

Brigadier General William Wirt Adams

Adams was born in Frankfort, Franklin County, Kentucky, on May 22, 1819. His parents were Judge George and Anna (Weissiger) Adams. His father was a personal friend of American statesman and orator Henry Clay. The family moved to Natchez, Mississippi, in 1829, and his father served as a district court judge from 1836 to 1839. William returned to Kentucky where he graduated from Bardstown College in Bardstown, Kentucky, in 1839. Upon returning from college, he enlisted as a private under Colonel Edward Burleson's command in the Republic of Texas. He immediately received a commission as adjutant of the regiment and went to northern Texas to fight the Indians.

He returned to Mississippi and made his living in banking and agriculture through the end of the 1850s. While in Mississippi he married Sally Huger Magrant in 1850. He served in the Mississippi State Legislature in 1858.



In early 1861 he operated as a Confederate agent in Louisiana, helping the state to secede. When the Confederate States of America was formed, President Jefferson Davis offered Adams the position of Postmaster General, which he declined. Instead, he returned to Mississippi and formed the 1st Mississippi Cavalry regiment. Commissioned its Colonel and commander, he fought a rear guard action as the Confederates were forced to flee Kentucky. He then saw action at the April 1862 Battle of Shiloh and the April to June 1862 Siege of Corinth. After the fall of Vicksburg, Mississippi, in July, 1863, his command harassed and had skirmishes with Union cavalry units. In September of 1863, another regiment was assigned to Colonel Adams' regiment and he was promoted to Brigadier General, PACS on September 25, 1863. After his promotion he was given the unenviable task of attacking Union Major General William T.

Sherman's forces, who were marching on Meridian, Mississippi. Towards the end of the conflict, he served with General Nathan Bedford Forrest in Alabama. His brigade surrendered in Sumter County, Alabama, on May 4, 1865, and he gave his farewell speech to the troops two days later. He had served gallantly throughout the war and was never wounded.



He returned to Mississippi after his parole, and was appointed a state revenue agent in 1880, a position he held until 1885 when President Grover Cleveland appointed him as postmaster of Jackson, Mississippi.

On May 1, 1888, William Wirt Adam met John H. Martin, a newspaper editor, on the streets of Jackson, Mississippi. The two had been quarreling for some time over political differences. Words were exchanged, both drew pistols and in less than a minute they lay dead. Wirt is buried in the Greenwood Cemetery in Jackson, Mississippi.

His brother, Daniel Weisiger Adams, also a Confederate Brigadier General, lost an eye at Shiloh and is buried in an unmarked grave next to William.

