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# WOODROW WILSON

The Story of His Life From the Cradle to the White House

By WILLIAM BAYARD HALE

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## CHAPTER II. Boyhood in Georgia.

IN the spring of 1858, Thomas Woodrow Wilson being then two years old, the family moved to Augusta, Ga., where the father was to be pastor of the Presbyterian church for the next four years.

With his entrance upon the Augusta pastorate, the Rev. Mr. Wilson became one of the most noted ministers of the south. Thoroughly equipped in the theology of his denomination, a pulpit orator of great power and a personality of extraordinary force, he early reached and long maintained a position of much influence. When the war came on he embraced with all the strength of his character the southern side. At the division of the Presbyterian church into northern and southern branches he invited the first general assembly of the latter to meet in his church and became its permanent clerk.

In 1865 Dr. Wilson was styled "attending clerk" of the southern Presbyterian general assembly, and he continued to be such until 1890, when he resigned, being then seventy-seven years old and having kept the southern Presbyterian records for nearly forty years. He was moderator of the assembly in 1879. He died at Princeton, N. J., in his eighty-first year.

Mr. Wilson had been a professor of rhetoric, and he always remained one, taking very seriously and practicing with a sense of its sanctity the art of words. He read his sermons, every one of which was marked by high literary finish, although in no sense unduly rhetorical.

Mr. Wilson used to speak with contempt of the florid style of oratory, and even early in life his son was trained to consciousness of the absurdity of highfalutin rhetoric.

Tommy Wilson's earliest recollection impression had to do with the breaking out of the civil war. On a certain day in November, 1860, the little boy, playing on the gate before his father's house, saw two men meet on the sidewalk and heard one of them cry, "Lincoln is elected, and there'll be war!" This is the earliest recollection of Woodrow Wilson. Something in the shrill tone of the speaker struck for the first time a chord of lasting memory.

Yet Woodrow Wilson remembers little, almost nothing, of the war. Augusta was on an island around which flowed the current of the conflict. It was never occupied by Federal troops until reconstruction days. No refugees ever fed to it. The man does remember that the boy saw a troop of men in every sort of garb mounted on every sort of horse ride past the house one day on their way to join the Confederate army. They were not a terrifying or glorious spectacle. The boy cried after them in a slang exclamation of the day, "Go get your mule!"

He does remember the scarcity of the food supply that came on as the war progressed—but that there was not enough food, but it was greatly restricted in variety.

There was another war event that made its impression upon the boy—in the summer of 1865 he saw Jefferson Davis ride by under guard on his way to Fortress Monroe.

After 1865 Dr. Wilson's church was occupied temporarily by Federal soldiers. However, such hardships as the city of Augusta suffered through the war were nothing compared with those endured in most parts of the south. It is to this fact that is to be attributed the small part in Woodrow Wilson's education played by the passions of the great conflict. He was only nine years old when the war ended. He was, too, apparently a boy who somewhat tardily developed strong convictions. In short, he was a real boy while he was a boy, more concerned in the games of his crowd than in the principles of a war of which they saw little.

The Wilson boy was, his companions say, an active little fellow. It was a peculiarity that he was always running. He seemed incapable of proceeding from point to point otherwise. He can scarcely be said to have walked until he was fourteen or fifteen years old.

One of the thrilling moments of the boy's early life was the day and evening when the first street car came down the streets of Augusta. The cars were of the hobnail variety with a box for nickels up in front. By night—the electric light had not then turned night into day—the glittering red, purple and green lights carried by the cars afforded endless pleasure as they approached and receded. The boys, too, made friends with the drivers and went along with them on their trips,

being allowed sometimes to work the brakes and to turn the switches.

A little later Tom learned the delight of the saddle. Dr. Wilson kept a big black buggy horse, which Tommy used to ride—"conservatively," says his old playmate, Pleasant A. Stovall, now editor of the Savannah Press.

The stable or barn and the lot inclosed by the parsonage offices were favorite resorts for all the boys of the neighborhood, among whom Wilson was a natural leader. He and Pleasant Stovall organized a club among the lads and called it the Lightfoot club. The chief activities of this fellowship seem to have been the playing of baseball with other nines of town boys and the holding of meetings characterized by much nicety of parliamentary procedure. Every one of the little chaps knew perfectly well just what the "previous question" was; knew that only two amendments to a resolution could be offered; that these were to be voted on in reverse order, and the rest of it.

In the neighborhood of the town was a delightful suburban spot, then known merely as the "sand hills," where Wilson's uncle, James Bones, who had married Marion Woodrow, Woodrow Wilson's aunt, had a country house. Wilson and Pleasant Stovall used to ride out to the sand hills on horseback and spend a great deal of their time in the pleasant country. Mrs. Wilson frequently spent a summer in the north, and when she was away from home the boy went out to live with his aunt in the sand hills.

The daughter of the house, Jessie Woodrow Bones (she is now Mrs. A.



The Mansie, Staunton, Va., Where Woodrow Wilson Was Born.

T. H. Brower of Chicago), was a great tomboy and idolized her cousin, and the two spent many a long, happy summer day at play in the woods. Long before she knew a letter he had filled her mind and imagination with the "Leather Stocking Tales," and what he read to her or told her in the twilight on the veranda they acted out in their play next day. Casting aside all the encumbrances of civilization except that which conservative authority in the shape of the aunt and mother required, they stained their faces, arms and legs with pokeberry juice and with headresses of feathers and armed with bows and arrows crept out of the house and stationed themselves by the side of a lonely road leading from Augusta to a negro settlement in the pine woods. Here they would lie in wait until chance brought them their victims in the shape of little darkies on their way to town with bundles of lightwood on their heads. Then, with bloodcurdling warwhoops, they would dash out upon the unsuspecting prey, brandishing wooden tomahawks in frightful fashion.

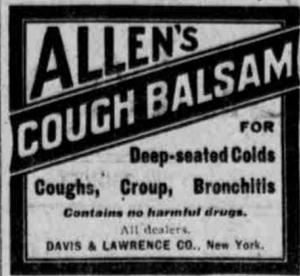
On other occasions the little girl had to enact the part of various kinds of game. Once she was supposed to be a squirrel in the top of a tree. So good a marksman was her cousin that she was hit by an arrow and came tumbling to the ground at his feet. The terrified little hunter carried her limp body into the house with a conscience torn as it probably never has been since, crying: "I am a murderer. It wasn't an accident. I killed her." Young bones are supple, and the little girl had happily sustained no injury.

Mr. Bones' house stood next to the United States arsenal, which after the close of the war was occupied by the Federal troops. Tommy and Jessie never tired of going to the guard-house, at the entrance to the arsenal grounds, to look at the soldiers and talk with them. One day, however, Jessie's mother explained to her that those friends of theirs were Yankees and had fought against the south. It was a great blow to the couple, and they often discussed the feasibility of converting the Yankees into Presbyterians, all good people being Presbyterians and all wicked ones Yankees.

Tom Wilson, for one reason or another, was not taught his letters until long past the date at which most youngsters have learned to read. It may have been that his mother, who had been strenuously taught in her young years in England and who used in later life to speak feelingly of the folly of having to learn Latin in one's sixth year, had ideas of her own about foreing the young intellect. It may have been his father, who was a man of very great positiveness and originality of opinion, was averse to having his son get his first glimpses into the world of knowledge otherwise than through himself. But, however it came about, Tom Wilson was not taught his alphabet until he was nine years old. There was a great deal of reading aloud in the family, not only his father and mother, but his two sisters, frequently reading him choice extracts from standard books. Sir Walter Scott and Dickens were made familiar to the lad in this way. He remembers still the pleasure which his father showed in "Pleekwick" reading the installments aloud, with Mrs. Wilson as the special audience, though even at the early age of eight the boy remembers that he appreciated much of the humor of the young author.

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The lad attended the best schools Augusta offered. Public schools were either nonexistent or so poor as to be worthless, so the boy was put at an institution kept by Professor Joseph T. Derry, with a habitation over the post-office. Later, Professor Derry moved his school to a building on the river bank next to some cotton warehouses. Here the boys made the warehouses their playgrounds, exploring and playing hide and seek among the cotton bales.

Joseph Rucker Lamar, now an associate justice of the supreme court of the United States, was a pupil of Professor Derry at about the same time. Joe Lamar was the son of another minister in the city, the Rev. James S. Lamar, pastor of the Christian church, who lived in a house on McIntosh street, next to the Wilsons.

Professor John T. Derry, much beloved of all his pupils, had returned home from four years in the Confederate army to teach. He is the author of several books and is now in the agricultural department of the state of Georgia. Mr. Derry says that Tom Wilson was a quiet, studious boy, and he speaks with the greatest delight of the Augusta days.

But young Wilson's real instructor during the Augusta days was his father. Long before the age at which boys are imbibing knowledge from books he was already receiving from the lips of his father an education more varied, more practical and sound than any that could otherwise have come to him.

Father and son were constant companions, but it was Sunday afternoons that the elder devoted particularly to his son's training. Then, sitting on the floor, or, rather, reclining there against an inverted chair, the gifted parson poured out into the ears of the spellbound lad all the stores of his experience, learning and thought. He was a man of wide information on the affairs of the world, a judge of good literature, a master of the queen of the sciences, theology, and withal a man of much imaginative power. Above all, the elder Wilson had a clean working mind. He had a way of recognizing facts, and the processes of his thought dealt with them in the light of reason. If the boy had learned nothing else he would have been happy indeed to have been guided from the beginning into the ways of clear, cold thinking.

And Dr. Wilson was a master of the English language. He believed that nobody had a thought until he could put it quickly and definitely into words. This he did himself, and this he taught his son to do.

On Mondays the father would almost without exception take his son out with him on some excursion in the city or neighboring country. On a Monday the two would visit the machine shops. Tom would be shown furnaces, boilers, machinery, taught to follow the release of power from the coal to the completion of its work in a finished product of steel or of cotton. He remembers to this day the impression made upon him then by the gigantic engines, the roar of furnaces or the darting up of sheets of flame. He remembers great forces presided over by sooty faced imps. In this fashion by a continual round of visits of inspection in which the sight of visible things and visible processes was the text of running lectures on the principles of nature, chemistry, physics and of the organization of human society the boy learned what he would have had great difficulty in learning from books alone.

(Continued next week)

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