



## John "Stretch" M. Wilson

January 20, 1968 - November 9, 2015

John "Stretch" M. Wilson died November 9, 2015 at the age of 47 in Willcox. Interment of his cremated remains will take place at a later date in the Hobo Cemetery in Britt, Iowa.

# Tribute Wall



“ *John " Stretch" M. Wilson*

January 30, 2023 at 12:50 AM



“ *I'll miss you stretch so will little bear I'll ride the grand canyon railway for you brother your one of the last and you'll bee missed RIP brother.*

**Andrew Ross** - December 24, 2015 at 12:19 AM



“ *Stretch was one of the friendliest people I ever met. He was so generous with his time and attention and always ready to share a story. Anybody who loves a dog as much as Stretch loved Burlington is a good person to know, and I'm very glad I got to know Stretch. Britt won't be the same without him, and nobody who met him will be the same either. Here's to Stretch, a kind and generous man who made lots of people's lives better just by being himself.*

**Gray Raulerson (High Pockets)** - December 11, 2015 at 02:51 PM



“ *You and Burl are now back together, riding in peace and riding free. Till we meet again somewhere down the line.*

*Ed & Elaine Bray (West Hill Jack & Cherokee)*

**Ed Bray (West Hill Jack)** - November 25, 2015 at 06:17 PM

LD

“ You my friend will be missed. Stretch had come and stayed a few days when ever he was in the area, it was always a unique experience. Ride free my friend. Halftrack, Crash and Tussa

Lea Donaldson - November 20, 2015 at 01:46 PM

JP

“ I met Stretch at my sisters house in Amory MS. He ask me for friends on FB and we have kelp in touch over the years. He was a nice friend. You knew where you stood with him. RIP  
Judith Phillips

Judith Phillips - November 19, 2015 at 09:44 AM

CZ

“ I own a cafe in Cassville wisc, and stretch would come here for our hobo days at stonefield. I would visit with him and Redbird when they would come. One day I met him over at the mississippi river and I brought him a big plate of hot roast beef, mashed potatoes, gravy, bread, and a veggie. He really gobbled it up and it was truly my pleasure, he really enjoyed it he said. I always looked forward to seeing him. I havent seen him for awhile he told me the last time he came that he wasn't sure if he'd be back. And now I guess he won't but, Stretch you will always be here in my heart! Good bye my friend.

cathy z - November 17, 2015 at 04:21 PM

TK

Wow, I just found out about this tonight. Way late. This explains why I haven't heard from him in awhile. John I will miss you brother. Always a great time hanging out with you my friend! -The Kodak Kidd

The Kodak Kidd - March 08, 2016 at 07:37 PM

BC

“ I met Stretch on Facebook and it was my honor. Praying for his family.  
May they find peace and comfort.  
Highball Stretch. See you on the other side.  
Billy Collins  
Locomotive Engineer BNSF  
Birmingham, Al.

---

**Billy Collins** - November 17, 2015 at 07:51 AM

BS

“ We had the pleasure of first meeting Stretch and Burlington at the Hobo Conventions. He & Burlington came and stayed with us for awhile..always filling the grill with enough meat to feed an army :)  
R.I.P..  
Duck Tape Girl & White Lightening

---

**Becky Steiger** - November 16, 2015 at 10:10 PM

LH

“ Thought and Prayers are with you at this time. Had many a good laughs with Stretch in Britt during the Hobo Convention. Now with his hobo friends at the heavenly jungle fire. Rest in Peace. Linda and Mary Jo and the gang at Mary Jo's Hobo House in Britt, Iowa

---

**Linda Hughes** - November 16, 2015 at 04:47 PM

JL

“ Stretch was always a fixture at the Conventions and at Deep Lock Quarry Gathering. He was the first king to issue me my Tourist Union 63 card. I will always remember him and Burlington Dog.

---

**Jack Who The Pope of Portage Lakes** - November 15, 2015 at 05:27 PM



“ *In memory of Stretch I met Stretch on my first trip to Britt for the Ho Bo Days. Stretch took me around and introduced me to everyone and showed me what goes on. He told me about the life of a Ho Bo. How he had been on the rails since he was a teenager. He told of his travels and how he got Burlington as a pup they were always together. As time went on he would come and stay with us for a few days. They became part of our family, Stretch and I would go camping we spent a lot of time together and became quite close. When we would go south Stretch and Burl would go with us. He also took us to the Combat Rail Fans campsite in the desert for New Years celebration and met more of his friends. It will always be easy to remember Stretch he had a big heart and cared for everybody. He also liked to cook his Stretch burgers and spaghetti he wanted to do his part. We will miss Stretch and Burl, but we know they are reunited and will always be together. Big Chuck and Cactus Flower*

---

**Charles Otto** - November 15, 2015 at 04:35 PM

FF

“ *1 file added to the album New Album Name*



---

**Flatcar Frank** - November 13, 2015 at 06:50 PM



“ Good memories of hanging out with him and Burl in Amory....he shared a beer with my sister and I as we walked down the tracks chatting about life.

*Love from Train Dummy, Tag-Along, St. Louis Frank family*



Rebecca Petersen - November 13, 2015 at 06:00 PM

JP

*this picture is at my sisters house in Amory*

Judith Phillips - November 19, 2015 at 09:43 AM

JF

“ Stretch liked to consider himself as "the welcoming committee " at Britt, Iowa and other gatherings. Always introducing himself and giving direction where to lay your head and if your hungry, to assist in getting a plate made up for them. You could usually find him at Big Chuck's jungle or riding around on the golf cart, with his cup in hand (contents unknown, lol )



*Stretch lived the way Stretch wanted to, free to roam & explore. I may not have known him as well as others, however, I do know he had a heart and he LOVED being a hobo. I will truely miss you my friend.*

*Stretch, your memory and stories of you will continue for years to come. Ride the rainbow rails with Burlington and be in peace.*

*-Much Love, Sassy*

Jenny "Sassy" Fox - November 13, 2015 at 12:09 PM

EP

“ Rest In Peace along with Burlington, missed you both at the last Rail Road Days.

*Ed "Clipper" Preston*



---

**Ed Preston** - November 13, 2015 at 09:40 AM

MQ

“ Stretch loved riding the rails with his greatest pal, Burlington his dog. He was excited to go to Hobo Days in Britt, Iowa and to several hobo gatherings. He enjoyed being hobo king. RIP Stretch and Burlington by your side.



---

**Mama Jo 2003 National Hobo Queen** - November 12, 2015 at 01:02 PM

 Cliff Williams

“ Stretch used to call me now and then when he was near Chicago. One time he was hanging out underneath a bridge south of Chicago. I drove there and spent a few hours with him. About fifteen years ago I interviewed him for my book, *One More Train to Ride: The Underground World of Modern American Hoboes*, published in 2003 by Indiana University Press. You can see the book on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and at [www.cliffordwilliams.net/onemoretraintoride](http://www.cliffordwilliams.net/onemoretraintoride). Stretch's life story is on pages 59-64. The first line in his story is "Ever since I was little, I always enjoyed trains." I will miss him. Oats (Cliff Williams)

---

**Cliff Williams** - November 12, 2015 at 12:43 PM

PA

“ *Such a kind, gentle soul. Stretch loved riding the rails and sleeping under the stars...but most of all he loved his dog & companion Burlington, who preceded him in death. Sure they are happy being reunited in heaven! Stretch will be missed by many! RIP my friend. Feel blessed to have known you!*

---

**Pam** - November 11, 2015 at 07:26 PM

PA

“ *1 file added to the album Tribute Wall*



---

**Pam** - November 11, 2015 at 04:06 PM

CW

*Sorry to hear about Stretch. I saw him last a couple of years ago. I live in Benson, Az. and went over to Wilcox to see him. He really liked spending the Winter there. Clayton DON and Nan Wilson.*

---

**clayton don wilson** - November 13, 2015 at 01:04 PM

HR

*First met Stretch and Burl when they came to Deep Lock Quarry Hobo Days. I will have fond memories these two gentle and kind souls. I also miss DLQHD. Great times with great people!  
Hummingbird*

---

**Hummingbird Rydquist** - November 17, 2015 at 01:36 PM

K-

*I am ashamed that I only heard of Stretch's passing today. I talked to him sometime in late October or early November, I don't remember exactly. It wasn't unusual to only hear from Stretch once in a month or so. He and I rode a few trains together, the best trip we ever took was probably in the fall of 2006, when we rode from Memphis up to Fulton, KY, then south through Corinth, MS to Amory, and then back north to Chicago and out west through Minneapolis to Annandale. We took our time, it took the better part of four weeks.*

*Stretch was a good friend to me. He was generous and considerate. I'm eighteen years older than him, so I'm not nearly as strong as he was and I'm a good deal slower, but he never complained about it. He was a great example of a "stand-up tramp." To some people that may not mean much, but it was important to Stretch to be a man of honor, and someone upon whom his friends could depend.*

*Stretch was an expert railroad tramp extraordinaire. He knew the geography of the U.S. like it was his back yard. He could navigate anywhere in the U.S. on trains, and he taught a lot of neophytes how to ride trains and live the life of a hobo. He believed that tramps should live an honorable, honest life, and in my opinion he did a good job of it.*

*He loved Burlington Dog as much as most people love their children, and after Burl died things were never really quite the same. I'm going to miss my friend Stretch. A lot. My thoughts are with his mother and his family. RIP, brother Stretch.*

---

**K-Bar** - February 19, 2016 at 01:27 PM

JB

*I was thrown into Jail in Las Vegas, 1996, Tress.RR.Prop, riding with Tat2 and We met Stretch & Burl. He was also jailed I saw him a few days later. I had a Road Dog, a Chow-Chow puppy named "Mary Elisebeth" we both got our dogs back, I headed back to Yermo stayed with Larry Staggs at the Worm Farm, then caught out to Roseyville, to see the Old Yard Master. I had got ot of Prison Feb. 1996, which cost me 5 Years of Dead Time, no trains to catch. I see you, K-bar, born 1950. I see You & Stretch were riding my favourite road in 2010 [?] and Laid Over in Clinton, Iowa, where I used to stay at "The Pool Hall" Hotel-1986 then again 1998 and last time 2000.*

*Best Run Ever, South Ogden, --Great Bend- Clinton, catch CP and sleep into Toronto.*

*At least I am alive to miss ya guy's. <https://youtu.be/5w1XktATPi8>*

---

**Johannan Ben Yisrael Bernays** - July 24, 2016 at 07:52 AM