

The History of West Virginia, Old and New
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HON. WILLIAM JANES, several times mayor of the City of Philippi, is an able lawyer and business man, whose activities have had much to do with the exploitation of the material resources of the state. He is of English ancestry, but is the direct descendant of a young Englishman who fought on the side of the colonists in the struggle for independence, and the family has been in West Virginia for over a century.

His Revolutionary ancestor was his great-grandfather, John Janes, who was born in Staffordshire, England, about 1752, and as a young man came to America. He enlisted from Pennsylvania for the War of the Revolution, and was with the American troops when General Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington at Yorktown in 1781, that being the concluding act of the war. John Janes lived for many years in Barbour County, West Virginia, and is believed to be the only soldier of the Revolution buried there. He died in 1842, since in that year he drew his last pension from the Government as a soldier. He was about ninety years of age when he died.

His son, Alexander Janes, was a stone mason, and examples of his work were on the bridge abutment on the Parkersburg and Staunton Pike and across Greenbrier River and the steps and the foundation of the old Court House of Randolph County at Beverly. These old steps are still in use. He spent his last days at Moatsville in Barbour County, where he is buried. Alexander Janes married Louisa Casteel, of the Casteel family of Preston County. Their children were: William, who retained the old English spelling of the name Jennings, and was a prominent resident of Preston County and a member of the County Court; Noah Janes, whose record follows: Thomas Janes; Nancy, who became the wife of George Nestor; Maria, who married James Isner; Margaret, who was the wife of A. J. Cline; Alice, who married Winfield Cox; and Calore, wife of Edward Freeman.

Noah J. Janes, father of Mayor Janes of Philippi, was born in Barbour County, in Cove District, February 19, 1849, and spent his active life as a farmer and lumberman. He acquired a common school education, was elected as president of the Board of Education of Cove District, and spent his last days at Fox Hall in Pleasant District, where he died August 13, 1911, at the age of sixty-two. He was a republican. He was distinguished by certain strong traits of character, he dealt in nothing but the truth, despised shams and camouflage, but in spite of the strength of his convictions was reasonable in his relations with all men. Noah Janes married Catherine England, daughter of Archibald England. She died December 6, 1889, being the mother of William and Ida B., the latter the wife of T. E. Phillips, of Fox Hall, West Virginia.

William Janes was born in Cove District of Barbour County, spent his early life on the farm, and beyond the advantages of his immediate home community he had to depend on his own exertions for the higher education which he craved. After completing the work of the common schools he taught school, his first school being in the Bull Run District in Tucker County. While teaching he attended the Fairmont Normal School, and in his senior year was given a scholarship under the Peabody fund as a student in the Peabody Normal College at Nashville, Tennessee. This appointment was conferred by the state superintendent of schools of West Virginia, and it paid in addition to the railroad fare both ways \$100 a year toward the maintenance of a student in the Normal College. Mr. Janes continued his studies there two and one half years, and subsequently entered West Virginia University, where he graduated A.B. in 1900, and subsequently received the law degree.

In the meantime he had done his duty as a volunteer soldier at the time of the Spanish-American war. He enlisted at Morgantown, and at Kanawha City was sworn in as a member of Company D of the First West Virginia Volunteers. The company was sent from Charleston to Chickamauga Park, Georgia, thence to Knoxville, Tennessee, and to Columbus, Georgia, and he was in that camp until discharged in the spring of 1899. After leaving the army he returned to Morgantown to finish his university work. Mr. Janes taught for a brief time, and then located at Philippi, where for some time he was engaged in the business of securing options on coal lands. Thus he became interested in some of the companies that were organized for the opening of mines and the development of the field. Although establishing himself in a business way in the community, he entered the practice of law, being admitted to the bar at Philippi. For a time he practiced with Senator W. H. Carter, now of Middlebourne. Mr. Janes has devoted his talent

primarily to the business side of law and as a counsel and adviser rather than in court practice. Among other professional connections he is attorney for the Peoples Bank at Philippi and one of its directors.

Mr. Janes is a republican, and has done a great deal of work for the party, being acting secretary of the County Committee in 1904, and has been a delegate to congressional, judicial and other conventions. In politics he is primarily interested in good government, and puts the interest of the community and people above party.

The most notable era in the progressive administration of the municipal affairs at Philippi coincides with his term of mayor. He was elected mayor by the City Council in 1918 as the successor of Brown Shafer. He then was elected by popular vote for five successive terms, now in 1922, serving his fifth term. Among other outstanding steps of his administration was the extension of the electric light plant, the power for which is purchased from the Monongahela Power Company. When he became mayor the income of the light plant was about \$200 a month, and now the gross revenue from the same source is \$1,400 a month. A sewerage system has been installed, providing not only for present needs but for future growth. About \$20,000 bonded indebtedness has been discharged, and the outstanding debt of the city at the present time is \$33,500. Altogether Philippi is on a sound financial basis, and is working out a program of municipal improvements that gives it rank among the best cities of its size in the state.

At the signing of the armistice closing the World war Mayor Janes issued a proclamation to the citizens of Philippi, and in the course of the proclamation he said:

"The war is over, the rights of man have been vindicated, righteousness and the allied arms have triumphed. Despotism and imperial Germany has been crushed. Downtrodden man now stands erect on the broad plain of equal rights to all. American principles and American ideals have permeated the old world and the Declaration of Independence has become the political textbook of all countries. It is right that we should be thankful and it is but right that we should celebrate this great world triumph with all that it means to humanity, and in order that we may more effectually do so I, William Janes, Mayor of the City of Philippi, call upon our citizens to take such steps to recognize the importance of the event by such public ceremonies as befit the occasion."

October 2, 1901, Mr. Janes married Miss Jessie Lee Semmelman, a native of Barbour County, who was reared and educated there. Her father, Samuel L. Semmelman, was born in Baltimore, has spent most of his life as a merchant, coming to West Virginia when about twenty one years of age, and for some years lived in Grafton, where he married and later was a merchant at Nestorville in Barbour County. He married Mollie (DeHaven) Hubbard, widow of William Hubbard. Both of them now live in Philippi. Mrs. Semmelman by her first marriage has the following children: Granville Hubbard, of Delphi, Indiana; Perdita, who died as Mrs. Mont Burley; Nettie, Mrs. Howard Bailey, of Flemington; Mrs. Iva Marple, of Hamilton, Ohio. The Semmelman children are: Alice M., wife of J. C. Annon, of Philippi; Charles, of Columbus, Ohio; Mrs. William Janes; Mrs. Gay Murphy, of Philippi; John Semmelman, of Moatsville; and Carrie, wife of D. C. Gall of Philippi. Mr. and Mrs. Janes have one son, Aubrey Howard Janes, born August 15, 1902.