

Hay, James, Jr. ^[1]

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by Richard Walser, 1988

28 Jan. 1881–7 May 1936



"James Jay, Jr." Photograph. *The Bookman* 41, no. 1 (March 1915). 12. ^[2]James Hay, Jr., journalist and novelist, was born in Harrisonburg, Va., one of two sons of James and Constance Tatum Hay. Besides his brother William, he had two half sisters from the second marriage of his father, who was a lawyer and congressman (1897–1917). Following preparatory school at Clay Hill Academy in Virginia, he attended the University of Virginia, graduating in 1903. On 4 May 1904, he married Lindsay Howell Walker.

After a few months with the *Washington Post*, Hay joined the staff of the *Washington Times* where his political assignments led to his appointment as White House reporter. A founder and charter member of the National Press Club, he was a friend of presidents William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson. For seven years Hay was a free-lance writer of stories and magazine articles. When his health broke in 1917, he was taken to [Asheville](#) ^[3] on a stretcher. There he continued to write and became associate editor of the *Asheville Citizen*. His second wife, whom he married on 19 July 1922, was Maud Millicent Larrick, a nurse who he always said saved his life. In 1929 Hay returned to Washington, and in 1931–32 he directed magazine publicity for the George Washington Bicentennial Commission.

Most of Hay's ten books are detective stories, of which three have their settings in Asheville: *The Winning Clue* ^[4] (1919) is a murder story involving jewel thieves, *The Bellamy Case* (1925) mixes murder and a political campaign, and *The Hidden Woman* (1929) combines murder and newspaper reporting. Several of his other detective stories use Washington as their setting.

He had a daughter, Lindsay, by his first marriage. Hay was a [Democrat](#) ^[5] and an [Episcopalian](#) ^[6]. He was buried in the family cemetery in Madison, Va.

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