

Daniels, Charles Cleaves ^[1]

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Daniels, Charles Cleaves

by Charles W. Eagles, 1986

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Charles Cleaves Daniels, editor, lawyer, and government official, was born on Ocracoke Island where his mother had fled after Union troops wrecked the Daniels hometown of Washington. His father, [Josephus Daniels](#) ^[2], Sr., died on 28 Jan. 1865 and never saw his youngest son. His mother, Mary Cleaves Seabrook Daniels, raised Charles Cleaves and his two older brothers, [Josephus, Jr.](#) ^[2], and [Franklin Arthur](#) ^[3], in Wilson. Young Daniels attended [Wilson Collegiate Institute](#) ^[4] and the summer school operated by [Edward Morse Nada](#) ^[5] in Wilson. With his brother Josephus, he began the *Kinston Free Press* in April 1882. After editing the *Free Press* for three years, he returned to Wilson and edited Josephus's *Advance* while his brother worked in Raleigh. He read law in Wilson and in the early 1890s moved to [Macon County](#) ^[6] to practice with George A. Jones.

In 1893 Daniels became a special agent of the U.S. General Land Office investigating frauds on public lands and Indian reservations in the Cherokee Strip, later Oklahoma. He also served briefly as county attorney for "L" county, which became Grant County, Okla.

In the late 1890s Daniels returned to Wilson to practice law; in 1898 he was elected chairman of the Democratic county committee. The following year he was chosen chief clerk of the state senate. In 1901 Governor [Charles B. Aycock](#) ^[7] appointed Daniels solicitor for the Fourth Judicial District, which included [Wilson County](#) ^[8]. Elected twice to the post, Daniels served as solicitor until 1913. In Wilson he also practiced law with Frederick Dudley Swindell and from 1909 to 1912 represented the Ware-Kramer Tobacco Company of Wilson in a successful suit against the [American Tobacco Company](#) ^[9] under the Sherman Antitrust Act.

The U.S. attorney general named Daniels a U.S. attorney to protect the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota, and he successfully prosecuted numerous fraud cases for Indians. He again left the government in 1916 to practice law in New York City. After [World War I](#) ^[10] he headed a secret bureau of anti-Jewish investigation that had been established by Henry Ford. From 1934 to 1940 he served as a special assistant to the attorney general representing the federal government in matters pertaining to Iroquois Indians.

After practicing law in New York for many years, Daniels died in Saint Luke's Hospital, New York. He was buried in Maplewood Cemetery, Wilson. Daniels married Mary Robinson of Franklin, and they had three children, Charles Cleaves, Jr., James Robinson, and Evelyn Hope.

References:

[Charles Cleaves Daniels Papers](#) ^[11] (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

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Joseph L. Morrison, *Josephus Daniels, Small-d Democrat* (1966).

Raleigh News and Observer, 21 Mar. 1951.

Additional Resources:

"Charles Cleaves Daniels." J. Robert Boykin III Wilson Archives. Willis N. Hackney Library Barton College http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/1912/703372/Charles_Cleaves_Daniels.pdf ^[12]

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Authors:

Eagles, Charles W. ^[18]

Origin - location:

Hyde County ^[19]

Wilson County ^[20]

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