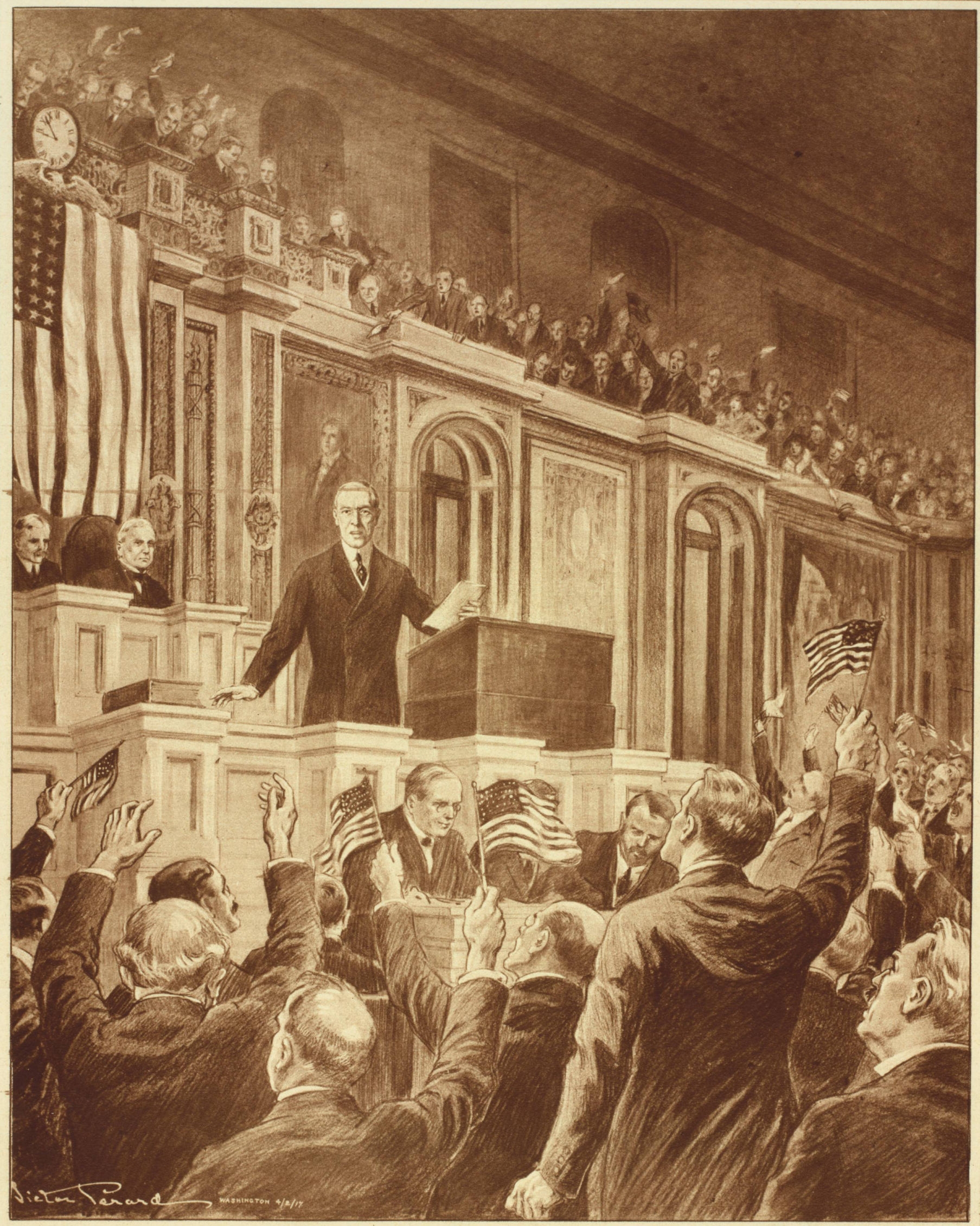
President Wilson Delivering Historic War Message



On Monday, April 2, 1917, before the Sixty-fifth Congress in joint session, President Wilson delivered his memorable address in which he declared unequivocally for war with Germany. Congress had spent the day in organization, and it was 8:32 at night when the President appeared before a solemn assemblage that crowded the Hall of Representatives and included, besides the members of Congress, the members of the Supreme Court, the Cabinet, and almost the entire Diplomatic Corps. The tumultuous scene which the artist's pencil has caught came at the moment it became a certainty that the President's decision, which had been carefully guarded, was for war. When the President stated: "There is one choice we cannot make—we are incapable of making. We will not choose the path of submission," Chief Justice White raised both hands above his head and brought them together with a resounding blow. Instantly Senators, Representatives, and even dignified members of the Supreme Court were on their feet, waving small flags and wildly cheering. Two days later the Senate passed the war resolution and the House of Representatives concurred on April 6.

(Drawn by Victor Perard © Mid-Week Pictorial.)