James J. Chase was born 26 December 1894 in Farmington, Dakota County, Minnesota to Horace B. Chase (1856-1929) and Elizabeth Jelly (1861-1913), parents of nine children. Elizabeth was born in New Market, Scott County, Minnesota and came to Eureka in Dakota County with her parents in 1863. Horace’s family was from New Hampshire. Horace and Elizabeth married in 1880 in Eureka. James’ brothers Cecil and Willis also served during WWI.

Horace registered for the WWI draft on 5 June 1917 while living in Modesto County, California; his occupation was farming. He enlisted in the U.S. Army on 24 June 1918 and served as a private in Company F, 311th Supply Train in the AEF in France. Before shipping out to Europe, he married in Chicago on 8 August 1918 to Stella Mae Buchanan. He was discharged from the service on 12 July 1919; at that time, Stella was living in Adel, Iowa.

In 1920, James and Stella Chase were living in Rose Township in Ramsey County, Minnesota, where James worked as a laborer. They had four children: James, Vivian, Arnold and Eloise, all born in Minnesota. By 1940 they were living in Dexter, Dallas County, Iowa, where James did road work for the W.P.A. After the death of Stella in 1948, James married in Missouri to Emily Brandenburg (1901-1976), the widow of Clyde Padgett (1886-1947).

James J. Chase died 29 July 1981 at Manly, Worth County, Iowa at the age of 86. He is buried in Highland Memorial Park Cemetery in New Berlin, Waukesha County, Wisconsin, alongside his first wife, Stella.