

Helen Eliza (Field) **James**

(1837-1930), born in Conway, came to Williamsburg as a rural district schoolteacher and married local storekeeper and sometime postmaster Lyman D. James. She was a sister of Chicago merchandising magnate Marshall Field.

Widowed in 1902 and left a large inheritance upon her brother's death in 1906, Mrs. James was a major benefactress of education and of the Congregational Church in Williamsburg. She gave \$40,000 to build the school that bears her name, donated an elegant vestibule to the church, paid to build a new firehouse across the street from her home after the previous engine house and several neighboring buildings burned in 1907, and provided funding for new sidewalks in several locations.

She was as kind and thoughtful in person as she was generous with her checkbook, and was loved by all who knew her. In gratitude for her many gifts and kindnesses, the townsfolk in December 1918 prepared this 1919 page-per-day calendar of greetings and well-wishes for her, which she evidently kept, and which was given to the Historical Society many years after her death.