

## JAMES SHELBY GRISHAM

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**JAMES SHELBY GRISHAM**, Sheriff of Colbert County, and one of the well-known citizens of the county, was born October 20, 1839, near Good Springs station, fourteen miles south of Tuscumbia on the Birmingham, Sheffield & Tennessee River railroad. The family to which he belongs is one of the oldest and best known families in the county.

Sheriff Grisham's father, William Grisham, was born in May, 1808, near Spartanburg, S. C., and was the son of Thomas Grisham, who was a native of North Carolina. The father of Thomas Grisham, James Grisham, was a Revolutionary soldier. Thomas Grisham, our subject's grandfather, at his death bore marks upon his body caused by being whipped by British soldiers for refusing to tell where his father kept his guns.

During the war he carried the mail a portion of the time, and passed Guilford's courthouse the next day after the battle at that place. In December, 1824, Thomas Grisham left South Carolina for Alabama, arriving in the state in January, 1825, and locating on a farm near where Sheriff Grisham was born. He was among the first settlers in that part of the state. Thomas Grisham died before the commencement of the late war.

William Grisham was married, in 1832, to Miss Mary D. Smith, who was a native of Buckingham County, Va., but whose father, when she was three years old, moved his family to Wilson County, Tenn., and settled near Statesville. William Grisham died in 1879, and his widow in 1882, leaving three children.

James Shelby Grisham was reared in the vicinity of his birth place, and secured his early education in the country schools. In February, 1861, he removed from Colbert County to Arkansas, and in the following June enlisted in Company I, Fifth Arkansas Infantry. From the fall of 1861 until the close of the war he served with the army of the Tennessee. There were five of the brothers in the service, one of whom was killed, another died during the war, and still another died after the war from the effects of exposure during the war.

After the close of the war James Shelby Grisham returned to his home in Colbert County, where he engaged in farming until his election to office. In 1888 he was the candidate on the democratic ticket for Sheriff of Colbert County, but with the majority of the ticket was defeated. In 1892 he was again nominated and won after a hard fight by a majority of 543, the largest majority of any man on the ticket. He took possession of the office August 22, 1892.

He was married December 20, 1866, to Miss Elizabeth C. Hurst, who was born near where Mr. Grisham was born. She is the daughter of John Hurst. To this marriage have been born four children: Eliza, Mary Caroline, Arthur and William H. Mr. Grisham is a member of the Masonic fraternity, and a very popular and highly respected citizen.

[SOURCE: Memorial Record of Alabama. A concise account of the state's political, military professional and Industrial progress, together with the personal memoirs of many of its people. In Two Volumes. Illustrated. Brant & Fuller, Madison, Wis., 1893. Volume I. pp. 693 - 4.]

Records indicate that Mr. Shelby Grisham died on August 16, 1924 and is buried in Tuscumbia Oakwood Cemetery.



Sheriff Grisham is top row – second from left.

By facial comparison, we are 99% sure that his brother Ben Grisham is in front of Sheriff Grisham. Picture taken at Spring Park approximately 1896.

Picture obtained from Chief Tony Logan of Tuscumbia Police Department



Cropped picture of individuals believed to be Shelby Grisham and Ben Grisham from a Civil War Reunion in 1903. Picture obtained from Scott Dawsey

In an article from *The Alabamian Dispatch*, dated December 7, 1916, the following was found:

### **GOLDEN WEDDING**

“Mr. and Mrs. J. Shelby Grisham, two of Tuscumbia’s most popular old people, will celebrate their Golden or 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary December 20<sup>th</sup>. They are expecting all their children and grandchildren to be present. Mr. and Mrs. Grisham each have a sister who are also expect4ed to be here.

Their children are all married, Mr. and Mrs. Egbert Walker of this city, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Grisham who live near town, Mr. and Mr. G. W. Sherrill of Cherokee, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Grisham of Birmingham.

Mr. and Mrs. Chillion Hill live near Russellville, Mrs. Hill being a sister of Mr. Grisham, Mr. and Mrs. D. W. Bowen also of near Russellville, Mrs. Bowen being a sister of Mrs. Grisham.

Mrs. Grisham as a young girl over a half century ago was Miss Elizabeth C. Hurst. Mr. and Mrs. Grisham wre both reared in Franklin County near Russellville. They have a host of friends I this city who rejoice with them in the celebration of a happy union of fifty years.”