



The D.G. James House – 383 East Haseltine Street - Richland County History Room photo.

D.G. James House – 383 East Haseltine Street - 1870.



David G. James - Company F, 16th Wisconsin Infantry - Richland County History Room photo.

David Goodrich James (August 8, 1843 - October 3, 1921) was a businessman, tinsmith and Civil War veteran who served one term as a Republican member of the Wisconsin State Senate from the 28th District (Richland and Vernon counties).

His brother Norman L. James had previously held what was basically the same seat in the Senate. James enlisted in the 16th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment upon the outbreak of the American Civil War on October 13, 1861 at the age of 17. In 1864 he was captured and taken to Andersonville Prison. He survived Andersonville, and when he was mustered out July 18, 1865, it was with the brevet rank of Captain, backdated October 3, 1861, "for conspicuous bravery manifested by him at the battles of Corinth and Atlanta."

After the War James returned to Richland Center, where he learned the tinner's trade, and in 1866 became a member of the firm of G. H. & N. L. James with his brother Norman. He became sole proprietor in 1881. In 1888 he was a delegate to the Republican National Convention. In 1900 he was made Wisconsin Department Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic and served as a trustee of the Wisconsin Soldiers' Home for many years. In addition to the hardware store, James invested in a number of commercial ventures in the city.



James family: Ada, David, Oscar, Vida, Laura, Beulah - Richland County History Room photo.

the door. As with many old landmark buildings in Richland Center, it was remodeled into a four unit apartment building in 1962. The house retains its gabled ell shape, but all other architectural design features have been altered or removed.

James married a second time to Laura Briggs, Ada Briggs' sister, on September 20, 1872. This union resulted in three children, Ada, Beulah and Vida. Laura Briggs James, in 1882, was one of the founders of the Richland Center Woman's Club that worked tirelessly for women's suffrage, and is said to have been the first suffrage organization formed in the state. Laura Briggs James died on January 24, 1905.

In 1892, their daughter Ada James and several other high school girls formed the Equality Club to assist in the campaign for women's suffrage. Ada James was to become one of Wisconsin's most prominent suffragists; in 1911, she was a founding member of the statewide Political Equality League, and became its president. Ada James graduated from high school in 1894, taught school for several years, and became active in the woman's suffrage movement in which both her parents played prominent roles. Her influence went well beyond Richland County.

In 1911 she became president of the newly formed Political Equality League, holding this office until 1913 when the league was combined with the Wisconsin Woman's Suffrage Association under the leadership of Mrs. Henry Youmans

Ada James was active in many of the reform movements of the 1920s including pacifism, the advocacy of birth control, and prohibition. In 1922 she was vice-chairman of the Republican state central committee, and in 1923 was president of the Wisconsin Woman's Progressive Association, but left the organization when Robert M. La Follette, Sr., insisted on supporting Governor John J. Blaine.



Ada L. James – Above and below - Wisconsin State Historical Society photos.



During the 1920s James was also engaged in a series of slander suits with Levi H. Bancroft growing out of her support of S. E. Smalley for the Republican nomination for a Wisconsin circuit judgeship. Active in social work, she administered the David G. James Memorial Fund established in 1922 after her father's death for the relief of needy families in Richland County and was chairman of the county children's board for many years.

In 1919, Wisconsin became the first state officially to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, granting women the vote.

Wisconsin won this distinction because David James traveled to Washington, D.C. by train and hand-delivered the documents to just nose out Illinois for this honor.

The above photograph was probably taken in Washington D.C. on June 13th when James took the document to the U.S. Office of the Secretary of State on June 13th to make Wisconsin the first state to file ratification papers. Wisconsin and Illinois both ratified the amendment within hours of each other on June 10th to make them the first states to do so.



The D.G. James House as a four unit apartment Building – SandHill Marketing photo.