

## #45 Albert Wilson writes from the Great Lakes training camp

As in the past, one thing seems to lead to another in this blog. In my last post about young Robert Wilson a mention was made of his big brother Albert being at the navy medical reserve at Great Lakes training camp. I'm sure this is what probably heightened Robert's dedication to the cause. Albert and his two other brothers had also been in the Boy Scouts as this 1905 picture of Fred, Albert, and Jerome Wilson shows (Kinsley-Edwards County Centennial 1873-1973)



*“Albert Edgar Wilson was born on January 20, 1896 and graduated from Kinsley High School in 1915 (president of the class). Albert was the first of the Wilson family to go to college at the University of Kansas but according to one source, “his mother missed him so much, he came home after a year.” (Wilson Thornberry Family History book)*

It seems that the Wilson brothers were quite musical and formed an orchestra to play at dances. Myrtle Richardson wrote in her book, **The Great Next Year Country**, *“At the time the Palace theatre was opened (1917), the old silent movies were all that were offered. Back ground music was furnished for the pictures...Albert Wilson and Robert Wilson were two of the members of the Wilson orchestra which helped to make the early day movies come to life.”*

Albert enlisted in the navy in July, 1917 and wrote a very interesting letter to the Graphic editor (November 29, 1917) from the Great lakes training center in Chicago, Illinois:

*“...All of us are housed in steam-heated barracks now, and have things a little like home. Of course we have to sleep in hammocks, but like everything else they are not so bad after you are used to them. The rub is getting used to them. They are nothing but a large piece of canvas which is hung eight feet from the floor. A fellow has to be quite an acrobat to get into them, and worse that that to stay there. On has to sleep on his back, and you know that position has a funny effect upon most persons, consequently all night long there is no such thing as silence, it's*

*just one long snore. I believe that an author could spend a night with us and write a book or at least an article on his experience, but like working in a boiler shop, you soon get used to it.*

*We get up at 5 o'clock the year around, so the old salts say, and for that reason I am ready to go to bed about 8 every evening. We get up, or hit the deck, to use the salty expression, take our watch and turn to and swab down the decks. We have breakfast at 7 and then loaf until 8, when we in the hospital start to school. We knock off for chow at 11:30. At 1 o'clock classes are resumed and we recite and listen to lectures until 3 o'clock. If the weather is nice we have an hour at litter drill after classes, but lately we have just been loafing during that time. From then until 9 o'clock we are free to use as we see fit.*

*Every one up here likes it fine, although at first it was a little hard upon us, as very few of us knew what discipline or regular hours were. The officers are very lenient with us at all times, and if a fellow tries to do right he will get along all right.*

*One thing that surprised me here was the food. I didn't think that it was possible to serve so many men so well. Of course it is not like sitting down to a meal at home, but nevertheless, everything is clean, well-seasoned, and plentiful. Like the most of the families, for that is what we are, we have our little wheatless and meatless days....."*

Albert would not be discharged until September 16, 1919. He became one of the charter members of the American Legion post in Kinsley. He married Annette Kauzer in 1926 and they owned Al n' Annette's Diner in Kinsley and was the Kinsley City Manager for a number of years.