

Wilson Davis and Baseball
April 30, 2005

Wilson was born in Washington, D.C. He was an avid baseball player from about 8 or 9 years of age. His early years coincided with World War II. During the years 1940-1945 this country's adult population was occupied with war. There were no parents available to coach or mentor young athletes. The boys that played baseball took their glove, their bat and a ball, walked to the nearest available field and found enough other boys to play a game. Maybe there wouldn't be 9 players to a team but that didn't matter. No umpires, no called strikes – maybe some special rules if there weren't enough players – like no stealing bases. This was Wilson's early baseball years.

From about the ages of 12 thru 14, he formed a team and signed up for a league playing on the Ellipse (the Monument grounds) in Washington, D.C. There was the only team in the league without a sponsor. (I only remember the name of one team – May Hardware – the big winner). This field was in downtown Washington while our home was in the outlying area. To reach the field where the games were scheduled, Wilson's team carried a bag full of bats and balls and got on a city bus to take them downtown. They played in this league for 2 summers – 1944 and 1945. Wilson was coach, manager and catcher. I was scorekeeper.

During this period our parents divorced and our father returned to Smyrna and his parents' farm. Wilson had always enjoyed a summer vacation in Smyrna. In the summer of 1946, I believe, he decided to move to Smyrna with our father. Baseball even contributed to this decision. In his first year at Coolidge High School in Washington, he became aware that the first string catcher for the school team was Stan King, a very mature 15 year old – tall, muscular, much bigger than Wilson. Stan was a 3 sport star, very talented and just a year ahead of Wilson. Wilson decided he would not get to play catcher for that team until his senior year after Stan graduated. He knew his chances to play good baseball would be much better in North Carolina than in Washington. I'm sorry I have no pictures or clippings from these years, but anything we may have saved has long since disappeared.

The rest of his baseball years you folks know much more about than I do. I look forward to attending your Baseball Memories Day on May 21st. Thank you for remembering my brother.

Jean Davis Lewis