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Guide to the Edmund Wilson Papers
YCAL MSS 187

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Overview

REPOSITORY: [Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library](#)
P.O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-
Email: beinecke.library@yale.edu
Phone: (203) 432-2972
Fax: (203) 432-4047

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 187

CREATOR: Wilson, Edmund, 1895-

TITLE: Edmund Wilson papers

DATES: 1829-1986

BULK DATES: 1920-1972

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 162.84 linear ft. (331 boxes)

LANGUAGE(S): Chiefly in English; some in French

SUMMARY: The collection consists of letters, records, photographs, and other materials. The papers span the years 1829-1986 and include materials concerning personal and professional life. The collection dates from the 1820s to 1972.

Series I, Correspondence, includes letters to and from Wilson and business associates; literary criticism; literature, interest in law, and American Indian rights. Series II, Writings, includes books and plays; drafts and drafts and clippings of

accompanying material, autobiographical work, American Earthquake, Commercials, The Death and I Thought of Daisy relating to obscenity trials, Red, Black, Blonde and Station, The Triple Threat Forties, The Fifties, and interviews with him, and Toby-Marcelin.

Series III, Subject Files, subjects such as communism, Cold War spending, and account statements and response to charges of espionage contains portraits and photographs of other writers, Wilson, drawings by him, Series VII, Wilson and his documents, genealogical speeches of Edmund V

VIEW/SEARCH: [To view and/or search](#)

FINDING AID LINK: To cite or bookmark the <http://hdl.handle.net/>

DIGITAL IMAGES: [Search for digital images](#)

CATALOG RECORD: [A record for this collection in the University Library catalog](#)

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Edmund Wilson Papers were acquired by the collection was acquired through purchases and purchases from Helen Miranda Wilson on the E 1997; and a gift of Helen Miranda Wilson, 2000. 1967-1988, and Lewis M. Dabney, 2003 and 2007 Collection of American Literature.

Information about Access

This collection is open for research.

Restricted Fragile in boxes 273-330 may only be photocopied or photographic prints for reference.

This collection may be housed off-site at Yale's 1

housed off-site please check the library's online requested 36 hours in advance. Please consult w

Ownership & Copyright

The Edmund Wilson Papers are the physical pro Literary rights, including copyright, belong to th appropriate curator.

Cite As

Edmund Wilson Papers. Yale Collection of Amei

Processing Notes

The Edmund Wilson Papers contain archival ma subsequently acquired from the Wilson family, t Dabney. Books and serials acquired from Edmu papers of Elena Wilson formerly classed in ZA W Pcolar formerly classed in ZA Wilson, see the M of Edmund Wilson acquired from his correspon Library's online catalog and in the Yale Collectio information about reorganization of materials f relating to *The Sixties* was acquired from Lewis

Alternative Formats

Series I., *Correspondence*, is available on microffi

EDMUND WILSON (1895-1972)

American literary critic; author of literary criticism, sc writer, *Vanity Fair*, *The New Republic*, and *The New Y* Scott Fitzgerald, Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Dos Pa: McCarthy, actress Mary Blair, Margaret Canby, and E

Wilson's life and work have been documented in auto *Forties*, *The Fifties*, and *The Sixties*. Correspondence c edited by Elena Wilson, and *Dear Bunny*, *Dear Volody* works by others include: *Edmund Wilson Revisited*, b *Wilson: A Biography*, by Jeffrey Myers. *Edmund Wils* Wilson from the beginning of his career through 1970

The following timeline lists publication dates of major

1895 May 8: born in Red Bank, New Jersey, only child

1908: trip to Europe with family; entered Hill School, I

1912: graduated from Hill School; entered Princeton I

1914: trip to England with college friends

1916: graduated from Princeton University; reporter for *The New York Times*

1917-1919: served in the United States Army

1920-1921: editor and writer, *Vanity Fair*

1921-1941: editor and writer, *The New Republic*

1923: married actress Mary Blair; daughter Rosalind Elsie Blair born

1925: *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of a Late Romantic Period*

1929: divorced Mary Blair; nervous illness; patient at Columbia Hospital

1930: married Margaret Canby

1932: Margaret Canby died

1935: trip to the Soviet Union

1936: *Travels in Two Democracies* (essays and stories)

1938: *The Triple Thinkers: Ten Essays on Literature, Criticism, and the Arts*

1939: taught at the University of Chicago

1940: *To the Finland Station: A Study in the Writing of the Russian Revolution*

1941: *The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature*; *The Last Tycoon*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald; bought house in New York City

1942: taught at Smith College

1944-1970s: book reviewer and columnist, *The New York Times*

1945: trip to Europe for *The New Yorker*; edited *The Columbia Book of the Year*

1946: *Memoirs of Hecate County* (novel); divorced Margaret Canby

1947: *Europe Without Baedeker: Sketches Among the Ruins of the Old World*

1948: daughter Helen Miranda Wilson born

1950: *Classics and Commercials: A Literary Chronicle*

1951: death of Helen M. K. Wilson; established residence in New York City

1952: *The Shores of Light: A Literary Chronicle of the Twentieth Century*

1954: trip to Israel for *The New Yorker*

1955: *The Scrolls From the Dead Sea*; Gold Medal from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

1956: *Red, Black, Blonde, and Olive: Studies in Four Countries*; *Reflections at Sixty*; honorary doctor of letters from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

1957: *American Earthquake: A Documentary of the Tu*

1958: charged with tax delinquency

1959-1960: taught at Harvard University

1960: *Apologies to the Iroquois*

1962: *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the Ar*

1963: *The Cold War and the Income Tax*; Presidential I

1964: Edward MacDowell Medal from the Edward Ma

1964-1965: fellowship, Center for Advanced Studies, V

1965: *O Canada: An American's Notes on Canadian C*

1966: *The Bit Between My Teeth: A Literary Chronicle* and Sciences; National Medal for Literature from the

1967: *A Prelude: Landscapes, Characters and Convers*

1968: *The Fruits of MLA*; Aspen Award from the Aspe

1971: *Upstate: Records and Recollections of Northern* livre de la ville de Nice

1972 Jun 12: died, Talcottville, New York

Posthumous books:

1972: *A Window on Russia: For the Use of Foreign Rea*

1973: *The Devils and Canon Barham: Ten Essays on F*

1975: *The Twenties: From Notebooks and Diaries of th*

1977: *Letters on Literature and Politics*, edited by Elen

1979: *The Nabokov-Wilson Letters*, edited by Simon K

1980: *The Thirties: From Notebooks and Diaries of the*

1983: *The Forties: From Notebooks and Diaries of the*

1986: *The Fifties: From Notebooks and Diaries of the l*

1993: *The Sixties: The Last Journal*, edited by Lewis D

THE WILSON AND KIMBALL FA

The following is a partial list of family members, show Wilson through his father, Edmund Wilson, Sr., throu with unidentified birth and death dates are listed in al

The Wilson Family

Andrew Wilson m. Melinda Ann

-----Thaddeus Wilson m. (1849?) Charlotte A. Miller
-----John Wilson (1861-1899) m. (1894) Susan C. 1
-----Susan Colston Wilson (1895-1981)
-----Edmund Minor Wilson (1897-1935)
-----Charlotte Miller Minor Wilson (1898-19
-----Edmund Wilson, Sr. (1863-1923) m. (1892) H
-----Edmund Wilson, Jr. ("Bunny") (1895-19
----- (see wives and children, below)
-----Nellie

The Kimball Family

Reuel Kimball (1778-1847) m. Hannah Mather

-----Reuel Kimball (1799-1867) m. Cleanthe Thomas (18
-----Walter Scott Kimball (1828-1890) m. (1854) F
-----Adeline Kimball ("Addie") m. Joe Stilwe
-----Dorothy Kimball m. Cecil Stewart
-----Helen Mather Kimball ("Nellie") (1865-
-----Edmund Wilson, Jr. ("Bunny") (189
----- (see wives and children, below)
-----maid/companion: Jennie Corbett
-----Laura Cleanthe Kimball m. (1907) Charl
-----Paul T. Kimball
-----Reuel Kimball m. Caroline Knox ("Carr
-----Alexander Kimball ("Sandy")
-----Esther Kimball m. Bob Hartshorne
-----Winfield Kimball

Edmund Wilson's Wives and Children

Mary Blair (1897-1947)

-----m. EW, 1923
-----Rosalind Baker Wilson (1923-2000)
-----Childhood nurse: "Stella"
-----sep. 1925
-----div. 1929
-----m. Constant Eakin ("Connie")

Margaret Canby (1895-1932)

-----m. James Canby, Jr.
-----James B. Canby, 3rd
-----m. EW, 1930
-----died 1932

Mary McCarthy (1912-1989)

-----m. Harold Johnsrud, 1933
-----div. 1936
-----m. EW, 1938
-----Reuel K. Wilson (1938-) m. Marcia Ruiz

-----Jay Hilary Wilson (1968-)

-----div. 1946

-----m. Bowden Broadwater, 1946

-----div. 1961

-----m. Raymond West ("Jim"), 1961

Elena Mumm (1906-1979)

-----m. James Thornton, 1931

-----Henry H. M. Thornton (1932-) m. (1958) Dag

-----m. EW, 1946

-----Helen Miranda Wilson (1948-) m. Tim Wood

-----Childhood nurse: "Hedwig"

Description of the Papers

The Edmund Wilson Papers consist of correspondence documents, and other personal papers and artifacts encompassing early family documents through material journals. The bulk of the collection dates from the beginning

The collection is housed in 330 boxes and is organized into Photographs and Drawings, Personal Papers, and Wilson's portfolios, and 3 broadside folders. Restricted Fragile photocopies or photographic prints have been substituted

Series I, *Correspondence* (boxes 1-81), consists of letters. Almost all letters are incoming, with a small amount of outgoing between Wilson and his parents, which includes original correspondence. Additional correspondence relating to Wilson is located in Elena, letters to Elena from other correspondents dated letters collected by Elena for publication in *Letters on "Bunny,"* a nickname used by Wilson.

Much of Wilson's correspondence concerns his research on other writers, and his views on literature. Many of Wilson's detailed correspondence with fellow writers and friends from his army service, current and former with friends from Cod, Massachusetts, and upstate New York. In addition, backgrounds who shared his interest in subjects such as the Cold War, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Russian literature, and

Extensive files of correspondence are present for John Powell, Mario Praz, Allen Tate, and Morton Dauwen Zabel. Personal relationships includes files for Leonie Adams Cowley, Floyd Dell, William Stanley Dell, Margaret De Penelope Gilliatt, Celia Goodman, Roman Grynberg, (Huling, Mamaine Koestler, Charlotte Kretzoi, Mary M Wilson's journals), Arthur Mizener, Helen Muchnic, L Phelps Putnam, Burton Rascoe, Paul Rosenfeld, Gilbert Philippe Thoby-Marcelin, Gilbert McCoy Troxell, John

Correspondence with family members concerns Wilson's

children, and his wives' extended families. Letters from Baker Wilson, make up the bulk of family correspondence present for each of Wilson's wives, Mary Blair, Margaret Helen Miranda Wilson; cousins Helen Augur, Alexander Rullman, a childhood friend; and Jennie Corbett, a maternal

Most business letters are from publishers, editors, and lit Wilson's works. These letters reveal Wilson's intensive publication process. Major publishers include Farrar, & Warburg, and W. H. Allen. Also represented are *The* wrote, and institutions where he lectured and taught (to *Memoirs of Hecate County* and Wilson's struggles with Penberthy & DeIorio. Many of Wilson's publishers, editors these correspondents are cross referenced under corresponding

Photocopies and carbons of third party letters are filed party letters are listed under the name of the writer and most business correspondence is filed here, corresponding Wilson's works, as well as fan mail and corrections of

Series II, Writings (boxes 82-173), is organized into nine Poetry, Teaching Materials, Other Writings, and Writing

The Journals subseries consists of holograph notebooks were the source of Wilson's published autobiographic *The Sixties*. Journals contain notes, drafts of writings, issues; his research, travels, and writings; and his daily were kept during trips, including a family trip to Europe 1935, Europe, 1945, and the American Southwest, 194

Journals and associated materials are identified by volume notebook. A single date has been transcribed from each not dated consistently. Dates have been supplied in brackets from other sources. Items originally laid in notebooks locations noted on enclosing sheets.

For journals dated 1908-1947, Wilson prepared transcripts notebooks and integrating additional text. For most titles the earliest draft is represented by a typescript carbon revisions. Most of Wilson's transcripts are filed here; except *Prelude* and *The Twenties*, which are filed in the Books filed in the Books subseries.

The Books subseries encompasses all genres of Wilson's history, novels, autobiography and journals, and collected books edited by Wilson: *The Crack-up*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald *Shock of Recognition*. For many titles, drafts and setting titles include contracts, publicity, and business and related essays, draft materials may include revised clippings from and Book Reviews subseries. While varying versions of books may be found in *Edmund Wilson: A Bibliography*

While his detailed revisions and intensive involvement

did not systematically retain his literary manuscripts, *The Wound and the Bow*, are represented by incomplete posthumously published journals, were retained by his directions.

For the following works, complete drafts, setting copies: *The Bit Between My Teeth*, *Classics and Commercials*, *Galahad and I Thought of Daisy*, *Memoirs of Hecate County*, *Canada*, *Patriotic Gore*, *A Piece of My Mind*, *Red, Black*, *Finland Station*, *The Triple Thinkers*, *Upstate*, *Window Sixties*.

Drafts and proofs are listed in chronological order for *Europe Without Baedeker* and *To the Finland Station*, publication. Additional materials relating to books made Correspondence series. Publisher accounting statements proofs or published copies of books with Wilson's correspondence Materials for *Letters on Literature and Politics*, edited

The Essays and Book Reviews subseries documents Wilson criticism and reviews, essays on non-literary topics, a date from Wilson's work as an editor and contributor 1920-1970; also present are a few works dating from before he wrote essays continuously throughout his career, typically essays addressing all major subject areas of his writing; essays typically exist in multiple versions, which may include

While a significant amount of drafts and proofs are present holograph revisions or other annotations. Although various all tear sheets and other clippings are described as "clippings" literary works, titles and authors are either stated in foot drafts or clippings containing multiple articles. To facilitate undated drafts are also present.

Although Wilson's best regarded works are in literary plays, short stories, and poetry. Materials for his novel *Story of Three Wishes*, are in the Books subseries. The to collections of plays in the Books subseries. While all subseries, the bulk of materials in the Plays subseries consists scripts, programs, and reviews are present. Additional series.

Materials in the Short Stories subseries include drafts written by Wilson and his cousin Alexander Kimball. C incorporated in *Memoirs of Hecate County*: "Ellen Ter Turtles". Additional materials pertaining to these and

Titles in the Poetry subseries are generally represented "By Dark Cocytus's Shore," including drafts, proofs, and versions of poems appearing in the Journals subseries Books subseries: *A Christmas Delirium*, *Holiday Green Note-Books of Night*, and *The Undertaker's Garland*. these and other poetry collections may be found in the

The Teaching Materials subseries contains notes and drafts of lectures given at the University of Chicago, Smith College, and Harvard University. As Wilson's papers were collected, they were filed here incorporate research materials or drafts for his lectures.

The Other Writings subseries consists of juvenile writings, including a notebook, a scrapbook of clippings, drawings, poems, and sketches by Wilson and Kimball. Similar juvenile collaborations by Wilson and Kimball include "The Philosophy of Philosophy," and a list of *New Yorker* book reviews, 1934-1935.

The Writings of Others subseries is organized into two subseries: Writings About Edmund Wilson, arranged by subject, and Writings About Other Subjects, arranged by author, covering the period 1934-1977. These materials document Wilson's interest and involvement in the work of other authors. Many of the materials collected by Wilson are his own works or articles on literary subjects are also filed here under their respective Subject Files series.

Writings About Other Subjects, arranged by author, covering the period 1934-1977. These materials document Wilson's interest and involvement in the work of other authors. Many of the materials collected by Wilson are his own works or articles on literary subjects are also filed here under their respective Subject Files series.

Authors include Edna St. Vincent Millay: poems and a notebook; *Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, proof with annotations and works of other Russian writers; and Philippe Tholozan: a notebook and other works. Other authors include W. H. Auden, Irving Berlin (songs), John Dos Passos, Boris Pasternak, Dawn Powell (drawings), and many others. Some authors enclosed with letters in the Correspondence series.

Series III, *Subject Files* (boxes 174-190), is organized into two subseries: *Subject Files for People* and *Subject Files for Other Subjects*. The *Subject Files for People* subseries consists of clippings, other printed materials, and personal notes on the writings and personal interests of historical figures, and friends and family members. In some cases, date specific folders are used in a particular area. Folder titles used in a preliminary list are retained or cross referenced. Some materials moved from the Correspondence series to enclosures to correspondence and returned to the Correspondence series.

Subject Files for People contain biographical information, articles, and other materials on historical figures, and friends and family members. Materials include Bishop, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Harold Frederic, Christian B. Miller, and Phelps Putnam.

Subject Files for Other Subjects pertain to non-literary topics, including the bulk of materials date from ca. 1920-1970, files for Correspondence ephemera from 1915-1919. Subjects represented by a folder include publications and ephemera of organizations, published works, and scholarship; income tax protest and Cold War spending; and the Great Depression.

Series IV, *Financial Papers* (boxes 191-197), is organized into two subseries: *Accounts* and *Correspondence*. *Accounts* consist of statements from publishers showing transactions. As Wilson published continuously throughout his life, the accounts list multiple titles for current and earlier works. *Correspondence* includes letters from publishers in the Correspondence series.

Income Tax materials are organized by tax year, documents and charges made by the Internal Revenue Service. Files for initial charges of tax delinquency in 1958. Detailed record of legal requirements during the years his case was active.

Tax documents include federal and state returns, lists of collector's receipts, statements of tax due, and documents. Correspondence series as enclosures to letters from lists of statements, including bank statements, bank deposit statements, stubs, and cancelled checks; and additional notes about

Series V, *Photographs and Drawings* (boxes 198-203), The bulk of materials are early family photographs showing families. A small amount of images are present for each photograph, a few drawings and reproductions of papers. Wilson are filed with his other drawings in the Personal Papers enclosed with letters in the Correspondence series.

Photographs and Drawings of People are organized in chronologically; Wilson and Kimball Families, arranged by Wilson include infant and child portraits, group portraits, portraits and snapshots through adulthood and old age. Wilson, Sr., and Helen M. K. Wilson; Kimball aunts, and Photographs of Other People include Wilson's Hill School. Unidentified daguerreotypes, tintypes, and other photographs.

Photographs and Drawings of Places include images of scenes in Red Bank, New Jersey; a series of photographs of Eugene O'Neill's house in Provincetown, Massachusetts; mother, with photographs of Wilson as a child, his parents.

Series VI, *Personal Papers* (boxes 204-205), is organized by Punch and Judy Puppets, School Records, and Other Papers. Presidential Medal of Freedom, an honorary doctorate from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Edward Taylor National Book Committee, and the National Institute of Journalism in World War II. In addition to artifacts and

Wilson's Drawings include informal caricatures of his childhood, and other drawings similar to the doodles. contain legal documents pertaining to Wilson's divorce from his marriage to Elena Wilson. Punch and Judy Puppets: many representing standard characters. These puppets, magic, and illusion, and were used by him in contain a small amount of material from the Hill School school events, and a sign advertising Princeton's *Nassau Papers* include address books and appointments calendar; passports; locks of hair from Wilson's childhood; and

Series VII, *Wilson and Kimball Family Papers* (boxes Research, and Other Papers. Together with materials of interest in his ancestors and their history in New Jersey

from family members other than Edmund Wilson; let
Correspondence series. The bulk of correspondence i
Charlotte A. Miller. Also present is one letter from his
Wilson. Other correspondence includes letters written
family.

Genealogy Research materials consist of charts and n
Edmund Wilson. Other Papers contain personal paper
Edmund Wilson, Sr., include speeches for New Jersey
University alumni and membership in other organiza
school classmates, a passport, and a document pertai
Rosalind Baker Wilson include school records and juv
writings, biographical information and memorials, an

Oversize (boxes 213-272, 4 portfolios, and 3 broadside

Restricted Fragile (boxes 273-316) and Restricted Frag
photocopies or photographic prints have been substit