

Story of B.A. James
Goodspeed's History of Tennessee
Biographical Appendix
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Smith County, TN

B.A. James, a merchant, farmer and livery man, of Gordonsville, was born in Smith County in 1831. He is the son of J.R. and Martha (Allison) James. His father was born in 1810, in Montgomery County, NC, and was one of eight children born to Bartlett and Sarah (Rollins) James. The father (grandfather of our subject) was born in VA in 1780; he was a farmer by occupation, and moved to Montgomery County, NC when a young man. In 1823 he came to the Fifteen District of Smith County, TN, and purchased 640 acres of land. He died in 1845. His wife was born about 1778, in VA, and died in 1855. J.R. James was educated in the common schools of Smith County and the Shady Grove Academy, near Gordonsville, Dr. F.H. Gordon being the principal. In 1830 he wedded Martha, daughter of Lieutenant Joseph and Elizabeth "Besty" (Madden) Allison, who was born in 1815, in Jackson County, TN, and died in 1871. Their children are: Bartlett A., Sarah E., William N., Robert A., Martha G., John F., Eliza, Calle C., Joseph h., Mary J., and Henry Clay.

In 1843 Mr. James was elected justice of the peace of his district, and served in that capacity twenty-six years. In 1845 he became chairman of the county court, holding the office about twelve years. In 1868 he became tax collector; after two years he resigned and was elected to the State Legislature. He is a Democrat, and cast his first presidential vote for Andrew Jackson in 1832. He owns 330 acres of land, highly cultivated, and with all modern improvements, and raises all kinds of stock. He is a worthy, respected citizen. He and the family are members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The subject of this sketch was educated in the common schools of his native county. At nineteen years of age he began his career as a partner in the Gold Bros. They have a substantial and extensive trade, being among the leading merchants of the county. In 1850 Mr. James married Miss Elizabeth, daughter of W. and Martha Dowell, who was born in Smith County in 1830. In 1861 our subject organized Company G. Fifty-fifth Tennessee Volunteers. He was elected Captain, and served in that capacity until after the battle of Shiloh, when he was discharged and returned home. He was elected justice of the peace in 1868, and has held the office continuously since that time, having made an efficient and satisfactory officer. He is a staunch Democrat; no man in the community is better or more favorably known.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~tnsmith/tngen/goodspeedsmithbio.htm>