

STONEHEDGE

Melville (Jack) Wilson was born in Toronto in 1883. He was a graduate of the University of Toronto in civil engineering in 1908 and spent five years in Moose Jaw as a civic engineer before working with the federal government. During his 40 years with the government he supervised construction of lift bridges at Burlington harbour facilities at both Hamilton and



Toronto, and marine installations from the St. Lawrence to Georgian Bay. Many of the problems he faced involved law, so he studied at Osgoode Hall and graduated as a lawyer. During World War II he became the first Canadian to be president of the American Port Authority and was responsible for the allocation of war materials on waterways in Canada and the US. After retiring from the government in 1953 he did consultant work for five years.



Jack Wilson and Luta Alberta Welch were married in 1909 in Toronto. They had four children – Helen Margaret (1911-1913), John Thomas (1913-1954), Ruth Eileen (1916-1999), and Jane Elizabeth (1917-1982). Sadly Luta died at Stonehedge in 1944. Jack died at the age of 93 in 1977. The Wilsons are buried in Prospect Cemetery, Toronto.

Jack Wilson enjoyed hunting and fishing. In the 1930s the family rented #130 Bayshore Road from Mayme Atkinson. Local residents will remember the Wilson family, particularly Ruth who was involved in many of the activities at Presqu'île during the summer and lived at #2, now demolished. Jack Wilson was the engineer responsible for the rebuilding of the Government Dock in Presqu'île Bay in 1939.

Work began on their summer cottage, Stonehedge, in 1942 and the grounds were completed around 1944. The home was first opened to the public on July 7, 1944 when the Wilsons hosted a social evening in aid of the local Red Cross making a net profit of \$106.40. The Brighton Ensign quotes: "An estimated 270 guests were free to explore through the spacious rooms of the beautiful home and delicious refreshments were served from the lovely dining room."

In 1956 Jack Wilson sold Stonehedge to the Park and for many years it was leased to the Salvation Army. Currently it is used for staff housing in the summer and, of course, for the Tea Room during Christmas at Presqu'île.

The Wilson family biography and photos from the family collection of grandchildren: John N E and Gloria Espino Wilson, Virginia Copping Tovell Pain, and David Wilson B and Cherie Knight Jones.

Researched by Joan Selwood for The Friends of Presqu'île and Ontario Parks.