

HON. JOSEPH G. WILSON was born at Acworth, New Hampshire, on December 13, 1826. He was the youngest of eight children and was descended from Scotch Presbyterian ancestors, who were part of the colony of one hundred families of Scotch Calvinists that settled in the town of Londonderry, New Hampshire, as early as 1719. His parents, Samuel and Sallie Wilson, with their family removed to Cincinnati in 1828 and later settled on a farm near Reading in Hamilton county. Joseph G. attended district school until fourteen years of age, when he became a student in Cary's academy where he remained until sixteen, in which year he entered the sophomore class in Marietta college. This was in the autumn of 1843. In 1846 he graduated from that institution, the event being marked by a beautiful and brilliant oration, one of the best gems ever pronounced from the college platform. Three years later he returned to his alma mater and received his second degree, and in 1865 it conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws. Following his graduation, Mr. Wilson was a professor in Farmer's college, near Cincinnati, where his labors received high commendation. In 1850 he left his birth place and traveled through the New England states. In 1852 he graduated at the Cincinnati Law School and was admitted to the bar. In the same year he went to Oregon where he commenced the practice of law and soon took rank as an able advocate and advanced to various positions until he was judge of the highest court in the state and served in that capacity eight years. He was a man of keen and penetrating mind, never swerved from dispensing absolute justice, by either political or other influences, and the result was that he held the position in the hearts of the people never shadowed by any other incumbent of the supreme bench. In 1870 he made a race for congress and came near being elected. At the next election he gained it by a handsome majority and was installed as the representative from Oregon in the forty-third congress.

Hon. Joseph G. Wilson was elected by the alumni of Marietta college to deliver the annual oration in July, 1873. On the second of July he was struck suddenly with paralysis and died in the city of Marietta, Ohio, before his oration was delivered. As a most untimely stroke, viewed from the human side, came this sudden death of one of the most brilliant men ever graduated from Marietta College and one of the most staunch and worthy statesmen that the west had produced. It was one of those events in human existence which reason can never compass and to which faith bids us bow in silent acquiescence. From the rude pioneer hamlets amid the hills of Oregon to the halls of the chief legislative body of the United States, came cries of sorrow at this great and good man's demise and sincere weeping and mourning were prevalent with every class who knew him. He was laid to rest with becoming honors, surrounded by representatives from every station in life, on July 3, 1873, in the college town of Marietta, Ohio. Of him one said. "His memory and the memory of his deeds will outlive eulogies and survive monuments."

*"He has outsoared the shadow of our night:  
Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,  
And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
Can touch him not and torture not again."*

Mr. Wilson left a wife and four children. The children are Genevieve, the wife of F. P. Mays, an attorney residing in Portland, Oregon; Grace G., the wife of Charles W. Taylor, a railroad man in Grenville, Wyoming; Lucy P., the wife of Joseph T. Peters, a lumber merchant at The Dalles; Frederick W., an attorney living with his mother at The Dalles. He graduated first from Whitman College at Walla Walla and in 1893 from Johns Hopkins University. The widow of Hon. Joseph G. Wilson was, in maiden life, Elizabeth Miller. She was born at South Argyle, New York, on June 8, 1830. Her father, James O. Miller, was born in Western Pennsylvania and was a Presbyterian preacher. He also took a great interest in the west, having become enthused by the reports of Lewis and Clark and as early as 1851, came via the isthmus of Panama to the Willamette valley, where he settled. He was soon installed the pastor of a church, and proclaimed the gospel faithfully until April, 1854, when he was killed by the explosion of the Gazelle. He had married Amanda Davison, who was born in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and came to Oregon with her husband. After his death she removed to Washington, D.C., and resided with her daughter, Mrs. Kelley, until her death. The Davissons are an old American family of Welsh descent, distinguished through many generations. Mrs. Welsh's paternal grandfather was a native of Ireland and followed the avocation of farming.

Mrs. Wilson received her education in New York and there remained until 1851, when she came to Oregon as one of the teachers sent out by the national board of public instructions. She followed the work of the educator until 1854, when she married Joseph G. Wilson, whose life has been mentioned in the earlier part of this article. After her husband's death, Mrs. Wilson returned to The Dalles, Oregon, where she has made her home since. During the years since, she has been occupied in educational and literary work and is one of the most prominent ladies of the state of Oregon. Mrs. Wilson has one brother, James Franklin, who was killed by the Apache Indians in Arizona; and two sisters, Ella, the widow of General Cuvier Groner, living in Rome, Italy; and Mary, widow of the late Senator James K. Kelley, of Washington, D. C.