

JAMES MORTON STAFFORD

James Morton Stafford was the sixth of eight children, born to Mahlon James Stafford on 20 November 1876 in Daviess County, Indiana.

James was a mail carrier, a horse breeder, a Presbyterian circuit riding Minister, a miner, an inventor with several patents and an author. James held the following :

- 740995 Non Refillable Bottle
- 753930 Fire Escape
- 761868 Wrench
- 785186 Coffin
- 806756 Apparatus for Preserving the Dead
- 875567 Mold For Glass Caskets, and Similar
- 930242 Focusing Light Producer
- 1203926 Water Elevator
- 1204605 Device for Locating and Raising Ships
- 1205806 Wood Sawing Machine
- 1207651 Gate Opener
- 1225072 Current Motor



James Morton Stafford

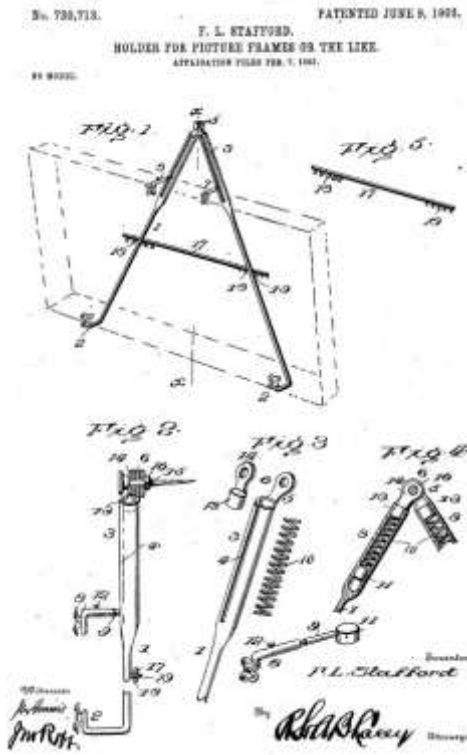


Flora Lenora "Nora" Horrell

James was an entrepreneur. He apparently was extremely successful at raising and breeding horses which gave him the opportunity at a young age to acquire some amount of wealth. He married young by today's standards at age eighteen. His bride was Flora Lenora Horrell, age 16. They were married in Glendale Indiana on 23 December 1894.

Nora was the daughter of John Coleman Horrell and Lucinda Angeline Steen, born 18 November 1878. She was the first of nine children born to the Horrells. There is some contention as to the spelling of the surname "Horrell" since some families spell it as "Horrall". However, after examining the grave stone of Nora's parents at Ebenezer Cemetery, Washington Indiana, it is clear that her parents spelled Horrell with an "e" and not and with an "a" as is believed by some.

Although the various census reports show Nora's duties as house keeping, she was awarded a patent number 730717, for a Holder for Picture Frames.



This invention, patented 9 June 1903 and filed for on 7 February 1903, was designed to provide a suitable substitute for the then present mode of hanging pictures – namely, by cord or wire – utilizing a rigid holder of bracket form... which is a more efficient means of supporting the picture, as well as being an ornament itself.

It is interesting to note that Nora held the first patent in the family between her and her husband. It is also interesting to note that this was her only patent on record. It is likely that her husband James was instrumental in developing her idea and seeing it through to the patent phase. In the years that followed, James held several patents as noted previously. He also developed many other ideas for which no patents could be found.

It is told that James' father was disappointed when his son chose the ministry as a profession and urged him to reconsider his determination, saying in effect, that a man who was as bright at figures as his son, could make his mark in some other business! James was undeterred by his father's opinion. A Republic Special news release dated 16 January 1903, touts "Inventions Make Preacher Wealthy", Keen Witted Circuit Rider

Acquiring a fortune. The article indicated that James Stafford was living in Petersburg and that his inventions were wrought out while traveling. At age 27 he owned seven inventions, six of which were patented at Washington, D.C., and the article states that he had been offered a fortune.

Medicines at that time were not in tamper proof bottles and certain unscrupulous individuals would dilute the medicines to increase their profits. Obviously, the potency of the medicines was compromised by this profiteering scheme, so James came up with a solution, the non-refillable bottle and another of James inventions, the non-refillable bottle cork.

James was awarded several patents while living in Daviess County: Number 1204605, Device for Locating and Raising Sunken Vessels; 1203926 Water Elevator; 1205806 Wood Sawing Machine; 1207651 Gate-Opener; 1295079 Current Motor are examples of his creative talents. What I remember as a child was hearing various stories about my great grandfather Stafford and all the unusual inventions attributed to him. I always had some doubt in those stories as some of them seemed farfetched, like the glass coffin for example. However in researching James M. Stafford, I was amazed to find his patents and am delighted to have them listed here for future generations to know the fact that James was most certainly an inventor.

James was a charitable man, and he was noted for dispensing charity from his fortune to those whom he knew to be in need. There is no doubt that his services were popular, considering that instead of passing the collection plate, the minister was the one dispensing alms. James also looked after his father and used his fortune to provide a home and a 200 acre farm for him. There was also a steam ferry which crossed the White River just above Petersburg Indiana, and not long after purchasing the farm for Mahlon, James bought the ferry for his father.

INVENTIONS MAKE PREACHER WEALTHY

Keen-Witted Circuit Rider of Indiana Is Rapidly Acquiring a Fortune.

REPUBLIC SPECIAL.

Indianapolis, Ind., Jan. 16.—From a poor Methodist circuit rider, preaching Sunday after Sunday to small country congregations in Pike and other Southern Indiana counties, to a man whose wealth is roughly estimated at \$300,000, with the prospect of quadrupling this amount within two years, is the record the Reverend James M. Stafford of Petersburg has made through inventions wrought out while traveling.

Mr. Stafford is only 27 years of age, but he owns seven inventions, six of which have been patented at Washington, and for each of which he has been offered a fortune.

Probably his most remarkable invention is a nonrefillable bottle, which has been tested thoroughly and is soon to be manufactured by a company organized for the purpose. After the first test the minister was offered \$100,000 for his patent, but refused it. The offer was increased, but he refused to dispose of the patent as a whole or even of a controlling interest. Ultimately he sold a tenth interest for \$10,000, and is to receive a royalty on all bottles manufactured.

Another invention is a nonrefillable bottle cork, which is closely allied to the nonrefillable bottle, but can be made to fit any bottle that is manufactured.

Still another is an automatic monkey wrench which does away with the screw and thread and adjusts itself automatically to any size. It is said the wrench can be sold much cheaper than the ordinary article.

The minister is not only enjoying his new prosperity himself, but is doing much good with the money which has come to him. His first purchase was a 200-acre farm, which he gave to his aged father. Soon afterward he bought the steam ferry at Petersburg and gave that also to his aged parent.

While ministering to the people of the country churches Mr. Stafford saw many opportunities for dispensing charity, and he has proved more than a good Samaritan to many with whom he came in contact as a minister and whom he knew to be in need.

As a minister he was popular with those among whom he labored, and his liberality in the last few months has added to the kindly feeling which the people had for him.

It is told in Pike County that the elder Stafford was disappointed when his son chose the ministry as a profession, and urged him to reconsider his determination, saying, in effect, that a man who was as bright as figures as his son was could make his mark in some other business. The young man replied that God would bless the deserving in the ministerial field and that, though he would not neglect his profession, he did not intend to abandon certain plans he had formed simply because he was about to enter the ministry.

A GLASS COFFIN.

Indiana Pastor Says It Will Revolutionize Funerals of Future.

A glass coffin is the latest creation of the Rev. James M. Stafford, a preacher, who has patented seven other inventions, and he declares it a great success and that it will revolutionize the methods of burial now in vogue, says a Washington special dispatch to the Chicago Inter Ocean.

In his capacity of minister he was brought face to face with the needs of improvements in caring for the dead. Oftentimes it was not possible to preserve the body until relatives and friends could arrive from a distance. Even if the burial could be delayed the last view of the remains was denied. After months of thought and experiment he perfected a glass casket.

The virtues of the glass coffin, as explained by Mr. Stafford, are manifold. The old Egyptian method of embalming has been far surpassed in every respect. When his coffin becomes universally adopted, as he confidently expects it to be, all bodies will become mummies, and there will be no limit to the time that remains may be preserved.

Nowadays embalming and preservation of bodies are expensive and cannot be afforded by many people. The thought of decay, earthworms, water and other kindred horrors causes the consigning of the body to the grave to be looked upon with dread.

Cemeteries often become a menace to growing cities through the pollution coming from decaying bodies. The cheaper grades of wooden coffins now in use are merely glued together and after being placed in the ground and subjected to moisture fall apart, and the decaying substance is carried off by the water to streams and wells.

The articles on the previous page are indicative of the accomplishments and of the life of James Morton Stafford. The article on the glass coffin came from the Lewiston Daily Sun, Lewiston Maine. The paper was published Tuesday morning, 1 August 1905 and the price was two cents a paper. It is apparent that James' accomplishments were known far and wide across the United States. The Inventions Make Preacher Wealthy article was a syndicated release and I am unsure of what newspaper published this particular article. The date hand written on the back of the clipping was 16 January 1903.

Among the other amazing accomplishments of James Morton Stafford, was the fact that he owned the first automobile in Pike County, Indiana. James stated, "We contracted the auto fever and got rid of it by taking the cure; buying one." He selected the Single Center Buggy Company of Evansville, Indiana as the firm from which to make his automobile purchase. The car was a "One Lunger" single cylinder, two seated machine, painted bright red and was said to make a much noise as a threshing rig does now. (This story was written about 1935, the date being deduced from a reference to a proposed law to be introduced to the Indiana Legislature in 1935.)

James M. Stafford }
 TO } ss:
 Nora Norrell. }

Be it Remembered, That on this 20th day
 of December, 1894, the following
 Marriage License was issued, to-wit:

INDIANA, TO-WIT: DAVIESS COUNTY:

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

Know Ye, That any person empowered by law to solemnize marriages, is hereby authorized to join
 together as Husband and Wife, James M. Stafford and Nora Norrell
 and for so doing this shall be his sufficient authority.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, Thomas D. Shimp Clerk of the
 Daviess Circuit Court, hereunto subscribe my name, and affix the seal of said
 Court, at Washington, this 20th day of December, 1894


Thomas D. Shimp Clerk.

BE IT FURTHER REMEMBERED, That on this 24th day of December, 1894, the following
 Certificate was filed in my office, to-wit:

Indiana, to-wit: Daviess County:

THIS CERTIFIES, That I joined in marriage as Husband and Wife, James M. Stafford
 and Flora L. Horrell on the 23rd day of December, 1894

W. W. Hartshorn Pastor M E
 Church Hindale Ind.



Record of Marriage for James M. Stafford and Flora L. Horrell, Daviess County Clerk's O; Book: 4; Page: 143

James and Nora Stafford had the following thirteen children:

1. James Alva Stafford, born in Daviess County, Indiana, Thursday 6 August 1896, died Saturday 17 September 1983 in Berea, Kentucky at age 87.
2. Harley Douglas Stafford, born in Daviess County, Indiana, Sunday 19 January 1898, died Monday 1 May 1978 in Petersburg, Indiana at age 80.
3. Ralph Mahlon Stafford, born in Dubois County, Indiana, Friday 2 March 1900, died Thursday 27 April 1995 in Washington, Indiana at age 95.
4. Elsie Sadie Stafford, born in Daviess County, Indiana, Friday 20 September 1901, died Monday 25 September 1995 in Washington, Indiana at age 94.
5. Esta Emaline Stafford, born in Pike County, Indiana, 11 December 1905, died Wednesday 5 October 1994 in Washington, Indiana at age 88.
6. Lucille Irene Stafford, born in Pike County, Indiana, Monday 10 June 1907, died Tuesday 3 September 1935 at age 28.
7. Nellie Glenn Stafford, born in Pike County, Indiana, Sunday 29 November 1908, died Thursday 3 February 1994 in Columbus, Indiana at age 85.
8. Marie Frances Stafford, born in Pike County, Indiana, Saturday 15 October 1910, died in 1924 at age 14.
9. Eva Viola Stafford, born in Arkansas Saturday 20 April 1912, died Monday 4 June 2001 in Washington, Indiana at age 89.
10. Edna Lorena Stafford, born Wednesday 3 Mar 1915, died Sunday 10 January 1971 in Kankakee, Illinois at age 55.
11. Donald Stafford, was born in Daviess County, Indiana, Wednesday 25 February 1914. He was a stillborn infant.
12. Dorothy Stafford, was born in Daviess County, Indiana 1916. She was a stillborn infant.
13. Lena Nova Stafford, was born in Veale Township, Daviess County, Indiana on 26 April 1918 and is 94, still living as of this writing in September 2012. She resides in Eastgate Manor, Washington, Indiana.

The Stafford family was never really domiciled in place for a long period of time. The 1900 census for Boone Township, Dubois County, Indiana, District 37, enumerated on the 19th of June 1900, indicated that family and house #226, consisted of James M. Stafford, age 23, and Flora L. age 21. They were shown to have been married for 5 years with the following with three sons, James A. age 3, Harley D. age 2, and John M. age 2 months. James' occupation was listed as "mail carrier" and that the family was renting their home.

The 1910 census for Washington Township, Pike County, Indiana, District 41, enumerated on the 15th day of April, 1910, listed James and Flora Stafford as family #3. James is now shown to be a minister with his place of work in church. After 16 years of marriage they now have the following children: James

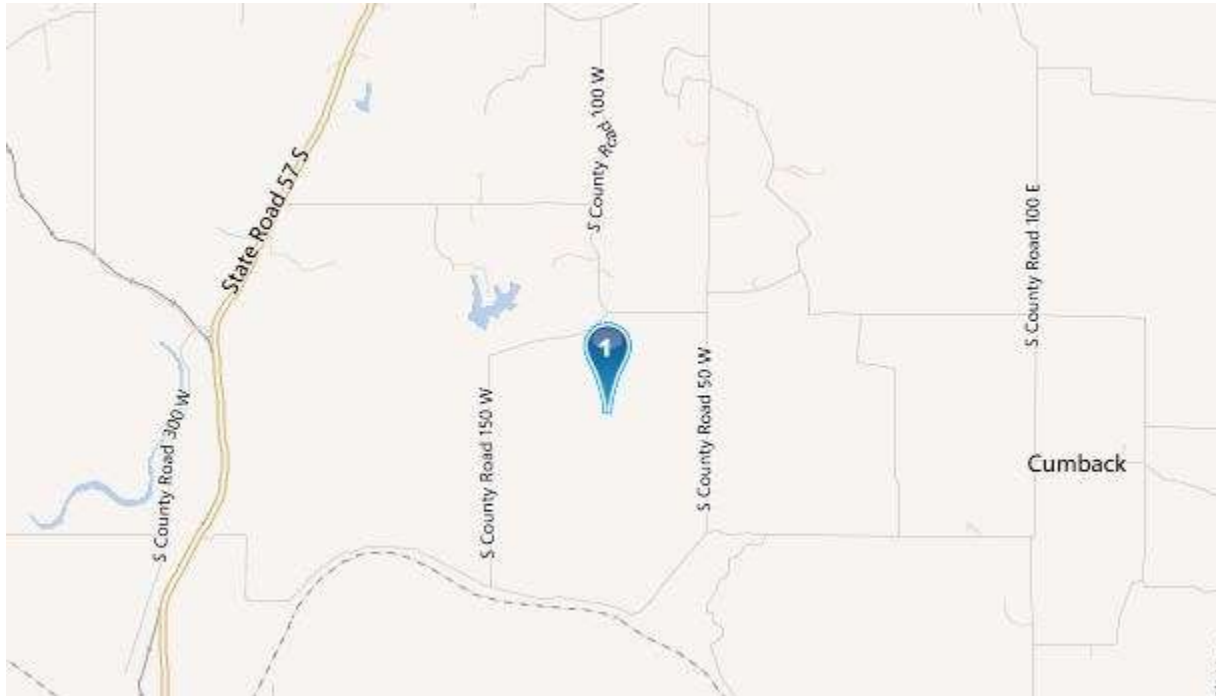
A. age 13, Harley D. age 12, Ralph M. age 10, Sadie (Elsie) age 8 , Esta E. age 4 , Lucille I. age 3 , Nellie G. age 1 10/12. All children were shown to have been born in Indiana.

More changes took place between 1910 and 1920. The Staffords moved again and gained four more children. James' occupation is now listed as a miner. There are scant records as to exactly what happened during this timeframe, but the family oral tradition states that James' business partners and associates took advantage of him and left him penniless. The Staffords took a raft trip about 1912 to Arkansas, removing the motor from the family car to power one of the two rafts. Disaster and misfortune beset the struggling family and after the birth of Eva, James sent word to his father that he was broke and needed money to return home.

The 1920 census for Veale Township, Daviess County, Indiana, District 20, enumerated on the 6th day of January, listed the Staffords as family #35. James and his three sons were all listed as miners for their occupations. Truth was, the property he purchased had a coal mine on it and that mine put all the family members to work. The family home and property was now owned, but with a mortgage. The Staffords now have the following eleven children: James A. age 23, Harley D. age 21, Ralph M. age 19, Sadie E. age 18, Esta E. age 14, Lucile age 13, Nellie G. age 11, Marie age 9, Eva age 7, Edna age 4, Lena age 1.



The 1930 census for Veale Township, Daviess County, Indiana, District 14-16, enumerated on the 11th of April, lists the Staffords as family #99. James has returned to preaching and is shown to be a Presbyterian minister. Harley, still living at home at the age of 31, is a coal miner. Eva is 17, Edna 15, Lena 11, and Lowell (a grandson) is 5.



The #1 above indicates the location of the Stafford property at the time of the 1930 census.

Finally, the 1940 census for Veale Township, Daviess County, Indiana, District 14-16 enumerated on the 24th of April, lists the Staffords as family 106. All the children have left home and only Lowell, a grandson, remains. James is listed as a laborer on the dam project. There is an interesting note about the birthplace of James Morton Stafford. In 1880, he was four years old living with his parents in Illinois. The 1880 census lists James as being born in Indiana, and that is a fact that a father would know for sure. However, the 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 censuses indicate that James was born in Illinois. So much for dry ink on old pages and incorrect recollections and memories!

On August 5th, 1948 Nora died in Daviess County, Indiana, from coronary thrombosis at the age of 69. She was buried August 7th, 1948 in Mt. Olive Cemetery, Washington, Indiana. Her death is recorded in Daviess County, Indiana, in book number 2BH, Page O. James, now a widower, makes his home on Troy Road, south of Washington, Indiana. He still wants to utilize his ingenuity and creativeness believing he can be self sufficient on a couple acres of land, living from the rewards of a home garden and the milk from a goat.

At some point in the 1950's, his daughter Lena and her husband Jim Martin, had been moving about, following work, first in Evansville Indiana, in support of the war effort and later in the coal fields of the various local Indiana counties. Lena and Jim had a family of boys and were in need of a more permanent home. Lena's father had the Martins move into his homestead and he moved into a single car detached garage, a makeshift room with a coal stove. It was a great gesture, and the Martins made

a comfortable home there.

At the age of 89, in the winter of 1957 at 4:15 a.m., on January 5th, James Morton Stafford died of bronchial pneumonia in the Daviess County Hospital, Daviess County, Indiana. Dr. A.G. Blazey was the certifying physician. Certainly, his death was a great loss for the family, the community, and the state of Indiana as well. The world lost a creative and talented individual.



James was buried at the Mt Olivet Cemetery in Washington, Indiana, on the 7th of January, 1957. The V.L. Poindexter funeral home handled the arrangements.

The Stafford Family circa 1950



Left to right: James Morton Stafford, Alva, Harley, Ralph, Sadie, Esta, Glenn, Eva, Edna, Lena