



## Glendale Library, Arts & Culture

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## Finding Aid for the Tave and Roy Wilson Collection, 1925-1950

### Collection Overview

**Title:** Tave and Roy Wilson Collection

**Dates:** 1925-1950

**ID:** TRW

**Primary Creator:** Wilson Family

**Extent:** 5.0 linear feet, 3 boxes

**Arrangement:** Photograph albums are arranged chronologically.

**Forms of Material:** Paper Records, Photographic Materials, Albums

**Language of Materials:** English

### Abstract

The Tave and Roy Wilson Collection documents the aviator brothers' professional work and their leisure time recreational activities with friends and family at Tweedy Lake. Lou Royal "Roy" Wilson worked as a stunt pilot for motion pictures, while his older brother Octavius Arthur "Tave" Wilson worked as a camera pilot. They established Wilson Aero Corp. airfield after establishing a career for themselves as stunt aviators for the movies. The photograph albums primarily document their recreational activities with friends and family, but also include a number of photographs and newspaper clippings related to their professional lives.

### Biographical History

Octavius Arthur "Tave" Wilson (1899-1980) and Lou Royal "Roy" Wilson (1901-1932) were born in Missouri, but their family moved to Glendale, California sometime in the early to mid-1920s. By 1930, the brothers were living in Glendale with their mother Elorius Brooks, and their younger sister Juanita and her son Frederick Richardson. Around this time the brothers established Wilson Aero Corp. Roy worked as an aerial stunt pilot, while Tave worked as an aerial camera man, and both were members of the Motion Pictures Pilots' Association. Roy almost died while filming stunts for *Hell's Angels* (1930) in 1928, but survived the crash. In 1932, while attempting a stunt as a double for Jack Holt in *War Correspondent*, his plane crashed in Dry Lake, California and he lost his life in the accident. Not long after the crash, Tave quit flying and sold the airfield in 1937.

## Scope and Contents

Three photograph albums and a small group of newspaper clippings document the aviation careers and recreational activities of brothers Octavius Arthur "Tave" and Lou Royal "Roy" Wilson. It is unclear who took the photographs or assembled the albums.

The earliest album, 1925-1927 primarily depicts outdoor recreation activities at Tweedy Lake, directly north of Los Angeles and Los Padres National Forest. Photographed activities include fishing, boating, swimming, golfing, hunting, horseback riding, skiing, and archery. The vacationers stayed at a log cabin there called Canvas Back. Outside of Tweedy Lake activities, the album also includes photographs of Reflection Lake, California, and a trip to Oregon and Washington that included stops at Rogue River, Kinsey Creek, Multnomah Falls, South Umpqua River, Diamond Lake, Crater Lake, Columbia Highway, Columbia River, Seattle, and Mount Rainier.

The second album, circa 1927-1932 and 1947-1950, contains outdoor recreation, Canvas Back cabin, and Camp Cornish photographs, along with photographs of dogs and horses performing tricks. This album also includes loose album pages of family photographs originally tucked into the back of the album. These photographs were taken in San Gabriel and Silverlake and depict Maas, Good, and Loyd family members.

The Wilson Aero Album, circa 1928-1930, includes many aviation related locations and planes, including Grand Central Air Terminal in Glendale, Hollywood Aero Club, Wilson Aero Corporation, the Graf Zeppelin at Mines Field, Culver City Airport plane "FPS," and the Travelair 3000 used for the filming of *Hell's Angels* (1930). There are also several photographs of an unidentified airplane crash. In addition to flying related photographs, the album also includes photographs of swimming and hunting activities at Tweedy Lake, dogs, and Aunt Gettie (Maas) Geiler's horse. Identified individuals in the photographs include pilot Mary Heath, Roy Wilson, Margaret Perry, Harold Maas of Ace Pharmacy, Mrs. Arthur Maas, Wally Timm, Frank Tomick, Pop Wilson, Bob Starkey, future Wilson brother-in-law George De Saulles, and Doug Shilling.

The loose newspaper clippings were assembled by Glendale Public Library and document aerial stunts, including Miss Glendale Ada Lavinia Smith's parachute leap from an airplane, Roy Wilson's plane crash into Hollywood during the filming of *Hell's Angels* (1930), and "Suicide Slim" Cahill's parachute jump and wing walking stunts.

## Subjects/Access Terms

**Personal Names:** Wilson, Octavius Arthur, 1899-1980  
Wilson, Lou Royal, 1901-1932

**Corporate Name:** Wilson Aero Corp

**Topical Terms:** Aeronautics

Air pilots

Silent films

Stunt performers

**Geographic Names:** Glendale (Calif.)

Los Angeles County (Calif.)

## Administrative Information

**Processing Information:** Mallory Furnier, 2018

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**Conditions Governing Access:** The collection is open for research use.

**Preferred Citation:** Tave and Roy Wilson Collection. Glendale Central Library History Room. Glendale Library, Arts & Culture.

**Acquisition:** Mike Rose, 2008

**Related Materials:** [Wilson Aero Corp photograph album, USC Libraries Special Collections](#)

## Collection Contents

### Box 1

**Item 1:** Outdoor Recreation Album, 1925-1927

### Box 2

**Item 1:** Outdoor Recreation Album and Loose Pages, ca. 1927-1932, 1947-1950

### Box 3

**Item 1:** Wilson Aero Album, ca. 1928-1930

**Item 2:** Aerial Stunt Newspaper Clippings, 1928 February 17-June 30