

Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 1
Number 2 *Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol 1,*
Issue 2

Article 8

1908

George West Wilson

F. P. Fleming

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>
University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Fleming, F. P. (1908) "George West Wilson," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 1: No. 2, Article 8.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol1/iss2/8>

By D. L. Dunham of St. Augustine: Constitution and Ordinance of Florida, 1861; Account of Old Cremona Violin.

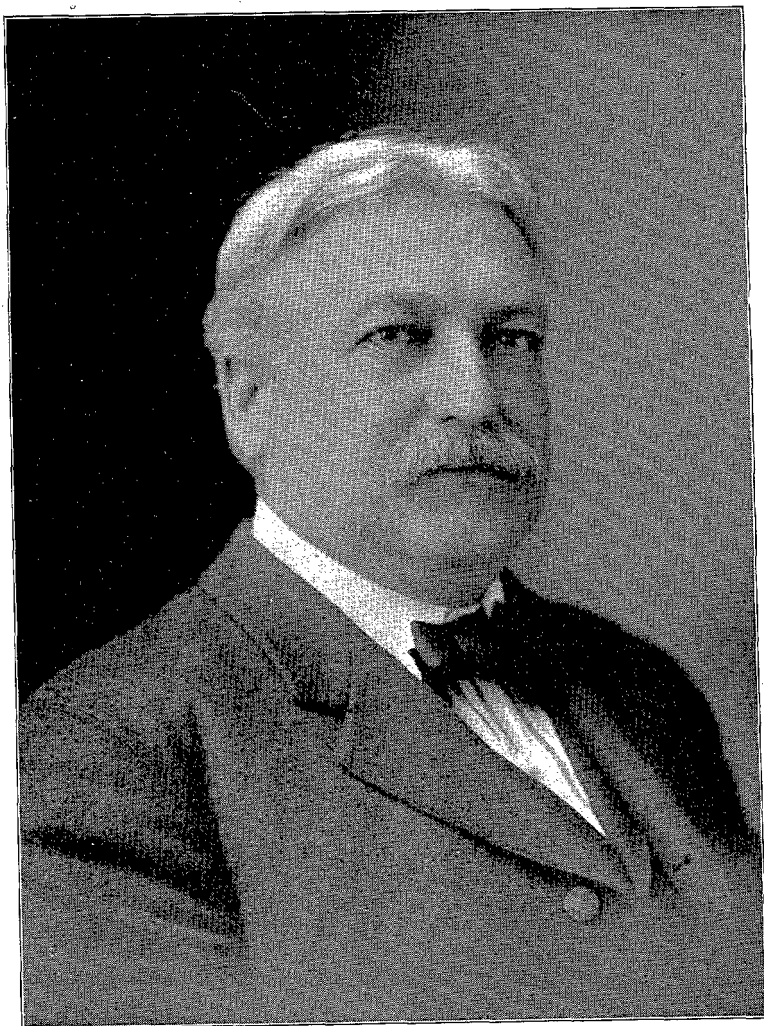
All contributions are gratefully received.

George West Wilson.

BY F. P. FLEMING.

George West Wilson, First Vice-President and former Secretary of the Florida Historical Society, died at his residence in the City of Jacksonville, June 2nd, 1908. In his death the State of Florida, this Society and his many friends have sustained a great loss. George W. Wilson was born in Boone County, Kentucky, May 10, 1859. His ancestors on both sides, originally from Virginia, were among the early settlers of Kentucky. His early youth was spent near Hamilton, Ohio, where he attended the public schools, but owing to delicate health his education was completed largely by private tutors. For a number of years his earlier manhood, before the claims of business absorbed his time, he was a great reader and faithful student. Returning to Kentucky he afterwards, in 1874, removed with his mother and stepfather, Col. R. A. Stewart, to Florida, and settled at Orange Lake in Marion County. He soon manifested a great interest in everything that pertained to the material interest of Florida. Starting a local newspaper at his home, he afterwards became more extensively engaged in journalism. in connection with the publication of the Ocala Banner. In 1897 he became editor-in-chief of The Florida Times-Union, then consolidated with the Citizen, in which position he continued up to the time of his death. His talents and able and conservative management of that paper did much to place it in the front rank of the great Southern dailies of the county.

Mr. Wilson was president of the Lake Weir Chatau-



GEORGE WEST WILSON

qua Lyceum Association, and for three years was president of the Semi-Tropical Exposition held at Ocala, which contributed greatly to demonstrate the varied resources and products of Florida. Taking an active interest in politics he became, in 1892, a member and secretary of the Democratic Congressional Committee of the second district, in which capacity he rendered efficient service and contributed much to Democratic success. Up to the time that he became disabled by ill health, by his writings, counsels and sound judgment, he was a potent factor in the work of his party. President Cleveland in 1894 appointed him Collector of Internal Revenue for Florida, which office he held for four years.

Among other positions of honor and trust held by Mr. Wilson may be mentioned those of President of the Board of Trustees of the Florida Agricultural College and the University of Florida, President of the Florida Press Association, Vice-President of the Seminole Club, Treasurer, respectively, of the Jacksonville Trade Carnival Association, the Galveston Relief Fund of Jacksonville, the Storm Sufferers Fund, The Florida State Fair Association, and a Trustee of the Indian Industrial School Fund.

It is proper that special mention should be made of George Wilson as a factor in the organization and development of the Florida Historical Society. To him more than any other one individual does the Society owe its existence. It was he who sent out the call which resulted in a meeting of patriotic citizens in his office in November, 1902, who organized the society. He was then elected its secretary and served in that capacity until November, 1906, when he became First Vice-President, which position he held to the time of his death. During the whole time his active interest and material aid contributed greatly to the success of the society.

Possessing all the elements of manly character, George W. Wilson was also endowed with the kindness and sympathetic nature of a woman, and that most

blesSED of all gifts charity, ever ready to help and sympathize with those in trouble or distress. He was a public spirited citizen, a loving husband and father and a kind and true friend. He will be sadly missed by all who came within the influence of his kindly nature.

The Story of Juan Ortiz and Uleleh.

BY F. P. FLEMING.

Every school child, who has been taught the elements of American history is familiar with the Story of Pocahontas, who saved the life of Captain John Smith, married the Englishman John Rolfe and became the progenitor of various prominent Virginia families, who proudly trace their ancestry to the Indian princess; yet comparatively few, even among the educated of our country, have any knowledge of the Story of Juan Ortiz, the young Spaniard, or the Indian Princess Uleleh, who saved his life in Florida, seventy-nine years before the events in Virginia which made Pocahontas famous.

Juan Ortiz was a native of Seville, Spain, of noble family, and a follower of Pamphilo de Narvaez who, in 1528, with a force of six hundred, invaded and attempted the conquest of Florida, but whose great expedition came to grief, the commander and all but four falling victims of starvation, disease, shipwreck or the vengeance of the natives, who had been cruelly treated by the arrogant and proud Spanish Cavalier.

Landing first at or near the bay of Espirito Santo, (now Tampa Bay) Narvaez sent back to Havana one of his brigantines and twenty men, among whom was Juan Ortiz, with dispatches for his wife. After executing the commission the vessel with Ortiz and others returned to the bay. Those aboard were informed by the Indians that Narvaez had marched into the interior of the country. They claimed to have a letter from Narvaez which