

James S. Elder Family History

from *History of Craighead County*, H. L. Williams, 1930

Page 538 (bottom)

James Sterling Elder and wife, Martha (Nokes) Elder, came to Jonesboro in the year 1870 from Nashville, Tenn. They made the trip in covered wagons and it required 21 days to reach their destination. Levi and John Elder, brothers of James S. had arrived here several years before and James S. had visited on White River and liked the country and decided to locate in this county. Mr. Elder was an early carpenter of Jonesboro and one of the two first elders of the First Christian Church.

Page 539

Mrs. Elder was a musician of note and the Elder family brought the first piano to the city in the wagon when they arrived here. James Sterling Elder died in 1887. His wife lived to the ripe old age of 90, passing away in 1926, after a long life of usefulness in the community. Lots were cheap when the Elder family arrived in Jonesboro. Mr. T. J. Elder in the year 1875 bought the two lots where the Jonesboro Hardware Co. is located for \$75. Children of James Sterling and Martha (Nokes) Elder: Thomas J. married Virginia Culberhouse, James married Callie Midget of Tennessee and is a merchant at Rogers, Ark., Sally married A. C. Broadaway and resides in Little Rock, Sue married Mr. Strickland, William died single, Fonza married Leottie Morelock and is a merchant of Jonesboro, with a number of children. His oldest son, Howard is a member of the faculty of Pine Bluff High School, Paul who married Ruby Dye of Parkin, is associated with his father in business. The other children are attending school in Jonesboro.

J. S. Elder [junior and senior]

from *Centennial History of Arkansas*, volume 2, Herndon, 1922, pages 735-736

J. S. Elder, an enterprising and successful representative of mercantile interests in Rogers, is at the head of the J. S. Elder Grocery Company and in this connection has conducted both a retail and a jobbing business for the past ten years. His birth occurred near Nashville, Tennessee, on the 18th of November, 1868, his parents being **James S.** and **Martha (Nokes) Elder**, both of whom were likewise natives of that state. The father, who was a contractor, made his way to Arkansas in September, 1869, and took up his abode among the earliest settlers of Jonesboro, where he erected the first brick church and a number of other buildings, including the jail. He was physically incapacitated for service in the Civil war but had two brothers who were killed while fighting with the Confederate forces. His religious belief was indicated by his membership in the Christian church, in the faith of which he died in 1896. His demise was the occasion of deep and widespread regret, for he had become widely and favorably known during the period of his residence in Jonesboro, which covered more than a quarter of a century, and had contributed in no small measure to the upbuilding and development of the town. His widow, who is still living at the age of eighty-nine years and yet makes her home in Jonesboro, followed the profession of teaching for a number of years. Her father, **Thomas Nokes**, was killed as a soldier of the Confederate army during the Civil war. By her marriage she became the mother of ten children, five of whom survive, as follows: **T. J.**, a capitalist residing in Jonesboro, Arkansas; **Mrs. A. C. Broadway** of Jonesboro, whose husband is identified with the personal injury department of the Iron Mountain Railroad Company and is a very prominent citizen of this state; **Mrs. Sue H. Strickling**, who is now a widow and is teaching music in Jonesboro; **J. S.**, of this review; and **H. A.** who is engaged in business in Jonesboro as the senior partner in the Elder & Stevens Clothing Company.

J. S. Elder, whose name introduces this review, was brought to Arkansas by his parents when still but an infant and has therefore spent practically his entire life within the borders of this state. He was reared on a farm and attended the public schools in the acquirement of an education, but his opportunities in that direction were necessarily limited, for at the age of fourteen years he entered his brother's store as a clerk. Later, when he felt that his experience justified such a step, he organized the Elder Brothers Mercantile Company at Bay, Arkansas, and successfully conducted the enterprise for twelve years. On the expiration of that period, however, he sold out and removed to Rogers in 1911, here purchasing a small store in which he carried on business for eleven months. He then organized the J. S. Elder Grocery Company and purchased a large store, in which he has since conducted both a jobbing and retail business in groceries, having built up an extensive and gratifying trade in this connection. He is a man of keen discrimination, sound judgment and unquestioned integrity, and his executive ability and excellent management have brought to him a large degree of success.

In 1889 Mr. Elder was united in marriage to **Miss Callie Midyett**, a native of Tennessee and a daughter of **Ralph Midyett**, who engaged in farming near Jackson. Mr. and Mrs. Elder became parents of two children: **Ula**, the wife of **A. F. Warren**, who is associated with her father in business and by whom she has two children, **James Arthur** and **Thomas Christopher**; and **Thomas Calloway**, who died when twenty years of age.

Mr. Elder gives his political allegiance to the republican party and is widely recognized as a most public-spirited and progressive citizen who withholds his support from no movement or measure instituted to promote the general good or advance community welfare. He is a worthy exemplar of the Masonic fraternity, has three times served as master of the local lodge and has twice been chancellor commander in the Knights of Pythias. His religious faith is that of the Christian church, which finds in him a devoted and consistent member. As a prosperous merchant and representative citizen he is widely known in the town of Rogers and his career has ever been such as to command for him the confidence and esteem of all with whom he has come in contact.

[Note: Jonesboro is in Craighead County and Rogers in Benton County.]