



Figure 218.—ALLEN BENJAMIN WILSON, 1824–1888.  
From a drawing owned by the Singer Mfg. Co.  
Formerly, the drawing was owned by the Wheeler  
& Wilson Mfg. Co. (Smithsonian photo 32066.)

Committee on Patents.\* There was strong feeling against the extension of the Wilson patents. The *New York Daily Graphic*, December 30, 1874, reported:

So valuable has been this latter four-motion feed that few or no cloth-sewing machines are now made without it. The joint ownership of this feature of the Wilson patents has served to bind the combination of sewing-machine builders together, and enabled them to defy competition by force of the monopoly. It is this feature which the combination wishes to further monopolize for seven years by act of Congress. The inventor has probably realized millions for his invention. Singer admits that his patents, which are much less important, paid him two millions prior to 1870, since which time he has not been compelled to

\**The Proceedings and Debates of the 43rd Congress, First Session, 1874 Congressional Record, vol. 2, part 3, petition read to the House by Mr. Creamer on April 7, 1874. In part 4 of the same, Mr. Buckingham read a similar petition to the Senate on May 19, 1874. Both were referred to the Committee on Patents; an extension was not granted.*

render an account. The Wilson patents with their extended terms were worth a much larger sum. They have been public property, so far as the feed is concerned, since June 15, 1873, and will remain so if too great a pressure is not brought to bear on Congress for their extension. A monopoly of this feed motion for seven years more would be worth from ten to thirty millions to the owner—and would cost the people four times as much.

Wilson had not made the millions for he only received a small percentage of the renewals' earnings plus his salary from the patents' owner, the Wheeler and Wilson Manufacturing Company.

The Congressional Committee on Patents made an adverse report in 1874 and again in 1875 and 1876, when applications for an extension were continued.

Wilson died on April 29, 1888.

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### ISAAC MERRITT SINGER

Isaac Singer, whose name is known around the world as a manufacturer of sewing machines, was the eighth child of poor German immigrants. Isaac was born on October 27, 1811, in Pittstown, New York, but most of



Figure 219.—ISAAC MERRITT SINGER, 1811–1875.  
From a charcoal drawing owned by the Singer  
Mfg. Co. (Smithsonian photo 32066-B.)