, was in the crowded room, his towering, patriarchal figure reminding one of the prophet Elijah, in his own peculiar impressive manner he read an appropriate psalm and then kneeling in the midst of that motley group, in a most fervent prayer, he implored the protection and the blessing of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage through the waters of the Red Sea and the dangers of the wilderness, into the Promised Land, that He would likewise give the helpless ones then assembled, keep them safe from the dangers and the detention by the way and bring them to the land where they would be free. Smothered expressions of "Pres de Lord" "Dats so" were heard on all sides and with the excitable peculiarities of their race several sprang to their feet examining, "Dat prayer will keep us safe. De Lord Bless him." "We will get through all right."

It is somewhat remarkable that during those years of disturbance and excitement, none of the houses on College Hill were ever searched by the "Minions of the law" though frequently there were well grounded fears that such would be the case. One hot Sunday evening word came to College Hill that officers properly armed and equipped were coming to search for a number of runaways supposed to be in hiding here. They were scattered among several families and the unknown news was soon known to all. They were hurried consultations and planning. The wife of the College President opened a trap-door leading from her large kitchen into a secret receptacle made for storing winter fruit, etc., and found that her guests could be safely stowed away there, and concealed by the carpeted floor. The women being "entertained" by our family were terribly frightened declaring "that they would die rather than be taken and carried back." Though quite large in size they were ready and willing to crowd through a small aperture into a dark cellar where they would be safe. Some were stowed away under the hay, and it is said that a "valuable buy" was secreted in a dark place in the belfry of the College where all possible precautions had been taken and all felt that an ordinary search would not reveal them, they settled down to patiently await the result, but it was a great relief to hear that the expected searching party had turned back to the city.

They came to the toll-gate, a mile below College Hill and told the toll man their business and asked for information as to suspected parties, etc. He was a clever man but a Democrat, and in sympathy with the South, yet was ignorant of his close proximity to the hated route. He told them that he really believed that there was no place on the Hill where a runaway could be concealed. The men believed the assertion and turned back and thus we were relieved of the indignity and danger of an "official search." Yet at the time there were some thousands of dollars worth of "human chattels" on and around the Hill.

Children belonging to the protecting families were early taught to be reticent, to be "know nothings" regarding such matters, never by word or look to hint of such arrival of "guests" and even those sometimes brought along with fugitives seemed to be burdened with an unnatural sense of responsible silence seldom whimpering or crying aloud. The large rewards offered for valuable runaway slaves seldom caused them to be arrested and returned to slavery. Only very unprincipled, brutish men would stoop to such work. All others seemed to feel that such "gain" would indeed be "blood money."

A young and bright mulatto, so trusted by his master as to be hired out on a river steamer earning large wages for him, learned that owing to financial embarrassment of his owner, there was a possibility of him being sold, ran off while the boat was at the wharf and found his way to College Hill, reaching the house where we lived in the wee small hours of the night. A young man who knew of his coming went to the city in the morning and saw large handbills giving a minute description and offering \$500 reward for information that would lead to his capture. They did not get the desired information, and he was happy not to get money in that way.

To show the peculiar difficulties attending the coming and going of the colored people from College Hill, frequently those in hiding were slaves of those having sons in College. An old colored woman while working in our kitchen saw the nephew of her Kentucky master at our table in the dining room, but he did not see her. She was a good cook and hired out at a country hotel, so prepared everything as usual Saturday night, even to dressing chickens for breakfast, then tied up a few things and joined a company making their way to freedom. Being unable to keep up with them she lay down and rolled down to the river where skiffs were in waiting. She reached the Ohio side in a sadly dilapidated condition. When she came to us she was wearing a dress given by the mother-in-law of one of Ohio's most noted Democratic politicians. All had to be very careful to efface every mark by which the donators could be identified were the slaves retaken. Frequently when at home on Saturday and asking for some article of clothing, I would receive the reply, "Gone to Canada."

The ruling principle which seemed to actuate the majority of the fugitives causing them to run away was the fear of being sold south. Some of them seemed to regard their "Massa and Missis" with affection and they seemed to hate to leave them, but the fear of what might be impelled them to get away. One of the residents of our hill was made an anti-slavery man by seeing a strong, black man roughly dragged from the cars at Cumminsville by a U.S. Marshall and carried back to slavery.

One of the last fugitives who came to College Hill, was a smart active young fellow who had made his way to one of the small stations on the Hamilton and Dayton R.R. Opening the car door he confronted his master with an officer. Springing back he tightly held the closed door until the train was under full headway, then jumped and ran for life and liberty. The pursuers dared not follow him and endeavored to have the train stopped, but the train men refused and they were carried on the next station several miles distant. Meanwhile the fugitive was making his unknown way over the Hill. Coming to some men at work cutting wood, he threw himself upon their mercy and told his story. They directed him the best way to College Hill, telling him that he would find kind people there who would help him. Sometime after the pursuing party came to the same men, asking if they had seen a black fellow, etc. The men professed to have not seen anyone answering the description and skillfully evaded all their questions. Finally the master said, "We may as well go home. Jim is too smart for us to catch him" so they reluctantly retraced their way, minus the \$100 dollars worth of flesh and blood which they had hoped to take with them.

He was forwarded on, but the work had become too well known and the peculiarly difficult circumstances attending it in College Hill, it was deemed wiser to have it carried on by other less exposed routes so in the years immediately preceding the civil war, there were comparatively none coming to the Hill yet those interested in the cause of human rights did their part financially to help on the work and when the great conflict came, when our country was made to suffer so fearfully for the sins of the parents and the framers of the government our hill did not escape the terrible "baptism of blood" which marked our bravest and best as martyrs laying down their lives in southern battlefields..."

H.N. Wilson
College Hill
April, 14, 1892

In the following article, Dr. Williams is a member of the committee calling for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention in April 1850 in Cincinnati. The purpose was to bring together “prominent abolitionist churchmen” and condemn the religious fellowship with slaveholders. This committee also consisted of men such as William H. Brisbane, A. Benton, B. P. Aydelott, S. H. Chase, Levi Coffin, James Birney and Charles Boynton as Chairman. In total, 2,000 people responded to the invitation to the Convention and 150 attended. As the organizers wrote:

The Anti-Slavery Bugle
Salem, Columbiana County, Ohio February 9, 1850
Call for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention.

The undersigned, having been constituted a Committee for the purpose of calling a Convention of Christians, to consider upon the connection of the American Church with the sin of Slaveholding, do hereby invite our fellow-Christians, of all denominations, to assemble in Convention at Cincinnati, on the third Wednesday in April next, to deliberate upon this important subject, and to adopt such measures as the Convention may, in its wisdom devise, for freeing the American Israel from this sin.

Among the many reasons which, in the opinion of the undersigned, render such a Convention desirable, we would mention the following:

1. The guilt of a wrong action is proportioned to the light and knowledge against which it is committed; and God, having, by His Providence fully revealed, through experience and discussions, the sinfulness of Slaveholding, the Church has no longer a cloak or excuse for continuing therein.—These are not the days of ignorance, in which the sin can be winked at, but all men, everywhere, are called upon to repent and forsake it.
2. The injurious influence of a sin in the Church, becomes greater when it particularly attracts the attention of the world.—Slaveholding has now drawn upon itself the observation of all men, and so universal has been the condemnation of the practice, that even the semi-barbarian refuses to tolerate what a portion of the American Church cherishes as a part of the Christian system, and thus the Gospel is evil spoken of, and its progress hindered at home and abroad.
3. We believe the influence of the Church to be so great, that no earthly power can destroy this sin, while, as now, it finds countenance and protection among the professed people of God; and that nothing can save it from speedy ruin so soon as the Church shall withdraw her support.

Call for a Christian Anti-Slavery Convention.

The undersigned, having been constituted a Committee for the purpose of calling a Convention of Christians, to consider upon the connection of the American Church with the sin of Slaveholding, do hereby invite our fellow-Christians, of all denominations, to assemble in Convention at Cincinnati, on the third Wednesday in April next, to deliberate upon this important subject, and to adopt such measures as the Convention may, in its wisdom devise, for freeing the American Israel from this sin.

Among the many reasons which, in the opinion of the undersigned, render such a Convention desirable, we would mention the following:

1. The guilt of a wrong action is proportioned to the light and knowledge against which it is committed; and God, having, by His Providence fully revealed, through experience and discussions, the sinfulness of Slaveholding, the Church has no longer a cloak or excuse for continuing therein.—These are not the days of ignorance, in which the sin can be winked at, but all men, everywhere, are called upon to repent and forsake it.

2. The injurious influence of a sin in the Church, becomes greater when it particularly attracts the attention of the world.—Slaveholding has now drawn upon itself the observation of all men, and so universal has been the condemnation of the practice, that even the semi-barbarian refuses to tolerate what a portion of the American Church cherishes as a part of the Christian system, and thus the Gospel is evil spoken of, and its progress hindered at home and abroad.

3. We believe the influence of the Church to be so great, that no earthly power can destroy this sin, while, as now, it finds countenance and protection among the professed people of God; and that nothing can save it from speedy ruin so soon as the Church shall withdraw her support.

4. It has become a question of grave import, with a large number of Christian, whether each member of an organized body is not held responsible by God for the sin of the organization of which he VOLUNTARILY forms a part; and it is believed that a public free interchange of opinions upon this point, would produce a salutary effect upon the minds of hundreds of inquiring Christians.

5. A large body of American professors, influential from their number, wealth, and social rank, have deliberately chosen and publicly declared their position: They enshrine slaveholding in the church, and cherish and defend it as a practice agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel. To a body of Christians, large already, and daily increasing, it is a very solemn question, whether silence and inaction on the part of other portions of the church, do not give consent to these principles, and whether this consent does not make the sin ours, by adoption, and involve us in the consequences.

We, therefore, earnestly request our Fellow-Christians, of all Denominations, to whom this Circular is sent, to obtain for it, as soon as may be, the names of such brethren as are friendly to the object, and return them to the Chairman of the Committee, at Cincinnati, on or before the first day of March next.

B. P. Aydelott,	Wm. Henry Brisbane,
S. C. Stevens,	A. Benton,
Joseph T. Lewis,	Samuel Lewis,
E. Goodman,	S. H. Chase,
M. C. Williams,	Levi Coffin,
James C. White,	Jonathan Cable,
Charles B. Boynton, Chairman.	
Cincinnati, Nov. 20, 1849.	

4. It has become a question of grave import, with a large number of Christians, whether each member of an organized body is not held responsible by God for the sin of the organization of which he VOLUNTARILY forms a part; and it is believed that a public free interchange of opinions upon this point, would produce a salutary effect upon the minds of hundreds of inquiring Christians.

5. A large body of American professors, influential from their numbers, wealth, and social rank, have deliberately chosen and publicly declared their position: They enshrine slaveholding in the church, and cherish and defend it as a practice agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel. To a body of Christians, large already, and daily increasing, it is a very solemn question, whether silence and inaction on the part of other portions of the church, do not give consent to these pro-slavery principles, and whether this consent does not make the sin ours, by adoption, and involve us in the consequences.

We, therefore, earnestly request our Fellow-Christians, of all Denominations, to whom this Circular is sent, to obtain for it, as soon as may be, the names of such brethren as are friendly to the object, and return them to the Chairman of the Committee, at Cincinnati, on or before the first day of March next.

B. P. AYDELOTT,	WM. HENRY BRISBANE,
S. C. STEVENS,	A. BENTON,
JOSEPH T. LEWIS,	SAMUEL LEWIS,
E. GOODMAN,	S. H. CHASE,
M. C. WILLIAMS,	LEVI COFFIN,
JAMES C. WHITE,	JONATHAN CABLE,
CHARLES B. BOYNTON, Chairman.	
Cincinnati, Nov. 20, 1849.	

This is followed by the appeal below from the *National Era* of April 4, 1850:

THE CHRISTIAN ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION

The welfare of man in the highest object of Christian labor it is the object for which Christ came into the world. Love to God is demonstrated by our labors for the temporal and spiritual good of mankind. If we fail in this, we have no right to claim the Christian name. But thus to labor, we must feel that every man is our brother, and demands from us a brother's affections and a brother's care. No abjectness of character, no degradation in vice, no condition of ignorance, no lowness of social rank, no loss of caste, no difference of race, no color of the skin, should make us forget that all men are brethren. To forget this is to repudiate the Gospel, to deny Christ, and to bring upon ourselves the wrath of an offended God. It is the want of this Christian spirit in the churches, obliterating the distinction between

those in and those out of the church, that now demands from all whose religion is more than a mere outward profession, an investigation of the cause why the churches in our land are not carrying out practically the doctrine of human equality.

In view of this condition of things, we would urge all Christians who desire the churches to take the highest ground in the recognition of the rights of every man to civil, religious, and personal liberty, to meet in convention on the third Wednesday in April next, in the city of Cincinnati for the purpose of adopting such measures, as the convention may in its wisdom devise, for freeing the American Israel from all connection with the sin of slavery.

Now brethren, do not forget the time, and begin at once to make your arrangement for the occasion. Prove your love to God and man by making sacrifices for the glory of the ONE, and for the happiness of the other.

We take the liberty to suggest to the friends of the object that there are brethren whose voices should be heard in the convention, but whose means are not sufficient to allow them to take the journey to Cincinnati. We hope that such brethren will be provided for by their neighbors, to meet their travelling expenses, so that the convention may have the benefit of their counsels. And whatever can be done in this matter, let it be quickly done, in order that we may have the assurance in time that these brethren will be present.

Charles Boynton,
Wm. Henry Brisbane,
B. P. Aydelott,
S. C. Stevens,
A. Benton,
Joseph T. Lewis,
Samuel Lewis,
E. Goodman,
S. H. Chase,
M. C. Williams,
Levi Coffin,
James C. White,
Jonathan Cable, etc., COMMITTEE

Another interesting item that relates to Dr. Williams from this period is an 1850 sword presentation to Robert C Caldwell.⁸ He was an 1829 graduate of Miami University, who afterwards was admitted to the Bar but determined to take a commission as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, and distinguished himself in the War with Mexico and various Indian Wars until in 1850 when he resigned his commission and returned to private legal practice at Pensacola, Florida, where he had most recently been stationed. The following article comes from the *Southern Press* of Washington, D.C. of September 3, 1850. Among the signatories are Dr. Mathis C Williams, Samuel F Cary, Freeman G Cary, John W. Caldwell, William B Caldwell and Robert H Bishop, who were all College Hill residents, while many of the others were prominent in Cincinnati and/or graduates of Miami University. As it addresses him as "General," that honorific must have come from a State militia or other source. He would live for only two years after this presentation. It reads:

Reward of Merit: Robert C. Caldwell formerly of this county, though young in years, has seen service in various wars, and in all conducted himself with great firmness and true courage. We understand that he has left the Army, and engaged in the practice of the law in Alabama. Fifty odd of his old acquaintances in this city and county have lately presented him a sword, as a testimony of their high appreciation of his services and of the high character he has sustained. The letter of presentation and the reply of General Caldwell, we copy below:

Cincinnati, July 4, 1850.
To Brigadier General Robert C. Caldwell,
Pensacola, Florida.

General: As citizens of Ohio, we feel proud to recognize you as one of ourselves, and one who has done honor to his nativity, and who will do no discredit to his country, in whatever capacity it may be your fortune henceforth to act. We have, with pleasure, marked your progress in your early life, in the walks of literature, science and the arts, in the acquisition of your university education. We have, with hope, seen you admitted to the labors and the honors of the legal profession, as a member of the Bar. And we have, with pride, watched your footsteps, as guided by lofty ambition, and patriotism, you have by sea and land, periled life and fortune, in defense of your country's rights, in the face of her foe-at-arms, wheresoever found.

REWARD OF MERIT.—Robert C. Caldwell formerly of this county, though young in years, has seen service in various wars, and in all conducted himself with great firmness and true courage. We understand that he has left the Army, and engaged in the practice of the law in Alabama. Fifty odd of his old acquaintances in this city and county have lately presented him a sword, as a testimony of their high appreciation of his services and of the high character he has sustained. The letter of presentation and the reply of General Caldwell, we copy below:

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To Brigadier General Robert C. Caldwell,
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GENERAL: As citizens of Ohio, we feel proud to recognize you as one of ourselves, and one who has done honor to his nativity, and who will do no discredit to his country, in whatever capacity it may be your fortune henceforth to act.

We have, with pleasure, marked your progress in your early life, in the walks of literature, science and the arts, in the acquisition of your university education.

We have, with hope, seen you admitted to the labors and the honors of the legal profession, as a member of the Bar.

And we have, with pride, watched your footsteps, as guided by lofty ambition, and undoubted patriotism, you have by sea and land, periled life and fortune, in defense of your country's rights, in the face of her foe-at-arms, wheresoever found.

We present you, this sword, as a small testimonial of our high appreciation of your distinguished services, as a Military and Naval officer of the United States, in their several wars with the Creek, the Cherokee and the Seminole nations of Indians, and the Republic of Mexico.

Respectfully yours,

S F Cary, J G Stilwell, F G Cary, M C Williams, Wm S McMaster, R H Bishop, James Rely, Charles F Hennisch, James J Faran, Timothy C Day, A H McGuffey, Wm Wiswell, Henry Achey, H E Spencer, Thomas J Gallagher, Wm C Smith, J M Tapscott, William Hunter, John M Pugh, James McMaster, Richard Burke, R B Warden, Rufus W King, J W Pratt, John W Caldwell, James Saffin, James Cooper, Charles G Broadwell, E B Stout, Edwin R Campbell, Jo Cooper, Patrick McGroarty, Edward Woodruff, A L Ross, S Caldwell, John A Matson, Wm W Warden, Jacob Finn, Robert Moore, R H Stone, Charles C Murdock, Stephen Clark, Thomas H Burrows, Daniel Gano, Thos J Stratt, Jos R Gitchell, Wm B Caldwell, Wm S Wilson.

⁸ **Robert Cunningham Caldwell** (1810-1852) is buried in St. Michaels Cemetery at Pensacola, Florida with his wife Judith Tomlin Fauntleroy Caldwell (1815-1866) and their son Fauntleroy Caldwell (1848-1854). He was the son of Samuel and Elizabeth Watson Caldwell, and a brother of John Watson Caldwell (1809-1896), who was a Miami graduate of 1827 and served as U.S. Minister to Bolivia, and William B Caldwell, also a Miami graduate in 1835 and law partner of his classmate Samuel F. Cary in the firm of Cary & Caldwell until 1845 when Cary quite their lucrative practice to devote all his energies to the Temperance cause.

We present you, this sword, as a small testimonial of our high appreciation of your distinguished services, as a Military and Naval officer of the United States, in their several wars with the Creek, the Cherokee and the Seminole nations of Indians, and the Republic of Mexico.

Respectfully yours,

S F Cary, J G Stilwell, F G Cary, M C Williams, Wm S McMaster, R H Bishop, James Reily, Charles F Hennisch, James J Faran, Timothy C Day, A H McGuffey, Wm Wiswell, Henry Achey, H E Spencer, Thomas J Gallagher, Wm C Smith, J M Tapscott, William Hunter, John M Pugh, James McMaster, Rupard Burke, R B Warden, Rufus W King, J W Pratt, John W Caldwell, James Saffin, James Cooper, Charles G Broadwell, E B Stout, Edwin R Campbell, Jo Cooper, Patrick McGroarty, Edward Woodruff, A L Ross, S Caldwell, John A Matson, Wm W Warden, Jacob Flinn, Robert Moore, R H Stone, Charles C Murdock, Stephen Clark, Thomas H Burrowes, Daniel Gano, Thos J Stratt, Jos R Gitchell, Wm B Caldwell, Wm S Wilson.



Pensacola, Florida, Aug. 24, 1850.

To General Samuel F. Cary and others: Gentlemen. I am honored by the receipt of your letter of the 4th ult, in which you tender to me a sword as an evidence of your appreciation of my services as an officer of the United States, in several wars with the Indians and with the Republic of Mexico. The appropriation of his countrymen, is justly esteemed the highest reward, which a public servant can receive for his services, and such a reward is richly enhanced when bestowed, unbidden, by that portion of my fellow-citizens, who have known him longer and best, and whose names are associated with his earliest and happiest recollections. It is with unfeigned deep emotion, that I recognize among the donors of this token of your regard and approbation, the names of playmates of my childhood, schoolmates, of my boyhood, of those who cherished and directed with their Christian wisdom, the vague aspiration of my youth, and of those who encouraged me to advance, when pausing on the slippery threshold of active life; a host of friends whose good opinion alone, is a reward far above my humble merits, and to retain whose esteem, will be the highest incentive to the continued discharge of the arduous duties of my profession.

Be assured then, gentlemen, that the sword you have presented me, is received and valued above price, as a token of your approval of my past career. It shall be kept, unsullied, through my future life, and often will I look upon it to encourage me in the aim to continue to the end such a course as to deserve your generous esteem.

With my whole heart I thank you and am gratefully and very respectfully, your obedient servant, ROBERT C. CALDWELL.

In the 1850 Census Dr. Williams is listed along with his wife and four children with two Irish born servants: Bridget McIntire and John Douly. His home was valued at \$10,000, a substantial sum for the era. Not long thereafter, in early 1851 while Dr. Williams was at the prime of life and center of the abolition movement, he suffered a debilitating stroke at the age of 50, from which he was never able to recover.

Dr. Williams included a devise of \$500 in his Will to the American Missionary Association, which had been created in 1846 as the union of three antislavery societies, specifically designated for their work at the “Mendi Mission” in Africa, which supported the cause of the freed slaves of the famous Amistad case. He also included several clauses regarding the good moral character of his children, and should they “become addicted to vicious habits” and “be likely to lead to the squandering of his or her share of the estate” he empowered his executors “in such case only the interest of such unfortunate child or children, portion or portions, shall be paid to him,” with the balance held in trust for the next generation. This clause underscores the social reforms to which Dr. Williams had volunteered his time and energies.

The following obituary comes from the March 11, 1853 issue of *The Ohio Organ of Temperance Reform*, edited by his friend and neighbor, Gen. Samuel F Cary⁹ (who was also an executor of this estate). It reads:

“Died, at his residence, at College Hill, on Friday the 11th inst., M. C. Williams, M.D., in the 52d year of his age. About two years ago the deceased was attacked with a partial paralysis of the tongue and muscles of the throat, depriving him of speech, and rendering it difficult to partake of food. From that time until his death, he gradually declined, and for months before his demise, his sufferings were unremitted and intense. In life and in death he trusted in the merits of Jesus Christ, and rejoiced as the messenger approached which would summon him to the rest and happiness of Heaven. In all relations of life he was a model; he took a deep and active interest in all the reforms of the day; as a practicing physician he had the entire confidence of all who knew him. A good man has passed from earth. ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.’”

Obituary.

Died, at his residence, at College Hill, on Friday the 11th inst., Mr. C. WILLIAMS, M. D., in the 52d year of his age.

About two years ago the deceased was attacked with a partial paralysis of the tongue and muscles of the throat, depriving him of speech, and rendering it difficult to partake of food. From that time until his death, he gradually declined, and for months before his demise, his sufferings were unremitted and intense. In life and in death he trusted in the merits of Jesus Christ, and rejoiced as the messenger approached which would summon him to the rest and happiness of Heaven. In all the relations of life he was a model; he took a deep and active interest in all the reforms of the day; as a practicing physician he had the entire confidence of all who knew him. A good man has passed from earth. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

Dr. Williams’s obituary from the *Organ of Temperance* (above) was published on February 18, 1853. The *National Era* of Washington, D.C. published the notice below on March 3, 1853.

Died of paralysis, at College Hill, near Cincinnati, Ohio, February 11, 1853, M. C. WILLIAMS, M. D., in the fifty-second year of his age, long and favorably known as a zealous advocate of the oppressed.

⁹ **Samuel Fenton Cary** (1814-1900) had been a member of the anti-slavery society while he was at Miami University in the early 1830s, and became one of the most prominent advocates of temperance reform in Ohio politics. At the time, temperance had wide spread appeal by social reformers. As Jed Dannenbaum wrote in his book *Drink and Disorder*, “temperance also appealed to groups seeking social influence, independence and freedom from exploitation. For reformers advocating the liberation of slaves or women, the temperance cause was a natural ally; it liberated its adherents from dependence, degradation, and exploitation...In all cases, temperance confronted difficult, complex issues, dealt with genuine social problems, and reflected both a concern for human welfare and a vision of a better society for all.” With that context, it becomes clear why Dr. Williams’ obituary and estate notice is published in the *Organ for Temperance Reform*.

Will of Dr. Mathias Williams

The following is a copy of Dr. Mathias Williams Last Will and Testament:

I, Mathias C. Williams of College Hill, Hamilton County and State of Ohio do make and publish this my Last Will and Testament and hereby revoking and making void all former wills by me at anytime heretofore made. As to such worldly estate to which it hath pleased a kind and merciful God to entrust me with I dispose of as follows: First, I direct that all my debts and funeral expenses be paid as soon after my decease as possible from any portion of my estate, real or personal.

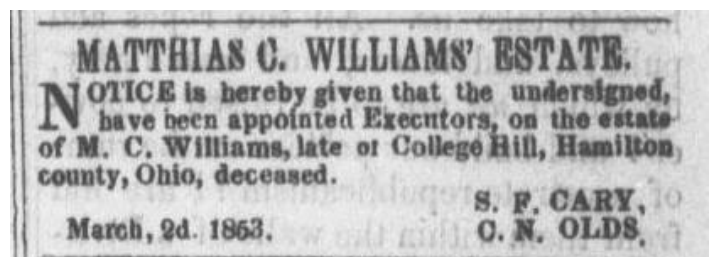
Secondly, I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife, Juliette Mariah Williams the place on which we now reside at College Hill, containing about ten acres and the proceeds of the residue of my estate of whatever kind real and personal after paying the legacies hereinafter mentioned to be disposed of by my executors as hereinafter directed, and the interest arising there from to be for the use of my said wife so long as she remains my widow, at the decease of my said wife or her intermarriage, the College Hill place, if not previously disposed of as hereinafter provided, to be sold and that with the residue of my estate to be equally divided among my four children Mary Bliss Williams, Cornelia Elliott Williams, Benjamin Franklin Williams and William Wilberforce Williams. Provided also, and my further will is that, if at the time of the division of my estate any of my children should have become addicted to vicious habits, which in the opinion of my executors would be likely to lead to the squandering of his or her share of the estate then and in such case only the interest of such unfortunate child or children, portion or portions, shall be paid to him, her or them during his, her or their natural life or lives, and upon the death of such child or children as aforesaid the portion or portions so given or intended for such child or children, shall go and be paid to and for the use and benefit of all and every child or children of such unfortunate child or children as aforesaid, the same to be equally divided to and amongst them, share and share alike (if more than one) and paid to such child or children at his, her, or their respective age or ages of twenty-one years or day or days of marriage, which shall first happen, together with interest from the same from the time of their respective parents' death, until the same become payable or paid.

Thirdly, I give and devise to the widow of the late Dr. Johann R. Mills, deceased, late of Cleveland, Ohio, if she should be living at the time of my decease the sum of One hundred dollars.

Fourth, I give and devise to the heirs of Thomas Latham, deceased, late of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, the sum of Fifty dollars.

Fifth, I give and devise to the American Missionary Association, the sum of Five hundred dollars; the interest arising from said bequest, is intended to be applied to the use of the "Mendi Mission" in Africa and in the event of the cessation of said mission, then, and in that event the interest arising from said bequest to be applied to other missionary fields in Africa under the direction of said American Missionary Association.

Sixth, I direct that the following real estate shall be sold by my executors for its reasonable value, for good current money and the proceeds thereof after paying and discharging the legacies herein by me made to be placed at interest and secured by mortgage on real estate, to wit: One hundred acres of land



A notice of Dr. Williams estate was published in the *Organ of Temperance Reform* (which was edited by Samuel F. Cary) for several months in the spring of 1853.

situated in Hamilton County, Ohio and known as the Jessup farm; One hundred and sixty seven acres of land situated in Hamilton County, Indiana; also five lots (town) in the town of Camden, Preble County, Ohio; and in the event of my wife's desire to quit our present residence, the College Hill place of ten acres and should it be thought advisable by her and by my executors to dispose of the same, then, I direct that the same be sold in like manner as I have directed my other real estate to be sold. And to effectuate this my intention, I do hereby vest in my executors full powers and authority to dispose of said real estate in fee simple in as full and large a manner in every respect as I could do if living.

Seventh, the use of my real and personal estate here bequeathed to my wife during her widowhood, to be in lieu of her dower, is she shall so elect.

And Lastly, I hereby constitute and appoint my esteemed friends Samuel F. Cary of Millcreek Township and Joseph Jackson of Springfield Township, Hamilton County, Ohio executors of this my Last Will and Testament.

In witness whereof, I Mathias C. Williams the testator, have to this my last Will written on one sheet of paper, set my hand and seal this twenty-third day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two.

M. C. Williams (seal)

Signed, sealed and acknowledged by said Mathias C. Williams as his Last Will and Testament in our presence and signed by us in his presence.

Witnesses: Edward DeSerisey Jr.¹⁰
M. M. Thomson

September 17, 1852: I this day change one of the executors named above in place of Jos. Jackson of Springfield Township, I hereby appoint in his place Chauncey N. Olds of Circleville, Ohio to act as one of the executors of this my Last Will and Testament. It is my will that the legacies named in this will should be paid out of monies which may be received from the sale of my land in Hamilton Co, Ind. and town lots in Camden, Preble County, Ohio. If the land and lots should be unsold at the time of my death, signed, sealed and acknowledged this seventeenth of September Eighteen hundred and fifty-two in presence of witnesses Edward DeSerisey Jr. M. M. Thomson M. C. Williams (L.S.)

Thereupon on the same day Edward DeSerisey Jr. and M. M. Edwards the subscribing witnesses of the Last Will and Testament and Codicil thereto of Mathias C. Williams late of this County, deceased, personally appeared in the open Court and were duly sworn and examined according to law touching the due execution of said Will and Codicil and their testimony therein was reduced to writing and filed in manner and form following to wit:

The State of Ohio, Hamilton County S.S. Hamilton Probate Court.

Probate of the Last Will and Codicil of Mathias C. Williams, deceased, presented on the 22nd day of February A.D. 1853. Personally appeared in open court Mathias M. Edwards and Edward DeSerisey Jr. the subscribing witnesses of the Last Will and Testament and the Codicil thereto of Mathias C. Williams, deceased, who being duly sworn according to law to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in relation to the execution of said Will and Codicil, depose and say that they were

¹⁰ **Edward DeSerisey** (1819-1895) was the first mayor and postmaster of the Village of College Hill, serving for 28 years. His home at the corner of Belmont and Pasadena Avenue is still standing and was sold to him by S. F. Cary, and is very near to the home of Dr. Williams. DeSerisey had no children and left an estate of \$75,000, which was then a considerable sum.

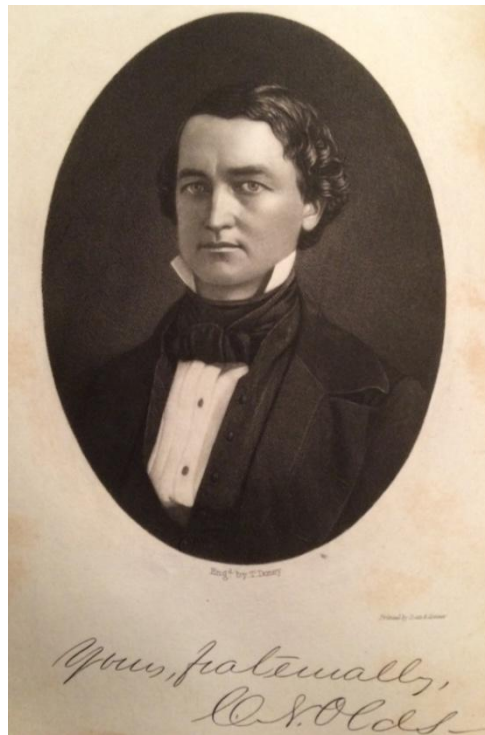
present at the making of said Will and at the request of the deceased subscribed their names to said Will as witnesses in the presence of the deceased and of each other, that they saw the said Mathias C. Williams, deceased, sign and seal said Will and Codicil and heard him acknowledge the same to be his Last Will and Testament and Codicil, that the said Mathias C. Williams was at the time of making, signing and sealing said Will and Codicil of legal age and of sound and disposing mind and memory and under no undue or unlawful restraint whatsoever. Edward DeSerisey Jr. M. M. Thomson, sworn to and subscribed in open court this 22nd day of February 1853. J.B. Warren, Probate Judge.

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Mathias C. Williams
Deceased

be and the same is hereby restored from said original Will, Codicil and Testament as provided by the Statute in the words and figures following to wit: Please at the Court House in Cincinnati, in the County of Hamilton and State of Ohio, of the Hamilton Probate Court at a session thereof held at the place aforesaid on the twenty second day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty three before the Honorable J.B. Warren, sole Judge of said Court: The State of Ohio, Hamilton County, Be it remembered, that on the day and year aforesaid and the last of said Testament and Codicil thereto Mathias C. Williams late of this County deceased was this day duly presented to the Court for Probate an of Records clothed in the words and figures following to wit, I Mathias C. Williams of College Hill, Hamilton County and State of Ohio do hereby make and publish this my last Will and Testament hereby revoking and making void all former wills by me at any time heretofore made. As to such worldly estate as it hath pleased a kind and merciful God to intrust me with I dispose as follows: First I direct that all my debts and funeral expenses be paid as soon after my decease as possible from any portion of my estate real or personal - secondly, I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Julia Maria Williams the place in which we now reside at College Hill, containing about ten acres and the proceeds of the residue of my estate of whatever kind real and personal after paying the legacies herein after mentioned to be disposed of by my executors as hereinafter directed, and the interest arising therefrom to be for the use of my said wife so long as she remains my widow, at the decease of my said wife or her intermarriage, the College Hill place of my previous disposal of as hereinafter provided, to be sold and that with the residue of my estate to be equally divided among my four children, Mary Bliss Williams, Cornelia Elvira Williams, Benjamin Franklin Williams and William Willbore Williams. Provided also, and my just husband be that if at the time of the division of my estate any of my children should have become addicted to vicious habits or had in the opinion of my executors arrived to such a state as to be unworthy of his or her share of the estate then and in such case only the interest of such unfortunate children's children's portion or portions, shall be paid to my, her heirs during his, her or their natural life or lives, and upon the death of such child or children as aforesaid the portion or portions so given or intended for such child or children, shall go and be paid to and for the use and benefit of all and every child or children of such unfortunate child or children as aforesaid, to be equally divided to and amongst them share and share alike (if more than one) and to be paid to such child or children at his, her or their respective ages or ages of twenty one years or day of marriage, which shall first happen together with the interest for the same from the time of their respective parents' deaths, until the same become payable or paid: Thirdly I give and devise to the widow of the late Doctor Johann R. Miller deceased, late of Cleveland Ohio, if she should be living at the time of my decease the sum of One thousand dollars Fourth I give and devise to the heirs of Thomas Ashmun deceased, late of Elizabeth town New Jersey, the sum of Fifty dollars - Fifth, I give and devise to the American Missionary Society, the sum of Five hundred dollars, the interest arising from said bequest is intended to be applied to the use of the "Mediterranean Mission in Africa"

Dr. Mathias and Juliette Crookshank Williams had four children:

1) **Mary Bliss Williams** (*daughter of Mathias & Juliette Williams*), born in Cincinnati, Ohio 17 July 1830, died at Columbus, Ohio 1 January 1889. She was married at her home in College Hill, Ohio 9 September 1852 to **Chauncey Newell Olds** (born at Marlboro, Vermont 2 February 1816, died at Columbus, Ohio 11 February 1890. Olds was an 1836 graduate of Miami University where he was the top of his class and went on to serve as a professor of Latin, Roman literature and Hebrew for four years until 1840 during the presidency of Dr. Robert H. Bishop. In 1840, he returned to Circleville, Ohio where he joined his brothers in a law practice and then was elected as a Whig as State Representative and State Senator during the later part of the decade and played a prominent role in the creation of the Ohio Constitution of 1851. At the formation of the Republican Party in 1856, he became an active supporter.



Olds also became a vocal advocate of temperance and served as President of the Ohio Sons of Temperance, a group that had as its national leader General Samuel Fenton Cary of College Hill who had graduated from Miami in 1835 a year prior to Olds where they would have become acquainted. Indeed, Olds would have had other strong connections to College Hill as when his former teacher and then faculty colleague Dr. Bishop was ejected as President of Miami University over his abolitionist views and the schism between New List and Old Presbyterianism, Bishop settled in College Hill (along with Dr. John W Scott) to teach at the newly formed Farmers' College that had been founded by one of his favorite pupils, Freeman Grant Cary in 1846. Given all of these connections to College Hill, it is not surprising that following the death of his first wife in 1851 in Circleville,¹¹ that Olds then marries Mary Bliss Williams of College Hill, whose home was within eyesight along the Hamilton Pike of General Cary's and Dr. Bishop's homes. A week thereafter, Dr. Mathias Williams amends his will to make him an executor of his estate, along with Gen. Cary.

Within a few years of their marriage, Chauncey and Mary Williams Olds settle at Columbus, Ohio where he is appointed by two Civil War Governors to important posts, including serving as the eighth Attorney General of the State of Ohio in 1865. Following the war, he demurred on seeking any public offices that he was offered and remained in private practice as an attorney for various railroad concerns, such as the Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Cincinnati Railway. He served as a trustee of Miami University for more the 25 years. She served as the Secretary of the Ladies Benevolent Association of Columbus in 1868. Chauncey and Mary Williams Olds had one son:

1-1) **Dr. Franklin Williams Olds**, born at Circleville, Ohio 19 July 1853, died at Williamstown, Massachusetts in 1930. He was married 10 December 1889 to **Harriet Eloise Nash** (born in New York 12 August 1855, died at Williamstown, Massachusetts in 1941). Dr. Frank Olds was an 1876 graduate of Williams College and received his medical degree from Columbia University. During the early 1890s he was a surgeon at Bellevue Hospital in New York City and

¹¹ Olds married 22 March 1838 to his first wife Caroline Woodruff (19 April 1819-21 Jan 1851), with whom he had three children: Lt. William Woodruff Olds (1838-1863), Mary Gore Olds Lewis (1847-1898) and Clara Olds (1850-1859).

then he located at Williamstown, Massachusetts in 1892 where he was a general practitioner. They had two children who died in infancy. One son was born and died on 9 September 1893 at Williamstown, Massachusetts.

2) **Cornelia Elliott 'Amelia' Williams (daughter of Mathias & Juliette Williams)**, born in Ohio in 1832 and was living at home in College Hill in 1850. It is possible that she was the author of the c1848 entry below from the Album of Maria Louisa Patterson.¹² Given that both of Dr. Williams' sons attended the Farmers' College and his known views supporting education, it is probable that both of his daughters also attended the female seminaries then operating in College Hill. During the mid-1840s this most likely would have been the Pleasant Hill Female Seminary operated by Dr. John Witherspoon Scott and Mrs. Sarah Brooks, prior to the opening of the Ohio Female College by Rev. John Covert in 1848 on property that was two doors up the street from the Williams home. In addition to their being one entry in this album by a "Cornelia," there is a second in an identical hand that is signed "C.D.W." at "Temperance Cottage." The latter was the name of the home of Gen. Samuel Fenton Cary, a good neighbor and friend and the former provides a monogram that is close if not conclusive. Each of these inscriptions

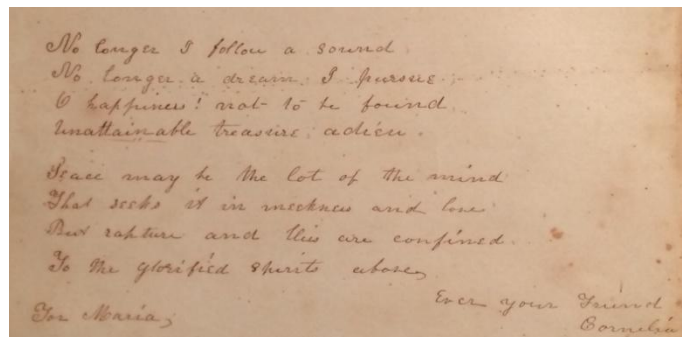
No longer I follow a sound,
No longer a dream I pursue;
O happiness! Not to be found,
Unattainable treasure, adieu.

Peace may be the lot of the mind,
That seeks it in meekness and love,
But rapture and bliss are confined,
To the glorified spirits above.

Ever your Friend

For Maria,

Cornelia



No longer I follow a sound,
No longer a dream I pursue;
O happiness! not to be found,
Unattainable treasure, adieu.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
That seeks it in meekness and love,
But rapture and bliss are confined
To the glorified spirits above.

Ever your Friend
Cornelia

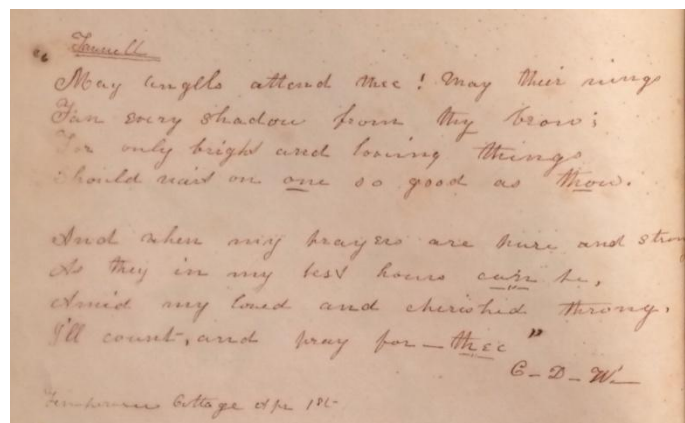
The second inscription reads:

Farewell!
"May angels attend thee! May their wings
Fan every shadow from thy brow;
For only bright and loving things
Should wait on one so good as thou.

And when my prayers are pure and strong
As they in my best hours can be,
Amid my loved and cherished throng
I'll count, and pray for—thee"

C—D—W—

Temperance Cottage April 18th



Small
May angels attend thee! May their wings
Fan every shadow from thy brow;
For only bright and loving things
Should wait on one so good as thou.

And when my prayers are pure and strong
As they in my best hours can be,
Amid my loved and cherished throng,
I'll count, and pray for—thee"

C-D-W
Temperance Cottage Apr 18th

¹² Maria Louisa Patterson (1827-1905) was the niece of Freeman G. Cary's wife Malvina McCann, and she attended the Pleasant Hill Female Seminary in College Hill in 1848. Her autograph album contains tributes by her Professor, Dr. John Witherspoon Scott and many of the students and teachers of the Farmers' College, as well as entries from her classmates. She was married in 1850 to Bernard Mann (1824-1902), who had also attended the Farmers' College.

3) Benjamin Franklin Williams (*son of Mathias & Juliette Williams*), born at Camden, Preble County, Ohio in 1836, died at El Paso, Texas 7 December 1870. Franklin Williams was a student in 1849 at Farmers' College in the middle class. His remains were removed from El Paso and re-interred at Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati on November 12, 1883 at the request of Chauncey N. Olds, in the capacity of executor of the estate of Dr. Mathias and Juliette Williams and no doubt the wish of their daughter, Mary Williams Olds. There is no grave marker.

4) William Wilberforce Williams (*son of Mathias & Juliette Williams*), born at College Hill 9 October 1842, died at Columbus, Ohio 14 July 1902. He was married to **Lucy E Neil** (born at Columbus, Ohio 21 August 1847, died at Columbus, Ohio 21 June 1897), who was the daughter of Robert Elkin and Jane Marshall Sullivant Neil. Wilberforce Williams was a student at the Farmers' College through at least 1855. In the 1860 Census he is living at Richmond, Indiana and is listed as a "clerk." He was a Major in the 192nd Ohio Infantry and became the paymaster for the Army and Navy, living at various times at Washington, D.C., Cambridge, Massachusetts and San Mateo, California. They are buried in Green Lawn Cemetery in Columbus, Ohio. Their children were:

4-1) **Robert Elkin Neil Williams**, born 9 February 1873, died at Columbus, Ohio 13 January 1895 and is buried in Green Lawn Cemetery in Columbus.

4-2) **Marie 'Juliette' Williams**, born at Cambridge, Massachusetts 8 August 1876, died at Santa Barbara, California 15 August 1956. She married **Alexander Spinning Lilley** (born at Columbus, Ohio 7 December 1867, died at San Francisco, California 8 December 1925. Lilley was the first head football coach in 1890-91 of the Ohio State Buckeyes. Their children were:



4-2-1) **Ethel R Lilley**, born at Columbus, Ohio 8 September 1897. She married at Gulf Stream, Florida to **Edwin Walter Hartzell** (born at Easton, Pennsylvania 22 July 1895, died in November 1969). Their children were:

- **Edwin Walter Hartzell Jr.**, born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 11 March 1921, died 19 March 2005.

4-2-2) **Alexander Neil Lilley**, born in California 28 October 1905, died 1976. Married to **Elena Musto** (born 1911). Their children were:

- **Alexander Neil Lilley Jr.**, born at Los Angeles, California 5 September 1941, lives at Carmel, California. Married to **Margaret** and has children **Brendan** and **Shannon Lilley**.
- **Elena Maria Lilley**, born at Paris, France 10 January 1949, died at Burlington, Vermont 5 January 2004.

4-3) **Hannah Neil Williams**, born at Washington, D.C. 22 January 1877, died at Monterrey, California 5 September 1957. She was married 12 May 1896 (div 1913) to **Walter Scott Hobart II** (born at San Francisco, California 26 April 1873, died at San Mateo, California 9 November 1933), and she remarried at Santa Barbara, California 24 February 1916 to **Charles S Wheeler** (born at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania 21 August 1869). Their children were:

4-3-1) Hannah Neil Hobart, born 14 March 1897, died at Pebble Beach, California 8 March 1978. She married in 1922 to Leonard Morton Prince.

4-3-2) Ruth May Hobart, born at San Francisco, California 28 August 1898. Married in 1923 to William Willard Crocker (born at San Francisco, California 29 June 1893, died 11 August 1964). Their children were:

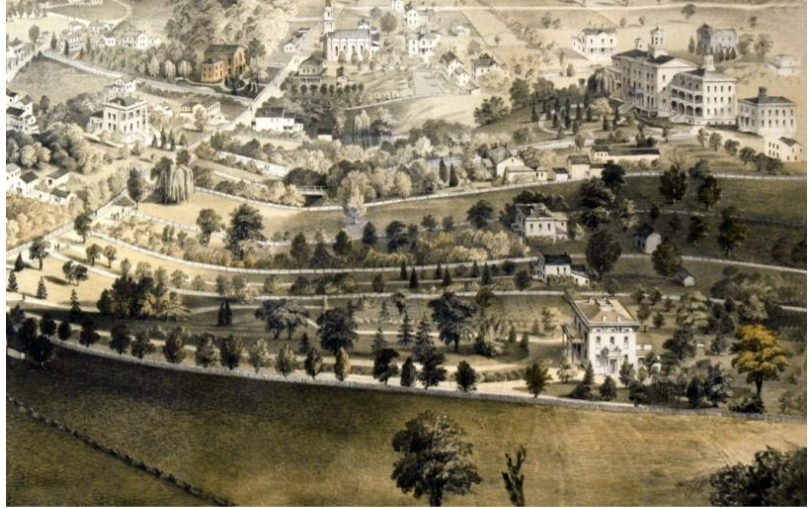
- William Henry Crocker II, born 20 August 1924. Was an anthropologist at Smithsonian Institution and specialist in the Canela Indians of Brazil.
- Diana Crocker, born in 1927. Married to _____ Redington, married secondly to Edmond J Nouri (born at Baghdad, Iraq in 1918, died at Glen Cove, New York 1 January 2012). Her children are: Ruth Redington of Cambridge, MA and David Redington of Stamford, CT.

4-3-3) Walter Scott Hobart III, born at Paris, France 9 August 1903, died at San Francisco, California 24 September 1957.

- Mary Hobart Gibbons, Concord, Tennessee

4-4) **William Wilberforce Williams**, born at Washington, D.C. 22 April 1878, died at San Mateo, California 8 April 1954. He married in 1924 to **Mary Emilie Parrot** (born at London, England 18 February 1883, died at San Mateo, California 21 February 1967).

Following Dr. Williams' death in 1853, his sons continued to attend Farmers' College, as William Wilberforce was listed among the students of 1855. The home was eventually sold by his widow in 1857 to Daniel B. Pierson, whose family would remain on the property for the next sixty years. The fine home that Williams built was burned in a fire in 1864. However, it is preserved in the Strobridge Lithograph of College Hill which provides a stunning bird's eye view of the community at the onset of the Civil War period and thanks to the near perspective the former Williams property is shown in excellent detail. After the fire, Daniel B. Pierson, who was a lumber merchant, brought in Cincinnati's well-known architect Samuel Hannaford to rebuild on the same site, which continues to provide the bones of the home that stands today at 1422 Hillcrest Road following a major renovation by architect John Scudder Adkins in 1924 and the sale of nearly eight acres of grounds, including the former front lawns at Hamilton Avenue. Today, Tanglewood faces to the south rather than its original western orientation.



The home and grounds of Dr. Mathias C. Williams in College Hill (lower right), as it would have appeared prior to being consumed in a fire in 1864.





