



## O.B. (Oscar Briggs) James House - 430 East Kinder St. circa 1890.



**Left to right: Ada Briggs James, D.G. (David Goodrich) James, O.B. (Oscar Briggs James), Vida, Laura Briggs James, and Beulah James. Richland County History Room photo.**

David Goodrich James married Ada A. Briggs on September 30, 1868 and they had a son Oscar Briggs James born to them on July 23, 1869, in Richland Center. Ada (Briggs) James died on November 11, 1869 and on September 30, 1872 D.G. James married Ada's older sister Laura Briggs, and to them three daughters were born, Ada, Beulah, and Vida. D.G. James was a partner in the hardware store that his father George H. James and brother Norman L. James had started in 1862, and he purchased the business becoming the sole owner in 1881. O.B. James worked in his father's store and partnered with him in 1898 under the firm name of D.G. James and Son.

On December 29, 1896, O.B. James married Anna Sanford and to them a daughter Anna Ada was born, both mother and daughter passed away in December of 1897. In September of 1898 O.B. James married Eloise Fort, the

daughter of Fulton Fort a newspaperman in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Eloise was very involved in the Richland Center community, she was an ardent supporter of the women's suffrage movement, she was active in the Women's Clubs, Muses of Music Club, Little Theater-where she played many roles in



**O.B. James and daughters Mary, Adeline and Beulah on Richland Center mill pond. Richland County History Room photo.**

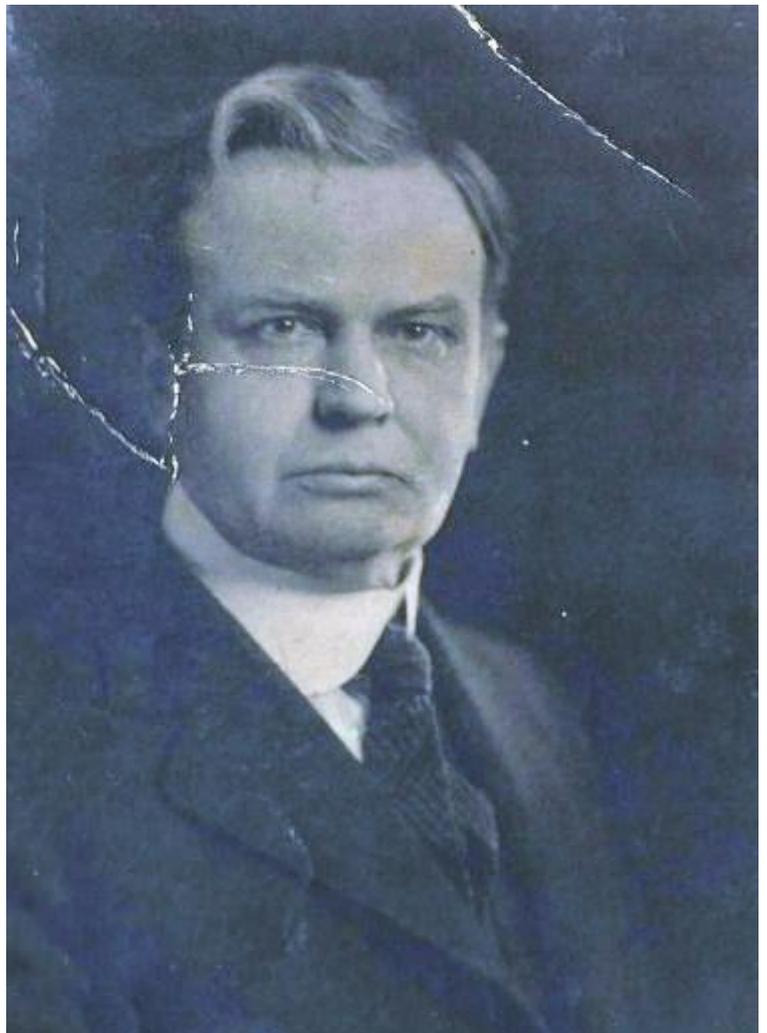
Association and was elected its' first president for three consecutive terms. In 1928 O.B. James retired from active life and turned operation of the store over to his daughter Buelah and her husband Daniel M. Young. O.B. James died in 1932 at the age of 62.

the local productions, Richland Center Country Club Auxiliary –which she served as president for 16 years, and a 50 year member of the Beth Chapter of the Eastern Star. She was also a gifted writer, who wrote poems and short stories of which several were published and she once was presented a silver certificate by the University of Wisconsin for writing a winning play in a state sponsored contest. Three daughters were born to O.B. and Eloise; they were Mary “Mame”, Adeline “Jimmy”, and Beulah “Baby”.

D.G. James passed away in 1921 and O.B. continued the hardware store’s operation. In the 1920s O.B. James was a founding member of the Wisconsin Hardware



**O.B. (Oscar Briggs James) 1869-1932.**



Mr. Young had previously worked for the Carnation Company in both Richland Center and in Tupelo, Mississippi, before returning to Richland Center to take over his father-in-laws business. Buelah (James) Young worked with her husband in the store and was also active in the Red Cross, Colonial Dames, Beth Chapter of the Eastern Star, and a charter member

of the Black Hawk Chapter of DAR in Richland Center. The Youngs operated the hardware store until 1959, when they retired to Florida and sold the business to Buelah's sister Adeline (James) Cook and her husband Fred, who had operated a hardware store in Hillsboro for twenty years, thus keeping the business under James family ownership. The Cooks operated the hardware store until 1962, when due to health reasons they closed the business and sold the building, ending one of Richland Center's oldest businesses after one hundred years of continuous operation by the James family.



**James Hardware operated from 1862 to 1962 at 156 East Court Street – Richland County History Room photo.**

The original James Hardware Store, when George H. James and son N.L. James started the business in 1862, was located across Court Street in a long, shabby, frame, building. D.G. James also built the building to the right of the store (present home of *The Richland Observer*) in 1889, as an investment, and also the building on the left in 1914 that originally served as a warehouse for the hardware store, before being used by J.C. Penny and others.

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