Making Woodrow Wilson president

McCombs William Frank
MAKING WOODROW WILSON PRESIDENT
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FOREWORD

William Frank McCombs was born at Hamburg, Ashley County, Arkansas, December 26, 1876. His father, William Faulkner McCombs, was a native of Kentucky. His mother was Mrs. Frances Pugh McCombs, a native of Alabama. There were three sisters, Corinne, Ethel and Addie, and two brothers, Robert and Ashton.

While the father tilled a 17,000 acre rice plantation, young McCombs learned his A B C's at his mother's knee and from a private tutor. As a mere child he suffered a fracture of the hip through a fall. As a result of this accident, he was permanently lame.

His preliminary training for college was obtained in the Webb Preparatory School at Belle Buckle, Tennessee. He entered Princeton University in 1894, graduating with the class of '98.

Mr. McCombs was of medium height, while leaning upon his ever present cane. He shot up to six feet when provoked. In youth his hair was auburn. It was tinged with gray when he attained the age of two score years. The hair was brushed back from a high forehead. His eyes were gray, the nose was long, the nostrils frequently dilated. The mouth was firm; the lips thin; the jaw square; the ears small; the face clean cut and of an intellectual type.

Mr. McCombs, throughout his career, avoided pyro-
FOREWORD

technics. He was dogged in his determination and cool in a crisis. He was no compromiser, but fought to a finish. His life’s achievements were embraced in the brief span of 44 years, his death occurring on February 22, 1921.

The genesis of this book was in a visit of the editor to William F. McCombs, nearly three years ago. At that time, Mr. McCombs, prostrated by illness, recited many incidents which appear in this volume. The editor was so impressed that he begged the privilege of writing them.

Mr. McCombs answered, "Not now. The story would be misunderstood. Let’s get together after I recover and map it out". A few weeks later, it was agreed that we should collect all available material and prepare it in book form. Death intervened before the task could be completed.

Mr. McCombs wrote about one hundred thousand words, terminating at a point in the Democratic Convention when Champ Clark needed only a few votes to become the Presidential nominee. There was, in addition, much detached material. Because of Mr. McCombs’ illness and death, he was unable to finish the work he had undertaken.

The editor has been compelled to supply many details with which he became familiar through an intimate friendship of nearly seventeen years. An effort has been made throughout this book to utilize all the material that Mr. McCombs had prepared, and to distinguish this from the material supplied by the editor.

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