

Gudger, James Madison, Jr. ^[1]

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by Julian McIver Pleasants, 1986; Revised by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, July 2023

22 Oct. 1855–29 Feb. 1920



Photograph of James Madison Gudger Junior, 1912. Image from the Library of Congress.

^[2]James Madison Gudger, Jr., congressman, state senator, and attorney, was born in [Madison County](#) ^[3] of Scot-Irish ancestry, the youngest son of Joseph Jackson and Sarah Emeline Barnard Gudger. Gudger's great-grandparents, William and Martha Gudger, were among the earliest settlers of the Swannanoa Valley. Their son, James, Sr., was born on 22 Jan. 1782—one of the first white children born west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. He married Annie Love, daughter of Colonel Robert Love, scion of a distinguished family and an officer in the American Revolution.

Young Gudger attended Sand Hill and later Weaverville College, Weaverville, before entering Emory and Henry College, Va., where he was graduated with honors. He then studied law under Chief Justice [Richmond Pearson](#) ^[4] and was admitted to the Virginia bar sometime around 1878. Gudger moved to [Asheville](#) ^[5] to practice criminal law. Eventually becoming the leading attorney in Marshall, Madison County, he was, by all reports, an able, genial, and popular practitioner of the law.

Entering the political arena, Gudger was elected to the North Carolina Senate in 1900. In the legislature he served on the committees on the Judiciary, Election Law, Claims and Penal Institutions. In 1901, Governor [Charles B. Aycock](#) ^[6] appointed him solicitor of the Fifteenth Judicial District in North Carolina. He served in that capacity for one year before resigning to run for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Elected to Congress in 1902, Gudger served two terms and gave up his seat in 1906 to resume the practice of law. In 1910, he was reelected to Congress and again served two terms. He was an unsuccessful candidate for reelection to the Sixty-Fourth Congress in 1914. In Congress Gudger served on the Committee on Indian Affairs and the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds; he was chairman of the Committee on Post Office Expenditures. During this period he worked assiduously to secure post offices for his congressional district, was a tireless advocate of rural free delivery, and a pioneer exponent of federal aid for public roads. As a congressman, Gudger was an effective organizer of some influence in national politics, as well as a popular representative who maintained steadfast loyalty to the [Democratic party](#) ^[7].

Gudger married Katie Yancey Hawkins of Hendersonville, and they had three children: Emmet Carlyle, winner of the French Legion of Honor and the Navy Cross in World War I; [Katherine Emeline](#) ^[8]; and one other child, apparently a son who died at a young age. His brother, Judge [Hezekiah Alexander Gudger](#) ^[9], was also a state legislator, a U.S. consul

general to Panama, and a justice of the supreme court of Panama. James Gudger was a member of the Masons ^[10], Knights of Pythias, and the Baptist church ^[11]. He was buried in Riverside Cemetery, Asheville.



Photograph of Katherine Yancy Hawkins, wife of James Madison Gudger Jr., circa 1914. Image from the North Carolina Digital Collections.

^[12]References:

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Additional Resources:

"Gudger, James Madison, Jr., (1855 - 1920)." *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*. Washington, D.C.: The Congress. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=G000514> ^[13] (accessed April 4, 2013).

Halford, A.J., compiler. "James Madison Gudger, Jr." *Official Congressional Directory*. Washington [D.C.]: Government Printing Office. 1906. 95. <https://archive.org/stream/officialcongres28pringoog#page/n126/mode/2up> ^[14] (accessed April 4, 2013).

United States Congress, Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds. 1914. *Public Building at Monroe, N.C.* ^[15] Washington, D.C.: G.P.O.

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Clinedinst, C. "Katherine Gudger, wife of Congressman J. W. Gudger Jr." Photograph. Washington, D.C. *Sky-Land* 1, no.10 (September 1914). 644. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/sky-land-1914-september-v.1-no.10/501942> ^[12] (accessed April 4, 2013).

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