

## *Marty's Parents*

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JAMES SANFORD LOVE, b. 1877

### *Her father*

Neither the oldest nor the youngest of Davis and Mary Jane Love's eight children, Jim Love was in a middle position to both his older and younger siblings. We know that he was a man who expressed this closeness and love in writing, as well as verbally. Probably due to financial reasons, he did not return to Mississippi College his senior year. Instead, he took a job as bookkeeper at the Wooten & Tate Mercantile Store in Brooksville. After a few months, he began bookkeeping at the Merchants & Farmers Bank in Macon, which was only a few miles away; thus began his life-long career of banking and finance. In 1900, he accepted a position with the National Bank of Commerce of Hattiesburg. It was there that he met Lillie Bufkin, the daughter of one of the town's most prominent physicians. Though he moved to nearby Lumberton later the same year, he married Lillie in 1903, and their first two children, Eloise and Alleen, were born while they were living there.

A 1901 newspaper clipping from the Lumberton newspaper states: "While quite a young man, there is not a more promising or more progressive businessman in the state than James S. Love, cashier of the First National Bank of Lumberton . . . he was unanimously elected cashier . . . a fine position and an office of trust . . . He is unmarried, is a Baptist by religion and belongs to no secret societies . . . While a young man, he is one of the best bankers in the state."

When the offer of vice-president of Hattiesburg Bank and Trust Co. was made, it is likely that Lillie encouraged the move, so she could be nearer her aging parents, Charles and Corine Bufkin. James Jr., called "Jimmie," arrived in 1910, while the couple lived in Hattiesburg. Jim and his brother, Lowrey, were both active members of Main Street Baptist Church. In 1914 Jim was elected by the Board of Bank Commissioners to serve six years as Bank Examiner for the Southern District. Marty, their youngest child, was less than a year old when Jim accepted the position as Vice-President of the Greenwood Bank and Trust Company in 1920.

While in Greenwood, Jim became an ardent golfer and an active member of the Greenwood Country Club. He helped organize and became the first president of the Greenwood Rotary Club. Jim and his children joined Greenwood's First Baptist Church, and Jim became a deacon.

In 1923, the state bankers selected Jim Love to serve as the first Superintendent of Banks. His salary, \$7,500 per year, was paid by a fund created by the banks — not by the state treasury. This position made a move from Greenwood to Jackson necessary, and the Love family settled in their

home at 932 North State Street. At Jackson's First Baptist Church, Jim joined the Sproles Bible Class, where he remained a member for 33 years. He enjoyed playing golf at the Jackson Country Club, where he was an active member. He continued his interest in the Rotary Club, and served as president of the Jackson Rotary Club in 1928-29. He became actively involved in his new community and made many valuable contributions. Among them was his interest in the Mississippi Baptist Hospital, where he served as a trustee and on the Executive Board. He was always proud of his affiliation with Mississippi College and helped them whenever called upon to do so.

In 1928, he was unanimously re-elected as Superintendent of Banks, with an increased salary of \$12,000. In 1931, he was elected President of the National Association of State Bank Supervisors. Throughout the state, Jim Love is still remembered for his contribution in leading the banks through the bank crisis. One news reporter commented, "Through his heroic efforts, Mississippi banks were led through the 'Bank Holiday' to such a successful rehabilitation that they were back to normal within 30 days after they were permitted to open. Largely through Mr. Love's efforts, Mississippi bonds earned such a reputation for stability that today they are bought in a larger extent in proportion than in any other state in the nation."

December 31, 1934 was a sad day for Jim Love. It was his last day to serve as Superintendent of Banks. By an act of the legislature, the "Superintendent of Banks" position became "State Bank Comptroller" effective January 1, 1935, and the position was to be appointed by the governor. Bankers and friends throughout the state, as well as newspaper editorials, urged Governor Mike Conner to appoint him, but instead a political appointment was made. In letters to his family, he expressed his hurt feelings, and he retained a large file of copies of the many letters that had been written on his behalf.

The disappointment soon turned out to be extremely beneficial. The first day after his banking job terminated, on January 1, 1935, he organized J. S. Love Company, which was extremely successful in handling state, county, and municipal bonds during its forty years of operation. Offices were first located at 302 Deposit Guaranty Bank Building in Jackson. Howard Ivy, a friend who had worked for him during his bank superintendent days, helped organize the new company. He remarked, "Mr. Love was a perfect Gentleman in every respect; he loved his fellowman; he was loyal to his friends; he was so very proud of his FAMILY and loved every one of them dearly." Mr. Ivy helped with the investments that Jim Love senior and junior made in the Buena Vista and White House hotels on the Gulf coast, as well as Lakewood Memorial Park in Jackson, and continues to be a close family friend.

Throughout his amazing career, Jim Love remained a family man. He wrote many letters expressing his love for his family and friends, and several of these letters have been preserved. At Christmastime each year, he wrote to his brother Bob, recalling fond memories, and telling him just how much he had meant to him. He continued this practice throughout his life. Personal friends of his feel that his ability to express his feelings in writing so beautifully is one of the things most responsible for his being a success — with his business, with his family, and with anything he undertook. Zach Hederman remembers his father-in-law as "a fine example of Christian manhood."

An avid baseball fan, he had box-seats at the baseball park, which was located on the fairgrounds behind the Old Capitol Building, and he rarely missed an opportunity to see the Jackson "Senators" play. Jim Love lived to enjoy all ten of his grandchildren, who knew him as "Daddy Jim." Jim and Lillie celebrated their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary in 1953. In 1956 the Loves moved to 828 Belhaven Street in Jackson. He died in 1957 at the age of eighty. He and Lillie are buried in a place of prominence near the entrance to Lakewood Memorial Park in Jackson.