



D.G. James Building (The Richland Observer) - 172 East Court Street - 1889 - Richland County History Room photo.

## The D.G. James Building – 172 East Court Street - 1889.



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. 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.

D.G. James erected the D.G. James building in 1889 as a rental commercial property rather than one he conducted his own business. James remained an important member of the business community as owner of a major hardware business from about 1873 to 1921 when he passed away.

The commercial building contained a craft and a number of businesses central to the community. J.H. Staff operated his harness shop at the rear of the building from 1894 to 1916. By 1892 until 1897, the State Bank of Richland Center occupied the main portion of the building. The bank began as the Pease Brothers and Company Bank sometime prior to 1891. Earl M. Pease served as its cashier and

D.G. James - Richland County History Room photo.

Lemuel Akey as its president by 1892. The bank erected a new building in 1897. By 1905, it became the First National Bank. The post office followed the bank in 1897 and remained to 1907. By this time, *The Richland Democrat* replaced the post office.

*The Richland Democrat*, which had attained considerable prominence in southwest Wisconsin, was started by Wilbur G. Barry in 1892 in the McKee Building as counterbalance to *The Republican Observer*, a partisan weekly that could trace its origins back to the *Richland County Observer* in 1855.



**The Richland Democrat in 1912 – Wilbur G. Barry - editor. Richland County History Room photo.**

A.P. (Arthur Penuel) Andrews purchased the paper in 1923 and continued the political contest of words and endorsements of the respective parties' candidates in elections. Mrs. Lela Andrews acquired the newspaper after his death in 1936. According to Margaret Scott, in her "*History of Richland Center*," Lela Andrews soon earned a prominent place for herself in Wisconsin journalism. In 1962, the rival weeklies *The Republican Observer* and *The Richland Democrat* merged under the new name of *The Richland Observer*. Some of the *Republican Observer's* equipment was moved to *The Democrat* facility and *The Richland Observer* has been published regularly on Thursdays from the D.G. James Building to the present day.

Lela Parfrey was born in Richland Center on August 28, 1889 and died at the age of 95. She was a graduate of Richland Center High School, Richland County Training School, and Whitewater Normal School. She taught in Sextonville, Lodi, and Mount Horeb and was assistant principal of the Rusk County Training School.



**Left to right: Lela Andrews, Lillian Gorder, unknown, A.P. Andrews - The Richland Observer photo archive.**

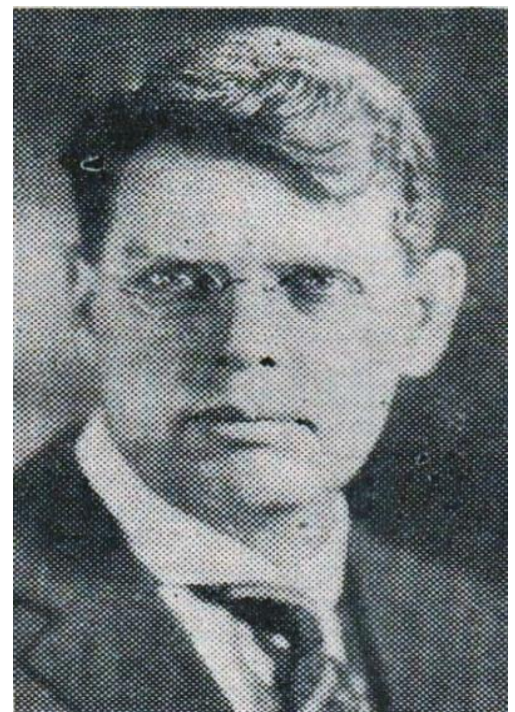
In October, 1917, she was married to Arthur P. Andrews who was then editor and publisher of the *Waupun Leader*. Mrs. Andrews was editor and publisher of the paper until she retired in 1962. During this time, she was an active member of the National Editorial Association, Women of the Press, and the Wisconsin Press Association, in which she was one of the first women to serve as a member of the board of directors and an officer. She received the Writer's Cup award presented at the annual convention of the Women of the Press in 1957 and was honored by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in 1960 with its Distinguished Alumni award.

Arthur Penuel Andrews was born on March 12, 1881, on a farm near Wadena, Minnesota. The Andrews family left Wadena in 1896 and joined another son, Farnk E. Andrews, in conducting a newspaper, *The Advance*, in Bloomer, Wisconsin. Here the father and three sons worked together in a business that became the life work of the family.

Lillian O. Gorder came to Richland Center in 1926 to work for Mr. and Mrs. A.P. Andrews on The Richland Democrat in a dual capacity as linotype operator and reporter. For many years she wrote the local page, the society news, and a column she called "Not Exactly News," which was frequently quoted in the state's daily newspapers. She devoted 45 years of her life working for *The Richland Democrat* and *The Richland Observer*.



Lela P. Andrews and A.P. Andrews frame this group of five individuals fronting the Richland Democrat facade (James Hardware is immediately to the left) – The Andrews' nephew, James O. Olson became the editor and publisher of The Richland Observer, as did his son Erik Olson - The Richland Observer photo archive.





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