

## HON. JAMES WILSON

MR. SPEAKER—Your committee appointed to draft resolutions, concerning the life and public service of the Hon. James Wilson of Traer, Tama county, Iowa, an honorable member of the House of Representatives of the 12th, 13th and 14th General Assemblies, beg leave to submit the following report:

James Wilson was born in a farm in Ayrshire, Scotland, August 16, 1835. He was the son of John and Jean Wilson. His father was a thrifty and intelligent producer of livestock, butter and milk. Believing himself fitted for larger opportunities, John Wilson brought his family to America in 1852, settling first in Connecticut. The family moved to Perry township, Tama county, in 1855, having saved money during the four years' stay in Connecticut sufficient to enter a half section of land.

James Wilson worked for his uncle, West Wilson in the summer and attended school in the winter. He hired to Stephen Klingaman to run his sawmill and sawed logs to build many of the houses and fences of north Tama in the two succeeding years. He also worked on a farm for Elijah Guernsey, of Geneseo, during the summer of 1860.

Mr. Wilson, in the days of his youth as well as throughout his life, was a great student. The late G. Jaqua, who knew Tama Jim from the time he arrived in north Tama in 1855, once wrote of him in the Star-Clipper: 'He loved to read, and few books or periodicals passed within his reach but what he eagerly devoured. Jim's employer was postmaster of the new settlement of Wolf Creek, and it is said that no paper or periodical ever lay in that office three days without his knowing all that was in it. He had a most capacious mind for knowledge. Once he went to school to us a few months, and what a student he was. When he got seated for study, so intent was he on his lesson that had an earthquake come he would not have known it. After that winter he went to Iowa college a year or two and then graduated between the plow handles. At this time he could turn an eighty rod furrow as straight as a line, could repeat at least half of Burns' poems or could make a speech on the political issues of the day, that would do credit to those of mature age.'

When the Civil War began, Mr. Wilson and his brother Peter had started farming on their own account. They had become of age—men of maturity, and recognized the claims of the government on their services. They formed a co-partnership to exist during the war, a common arrangement among brothers at that time. One would enlist and the other would remain to look after home affairs. When the war would end an equal division would be made. This arrangement was carried out. Peter, being the stronger, enlisted, first serving as private, then corporal and then sergeant. The two owned eighty acres of land between them. When they divided, a year after the war was closed, there was a half section of land, and all the hogs, cattle and horses

it would maintain, to divide. While Mr. Wilson was adding the three eighties and the stock, he was attracting the attention of his townsmen, and one day in September, 1864, at the home of Daniel Connell, the plan was formed to make Mr. Wilson a member of the Board of Supervisors, and it was successful. He was elected in October, serving a term of 1865-66.

Mr. Wilson was elected to the 12th, 13th and 14th General Assemblies as a member from Tama county, where he served with distinction and honor to himself and his country. In passing, it is interesting to note that during Mr. Wilson's terms in the General Assemblies, he acquired the appellation of "Tama Jim" to distinguish him from another James Wilson who was also a member at that time, and it was by that title that he was best known to all who loved and honored him. He was unanimously elected speaker of the 14th General Assembly. He was elected to the forty-third and the forty-fourth congresses and took an active part in securing legislation reducing the cost of transportation of Iowa produces eastward and in the regulation of Interstate Commerce. He was considered an authority on Parliamentary Law during his two terms in Congress.

At the expiration of his term of service, Mr. Wilson returned to his farm near Traer, where his family had continued to reside. He was appointed a member of the State Railroad Commission by Governor Sherman in 1882, and served eleven months in that capacity. Many important conclusions were reached during that period.

Mr. Wilson enjoyed the distinction of being the first farmer to go to Congress from Iowa.

After his service in Congress, Mr. Wilson took up agricultural writing. Later he became a regent of the Iowa State University and in 1891 he was elected to the chair of practical agriculture in the Iowa State College of Agriculture at Ames and director of the state experiment station. He then became the greatest instrumentality for building up agriculture pursuits that Iowa ever had.

It was in February, 1897, that he received word of his appointment by President McKinley to the cabinet portfolio of secretary of agriculture, taking up the duties of that office in March of that year.

When Mr. Wilson took office, the agricultural development of the country was already remarkable, but in the years during which he was at the helm of its interests, so far as the federal government was concerned, this development was increased far beyond the boundaries of natural promise which mere land and work afforded.

Mr. Wilson obtained on the merits of one achievement after another, until it became a universal belief among the farmers that the department of agriculture was working with a single minded purpose for their benefits.

In the management of the department of agriculture, he began with two cardinal rules; first, to find the best markets for the products of the farm; second, to induce and teach the farmers to raise the very best examples of the articles that the markets wanted.

Through his efforts and ability, the portfolio of the secretary of agriculture developed from one of minor consideration to one of the most important in the cabinet.

He was especially active in seeking new plants for this country and in plant improvement. He is credited with re-establishing the Morgan breed of horses, obtaining a crop of 60,000,000 bushels of African durum wheat, the introduction of new varieties of rice for the south, the introduction of new varieties of alfalfa from Arabia, Sahara, Chili, Turkestan and Peru, as well as new fruits and vegetables.

He saw the agricultural balance of trade increase from \$234,000,000. to \$425,000,000.

Mr. Wilson was head of the department of agriculture for sixteen years. His long service in the cabinet constituted an unparalleled record. He served under three presidents, McKinley, Roosevelt and Taft.

Mr. Wilson retired from office on the 4th of March, 1913, when Woodrow Wilson replaced Mr. Taft as President. On March 6, on the eve of his departure from Washington, 2500 employes of the department of agriculture tendered Tama Jim a great reception. For two hours he stood in the National Coliseum and received the good wishes of his employes, many of whom had worked under him throughout the sixteen years. In the presence of Secretary of State Bryan and Secretary of Agriculture Houston, they presented him with a life size bronze bust of himself, a replica of which was placed in the department. The bronze bust is now the property of Traer and is in the public library there.

A great homecoming for Secretary Wilson was arranged on his return to Iowa and was held at Ames. There was a big reception, parade and banquet. The banquet was given in the college gymnasium. Addresses were delivered by Mr. Wilson, Governor Clarke and others. It is estimated that the home folks who took part in this reception, numbered more than 4000 people. Tama Jim then returned to Traer with the intention of spending most of the remainder of his life among his children, relatives and old friends, but in June he accepted the appointment of Governor Clarke to be one of a commission of Iowa to go to Europe to study agricultural conditions of interest and profit to the Iowa farmer. He was accompanied on this trip by Henry Wallace, of Wallace's Farmer, his life long friend. They spent most of the time in the British Isles and Mr. Wilson visited his native land for the first time. He was abroad about two months.

Tama Jim was active in public service until the last two years of his life when health and strength failed.

During his cabinet service and later he was honored by several colleges and universities by being awarded the honorary degree of L. L. D. Among the schools to so honor him were the University of Wisconsin, University of Missouri, Cornell College and McGill university. In all, he received L. L. D's from eighteen American universities. He also was given L. L. D. by the university of Edinburgh. Andrew Carnegie, Rufus Choats and Mr. Wilson are the only Americans thus recognized by the Edinburgh university. Two humorists, Mark Twain and the actor, Joe Jefferson, were intimate friends of Mr. Wilson.

Throughout all his busy public career, Tama Jim never lost interest in affairs at home. He loved his home community. He was always associated with many Traer activities. He held membership in the Tranquillity church and was a faithful attendant when at home. Years ago when Traer had a fair, he was active in the management. He was president of the association several years. For many years, he was president of the First National Bank, including the years he spent in the cabinet in Washington.

Tama Jim was an able platform speaker and was continually in demand for addresses. He addressed conventions of associations of various kinds and stumped the country for Republican candidates during presidential and state campaigns. He was shrewd in politics. He could travel over Iowa and forecast the election results the most accurately of any man we ever knew. For thirty years it was his lot to close the campaign by a speech in Traer the night before election. In this practice honors were bestowed on both sides. He felt honored by being invited to speak, his friends felt honored in being able to hear him. He deeply appreciated the courtesy.

Mr. Wilson was married on May 7, 1863, to Miss Esther Wilbur, of Buckingham. Six children were born to the couple all of whom were living at the time of his death. They were as follows: Ward and Peter, who occupied the home farm three miles west of Traer; James W., of Brookings, S. D., a professor in the South Dakota Agricultural College; Miss Flora, Washington, D. C.; Jasper and Wright, living near Traer.

The five sons and Sherd Wilson, a nephew, served as pall bearers, as was the wish of Mr. Wilson. Burial was in the Buckingham cemetery, Tama county.

*Whereas*, The Honorable James Wilson, was called from this life, August 26, 1920, therefore,

*Be it Resolved*, That the House of Representatives has heard with deep sorrow and regret of his death and that it recognizes the high character of his service to his state and nation and in his death, the state and nation has lost a worthy and noble citizen, and,

*Be It Resolved Further*, That these resolutions be spread upon the journal, that engrossed copies of the same be sent to the members of his family.

F. W. INGERSOLL,  
 F. B. GILBERT,  
 JAMES S. FRANCIS,  
*Committee.*

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HON. JAMES WILSON

*Be It Resolved*, That in the passing of Honorable James Wilson, late of Tama county, the state has lost one of its most illustrious citizens. His service as a member of this House in the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth General Assemblies, and his entire public career culminating in sixteen years' service as secretary of agriculture in the cabinets of Presidents McKinley, Roosevelt and Taft, mark him as a man of unusual intellectual power, and of the highest ideals of public service. His deeds reflect honor upon his name, and Iowa cherishes his memory among the best beloved of her sons.

F. W. INGERSOLL.

Adopted March 23, 1921.

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HON. CHARLES E. BOIES

Charles E. Boies was born on a farm in Boone county, Illinois, January 15, 1859, and at the age of fourteen came with the family to Iowa, where he settled on a farm.

January 26, 1880, he was united in marriage to Miss Clara I. Miller, with whom he lived in happy companionship for over forty years. Mr. Boies remained a resident of Buchanan county until the time of his death. He was engaged in farming and stock raising all the time of his mature manhood.

Since boyhood Mr. Boies was an active member of the Methodist Episcopal church, which he served in an official capacity for many years. He was a member of the official board at the time of his death. He was not a member in name only, but a sincere Christian.

Mr. Boies is survived by his widow and two daughters, Mrs. E. M. Wilcox, and Miss Inez M. Boies. His only son, Corporal Burr Boies, died in France October 13, 1918. Mr. Boies also is survived by two brothers, Horace L. of Quasqueton, and Congressman Wm. D. Boies, of Sheldon.

Mr. Boies was a member of the Independence Lodge No. 87, A. F. and A. M., Declaration chapter O. E. S., Wapsi camp, M. W. A., and the Sons of the American Revolution. During his lifetime he was