

Wilson, Edwin Mood ^[1]

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by [Louis Round Wilson](#) ^[2], 1996

26 July 1872–8 May 1968

See also: [Wilson, George Wood](#) ^[3]

Edwin Mood Wilson, teacher and school administrator, was born in Lenoir, the son of Jethro Reuben and Louisa Jane Round Wilson. He attended a public school in Lenoir from early August to December when he was six years old. This was followed by attendance at a subscription school from December to June. He continued this type of training for several years before transferring to Finlay High School, conducted by Captain E. W. Faucett with distinction and success.

In March 1886 he became a typesetter in the office of the *Lenoir Topic*, continuing his studies under the direction of his parents, both of whom were teachers. Two years later he entered [Guilford College](#) ^[4], where he was graduated in 1892. During this period he met his expenses by working in the college during the regular terms and summer vacations. At Guilford he participated in various student activities and was captain of the baseball team. In 1893 he transferred to [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[5], where he worked as secretary to President [George Tayloe Winston](#) ^[6] and began graduate work. In Chapel Hill he became acquainted with problems and procedures of academic administration and earned a second A.B. degree.

While still at the university he was informed that he had been awarded a fellowship by [Haverford College](#) ^[7] as a graduate designated by Guilford College. Beginning his work at Haverford in September 1893, he received an M.A. degree in English in June 1894. During the year he entered the contest for the [John Sprunt Hill](#) ^[8] \$100 cash prize in North Carolina history. His winning paper, entitled "The Congressional Career of Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina," was published later as Monograph No. 2 of the *James Sprunt Historical Monographs* ^[9] of The University of North Carolina.

In the summer of 1894 Wilson and three college companions sold subscriptions for stereoptican views, produced by Underwood and Underwood, that featured the buildings and exhibits of the Columbian Exposition of 1892–93. In September, after a successful summer, Edwin became a teacher of English and Latin in Oakwood Seminary at Union Springs, N.Y. While there he accepted an appointment to teach history and Latin at the [Haverford School](#) ^[10] in Haverford, Pa. That marked the beginning of forty-two years of teaching and administration at that preparatory school.

Appointed vice-principal in 1904, he gradually gave up classroom work for executive duties. On the retirement of the headmaster in June 1912, he was appointed to that position and occupied it until he was retired at age sixty-five as headmaster emeritus, on 1 Aug. 1937. During his administration the school made great progress in enrollment, physical plant, strength of faculty, and the quality and range of the curriculum. In 1916 the school became a nonprofit institution under the laws of Pennsylvania. As such, it was developed by trustees and officers into one of the very substantial preparatory schools of the Northeast. Wilson was the initiator of the change of direction and new program.

In 1939 he moved to Philadelphia and became an officer of the Presbyterian Social Union of Philadelphia and chairman for ten years of the Student Christian Association, an interdenominational organization of churches that maintained an educational center for students of the individual churches adjoining the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. He also served in the Westminster Foundation of the Presbyterian church in continuing its work at the university as a member of the interdenominational organization.

Wilson received honorary membership in the Headmasters Club of the Philadelphia area and of the National Headquarters Association, in both of which he had been an active member and officer. Honorary degrees were awarded by the [University of Pennsylvania](#) ^[11] (A.M.), [Dickinson College](#) ^[12] (Sc.D. in education, 1934), and [Rutgers University](#) ^[13] (LL.D., 1935). On 1 June 1904 he married Alice Green, of Wilmington, the niece of University of North Carolina president [Edwin A. Alderman](#) ^[14]; she died in 1921. Their son, Edwin Mendenhall Wilson, died on 3 Feb. 1909.

In 1955 he moved to the Hillsborough home of another son, Hugh McLean Wilson, who survived him. Edwin was buried in the New Hope Presbyterian Church cemetery in [Orange County](#) ^[15]. A [Methodist](#) ^[16] in his early years, he became a [Presbyterian](#) ^[17] and served as an elder in the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church while a resident of Haverford. He was a member of the [Democratic party](#) ^[18].

References:

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Subjects:

Biographies ^[21]

Educators ^[22]

Authors:

Wilson, Louis R. ^[23]

Origin - location:

Caldwell County ^[24]

Lenoir ^[25]

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Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.^[26]

1 January 1996 | Wilson, Louis R.

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Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/wilson-edwin-mood> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/wilson-louis-round> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/wilson-george-wood> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/guilford-college> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/university-north-carolina-chapel-hi> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/winston-george-tayloe> [7] <http://www.haverford.edu/> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/hill-john-sprunt> [9] <https://archive.org/stream/jamessprunthist00goog#page/n8/mode/2up> [10] <http://www.haverford.org/about-us/history-tradition/a-brief-history/index.aspx> [11] <http://www.upenn.edu/> [12] <http://www.dickinson.edu/> [13] <https://www.rutgers.edu/> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/alderman-edwin-anderson> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/orange> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/methodist-church> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/presbyterian-church-0> [18] <https://ncpedia.org/democratic-party> [19] <https://docsouth.unc.edu/true/grant/menu.html> [20] http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/w/Wilson,Louis_Round.html [21] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/biography-term> [22] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/educators> [23] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/wilson-louis-r> [24] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/mountai-18> [25] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/lenoir-0> [26] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no>