

Biographical & Historical Memoirs of North East Arkansas  
Goodspeed's

## Gilliland

**James M. Gilliland**, county examiner and teacher, Harrisburg, Ark. Since his residence in this county, **Mr. Gilliland** has been very prominently identified with the material affairs of this community, indeed, far more so than the average of men. Particularly in educational matters is this true. He was originally a native of Tennessee, where his birth occurred in Tipton County, on the 14th of December, 1844, but he was reared in Shelby County of the same State. He is the son of **Samuel and Eliza (McFerrin) Gilliland**, the father a native of Virginia, and the mother of Alabama. **Samuel Gilliland** was one of the very early settlers of Shelby County, and, at the time of his first residence, remembers seeing Memphis when it was a very small village. He was a farmer, and opened a large tract of land; he was also a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and labored in that field until forty-five years of age, when he was forced to abandon his chosen profession on account of ill health. He was a Democrat, though conservative in his views. His death occurred in Tennessee in 1856. His excellent wife survived him, and in 1860 removed with her family to Poinsett (now Cross) County, Ark., where she bought a large tract of land, 200 acres of which she cleared and put under cultivation. She erected good houses and barns, set out orchards and otherwise improved the plantation. **Mrs. Gilliland** was the sister of the late lamented **Rev. John B. McFerrin**, general manager and field agent of the Methodist Book Concern, of Nashville, and possessed his sterling qualities. Her death occurred at Wittsburg, Cross County, Ark., in 1871. She was an esteemed member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. **James M. Gilliland** was the third of seven children born to his parents. **Mrs. Anna Wilson**, who died in 1867, at the age of twenty-four, leaving her husband and four children; **Mrs. Sallie Rivers**, widow of **R. E. Rivers**; James M.; John W., a farmer, who died and left a wife and one child in 1881; **Mrs. Alice Thomas**, **Mrs. Ella Durham**, and Samuel, who was

accidentally drowned in St. Francis River. The shock of this event caused the mother's death on the day following. **James M. Gilliland** became familiar with the details of farm life in his youth, and received the rudiments of an education in the common schools of Tennessee. Later he attended Marshall Male Academy, at Marshall, Miss., but his studies were interrupted by the breaking out of the late war, which caused him to leave school in order to assist his mother during that struggle. As the excitement increased, however, he deemed it best to join the army, and accordingly in the year 1862, at the age of seventeen, enlisted for one year in Company B, Twelfth Tennessee Infantry, under Col. Preston Smith, and was with his regiment at the battle of Corinth. After the retreat from that city **Mr. Gilliland** was discharged on account of age, under the provision of the Confederate Congress, and returned to Arkansas for a short time. He then enlisted in McGee's Battalion (cavalry), under **Gen. Marmaduke**, and participated in the battles of Helena, White River and numerous skirmishes in White County. Here during an encounter with the Third Iowa Cavalry **Mr. Gilliland** had his horse killed, and he was taken prisoner. He was conveyed to Camp Douglas, Chicago, where he was kept a prisoner for about two years. On the 12th of April, 1865, they were started to the mouth of Red River, and arrived at Cairo on the night that **President Lincoln** was assassinated. From there they were sent to New Orleans, thence returned to Shreveport, where they were placed on board a Confederate transport, and were ordered to report to their command. There being no command to which to report, on arriving at the mouth of Red River, about 200 of the soldiers, including **Mr. Gilliland**, started on foot to their homes in Northern Arkansas. This tiresome and perilous journey was accomplished, with great labor but without serious loss, in about one month. On his arrival at home **Mr. Gilliland** engaged in farming, and March 14, 1872, was the occasion of his marriage to **Miss Anna Davis**, daughter of **Dr. N. A. and Mrs. Eliza M. (Drake) Davis**, natives of Tennessee. The fruits of this union were the following children: Eliza Alice, Mary E., John D., who died in infancy; Anna V., J. Landon, Florence C. and Lillian M. **Mr. and Mrs. Gilliland** are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and he is a member of the following orders: Masonic,

Odd Fellows and K. S L. of H. He, like his father, is a Democrat, but is conservative. He has served in different official capacities in the county, first as mayor of Wittsburg, from 1871 to 1872, then as justice of the peace in Cross County, two years, was a member of the board of registrars for two years, and is one of Poinsett County's representative citizens. He moved to Harrisburg, in November, 1886, and has followed the profession of teaching a portion of the time since. He was appointed county examiner in January, 1888, and is the present incumbent. He has taught in the schools of Cross, Woodruff, Craighead and Poinsett Counties, and is one of the progressive educators of this county. He is an earnest advocate of improved methods in education, and under his direction the schools of Poinsett County, are in a very prosperous condition. He is the owner of 127 acres of land in Cross County, fifty acres of which are under cultivation, and he also owns a house and lot in Harrisburg.

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