



Alice Melissa Lee (b. 1909)
Dau. of Guy Lee and
Florence Wilson

"One other thing that will tell you something else about him. He remained close friends with Lorraine, even after she remarried. In fact her second husband, Don, whom I met, grew to love Unc so much as a person, that when Unc lost his health and was down on his luck, he and Lorraine took him in and nursed him through to his death. Oh, yes, Uncle Vernon was quite a guy!"

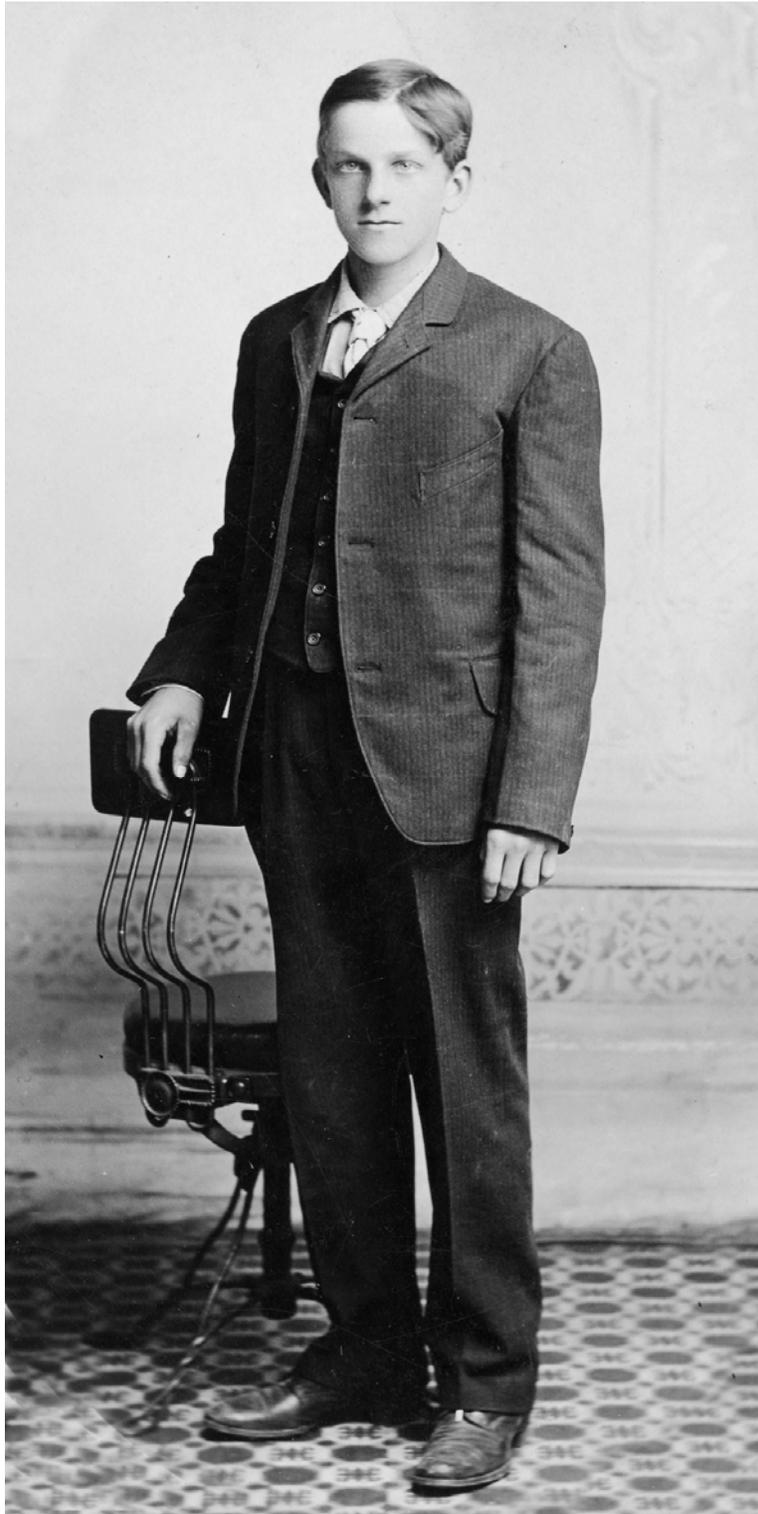
Alice Lee married Joe Terry in 1909 and together they had two sons: Lynn Irving Terry (1939) and Richard Lee Terry (1944; died in a car accident in 1966, at the age of 22, less than a year after coming home from the Navy; he died unmarried and childless). Lynn has no children of his own, but married Maudelle Baker Kary in 1979 and adopted her son from her previous marriage, Taril Kary (now Terry). Consequently, after the death of Lynn, there will be no living biological descendants of Florence Wilson.



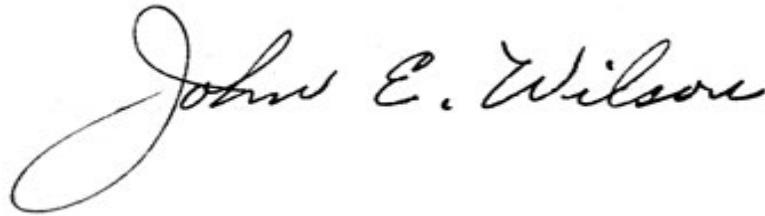
John Edgar Wilson (1892-1977) and his dog, "Snibe"

John Edgar Wilson (1892-1977)

John Edgar Wilson was born on January 26, 1892, in rural Iroquois County, Illinois, near Danforth about 75 miles south of Chicago. His family moved a few miles away to LaHogue around 1900; his father (John Ulmer Wilson), as mentioned above, worked at a grain elevator there and farmed some acres about 5 miles to the north. In 1903 the Wilson family moved to Heron Lake, Minnesota, and the following year to Darfur about 10 miles northwest of St. James. By coincidence their farm was directly adjacent to that of Heinrich Haseman, whose daughter, Lorraine (b. 1921) would one day marry John Edgar Wilson's son, Wendell (b. 1922). They cared for John U.'s brother Oscar (who died of mouth cancer in 1907). In 1912 John E.'s mother (Melissa Jackson Wilson) hired a housemaid, 16-year-old Eugenia Weinbrenner, who became a part of the family.



John Edgar Wilson (1892-1977)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John E. Wilson". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Everyone moved back to the La Hogue area in 1910. John E. and Jenny were married in 1916, and Jenny gave birth to their first son, Clinton Ulmer, late in 1917. Melissa died in 1921, a short time before the birth of John and Jenny's second son, Wendell Eugene Wilson, in 1922.

John E. was a proficient musician, equally at home with the violin, the piano and the harmonica. While growing up in Iroquois County, Illinois, he had studied for some time at a branch of the Illinois Conservatory of Music. The school was about a 20-minute ride on horseback from his home. He continued taking lessons until he was about six months from graduation, but then his horse died and, without transportation, he was forced to quit. But he had a very nice violin given to him by his father (now in the possession of his daughter Ardis and granddaughter Shelly), and he regularly played at local barn dances, along with his wife Jenny who accompanied him on piano. (During his last illness in 1977, at the age of 85, he still enjoyed entertaining the hospital nurses by playing the harmonica!)

In 1925 the Wilson family (now consisting of John U., John E., Jenny, Clint and Wendell) moved back to Minnesota. Doris Melissa was born the following year. They spent a year or so living near Odin until a suitable farm came up for sale; John E. purchased what was then known as the "Rudy Henry Stock Farm" (in Cedar Township, Martin County) in 1926, roughly 200 acres of excellent farm land with modern facilities and a spring-fed creek. For a number of years the farm prospered; they raised corn, wheat, flax, oats, milk cows, pigs, chickens and turkeys. An old English bulldog named Bob effectively protected the chickens and turkeys from wild mink, weasels and dogs (dead bodies of which were often found littering the grounds in the morning).

The Great Depression began in 1929, and by early 1932 the farm was bankrupt. The bank managers who held their loan wanted the Wilsons to continue working the farm, and were willing to extend them more credit; but John E. and John U. were just too discouraged to continue, and did not want to accumulate more debt. The property was sold at auction, and the family then rented a house in nearby St. James where John E. took a job with the city of St. James (on road crews) which he held until his retirement in 1960. They finished paying off their modest house in 1937. Ardis Darlene Wilson was born there in 1932 and Alice Marie Wilson in 1937.



John Edgar Wilson (1892-1877) and Eugenia Weinbrenner (1895-1980) in December 1916



**John Edgar Wilson (1892-1977) and wife Jenny Weinbrenner (1894-1980)
with son Clinton Ulmer Wilson (1917-1973) at the Wilson farm in LaHogue**

John and Jenny were a wonderful couple. They liked to go fishing in nearby lakes, catching mostly bullheads which Jenny would fry up later. They also enjoyed playing cards, especially the game "500," in which they would play as partners and were almost impossible to beat. They had an old floor-model radio in the living room, which Jenny would tune to polka music. She had a wood-fired cooking stove, a large vegetable garden in the back yard, and a butter-churn which she used regularly to make butter from cream. In those days (1930's to 1950's) milk was delivered in glass bottles in which the cream had separated out and risen to the top. This cream was poured off to make butter, and for other uses, leaving the lower-fat buttermilk.



John Edgar Wilson and "Lady," LaHogue farm, ca, 1917



Wilson Farm near LaHogue, Illinois ca. 1915

In 1962 John and Jenny were involved in a serious highway accident while traveling from St. James to Bloomington with John's niece Goldy and her husband Albert Holland. A large semi-tractor-trailer made a sudden left turn in front of them; rather than pass under the

trailer and be decapitated, Albert's only choice was to aim for one of the big rear wheels. They struck with such an impact that the reverse image of "Firestone" was later visible embossed into the crumpled hood of their totally destroyed car. All were hospitalized and all survived, including John, who suffered crushed ribs, a bruised heart, and a skull concussion. When being wheeled into the emergency room, John was asked by the doctor how he felt; "With my fingers," he joked. Jenny suffered a broken hip.



John Edgar Wilson and his chickens, in St. James

John also maintained a chicken coop out back, and would periodically select a chicken for dinner--Jenny was an expert at preparing delicious fried chicken on her wood-fired stove. To kill the chicken, John would simply grab it tightly by the head and twirl the body around violently until it ripped off, the headless body then flopping around on the ground spraying blood for a few seconds. John's 10-year-old grandson, Wendell Jr., observed this technique carefully, and tried to apply it himself when he caught a wild pheasant while on a pheasant-hunting trip near Darfur. The pheasant had an infected BB wound in one wing and had refused to fly, so Wendell wasn't able to shoot it with his 12-gauge shotgun. It had tried to run away but had become entangled in tall grass and was finally captured by hand. Seizing the opportunity try the chicken-twirling maneuver, Wendell grasped the bird's head, as he had seen his grandfather do, and then twirled it around violently. Unfortunately, however, Wendell was not strong enough to

make the body tear loose from the head, and after much effort ended up with a very limp and presumably dead pheasant still in one piece. His father tossed the body in the trunk of their car, and they drove back home that night to Minneapolis. But when they opened the trunk at home, there sat a somewhat nervous and traumatized-looking but fully alert pheasant staring back at them! Wendell Sr. then had to take the unlucky bird into the back yard and decapitate it the easy way, with a knife.



Eugenia Weinbrenner Wilson (1895-1980) and John Edgar Wilson (1892-1977)

Some people like cats, and some like dogs; the Wilsons were always a dog family. After Bill the bulldog (during the depression), in the 1940's-50's they had another dog, a tan-colored cocker-spaniel named "Snooky." In his youth John had also had a dog, named "Snibe," and when Wendell was young he was given a dog named "Bingo."

Growing elderly and wanting to live nearer to their children in the Minneapolis area, John and Jenny finally sold their St. James house in 1974 and moved to a retirement complex in Edina in. John died three years later, and Jenny died in 1980.



**Jenny and John Edgar Wilson ca. 1973
(at son Wendell's home, 8042 Bryant Ave., Bloomington, MN)**