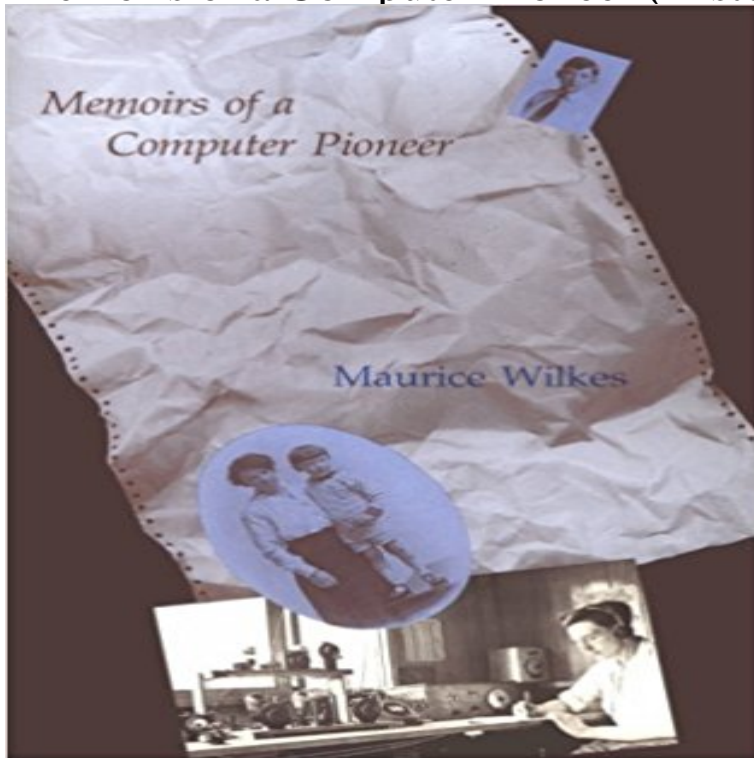


## Memoirs of a Computer Pioneer (History of Computing)



Maurice Wilkes was one of the leading scientific explorers in the development of the modern digital computer. He directed the Mathematical Laboratory (later named the Computer Laboratory) at Cambridge University, where he and his team built the EDSAC, the first stored program digital computer to go into service. Wilkes describes in nontechnical detail the growth of EDSAC and its successor, EDSAC 2, his introduction of microprogramming, and the first experiments with time-sharing systems. In the 1950s, when machines were still getting larger rather than smaller, Wilkes was one of the few who foresaw a time when nonspecialists would be using computers almost universally, and he reviews his anticipatory efforts to develop simple programming systems. But his book is more than a history of computing, it also recounts the allied scientific effort when he was one of those scientists and engineers (boffins as they were called by the RAF) who were in the thick of it, his electronics skills enlisted in the new and exciting development of radar. In this absorbing autobiography, Wilkes is as concerned with people and places as he is with computer components and programs of development. He deftly sketches his childhood in the English midlands and his student days at Cambridge where he studied mathematical physics, and his boyhood fascination with radio matured. He conveys the excitement of sudden insights and long-sought breakthroughs against life's simpler pleasures and trials. His account brims with assessments and anecdotes of such contemporaries as Turing, Hartree, von Neumann, Aiken, and a dozen others. And with his impressions of America and Germany formed during his scientific journeys.

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