from Richmond Hill, the law school established and taught by his father, James Johnston. Later his brother joined him in law, the firm for ten years was Wells & Wells. 1874

Law June 1877. The public career began as a mayor in 1880 and in 1888 he was elected to the State Legislature as a Senator, re-elected in 1881, served as President of the Senate. While in the Legislature he introduced the bill in Senate to build the now standing Governor's Mansion on N. Alwood St., Raleigh, N.C.

He had the pleasure of visiting often in this mansion while made his home. The daughter, Fay, m. O. O. Reman, lives there as the wife of Gov. F. D. Reman, Governor 1924-1932. He enjoyed the Inauguration Day of Governor 1924-1932. He enjoyed the Inauguration Day of Governor 1924-1932.

He had a public career for almost half a century and was never opposed for office by the Democratic party and was never defeated before the people. For 6 months he was Post-Office Inspector under President Cleveland. He and his wife attended Pres. Cleveland's second Inauguration at Washington, D.C. In 1892 Governor Holt named him Solicitor of Superior Court and in 1894 he was appointed Superior Court Judge by Governor Charles B. Aycock.

It was prominently mentioned for Lt. Governor of the State in 1889 but he refused to allow his name to go before the Convention. When all the Democrats went down in the landslide, Solicitor Wells came within a few votes of receiving the Democratic nomination for Congress in the 8th District.

He was a St. in the Cleveland Guards, a Royal Arch Mason, a Pythian, a member of the First Baptist Church and Chairman of the Building Committee for the new church, on E. Washington St., a youth of the First Baptist Church Sunday School for several years.

In 1878 he married Kansas, five children were born to them, one being in infancy. His only son, Ralph, born May 15, 1878 died Jan. 9, 1905. His daughter, Maud, m. R. P. Williams of Greensboro, N.C. and his daughter, Fay, m. O. O. Reman.
Judge James F. Wells
From the Asheville Citizen

Judge James F. Wells, a man of supreme mind and highly cultivated intellect, was one of the purest democratic principles from his childhood, and his manhood was spent in the same atmosphere earnestly working for his party. He was a man of fine presence and commanding appearance—six feet one and a half feet tall—has rare ability as an orator and as a convincing argument in a political campaign. Besides this, he was a gentleman, and retained his character after he had been subjected to all tests and trials of political campaigns. He was a man of personal magnetism, of genial nature and honesty of purpose, beloved and respected by all who knew him. He was always affable and courtly with a dignified bearing. His equanimity of temper and perfect control of his mind and thought made it impossible to discount him, or throw him off his guard. He presided over the Senate several times with ability and decided with a promptness, fairness, and correctness. He knew his duty and had the manhood to perform it. He was dignified without reserve, impartial, fair-minded, just, and industrious when first appointed Judge he went to many courts all over the state, where there were no court stenographers and the Judge had to take down the greater part of evidence a very laborious task.

Gov. Holt appointed him Solicitor in 1897 of the 11th Judicial District succeeding Frank H. Dabney of Charlotte (who went to Attorney Generalship) and Gov. Aycock appointed him Judge of the Superior Court Nov. 14, 1906 to succeed Judge W. A. Hope of Lincoln (who went to Supreme Court as Associate Justice). His first court was at Windsor, Bertie Co., NC. and he took the oath of office Tuesday morning in the office of the Clerk of Superior Court, the oath administered by Rev. Silliam, Esq. J.P. His wife was present.

For more than a century the name of Wells appears in our records, filling responsible stations and representing a high order of official and personal character.

Judge Wells held the first court in the new Court House Monday, June 15, 1907. The first court held in Cleveland Co. was at Wm. Womans Grove, now part of Asheville. This court was held Sept. 15, 1841, - the county was organized in 1841. The court was held in the house of Judge Wells. The present courthouse was built over the old house of Judge Wells. The new courthouse was built on a hill overlooking the town, and the old courthouse was moved to the new site and used until 1846 when a brick building with two side steps was used until present structure June 1906.