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WILKINSON CALL, SOLDIER AND  
SENATOR

By ALBERT HUBBARD ROBERTS

PART II <sup>1</sup>.

After the severe strain of the election of 1876 it was perhaps well that the Democratic party, now returned to power in the government of Florida, was not burdened with the selection of a United States senator in 1877. Two years later, with a majority of two to one over their Republican opponents, the Democratic members of the Legislature went into caucus to nominate a candidate for senator without the necessity of seeking votes from the opposition. On the seventeenth ballot Wilkinson Call, who had not fallen below thirty votes on any ballot, received forty-nine votes, only two short of the required two-thirds majority, and his nomination was then made unanimous; the name of his principal competitor, General Robert Bullock, of Ocala, being graciously withdrawn.

At noon the following day (January 21, 1879) Call was elected by the two houses of the Legislature, receiving a majority in each branch, a total of 69 votes to 22 for Senator Conover, with 8 scattering. The following day Call was introduced to the houses in joint session, and in an eloquent speech expressed his appreciation of the honor, pledging his efforts to the advancement of the people of all sections of the

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1. Part I of this paper, which appeared in the last number of the *Quarterly*, recorded Call's birth in Russellville, Kentucky; the removal, in his boyhood, to Tallahassee; his early legal and political activities; his service in the Confederate States army; his election to the United States Senate in 1865, and the refusal of that body to seat him; his removal to Jacksonville in 1867 or 1868; his defeat for United States senator in 1875; and his successive defeats for presidential elector on the Democratic ticket in 1868, 1872, and 1876. In connection with the latter, on page 113 of that number of the *Quarterly*, "Electoral ticket" should be "Electoral Commission."

State; to preserve the sovereign right of the people to the control of their government; to protect the citizen from injustice under the form of law; to engraft on the Southern population fellow citizens from other sections; to the repeal of reconstruction measures; and the removal of the courts from partisan influences. In conclusion he said,

Connected with those who have passed away and who bore no undistinguished part in the early settlement and traditions of the state \* \* \* a citizen of the state from my earliest childhood, always receiving marks of the attachment and sympathy of her people, I am bound to her by the strongest ties of affection. No object lies nearer to my heart than that of promoting the advancement of her people and whatever shall be for the interest of the State.<sup>2</sup>

The Tallahassee *Floridian* (Jan. 21, 1879) in an editorial presumably written by Captain Charles E. Dyke, the leading journalist in Florida at the time, said, in part,

Mr. Call has been a faithful worker in the cause of reform. His ability is unquestioned. Under the "Johnson reconstruction" he was elected to the senate along with Governor Marvin, but was not allowed to take his seat. He goes now with a commission that will not be questioned; and we predict that he will make his mark in that body.

Commenting upon the election of Call with more restrained enthusiasm the Florida Mirror, published at Fernandina, which had supported General Bullock after its fellow-townsmen, former Senator David Levy Yulee had declined to allow the use of his name, said in its issue of January 25, 1879,

On the 21st instant the legislature elected Colonel Wilkinson Call to succeed S. B. Conover in the United States senate. Colonel Call is a showy and rather pleasing speaker; a man of industrious habits. We sincerely hope he may be able to lift Florida from the depths to which our representation hitherto in the Senate has sunk the state. He is not our first choice, still, from Conover to Call is a very perceptible gain.

Mr. Call is one of many who might sing with unctious-  
"This is the way I long have sought,  
"And mourned because I found it not."

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<sup>2</sup> Florida legislative journals, 1879.

The same paper; in its issue of March 22, 1879, reported the appointment of the new Senator to the Committees on Pensions, Patents, and Enrolled Bills, and reprinted the following laudatory editorial from the *Ocala Banner*.

If there were any real grounds of opposition to Hon. Wilkinson Call's election to the Senate-any real disappointment felt in any part of the state over his election, that disappointment will no longer be felt after reading his masterly speech in the Senate on the infringement of the personal liberty of the citizen. It is a scholarly production, and will place Mr. Call among the conspicuous members from the south. His array of facts were overwhelming and unanswerable.

Also an editorial from the *Union*, published at Jacksonville,

Our calls are numerous for Hon. Wilk. Call's great speech, recently delivered in the senate. We are unable to supply the demand as we have no copies of our paper left which contained it. We had a few copies sent us by the senator, but they are constantly in the hands of someone. We have promised to lend them. to four or five different men as soon as possible to do so.

To this, the *Florida Mirror* added its own comment.

We have not seen a copy of the speech, and the meagre extracts in the papers are not what we want to judge the performance by. We hope the senator's modesty will yield so far as to permit his sending us a complete copy.

The concluding words may not have been entirely devoid of irony, as "the Senator's modesty" had not been sufficient to keep him silent during the then traditional probationary period of a newly elected member.

When Call entered the Senate, he found John David Walker, his cousin, and like himself a native of Russellville, Kentucky, beginning a six year's term as a Senator from Arkansas, whither his family had removed while he was a young boy, as Call's family

had moved from the same vicinity to the Territory of Florida.<sup>3</sup>

Senator Call's first term, during which time the executive department of the Federal government was under Republican control, seems to have been relatively uneventful, and his re-election in 1885, without serious opposition, as it was a well established Democratic policy to give its public officials a second term. On January 20 he received a majority of the votes of each house, a total of 75, to 21 for Jonathan C. Greeley, and 4 for D. L. McKinnon. The following day he again expressed to a joint session of the Legislature his thanks for the honor conferred upon him, referring particularly to the fact that the Democratic party, for the first time in a quarter of a century, was shortly to resume executive direction of national affairs.

Questions of inter-state commerce and of transportation, questions of public health, of public education, of the general diffusion of knowledge, of reciprocal trade and treaties between adjacent countries, the improvement of the waterways of the country, all were mentioned by the speaker as of primary importance. Referring to racial relations, he said,

We have been confronted in the Southern States with questions of fearful consequences to both races of their people. These have sought to be determined by the interference of the federal power instead of leaving the adjustment of the relations of the two races to the states, and the softening influence of time and the employments of industry. This mistaken policy will happily pass away with the inauguration of a president and a party who have faith in a government of the people, and recognize the beneficence of the distribution of power which leaves to the people of the states the regulation and control of their own domestic affairs. There never was, and there never will be any danger in leaving to the people of the states the interests of their own people. If this were not true, our whole system of government would be a failure.

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<sup>3</sup> Congressional Biography : *Call, Wilkinson, and Walker, John David*. Senator Call also was a nephew of General Richard Keith Call, an early delegate in Congress from Florida and later governor of the Territory.

At the conclusion of the address the legislature extended its thanks to Senator Call in a resolution offered by Representative J. E. Yonge, of Escambia.<sup>4</sup> That occasion was a high point in the life of Wilkinson Call. It is true that twelve years in the Senate still lay before him, but his re-election six years later was to be amid circumstances that marked it as his last.

Probably Call's greatest constructive service to the country as a whole during the entire period of his senatorial service, was his support of the act creating the first Inter-State Commerce Commission. Speaking at length on this bill on January 12, 1887, he said, in part,

Representing a terminal state, approving the policy of the bill, the spirit of the bill, and objecting most earnestly as I do to the implied legalization of the bill of \$3,000,000,000 of fraudulent debt upon the people of this country and \$300,000,000 of annual taxation for nothing, objecting to legalizing this enormous and oppressive taxation upon the people, I still approve the policy, the great features of the measure, and expressing my dissent upon these subjects I now expect to give the bill ultimately my support.<sup>5</sup>

With Federal regulation of interstate commerce so long an accepted policy of government, we may remember that at this time there was strong opposition to the measure, and that Southern Democrats of this period were particularly opposed to anything which they regarded as undue extension of Federal power.

Likewise, Call was considerably in advance of the strict states-rights policies of the day in advocacy of Federal aid to common schools. It was in a debate on this subject, on February 8, 1888, that he irritated Senator Isham G. Harris, the veteran Democrat, of Tennessee, into exclaiming :

<sup>4</sup> Florida legislative journals, 1885.

<sup>5</sup> This and subsequent quotations from Call's speeches, unless otherwise noted, are from "Speeches of Hon. Wilkinson Call in the U. S. Senate," in the Jacksonville Public Library, consisting of reprints from the *Congressional Record*. Presumably selected by Senator Call for this single bound volume.

The senator adopts a method in this discussion somewhat peculiar, it is said, to New England. I do not know whether it is or not, but instead of answering a question so plain that no human being can misunderstand it, he asks another wholly foreign to the subject.

Speaking on "The Tariff" October 12, 1888, three or four weeks before the general election of that year which resulted in the defeat of President Cleveland, (whose tariff message a year before, together with his side remark as to where the presidency might go if the country did not approve his stand, had made this question the overshadowing issue of the campaign), Senator Call said,

I am in favor of a reasonable tariff. There is no question of free trade here. \* \* \* I am for taxing the luxuries of life for the support of the Government to the highest extent possible and exempting the necessities of life from taxation. \* \* \*

\* \* \* All wise public economics and policies of state \* \* \* must center in such economic forces as will result in such a distribution of the results of labor, of aggregate production, as will give to each man all the necessities and as much of the comforts of life as may be possible.

Allowing for crudity of expression, this formula stated a principle recognized much farther and more clearly now than when the words were uttered, forty-five years ago. It may have been to Call's injury, though not to his discredit that when he was the nearest to right, he was the more in advance of his environment and of his times.

On February 20, 1890, Call addressed the Senate on the murder of Deputy United States Marshal Saunders, near Quincy,<sup>6</sup> and on June 10 of the same year, on the subject "Treasury Notes and Silver Bullion." In the latter speech he declared, "The free and unlimited coinage of the precious metals

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<sup>6</sup> It is not clear from this speech just what caused this homicide. Presumably it resulted, either directly or indirectly, from the then disturbed political conditions in Leon, Gadsden, Jefferson and Madison counties especially, which occasioned a special communication from President Benjamin Harrison, to his Attorney General, under date of April 24, 1890. *See Messages and Papers of the Presidents.* Vol. IX, pages 104-105.

is the only proper solution of the financial troubles which now rest upon the country." He did not, however, commit himself to any fixed ratio between gold and silver coinage. He had, indeed, opposed the idea of fixed ratio in a speech on "The Treasury Surplus" four years earlier (July 30, 1886).

Mr. Call had scarcely taken his seat in the Senate for a second term (or, perhaps, we should say that he had scarcely discarded his shoes and decorated his desk with senatorial feet protected from the surrounding atmosphere only by a pair of blue cotton socks, to record here an informality currently credited to him at the time) when he began an active warfare against certain railroad land grants in Florida which was to overshadow practically everything else he did, or failed to do, during this term. Beginning with the avowed intention of protecting individuals who had erected homes on lands granted to several railroad companies in Florida, his activities expanded into numerous efforts to forfeit the grants themselves as fraudulent. On January 28, 1886, he introduced the following resolution,

**Resolved**, that all railroad land grants heretofore made where the land was not earned by the completion of the line of railroad and the performance of the conditions required by the granting act within the time required therein, and where the time has not been extended by an act of Congress, or shall not hereafter be extended, shall be declared forfeited and opened to homestead entry and cash entry in small bodies, securing to actual settlers the preferred right in all cases to make entries of their homes to the extent of 160 acres, and confirming to all purchases of town sites, where lots have been sold and improvements made, their title to the same.

It would be useless to discuss this question in detail now, or to attempt to quote from the numerous speeches made by Call on this subject over a period covering his second and a part of his third term in the Senate. No direct results came of the long agitation, of any great public benefit. It was virtually a lone fight, and Call himself was probably the chief

beneficiary, politically, for a season, though the animosities thus aroused contributed largely to his eventual defeat. Four years after his retirement from the Senate in 1897, Governor William S. Jennings stopped the issuance of deeds of public lands and land grant corporations; and in 1907, under the administration of Governor N. B. Broward, with Mr. Jennings then serving as counsel for the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund compromise settlements were made of outstanding claims against the Trustees, and the principal land grants for which deeds had not been issued, were assigned to the State Board of Education.<sup>7</sup>

Call's fight on the railroad land grants excited especially the opposition of William D. Chipley, of Pensacola, Vice-president and Land Commissioner of the Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad system, and a former chairman of the State Democratic Executive Committee. Early in 1890 the antagonism had reached a point where Colonel Chipley published and distributed over the State a pamphlet of 123 pages, entitled "Review of Senator Call's Record." From this lengthy document we quote the following :

Mr. Call has shown all his life as a reflected glory. As the son of his father, the nephew of his uncle, and the brother of Maj. George W. Call \* \* \* Senator Call's advancement was rendered possible by the reaction which followed the Civil war, when our people in a spirit of conciliation and submission, elected Mr. Call over the battle-scarred veteran, General Patton Anderson. His prominence is more a reproach 'upon those times than a tribute to any real worth \* \* \* His record is absolutely barren of any good. \* \* \* A more prolific creation of bills, and a more sterile result, is not exhibited on the records of Congress.

Call replied through a speech in the Senate, saying in part,

I think it is due to the people who have so often honored me with their confidence, that I should say that this pamphlet from

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<sup>7</sup> This compromise settlement removed a serious legal and financial obstacle to the state's plans for reclamation of lands in the Everglades.

the first sentence in it to the last word in it is a falsehood; that it does not contain one syllable or one word of truth; that even its commas and periods and semi-colons and quotation marks speak a falsehood.

Those who anticipated an interesting session of the Legislature of 1891 were not disappointed.

A caucus of the Democratic members met April 13, and by a vote of 56 to 41, adopted the time-honored rule of Democratic conventions requiring a two-thirds vote to make a nomination. The first ballot for a party candidate for United States senator gave Call 60 votes to 35 for ex-Governor William D. Bloxham, of Leon, while the second ballot gave Call 54, Bloxham 38, and the caucus then adjourned. Three days later, Bloxham withdrew and the Farmers Alliance, then powerful in Florida politics, put up the name of Judge James G. Speer, of Orange, who received 37 votes to 59 for Call and 2 for Bloxham. On the 23rd ballot, April 21, Call received 55 votes, Speer 41 and Bloxham 1.<sup>9</sup>

As formal balloting for senator was to begin in the Legislature that day, a committee was appointed by the caucus to so distribute the votes that no candidate would receive a majority until a Democratic nomination had been made. For that reason the official balloting, as shown in journals, does not reflect the actual strength of the candidates. Call could have been elected on any joint ballot but for the caucus agreement.

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<sup>8</sup> *Congressional Record*, June 3, 1890, in Florida State Library, Tallahassee. Whatever the fate of his bills, Call had by this time acquired some really important committee assignments, including Appropriations, Fisheries, Immigration, and Mines and Mining, as shown by the same document.

<sup>9</sup> A file of the *Daily Floridian*, of Tallahassee, covering this session (in the library of J. C. Yonge, Pensacola) contains a great deal of data concerning this memorable contest. See also *Appleton's Annual Cyclopaedia* for 1891, under article Florida, in the Florida Supreme Court Library, Tallahassee, and the Florida legislative journals, 1891.

On the 59th ballot, on May 25, Judge Speer's name was withdrawn and that of Representative D. H. Mays, of Jefferson, was presented. Mays received 42 votes to 49 for Call. On the 85th and final ballot, on May 25, Call received 52 votes to 42 for Mays and 2 for Bloxham, and the seven weeks' deadlock was ended by the Call forces carrying through a motion to adjourn the caucus *sine die*.<sup>10</sup>

Only one chance was now left to defeat Call, and that was to prevent the holding of a joint session the following day. A majority of the Senate were anti-Call men, and they quickly faded out from the Capitol, spending the night in the open, in the northern part of Leon County, and acquiring for themselves the facetious appellation, "Babes in the Woods." The Senate, upon convening the next day, ordered the sergeant-at-arms to bring in the absentees, giving him three assistants for that purpose, one of whom was Napoleon B. Broward, then sheriff of Duval county and later governor of Florida. But by this time the babes in the woods were across the Georgia line, and out of the Senate's jurisdiction.

At noon the President of the Senate (Jefferson B. Browne, of Monroe) and the remaining 14 senators, proceeded to the House of Representatives, and Call was elected on the joint ballot, receiving 51 votes to 1 for Mays. One senator, a supporter of Call's, withdrew his vote because he was paired with an absentee member. The anti-Call members of the House present, with one exception, left the chamber or refused to answer to their names.

The usual committees were appointed to notify the Governor and the Senator-elect of the results.

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<sup>10</sup> Although Call was favorable generally to the policies of the Farmers' Alliance, this organization opposed him throughout this contest. The state president of the organization, the late Robert F. Rogers. (who died in Ocala in December, 1933) was Senator from Suwannee county in the legislature of 1891.

Governor Francis P. Fleming was not friendly to Call, and the first of these committees returned in due course and "reported that they had visited the Governor's office, and did not find the Governor in;" a unique report, suggesting that probably the Governor saw them first. The second committee was more fortunate, and returned with Senator Call, who for the last time thanked the Legislature for electing him a United States senator. Probably because they were too wearied with the long struggle, none of the members moved that his address be spread on the journals.

During the entire session Call had been heavily bombarded by the opposition press, which charged him, amongst other offenses, with being the only Southern Senator to vote for "the \$200,000,000 pension steal."<sup>11</sup> He had overcome the opposition at the last, but all the circumstances pointed conclusively to this hard-won triumph as the beginning of the end.

Three days later, on May 29, the seventeen anti-Call senators returned to the Capital, where they were received enthusiastically by their sympathizers, and corrected the journal of the 26th, so as to throw all possible doubt on the legality of the senatorial election, and refusing to approve the journals of the 27th and 28th, in which disciplinary measures were threatened against the absentees.

After long consideration, Governor Fleming concluded that the election of Call was illegal and appointed former Congressman R. H. M. Davidson, of Quincy, to the supposed vacancy. The Secretary

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<sup>11</sup> *Daily Floridian*, April 30, 1891. At that time the Democratic Southern States were able to pay a mere pittance, or nothing at all, to their ex-Confederate soldiers and sailors, and were bitterly resentful at the rapidly growing roll of Union pensioners paid by the Federal government. President Cleveland's numerous vetoes of private pension bills, during his first administration, increased his popularity in the South while contributing, in the North, to his defeat for re-election in 1888. He was, however, again chosen President in 1892.

of State, John L. Crawford, a Call man with opinions of his own, refused to attach the Great Seal of the State to Davidson's commission until required to do so by the Supreme Court of Florida. (State ex rel Fleming vs. Crawford 28, Fla. 441) the court holding this duty to be purely ministerial, and not discretionary, on the part of the Secretary of State. The Attorney General, W. B. Lamar, holding with the Secretary of State, the Governor was represented in these proceedings by Fred T. Myers, of Leon, then a state senator and one of the late Babes in the Woods.<sup>12</sup> Eventually, however, Call's election was upheld by the United States Senate, which, on February 4, 1892, adopted without a record vote the unanimous report of its Committee on Privileges and Elections, in his favor.

In addition to continuing his fight on railroad land grants and the railroad interests antagonistic to him in Florida, Call made a number of speeches during his last term on currency questions, holding generally with the advocates of free silver, while professing continued admiration and respect for President Cleveland, an unflinching advocate of the gold standard, who found his second administration sadly disrupted by the troublous money question of the 1890's. Call also manifested great interest in the Cuban insurrection, offering a resolution on December 3, 1895, to accord belligerent rights to the Cuban government ; and a year later (December 9, 1896) he offered a resolution recognizing the Republic of Cuba as a free and independent government, thereby

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<sup>12</sup> Mr. Myers, for twelve years a state senator from Leon County, and a "favorite son" in the finest sense of the word, consistently opposed Senator Call's aspirations in 1891 and again in 1897. Some months before his death (in January, 1927) Mr. Myers, in conversation with the writer of this paper, made the comment that Senator Call, in a somewhat crude way had been a pioneer advocate of railroad regulation, primary nominations, and other measures which were regarded as radical at the time, but which later were accepted generally.

anticipating final action by our Government to this end by sixteen months.<sup>13</sup> In one of the last speeches he was to deliver in the Senate, (January 6, 1897) on a resolution offered by himself and adopted, to inquire into the imprisonment of an American citizen, Julio Sanguilly, by Spanish authorities in Cuba, he said in part,

While we do not advocate or desire war, we are satisfied that there are worse things than war. If any part of the country be exposed to the possible chances of injury in a condition of war it would be the peninsula of Florida, but her people are courageous, her people are a Christian people, her people sympathize with the progress of mankind, with liberal institutions, with republican governments, with patriotism, with the sentiment which would make the stars and stripes the symbol of power and protection to the citizens of the United States, wherever the sun shines.

A little melodramatic, perhaps, but not an ignoble declaration, as the curtain fell.<sup>14</sup>

Senator Call had made his own campaign in 1896, speaking for the Democratic national ticket, headed by William J. Bryan, and endeavoring to elect a majority of Call men to the legislature. He attended the Democratic state convention in Ocala, as a visitor, and spoke in all parts of the state—a losing fight from the start, as most of the newspapers were against him, and, to a large extent, the railroad and other corporate interests. Many of his old supporters were alienated by now, also, and a deficiency of really constructive statesmanship had at last proved his undoing. His record was not as bare as

<sup>13</sup> Call's bill (which became a law,) prohibiting the sale of adulterated food in the District of Columbia, may also be credited to him as an act of pioneer legislation, though its operation was confined to the Federal district.

<sup>14</sup> Senator Call also served as a member of a sub-committee of senators and representatives which visited Cuba in the winter of 1892-93, and submitted, for the Committee on Immigration, its report on "Cuba and Florida Immigration Investigation," to the Senate, on February 4, 1893. The report dealt largely with the danger of the introduction of yellow fever into Florida from Cuba. Mention should also be made of Call's successful efforts in securing Federal aid in the State's fight against the yellow fever epidemic of 1889.

his enemies painted it but he did not have much in concrete accomplishment to show his constituents for his eighteen years in the Senate. He carried his uncouthness of dress and manner to still greater extremes, causing yowls of agony from the enemy's camp which in some cases perhaps were fully as affected as Call's own antics in his efforts to emphasize his alignment with the House of Want in its eternal warfare with the House of Have.<sup>15</sup>

Call's chief journalistic supporter in this campaign, Editor Frank E. Harris, of the *Ocala Banner* (a native of Tallahassee, who died, full of years and honors only five years ago,) introducing the Senator in Ocala at a political meeting in October, 1896, answering the old question, "What has Call done?" said in part,

He has voted for every democratic measure.

He has voted against every measure that was not democratic. \* \* \*

Senator Call has succeeded in obtaining larger appropriations for public improvements in Florida than the entire aggregate amount she received in all the years before his entrance into the United States Senate.

He succeeded in having appropriated a larger sum of money for a public building in the city of Jacksonville than was obtained for Savannah by Georgia's able senators and representatives.

Through his efforts public buildings have been erected at Tallahassee, Tampa and other places. \* \* \*<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> His action in removing his collar while making a speech on a hot summer day at a country political rally, and other unconventionalities, was made the subject of a humorous editorial in the nationally prominent *Courier-Journal*, of Louisville, Kentucky, then edited by the renowned Henry W. Watterson. A present-day tradition that he wore trousers with bi-chrome patches in his campaigns, is of doubtful validity.

<sup>16</sup> The Federal building in Jacksonville, referred to by Mr. Harris, was opened in 1895 and housed the United States court, post office, custom house, etc., until the new Federal building was dedicated early in 1934. Call was not author of the bill which gave Tallahassee its federal building, erected in 1890 and still in service, but he did introduce a bill for this purpose, and he was also author of the Act passed in 1889 which made Tampa a port of entry. Tampa, then a rather insignificant town, was destined within comparatively few years to become one of the principal ports of entry in the United States.

He was the strenuous advocate of that measure the last Democratic platform "pointed to" as one of the "proudest achievements" of the Democratic party. \* \* \*

"The Democratic party has reclaimed from corporations and restored to the people, nearly one hundred million acres of valuable lands to be sacredly held as homesteads for our people, and we pledge ourselves to continue this policy until every acre of land so unlawfully held shall be reclaimed and restored to the people. \* \* \*"

What has Call not done?

He has never grown rich out of his office. \* \* \* He is as poor today as when he first entered public life. \* \* \*

What has Call done?

He has been honest. He has been faithful to his trust. He has been loyal to the Democratic party. He has been true to his friends. \* \* \*

A man whom the common people love and the corporations fear.<sup>17</sup>

There was no Democratic caucus in the legislature of 1897. William D. Chipley, now a senator from Escambia county, had become an active candidate against Call, and neither had the remotest chance of a two-thirds majority under the usual caucus rule. The legislature convened April 6, 1897, electing Charles J. Perrenot, of Santa Rosa, and D. H. Mays, of Jefferson, both avowed Chipley men, as president of the Senate and speaker of the House of Representatives respectively, and on the 20th, balloting for United States senator began, Call receiving a total of 33 votes to 24 for Chipley, 14 for George P. Raney, of Tallahassee, 12 for William A. Hocker, of Ocala, 7 for Robert A. Burford, of Ocala, and 6 scattering; total 96.<sup>18</sup>

On May 1, Call reached his maximum strength, with 41 votes, and pairs, to 33 for Chipley. Five days

<sup>17</sup> Reprinted in the Florida legislative journals, session of 1897.

<sup>18</sup> Call's term having expired March 4, 1897 before the legislature met and Congress being convened in extra-ordinary session, Governor William D. Bloxham appointed John A. Henderson of Tallahassee, to the vacancy, but his credentials were not accepted by the Senate. Colonel Henderson had served in the legislature of 1875 as a senator from Hillsborough County, and in that session had received the votes of the Democratic members for United States senator through a number of ballots. In referring to this (page 111, of the January *Quarterly*.) his name was incorrectly given as John Anderson.

later Chipley nosed into first place, with a vote of 36 to Call's 35, and the old senator, complying with his promise to his friends at the outset, reluctantly abandoned the fight. The following day his name was withdrawn and that of Representative John N. C. Stockton, of Duval, put up in his stead, Call urging his friends to support Stockton. But it is doubtful if he ever fully forgave the supporters who insisted upon his withdrawal.<sup>19</sup>

We may wonder whether Call, with his dreams of another term in the United States senate ended, went back in memory twenty-nine years and recalled the speech in the same Capitol in which he came so valiantly to the defense of "the citizens of Columbus, falsely accused of the murder of the miserable wretch, Ashburn." If so, the echo of his words must have mocked him; for the outstanding figure amongst those citizens of Columbus, had been William Dudley Chipley.

The rest of the senatorial contest of 1897 is not the story of Call, but the story of Chipley, who, with an actual majority of the votes cast for him on the final ballot (May 14, 1897,) saw the prize snatched from his grasp by the change of votes during the verification of the roll call, the final official vote giving the senatorship to Stephen R. Mallory by a vote of 53 to 44 for Chipley, and 1 for Call. Mallory, a son of a former senator from Florida who later became Confederate Secretary of the Navy, was a fellow townsman of Chipley, but the men were political enemies and by no means personal friends.<sup>20</sup> He had

<sup>19</sup> Though Call lived for 13 years after this defeat, no other senator from Florida prior to his death had served as long as he. Since that time his record has been eclipsed by only one other Florida senator (Duncan U. Fletcher, now serving his fifth consecutive term), while the present junior senator Park Trammell, is the only other Floridian to be elected three times.

<sup>20</sup> Mallory had served in the national House of Representatives from 1891 to 1895, and had been defeated for a third term principally through the opposition of Chipley.

been selected the night before the final ballot by a conference of anti-Chipley members, and was elected, amidst scenes of the wildest disorder, without being formally placed in nomination.

Chipley himself is said to have been the calmest man present at the fateful last ballot, and it was Chipley who offered the formal motion to adjourn over the week-end after the Senate had resumed its separate session. The following day (Saturday) he and his friends sought to forget the turmoil and the disappointments of politics in the beauties of Wakulla Spring, and its sylvan setting.

Call's friends in the house passed a resolution through that body requesting the governor to name him as commissioner to adjust the Indian War Claims of the State of Florida, but the resolution was defeated in the senate. Call had been criticized severely both in 1891 and 1897 for his alleged ignorance in handling this subject in the senate. The majority of a special committee appointed by the legislature of 1891 had held, the criticisms to be unfounded.<sup>21</sup>

Given a great ovation and reception by his constituents upon his return to Pensacola after the legislative session, Chipley expressed satisfaction on having driven Senator Call from public life, and with him, John N. C. Stockton.<sup>22</sup>

While Call was not seriously considered for the senate in 1899, he received 8 votes on the first ballot, and 6 on the second, which resulted in the election of

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<sup>21</sup> Florida legislative journals, 1891 and 1897.

<sup>22</sup> Pensacola *Daily News*, June 8, 1897. Chipley was very popular in West Florida, and his return to Pensacola from Tallahassee, after the adjournment of the legislature, was more like that of a conqueror than of a candidate who had suffered a tragic defeat.

James P. Taliaferro,<sup>23</sup> of Jacksonville, as successor to Senator Samuel Pasco, of Monticello. Chipley's death, after a brief illness, in Washington on December 1, 1897, had ended the hopes of his friends that he might eventually be chosen a senator from Florida.

In 1902 the first state-wide Democratic primary election was held, and Call announced his candidacy against Senator Mallory, but later withdrew.<sup>24</sup> In 1904, however, he made an active campaign against Senator Taliaferro, John N. C. Stockton and Governor W. S. Jennings. Though he spoke over the State with much of his old fire, he had none of his old force left, and he received only 1,138 votes out of a total of approximately 45,000; but enough, withal, to force Senator Taliaferro into a second primary with Stockton. Four years later, he engaged in a futile effort to organize Florida for the Independence League, a short-lived political party promoted by the prominent publisher, William R. Hearst, of New York.

After his defeat for the senate in 1897, Call practiced law in Jacksonville and Washington, spending his latter years almost entirely in the national capital. He was for a time president of the Jacksonville Ortega Town Company, a New Jersey corporation, which owned much property along the St. Johns River south of Jacksonville, later acquired and developed (in 1911,) as Ortega, by the Ortega Com-

<sup>23</sup> Senator Taliaferro still resides in Jacksonville, the only living incorporator of the Florida Historical Society. He was the last of a long line of ex-Confederate soldiers to be elected to Congress or governor by the Democrats of Florida from 1875 to 1899. The short-lived Spanish-American War of 1898 wiped out a great deal of the sectionalism which had for so long afflicted the nation, and turned the thoughts of the people of Florida toward new leaders and new issues.

<sup>24</sup> Though Call was opposing Mallory, he scarcely mentioned the latter in his one campaign pamphlet published early in 1902, directing his attacks almost entirely against Senator Taliaferro (whose term did not expire until two years later) and Taliaferro's principal supporters.

pany, of Jacksonville, headed by Call's old political associate, John N. C. Stockton.<sup>25</sup> Senator Call's old home in Jacksonville stood on the present site of the Woman's Club, in Riverside.<sup>26</sup>

Wilkinson Call died at the Emergency hospital in Washington, D. C., on August 24, 1910, having been stricken with apoplexy the previous Saturday at his home, 1903 N street.<sup>27</sup> His daughter, Lucy Call, was with him. He was laid to rest in Oak Hill cemetery the following day in the lot with his wife, Caroline P. Call, who had died (June 27, 1906), at the age of 50, and two infant sons, Arthur W. Call (died April 5, 1883, age three years) and Richard W. Call (died August 6, 1887, age 6 months.) His grave is unmarked by any stone.<sup>28</sup>

Although we have in Tallahassee several prominent and beloved families who are descended from Governor Call, through his two daughters, I find no record of any males of the Call name now living. When Rhydon Mays Call (the former senator's nephew and at one time his secretary) died near Jacksonville six years ago, after a judicial career of 34 years and of unusual honor, the family name which had been conspicuous in Florida through its first hundred years under the American flag, passed into history with that century.

<sup>25</sup> Letters to the writer from Hon. Gilchrist B. Stockton, of Jacksonville, formerly minister from the United States to Austria, and from Mr. T. Frederick Davis, of Jacksonville, Treasurer of the Florida Historical Society, author of *History of Jacksonville*.

<sup>26</sup> Same letters. In P. D. Gold's *History of Duval County* reference is made (page 131) to the Acosta family's occupying "the deserted dwelling of Wilkinson Call" near Ortega, toward the close of the Civil War. This property must have been acquired at a later date by Call, who apparently did not remove to Jacksonville from Tallahassee until 1867 or 1868.

<sup>27</sup> The records of Oak Hill Cemetery, Washington, D. C., give Call's age at death as 76 years, 7 months and 15 days, which corresponds with his date of birth (January 9, 1834.) as given in the *Congressional Biography* and other biographical sketches. For reasons stated in the *January Quaterly*, it would seem probable that he was, in fact, born several years earlier, but no other record has been found.

<sup>28</sup> Records of Oak Hill Cemetery.