

Biographical & Historical Memoirs of North East Arkansas
Goodspeed's

Wilson

J. B. Wilson is possessed of those advanced ideas and progressive principles regarding agricultural life which seem to be among the chief characteristics of native Tennesseans. He was born in Shelby County, of that State, in 1829, and is the elder of two children born to **John B. and Mary Ann (Cowan) Wilson**, who were also Tennesseans. The father followed the trade of cabinet-making until his death, which occurred in Middle Tennessee, in 1833, but his widow survived him until 1874, dying in Poinsett County, Ark. The early advantages received by our subject were such as usually fall to the farmer's boy, and at the early age of fourteen years, owing to the death of his father, he was compelled to put his shoulder to the plow, in order to assist in the support of his widowed mother. He was married in Tennessee, in 1857, to **Miss Mary Houston**, a native of Tennessee, and a niece of **Gen. Sam Houston**. Her parents, **John and Martha (Gillespie) Houston**, were Tennesseans, her grandfathers having been among the earliest settlers of that State from Virginia. **J. B. Wilson** removed to Poinsett County, Ark., in 1857, and located in Greenfield Township, where he purchased a partially improved farm, consisting of 179 acres, and now has eighty acres under cultivation, which he devotes to cotton and corn. By his wife, who died in 1873, he became the father of seven children, three now living: Mary L. (**Mrs. Bennett**, residing in Craighead County), David B. and Ida. In 1874 **Mr. Wilson** married **Mrs. Mary Jane (Wilkison) Kelsoe**, she having been born in the State of Alabama, but was reared in Poinsett County. Six of their seven children are living: Ellen, Eland, Thomas Payne, Robert Ingersoll, Joe Voltaire and Andy Bradlaw. In December 1861, Mr. Wilson went to Decatur, Macon County, Ill., and was there engaged in gathering supplies, for the Union Army. The following year he went to Memphis, Tenn., and from that time until 1865 he was on the city police force. In the latter year he returned to Poinsett County, where he has since made his home. Although not a

politician, he votes with the Republican party, and has advocated its principles alone and single-handed at all times, and was one of two men of Arkansas who voted for **Abraham Lincoln** for the Presidency, in 1865. He has always advocated the building and sustaining of good schools, and has for many years been a member of the school board in his district. He has been a Mason since 1850. He is also a member of the Agricultural Wheel. He has ever contributed liberally for the support of every enterprise for the building up of the county, and is considered one of its good citizens.

Poinsett County
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