

LIFE HISTORY OF WOODROW WILSON

TWENTY-EIGHTH president of the United States, and the first democrat since Jackson to serve two successive terms, Woodrow Wilson occupied the presidency during eight years of such world upheaval and turmoil, that his proper place in history cannot be assigned to him until his contemporaries are likewise assigned to their niches.

Certainly, he ranks as one of the great war presidents of the American republic, and he exercised such an influence in world affairs as never before attached to his office.

Empires crumbled, thrones collapsed, the map of the world was made over, and under his administration the country abandoned its policy of isolation and became an active participant in world affairs. In all of that he took a powerful hand. No biographer could attempt to assess him accurately, and in full, until the processes which began in his day and with his participation have come to a conclusion.

Became Educator.

An obscure lawyer, by nature a man of letters, he became an educator and won his first attention from the public as president at Princeton university. Then by the strange ways of a political system he became governor of New Jersey and later, because the voters of the republican party were divided between Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft he became president of the United States.

During his eight years of power he traveled the gamut of human emotions; victory, defeat, courtship and marriage; responsibility for leading a nation into war with the collateral responsibility of bringing it back again to the ways of peace; and finally a daily struggle with death.

Called "God of Peace."

He had heard himself hailed by the millions of Europe as "the God of peace" and heard his name hissed by the same millions. Acclaimed at one time almost as a new Messiah, he heard himself exoriated and denounced as an autocrat and worse at home and abroad. No other president since Lincoln was so worshipped and hated; no other president since Roosevelt had such friends and such enemies. Through it all he preserved an outward calm while the grim destroyer which hovered close about him during the last months of his occupancy of the presidency, followed him relentlessly to the modest home where he lived the ways of a retired gentleman and knocked at his door every day until it was at last opened.

After having borne the burdens of a war president, he undertook the task of making a peace which he sincerely believed would be a lasting one and although he succeeded in getting Europe to accept it in large measure his own country rejected it. And in the fight he broke his health, wore himself out, suffered a stroke of paralysis which led to his death, and declared through it that he would have been happy to give his life for the success of his efforts.

Was Precedent Smasher

Woodrow Wilson was a precedent smasher from beginning to end. He began by reviving the practice of Washington and Jefferson in delivering his messages to Congress in person; he finished by actually leaving American soil and going to Europe. He was the responsibility of deciding when a country with a people torn by conflicting sympathies was ready to throw itself into the great world war, and when the moment came he took the responsibility of throwing in the men and millions, which turned the scale to victory.

What ever an army of Boswells may write, that will be the part in which he will be best remembered by coming generations.

Known as "Tommy."

Born in Staunton, Va., December 28, 1856, of Scotch-Irish parentage, he was christened Thomas Woodrow Wilson and he was known in early life as "Tommy". After he was graduated from Princeton in 1879 he was known only as Woodrow Wilson. His father was the Rev. Joseph Ruggles Wilson, a Presbyterian clergyman, and his mother was Jessie Woodrow.

When he was two years old the fortunes of his father took the family to Augusta, Georgia, and later to Columbia, S. C., where at the age of 17 Thomas Woodrow Wilson entered Davidson college, but left there soon to go to Princeton. After graduation at Princeton he studied law at the University of Virginia and in 1882 hung out his shingle in Atlanta, Ga. Meantime he courted Ellen Louise Axson, the daughter of a Savannah Presbyterian clergyman. They were married in 1885 and had three daughters, Margaret, the eldest who did not marry; Jessie, who became the wife of Francis Bowes Sayre, and Eleanor, who became the wife of William G. McAdoo, secretary of the treasury during

her father's administration and later a presidential aspirant.

Wore Out Rug.

Wilson once said that as a young lawyer he wore out the rug in his office walking around the desk waiting for clients, so he abandoned a legal career and went to Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore for a post graduate course in letters. While there he published his first book "Congressional government," a study in American politics. It evoked professorships at Bryn Mawr and Wesleyan and won recognition at home and abroad. The young man who wrote of the defects of the American political system in 1883 found himself to deal with them later. Having written in a deprecatory tone of the tendency toward autocracy in American presidents he lived to hear himself called the greatest autocrat of them all and to see a resolution declaring his office vacant on those grounds introduced and tabled in the senate.

Became Professor.

Successively, Wilson became professor of history and political economy at Bryn Mawr and at Wesleyan University and later professor of jurisprudence and political economy at Princeton where, subsequently, he was made head of that institution. Meanwhile, Professor Wilson had gained high reputation as a writer. Some of his works, with the date of their production, were as follows: "The State Elements of Historical and Practical Politics," (1885); "George Washington," (1886); "A History of the American People," (1902); "Constitutional Government in the United States," (1905); "Free Life," (1913); "When a Man Comes To Himself," (1915); "On Being Human," (1916); "An Old Master and Other Political Essays," and "Mere Literature and Other Essays," were among his earlier writings. His state papers, notes to belligerent governments and addresses to Congress, would fill many volumes.

Took Honorary Degree.

The honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was bestowed upon him by Wake Forest College (1887); Tulane University (1893); John Hopkins (1902); Brown University (1903); Harvard University (1907); Williams College (1908); and Dartmouth College (1909). Yale made him a Doctor of Literature in 1901. Life was a pretty well settled affair for him while he was president of Princeton. Its great oaks, shaded lawns and historic halls, furnished the settings in which Mr. Wilson did much of the literary work which later was to attract the world. He probably had little thought of being snatched into the maelstrom of politics and war. He drew some public attention in the fight for preservation of democratic ideals at the University, but he lived the life of a family man on small pay and as late as 1910 was contemplating retiring on a teachers' pension.

That year the inexorable force of events came into evidence. The tide which "sweeps on to fortune" began to rise about him. Nominated for governor of New Jersey in a political situation about which many interesting things have been said and denied with equal fervor, he was elected on the Democratic ticket, and immediately took on the state "bosses" for a round of combat which attracted the attention of the country. In the Jersey legislature he found the young lawyer, Joseph P. Tumulty who became his private secretary and biographer.

Political opponents charged Governor Wilson with radicalism, but he drove his program through. The outstanding legislation was the "seven sisters law" a series of bills drafted under his direction which dealt with trusts. New Jersey up to that time, because of its corporate laws, had been called a rendezvous for monopolies.

Dramatic Spectacle.

Governor Wilson's nomination for the presidency at the Democratic convention of 1912 in Baltimore was one of the dramatic spectacles of American political history. It was a battle royal which brought him victory after more than 40 ballots.

Champ Clark, the venerable and beloved speaker of the House of Representatives, led Wilson in the early voting—in fact polled a majority of the delegates. For the first time in history a democratic national convention refused to give the necessary two thirds to a candidate who had gotten a majority. William Jennings Bryan, himself the nominee of three previous conventions, led the fight against Clark in one of the bitterest contests ever gave Wilson or Bryan—and he opposed Wilson's policies in Congress conducted in American politics. It broke Clark's heart—he never repeated. Clark knew he lost only the nomination, but the presidency, for the contest between Taft and Roosevelt assured such a rift in the republican vote that the election of a democrat was all but inevitable.

The convention realized this for the man who nominated Clark declared: "We meet not only to choose a candidate but to choose a president."

Won Nomination.

At any rate, Woodrow Wilson got the nomination and won the election with 435 electoral votes. Roosevelt got 88 and Taft got 8. He came to the White House on March 4, 1913, signaling the return of uni-

THE EIGHT AGES OF FORMER PRESIDENT WILSON



Top row, left to right: 1—As a young lawyer. 2—As a young professor at Wesleyan University. 3—As Governor of New Jersey. 4—At the time of his inauguration as president. Bottom row, left to right: 5—During the war period. 6—While touring the country in defense of the League of Nations. 7—On his 65th birthday. 8—At President Harding's funeral ceremony in Washington.

WILSON'S MOST FAMOUS WORDS

There is no such thing as a man being too proud to fight.

The world must be made safe for democracy. We must be impartial in thought as well as action. A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. There is no hate in our hearts for the German people.

We have always said that we were the servants and friends of mankind. Peace must be planted on the trusted foundations of political liberty.

13 WAS WILSON'S LUCKY NUMBER

He was re-elected in 1916 by California's pivotal 13 electoral votes.

There are 13 letters in his name. He landed at Brest Dec. 13. He was inaugurated in 1913. Thirteen governors were in line. Militia from 13 states were there. Thirteen educational institutions were represented. There are 26 articles in his League of Nations covenant—twice 13. It was completed Feb. 13. The marriage of his daughter, Jessie, to Francis B. Sayre, was the thirteenth White House wedding.

democracy to power after successive defeats of 16 years. Immediately he galvanized the country, appearing before Congress in person, publicly denouncing "a vicious lobby" which he charged was attempting to influence in Washington and launched a legislative program which included repeal of the tariff, revision of the currency system, new styles of control of the trusts, the creation of many new government agencies, and such a multitude of other legislative business that Congress and the country had difficulty in keeping up with it.

Danced to His Tune.

Congress thought Theodore Roosevelt a "dictator" and an "autocrat" but it soon found itself dancing to Woodrow Wilson's tune and at first it danced very obediently and with very little grumbling. Wilson early confessed that he had a "one track mind" and he proved to Congress early in his administration that he knew what he wanted and how to get it. He had a cabinet. It was true, but he consulted it after he had determined what he wanted to do. When he wanted a bill introduced in Congress he frequently drew it himself and if it hesitated in

passage he summoned the leadership and it passed soon thereafter. In dealing with the cabinet he did his own thinking and conducted much important business of the various departments direct from the White House.

Hardly had Wilson gotten himself turned around when he had his first foreign situation to deal with. It was with Mexico and was a legacy from the preceding republican administration. The republican chiefs said they left it for Wilson because they didn't want to embarrass him in dealing with it. The democrats declared the republicans had "passed the buck." It came to a crisis when Huerta, the dictator, seized the reins of government, and President Madero and Vice-President Suarez were murdered.

Had Fixed Ideas.

Wilson had very fixed ideas of his own on succession to the presidency by assassination. He thought it pretty general in Central America and he told candidates it was going to stop. He withheld recognition from Huerta and the situation worsened until Huerta troops attacked some American bluejackets at Tampico and Wilson ordered the occupation of Vera Cruz by the American army. The official reason given for the occupation was that the German ship Ypiranga was about to land arms and ammunition for Huerta and the occupation was to prevent it. The United States demanded a salute to the flag, critics of the Wilson administration took delight in pointing out, never was given.

Events in Mexico solved their own problem in a few months when Carranza, another newly-risen leader, ejected Huerta who fled. American troops were withdrawn from Vera Cruz. But Wilson had had one experience with Mexican affairs and he did not recognize Carranza either. In fact, no government in Mexico was recognized for ten years—long after Wilson had gone out of office. The Mexican problem came back to a republican administration for settlement. "Watchful waiting" was not alone Wilson's.

Was Called Weak.

Wilson was much criticized for weakness in handling the Mexican situation, but his friends said he saw a world-war coming and had told them he "did not propose to have the United States caught with one hand tied behind his back." He did not propose to be engaged in a war with Mexico at such a time. At all events, the world war broke the same year. Woodrow Wilson added his appeals to the futile effort to stay it, sitting by the bedside of his dying wife on a memorable August 6, 1914. Mrs. Wilson passed

away that day, and with a world taking fire about him, he took her body to her girlhood home in Rome, Georgia, for burial. The president was almost prostrated with his grief and returned alone to the White House to face his burden. Wilson's friends always said that from the first Wilson saw it would be a world war and that the United States eventually would be drawn in. But he realized that the country drawing its population from the states of Europe which were going to war would face a much-divided sentiment and a very difficult situation. His first words to his countrymen were a caution to strict neutrality.

Stood for Neutrality.

Wilson's efforts were devoted to keeping his country neutral until the submarine outrages began. He was at first unable to believe that the atrocities had the sanction of the German government but was convinced when they sunk the Lusitania. That incident brought the first rift in his official family. William Jennings Bryan, secretary of state, an avowed pacifist, opposed Wilson's course and left the cabinet. Wilson nevertheless went ahead and warned the German government against sacrificing the lives of American citizens. Through a diplomatic correspondence which continued for two years, the president built up a record which reached its climax when he handled passports to Count Johann Von Bernstorff, the German ambassador and asked congress to declare war which it did. With that the president led the nation into the tremendous effort before it.

Meanwhile, with a world war all about him, Wilson had found time for an affair of the heart. He had met Mrs. Edith Bolling Galt, the widow of a Washington merchant. Their courtship was swift and they were married December 18, 1915. There were no children of this second marriage.

Election Intervened.

A presidential election had intervened before the country went into the war and this time Wilson's republican opponent was Charles Evans Hughes, who left the supreme court bench to become a candidate. The issues of that campaign were very much muddled. The democratic slogan was "he kept us out of war." Wilson's election, however, was by a very narrow margin. The result trembled in the balance three days and finally turned in his favor when California finally flopped to the democratic column by a few votes. Wilson got 277 votes in the electoral college and Hughes got 254.

President Wilson actually assumed his place as commander in chief of the army and navy. He took

the leading part in planning America's participation in the war. He insisted from the first for a unified command on the western front; for vigorous measures to curb the submarine menace. He personally initiated much of the war legislation such as the passage of the selective service law, the creation of the shipping board, the war industries board, the war labor board and a multitude of other arms of the government for carrying on the struggle. He devoted his whole being to the war, seeing nobody and thinking of nothing else. Some of his days probably were like Lincoln's.

It was President Wilson who conducted the correspondence with Chancellor Max of Germany when the request for an armistice came, and when the Germans laid down their arms he turned his thought wholly for war to peace, telling his friends that while Germany must be made to pay to pay for full ability, Europe must not have another Alsace-Lorraine.

It was quite a different Woodrow Wilson who sat in the president's chair when the war ended. With hair whitened and faced lined he showed the effects. He had learned something about men and human nature. He had learned, he told a friend "that some men become great and others swell up," but his penchant for doing things himself never had lessened. He wrote state papers and read them to the cabinet afterward; he became impatient with men who disagreed with him and frequently dismissed them. He quarreled with friends who in turn reproached him with being ungrateful, but he always kept on his course having once decided upon it.

Boared Disapproval.

Peace in sight, Wilson decided to go to Europe himself and take a hand in making it. Congress, no longer the suppliant hand maiden it was during his first administration, rebuffed his disapproval. Wilson assured congress that in the day of wireless and cable it would know all he did. As a matter of fact he told congress very little of what he was doing, or anybody else for that matter, until it was done. That was not Wilson's way. The result was that he committed the United States to the League of Nations and was repudiated.

President Wilson's participation in the memorable peace congress had been described by many pens, friendly and unfriendly, and his part was so indelibly written in recent history that it needs little attention in a brief resume of his life works.

Charmed by Oratory.

The statements of Europe were charmed by his oratory, his wit and his personality, until they bumped into his indomitable will to do things his way when he was convinced he was right. Then the sparks flew in the secret meetings he had with Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando. He was determined to have a League of Nations covenant so inseparably interwoven with a treaty of peace that no nation could accept one without accepting the other. The opposing statesmen found that only by letting him have it could they get the provisions of peace they wanted. The result was a treaty in which all got something and it was denounced by its opponents as a breeder of wars rather than a treaty of peace.

It would require a large volume to tell all the interesting things that happened to Woodrow Wilson while he was participating in making the treaty of peace in Paris in that historic winter of 1918-1919. It would require another volume to tell the engrossing story of diplomatic maneuvers, intrigues and dramatic moments that attended it. Publication of either at this time probably would result in the creation of Annanias clubs on both sides of the Atlantic and certainly would not add to good feeling among people who are looking forward to an end of wars and an era of peace.

Woodrow Wilson himself would not wish it. When, in 1920, he accepted the Nobel peace prize for being "the person who has promoted most or best the fraternity of nations and the abolishment or diminution of standing armies and the formation and increase of peace congresses," he said:

"The cause of peace and the cause of truth are of one family. Whatever has been accomplished in the past is petty compared to the glory of the promise of the future."

Never Lost Faith.

Woodrow Wilson lived his last year and died in "the glory of the promise of the future" confident that right as he saw it would ultimately prevail. He never lost faith in the League of Nations but he lost faith in some of the human beings who were its inevitable elements. He closed his eyes confident that as a man of letters and a president he had done his best for humanity but that his best was not all that he might have wished.

Time alone can write his epitaph.