

1933

Wilkinson Call, Soldier and Senator, Part I

Albert Hubbard Roberts



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

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

Roberts, Albert Hubbard (1933) "Wilkinson Call, Soldier and Senator, Part I," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 12 : No. 3 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol12/iss3/3>

WILKINSON CALL, SOLDIER AND SENATOR

By ALBERT HUBBARD ROBERTS

PART I

IF WILKINSON CALL was fortunate politically in being of a family already prominent in Florida affairs, he may have suffered historically as the nephew of a great uncle and the uncle of a great nephew; his own colorful career, including eighteen years as a United States senator, being obscured by the earlier glory of Richard Keith Call, as soldier and territorial governor of Florida, and to the present generation by the recent service of Rhydon M. Call, State and Federal jurist. Relatively few Floridians of today remember more than the name of Wilkinson Call and of these, fewer know that Tallahassee was his home from boyhood until he had first been elected a senator from Florida.

Wilkinson Call, a son of Dr. George W. and Lucinda L. Call, was born in Russellville, Kentucky, January 9, 1834, according to the Congressional Directory and the few other biographical data available. These sketches are all brief, and none records Senator Call's residence in Tallahassee. Despite their consistency as to the date of his birth, several circumstances which will be noted later question its accuracy.

Of his earlier years in Tallahassee we know little. General R. K. Call moved to Tallahassee from Pensacola in 1832, and was appointed governor of the Territory of Florida by President Jackson in 1836. It was probably about this time that his brother, Dr.

Note—This paper was read in part before the Tallahassee Historical Society on Jan. 11, 1934.

Call made the same city his home, occupying "the old Randolph house" at the southeast corner of Monroe and Brevard streets; a long, one-story frame dwelling, with five immense red brick chimneys, a quarter-mile southeast of Governor Call's mansion. This old home of Dr. Call's was razed several years ago, but the site may be further identified to strangers by the marker at the corner-commemorative of old Fort San Luis, two miles westward.

His brief biographies tell us that Wilkinson Call had an academic education ; received mostly, it would seem, in Tallahassee, as even then children there had good educational opportunities. He must have chosen the law for his profession early in life, for on December 25, 1846, Governor William D. Moseley approved "An Act to admit Wilkinson Call to practice law in the several Courts of the State;"¹ truly an extraordinary Christmas gift to a boy not yet thirteen years old, if the only date we have of his birth is correct. While the act was conditional upon young Call's standing a satisfactory examination before the Circuit Court, and while it recognized his minority by a removal of certain of its disabilities, it seems incredible that the Legislature would have passed this Act if Call had not been several years older than it would appear. The public records of Leon County show that on February 22, 1851, he purchased from R. K. Call, and conveyed to his mother two weeks later, Lot 139, City of Tallahassee, on the west side of Monroe Street.² If Call were actually born in 1834, he was only 17 years of age

¹Chapter 131, *Laws of Florida, Acts of 1846*.

²This lot is now occupied by the Floridan hotel annex. The old house on this spot, which was known in its latter days as "Miss Girard's Millinery Shop" was occupied as an office by Senator Call's father and a brother, Dr. John L. Call, who died in Tallahassee in 1857.

at the time this conveyance was made, which brings the accuracy of this date further into question. Napoleon is said to have altered the date of his birth in order to make himself a native-born Frenchman, and lesser statesmen may have found it politic to do likewise, though for reasons which may not be apparent to a puzzled later generation. The records of St. John's Parish show that Wilkinson Call was confirmed in the old Episcopal Church on December 26, 1852, but they give no information as to his age.

Young Call was taken into partnership in due course by his kinsman, David S. Walker, afterward a justice of the Supreme Court and governor of Florida. Several cases may be found in the Florida Supreme Court Reports for several years preceding the War between the States, in which these attorneys appeared. One of these cases (Tallahassee R. R. Co. vs. Macon, 8 Fla. 299) is of interest because of its dealing with the ancient institution, human slavery. In this case, decided in 1859, the Supreme Court, sitting in Tallahassee (at that period the high court sat in various parts of the State) affirmed a judgment against the railroad company in favor of Walker & Call's client, for \$600.00 on account of the death of a slave while hired to the company, saying, in part: "The bailee of a slave upon hire is bound to bestow the degree of care and attention which a humane master would bestow on his own servant under the like circumstances." This ruling of the high court seems to be consistent with the general trend of its decisions when the welfare of slaves was an issue.

In 1856 David S. Walker was the candidate for governor of the American party, successor to the defunct Whigs, and was defeated by a small plurality by Madison S. Perry, Democrat. Walker ran considerably ahead of the electoral

ticket, pledged to ex-President Millard Fillmore. Call doubtless supported Walker in this campaign, though four years later, in a speech at St. Augustine, in, the first campaign in which his activities have been preserved to us in the public prints, he denied having been a "Know-Nothing" in 1856; which was probably more the repudiation of an uncomplimentary political appellation than a denial of the fact itself.³

The campaign of 1860 found Wilkinson Call and his brother, George W. Call in opposite camps. George Call being a leader of the extreme State's Rights Democrats, while Wilkinson followed the lead of their uncle, ex-Governor R. K. Call, the recognized leader of Union sentiment in Florida, in the support of "the Constitutional Union Party, with no platform but the 'Union, the Constitution and the enforcement of laws'," with John Bell for President, and Edward Everett for Vice-President. The state convention of this party met at Quincy June 27, 1860, and adopted resolutions reported by Wilkinson Call as chairman of the Committee on Federal Relations, which, in addition to endorsing the principles and the candidates of the national party, asserted the equality and sovereignty of the states, and contained the following veiled threat of the secession the party was vainly trying to forestall :

Resolved, That if the next or any future Congress shall pass laws directly or indirectly prohibiting slavery in the Territories, and the Supreme Court of the United States shall declare such laws to be Constitutional, the safety and honor of the Southern States will require of them extreme and decided measures, That in an exigency so important no party should prescribe the course to be pursued, but a convention of the people of the State should be called to decide and adopt such measures as may be necessary.⁴

The State gave a decisive majority to the

³St. Augustine *Examiner*, Sept. 22, 1860.

⁴*National National Intelligencer*, Washington, July 10, 1860.

Southern Democratic ticket headed by John C. Breckenridge and Joseph Lane. Wilkinson Call, as a candidate for elector on the Constitutional Union ticket, made a thorough canvass of the State, speaking at numerous meetings, and laying the foundations for his later success, in his reputation as a forceful and eloquent speaker.

The Republicans having carried the election nationally, with Abraham Lincoln as their candidate for president, the Florida Legislature promptly called a state convention to consider withdrawal from the Union.⁵ The resolution to this effect was reported in the Senate by George W. Call, now a senator from the Nassau County district (Fernandina) and chairman of the Senate Committee on Federal Relations.⁶

On December 17, 1860, a mass meeting was held in the capitol building to nominate delegates from Leon County to the approaching convention. After voting down a resolution to submit the action of the convention to the people for ratification, the following candidates for delegates were nominated: Wm. G. M. Davis, John Beard, Geo. T. Ward, James Kirksey and James V. Jones.

A dissatisfied group met later, and named the following as a "People's ticket," pledged to submit the action of the convention to a popular vote: Geo. T. Ward, Wilkinson Call, M. D. Papy, G. W. Parkhill, and D. P. Hogue. Mr. Papy declined the nomination, having previously declined a place on the ticket first named.⁷

⁵The republicans had no electoral ticket in the Southern states. Unionists in Florida, and the more moderate secessionists, generally supported the Bell and Everett ticket, giving it a strength in Florida far out of proportion to its vote nationally.

⁶Florida Senate Journal, 1860.

⁷December 20, 1860.

Wilkinson Call made a number of speeches in various places before this special election, but the secession sentiment, both within and without Leon County, was too strong to combat successfully, and on January 10, 1861, Florida withdrew from the Union, declaring herself a free and independent nation. Shortly thereafter she joined the Southern Confederacy.

Though the Call brothers had been on opposite sides politically before the die was cast, each volunteered his services to his State and to the Confederacy when war came. George W. Call's military career was gallant but brief. He was killed at Seven Pines May 31, 1862, three weeks after being promoted to the rank of major.⁸ General R. K. Call died September 14 following, heart-broken by the calamity he was powerless to prevent, but following his State when the majority had spoken.

Records of Florida soldiers of the War are unfortunately far from complete. It is surmised that many of these records were destroyed when the Confederacy collapsed, and before the Federal troops entered Tallahassee, in order to destroy evidence that might be used in "treason" trials then both threatened and feared. Other records possibly were lost or destroyed during the carpet-bagger regime, from 1868 to 1876. A great deal of data collected in after years by Robert E. Lee Camp, United Confederate Veterans, in Jacksonville, were lost in the great fire of 1901. Two years later, the Legislature made an appropriation of \$5,000.00 for the purpose, and Governor William S. Jennings, employed the late Fred L. Robertson to procure and compile all available information relating to Florida's part in all past wars.⁹ This painstaking work was published

⁸*Soldiers of Florida*, page 95.

⁹*Id.*, Preface and page

under the title of "Soldiers of Florida," ending with the Spanish-American war of 1898.

From this publication (page 55) we learn that on September 21, 1861, the Concordia Infantry, Wilk Call, Captain, was mustered in by Francis L. Dancy, Adjutant and Inspector General, for six or twelve months service. The name indicates that the company was recruited principally in the Concord vicinity, in the northeastern part of Gadsden County. Apparently it disbanded at the end of six months, most of the men re-enlisting in Company A, 6th Florida Regiment, and in the Fifth Florida Cavalry.

Records in the War Department in Washington show that Call previously tendered a company at Tallahassee on June 27, 1861, for six months service in the Confederate States Army, and that he was appointed Captain, Adjutant General's Department, Provisional Army, Confederate States, to take rank May 1, 1864.¹⁰

Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Series I, Vol. XXXV, Part II, p. 23.) contains the following order:

Adjutant and Inspector General's Office
Richmond, June 7, 1864

Capt. W. Call, assistant adjutant general, will proceed without delay to Lake City, Fla., and report to Gen. Anderson, commanding, for assignment to duty in the District of Florida. By command of the Secretary of War.

J N O .
Assistant Adjutant General.

Other official correspondence of this period shows Call to have served as Acting Assistant Adjutant General of the district of Florida, and that he was stationed at Camp Melton, near Jacksonville. He participated in the battle of Olustee, on February 20,

¹⁰Letter from War Department, Adjutant General's Office, Washington, to Secretary Florida Pension Board, Sept. 19, 1933.

1864, and appears to have had the confidence and esteem of the Confederate commander, General Joseph Finnegan.¹¹ Olustee, though a minor battle with respect to the number of men involved, is credited with the highest percentage of casualties, both Union and Confederate, of any battle of the war. It was an important Confederate victory over superior numbers, also, and it was the first of the two battles (Natural Bridge, 16 miles southwest of Tallahassee, fought March 6, 1865, being the second) that saved from capture by Union troops the one Southern capital which flew the Confederate flag until the end of hostilities.

Possibly Call's last official act as a Confederate officer was to endorse, "Official, W. Call, A. A. G." on a copy of a telegram dated April 27, 1865 (now in the possession of Mrs. Leroy Collins, of Tallahassee) incorporating General Order No. 18, Headquarters Army of the Tennessee, near Greensboro, N. C., signed by Howell Cobb, Jr., A. D. C. and P. C. Warwick, A. D. C., in which it was directed that the Confederate troops in the district surrender on the same terms granted General Joseph E. Johnston's army at Greensboro, and advising that Florida troops west of the Apalachicola River were privileged to surrender on the same terms. At that time Call was Assistant Adjutant General of Sub District No. 1, Military District of Florida. He was paroled at Tallahassee, May 13, 1865, his description on parole being stated as follows: height 5 feet 11 inches; light hair, light eyes, light complexion.¹²

Seven days later, United States troops took peaceable possession of the Florida capital, and the war of secession became history.

¹¹Letter from A. L. Woodward, of Monticello in *Florida Times-Union*, August 27, 1910.

¹²Letter from War Department. (20)

Whether Capt. Call's service in the Adjutant General's Department was wholly in Florida, or whether he was for a time one of the Assistants Adjutant General on duty in Richmond, is not shown clearly from available records. That he was for a time in Richmond seems probable, and we can not imagine any other basis for the somewhat curious statements which we find in several biographical sketches of Call implying that he "served as," or "attained the rank of" Adjutant General, in the Confederate army, since General Samuel Cooper was the only Adjutant General of the Confederate States Army, under either the provisional or the permanent government.¹³ It would be unfair and unwarranted to suggest that Call purposely misled anyone as to his actual rank in the Confederate army, but as an astute politician, it is doubtful if he ever bothered to correct any misapprehension that tended to magnify his own importance, at any time or in any way.

In line with his general policy of reconstruction, President Johnson appointed Judge William Marvin, of Key West, a Unionist who had refused to follow his state into secession, as provisional governor of Florida and at an election held under Marvin's orders, David S. Walker was elected governor of the State; chosen unanimously to the office for which he had been defeated ten years before. Walker, also a Union man in sentiment, had yielded his personal views to the will of the State, and had continued on

¹³Adjutants General take varying ranks. General Cooper had the rank of full General in the Confederate service; as Adjutant General of the United States Army, he had ranked as Colonel. This office now carries the rank of Major General. In Florida and most other states at this time, the Adjutant General ranks as Brigadier General. Many Assistants Adjutant General during the Civil War ranked as Captains.

the State Supreme Court after Florida joined the Confederacy.

The ensuing Legislature during prolonged balloting which resulted in the election of Governor Marvin to the United States Senate for the short term, took one ballot for the long term which resulted in the election of Call over his old commander General J. Patton Anderson, by a vote of 51 to 21.

Officially, at least, Call then lacked a few days of being 32 years old, and even allowing a little latitude in the matter of age, was still one of the youngest men ever to be elected United States senator, and possibly the first Ex-Confederate to attain this distinction. It proved an empty honor, however, except as it laid the foundation for future successes, since the "radical" Republican congress, at loggerheads with the President on reconstruction policies, refused to seat either Call or Marvin; to the especial humiliation and resentment of the latter, who found this treatment his reward for having been loyal to the Union during the four years of war.

Though Call was denied the seat in the United States Senate to which he had been duly and legally elected, he put in his time to good advantage, politically, while waiting the Senate's action on his credentials. On May 1, 1866, he attended a dinner in New York City in honor of James Brooks, who had been deprived of his seat in Congress, in which, as a spokesman for the South, Call said:

We have buried our dead—the past, with its recollections, has gone. * * * We have accepted the invitation to return to the Union * * * We come with untarnished faith to maintain the American Union and the Constitution of the United States * * * We come with no reservations * * * The South will shed her blood as freely for the flag of the United States as in the past she has misguidedly shed her blood against it. (cheers.)⁴⁴

⁴⁴Tallahassee *Sentinel*, May 1, 1866.

Two foreign wars since then have made his prophecy history, but in his re-avowal of his old Unionist convictions the young senator must have gone far beyond the Southern thought of that day. He was under the necessity of combating a very different conclusion prevalent in the North at the time, and supported by such evidence as the testimony of John W. Ricks, collector of customs in Florida, a few weeks earlier, to the effect that "the general impression among the people was that they had been overcome, but not conquered. There has been no material change for the better in any portion of the State lately in rebellion."¹⁵

In August, 1866, Call attended a national convention of Conservatives in Philadelphia, as a delegate from Middle Florida. He served on a committee on Resolutions and Addresses, and was chosen also as a member of the National Union Executive Committee.¹⁶

Governor Marvin's credentials as a senator from Florida were presented on January 19, 1866; Call's on June 6, following.¹⁷ On March 27, 1867, still hopeful that his election might be recognized, Call issued, from Washington, a lengthy address to "The People of Florida," advising submission to the reconstruction acts, even to giving negro suffrage a trial. In this address Call said, in part:

In my opinion we should submit without opposition to the Congressional Law and conform to its requirements. * * * In my judgment, the only practical question for us to consider is whether we will be dragged in the career of the Republic by the chains of a relentless destiny or * * * participate in its rights? We should conform to the Congressional policy as it is, if for no other reason, yet, while we have no power to change it in the direction of leniency, we may have the power to change it for the worse. * * * I venture little in stating that the political

1

5

Weekly (New York) March 31, 1866.¹⁶Davis, *Civil War Reconstruction* page 434.¹⁷*Congressional Biography*(1927)page285.

feeling against the South is more intense than it has heretofore been. There has been a continual progress in the direction of severity.¹³

But efforts at conciliation were in vain, as no recognition was given by the Senate to the claims of either Call or Marvin, and soon thereafter there appeared in the *Floridian* of Tallahassee, the issue of May 3, 1867: "Hon. Wilk. Call returned to his home in this City Wednesday last after some weeks in Washington in behalf of the interests of the State."

On August 24, of the same year, Call delivered a long address before a Leon County convention and the same paper (Sept. 3, 1867) lists him amongst the speakers at "The Club Meeting" on the previous Saturday evening. Writing from Tallahassee a month later (October 4, 1867) to "Messrs. Alvin May, John Townsend and others," he advised against the holding of a State Constitutional Convention, saying in part :

In view of the now apparent fact that the carrying into effect of the reconstruction measures of Congress, commonly called the "Military Bill" and the "Enabling Act," is the complete political subjection of the white people of the South to the blacks * * * in view of the fact that the white race is and of right should be the governing power of every state in the union * * * I state to you as I declared in a speech lately made to the Conservative Union Convention, assembled in this city, that every means within our power should be used to defeat the convention, without regard to consequences, for surely no greater evil could befall this country than the carrying into effect of these measures.

In spite of Democratic opposition, however, the convention was held and the constitution of 1868 was adopted, being superceded by the present constitution, framed in 1885, with its numerous amendments. In considering the history of this period in Florida, it must be borne in mind that by "Conservative" is meant "Democrat," and by "Radical" is meant "Republican." The white voters of Florida, many of them of Whig antecedents, were not quite ready

¹³Tallahassee *Floridian*, April 12, 1867.

to adopt the name "Democrat," which many of them had despised in years gone, nor were they willing to concede to their carpet-bag, negro and scalawag opponents a party name with even (to them) the then limited respectability of the term "republican."

This letter apparently closes Call's political career as a resident of Tallahassee; It must have been shortly thereafter that he removed to Jacksonville his second and last Florida home. Differences growing out of the administration of Governor Call's estate led to a permanent estrangement between Wilkerson Call and his uncle's heirs, and his visits to his old home town became more and more political or professional in their nature.

Though now a private citizen, Call, while a resident of Middle Florida, had acquired a political eminence that followed him into East Florida readily, and in 1868 he was a delegate to the National Democratic Convention, serving again on the Committee on Resolutions. He spoke also at a ratification meeting winning the following praise from the St. Augustine Examiner (August 1, 1868) :

We have just received the eloquent appeal in behalf of the prostrate South of one of Florida's distinguished sons, Hon. Wilk. Call made at a ratification meeting held in New York shortly after the nomination of Seymour and Blair. We can only say that it was manly, patriotic, dignified and comprehensive, an effort creditable even to the 'Eloquent Floridian' as he is justly termed, by our Northern Exchanges.

On August 1, 1868, "Colonel" Call (by this time he had received the usual complimentary rank conferred by their admirers upon lawyers in politics) addressed the State Convention in Tallahassee, giving a full report of the National Convention and praising highly its nominees. He was given a tremendous ovation, according to friendly newspapers of the day, and delivered a long speech, casting aside to a great extent any efforts at conciliation, and bitterly denouncing the Republican administration

then in power, as "Jacobins." and singling out the principal officials as "a half-dozen strangers from other States, remarkable for their ignorance and stupidity." Leaving Florida for Georgia, metaphorically, he referred to the celebrated Ashburn case in the following words :

The history of no country and of no age presents a more barbarous spectacle than the treatment of the citizens of Columbus who were falsely accused of the death of the miserable wretch, Ashburn.

Astute politician he may have been, but Call was not enough of a prophet when he spoke these words to see a shadow across his path, a quarter of a century away.

As a Democratic candidate for presidential elector, Call spoke for the ticket throughout the State, being one of the speakers at the rally in Marianna October 20th. A special effort had been made by the Democratic Committee to get the colored voters to attend this speaking and barbecue dinner. But the "colored brother" seems to have been conspicuous by his absence, possibly offended that separate tables were provided for white and colored voters, but deterred also, according to Contemporary accounts, by a skillfully circulated story that the Democrats were inviting the negroes to this function for the purpose of poisoning them all.²⁰

Governor Harrison Reed, Republican, charged Call with having sought Republican support for the United States senatorship in 1867, to which Call published a scathing denial, further denouncing Reed and asserting that he considered the carpet-bag governor less desirable as a man and as an official than some of his negro appointees.²¹

²⁰*Id.*, August 11, 1868.

²⁰*Id.*, October 20, 1868.

²¹*Id.*, September 15, 1868, reprinted from Jacksonville "Mercury."

Taking no chances on the State's giving the National Democratic ticket a majority, the Republican Legislature fell back on the antiquated but entirely constitutional plan of selecting the three electors without a popular vote, choosing of course the three Republican candidates. Four years later Call was again a Democratic candidate for elector, (the state going Republican again in the general election) and in 1876 was once more nominated by his party for elector, besides serving as a delegate in the National Democratic Convention which nominated Samuel J. Tilden for president and he served also as a member of the Democratic National Executive Committee. In those days, although presidential electors merely registered the wishes of the people, as now, State conventions chose candidates for elector with great care, as Florida was a doubtful state. Call's eloquence and persuasiveness as a public speaker doubtless influenced his selection as an electoral candidate by the Constitutional Union party in 1860, and by the Democratic party in every election during the period of reconstruction.

In 1876 ("The Sentinel," Tallahassee, issue of October 7) we are treated to the following facetious reference to Call, from the Republican side:

*"Chronicles of Florida, Chapter I. * * * 4. And Wilk, the smooth-tongue Apollo, the words of whose mouth flow as honey, even as honey from the rocks. The same Wilk that defies Grant and his satraps and the armies of the nation."*

Call's candidacy for presidential elector in 1876 almost made him one of the most important men in the country, as one more electoral vote would have chosen Samuel J. Tilden president of the United States instead of Rutherford B. Hayes, and would have restored the Democratic party to power nationally in 1877 instead of 1885. So many volumes

have been written on the election of 1876, it is a temptation to comment on it here at length. But we must content ourselves with noting that a majority of the State Canvassing Board and the outgoing Republican governor, Marcellus L. Stearns, declared elected and issued certificates to the four Republican candidates for elector, while the third member of the Canvassing Board, the incoming Democratic Governor, George F. Drew, and the newly elected Democratic Legislature, recognized the Democratic electors, Robert Bullock, Wilkinson Call, R. B. Hilton and J. E. Yonge, whose right to act was upheld, furthermore, by the Circuit Court of Leon County, in quo warranto proceedings, the judgment given by this court not having been reversed by any Appellate Court, to this day. But the return for Hayes was sustained by the United States Senate and by the specially created Electoral Commission (the House of Representatives dissenting) and all other contested returns submitted by Congress to the Electoral Commission being similarly disposed of, Hayes was declared elected. One circumstance of the Florida case will, however, be mentioned here.

Apparently every case referred to the Electoral Commission was decided by a vote of eight to seven, and both critics and defenders of this Commission have seemingly fallen into the assumption that in each case Joseph P. Bradley, (the fifth Supreme Court Justice on the Commission) voted with his Republican colleagues. But there seems to have been one exception, which we may note here, at the risk of, straying somewhat from the proper limitations of this paper.

The Electoral Commission, after first determining its general powers, adopted the following order in the Florida case:

"Ordered, That no evidence will be received or considered by the commission which was not submit-

ted to the joint convention of the two Houses by the President of the Senate with the different certificates, except such as relates to the eligibility of F. C. Humphries, one of the electors.”

This order having been adopted by a vote of 8 Republicans for, to 7 Democrats against, the Republican Commissioners lost interest in the eligibility of Humphries, and it devolved upon one of the Democratic members to move that they receive the evidence on this point. On this motion, Justice Bradley voted with the seven Democratic members, the seven Republicans, other than Justice Bradley, voting in the negative. Although Justice Bradley subsequently voted with the seven other Republicans in holding the evidence against the eligibility of Humphries, to be insufficient, he should in fairness be credited with casting one vote contrary to the apparent interest of his party's nominee; the more so, as Justice Bradley has been condemned for partnership in these proceedings more than any other member of the Electoral Commission. It should be remembered, also, that the exclusion of a single vote for Hayes would have made the electoral vote a tie, and the House of Representatives, with a majority of the State delegations Democratic, would have elected Tilden president.²²

In the meantime Call had been defeated for the senatorship in 1875. Neither the Democratic nor the Republican parties had a clear majority in the legislature that year, and the balloting was prolonged, David S. Walker, Wm. D. Bloxham, John L. Crawford, Robert Bullock, John Anderson, and

² ² *Annual Cyclopaedia* (Appleton's) for 1876 and 1877 contain very full reports of the disputed presidential election, and of the conflicting returns from Florida, as well as the contested election for the governorship of the state. The latter (Drew vs. State Canvassing Board) is also set out fully in 16th Florida Supreme Court *Reports*.

Wilkinson Call being amongst the democrats voted for. Call, indeed, at one time received 35 votes, only five short of election. The contest ended February 4, 1875, on the 24th ballot, when a sudden break to Charles W. Jones, a Democratic representative from Escambia County, gave him the victory over Horatio Bisbee, Republican, by a vote of 40 to 30, a few scattering to other candidates.

Despite the bitter partisanship of that day, there was a general feeling of relief when the deadlock was broken, and Republican papers joined with Democratic organs in praising the personal fitness of the new Senator, and a mass meeting in his honor, held in Gallie's Hall, in Tallahassee, several nights after the election, was attended by Governor Stearns, United States Senator S. B. Conover, and other leading Republicans, as well as Democrats. The meeting was presided over by ex-Governor Walker, while Call and Colonel Bisbee also proved themselves good losers by delivering addresses.

Governor Walker's graceful speech on this occasion was all the more creditable to him, as he had, in fact, received a majority of votes on one of the joint ballots, only to have the prize snatched from him when a Republican representative from his own county, who had given him the necessary vote, found himself unable to withstand the storm on his own side of the chamber, and declared that his vote was intended for "Samuel Walker" before the result could be announced.²³ This defeat of Walker was

²³*Floridian*, *Legislative Journals of 1875*, and "Carpethag Rule in Florida" by John Wallace (colored), State Senator from Leon County at that time. It is singular that Wallace, in his exhaustive work covering the period 1865-1876, does not once mention Call's name. Even later writers of Call's own race and party, give him scant mention in their formal histories. The one history—and a very authoritative one—which mentions Wilkinson Call's career prior to his first election to the United States Senate in 1865, confuses his position with that of his brother, Major Geo. W. Call, and mentions him, casually and incorrectly, as a leader in the secession movement.

probably a "lucky break" for Call. Had the former Governor gone to the United States Senate from Florida in 1875, it is altogether unlikely that his younger relative and former partner would have been chosen to the other seat four years later, or at any time.

If Wilkinson Call "took stock" politically in the spring of 1877, the process was not inspiring. Elected United States senator in 1865, and arbitrarily denied his seat by a hostile senate; defeated in his effort ten years later to be elected senator again; defeated for presidential elector three times, and his vote rejected by the senate and the Electoral ticket when that vote would have put his party back in the White House; such a series of disasters would have finished a less determined politician. It may have been fortunate for Call that there was no senator to be elected from Florida in 1877.

(This will be concluded in the next issue.)