

Biographical & Historical Memoirs of North East Arkansas  
Goodspeed's

## Steele

**Thomas B. Steele**, attorney, Harrisburg, Ark. Of the many prominent names that make up the strength of the Arkansas bar is that of **Thomas B. Steele**, who is a true type of the progressive, yet conservative, and cultured Arkansas man. He was born at Batesville, Independence County, Ark., on the 18th of April, 1855, and is one of seven children born to **Rev. John M. and Narcissa (Brookfield) Steele**, and grandson of **Rev. Isaac Brookfield**, who was originally from New Jersey, and was one of the pioneer preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

He, with **Rev. John M. Steele**, was the founder of a great many churches of that denomination on Crowley's Ridge, their territory extending from Chalk Bluff to Helena.

**Rev. John M. Steele** was born in Hardeman County, N. C., on the 2d of March, 1810, and remained in his native State until 1836, when he moved to Arkansas, where, for a number of years, he spent his time as an itinerant preacher. He was without a permanent home until about 1843, when he took for his second wife **Miss Narcissa Brookfield**, a history of whose parents appears in the church history of the counties traversed by Crowley's Ridge. The seven children born to **Rev. John M. Steele** and wife are as follows: **Mrs. Nancy J. Harris**, residing in Bolivar Township; **Rev. J. R.**, an elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church, Texas; **Mrs. Mary E. Dudley**, who died in 1874, leaving three children; **Mrs. S. Ann Keck**, in Bolivar Township; **Mrs. Martha C. Bettis**; **Thomas B.** and **James M., Jr.**, physician and surgeon at Weiner, Ark.

**Thomas B. Steele** began in early life to assist on the farm and to attend the schools of Poinsett County. He attended the high school at Harrisburg, and finished in Arkansas College, at Batesville, in 1875. After this he began the study of Blackstone, under the tutelage of **J. C.**

**Brookfield**, was admitted to the bar in 1878, and licensed to practice in the circuit and all inferior courts of the State. He at once located at Harrisburg, and has since been successfully devoting himself to the practice of his profession. On the 18th of September, 1887, he abandoned his single state, and was united in marriage to **Miss Dora E. Guyer**, a daughter of **B. Y. and Mary A. (Bomar) Guyer**, natives of New York and Tennessee, and of English and French descent, respectively. The marriage of **Mr. and Mrs. Steele** occurred in the Lone Star State, where her parents were living at that time. One child has been born to this union - Archie W., whose birth occurred on the 31st of August, 1888. **Mr. Steele** is the owner of about four acres in the oldest part of Harrisburg, and one business block on Main Street. In addition to this, he is the owner of 400 acres of timber land in Poinsett and Craighead Counties, with about fifteen acres under cultivation. He votes with the Democratic party, and is quite active in politics, having made the canvass for representative in 1888, but was defeated by **L. J. Collins**. He takes a prominent part in all matters relating to education or for the public good.

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**Dr. James M. Steele**, physician and surgeon, Weiner, Ark. **Dr. Steele** is a son of the well-known pioneer, **Rev. John M. Steele**, and is the youngest in a family of seven children. He was born in Batesville, Independence County, Ark., on the 25th of February, 1861, and his brothers and sisters are named as follows: **Mrs. Jane Harris**, wife of **W. C. Harris**, a farmer near Harrisburg; John R., a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Meridian, Tex.; **Mrs. Mary Dudley**, wife of **N. P. Dudley**, and who died in June, 1876; **Mrs. Ann Keck**, wife of **T. W. Keck**, a farmer, living in Poinsett County; **Mrs. Kate Battis**, wife of **J. W. Battis**, a farmer near Harrisburg, and **Thomas B. Steele**, an attorney and counselor at law, at Harrisburg. **Dr. James M. Steele's** parents, **Rev. J. M. and Narcissa (Brookfield) Steele**, were among the earliest settlers of Crowley's Ridge. The father was born near Raleigh, N. C., in 1810, and received his education in that State and in Tennessee, having removed with his father to that State in 1824. He began life as a millwright, and in 1829 he was united in

marriage to **Miss Mary Seit**, a native of Tennessee. Two children were the fruits of this union: A. C., a farmer, who died from injuries received in the war, in 1865, leaving a wife and two children, and William M., who died in 1881, leaving a family of five children. **Rev. Steele** lost his wife in Saline County, Ark., in 1832. He had moved there in 1830, and a short time after his wife's death was converted and united with the Methodist Episcopal Church. He immediately entered the ministry of the Arkansas Methodist Episcopal Conference, and began his notable life-work. His labors for the first four or five years were in Northwest and Southwest Arkansas, and after that time on Crowley's Ridge, in St. Francis County. He was there married, in 1848, to **Miss Narcissa Brookfield**, daughter of **Rev. Isaac and Nancy Brookfield**, and the same year he was sent by the conference to the Indian Territory, where he remained four years. He then returned to Batesville, Ark., and after this time his field was Crowley's Ridge, from Chalk Bluff to Helena and the Black River country. After starting over fifty churches, this devout and truly Christian man closed his eyes to the scenes of this world in 1881. **Dr. James M. Steele** attended the schools of Harrisburg, then Washington high school, in Independence County, and also attended one term at Vanderbilt University, at Nashville, Tenn. He began the study of medicine in 1876, under **Dr. Beecher**, and then spent several seasons as a drug clerk. In 1884 and 1885 he took a medical course in Memphis Hospital College, and in the last mentioned year began practicing at Weiner, Poinsett County, Ark., where he has built up a large and paying practice. He was married, on the 14th of March, 1886, to **Miss Emma E. Mayer**, daughter of **Michael and Mary (Klaege) Mayer**, natives of Germany. To the Doctor and wife was born one child, Austin G., now a bright boy of six months. They lost one child, Edgar M., at the age of three months. **Dr. Steele** owns eighty acres of land, twenty acres under cultivation, and in connection with his practice is engaged in farming and stock raising. He votes with the Democratic party, but is conservative. He is a member of the school board, and one of the leading men of the county. **Mrs. Steele** is a member of the Catholic Church.

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