

McDaniel, James ^[1]

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by Lou Rogers Wehlitz, 1991

22 Dec. 1803–25 Dec. 1869

James McDaniel, Baptist ^[2] leader, was born in Cumberland County, the son of John and Rebecca Cade McDaniel. He received his education at Redia Marsh Academy and at Wake Forest Institute, which he helped establish in 1834. In 1851 he was granted a master's degree and in 1869 an honorary doctor of divinity degree by Wake Forest College ^[3]. As a young man he joined the Cape Fear Baptist Church and was ordained soon afterwards; in the fall of 1827 he was made clerk of the Cape Fear Baptist Association, a post he held for fourteen years.

After serving as pastor of several rural churches, McDaniel was persuaded to establish a Baptist church in Fayetteville despite the fact that there were no members of that denomination in the town. Riding horseback across the state to visit Baptist congregations, he succeeded in collecting funds to build the first Baptist church in Fayetteville; the building was completed and the church was "established" on 25 Nov. 1837. With the exception of eight years when he was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Wilmington (1844–52), McDaniel served the Fayetteville congregation until his death. In 1849, while in Wilmington, he established a periodical, *Religious and General Intelligence* ; with McDaniel as its editor, it continued into the following year.

McDaniel was one of fourteen men who met in Greenville in 1830 to organize the Baptist State Convention, and he was the convention's secretary for nineteen years and president for eighteen years. He also was elected a delegate to the organizing session of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845 but was unable to attend; nevertheless, he was present the next year. He also was an active member of the Masonic order ^[4] and held various offices in the lodges to which he belonged.

In 1830 McDaniel married Ann Elizabeth Smith, the daughter of John and Elizabeth Clark Smith of Craven County ^[5]. They were the parents of Amanda (Mrs. R. P. Jones), Lillias Margaret (Mrs. W. W. Vass), Sophia (Mrs. H. E. Colton), Cornelia, Lida, and Adolphus Meredith Wait. His wife died in 1855, and in 1858 he married Mrs. Mary Taylor Strong.

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