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## **Williams, Dick collection**

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Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Havana History and Heritage Society

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Havana History and Heritage Society
<b>Title:</b>	Dick Williams collection
<b>ID:</b>	21.0010
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1922-2021
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1 Files 1 file
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Mixed Materials [Box]:</b>	Single Folder Collections - 2021 Box 1
<b>[Folder]:</b>	21.0010-Folder 1

### Preferred Citation

Dick Williams Collection, Havana History and Heritage Society, Havana, FL.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Dick Williams grew up in Gadsden County as the son of W.L. Williams Senior, a central figure of the original Planter's Exchange. W.L. managed the Planter's Exchange alongside shareholders Tom Gregory, Ben Gregory, Potter Woodberry, and Tom Delacy. Dick Williams worked for his father at the Exchange and played on the Havana Merchants baseball team.

W.L. Williams Senior left home at the age of 16 and went to Jacksonville, Florida with near nothing. After attending school, he got a railroad job and was sent to Apalachicola, Florida, as a railroad agent looking after Gadsden County depots. He then married a Georgia schoolteacher and had 7 children - 4 boys and 3 girls. To his children, he was a strict but fair disciplinarian. After being established, Williams Sr. was able to take part in the Planter's Exchange formation of the late 1920s to early 1930s. He essentially ran the show, bringing in a lot of profit for the Gregorlys and other stockholders, though they did not much care for him.

Williams Sr. also had many connections in the town of Havana and the surrounding area. He was friends with the president of Quincy State Bank, for one. Pat Monroe was another connection who encouraged him to buy shares of Coca-Cola while it was still a young, unestablished company. Later, Monroe encouraged Dick Williams to buy Aflac stock at 10 dollars a share.

Dick Williams worked in both the front and back of the Planter's Exchange growing up, primarily under his brother-in-law Cecil May, who ran the fertilizer house. When Williams was 15, May fired him and his father made him get a job clearing land on the highway for \$8 per acre until he rehired him at 16 to haul beans to Birmingham. Williams' brother, W.L. Junior, acted as the bookkeeper. Though the fertilizer business declined with the tobacco industry, the Planter's Exchange was able to maintain itself due to the other local agricultural ventures.

Dick Williams was the only one of the four boys in his family that did not serve in World War II, having already been married at 19. He was at a youth meeting at the Baptist Church when Pearl Harbor was attacked. When he got home, his father was listening to the radio and crying at the news. He then told Williams that "all hell had broke loose". One of Dick's brothers was in the army and sent to a canal zone, and another was in the navy. Dick was married young and did not serve, but is still married to his wife as of 2021.

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## Content Description

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This collection relates to Dick Williams, a retired tobacco farmer and the son of the original manager of the Planter's Exchange in Havana, Florida - W.L. Williams. This collection contains an interview registration form and a digital video disc interview of Williams.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

Havana History and Heritage Society

## Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open to all researchers.

## Conditions Governing Use

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Tobacco industry -- United States
- Gadsden County (Fla.)
- Havana (Fla.)
- Fertilizer industry