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Having gained a foothold in the city and won substantial prosperity, Mr. Cooper turned his attention to farming and raising live stock as a side line for the employment of his surplus energy. He bought 1,000 acres of land and on it conducted extensive operations in farming and raising stock. He gave special attention to raising mules, handling from 125 to 150 annually for a number of years with great success and profit. When his three sons arrived at the necessary capacity and development to handle this business he turned it over to them, and from that time until his death gave his whole attention to his harness and saddlery business and a lively trade in real estate which he had worked up from a small beginning, and his banking interests.

He was one of the founders of the 'Shelby County Savings Bank, which was started in 1874, and one of the most potential factors in preparing the way for it. When it was organized he was elected president and as such conducted its affairs for several years. Then he and Mr. Dimmitt, his partner in another enterprise, bought all the stock of the institution and converted it into a private bank known as the Cooper & Dimmitt **bank**, to which for awhile he gave his whole energy, leaving the management of his harness trade to Julies Ritter. He was also a member of the firm of W. A. Dimmitt & Co., dealers in carriages and

other road vehicles. The Cooper & Dimmitt Bank was dne of the soundest and best managed financial institutions in this part of the state and enjoyed a wide and exalted 'reputation in the business world.

Mr. Cooper was married on September 6, 1848, to Miss Frances Shambaugh, a native of Caroline county, Virginia. They had three children, their sons, Alonzo, John H. and David L., all residents of this county, where John and David died some years ago, leaving Alonzo the only survivor of the family. A sketch of his life will be found in this work. The father retired from active work a few years before his death, but to the end kept his finger on the pulse of all his business interests.

JAMES E. RAGSDALE.

From his boyhood James E. Ragsdale, of Shelbina, has mingled with the people of Missouri' and been a part of the state's productive activity. He was born in Monroe county on April 23, 1841, and is a son of James and Sallie (Deaver) Ragsdale, natives of Kentucky. The father came to this state in 1830 and located in Monroe county, where he was extensively engaged in farming and raising live stock until his death on June 9, 1850. High hopes blazed his way into the wilderness and he was subsequently rewarded by their full fruition. Fortune did not jest with him, as she does with many, but gave him opportunity to secure her bounty if he was willing to pay the price she exacted in sacrifice, endurance and patient toil. She was dealing with sturdiness of character and deter-

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mination of purpose, and she unbound her treasures to them in recognition of their worth.

Just one year after his arrival in the state the father was united in marriage with a lady of his choice, Miss Sallie Deaver, who was, like himself, "bred in old Kentucky." They became the parents of seven children, four of whom are living—Martha E., wife of Isaac Greening, of Monroe county; James E., a resident of Shelbina, and the subject of this record; C. H. and Mary A., the wife of James A. Spencer, both living in this county. The father was a Whig in political faith and allegiance and a member of the Christian church. He was successful in his farming and stock-raising operations and became a man of considerable substance in a material way.

James E. Ragsdale was born to a boyhood and youth of privation and toil, as most of the offspring of the frontier are. He grew to manhood on his father's farm, taking his part in its labors and making the most of the slender opportunities for academic training which the district schools of the neighborhood afforded. Not only were their facilities very limited, but the terms during which they were in operation each year were short and confined to the winter months. For at all other seasons of the year all the available force in the community was required in the arduous work of conquering and fructifying the wilds and providing the means of subsistence for the daring adventurers who had braved their perils and stubborn inhospitality.

At the age of thirty-one Mr. Ragsdale bought a farm of his own, beginning over again for himself the work of develop-

ment and improvement he had so zealously assisted in for his father. On this farm he lived and carried on active operations in tilling the soil and raising live stock until 1902, when he sold the place and retired from active pursuits, taking up his residence in Shelbina. He did not, at this time, however, turn his back upon the duties of life, but only cut out the more laborious and exacting ones. He took an immediate interest in the business life of the community and became an important factor in carrying it on to greater development and more extensive operations. He is the vice president and one of the directors of the Shelbina National Bank and owns considerable real estate in and around the city, to the care of which he gives diligent attention.

He also takes a good citizen's part in the affairs of the city, county, state and nation, ardently supporting the Democratic party in political matters and working with zeal and effectiveness for the welfare of the Christian church, of which he has long been a prominent and useful member. In the social life of Shelbina and the county he and his family are also active and prominent, holding a high place in the regard of the people and showing that they deserve it by the interest they take in the welfare of those around them and the agencies that minister to their comfort, convenience and advancement.

On December 6, 1870, Mr. Ragsdale united in marriage with Miss Mary E. Cox, who was born and reared in this state. They became the parents of eight children, six of whom are living—John W., of Kansas City, Missouri; Winnie,

the wife of Edward Achuff, of Gallatin, Missouri; James E.; Sallie Belle, the wife of W. S. Eller, of Mexico, Missouri; Lelia M., the wife of Ripley Spencer, who lives in Shelby county; and Mrs. Bird Estes, a resident of Shelbina, who married Dr. Selsor, also of Shelbina, in the fall of 1910.

Mr. Ragsdale is nearing the limit of human life fixed by the Psalmist, but he is yet hale, vigorous and energetic. Whether there be much or little of an earthly career vouchsafed to him yet, the sunset of his day is mild and benignant, and the retrospect of its period of toil and trial must be pleasing to him. For he has lived acceptably and usefully, and can now see blooming and bearing fruit around him the progress and development of a great commonwealth to whose advancement he has essentially contributed, and many valued institutions which he has helped to found and has sustained and fostered with assiduous devotion and commendable generosity. He has lived for the community and its people, even while most industriously pushing forward his own fortunes, and their appreciation of his career is shown by the universal esteem with which they regard him and his family.

JOHN S. MILES.

From his youth John S. Miles, who is now one of the leading merchants of Shelbina, has been connected with the mercantile life of the city. All the activities of his life in business have been given to that line of endeavor, and as he started in it with natural aptitude for its requirements and has had his faculties

trained and developed in long experience, it is not surprising that he has succeeded and now stands in the front rank among the business men of this part of the state.

Mr. Miles was born in Monroe county, this state, on April 19, 1864, and is a son of William F. and Nancy W. (Jackson) Miles, natives of Kentucky. The father passed many years of his life in his native state, coming to Missouri in 1849 with a colony of Kentuckians, who located near Paris, in the adjoining county of Monroe. There the father reared his family and passed his time in farming and raising live stock until 1866, when he sold the farm and moved to Shelbina, retiring from all active pursuits. He was married to Miss Nancy W. Jackson, a Kentuckian by birth and belonging to families long resident in that state. Mr. and Mrs. Miles became the parents of six children, three of whom are living—R. E., a resident of Santa Ana, California; Susie, the wife of N. H. Langford, of Hannibal, Missouri; and John S., who still lives at Shelbina. The father is an ardent Democrat in political allegiance and adheres to the principles of his party with steadfast loyalty, giving it active and effective aid in all its campaigns. His church relations are with the Baptists.

John S. Miles obtained his education in the public schools of Shelbina, and having a decided turn toward merchandising, left school early to follow the path in life which nature and his own predilection seemed to have marked out for him. He began his mercantile career as a clerk and salesman in a hardware store, to which he rendered faithful