

THOMAS LEMUEL JAMES.

THOMAS LEMUEL JAMES was born in Utica, N. Y., March 29th, 1831. His grandparents on both sides emigrated to the United States from Wales in 1800. After studying in the common schools and the Utica academy, he learned the printer's trade in the office of the Utica Liberty Press, and in 1851 bought the "Madison County Journal" a whig newspaper, published at Hamilton, N. Y. In 1856, when the Republican party made its first canvass, his paper was united with the "Democratic Reflector" under the name of the "Democratic Republican." He continued in journalism for ten years, meanwhile also serving as collector of canal tolls at Hamilton in 1854-55. In 1861 he was appointed an inspector of customs in New York city, and three years later was promoted to be weigher. In 1870 he was appointed deputy collector and placed in charge of the warehouse division and the bonded warehouses of the port. The records of the division were in confusion, and the general work from one to three years behind, but in one month Mr. James reported the exact condition of the division, and within six months he had brought the business up to date. The prevailing laxity had given way to the utmost efficiency. He was appointed by General Arthur, who had become collector, a member of the civil service board of the collector's and surveyor's offices, was made its chairman, and was among the earliest and most steadfast of public officials in advocating and applying the reform of the civil service by establishing the system of appointments upon the basis of examination and merit. On March 17th, 1873, Mr. James was appointed postmaster of New York by President Grant. He was reappointed four years later by President Hayes. His service is recognized as marking a new era in postal administration. The two aims which he kept steadily in view were, first, to bring the office and its working force up to the highest state of efficiency; and second, to improve and increase the postal facilities wherever practicable. The deliveries were multiplied, fast mails were recommended and obtained, the foreign mails were expedited and the security of the mails was increased by careful devices. After the removal of General Arthur from the collectorship, the President tendered the appointment to Mr. James, but he declined it on the ground that, having been General Arthur's deputy, he could not consent to supersede him. In 1880, when David M. Key resigned the Postmaster-Generalship, President Hayes offered this place in his cabinet to Mr. James, who, on consultation with his friends, declined it. The same year the Republicans named him for mayor of New York, but he declined the nomination.

When President Garfield announced his cabinet, March 5th, 1881, Mr. James was included as Postmaster-General, and two days later entered on the duties of the office. The assassination of the President and the accession of Vice-President Arthur caused a complete recast of the cabinet, and Mr. James retired January 2d, 1882. Though he thus served only ten months, his administration was not too brief to be distinguished by important and lasting reforms. When he began he found an annual deficit of \$2,000,000, which had varied in amount every year from 1865, and, with one or two exceptions, from 1851. His policy of retrenchment and reform was immediately begun. The reductions that he made in the Star service amounted to \$1,713,541 and those in the steamboat service to over \$300,000, thus effecting

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an aggregate saving of over \$2,000,000. In cooperation with the department of justice, Mr. James instituted a thorough investigation into the abuses and frauds in his department the result of which was the famous Star Route trials. In his annual report to Congress he announced that, with these reforms and with retrenchments in other directions which he indicated, a reduction of letter postage from three to two cents would be possible, and it followed soon afterward.

While Postmaster-General, Mr. James negotiated a money-order convention with all the Australian colonies, and with the island of Jamaica.

Retiring from the Post Office Department on January 4th, 1882, he became president of the Lincoln National Bank and the Lincoln Safe-Deposit Company of New York. The degree of A.M. was conferred on him in 1863 by Hamilton College, and that of LL.D. by Madison University in 1883, and by St. John's College in 1884.

From: The Union College Practical Lectures
Butterfield Course
Vol. I p. 401

THOMAS JAMES, non-graduate of 1827, was a member of the Delphian Institute Society, and resided in Jackson, Alba.
Delphian Catalogue 1830

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