The PALIMPSEST

Frank Wilson receives award for his work

MEMORIES OF A PROMOTER

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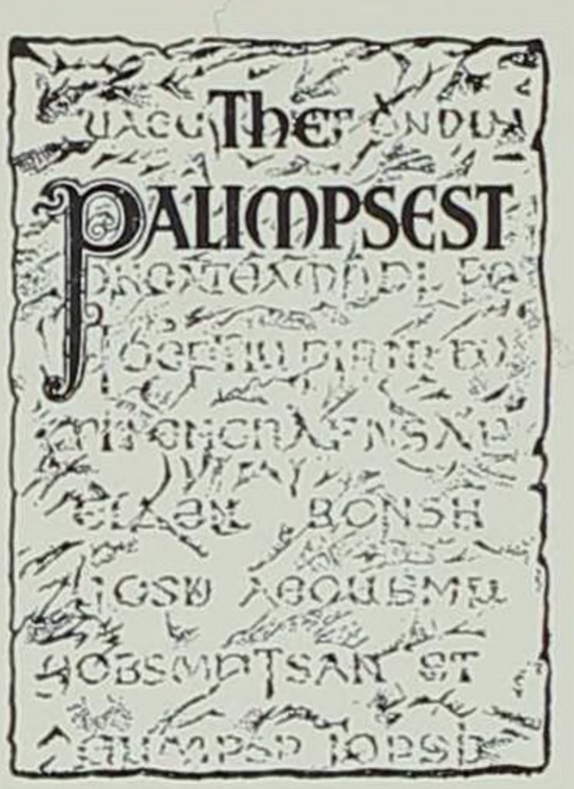

The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

Cover

Front — Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer presents Frank Wilson (left) with a gold medal in 1952 for his work as director of information for the Census Bureau.

Back — Inside: Four posters used in the First, Second, Fourth, and Victory Liberty Loan drives. From Labert St. Clair, *The Story of the Liberty Loans* (Washington, D. C., 1919).

Authors

Frank R. Wilson (see pages 348-352).

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THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

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Boyhood on the Farm

In February, 1838, Robert Wilson and his wife crossed the frozen Mississippi and settled one mile east of where Columbus City was later built. Wapello, which was to become the county seat of Louisa County, lay to the south, and Columbus Junction was later established to the north. Straggling Sauk and Fox Indians still camped about his cabin. Martin Van Buren was the President of the United States.

Robert Wilson's westward trek began in Belfast, Ireland, in 1821 when he, with two brothers, a baby sister, and parents, boarded a sailing vessel for America. The vessel ran into such violent storms that its journey to St. Andrews, New Brunswick, required nearly two months. Unable to get a boat at St. Andrews, they boarded a coast-wise vessel at Eastport, Maine, only to be delayed by a dense fog in Penobscot Bay. During another violent storm on the way down the coast the skipper was tied to the mast to keep him from blowing overboard.

The long journey across the sea had so weakened Robert's mother that she died in Philadelphia. The distraught family was assisted by Quakers, who buried the mother and helped them obtain a one-horse wagon in which they journeyed onward to Wheeling, West Virginia, where they boarded a steamboat for Rising Sun, Indiana. Soon they joined relatives in Ripley County.

Robert's father had been a skilled builder of linen mill equipment in Belfast, and he and Robert worked in cotton mills in Kentucky for several years. In 1837, Robert married Nancy McCray at Connersville, Indiana, and moved to Iowa.

Robert Wilson was a man of wide interests. He became a successful farmer in Louisa County, amassing a fair-sized fortune for those days. He had the largest library in the county, was the first to have a top buggy and to import ornamental evergreens. More important, he invented a tubular stove for which he secured a patent. His ventures were not always successful, however. When N. W. Burris laid plans to build Burris City on the banks of the Mississippi where the "Great Air Line Railway" was to cross, he asked Robert Wilson to help him finance it. Wilson invested $20,000 but lost his money when most of the city was washed away by a rampaging river and the railroad could not get its financing.

Robert Wilson died in his late fifties leaving three sons — John Byron Wilson, founder of the

Wapello *Republican*; Alonzo Wilson, who homesteaded in Kossuth County before moving to Gosper County, Nebraska, where he died; and Milton Robert Wilson, who, after marrying Anna Roth in Columbus Junction, drove for seventeen days in a three-horse wagon to Woodbury County. Mrs. Wilson, who had been a member of a Pennsylvania Dutch group, went to Sioux City by rail later. The eighty acres they had purchased sight unseen were found to be worthless, and to secure a better farm they went into debt. A Sioux City lumber dealer named L. C. Sanborn loaned Wilson money to build a house. Twice grasshoppers wiped out Wilson's crops, but Sanborn was always ready with a helping hand.

Milton Robert Wilson retired to Sioux City in his fifties and died at the age of 79. Mrs. Wilson lived to be 86. They had three sons — George Byron Wilson, who, with his six sons and daughters, farmed more than a thousand acres of land east of Sioux City in Woodbury County; Chester H. Wilson, who is retired after 42 years of service in the Sioux City post office; and Frank Robert Wilson, the subject of this sketch, of Washington, D. C.

Youngest of three brothers, and having no sisters, I early became my mother's helper. I learned to cook and keep house, even to bake bread when my mother was back in eastern Iowa visiting her relatives. My father was fond of music. He

bought an organ and sent me to a neighbor woman to take lessons. Later, when the organist at our schoolhouse church died, I was offered the position since I was the only one who could play. I accepted on condition that I be permitted to select the numbers and practice week-days.

I have many memories of pleasant and tragic events in the neighborhood. An epidemic of diphtheria swept the community. The Buckner family lost four children within two weeks — all schoolmates of mine. I remember their father riding horseback through a snowstorm to borrow money for the funeral expenses from my father.

The hazards of winter were many. To get through snowdrifts on our mile-long walk to school we used stilts. Nearly frozen when we arrived, we spent the first two hours of the session around the pot-bellied stove. On the day of the great blizzard of 1888, I was kept at home, but my brothers trudged to school. The storm got so heavy that my father bundled up and tried to bring the cattle home. The animals refused to leave the straw-stack haven, and father came home loaded only with icicles. My two brothers did not come home that night. We thought they must have stayed overnight in the schoolhouse, but John Diediker, who lived near the school, took all twenty of the pupils home and bedded them down on the floor.

Summer had more pleasant aspects, particularly

when the neighbors joined forces to work on the roads to pay their road taxes and to help each other with threshing. One day father sent us boys to replace the cap sheaves on the oat shocks after a heavy windstorm. I picked up a stray bundle which concealed a big rattlesnake that struck at me and hit the sheaf. He was soon for the ages. And I was barefooted.

My father's Scotch thrift came in good stead one year when we had a severe drought which kept the ears of corn from fully maturing. He rigged up a four-wheeled device with blades extending from both sides and with a seat that would hold two. This device was horse drawn, and two of us sat on top to grab the stalks and drop them at the proper place for shocking. We cut up 110 acres. My father then had the wheels of a wagon reduced to half-size, so that during the winter we could tip the shocks onto the wagon. Most of our neighbors failed to take these precautions, and soon they were asking father to buy their cattle. We accumulated nearly 150, and I will never forget that winter's job of hauling fodder to a hungry herd. Father had us scatter the fodder on a hill of lifeless clay, and for years that hill continuously wore a cloth of magnificent blue grass. Prairie chickens came many miles to pick up the stray kernels. My father would permit neither us nor the neighbors to kill them.

My mother once told me that in the early days

of struggle on the farm she used to help my father plant the potatoes. Since there was no one at home to take care of three baby boys, she took blankets to the field, spread them in furrows, and put the youngsters to sleep.

Through our farm ran a creek with the unique name of "Big Whiskey." The story was that the man who named the creek found a cask of whiskey which had been left on the bank by Indians. We dammed the creek for swimming, but often a heavy rainstorm broke the dam. We did not realize then that this muddy water was laden with rich soil headed for the delta. Last year, when I traveled by the rice lands in Louisiana, I thought of our contribution.

Probably the most exciting experience I had as a child was a runaway of a three-horse team while I was walking barefoot behind the harrow. Frightened by something — I will never know what — they ran about half a mile before they stopped at a fence, ending a very dangerous adventure.

In the early days an abundance of blue joint hay, as tall as a man, grew in many valleys. Continued cutting killed it out, and the growth of wild hay declined. My father was the first in the neighborhood to substitute timothy, clover, and later alfalfa.

Two national events of that day remain vividly in my memory. One day, while we three boys

were working in the field, father came riding out to tell us some startling news that he had just learned at the country post office. It was the sinking of the *Maine* in Havana harbor.

Another event that filled the whole neighborhood with excitement was the prize fight between Sullivan and Corbett in New Orleans. My father, a very religious man, was opposed to prize fighting, but when the paper came I sneaked a look over his shoulder. He was so absorbed he did not notice my great interest. The Sioux City Fire Department named its two fastest horses Sullivan and Corbett, and for several successive years this team won the state championship of the fire-horse races at the annual Firemen's Tournament.

Northwest Iowa at that time had a preponderance of GAR's who dominated the politics; the whole area had a Republican outlook. When my father was made township chairman of the Republican campaign, I went with him all over the township to nail up posters of William McKinley. My father drove us to Sioux City when McKinley and William Jennings Bryan made campaign speeches to great audiences. By that time my father was lending some money, and he became concerned over Bryan's 16 to 1 issue. One day I went with him to Sioux City to have a printer make up notes containing the words: "Payable in Gold Coin of the United States." Throughout this period the farms in northwest Iowa were

getting larger as machinery was introduced, and there was a constant flow of the less successful farmers to Nebraska and Kansas.

For many young people, especially those whose older brothers would take over the operation of the land, the future was uncertain. I wanted to go to high school, and the nearest one was at Sioux City, ten miles away. My father got me a bicycle, and I rode the twenty miles each day. Once my bicycle broke down halfway home, and the exposure gave me pneumonia, which made it necessary for me to remain home another year. My father told M. D. Nicol, an old friend who was a life insurance agent in Sioux City, about my problem. Nicol had one son younger than I. They lived in a fine home and kept a horse, a carriage, and a cow. He offered to make me a member of the family if I would take care of his chores, and thus I started high school again. Although I had been admitted conditionally, I never had to take an examination during the four years. For my last two years in high school I got a job at a boarding house making beds and waiting on tables. I became editor of the high school paper, manager of the football and baseball teams, and played left tackle. One day I published a poem I had written on the death of President McKinley. Fred Beckman of the Sioux City *Journal* staff saw it and asked me to come to see him. I began to write high school news for the *Journal*. I was

a member of the Sioux City debating trio that won the state championship from Council Bluffs.

After graduating second in a class of 88 students, I got a cub reporter's job on the *Journal* at $8 a week. One of my first assignments was to collaborate with Jay Darling (who later became one of the great cartoonists of the nation, using the signature "Ding"). He drew caricatures of prominent citizens, and I wrote the texts.

Subsequently Fred Beckman was made editor of the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil* and asked me to go with him at $12 a week; later this was raised to $15. On the staff of the *Nonpareil* was a brilliant young man, George Fitch, who wrote a column entitled "Frolics of the Types." He was the George Fitch who later wrote the famous Siwash stories and contributed frequently to *Collier's* and other publications. Beckman later became editor-in-chief of the Des Moines *Register* and was a member of the School of Journalism at the State Agricultural College at Ames. Now he owns the Knoxville *Journal* which, since his retirement, his son manages.

After a year on the *Nonpareil,* I had saved $90, enough to enter the University if I worked my way. I went to Iowa City and lined up some jobs, including the writing of the University news for the Iowa City *Republican.* I also wrote articles for Omaha and Sioux City newspapers and a few for the Chicago *Tribune.* At the Iowa City depot

I was met by a committee from the Beta Theta Pi fraternity, and I joined under the sponsorship of Darling and Fitch, who had been fraternity mates at Beloit College. By this time, 1906, Darling was the cartoonist for the Des Moines *Register*, and by 1917 his cartoons were being widely syndicated through the New York *Herald Tribune*.

The *Daily Iowan* then was privately owned. Its editor — Roy A. Cook of Independence — had angered the University football team, and a movement was started to publish a competing paper. During my first year I was made editor of the new paper, *The Old Gold*. Cook then agreed to sell, and I became editor of the *Daily Iowan* at $25 a month. I also earned $1.50 a week singing tenor at the First Presbyterian Church. Although I had been elected business manager of the *Junior Annual*, I decided to withdraw from the University because I was neglecting the classroom for newspaper work, which I liked better. About that time John W. Carey, city editor of the Sioux City *Journal*, telephoned me that George D. Perkins, owner and editor of the *Journal*, was about to give political battle to Governor Cummins. Offered a position, I returned to the *Journal*. The following year I was married to Philena Yutzy, whom I had known through my high school days, and who had come back to Sioux City after attending the University of Wisconsin for a year.

FRANK R. WILSON

The Great Sioux City Boom

As a young boy, I remember the great Sioux City boom in the 1890's. These were the days of the annual Corn Palaces, which stirred the curiosity of the country. Every fall for five years these elaborate architectural structures were erected, covered inside and out with all the patterns that artists could produce with corn and stalks. Arches with millions of gaslights illuminated the streets at night, and people came from all over the nation to see the displays. President Grover Cleveland came from Washington to take part in this harvest festival. Special trains brought great throngs from hundreds of miles away, and for a few days the population of the city was doubled.

Many people believed that Sioux City was destined to become a very important commercial center. A group of Boston capitalists advanced millions to local promoters to develop enterprises that would make Sioux City unique among cities. One project was the construction of an elevated steel railroad for two miles on Third Street and, after crossing the Floyd River, three more miles on the surface to Morningside, then a booming suburb. Only recently has this structure been re-

moved. A genuine cable car line — the second such system in the world — was built the entire length of Jackson Street. Another big project was a five-mile railroad extending east of Sioux City, with cars powered by storage batteries. There are still remnants of fantastic excavations and gradings for subdivisions that were never built. A pontoon bridge crossed the Missouri River to Covington. Steamboats were carrying traffic up and down the river. Cowboys came from as far away as the Black Hills for recreation, and annually they engaged in a horse race from Cody in western Nebraska to Sioux City. Big prizes went to the winners. Like all pioneer cities, Sioux City had its districts of vice, and gambling houses ran free. Many millions of dollars were lost when the crash of 1893 came, and it took years for the city to recover its momentum. The trans-continental railroad which eastern investors thought was a certainty, did not come through Sioux City.

I had not been on the *Journal* very long when the owners of the Clover Leaf League of Newspapers (Des Moines *News*, Omaha *News*, Minneapolis *News*, St. Paul *News*) approached me to join them in establishing a third newspaper in Sioux City to be called the Sioux City *Daily News*. The group had fine backing, its principal stockholder being a son-in-law of the owner of the Scripps Newspaper chain. They were owners of the Newspaper Enterprise Association which,

from Cleveland, Ohio, distributes a picture and feature service. I accepted and became city editor. Their managing editor was Oliver Newman, a former Des Moines newspaper man, and they brought a well-known advertising man, Hal Fink, from Chicago. Six months later they transferred Oliver Newman to St. Joseph, Missouri, where they started a new paper. I became managing editor of the *News*. A year later they transferred Hal Fink back to Chicago and made me general manager. After about three years the Clover Leaf executives decided that Sioux City was not big enough to support a third newspaper in competition with two already established papers. I felt otherwise. John McHugh, then president of the First National Bank, gave me a loan of $35,000 to purchase the plant. This was the same John McHugh who later became president of the Chase National Bank of New York City and who aided me in my motion picture financing after I had located in New York.

In a few years I increased the circulation of the *News* from 4,500 to over 16,000 and added a Sunday edition. One night I was awakened with a message that the plant was on fire. The destruction was almost complete, with the exception of the composing room machinery. Somehow I was able to acquire a new three-deck printing press and get a new location, but in the interim the *Journal* accommodated me by permitting me to

print on one of their presses. John W. Carey, formerly city editor of the *Journal*, joined me.

When Woodrow Wilson became a candidate for the presidential nomination, my paper supported him vigorously. Wilson carried northwest Iowa, and a Democratic congressman was elected. The afternoon that caucuses were to be held for the selection of delegates for the state Democratic convention at Burlington, I learned that at a low-priced hotel a representative of the Champ Clark faction was paying 50 cents a head to enlist men to attend the caucus that night and vote for Clark delegates. Carey went with me to the hotel, and we sold our votes at 50 cents apiece. I got the floor and exposed it that night in a caucus at the courthouse. The bitter contest resulted in Woodbury County sending two delegations to Burlington. But the Champ Clark faction was in control, and our delegation lost out. Fortunately, I had made a printed record of the purchase of votes and exposed it with a front-page story, preserving copies for later use. Julius Kerberg of O'Brien County was one of the delegates selected at Burlington to represent Iowa at the Baltimore national convention where the contest was between Champ Clark and Woodrow Wilson. Mr. Kerberg was the first member of the Iowa delegation to switch his vote from Clark to Wilson at Baltimore. He became advertising manager of the *Daily News* and joined me in Sioux City.

Upon the election of Woodrow Wilson as President, I became a candidate for the Sioux City postmastership. The state Democratic organization, including Judge Martin Wade of Iowa City, state chairman, had pledged its support to Ed Kirby, whom I had accused of being the master mind behind the vote buying. I took copies of this previous newspaper exposure to Washington and showed it to Postmaster General Burleson. Mr. Burleson became friendly to my cause when he saw the evidence, and a bitter political fight continued for several weeks. Finally Burleson went personally to the White House and showed President Wilson my evidences of fraud. The President advised Burleson that the fight had grown too bitter for the appointment of either Mr. Kirby or me, and I was given the option of suggesting a substitute. I suggested Julius Kerberg. In spite of the opposition of the entire state organization, he was appointed and served six years.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the price of white paper rose sharply, and it became obvious that one or more of the newspapers in Sioux City would have to go. The publishers of the two older papers jointly notified the three biggest advertisers that, beginning the following month, their display rates would be 75 cents an inch if they used two papers, but if they used three papers, their rates would be $1 an inch. I

lost the accounts of the two largest advertisers — department stores — on the same day. Such a conspiracy could not operate under modern laws.

Frank Pelletier, owner of the third large department store, also owned the biggest department store in Topeka, Kansas. He asked me to go with him to Topeka and talk to Arthur Capper, who was then Governor of Kansas and the owner of the Capper Publications. Governor Capper told me to go back and try to buy up the obligations of the *Daily News* and draw on him for the money. One of the creditors, embittered by the post office fight, refused to accept settlement, and it became necessary to put the plant into receivership at which time Governor Capper bought it. I was to continue managing the paper and would receive 25 per cent of the equity. Capper then brought his advertising staff to Sioux City for a meeting, and while he was there the two Sioux City newspapers convinced him that continuation of the battle would mean insolvency for all. They bought him out.

FRANK R. WILSON

U. S. Treasury Campaigns

The Sunday after the demise of the *Daily News* I read that the Federal Farm Loan Board would meet with Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo on Wednesday to organize the system. Herbert Quick, a former mayor of Sioux City and a native of Mason City, had been appointed a member of the board by President Wilson. Since leaving Sioux City, he had edited *La Follette's Weekly* and several other farm papers and was at that time associate editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* and editor of the *Country Gentleman*.

I was able to scrape up enough money to buy a round-trip ticket to Washington and New York. As soon as I reached Washington I saw Herbert Quick and asked him if they could use me to promote the Federal Farm Loan system. It was the middle of July, 1916, and President Woodrow Wilson was up for re-election that November. They had only three months in which to get the story of the Farm Loan Act to the six million farmers in the nation. Quick said that he would introduce me to Secretary McAdoo if I could present a promotion plan. He told me to be in the waiting room of McAdoo's office the next day,

and he would ask the Secretary if he would see me. Sure enough, a messenger announced me. I nearly caved in as I entered.

The Federal Farm Loan Campaign

A country boy trying to sell an idea to a member of the cabinet has to have the pressure of desperation. I suggested a program of public hearings to be conducted by the Secretary of the Treasury and the board in the state capitals. Farm organizations would be invited and the new system would be explained. Questions and answers were to be recorded to show what farmers wanted to know.

At the end of my suggestions, Mr. McAdoo asked me to retire while they considered it. That night Quick gave me the word that McAdoo was pleased and that I could go to work the next morning. I wired my wife the news and sold my return ticket to Sioux City.

I will never forget the meeting with Secretary McAdoo on that hot day. He had on a white suit, and when he stood up to shake hands with me, he seemed a mile high. I was to start at $75 a week. McAdoo wanted me to precede the board and arrange these hearings — one day to a state.

I spent a week writing a series of interviews for the five members of the board — all in a different angle. Then I was on my way to Augusta, Maine. The Governor, a Republican, gave me the use of

the senate chamber. The Maine state chamber of commerce took charge of inviting all farm organizations and, in addition, inaugurated a campaign for the location of a federal land bank in Maine. Eight days later the board came along and hearings started. I kept just about eight days ahead of them.

When I got to San Francisco, I discovered that the chamber of commerce was the headquarters for a great antilabor movement. I smelled political difficulty if we did business with them. So I sent a telegram to Herbert Quick, who was attending the hearing at Helena, Montana. My wire suggested that we move the hearing over to the State Agricultural College at Berkeley, California. Quick showed the telegram to McAdoo, whose response was, "Tell that kid to go ahead and make the change."

I proceeded eastward to Columbus, Ohio, where I received a telegram from McAdoo asking me to ride to Washington with the board in its private car. I killed the waiting time by going around the state visiting farm publications.

McAdoo was very happy with the results of the tour and told me that he would like to have me to help him on some other publicity problems. As soon as we got back to Washington we selected three hundred of the questions most often asked by farmers. We rushed out six million pamphlets containing the questions and answers and put

them in the hands of six million farmers before November.

That was the year when the nation went to bed on election night thinking that Charles Evans Hughes had been elected President, only to learn upon waking that a very close vote in California had given that state to Wilson, thus assuring his re-election.

The Liberty Loan Campaigns

I was still with the Federal Farm Loan Board when the United States entered the first World War. I had thirty days of leave coming, and I volunteered that time to Secretary McAdoo. He had had requests from all over the United States to make speeches. I prepared speech material designed to arouse the public to co-operation. For the United Press Association, I wrote a series of six releases on the costs of all previous American wars: how the money was raised, and how the debt was met. The head of the United Press in Washington at that time was Robert Bender, son of Victor Bender, who owned the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil* when I worked there. Robert was then a boy in school. The United Press distributed six articles over my signature to their three thousand newspapers. Then McAdoo asked the Farm Loan Board to lend me to him so that I could go ahead of his tour and make arrangements for his appearances.

At the time war was declared there were only 300,000 owners of government securities in the United States, and most of these were banks, life insurance companies, other financial institutions, and wealthy persons. Now it was obvious that in order to raise these unprecedentedly huge sums of money the co-operation of millions of people was necessary. The question before Congress was whether a greater part of the cost of the war should be met by taxation or bonds. McAdoo maintained that the major portion should come from bonds. He held that it would be unwise, if not impossible, to inflict such a heavy tax burden on a single generation. It was decided, as an initial step, to authorize the issuance of five billion dollars in bonds, of which three billions could be used in loans to our allies. President Wilson approved this plan on April 24, 1917, and a few days later Secretary McAdoo offered for subscription $2,000,000,000 of Liberty Bonds to bear 3½ per cent interest.

On the first day, subscriptions were at the rate of $330,166 a minute. Sales on the second day jumped to $480,508 a minute. In the First loan $3,035,226,850 was subscribed, of which $2,000,000,000 was accepted by the government. More than four million persons bought bonds, and 99 per cent of these subscriptions were for denominations of from $50 to $10,000. Twenty-one each bought $5,000,000.

Congress increased the interest rate to 4 per cent for the Second loan, which began on October 1, 1917, the offering being for $3,000,000,000. McAdoo made a tour of the country, and the Second loan produced $4,617,532,000, of which $3,800,000,000 was used. Mounting war costs made it obvious that we had to use every means possible to reach all the people in the country. Secretary McAdoo made me director of publicity for the Third, Fourth, and Fifth loans.

Through the twelve Federal Reserve Banks, local organizations were completed in practically every community. More than one million volunteers were recruited to do solicitation. The motion picture industry, under the leadership of Adolph Zukor, threw its power behind the campaign, and 35 of the leading motion picture stars produced 35 one- and two-reel subjects, which we showed in 17,000 theaters. They included such stars as Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin, D. W. Griffith, and many others. Production cost was borne by the industry. We paid only for the prints.

The great advertising industry assigned its ablest copywriters to compose a series of advertisements — mostly full-page displays — which were put into mat form and distributed to all newspapers. Local firms and individuals purchased newspaper space for these advertisements. The paid space for the Fourth loan exceeded

75,000 pages. One of these advertisements was in the handwriting of President Woodrow Wilson. He did this at our request.

Most of the big stars of the theater and motion pictures appeared before audiences to arouse enthusiasm. When Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Chaplin were in Washington one day, I got word from our New York office that a $5,000,000 subscription was available. In order to make this subscription spectacular, I took Fairbanks down to the Postmaster General and got "First Class Mail" stamped on his forehead. The only mail air route in those days was between Washington and New York. I handed him up to the pilot as the cameras ground, and he gave a one-man parade on Fifth Avenue before thousands of spectators. When he came back to Washington he ate a sandwich lunch at a counter, and then I started to take him to McAdoo's office. He asked me to point out the Secretary's window. Then he mounted the eight-foot iron fence and went up the outside of the building, knocked on McAdoo's window, and got in.

Every device known to publicity was used in the Liberty Loan campaigns. The greatest artists, including Charles Dana Gibson and Howard Chandler Christy, contributed freely to make posters for public display. Hundreds of artists responded, but we could use only seven or eight posters for each loan. These were selected by a

jury, of which Mrs. McAdoo was a member.

I asked Secretary of War Newton Baker to have five shiploads of captured German artillery sent from Europe. These pieces were awarded to communities when they reached their quotas. Many are still standing in public parks. German cannons were melted down to make badges, which millions of people wore. Five captured German submarines were brought across the ocean and inspected by millions in coastal ports. Navy Secretary Daniels assigned me a boat to take the news cameramen 400 miles out in the Atlantic to get shots of these captured submarines.

More than a hundred United States soldiers, who had seen service with General Pershing, and fifty of the famous French "Blue Devils" were brought over for speaking tours and parades. President Wilson and all members of the cabinet participated in the speaking campaigns. A sample sermon, prepared for us by a brilliant newspaperman, Homer Joseph Dodge, was distributed to ministers, 114,000 of whom delivered Liberty Loan sermons. An honor flag was designed and sent to each city for display when it had attained its quota. Exhibit trains carrying instruments of warfare were sent throughout the United States for public inspection. Bond sellers on these trains did a land office business.

President Wilson attended the vaudeville show at Keith's Theater in Washington once a week.

The four-minute speech given in the theaters throughout the nation originated at this theater. President Wilson made a subscription of $50, and then we sent out a challenge to "match the President." This single stunt produced over $100,000,000.

A woman's committee was set up with well-known representatives from all areas. The women were assigned a quota. The contributions they turned in amounted to more than $1,000,000,000. In the Fourth loan the women of Pennsylvania were credited with one-third of the entire state quota of $226,000,000. The national committee chairman for this campaign for the women was Mrs. William McAdoo, daughter of the President.

The quota for the Third Liberty Loan was $3,000,000,000, and it brought $4,176,516,850 from 18,308,325 subscriptions. We had succeeded in getting a wider distribution. The Fourth Liberty Loan, beginning October 19, 1918, was the most successful drive during the war, despite the fact that an epidemic of influenza was sweeping the country. Because many public meetings were canceled, it became necessary to resort to more personal solicitation. I wrote a memo to Secretary McAdoo asking him if he would set an example by joining the solicitors the following Sunday. I got back a note saying, "F.R.W., Yes I'll do this. W.G.M."

On that Sunday the leaders of the Washington campaign met at the McAdoo home at two o'clock. When I went in, Mrs. McAdoo said, "Mr. Wilson, you are always making Mack do the strangest things." There was a crowd of several hundred in the street and a flock of newsreel crews. I had laid out a route including a visit to a Negro woman in a humble cottage, a boarding house where a dozen government workers lived, and a variety of other calls that would make human interest. The colored widow had already taken a $50 subscription, and all other calls produced results. At the end of the prepared route McAdoo said, "Frank, let's go and get some real money." Our first call was on Bernard M. Baruch, chairman of the War Industries Board. He took $1,000,000. Next Eugene Meyer, who was director of the War Finance Corporation, took $500,000. He is now publisher and owner of the Washington *Post and Times-Herald*. On the way to our next call we passed a carriage containing Ray Baker, director of the Mint. McAdoo hailed him and got $1,000. We got $10,000 from Eleanor Patterson, one of the owners of the Chicago *Tribune*; another $100,000 from J. L. Replogle.

Then we went to the White House to see the President, and I waited in the Green Room while McAdoo talked to the President, who was eating dinner. We wanted the President to make another subscription to stimulate the national sale.

He soon came down and subscribed for $10,000 while the cameras clicked. He had previously subscribed for $10,000. After signing the agreement he handed me the pen, but in all the excitement it got away from me. The Fourth Liberty Loan had 22,777,680 individual subscribers making commitments of $6,992,927,100.

As the loans progressed state competition became sharper. In the Fourth loan, Iowa reported its quota fully subscribed at the end of four days. We announced this, and Oregon contested the claim. The Treasury Department was never able to decide which state was first, so we sent congratulatory telegrams to both.

Iowa's record in the whole series of loans was excellent. I do not have the dollar subscriptions for each state in the First loan, but in the Second loan Iowa's contribution was $82,922,750; Third loan, $117,211,450; Fourth loan, $157,870,250; and in the Victory Liberty Loan, $111,787,450. The total subscriptions for the Victory Liberty Loan amounted to $5,249,908,300. This was a remarkable performance in view of the fact that even when the loan started, the war was over. Stripped bare of their wonderful patriotic values and considered solely from a financial viewpoint the Liberty Loan campaigns stand without parallel in history. In the five loans, subscriptions amounted to $23,972,111,400 and $21,477,355,-840 was accepted.

I will never forget an interesting incident at the White House. Fairbanks, Chaplin, Pickford, and two or three other important stars had asked if they could meet President Wilson. The President was probably the busiest man in the world, but his secretary, Joseph Tumulty, arranged the meeting. Mary Pickford's mother was with her. The President shook hands with all of them with his usual dignity. The picture stars, ordinarily voluble, seemed almost speechless in the presence of the President. As they left, the President said, "I wish you all success in your undertakings." Nobody knew what to say, but Mary's mother came to the rescue. She said, "We wish you the same, Mr. President." The man who was carrying the greatest responsibility in the world said, "Thank you very much" and said it as if he meant it.

When the Victory Liberty Loan started on April 22, 1919, the war was over, and President Wilson was already in Paris with Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Orlando working on the peace treaty. To this conference Wilson had taken his dream of ending all wars through the creation of the League of Nations. At the opening of each loan we had had no difficulty in getting the President to issue an appeal to the people. I sent a cablegram to Tumulty, the President's secretary, at Paris, requesting this again. Tumulty cabled back to submit a draft. I prepared a proclamation,

with the assistance of Russell Leffingwell, and we cabled this to Paris. It came back immediately and the next day appeared on the front page of American newspapers.

FRANK R. WILSON

IOWA'S LIBERTY LOAN RECORD

	Amount Subscribed	*Number of Subscribers*
First Loan	$ 30,740,600	60,000
Second Loan	82,922,750	288,080
Third Loan	117,211,450	660,942
Fourth Loan	157,870,250	643,889
Fifth Loan	111,787,450	364,303

Time Out for Politics

William Gibbs McAdoo, one of Woodrow Wilson's leading cabinet members, emerged as a strong presidential candidate prior to the San Francisco convention of June, 1920. Other names in the headlines were James Cox of Ohio, Mitchell Palmer of Pennsylvania, William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska, John W. Davis of West Virginia, and Vice President Thomas Marshall.

During the pre-convention period the *Literary Digest* poll measured Democratic sentiment which showed 102,000 for McAdoo, 67,000 for the re-election of Wilson; 46,448 for Bryan; 11,600 for Marshall, and a scattering for others. As the time for the convention approached, newspaper headlines reflected the fact that it was McAdoo against the field.

Daniel C. Roper, Commissioner of Internal Revenue, managed McAdoo's cause. I was with D. W. Griffith in New York when Mr. Roper asked me if I would go to San Francisco at once to pave the way for the battle. I went west by way of Seattle, where I received a telegram from Mr. McAdoo saying that he had decided not to permit his name to go before the convention. I showed the telegram to several McAdoo

boosters who were shocked. The same confusion among McAdoo's supporters existed in San Francisco. Their general opinion, however, was that McAdoo would accept if nominated. By that time newspaper headlines had played up McAdoo's withdrawal. At San Francisco I received a message from Roper saying he was not coming west because of McAdoo's decision. He asked me to get in touch with Carter Glass, who was chairman of the platform committee, and see if I could be of help.

In spite of the fact that McAdoo was not formally presented he got 266 votes on the opening ballot against 134 for Cox, 256 for Palmer, 32 for Davis, and 35 for Marshall. Succeeding ballots showed gains for McAdoo. On the thirtieth ballot he received 403 against 400 for Cox. McAdoo reached his peak strength on the fortieth ballot with 467, when the strength of minor candidates began swinging to Cox. By this time the continuous day and night sessions had exhausted the delegates. Many of them had overexpended their budgets and wanted to get home. The Democratic conventions at that time required a two-thirds vote to nominate, which was probably the most important factor in McAdoo's defeat. The other was the sentiment for a repeal of prohibition, which made it easy for Tammany, Tom Taggart of Indiana, and the Ohio delegation, which supported Cox, to get together. The "Church

crowd" was for McAdoo. Early one morning the convention broke down and nominated Cox for President and Franklin D. Roosevelt for Vice President.

During this convention one afternoon was devoted to speeches by four of America's greatest orators. I have never heard such oratory at any one time in my life as was displayed by Bainbridge Colby, Secretary of State; Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War; Carter Glass of Virginia, and William Jennings Bryan.

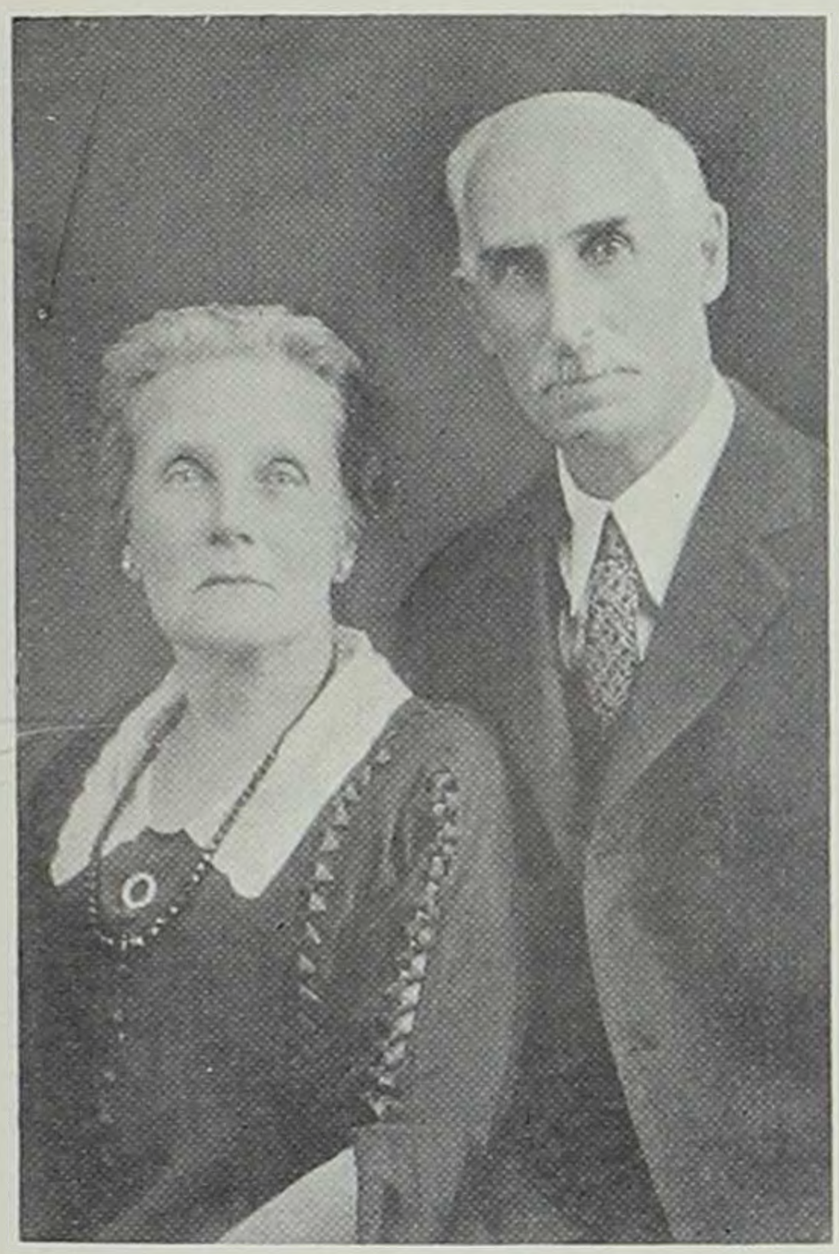
Shortly after the convention McAdoo told me that his decision to withdraw was not a political trick, but that it was dictated by his financial condition. He had had only a little more than a year in private business since he left the government and had not been able to recoup the personal deficit he had accumulated.

Later I received a long letter from Mr. McAdoo, the first paragraph of which follows:

> I wish I had the power to express adequately the depth of my gratitude for the support that you and my other loyal friends gave me at San Francisco. You and they paid me a tribute and gave me evidence of a friendship which I can never forget and which I value more than the Presidency itself.

Four years later, at the Madison Square Garden convention in New York, the same situation developed. This was the longest convention in history — 103 ballots. Many can yet remember

FAMILY PORTRAITS

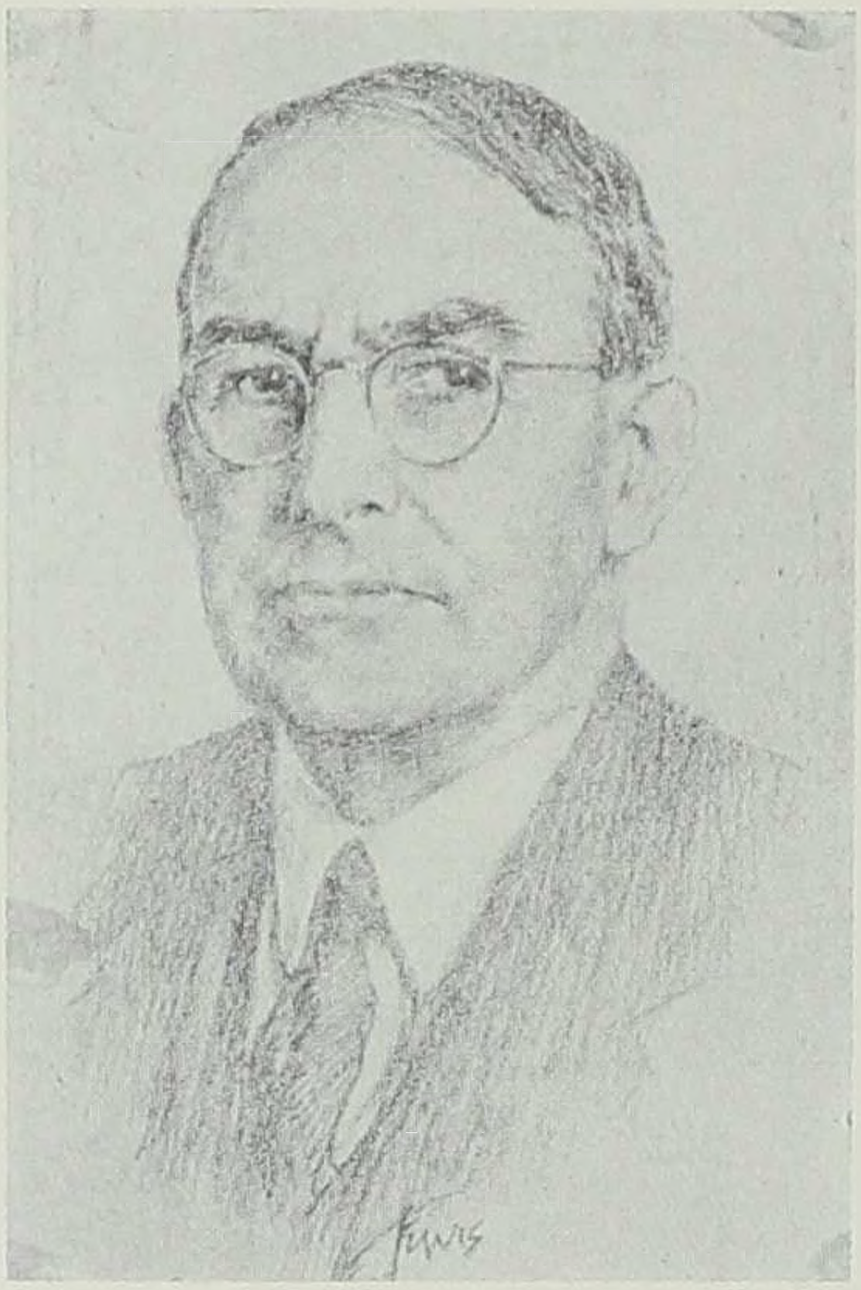


Mr. and Mrs. Milton R. Wilson

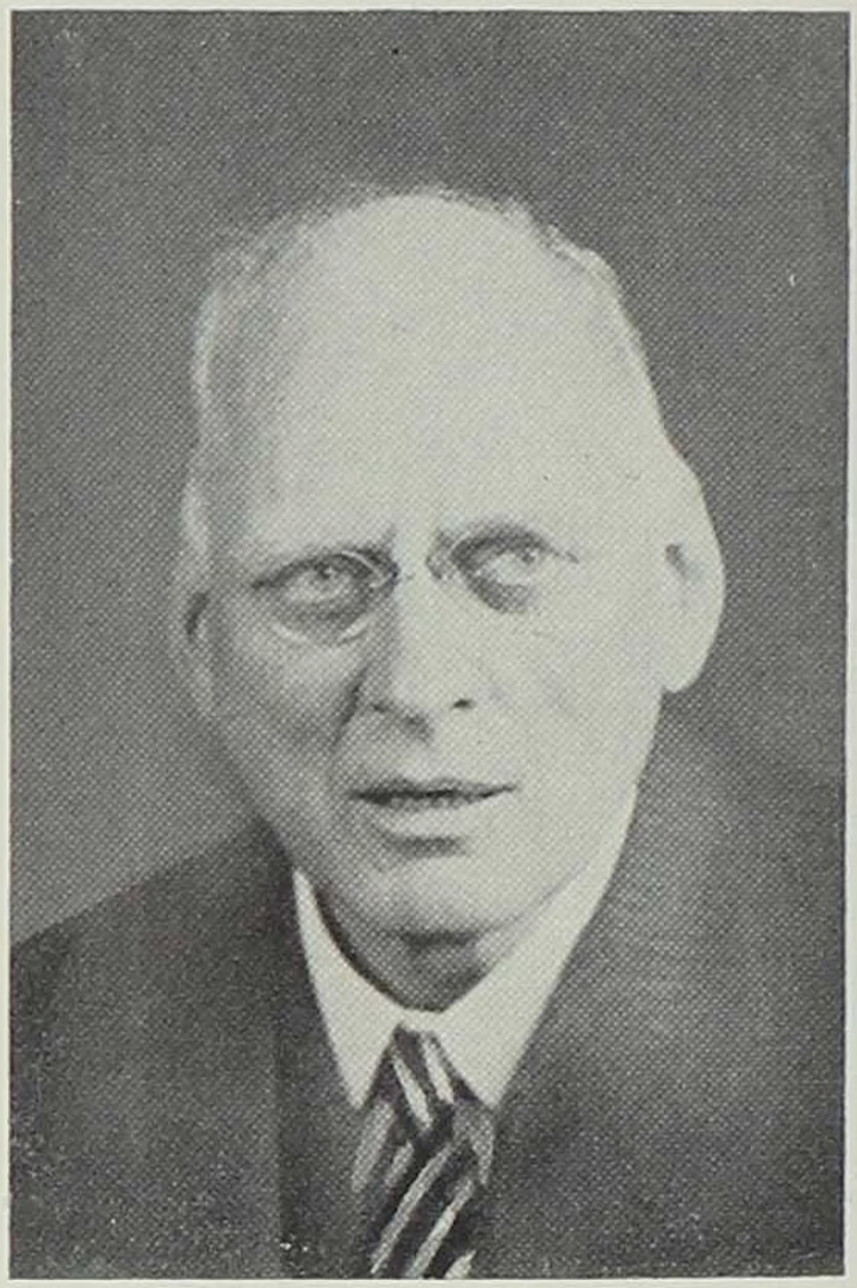
Frank R. Wilson

Frank and Philena Wilson on their farm in Dutchess County, New York

ASSOCIATES THROUGH THE YEARS



John W. Carey



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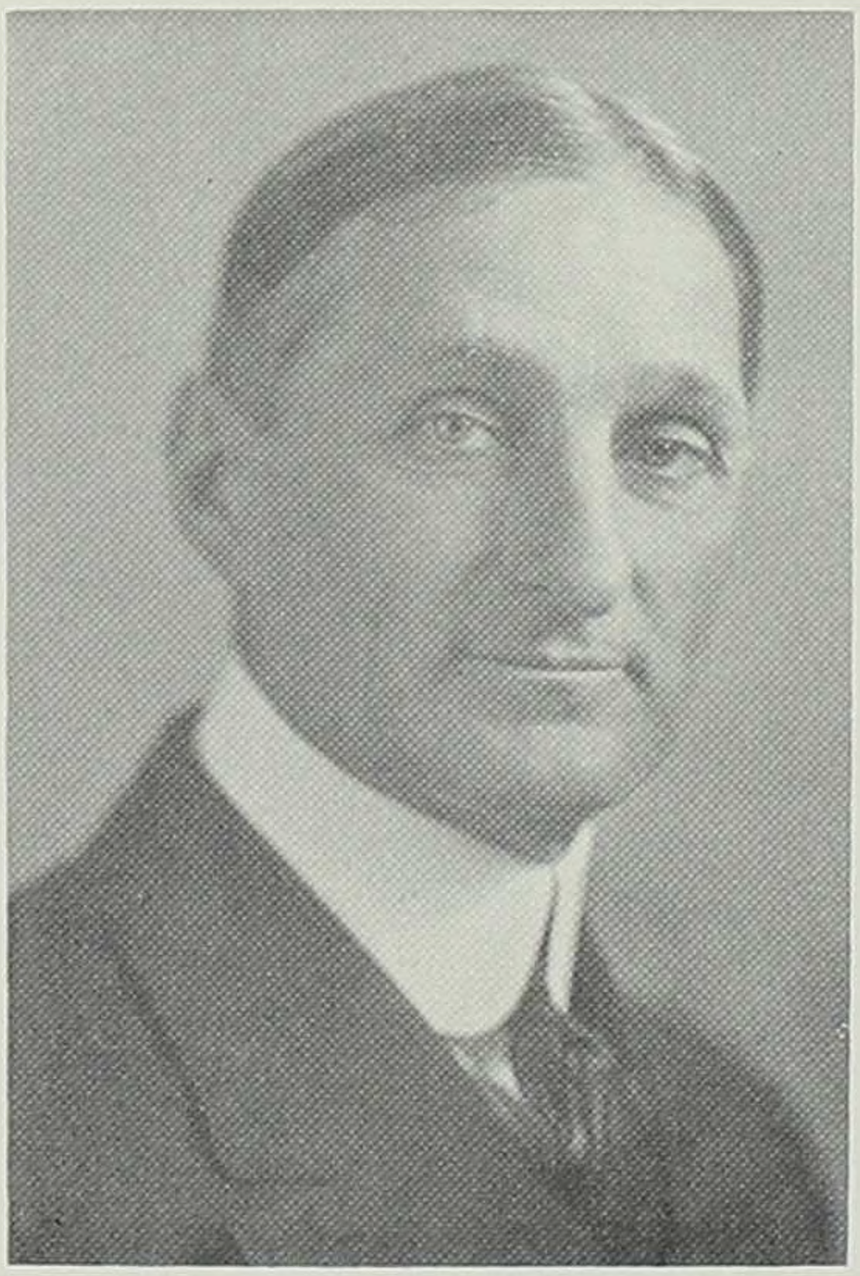
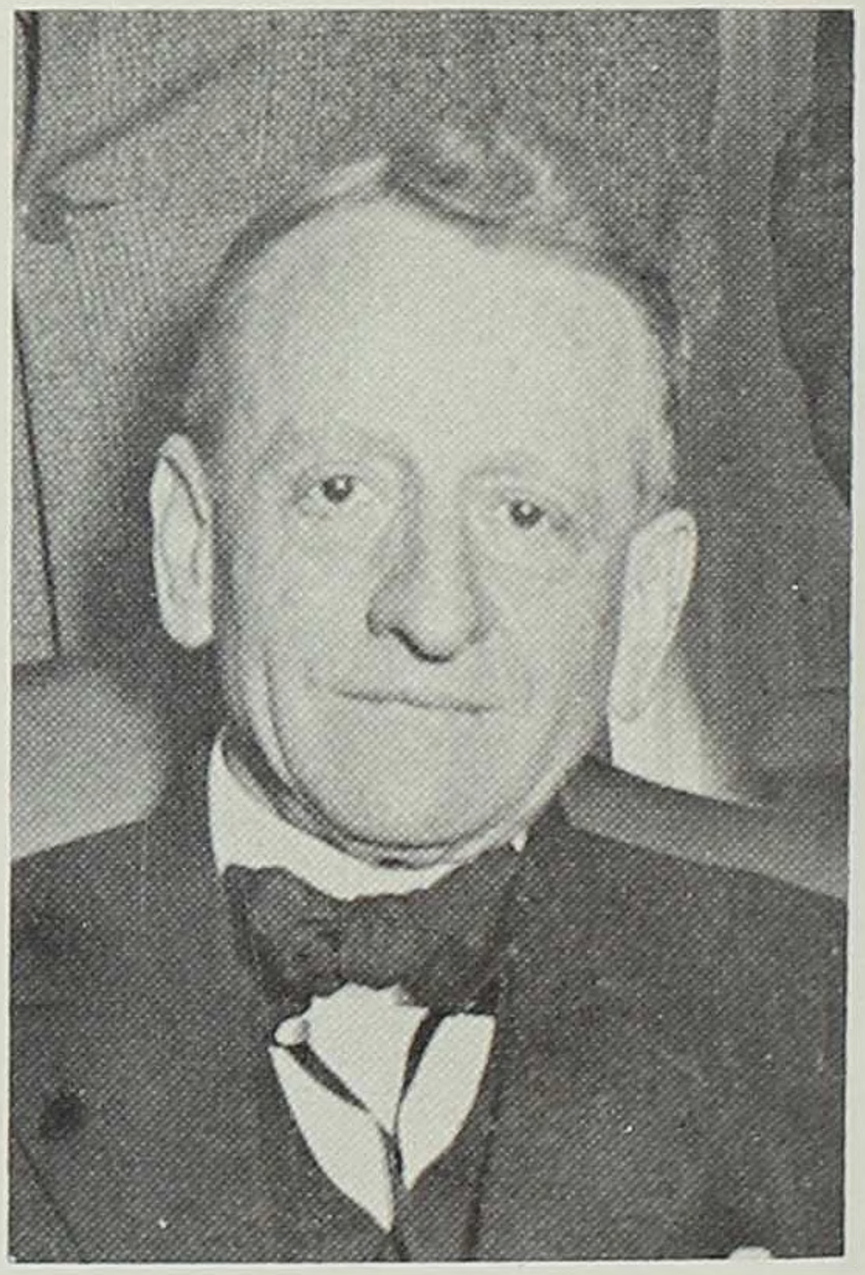


William G. McAdoo



Carter Glass

the response of the Alabama delegation at the beginning of each roll call — "TWENTY-FOUR VOTES FOR UNDERWOOD." McAdoo and Al Smith were the leading contenders, and it is agreed that no nominating convention has ever matched this one for interest and excitement. The convention was being held on Tammany's own ground, and every pressure in behalf of Al Smith was put on the delegates. I was assigned to handle the demonstration for McAdoo following his presentation.

By that time McAdoo had moved his residence to southern California, so I used the California delegation to lead the parade in the Garden. The McAdoo uproar continued for an hour, but we never could make quite as much noise as the Tammany marchers did with their bells, guns, and other instruments.

Across the street from Madison Square was an office building from which could be seen the operations on the convention floor. From that point one night McAdoo, Baruch, and I watched the show. Like the San Francisco convention, this one turned out to be a draw, and finally, when the delegates' energy and money were exhausted, they nominated John W. Davis of West Virginia.

It was the two-thirds requirement again that beat McAdoo, in addition to the Ku Klux Klan and prohibition issues. McAdoo's friends tried to get the two-thirds clause eliminated, but the con-

vention defeated it by thirty votes. McAdoo started with 431 and built up to 506 on the forty-second ballot. The highest vote for Al Smith was 368.

If McAdoo had been nominated and elected he would have been a spectacular president. He had great imagination and vigor. He was the first to propose putting traffic under the Hudson River. He raised the capital and executed the completion of the first tube, which for years was known as the McAdoo Tube.

FRANK R. WILSON

The Liberty Loan work completed, I offered my resignation to Secretary Glass on September 14, 1919. McAdoo telephoned me from New York, where he was in law practice, asking me to be there the next day. D. W. Griffith was purchasing the Flagler estate, facing Long Island, for an eastern motion picture studio, and he was committed to make two films — *Way Down East* and *Orphans of the Storm*. Among his stars were Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Richard Barthelmess, and others.

I made a two-year contract with Griffith and succeeded with great difficulty in raising $2,000,000. I found great resistance among investors because they regarded motion picture production as highly speculative. I persuaded two Wall Street men to go on the board of D. W. Griffith, Incorporated. Griffith — the genius who produced *Birth of a Nation* — was an extravagant producer who would not consent to banker control.

At the end of the two-year period I resigned and undertook the organization of a finance plan that would make bank credit available to the picture industry. This plan was to organize a company that would have enough paid in capital so

that it could indorse bank loans of picture producers and protect itself by taking 6 per cent and a small percentage of the profits, thus applying the law of averages. I ran into a depression in the early 1920's, and it took two years before I could sell the idea to a financial man. That man was Jeremiah Milbank, a director of the Chase National Bank, and a controlling figure in the Southern Railway and in the Borden Company, which had been financed by his father.

Milbank's proposal was that he start me out with $100,000 and see what I could do with it. We organized Motion Picture Capital Corporation; he took preferred stock for his $100,000, and we divided the common stock 50-50. I was president. I agreed to take no salary until it had been earned. My first deal of $75,000 made us a net return of over $20,000; other successful operations with our limited capital proved the soundness of the plan. Wall Street was relenting, and we increased our capital to $1,500,000.

The growth of the company enabled us to have the stock listed on the New York Stock Exchange, and it was not long before the paid in capital was $3,750,000. We got credit lines at nineteen banks, enabling us to borrow bank money to lend to the producers by depositing a margin of 25 per cent in cash of our own money. Our outstanding loans averaged around $10,000,000, and in four years of operation we financed nearly four hun-

dred motion pictures costing over $50,000,000. Four of these were Samuel Goldwyn films starring Ronald Coleman, Rod LaRocque, and Vilma Banky. A $1,000,000 advance went to Cecil B. DeMille for part of the production costs of *King of Kings*.

In addition to operating the finance company I raised $4,000,000 for a new company, North American Theaters, of which I was also president. We purchased forty theaters of the Jensen and Von Herberg chain in the Pacific Northwest; a half interest in fifty theaters in the San Francisco area; several more in southern California, and several in Iowa. We built the Fifth Avenue Theater in Seattle and the Broadway in Portland.

After operating this chain for two years, I approached the bankers who had financed the West Coast Theaters (nearly 400 houses in southern California) and suggested that a merger of our companies would bring us control over the entire west coast. The merger was made. Our stockholders approved. Shortly thereafter, we sold the combined chain to William Fox at a big profit. When the 1929 crash came, the new owners had to go through receivership.

After nearly five years of operation, the Motion Picture Capital Corporation found its outstanding loan volume of $10,000,000 shrinking. The reason was that we had made motion picture investments respectable in Wall Street, and the big

distributors through whom our producers released came to Wall Street for money. They then told their producers that they would have to come to them for financing and make use of their studios.

At that time the Stock Exchange had a rule against the listing of investment trusts. Investment trusts were increasing, and one big Wall Street banking firm — C. D. Barney & Company — controlled four such companies with a capital of approximately $16,000,000. In order to give their companies the benefits of stock listing they made a proposal to us that we issue $5,000,000 of new common stock in Motion Picture Capital Corporation which they would then purchase in order to get control of the company. This transaction was completed; the capital was raised to nearly $9,000,000; I resigned as president and was succeeded by John Hanes of the Barney Company, and the nature of the business was changed.

Mergers with other investment trusts followed, ultimately resulting in the Tri-Continental Corporation, now one of the largest investment companies in the world with a capital of more than $250,000,000. My 3,000 shares of motion picture stock rose to more than $60 a share in the crazy speculative era preceding the 1929 stock market break. During this period I began selling at $40, eventually at $12. In the depth of the 1929 panic

the company's stock went as low as $1.50 a share.

Simba *and Talking Picture Epics*

Shortly after the Motion Picture Capital Corporation had been converted into an investment company, Martin and Osa Johnson, the celebrated makers of adventure films, returned from Africa with their picture *Simba*. This film had been made under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History and financed by a syndicate of wealthy men including George Eastman, Daniel E. Pomeroy, some partners in the J. P. Morgan banking firm, and others. Although Mr. Pomeroy was a member of the board of directors of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, one of the largest picture distributors, that company refused to distribute *Simba* because it had no love interest. Mr. Pomeroy showed me the film, and my opinion was that it would have to be "road shown" with special publicity directed toward intellectual groups and the schools.

I made a contract for the world rights and formed an organization to exploit it. I rented the Earl Carroll Theater in New York for $5,000 a week and spent $9,000 advertising in New York newspapers for the opening. I sent letters to the nine thousand members of the American Museum of Natural History announcing that they would be given preference the first two weeks of the run. Music, written specially for the picture, was re-

corded and used instead of an orchestra. We even had a song written called "Safari," and had it recorded by one of the most popular singers of the day.

The picture ran thirteen weeks at the Earl Carroll Theater and made a net profit of more than $1,000 a week. I then took it to Boston where it had a successful three-week run under the sponsorship of the Boston Museum of Science. By this time the picture had had so much national publicity that it was necessary to organize eight units, each unit employing advance agents and managers. Within a few months we showed it in 280 cities on a road show basis and at high prices.

It was not economically feasible to operate these expensive units in smaller cities so I organized a regular distributing company, Motion Picture Epics, with a set of exchanges. Despite the fact that Loews (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) would not sell to picture theaters, our exchanges sold it to 3,500 theaters at popular prices after it had been shown in many of those cities at road show prices.

Selling *Simba* in Europe turned out to be the most interesting experience that my wife and I had ever had. A big London distributor had agreed to distribute the picture in England on a percentage basis, but would not guarantee a net profit. I decided, therefore, to "road show" it in Europe. From the American Museum of Natural History I got letters to museums and zoos in Eu-

rope. From the J. P. Morgan firm in New York I obtained an introduction to their London office, and then I asked George Eastman to give me leads to the three managers of his European plants at London, Paris, and Berlin.

Eastman invited me to come up to Rochester. I arrived at his magnificent home early in the morning and had breakfast with him while his organist played beautiful music. I had often heard about Mr. Eastman's having breakfast with pipe organ music, but I never expected to participate in it. That day he took me through his wonderful film establishment. Around the corridor in his home he had one of the world's largest collections of small firearms. He showed me many of these rare pieces, and years later when I read that he had killed himself with one of these guns I could visualize the setting. This practical industrial giant, when he was informed that he had a cancer, left a simple note to the effect that "it might as well be now."

The Morgan office in London gave me a letter to the American Ambassador in England, Alanson Houghton. I told him that I had rented the Palace Theater — one of the best in London — and authorized him to invite all the world ambassadors who had offices in London for a gala opening. The theater was packed with dignitaries in full dress, and London newspapers ate it up. I had heard that the Prince of Wales (later the

King who abdicated) was planning a hunting trip to Africa. I telephoned his secretary and offered to give the Prince a special box for the opening. But the Prince was leaving for Africa two days before our opening, so I proffered him a private showing at St. James Palace, which he accepted.

When my three-week contract with the Palace Theater expired, I moved *Simba* to another theater where we ran for twenty weeks. It was a wonderful thrill to see the London school children swarm to this theater in busses packed to the doors. The same British distributing company that had previously declined to guarantee the gross was now happy to distribute the film to regular motion picture theaters throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland.

One afternoon while my wife and I were standing in the lobby of the Palace Theater a man and his wife came in and said that they would like to see the picture. He was B. Wilton, who had retired from active presidency of the largest shipbuilding plant in Holland. They lived at The Hague. The citizens of The Hague had wanted a new motion picture theater, and Wilton built it for them. He wondered if *Simba* would be a good picture for the opening. It was. My wife and I spent one of the pleasantest weekends of our lives as Wiltons' guests at their magnificent estate in the outskirts of The Hague. With them we motored to almost every place of interest in Holland.

After selling the picture outright to distributors in the Scandinavian countries, we went to Paris, where we spent three weeks trying to get a satisfactory guarantee, but Frenchmen seem never to be able to make up their minds. So we went on to Berlin for three weeks and had no difficulty in selling the picture outright for all of Germany including distribution. One of these German distributors had a branch office in Paris, and he took over the French distribution.

FRANK R. WILSON

The N. R. A.

The theory that a great depression always follows a great war seemed to have justification by our economic behavior after World War I. In 1920 farm land prices in Iowa were the highest in the state's history. Farmers had prospered from the heavy expenditures for food for the armed forces and gifts to our allies. But early in the 1920's land values started to decline drastically. Holders of mortgages began to foreclose.

The farm depression, however, did not seem to be reflected in the industrial field. Manufacturing plants which had devoted their energy to production for war had now started rehabilitation for normal use, and there was a tremendous demand for investment money. This, plus the low margin then required on stock investment, produced the greatest volume of selling and, eventually, the greatest relative decline in security values in the history of the world. When the crash came in 1929, millions of workers lost their jobs. Economic disruption and chaos were nationwide.

In President Roosevelt's inauguration speech he used the phrase, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself." This set the theme for the National Recovery Administration, commonly known as the

Blue Eagle Campaign. It was a plan to marshal all the business elements of the United States to lift wages and prices and create a spirit of hope.

Roosevelt appointed General Hugh Johnson to head the NRA. I received a long distance call in New York from Johnson's office. He said that he would like to get together a few of the Liberty Loan personalities. I called up Bert St. Clair, who had been my assistant in the Liberty Loan publicity, and he went with me to Washington. I was given the title of "chief of organization," and St. Clair became publicity director.

I prepared a telegram for General Johnson to send to seven thousand chambers of commerce and industrial groups asking them to set up organizations. Most industries and trades set up codes to stop price cutting and to eliminate other depression practices. In fact they followed some practices which seemed to violate the antitrust laws, and, eventually, the Supreme Court declared the NRA unconstitutional.

I made many interesting contacts in the appointment of state and local directors of the NRA. I decided to split upper New York state from the city and asked Grover Whalen and Averell Harriman to meet me at Whalen's office. Whalen agreed to head the New York City organization provided I would arrange to have the appointment made by the President. I called up Marvin McIntyre, the President's secretary, and had the ap-

pointment made from Hyde Park. Harriman took over the upstate area. In all of my associations with important personalities I never found one so willing to make sacrifices for the public good as Averell Harriman. I was later to have the pleasure of working with him when he was Secretary of Commerce and I was with the Census Bureau.

After the NRA campaign, I returned to my farm in Dutchess County, but not for long. A message from Secretary of Commerce Daniel C. Roper took me back to Washington for another campaign. Congress had appropriated $50,000 and directed the Department of Commerce to try to induce the states to adopt uniform automobile traffic regulations.

In my new office as assistant to the Secretary of Commerce I battled with the governors and legislators in fifteen key states. The two which gave the most difficulty were Illinois and Missouri. Governor Horner of Illinois, a Democrat, had a Republican house and senate. I had no trouble in getting the Governor to support a revised traffic law, but I had very great trouble working with a Republican legislature because it was not good politics to put any feathers in the Governor's bonnet. Nevertheless, some real progress was made toward uniformity in traffic regulation.

FRANK R. WILSON

The United States Census Bureau

Census of Unemployment

During the 1930's the United States was plagued with unemployment. The National Recovery Administration had lifted the spirits of the country, but it had not created purchasing power. Congress decided that it would be necessary to measure the actual extent of unemployment — complete and partial — before undertaking any step to relieve the situation. Congress appropriated $5,000,000 and authorized the Commerce Department to set up an organization for measuring unemployment.

In 1937 President Roosevelt appointed John D. Biggers, President of the Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company of Toledo, Ohio, to take charge. I was supervising a crew of silo fillers on my farm in Dutchess County when I got a telegram from Mr. Biggers, whom I had never met, asking me to meet him the next day at Hyde Park where he was going to have a talk with President Roosevelt. The result of our talk was that on the next day I was on my way back to Washington.

This campaign did not require the use of widespread local organizations such as we had used in the Liberty Loans and NRA. An arrangement

with the Post Office Department enabled us to cover, in a two-day period, every home in the United States that had mail delivery.

Our purpose in this campaign was to show the people how to fill out the blank that was being prepared for distribution to every home that could be reached by mail. The form was designed to show full-time unemployment, partial employment, and other essential items. I had the form photographed and reproduced in practically every newspaper in the United States and made a motion picture film, which was run in 5,000 theaters, in which actors went through the process of filling out this chart. By the time the distribution was made by the Post Office Department, we had used every possible device of publicity.

In those days President Roosevelt occasionally gave 15-minute "Fireside Chats" over the radio. I asked the White House to devote one of these broadcasts to the Census of Unemployment. Steve Early told me to write the manuscript and submit it. The only change the President made was the addition of a line or two to fit timing necessities. Prior to this speech I had prepared a shorter version for the President to record for radio. Steve Early invited me over to watch the recording. The President came down to the recording room in his wheelchair and remained in it while he read the manuscript and recorded. It happened to be one of the days when he was not

as cheerful as he was ordinarily. I can recall a pleasanter occasion when he was in the highest of good humor.

Up at my farm in Dutchess County, Lowell Thomas had telephoned that his baseball team was going over to Hyde Park that Sunday afternoon to play a ball game against the Washington newspaper correspondents' team. It was an annual event. Bert St. Clair, who had been associated with me in the Liberty Loan Campaign and in the NRA, and who was then employed in New York City, had driven to our farm that day and together we went to see the ball game. The President's car was parked near third base, and we were in conversation with the President who was sitting in the rear seat watching the game and having the time of his life. He was kidding the players for their successes and fumbles. Before the game was over it was necessary for St. Clair to leave and go to New York, and the President chided us for leaving "before they put the keg of beer on third base."

The Census of Unemployment was one of the snappiest and most successful of all government campaigns. In two consecutive days the Post Office delivered more than 36,000,000 of these blanks to American homes, and the result was amazing. The returns showed that nearly 7,000,000 were without any job, and 5,000,000 more had varying degrees of employment. One of the

rare cases in government was Mr. Biggers's termination of this enterprise with a report to Congress that he was turning back $2,500,000 of the $5,000,000 that Congress had appropriated. I know of no other instance of this kind in government history.

In the Census Bureau

During the 1937 Census of Unemployment we got a great deal of cooperation from the Bureau of the Census and made use of its vast quantity of basic statistics. In 1939 I was asked by the Census Bureau to handle their public relations problems, just prior to the 1940 census. I continued with the Census Bureau until 1952 — two years beyond the retirement age of 70. (A federal employee is permitted an extension of two years only upon approval from the President.) My thirteen years with the greatest statistical organization in the world proved to be one of the most interesting and rewarding of my life.

The Census Bureau is one of the oldest agencies of government. It was set up in the Constitution to determine representation in Congress for each state according to its population. As the nation expanded, the duties of the Bureau went far beyond that of counting the population. Regular surveys of industry, agriculture, trade, transportation, employment, housing, and many other areas of national life gradually came to be part

of the Bureau's activities. People in a variety of fields, professional and business, turned to the Census Bureau for information.

It is doubtful if there is a more interesting and solid public relations opportunity in the world than that associated with the preparation for a decennial census of population. A nationwide operation brings the Census Bureau in contact with at least one person of every family in the United States. Preliminary publicity is calculated to make the enumerator a welcome figure at each door and to avoid unpleasant incidents. Emphasis is put on the purposes of the census: the national value of the results, the need for accuracy in the replies, and familiarity with the questions to be asked.

Just prior to the 1940 census, I prepared a letter for the director of the Bureau inviting publishers of large daily newspapers to send advertising representatives to Washington for a two-day conference when the 1940 census material became available. More than two hundred newspapers were represented at the meeting. The organization of Newspaper Promotion Managers has now expanded to nearly 500, and it holds national and regional meetings annually. When my Census Bureau associates gave me a luncheon at the time of my retirement a representative of the Newspaper Promotion Managers presented me with a life membership.

For the 1950 census preliminary material ap-

peared in 19,000 newspapers and 2,000 periodicals, was heard and seen over 1,900 radio and television stations and in thousands of motion picture theaters. All these agencies of public education find a decennial census attractive as news because it concerns every family in the nation. American industry always supports a census because it affords them with essential information on population movements as a basis for advertising and the allocation of production.

We spent less than $150,000 on publicity for the 1950 census, and more than half of that was the cost of booklets for school children who could help their mothers answer the questions of an enumerator. Following the 1950 census the Department of Commerce awarded a gold medal to me for outstanding achievement. It was presented by Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer in the auditorium of the Department of Commerce.

Iowa in the Census

In the census of 1840 Iowa had 43,112 people and that included that part of Minnesota lying west of the Mississippi and a line drawn from its source northward to Canada. In the census of 1850, four years after the state was admitted to the Union, Iowa had 192,214; 2,231,853 in 1900, and 2,621,073 in 1950.

If any proof is needed that Iowa is the number

one state in agriculture the Census Bureau can provide it. The 1954 census demonstrated that agricultural efficiency reached its peak in Iowa. The census found 192,933 farms in Iowa, of which 178,248 were commercial farms and the balance residential farms with litttle production. The average size of Iowa farms in 1954 was 176.5 acres compared with 169.7 acres four years earlier. The state has 94 per cent of its land in farms. The Iowa farm labor force consisted of 181,916 operators; only 48,022 hired workers and 110,625 unpaid family workers — a total farm labor force of 340,563 or only about 1.7 workers per farm. This total is about 200,000 fewer workers than General Motors employs throughout the United States; vastly fewer than the employees of American Telephone and Telegraph and only a little more than the employees of United States Steel.

Increased mechanization enabled Iowa farmers to reduce their cost of hired labor from 68.3 million dollars in 1949 to 53 million dollars in 1954. In the same period Iowa farmers increased their expenditures for gasoline and oil from 75.6 million to 84.3 million. And by owning more machinery they decreased their cost of machine hire from 37.3 million dollars to 31.7 million dollars. Iowa, heretofore a small user of fertilizer, reported the purchase of $50,000,000 worth of fertilizer and lime.

With approximately two tractors per farm

Iowa's 340,563 farm workers harvested 530,000,000 bushels of corn from 9.7 million acres; 222,000,000 bushels of oats, and 55.6 million bushels of soybeans making Iowa, for the first time, the leading state in soybean production. Among a long list of additional products Iowa took the championship in popcorn production—40,000,000 pounds — surely enough to make most of the motion picture theaters of the nation uninhabitable for weeks.

In 1954 Iowa farmers marketed 2,657,011 cattle, mostly fat steers, and received $486,000,000 for them; 14,001,563 hogs yielding $510,801,813; sheep sales amounting to over $23,000,000, and horse and mule sales of only $870,832. The last census found that there were only 96,584 horses left on Iowa farms or only one-half a horse per farm. For many years, Iowa has been the champion producer of eggs, and in 1954 it amounted to 238 million dozen, enough eggs to supply six dozen for every family in the United States.

In 1950 Iowa had 10,317 farms that sold products for $25,000 or more each; 52,134 that sold from $10,000 to $25,000, and 59,884 with sales between $5,000 and $10,000.

Iowa's gross product sales in 1954 exceeded 1.8 billion dollars. Texas with five times the land area of Iowa sold a little over one billion. South Dakota's gross sales were 436 million dollars; Kansas, 802 million; Nebraska, 882 million; Min-

nesota, 984 million, and Illinois, $1,500,000,000.

The asset value of Iowa farms — land and buildings only — in 1954 passed 7 billion dollars. Adding the value of livestock, crops on hand, and machinery, the gross farm values in the state would vastly exceed 10 billion dollars. The mortgage debt in 1950, four years earlier, was only 433 million dollars, and the Iowa farms supporting this indebtedness represented a value of 1.8 billion dollars. The value of all of the stock of American Telephone and Telegraph holdings in the United States is about 15 billion dollars. The working capital engaged in Iowa agriculture greatly exceeds the combined net working capital of American Telephone and Telegraph, General Motors, and United States Steel. Business concerns can turn their capital over many times a year, while the farmer is limited by the season.

Between 1950 and 1954 Iowa lost 10,226 farms by merger; lost 220,000 acres of farmland through industrial expansion and otherwise; increased its average size of farms by 8.2 acres, and showed an increased value for land and buildings of $8500 per farm.

Loafing away my retirement days at the round table at the National Press Club in Washington and listening to the transient wisdom from correspondents who come and go, I often think of another promotion that should be undertaken by someone. It would be designed to stop the migra-

tion of young people out of Iowa. For many years Iowa has been giving her sons and daughters to the rest of the nation at an alarming rate. In the 1950 census 3,230,275 reported that they were born in Iowa. Of these only 2,039,135 were living in Iowa in 1950, and 1,191,140 were living in other states.

Between 1940 and 1950 Iowa had a net gain in population of 84,000. In that decade there were 544,061 births and 259,000 deaths. The net out-migration in the ten years was 176,000.

If it costs $15,000 to bring up a child, it would seem that Iowa is making a contribution to other states of $2.6 billion in 10 years. Can Iowa, even with its great capacity for production, afford such a gift to other states? It would seem that such an amount of money might better be used to bring new industries to Iowa, especially at this time when there is great mobility in industry.

FRANK R. WILSON

A Forty-eight Year Partnership

My wife was always an enthusiastic partner in all my ventures — business or political. Even after we had moved to Dutchess County and I had to be away on government campaigns, she supervised our 300-acre farm.

We were married in Sioux City in 1907. She was Philena Yutzy, an adopted daughter of Jeremiah Yutzy of Sioux City, a passenger conductor on the Illinois Central. Yutzy had fought all the way from Gettysburg to the site of Lee's surrender. Her real father was Yutzy's brother of Falls City, Nebraska, who had four children and who had lost his wife and felt that his brother in Sioux City could give Philena greater opportunities. Her adopted mother died while she was very young, but the grandmother, Mary Wingett, reared her. Mrs. Wingett and her husband pioneered in Plymouth County where they had a 200-acre farm, which my wife inherited.

Our romance began in high school. In fact, while working my way through high school I changed my employment from M. D. Nicol's home on the north side to chores in a boarding house so that I could walk Philena to school every morning.

Philena graduated from high school in 1904. She attended the University of Wisconsin for one year, returning to Sioux City where I was back working on the *Journal*.

After our Sioux City newspaper venture, I went to Washington, where Mrs. Wilson soon joined me. When we transferred to New York we lived for three years in a modest place on West 72nd Street. When our business succeeded and we found our associates lived on Park Avenue, we got an 8-room apartment at 277 Park Avenue, living there for seven years. Just above us lived John Philip Sousa, who was retired. When he stepped into the elevator in his impressive uniform, you felt like marching.

During our motion picture activities we had financed the recording of 27 of Lowell Thomas's travel films. We were charmed by his wonderful farm in Dutchess County and such neighbors as Thomas E. Dewey, Ed Murrow, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., Henry A. Wallace, and Ben Hampton, the magazine publisher.

We accordingly bought a 300-acre tract of scenic wonderland with a large brook, a 12-foot waterfall, and a nine-mile view toward Pawling. We purchased this land in 1928 when the stock market was boiling. We withdrew more than $50,000 cash from our stock trading account, paid cash for the property, and took six months to build an elaborate stone residence, which was all

paid for when completed. One year later the stock market blew up.

While we were in motion pictures, Mrs. Wilson enjoyed her frequent trips to Hollywood. One day Sam Goldwyn invited us to attend the wedding of Rod LaRocque and Vilma Banky. Ronald Colman, her favorite star, ushered us to our seats. On one trip Mr. and Mrs. Cecil B. DeMille gave a dinner for us at their home. Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin, and the Talmadge sisters were the other guests.

My frequent calls to Washington meant long absences from our home. This, plus Mrs. Wilson's ill health, caused by pernicious anemia, induced us to move back to Washington where we would be nearer to the facilities of Johns Hopkins Hospital at Baltimore. Later we sold our estate in Dutchess County to a New York restaurateur who converted it into an exclusive weekend resort for New York patrons.

Science could do nothing for Mrs. Wilson except prolong her life, and after sixteen years, she died on November 8, 1955, at the age of 70.

FRANK R. WILSON

Frank R. Wilson

The story of Frank R. Wilson is typical of many men who were born, nurtured, and educated in the Hawkeye State and then went out to attain fame, and sometimes fortune, in their chosen fields. Distinguished Iowans by the hundreds who achieved renown far from their native hearth can be numbered in the ministry, in education and journalism, in banking, insurance, and industry, in medicine, law, and other professions, and as executives and administrators in our own federal government and throughout the world.

Although Frank Wilson accomplished Herculean tasks during the course of his lifetime, his name rarely appeared in the headlines. His work was that of a promoter for others — an "idea" man, a "leg" man, a super salesman. It was largely his task to push notables into the limelight in order to achieve some objective that would redound to the common good. This was particularly true whenever he was called upon to serve the federal government. Mindful of Wilson's contributions to the war bond sales during World War I, Secretary of the Treasury Carter Glass wrote him as follows on September 16, 1919:

> I can not permit you to leave the department which you

have served so well without committing to writing an expression of my genuine appreciation of your loyalty and devotion to the interests of the Government. You entered the Treasury in the service of the Federal Farm Loan Board where your intelligent work attracted the attention of my distinguished predecessor who gave you the opportunity for the greater employment of the admirable talents with which you are endowed by your appointment as Director of Publicity of the War Loan Organization. In that work you displayed the finest qualities of direction in campaigns that required imagination of the highest degree and a full understanding of all the elements of popular appeal. I am happy to have the privilege of saying that you were equal to a task that was of very great importance in the program of war finance and that I know of few men who could have done so well and none who could have excelled. In the years to come it will be a comfort to you to realize that you served your Government with the enthusiasm and loyalty of a patriot in your country's period of greatest peril. You leave the Treasury with the deepest regret of those who have been associated with you, and I know I speak the mind of all when I say that you will carry with you into private life their every good wish for your health and happiness.

During much of his active life Frank Wilson served the federal government in various capacities for little compensation. Indeed, most of Wilson's personal estate was built up during the fabulous 1920's when his keen imagination, his driving energy and courage in the face of insuperable odds allowed him and his associates to reap rich rewards in the newborn motion picture industry. It took a man of rare insight and organizing ability

to achieve the success he did before the financial debacle of 1929. Even then, Wilson had foresight enough to convert much of his paper stock into real estate, thereby saving some of the fruits of his labor.

Iowans will always be indebted to Frank Wilson for the deep interest he took in his native state. According to the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil*:

> He never lost his interest in Iowa. Today he probably knows more about each Iowa city than most of the local residents.
>
> As chief of publicity he always works on Iowa statistics first. He just can't wait to see what has happened to corn production, hog production and other activities in the greatest agricultural state in the Union.
>
> The Nonpareil hears from him frequently, with information about Iowa crop producion.

Frank Wilson played such an important role in the United States Census Bureau that a special act was required to prevent his mandatory retirement until the government could benefit from his ability to interpret the census of 1950. Little wonder that, upon his retirement from the Census Bureau, Frank Wilson received a gold medal for outstanding service, the highest award which the government offers its civilian workers. Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer made the award to Wilson for his unique service as Director of Information of the Bureau of the Census. Wilson was the first government information man to receive the award.

Hugh H. MacMillan of the Detroit *Free Press* praised Wilson for his "unselfish devotion" and his "constant courtesy and kindness" to newspaper men. Douglas Taylor, president of the American Association of Newspaper Representatives, lauded his "thoughtfulness, helpfulness" and "intelligent understanding of our interests." Roy V. Peel, former Director of the Census Bureau and now of the University of Utah, described Wilson as "indefatigable, ingenious, industrious — and incomparably the best information man in Washington." Letters in a similar vein came from such men as W. W. Waymack, editor of the Des Moines *Register*, Robert W. Burgess, Director of the Census, and Sinclair Weeks, Secretary of Commerce.

Perhaps the outstanding tribute was the following resolution adopted by the Board of Directors of the National Newspaper Promotion Association:

WHEREAS Mr. Frank Wilson is retiring from his position as Director of Information for the United States Census Bureau thus terminating many years of valuable public service; and

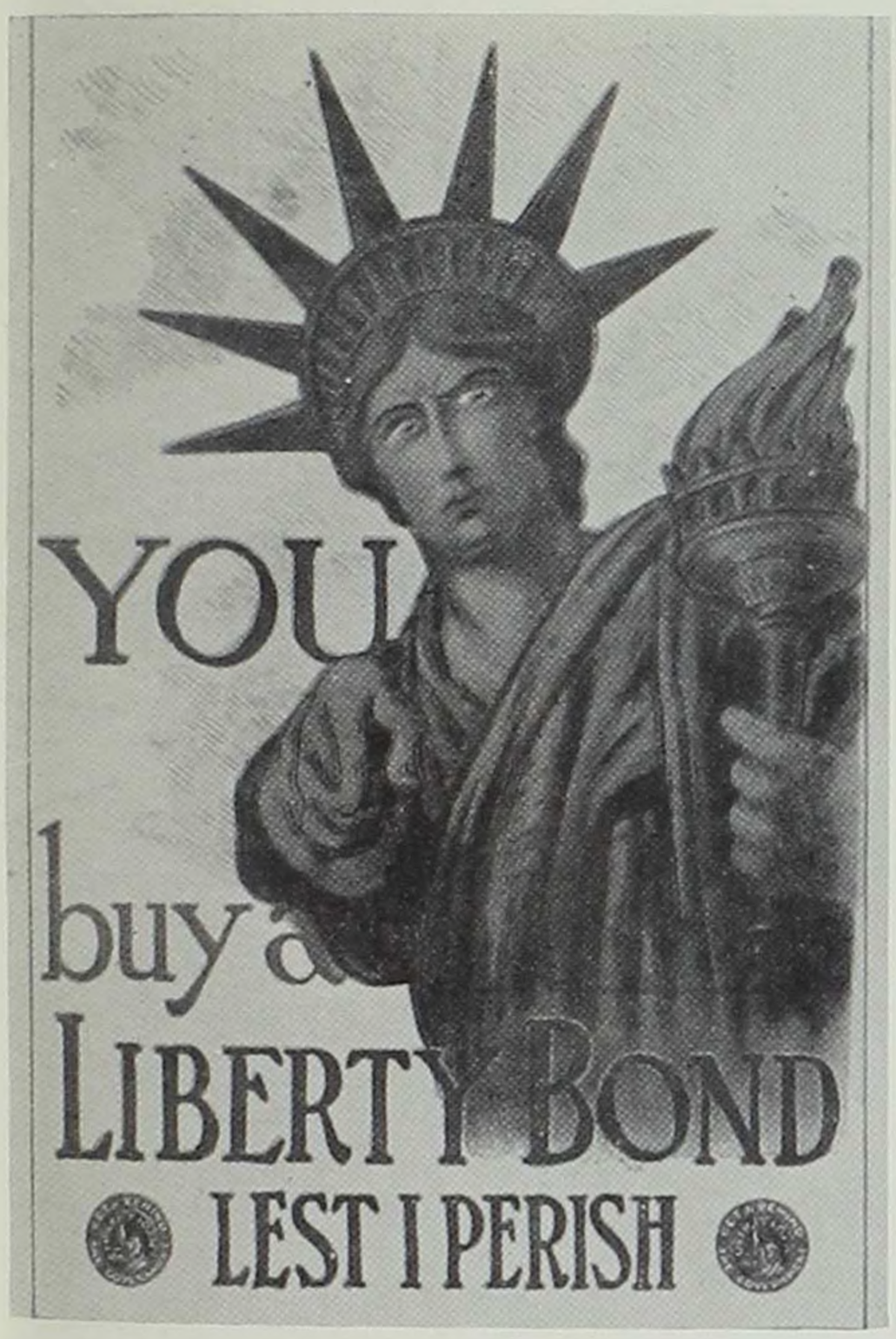
WHEREAS Mr. Wilson has contributed extensively to the promotion of newspaper advertising and circulation by his unexcelled co-operation in making available the services and statistics of the United States Census Bureau to newspapers, advertisers and advertising agencies; and

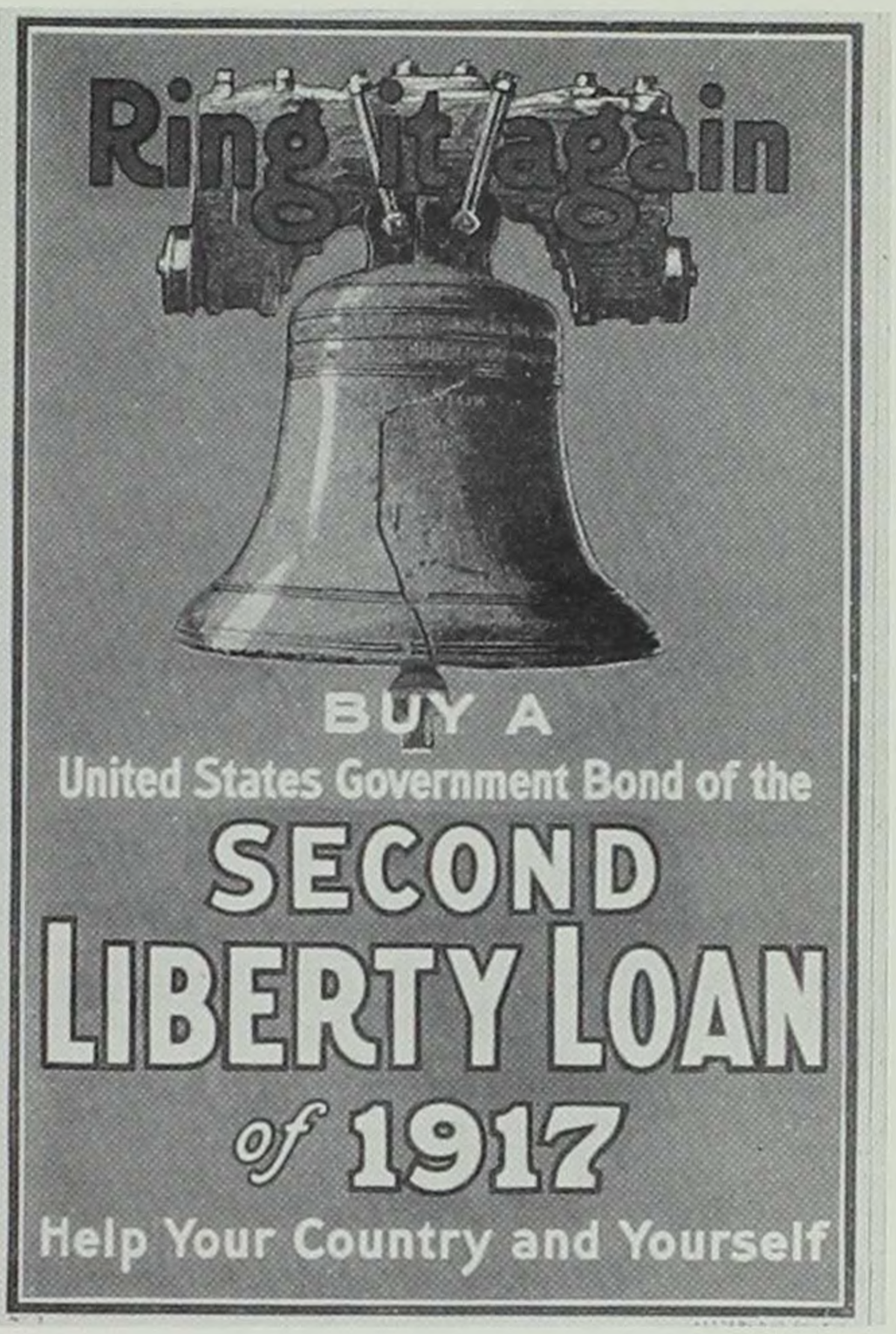
WHEREAS Mr. Wilson has on innumerable occasions personally participated in newspaper programs and meet-

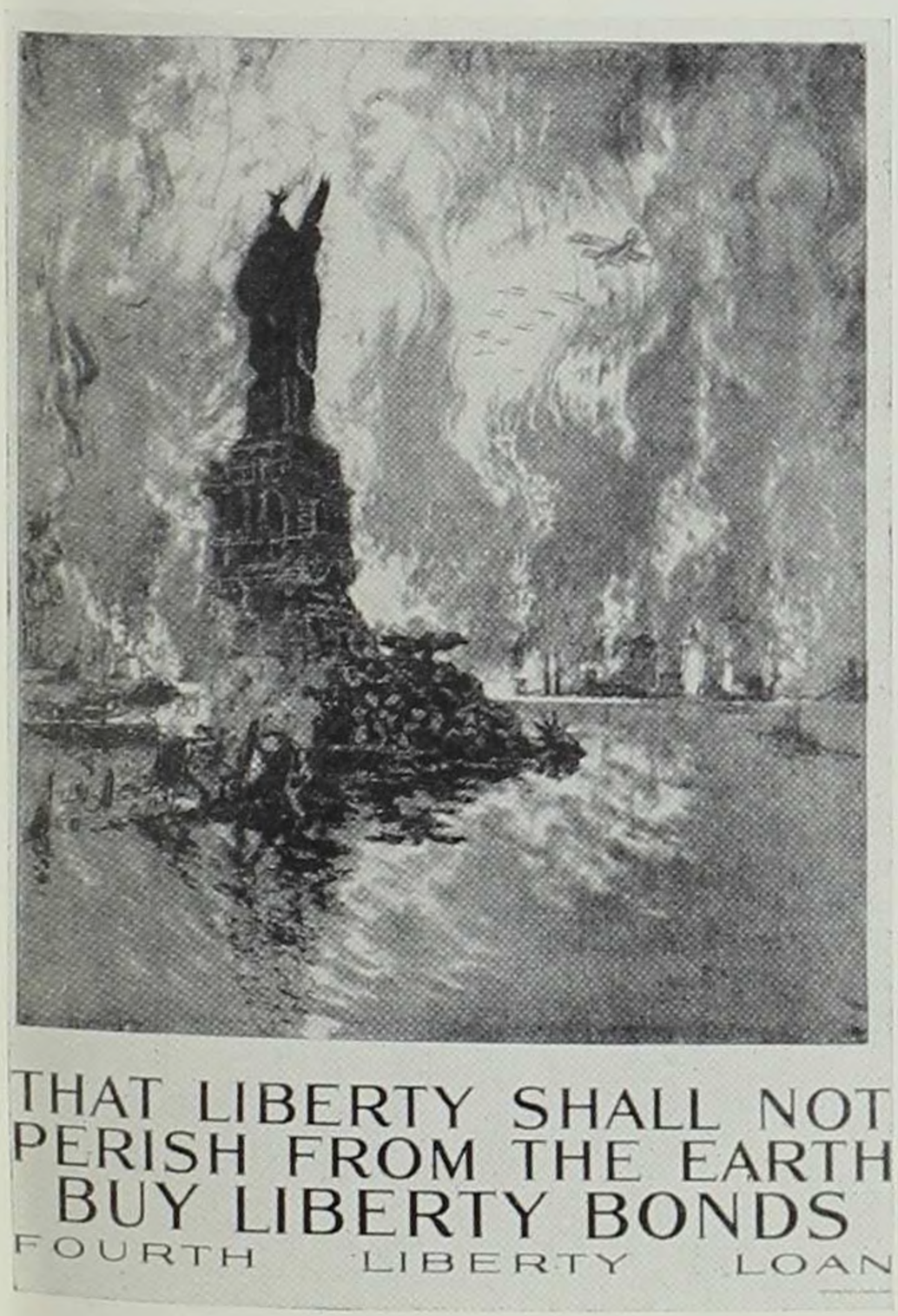
ings designed to enlighten newspaper promotion management concerning the availability and utilization of the valuable and factual data released by the United States Census Bureau; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Newspaper Promotion Association extend to Mr. Frank Wilson its highest expressions of gratitude and appreciation and in token of its esteem extend to him an Honorary Life Membership that he may ever know of the high regard and affection in which he is held by all.

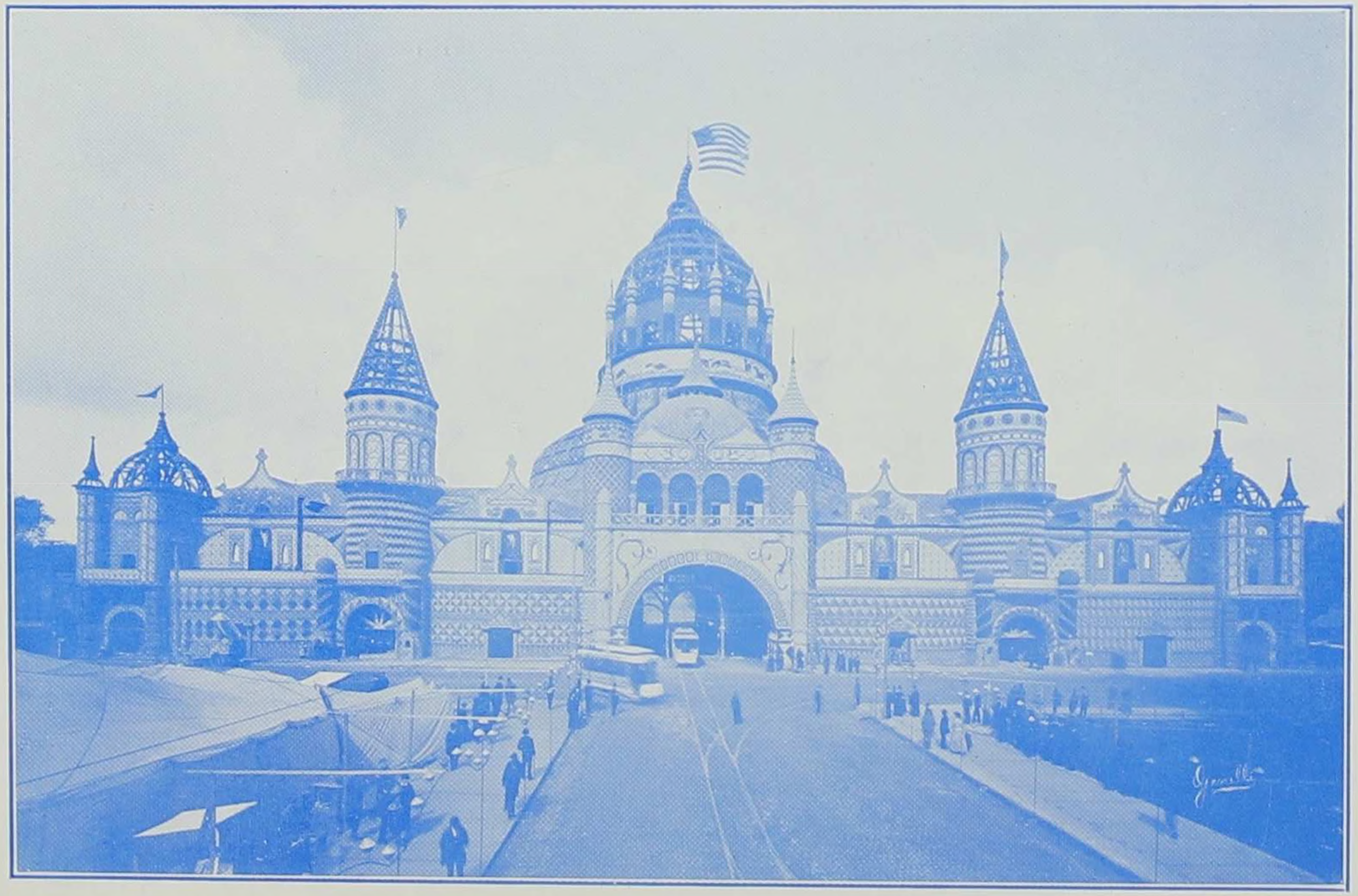
WILLIAM J. PETERSEN


YOU
buy a
LIBERTY BOND
LEST I PERISH


Ring it again
BUY A
United States Government Bond of the
SECOND
LIBERTY LOAN
of 1917
Help Your Country and Yourself


THAT LIBERTY SHALL NOT
PERISH FROM THE EARTH
BUY LIBERTY BONDS
FOURTH LIBERTY LOAN

SURE!
We'll
Finish
the Job
VICTORY LIBERTY LOAN



The fifth Corn Palace at Sioux City, 1891