

A reflection on

Lloyd and Helen Williams

by Gary Williams

Lloyd G. Williams was born in Fair Haven, Vermont, on March 9, 1914, and spent his childhood there. Fair Haven was home to a large Welsh population, many of whom worked in the slate quarries. In Lloyd's home, Welsh was the language that was spoken. Lloyd graduated from Middlebury College, and received his Master's degree in teaching from the former Albany State Teachers' College. He also took credits toward his Doctorate degree from Columbia University in New York City.

Helen Beatrice Griffith was born in Poultney, Vermont, not far from Fair Haven, on May 21, 1919. She attended the Troy Conference Academy, which later became Green Mountain Junior College, and received her nursing license from Nathan Littauer Hospital in Gloversville, NY.



Lloyd at about 12 and in the Coast Guard during WWII

Lloyd and Helen were married in Poultney on May 29, 1943. They then located to Poquonock Bridge, CT, as Lloyd was an instructor at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, and Helen was working as a nurse. Their first child, John Gary, was born on April 1, 1946

After the war, Lloyd, Helen and Gary moved to Hobart, NY. Lloyd taught English at the South Kortright Central School, and Helen worked as a private-duty nurse. On March 9, 1950,

during a blizzard and on Lloyd's birthday, their second child, Janice Ann, was born.

In the summer of 1950, Lloyd and his family moved to Copake Falls, where Lloyd now taught at the Roeliff Jansen School. Helen took a nursing job at Sharon Hospital in Connecticut.



(above left) Helen in Nursing School,
(above right) the young couple in 1939
(below right) Lloyd Williams, Poultney High School Teacher

The Williams' first home in Copake Falls was on Main Street, a few yards from the old Methodist Church, which was still in use. However, they soon began attending the Copake Methodist Church, as it had a Sunday School. Gary's first memories of the old church were that it was difficult to see inside because of the dark and dirty windows! After a few years the family moved (continued next page)





Often, on Christmas Day, Helen would volunteer to work so that a nurse with a young family could be home to celebrate. She was also one of the first hospice nurses in the area. Helen was also a generous civic volunteer. She belonged to the Women's Society of the Methodist Church, and was also a Brownie and Cub Scout leader. Many times, after the neighborhood children sang Christmas carols, she would invite everyone into her home for hot chocolate, and she often sponsored Halloween parties. She even played Cupid for a nurse and a teacher!

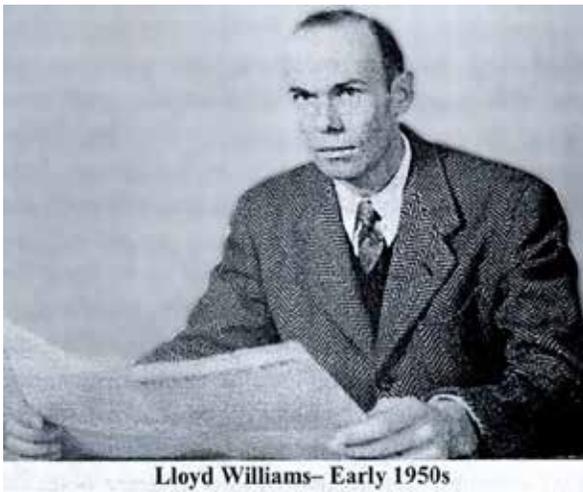
to the house at Miles Road, where Helen and Lloyd lived until their deaths.

Helen and Lloyd were busy with their careers and their civic involvement. Lloyd was an English teacher at Roe Jan, teaching 11th and 12th grades, and acting as their class advisor.

He was also the director, for years, of the Senior Class Play, and he and Helen would open their home for play rehearsals, and even a reception before the Junior Proms. They were often chaperones for school events, and took numerous senior classes on their trip to Washington, DC.



Lloyd, Helen, Janice and Gary about 1953

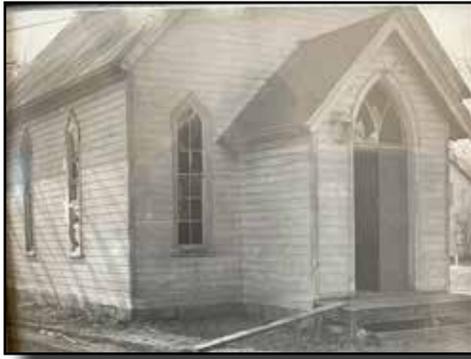


Lloyd Williams— Early 1950s

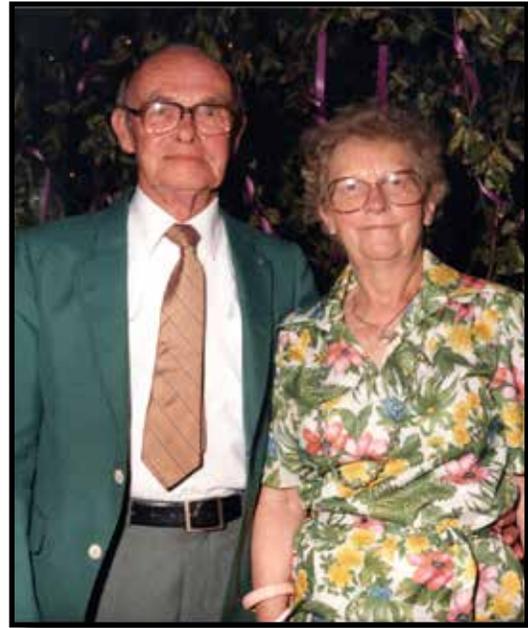
Lloyd ran for a seat on the Copake Town Board and won. Along with Elinor Mettler, one of the original founders of the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society, he began the search for a suitable facility that could become the society's museum. One possibility was the Copake Falls Methodist Church, which was no longer in use. Since Lloyd was a trustee of the Copake Methodist Church, he was able to convince the Methodist Conference to donate the church to the town, for use as the Society's new museum.

Lloyd had been the president of the Eastern Zone of the NYS Teachers' Association; a member of the Lions Club, where he was often elected president; a 32nd degree Mason with the Hillsdale Lodge; a trustee of the Copake Methodist Church; and on the board of directors of Camphill Village. Helen worked as a nurse at Sharon Hospital.

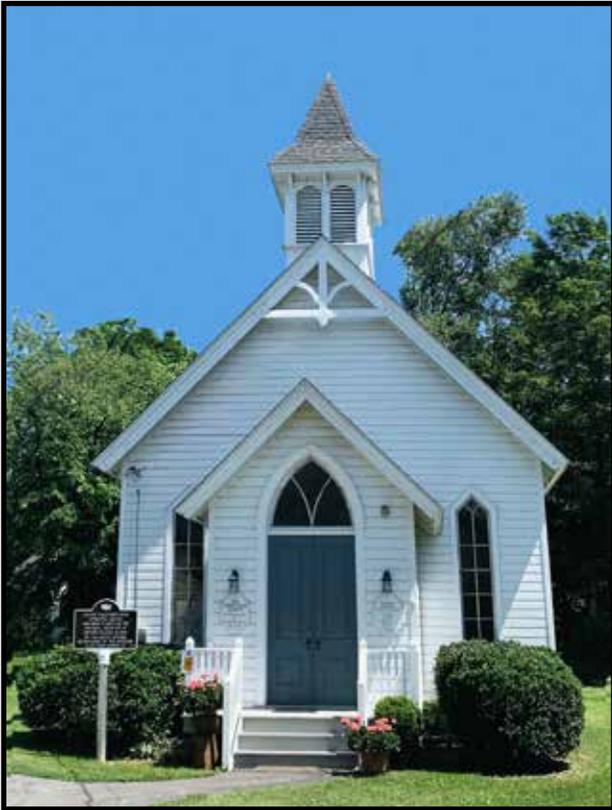
Years of non-use meant that the church building had to be repaired and refurbished, and Lloyd played a major role, getting donations from the



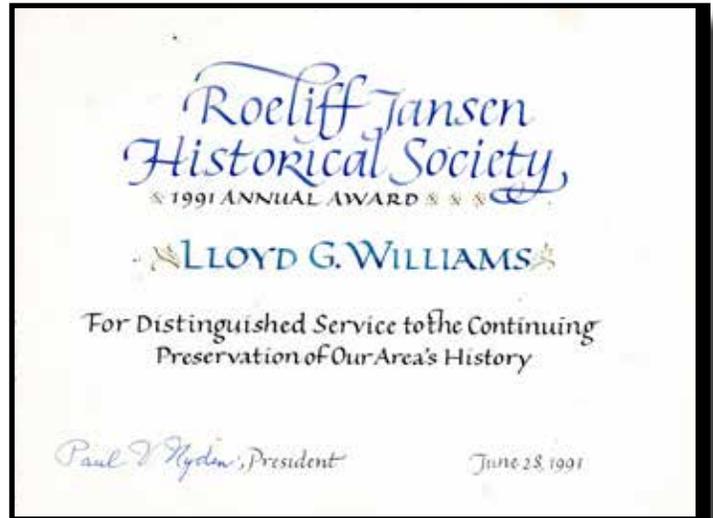
The Old Copake Falls Church during the time it stood empty



Lloyd and Helen in their later Years



The Roaliff Jansen Historical Society today



Citation for Distinguished Service presented to Lloyd Williams in 1991 by the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society

community and recruiting inmates from the Hudson Correctional Facility to come to paint the exterior. Lloyd often came to check on their progress, and Helen brought cold drinks to the men. The Museum was dedicated in 1985.

In 1991, the Roe Jan Historical Society gave Lloyd a citation, "For Distinguished Service to the Continuing Preservation of Our Area's History."

Gary Williams

Helen Williams passed away on January 24, 1991, and Lloyd Williams on July 1, 1998.

*All photos of the Williams Family provided by Gary Williams
Color photo of Old Copake Church/RJHS by PN Fritsch
Photo of abandoned church: The Columbia Paper
Layout: PN Fritsch*

