

Biographical & Historical Memoirs of North East Arkansas
Goodspeed's

Bledsoe & Tillery

Bledsoe & Tillery, dealers in general merchandise, also millers and ginners, Bay Village, Ark. The field of enterprise opened up in the mercantile line is a large one, and many prominent citizens of Bay Village are engaged therein. Among the representative houses that of **Bledsoe & Tillery** is entitled to due recognition. The above firm was established in Bay Village in 1884, by the present proprietors, who bought out Stone, Shaver & Co., and since then they have refitted the machinery, and made everything new except the corn buhrs. The individual members of the firm are **W. L. Bledsoe** and **F. F. Tillery**, the former being the senior member. He was born on the 18th of July, 1849, and is the son of **Stephen and Mary Nichols (Jennings)**

Bledsoe, natives of Middle Tennessee, and both members of the Baptist Church. The father was an enterprising agriculturist, and in his political views affiliated with the Whig party. He was the father of three children: Sarah A., who died in 1883, was the wife of **D. H. Pitman**; Susan F., is the wife of **G. H. Grubbs**, a farmer, and lives in Lincoln County, Tenn., and William L., one of the subjects of this sketch. He was left fatherless at the age of nine years, and during the ten years of his mother's widowhood he remained with her, and secured but a limited education in the common schools. After her second marriage, in 1808, he started out on the broad highway of life for himself, and became a sturdy son of toil, continuing at this in Tennessee for ten years. In February, 1870, occurred his marriage to Miss **Calister Moore**, daughter of **James and Martha Moore**, natives of Marshall County, Tenn. This happy union resulted in the birth of three children: Willie, James and Orah. Their mother died in 1886, and Mr. **Bledsoe** took for his second wife Miss **Fannie Roy**, daughter of **Judge Roy**, and a native of Tennessee. Two children were the fruits of this marriage: Maud and Elmer. In 1878 Mr. **Bledsoe** left the farm and embarked in the grocery business, which he carried on in Middle

Tennessee for two years. In 1880 he moved to Harrisburg, Poinsett County, Ark., tilled the soil here for a year, and then moved to Bay Village, where he still continued farming. Three years later he engaged in his present business, and is making a success of the same, having erected new buildings etc., and secured a lucrative patronage. The firm own a tract of land of sixty-three acres, and are engaged extensively in the raising and selling of stock. They also farm extensively, and have this year over 150 acres of cotton, seventy-five acres in connection in Poinsett County. Aside from this they own five acres in Bay Village, and 210 acres, 180 under cultivation. In their mercantile business they carry a stock of goods valued at \$2,000, and their annual sales equal \$20,000.

F. F. Tillery, junior member of the above mentioned firm, was born October 16, 1856, in Alabama, but was reared in Middle Tennessee, where he received but a limited education. His parents, **William and Jane (Cunningham) Tillery**, were also natives of Alabama. **William Tillery** followed tilling the soil in early life, and at the age of thirty years, being fairly well educated, he entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which work he continued with successful results for thirty five years, or until his death, which occurred in 1863. He was an honored member of both the Masonic and Odd Fellows fraternities, and was a much revered gentleman. Although he never enlisted in the service, he went with those of the soldiers with whom he was acquainted to wait upon and attend to their wants, and died while thus striving to do good. Mrs. **Tillery** survived her husband twenty-five years, reared her children to maturity, and during the last five years of her life lived happily with them. She united with the Methodist Episcopal Church at the age of sixteen, and lived a consistent member of the same until her death, in 1888, having been a member of the same for fifty-four years. She reared her family at a time when educational opportunities were very limited, and the training and instruction she gave them were all they ever received. **F. F. Tillery** was the twelfth of thirteen children, seven of whom are now living, six daughters and one son, all married, viz.: Mrs. **Francis Van Martindale**, Mrs. **Sarah A. McKenney**, Mrs. **Margaret Roper**, Mrs. **Mary Bledsoe**, Mrs. **Harriet Smith** and Mrs.

Julia Goodloe, the subject of this sketch being the only son living. He started out in life at the age of eighteen, and entered the employ of a saw-mill man, with whom he remained for some time. After this he embarked in agricultural pursuits, and continued at this until November 30, 1880, when he made a visit to Harrisburg, and although he had no intention of a permanent stay, his practical eye soon saw that right there was a chance for a man with progressive ideas to make a start in life. He first began by teaming, and in connection with this carried on farming and trading, which he continued until 1884. He then embarked in merchandising with **Mr. W. L. Bledsoe**, at Bay Village. On February 14, 1879, he was first married to Miss **Lebecca Merrill**, who was a daughter of **Garrett and Amy (Walker) Merrill**, natives of Alabama and Middle Tennessee, respectively. Mrs. **Tillery** lived about twenty-three days after marriage, and in February, 1880, Mr. **Tillery** married Miss **Mellie A. Merrill**, sister to his first wife. They have the following family: Mary F., Robert Lee, Minnie O., Arthur B., Tillie M., died in infancy; Willy D. and Pearl. Mr. **Tillery** casts his vote with the Democratic party, and is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as is also Mrs. **Tillery**.

Poinsett County
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