

Biographical & Historical Memoirs of North East Arkansas
Goodspeed's

Sparks

Thomas B. Sparks, general merchant, Harrisburg, Ark. **Thomas B. Sparks**, the senior member of the well-known and thoroughly established firm of **T. B. Sparks & Co.**, is a native of Middle Tennessee, where his birth occurred February 27, 1840. His father, **Thomas Sparks**, was a farmer and trader by occupation, and was married in Virginia, to **Miss Mary Booth**. He moved to Arkansas in 1859, and died near Jonesboro about 1878. Both he and wife were members of the church, he of the Methodist Episcopal, and she of the Baptist Church. Their children, ten in number, are as follows: Mrs. **Sarah A. Stroud** (residing near Jonesboro), Mary E. (widow of **H. Parr**, residing at Jonesboro), T. B., A. W. (a farmer, residing at Harrisburg, Ark.), W. M. (a traveling salesman for a wholesale clothing house, at Cincinnati), G. N. (merchant at Wynne, Ark.); the rest of the children are deceased. **Thomas B. Sparks** began life for himself by entering the army, enlisting February 17, 1862, in Company A. Twenty-third Arkansas, with **J. D. Hillis**, as captain. He took part in the disastrous battles of Iuka and Corinth, and was captured at Port Hudson, paroled and returned home. In the autumn of the same year he was exchanged, after which he entered the service in the same company and regiment, but cavalry. On the re-organization, his elder brothers, James E. and T. B., were elected captain and lieutenant, respectively, of Company A, which position they each held until the close of the war. After entering the cavalry, the subject of this sketch was in the White River campaign, but surrendered at Wittsburg, in July, 1865. After the termination of hostilities, he returned home, and engaged in tilling the soil for one year, after which he entered the employ of his brother, **James E. Sparks**, as clerk. In the year 1868 his marriage to **Miss Elvira Harris** was consummated. She is the daughter of **Capt. Benjamin and Martha (Thrower) Harris**, who were among the earliest settlers of this county, and were the founders of the town of Harrisburg, which

was named in their honor. **Mr. Harris** was a successful agriculturist, and figured prominently in the affairs of his county and State, holding the offices of representative, judge, and was also senator of the Twenty-ninth District of Poinsett, Jackson and Mississippi Counties. He was a Democrat in politics, and was a prominent Mason. **Mr. Sparks** continued to work as a salesman until 1873, when he was elected clerk of the circuit court of Poinsett County, and was twice reelected. He was defeated in 1878, and subsequently returned to mercantile work, which he continued until 1880, when he was elected sheriff and collector. He was twice re-elected, thus plainly showing his efficiency as a public man, and served in that office until 1886, since which time he has given his undivided attention to merchandising. He and **Mrs. Sparks** are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and are much respected by all who know them. He is a member of the A. F. & A. M. (being High Priest of the Chapter) and of the K. of H. He is a Democrat, and is active in his support of all schools, churches and public enterprises generally. In January, 1887, the present firm of **Sparks & Co.** was formed, the individual members being **T. B. Sparks** and **J. L. Smith**. They carry a stock of goods valued at from \$6,000 to \$8,000, handle cotton and grain, and are doing the largest business of any firm in town.

Poinsett County
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