

# Mrs. Missouri Pleasants of Louisburg Gives \$100,000 For Scholarships at UNC

By PETE IVEY.

CHAPEL HILL—Mrs. Missouri Alston Pleasants of Louisburg has given \$100,000 to establish scholarships at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in honor of her grandfather, Willis (Congress) Alston, who was an influential member of the United States Congress during the War of 1812.

Young men and women from Franklin, Halifax and Warren counties will be eligible to apply for the Alston-Pleasants scholarships, the first of which will become effective for the school year 1959-60, with each scholarship sufficient to more than cover all expenses in the University.

Chancellor William B. Aycock announced the scholarship grant today. Wachovia Bank and Trust Co. is the Trustee.

Mrs. Pleasants, 90-year-old benefactor of many young people seeking college education, has contributed both to Louisburg College and Salem College, the latter from which her mother was graduated and established a "growing" endowment at Chapel Hill, with 5 per cent of the income each year added to the principal, and 95 per cent of the income used for scholarships.

The trust is a perpetual memorial to Willis (Congress) Alston who was born in 1769, became at 21 years old, a member of the North Carolina House of Commons from Halifax County in 1790, and after three terms there served three more terms in the State Senate. In 1803 he defeated William R. Davie for a seat in the Congress of the United States.

He was a member of Congress until 1815, and from 1812 to 1815 he was chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. He served a second time in Congress from 1825 to 1831. In Washington

he was recognized as a man of tact and ability and social graces and he maintained his own horse and carriage in the Capital.

He was called "Congress" Alston, in addition to his given name, Willis Alston, to distinguish him from other Willis Alstons. He was a nephew of Nathaniel Macon.

Mrs. Pleasants was born at Belmont Plantation in Warren County, June 11, 1867, the youngest of the eleven children of Archibald David Alston who married a distant cousin, Missouri F. Alston.

Mrs. Pleasants' mother was the daughter of Willis Alston and Sallie Madeline Potts of Washington.

Mrs. Pleasants' great grandfather on the maternal side was Joshua Potts, Collector of Revenue for the Port of Wilmington and known as "The Socrates of America."

"I didn't have a name until I was 11 years old," recalls Mrs. Pleasants. "My mother died when I was two, and my

brothers and sisters called me "Baby." I didn't like to be called Baby and I wouldn't answer. Then they tried calling me Missouri, after my mother, and I came a-running. My mother had said she didn't like the name Missouri, but I like it."

Missouri Alston attended the famed John Graham School in

Faulk Township in Warren County. She was married to William Henry Pleasants, and they operated a dry goods store in Louisburg until his death in 1917.

"Miss Missouri," as she is called in Louisburg, in addition to her interest in educating young people, was active in the Colonial Dames and in the Daughters of

the American Revolution. She has given also to the Episcopal and Methodist churches in Louisburg.

Although she will be 91 years old June 11, Mrs. Pleasants is strong for her age, does not wear glasses, reads and writes well and is still active in the management of her own business affairs.

The scholarship committee at

the University of North Carolina will select young men or young women without regard to social or economic standing, who not only have a satisfactory scholastic record but also are possessed of the best traits of upright morals, sincerity, industry, thrift, truthfulness, kindness and Christian humility.