

## JAMES WILSON OF VERMONT, AMERICA'S FIRST GLOBE MAKER

BY LEROY E. KIMBALL

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FOR over a century after 1702 when John Coney of Boston introduced engraving on copper in America, there were atlases, geographies and wall maps published for the schools and academies of this country, but no one appears to have tried his hand at the engraving, construction and sale of American globes. Europe continued to furnish our globes until a Vermont farmer about 1810 began announcing to New England that he was prepared to furnish celestial and terrestrial globes quite as good as the London article and at a cheaper price. The farmer's name was James Wilson; he lived near Bradford, Vermont, the greater share of the ninety-two years of his life, established America's first globe manufactory, became the husband of three wives, the father of fourteen children, and is said to have rebuilt his home three times following an equal number of disastrous fires.

The history of globe making goes back to 150 B.C., according to Edward Luther Stevenson of Yonkers, New York, for many years with the Hispanic Society of America, whose fascinating two-volume history of the subject, listing some 600 different globes to the year 1800, was published by the Hispanic Society in 1921. He says it appears to have been the grammarian Crates of Mallos, a contemporary of Hipparchus, and a member of the Stoic School of Philosophers, who made the first attempt to construct a globe, and that he exhibited the same in Pergamum about the year 150 B.C. Martin Behaim (1459-1507) of Nürnberg constructed one of the first modern terrestrial globes

and his "Erdapfel" (1492), as he called it, may be the oldest terrestrial globe extant, according to Dr. Stevenson; it still belongs to the Behaim family and is in the custody of the Germanic Museum. There is no evidence that Christopher Columbus or his son Bartholomew, "a man of prudence and great intelligence," ever made a globe; "this statement touches the reputed correspondence between Columbus and Toscanelli, which correspondence in light of the very searching studies of Mr. Henry Vignaud, must now be considered to be of doubtful authenticity." France was leading at the turn of the 17th Century in the field of geographical and astronomical science. In the British Isles, there appeared the able James Ferguson (1710-1776), Scotch experimental philosopher, physicist and astronomer, and William Cary (1759-1825), one of the globe makers of the 18th Century whose work carried over into the 19th Century; the latter "at first associated with Ramsden, a renowned mechanic, established himself in an independent business in London in the year 1790. He is reputed to have constructed the first transit circle made in England."

That America was early given an opportunity to familiarize itself with the use of globes is attested to by the researches of Prof. Louis C. Karpinski of the University of Michigan, whose map collection has now become a part of the valued possessions of the New York Public Library. In *Science* for September 12, 1924, Professor Karpinski calls attention to a book written in 1753 by Theophilus Grew, "professor in the academy at Philadelphia which has become the University of Pennsylvania," and which is a treatise on globes. The title reads:

*The Description and Use of the Globes, Celestial and Terrestrial; With Variety for Examples For the Learner's Exercises: Intended for the Use of such Persons as would attain to the Knowledge of those Instruments; But Chiefly designed for the Instruction of the young Gentlemen at the Academy in Phila-*

delphia. To which is added *Rules* for working all the Cases in Plain and Spherical Triangles without a Scheme. By *Theophilus Grew*, Mathematical Professor. Germantown, Printed by Christopher Sower, 1753 [pp. 60, (2)].

He also tells of Benjamin Franklin's letter of June 20, 1752 to his London correspondent, William Strahan, ordering a pair of globes.

Please send me another of Popple's Maps of North America . . . ; a Pair of Mrs. Senex's improved Globes, . . . (or Neal's improv'd Globes, if thought better than Senex's) the best and largest that may be had for (not exceeding) Eight Guineas.

Also in Boston as early as 1743, a Harvard mathematician, Nathan Prince, advertised that "on suitable Encouragement" he would open a school to teach among other things, . . . "Geography and Astronomy, With the Use of the Globes, and the several kinds of Projecting the Sphere."

James Wilson lived in Londonderry, New Hampshire, where he was born March 15, 1763, until he bought a hundred acres of wild land at Francistown, New Hampshire, erected a log cabin, and occupied his time as a farmer until he was thirty-three years of age. In 1796, he moved to the banks of the Connecticut River one mile north of Bradford, Orange County, Vermont, north of Hanover, on the west side of the River.

Hanover was the scene of James Wilson's determination to make globes, for it was here on a brief visit to a Mr. Miltmore at Dartmouth College, near the turn of the 18th Century, that he saw a pair of terrestrial and celestial globes and resolved to try and duplicate the effect. Quotations from family documents state at this point that Wilson's meager knowledge of geography and astronomy made it necessary for him to secure, at his age, the desired information in as understandable and authentic form as was possible without studying with the younger generation at Bradford Academy, and he decided to purchase an encyclopaedia. This

purchase is said to be in existence and in the possession of one branch of the family.

James Wilson sold farm stock, gathered together one hundred and thirty dollars in cash, and is said to have secured from Hugh Somers at Ryegate, Vermont, the third edition of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica; or a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Miscellaneous Literature," the first volume of which had appeared in October, 1788, and was completed in 18 volumes in 1797, with 14,579 pages and 541 plates. It had been published in Edinburgh, by A. Bell and C. Macfarquhar, in weekly numbers at the start—the same as the two previous editions—the original plan calling for 300 weekly numbers at one shilling each—forming 30 parts at ten shillings six pence each, or a total of fifteen volumes with 360 plates. James Wilson received the benefit of the expanded plan when he took his eighteen volume source book of natural science knowledge back to Bradford.

Like many early American engravers, Wilson was largely self taught. He made a journey to Boston and Newburyport to secure instruction, and John Akin (1773–1846) "of South Carolina," at Newburyport, is said to have asked him \$100 for the service, an amount which Wilson did not have. About this time Akin had engraved the most interesting (to the book collector at least) of his eighteen items listed in Stauffer: "A. March's Bookstore. Described as—A copperplate engraving of the interior of the book-store of Angier March; published at Newburyport, Mass., about 1800; signed J. A."

He returned to Bradford, and after a series of unsuccessful starts decided to see Amos Doolittle (1754–1832) in Connecticut, and went on foot to New Haven to interview the man who had engraved the two maps included in Jedediah Morse's "Geography Made Easy" (1784), the first geography published in the United States. Doolittle, of course, was fairly well known as the engraver of those four curious military

plates of Lexington and Concord: "six shillings a set for plain ones and eight shillings for colored." He taught James Wilson the basic things to be known about the process of engraving on copper, although the scene of the instruction is not definitely placed in New Haven—it may have been Cheshire—and the farmer-pupil trudged back to the Vermont banks of the Connecticut to show his second wife and growing family what he had accomplished "in Connecticut."

During the process of self instruction, Wilson experimented little with methods of making the background material to hold the results of his engraving. At the beginning he had made a large sphere of solid wood and covered it with paper and drew in the countries with pen and ink. This first wooden ball is said to have been the basis of most of his experiments for some time. He was not so much concerned with how he would eventually construct the globe and its mounting; his chief desire was to perfect himself in the engraving process and execute his work in such a manner that the surface could not be told from the English globes which were in general use in the new country.

Besides farming, Wilson had learned the trade of blacksmith, and through the years had found he possessed considerable skill in the working of hot metal. The mastery of this accomplishment may have been partially responsible for his desire to construct the globes which later were to bear his name. To be sure, globes were a long way from blacksmithing, but in those days there were few technical lines into which one could graduate, and terrestrial and celestial globe making had its fascination, especially if one read the correspondence in the weeklies about voyages to uncharted seas, and the mysteries of the heavens, and was handy with tools.

The young mechanic did everything for himself. He made his own tools, his lathes, and his presses. He did his own printing, made his own ink, glue and varnish,

and cast his own meridians and turned them; he designed all of his own maps, and labored with great trouble in connecting hair lines. It is said he worked a total of three hundred days on his first large copper plate and meeting with difficulties on the problem of getting a true proportion of meridians upon a globular surface, went to see Jedediah Morse (1761-1826), "Father of American Geography," at Charlestown, Massachusetts, whose books to appear up to that time, on geography and related subjects, five in number, were continuously popping up in new editions. Morse, two years the elder of the struggling globe enthusiast, told Wilson the remedies could not be made on the same plate, and the latter went back to his blacksmithing-globe-manufactory and began anew on some copper which was obtained at great sacrifice on the part of all members of the family. Luckily, three of the boys were growing up with a desire to be something more than idle pranksters in their father's shop at Bradford. Samuel, John and David were seventeen, fifteen and thirteen when the first globe was sold in 1810, and all showed a promise which later took them into the business.

It is possible that globes were sold before 1810 bearing the name of James Wilson, Bradford, Vermont, but that date is the earliest we have been able to find in our survey. The first family evidence we have is on the stray leaf of an account book where James Wilson has entered in his own hand: "Jan. 18, 1810, sold Mr. Wellman 1 globe. Jan. 25 sold Judge Niles 1 globe." Then the shop seemed to swing into greater production. Wilson must have been doing very well as a starter, as before the entry just quoted, upon the same leaf, is the record of the sale of seventeen globes, but with no dates, and eleven more are listed after the January, 1810, notation without giving the dates. On another page, the story continues with more definiteness: "Nov. 1, 1810, Mr. Melindy of Amherst, 1 globe." There is evidence to support the statement that the

globe maker received fifty dollars a pair for the 1810 edition, with no mention of the price individually. This early activity caused a Vermonter, many years ago to pen these lines: "The small unpainted blacksmith shop had become a globe factory which was throwing off its products as far as Amherst and paralyzing the heart of the English globe trade in America."

But James Wilson had his eyes fixed beyond Amherst and on Boston and Albany as sales centers, the latter especially because of its location. In Boston, he became a paper customer of William Wells, although he continued to have some paper made in Bradford, as is shown by the letter of a correspondent in the "Boston Cultivator" for September 8, 1866: "Who made the First Artificial Globe?" James Wilson of Bradford, Orange County, Vt., in 1811, I think, perfected the first globe made in this country, as he told me so himself. I was employed from 1810 to '14 in the paper mill in the village of Bradford. Mr. Wilson's house and shop were about a mile north of the village. I was at his shop several times. In 1812, I assisted in making some paper for him to use on his globe; he wanted it made strong and firm, so that it would not break or stretch in the least while using it . . . This answers your question in the CULTIVATOR of August 11th. Nathan Bowen, North Bennington, Vt."

Family tradition has it that James Wilson published his "first edition" of perfected globes in 1814, and exhibited them in Boston. At this first showing of American-made globes, Wilson is said to have been highly praised. Our researches have failed to find any contemporary mention in the Boston newspapers for 1814, and perhaps the details will come to light through someone who will have more fortunate results. The celestial globes made at that time "had the Greek letters affixed to the groups of stars, and were furnished with a new horizon," as one observer states. "The frames of the sets were of ash and each globe was

furnished with a brass quadrant and the screw at the bottom could be easily turned with the fingers without a screw driver. Each globe was packed in a pine box of material half an inch in thickness, planed and dovetailed, with hinges and clasp."

Aside from globes, there were other engraving activities in which Wilson engaged at this time. He did minor commercial engraving and the only item listed to his credit in Stauffer (*American Engravings on Copper and Steel*, by David McNeely Stauffer, 2 vols. The Grolier Club of the City of New York, 1907).—no mention is made of his globe engravings—is a joint enterprise in which he engaged with Isaac Eddy (1777–1847) of Weathersfield, Vermont. This is a large chart which is known to have been issued in at least two sizes (16 x 20 and 24 x 40) captioned: "Chronology Delineated/To Illustrate the History of Monarchical Revolutions." The plate represents the growth of the nations of the world from the time of Adam. At the bottom is an extensive engraved explanation of the tree whose gnarled branches shoot up perpendicularly to the top of the chart, with a horizontal gnarled branch in the middle. At the tree's base are the words "Adam or the Creator," then just above is "Noah or the universal Deluge" and above that, and starting the branches of the tree: "Shem . . . Ham . . . Japhet." Upon looking at the chart, one is immediately reminded of an anatomical x-ray plate, with the aborigines (at the right of the horizontal gnarled branch which finds its way authoritatively through the middle of the perpendicular effect) pointing their arrows not at an approaching enemy, but at what appears to be a vermiform appendix, but which is delicately engraved as "Syria."

It is probable James Wilson did the text on the plate, which is the larger portion of the work, as the engraving of Adam naming the beasts, and the figures of the Indians, resemble Eddy's other work. At the left is: "Published by Isaac Eddy, Weathersfield,



Vermont. 1813. With the privilege to copyright." At the right: "Engraved by James Wilson, Bradford and by Isaac Eddy, Weathersfield, Vermont."

Just when the manufactory was started in Albany at 110 Washington Street is open to further investigation. The date used in the several available genealogical articles is "about 1815." As I write I have before me the original of an agreement between the globe maker and one of his sons, dated 1818:

This agreement, made between James Wilson in the town of Bradford and state of Vermont and John Wilson of City of Albany and state of Newyork, sheweth that said James Wilson agrees to find all materials required for manufacturing Globes in said City of Albany and to receive one third of the proffit arising therefrom and that said John Wilson agrees to manage the business according to the best of his judgement and to employ all necessary workmen in said business and receive two thirds of the proffit arising therefrom.

JOHN WILSON  
JAMES WILSON

Bradford March 10<sup>th</sup> 1818

Apparently at the start of the Albany adventure there was no "agreement" or perhaps it has been lost. In any event, it is certain they were doing business there early the previous year as this original letter which I quote will show. It is written on folded foolscap and the outside sheet contains this address: "James Wilson, Bradford, Vermont, Orange County."

Albany March 30<sup>th</sup>—1817

HONORED FATHER

We have a fine appearance of warm weather and should our prospect not fail I shall be in the want of those Maps by the 12<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of April, which I hope you will not fail to forward nearly by that time, or sooner if possible as I can have work for John at any time. I want to have some Globes finished by the first of June as some are wanting by that time.—I have been to Hartford to see M<sup>r</sup> Cook and found him more plausible than I was expected, although he observed that he had not received pay for those Globes which he sent off, except one set, and in fact had not heard from them all, since they were sent away, however he come to a settlement, paid me fifty dollars and promised to be in Albany by the first of September next

and pay the rest, with this agreement, that I should send him three celestial, to mate three terrestrials which he has on hands as soon as convenient, and take books for pay. the residue that is acoming is \$175,50 exclusive of the books. If you want books you can have them any time by sending an order, when you send for books you must let a catalogue accompany the order, that he may know what kind of books you want, should M<sup>r</sup> Cook settle according to the agreement I shall remit you the money when I return to Bradford in the fall

From your affectionate son

SAMUEL WILSON

P S

I got Johns cloth when in Hartford. This day is beautiful and fine, it resembles the first of June as to the pleasantness of weather. The thermometer stands at 70, and the Hudson will be clear of ice in a few days, the snow has once more made its exit.

Thus in 1817, twenty-four year old Samuel, the elder of the two sons in Albany, seems to have been at the helm, and the next year the father signed an agreement with John, the younger son.

Evidence of sales activity in Boston at this time is also at hand in an original letter which bears the address on the reverse side: "Mr. James Wilson, Globemaker, Bradford, Vermont."

Boston 22 July 1817

Mr. Wilson,

SIR

We have severall times, we think three times, been called on by some one as we presumed from you, to see on what terms we would take your globes for sale;—we declined or expressed indifference, as we supposed Mr Wells was your agent exclusively in this place—but we have not possitively known this to be the case—

We now address you to ascertain on what terms you would sell us six terrestrial, & one celestial globe. that is—for what each, cash down; & for what one half cash in hand & the other half in 6 months.

Your ans<sup>r</sup> by first mail will oblige

Your obed<sup>t</sup> servants

CUMMINGS & HILLIARD  
Boston Bookstore  
N<sup>o</sup> 1 Cornhill  
Boston

David Wilson, the third globe-making son, who has been previously mentioned, joined his older brothers at Albany, and did the engraving on a forthcoming new edition of three-inch terrestrial and celestial globes. In 1824, he separated from his brothers and went to New York where he had success as a miniature painter, but died of consumption in 1827. His son was Lavalette Wilson of Haverstraw, New York, expert surveyor in the Highlands of the Hudson, several of whose meticulously drawn property maps came into the possession of the writer years ago, and from whom was originally learned the story of the globe maker. Lavalette Wilson's genealogy of the family is the most complete account.

Bradford continued to be the home of the globe maker despite the developments in Albany; from his first settlement it was home to him. It is said he made frequent visits to the manufactory and encouraged the boys in their undertaking, returning to Bradford at the first opportunity.

In 1820 appeared the earliest newspaper advertisement we have discovered. It came out in the "Albany Argus" on the 4th of July, and was continued through that month, August, and most of September. At the top is an engraving of two large globes on stands. The space was one column wide, two inches high, with this reading matter: ELEGANT GLOBES./For sale at the Manufactory, No. 110 Washing-/ton street, Albany, 13 12, 9 and 3 inch/GLOBES, which comport with the best authorities./ Also—*A New Treatise on the Use of the Globes./*by Thomas Keath./ JAMES WILSON & Co./ Albany, July 4, 1820. 77tf/

In August, 1821, more advertising was done in the Albany papers, if not elsewhere. "The New York Statesman's" illustrated advertisement was first inserted on the 21st and was still in evidence in the issue of January 1, 1822. The same copy had appeared in the same month on the 15th in the "Albany Register" and ran until January 22, 1822.

The American Globe Manufactory. [wdet. of two globes] James Wilson & Sons, Respectfully inform an extensive and scientific community, that they have constantly for sale at the Manufactory, No. 110, Washington-street, Albany, a supply of 13 1-2, 9 and 3 inch GLOBES, in pairs or single, together with a Treatise on the use of the Globes, by Thomas Keith.

From the recent improvement in the elegance of the execution in the work, the geographical and political correctness of the delineations, and the recommendations of competent and scientific judges, the manufacturers are warranted in saying, the Globes hold a fair competition with, and in some respects superior to, the best European workmanship.—The Globes are offered at very low prices, particularly to schools and academies.—They can be transported, with safety, to any part of the country. August 15, 1821. 11tf/

The high point of the company's experience came in 1826, when they brought out an entirely new set of plates for all three sizes of the globes. It was after this new edition in this year that James Wilson withdrew from the direct responsibility of conducting the business, and David having left for New York, the father introduced Cyrus Lancaster of Acworth, New Hampshire, into the firm. This young man had taught at Bradford Academy following several years as a student at Dartmouth, was twenty-four years of age, and was doubtless expected to speed up the sales to the academies.

With the new edition of the globes complete in every way, their appearance quite equal to the London make, and their engraving of the North American continent more accurate, the Wilsons told their story to the nation's capital. In December, 1827, the members of the Congress of the United States were handed a slightly oversized business card which read:

#### AMERICAN MANUFACTURES.

...oOo...

A Pair of 13 Inch  
GLOBES,

From the Manufactory of Messrs. J. WILSON & SONS, of Albany, N. Y. is now exhibiting for public inspection at the

United States Library, in this city. James Wilson is the original manufacturer of Globes in this country, and has brought the art to such a degree of perfection, as to supersede altogether the necessity of importations of that article from abroad.

Members of Congress, as friends of American productions and ingenuity, are respectfully invited to examine these Globes.

Washington, Dec. 1827.

How these globes were received at the exhibition in the "United States Library" cannot be answered at this time as our search through four Washington papers for that month was fruitless, and the Library of Congress had no information concerning the event. However, the new edition was to be brought to the knowledge of the entire country in another way, when in the following April there appeared a large broadside with an elaborately engraved top piece showing two globes, two separate styles of bases, with a female figure quite dwarfed by the larger of the globes. The text gave complete information as to price and the virtues of the product.

### WILSON'S AMERICAN GLOBES.

#### J. WILSON & SONS,

MANUFACTURE, AT NO. 110 WASHINGTON-STREET, ALBANY,  
GLOBES OF THREE, NINE, AND THIRTEEN INCHES DIAMETER.

Thirteen Inch Globes mounted on mahogany pedestal stands, with compasses, per pair . . . . .	46 & \$55
Ditto. Mahogany and curly-maple, turned frames, with compasses, per pair . . . . .	40
Ditto. Common, low frames, without compasses, per pair . . . . .	32
Nine Inch Globes, common frames, per pair . . . . .	22
Three Inch Globes, fancy mountings, per pair . . . . .	5

GREAT PAINS HAVE BEEN TAKEN, IN THE PLATES FOR THESE GLOBES, to make them elegant as well as useful; and, in point of accuracy and execution, they are represented by able mathematicians to be equal, and in many respects, superior, to those manufactured in Europe. The TERRESTRIAL GLOBE is as critically correct, as the

most recent and authentic surveys can contribute to make them. The tracts of the various circumnavigators are carefully delineated, together with the recent discoveries of Parry and Franklin.

THE CORRECTNESS OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS, &C. OF *OUR OWN country*, and the western hemisphere, renders these globes more useful and interesting to the American geographer, and gives them a decided preference to imported globes, on which this continent is greatly misrepresented.

THE SEVERAL STATES AND TERRITORIES OF THE UNION, ARE CORRECTLY divided by dotted lines, and variously coloured, by which they are easily designated. The new thirteen inch CELESTIAL GLOBE, with elegant drawings of the constellations, contains nearly 5000 stars, carefully compiled and laid down, from the latest and most approved astronomical tables, and reduced, according to the precession of the Equinoxes, to the present time. The Celestial Globe, also, contains the names of several new constellations, not to be found on any other globes.

THE PRICES OF THESE GLOBES ARE MUCH LOWER THAN THE ENGLISH CAN be imported for, and of a more durable quality; consequently our Schools and Academies, as well as private families, would find it for their advantage to use them. The popularity and usefulness of Geographical and Astronomical science are so apparent and universally acknowledged, that it is unnecessary to urge the necessity of acquiring a knowledge of that important branch of education.

...ooooOoooo...

*Extract from a Report of the New-York Mechanic & Scientific Institution, for the encouragement of American Manufactures.*

"A discretionary premium was awarded to Samuel Wood & Sons, for a pair of superior 13 inch Globes, made by JAMES WILSON & SONS, of Albany. The elegance and excellence of these articles, are deserving of high commendation; and, when we consider the great utility of them in our primary schools, we cannot do less than encourage the manufacturers by calling the attention of the public to them."

ALBANY, April, 1828.

In the early Albany newspaper advertisements, mention had been made of the gift with each globe of a "Treatise on the use of Globes by Thomas Keith" (1759-1824), accountant to the British Museum, among other London activities. In 1832, Samuel Wood & Sons, 261 Pearl Street, New York, who had several years before become agents for the Wilson globes, brought out an edition of Keith's book, "revised and corrected by Robert Adrian, LL.D. etc., and Professor of Mathematics in Rutgers' College, New Brunswick, New Jersey." This contains a page of advertising immediately preceding the title page announcing Samuel Wood & Sons' ability as agents to supply all sizes of the globes, and calling attention to the "tracks and discoveries of Columbus, Cooke, Vancouver, Gore, Butler, Phipps, Parry, etc.," which are carefully delineated. A footnote on page VI of the preface gives the names of the principal globe makers of London, together with the size globes they offered for sale.

Cary (21 inches 18, 15, 12 and 9).

Bardin's globes, or "The New British Globes," 18 and 12 inches in diameter.

Newton's globes are 15 and 12 inches in diameter.

Addison's globes are 18, 12 and 10 inches in diameter. "Mr. Addison is now constructing a superb set of globes 36 inches in dia."

"Wilson's American Globes" are 13, 9 and 3 inches in diameter. They are used in academies generally in preference to any others as they are quite equal to the best English in the execution of the plates; more correct in the geographical divisions of the western continent, and can be purchased at less prices.

A great sorrow came into the life of James Wilson in 1833, when both of his sons in Albany, Samuel and John, died. They were, of course, the mainstay of the business, and their loss meant that Cyrus Lancaster would have to carry on, which he did. Two years later, Lancaster, the new manager, married Samuel's widow, Rebecca, and thus became a member of the Wilson family, continuing the business with frequent

reports to the old gentleman at Bradford. How long Cyrus Lancaster continued to run the globe factory for James Wilson has not been determined. From family records we learn that Lancaster lived until 1862.

James Wilson's surging interest in geography and astronomy would not let him waste his time, and he, too, was busy with plans and accomplishments until a few years before 1855, when he died at the age of 92 years. Edward L. Parker in his "History of Londonderry," which was published in Boston during Mr. Wilson's lifetime (1851), describes "Wilson's Planetarium," copies of which are said to be in possession of at least one branch of the family, and also were originally given to Bradford and Thetford Academies. "Since he was eighty years of age," relates Mr. Parker, "he has contrived and with his own hands constructed a machine which finely illustrates the diurnal and annual revolutions of the earth, the cause of the successive seasons, and the sun's place for every day of the year in the ecliptic. These movements are produced by turning a crank, which causes the earth to revolve about the sun in the plane of the ecliptic, always retaining its true relative position. The machine is also furnished with the means of enabling the student to see and understand precisely what is meant by the procession of the equinoxes, a difficult thing without some such means of illustration. The large copper plate on which are printed the months of the year, with their days, and the corresponding signs of the zodiac, with their degrees, was engraved by Mr. Wilson after he was eighty-three years of age. Can a similar instance anywhere be found?"

In Boston, "Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion" (Vol. XII, p. 156) ran a picture of James Wilson and a brief sketch of his accomplishments, but not until 1857, two years after his death. The article states the "accurate likeness . . . (was) . . . drawn by Mr. Barry from an original sketch made by John Ross Dix, Esq." At least one other likeness of Mr. Wilson is



in existence; it was done by a descendant and is of his head and shoulders with a large globe to the rear of his left shoulder.

The writer has carried on a rather voluminous correspondence on the subject of locating Wilson globes. Inquiries were sent to almost two hundred academies, schools, colleges, libraries, historical societies, private collectors, scientists, etc., largely in New England and New York State, and following is a chronological list of those located up to the present. Many have promised to make further inquiries, and everyone responding has been most helpful in the quest. I am especially indebted to Lavalette Wilson's grandson, Frederick Wilson Keller, and to Harold Franklin Wilson, both of whom were most generous with the loan of their family possessions and suggestions.

#### CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE WILSON GLOBES

##### 1811

A New/American/Terrestrial Globe/on which the/Principal Places of the/Known World/are Accurately laid down/with the traced attempts/of Captain Cook to/discover a Southern Continent/by/James Wilson/1811 (The diameter of this globe is 13 inches)

Owner: The Concord Antiquarian Society, Concord, Mass.

Mrs. Howard W. Kent of the Society and Mrs. Charles Davis Jameson of The Old Manse, by the North Bridge, Concord, have both studied this globe in detail and state it is in excellent condition with a maple stand mounting and the globe itself a soft yellow, quite the color of the stand. The stand is 11 inches high, making the over-all dimensions 17½ inches.

A NEW / AMERICAN / TERRESTRIAL GLOBE / on which the / PRINCIPAL PLACES of the / KNOWN WORLD / are ACCURATELY laid down, / with the traced attempts / of CAPTAIN COOK to / discover a Southern Continent, / by / JAMES WILSON. / 1811 / With Additions to 1810 / Albany N. York (The diameter of this globe is 13 inches)

Owner: Norwich University, Northfield, Vermont.

The above inscription is in a circle placed in the north-west portion of the Pacific Ocean.

## 1812

A NEW/CELESTIAL GLOBE/*containing the Position of nearly/5000 Stars, Clusters, Nebulae, Planetary/Nebulae &c. Correctly compared & laid down/from the latest observations and dis-/coveries by D<sup>r</sup> Maskelyne, D<sup>r</sup> Herschel/the Rev. M<sup>r</sup> Wollaston &c. &c./By James Wilson/1812* (The diameter of this globe is 13 inches)

Owner: Norwich University, Northfield, Vermont.

The Librarian of the University, K. K. Moore, has generously furnished this full description of the Norwich globes:

Each globe pivots in a one-half inch vertical brass frame marked off into four quadrants of 90° for longitude. This frame is fastened to the base by a brass screw, at the lowest part of the frame. The frame is grooved on one side; it would seem that the globe might have been inverted on its axis if desired, but at the present time it seems too stiff to slide. The brass frame is supported at its mid-points by one-half inch grooves in the circular, horizontal wooden frame which is two and one-half inches wide and is covered on the top side by paper similar to that on the globe, which is marked in the following manner, beginning next to the globe and proceeding to the outside edge: degrees of latitude, compass directions, signs of the zodiac, degrees of the zodiac, differences in clock time and sun time, days, and months.

The top surface of this wooden frame is eleven inches from the table surface, and its edges are beveled in on the under side. The frame is supported by four turned legs, which are braced "x" fashion by two diagonal turned braces. At the intersection of the bracing is found the brass clasp and brass screw which holds the brass frame. At the top axis of each globe is found a one-inch pointer, which may be swiveled to desired points.

## 1826

A NEW/AMERICAN/CELESTIAL GLOBE/Containing the positions of nearly 5000/Stars, Clusters, Nebulae, etc., Carefully/compiled & laid down from the latest &/most approved astronomical tables reduced/to the present time/By

J. WILSON & SONS/1826/Albany—ST. N. Y. (The diameter of this globe is 13 inches)

Owner: Mrs. Ralph Mortimer Packer, through whose courtesy it is on loan to the Dukes County Historical Society, Edgartown, Mass.

#### 1828

A NEW AMERICAN THIRTEEN INCH/TERRESTRIAL GLOBE/Exhibiting with the greatest possible Accuracy/THE POSITIONS of the PRINCIPAL KNOWN/PLACES of the EARTH;/With the tracks of various Circumnavigators together with/New Discoveries and Political Alterations down to/The present PERIOD: 1828/By J. WILSON & SONS, ALBANY ST., N. Y.

Owner: Mrs. Ralph Mortimer Packer, through whose courtesy it is on loan to the Dukes County Historical Society, Edgartown, Mass.

Mrs. Packer states these globes were purchased by her ancestor, Captain Seth Daggett, who was in the merchant service, and they came to her through her grandmother who was born in 1827 and was Captain Daggett's daughter. The globes have always been on the island of Martha's Vineyard since their original purchase, with the possible exception of voyages with Captain Daggett.

#### 1850

Wilson's/New Thirteen Inch/Celestial Globe/containing the positions of nearly 7000/Stars, clusters nebulae etc carefully compil'd/& laid down from the latest & most approv'd/astronomical tables reduced to the present/time./By C. Lancaster/1850/Albany—St N. Y.

Owner: Sinclair Hamilton.

#### Undated

A New/Terrestrial Globe,/on which the/Tracts and New Discoveries/are laid down/from the Accurate Observations/made by/Cap<sup>n</sup> Cook, Furneux, Phipps &c./By J. Wilson. Vermont. (The diameter of this globe is 13 inches)

Owner: Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, Vermont.

A New/Terrestrial Globe,/on which the/Tracts and New Discoveries/are laid down/from the Accurate Observations/made by/Cap<sup>s</sup> Cook, Furneux, Phipps, &c./By J. Wilson, Vermont. (The diameter of this globe is 13 inches)

Owner: Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Through the courtesy of K. D. Metcalf, Director of the Library of Harvard University, we learn this globe was purchased through a dealer from a lady in Wells River, Vermont, who stated her grandfather purchased it from James Wilson at Bradford.

Wilson's/New American Thirteen Inch/Terrestrial Globe/exhibiting with the greatest possible accuracy/The Positions of the Principal Known/Places of the Earth/with the tracks of various circumnavigators together with/New Discoveries and Political Alterations down to/the Present Period./Cyrus Lancaster/Albany, N. Y.

Owner: Sinclair Hamilton.

A THREE INCH/TERRESTRIAL/GLOBE/By Wilson's & Co. Albany.

Owner: Francis Wilson Keller.

This globe is enclosed in a case which depicts the celestial sphere on the inside. It follows the "cricket ball" style of terrestrial and celestial combination as was made by N. Lane in London in 1776 except that the case enclosing the Wilson terrestrial globe has the external appearance of a cylinder three and a half inches across and five inches high and opens at the middle; the Lane type has a tight round case slightly larger than the globe itself.

A THREE INCH/TERRESTRIAL/GLOBE/By Wilson's & Co. Albany.

A CELESTIAL GLOBE/With all the stars of the/1st 2d & 3d Magnitudes/By/Wilson & Sons, Albany

Owner of both globes: Harold Franklin Wilson.

These are mounted on turned wooden bases giving an overall height of 10 inches.

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