Overview

**Repository:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P.O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
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, including 60 oversize boxes) + 4 portfolios + 3 LDC boxes + 3 binders

**Language(s):** Chiefly in English; some materials are in French, Russian, Hebrew, or Hungarian.

**Summary:** The collection consists of correspondence, literary manuscripts, records, photographs, and personal and family papers. The papers span the years 1829-1986, encompassing materials concerning posthumous publication of Wilson's collection dates from the beginnings of Wilson's 1972.

Series I, Correspondence, 1907-1972

Series II, Writings, 1907-1972

Series III, Subject Files, 1904-1971

Series IV, Financial Papers, 1923-1972

Series V, Photographs and Drawings, 1885-1971

Series VI, Personal Papers, 1895-1972

Series VII, Wilson and Kimball Family Papers, 1829-1964

Oversize

Restricted Fragile

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Navigation options:
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accompanying materials, and transcripts, which were the source of Wilson's published autobiographical work American Earthquake, Commercials, The Dea and I Thought of Daisy relating to obscenity trials, Red, Black, Blonde and Station, The Triple Thir Forties, The Fifites, and interviews with him, by Thoby-Marcelin.

Series III, Subject Files, subjects such as communism, labor, Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship, income tax protest and Cold War spending, an account statements an response to charges of contains portraits and photographs of other writers, Wilson, drawings by him Series VII, Wilson and Kimball Family Papers, includes documents, genealogic, speeches of Edmund V

**View/Search:** To view and/or search

**Finding Aid Link:** To cite or bookmark the finding aid, use the following address: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.edwilson

**Digital Images:** Search for digital images

**Catalog Record:** A record for this collection, including location information, may be available in Orbis, the Yale University Library catalog.

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### Administrative Information

#### Provenance

The Edmund Wilson Papers were acquired by the Library through gift and purchase. The collection was acquired through purchases and gifts from Edmund Wilson, 1944-1968, and Elena Wilson, 1972-1979; purchases from Helen Miranda Wilson on the Eugene G. O'Neill Memorial Fund and the Ezra 1997; and a gift of Helen Miranda Wilson, 2000 and 1967-1988, and Lewis M. Dabney, 2003 and 2007. This collection may be housed off-site at Yale's Library Shelving Facility (LSF).

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#### Information about Access

This collection is open for research. 

*Restricted Fragile* in boxes 273-330 may only be consulted with permission of the appropriate curator. Photographer's copies or photographic prints for reference use have been made of many materials. This collection may be housed off-site at Yale’s Library Shelving Facility (LSF).
housed off-site please check the library’s online catalog and in the Yale Collection of American Literature Manuscript Miscellany (YCAL). Information about reorganization of materials formerly classed in ZA Wilson relating to The Sixties was acquired from Lewis M. Dabney. Books and serials acquired from Edmund Wilson have been cataloged separately.

Alternative Formats

Series I., Correspondence, is available on microfilm.

EDMUND WILSON (1895-1972)

American literary critic; author of literary criticism, social criticism, history, writer, Vanity Fair, The New Republic, and The New Yorker; Scott Fitzgerald, Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Dos Passos, Mary McCarthy, and McCarthy, actress Mary Blair, Margaret Canby, and Elena Wilson, see the Elena Wilson Papers (YCAL MSS 188). For papers of Mary Pcolar formerly classed in ZA Wilson, see the Mary Pcolar Papers Relating to Edmund Wilson of Edmund Wilson acquired from his correspondents and Library’s online catalog and in the Yale Collection of American Literature Manuscript Miscellany (YCAL). Information about reorganization of materials formerly classed in ZA Wilson from the beginning of his career through 1970.

The following timeline lists publication dates of major works by Wilson from the beginning of his career through 1970.

1895 May 8: born in Red Bank, New Jersey, only child
1908: trip to Europe with family; entered Hill School, Pottstown, Pennsylvania
1912: graduated from Hill School; entered Princeton University
1914: graduated from Princeton University; began working for The New Republic
1915: began working for The New Yorker
1917: began working for Vanity Fair
1918: married Edna St. Vincent Millay
1920: published first book of poetry
1922: published first book of criticism
1923: published first book of short stories
1925: published first novel
1930: published second novel
1932: published second novel
1934: published third novel
1936: published fourth novel
1938: published fifth novel
1940: published sixth novel
1942: published seventh novel
1944: published eighth novel
1946: published ninth novel
1948: published tenth novel
1950: published eleventh novel
1952: published twelfth novel
1954: published thirteenth novel
1956: published fourteenth novel
1958: published fifteenth novel
1960: published sixteenth novel
1962: published seventeenth novel
1964: published eighteenth novel
1966: published nineteenth novel
1968: published twentieth novel
1970: published twenty-first novel

Ownership & Copyright

The Edmund Wilson Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Cite As

Edmund Wilson Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Processing Notes

The Edmund Wilson Papers contain archival material formerly classed in ZA Wilson and subsequently acquired from the Wilson family, through Wilson's publisher, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, and from Lewis M. Dabney. Books and serials acquired from Edmund Wilson have been cataloged separately.
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 Baker Wilson born; death of Edmund Wilson
1925: *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930*
1929: divorced Mary Blair; nervous illness; patient at Clifton Springs Sanitarium
1930: married Margaret Canby
1932: Margaret Canby died
1935: trip to the Soviet Union
1936: *Travels in Two Democracies* (essays and stories about the United States and the Soviet Union)
1938: *The Triple Thinkers: Ten Essays on Literature*
1939: taught at the University of Chicago
1940: *To the Finland Station: A Study in the Writing and Acting of History*
1941: *The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature*; married writer Mary McCarthy; son Reuel Kimball Wilson born
1942: taught at Smith College
1945: trip to Europe for *The New Yorker*, edited *The Crack-Up*
1946: *Memoirs of Hecate County* (novel); divorced Mary McCarthy; married Elena Mumm Thornton
1947: *Europe Without Baedeker: Sketches Among the Ruins of Italy, Greece and England*
1948: daughter Helen Miranda Wilson born
1950: *Classics and Commercials: A Literary Chronicle*
1951: death of Helen M. K. Wilson; established residence in Kimball ancestral home, Old Kimball Farm
1952: *The Shores of Light: A Literary Chronicle of the Twenties and Thirties*
1954: trip to Israel for *The New Yorker*
1955: *The Scrolls From the Dead Sea*; Gold Medal from the National Institute for Arts and Letters
1956: *Red, Black, Blonde, and Olive: Studies in Four Civilizations: Zuni, Haiti, Soviet Russia, Israel; Reflections at Sixty*; honorary doctor of letters from Princeton University
1957: American Earthquake: A Documentary of the Twenties and Thirties

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 American Civil War

1963: The Cold War and the Income Tax; Presidential Medal of Freedom; settlement with the Internal Revenue Service

1964: Edward MacDowell Medal from the Edward MacDowell Association

1964-1965: fellowship, Center for Advanced Studies, Wesleyan University

1965: O Canada: An American’s Notes on Canadian Cultures

1966: The Bit Between My Teeth: A Literary Chronicle of 1950-1965; National Medal for Literature from the National Book Committee

1967: A Prelude: Landscapes, Characters and Conversations From the Earlier Years of My Life

1968: The Fruits of MLA; Aspen Award from the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies


1972 Jun 12: died, Talcottville, New York

Posthumous books:

1972: A Window on Russia: For the Use of Foreign Readers

1973: The Devils and Canon Barham: Ten Essays on Poets, Novelists and Monsters

1975: The Twenties: From Notebooks and Diaries of the Period

1977: Letters on Literature and Politics, edited by Elena Wilson


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

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

1986: The Fifties: From Notebooks and Diaries of the Period

1993: The Sixties: The Last Journal, edited by Lewis Dabney

THE WILSON AND KIMBALL FAMILIES

The following is a partial list of family members, showing people represented in the Wilson through his father, Edmund Wilson, Sr., through his mother, Helen Mather Kimball, and through his marriages. Siblings with unidentified birth and death dates are listed in alphabetical order.
The Wilson Family

Andrew Wilson m. Melinda Ann
-----Thaddeus Wilson m. (1849?) Charlotte A. Miller
-----------John Wilson (1861-1899) m. (1894) Susan C. I
-----------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 (1806-1835)
-----------Walter Scott Kimball (1828-1890) m. (1854) I
-----------Adeline Kimball ("Addie") m. Joe Stilwe
-----------Dorothy Kimball m. Cecil Stewart
-----------Helen Mather Kimball ("Nellie") (1865-
-----------Edmund Wilson, Jr. ("Bunny") (18
-----------(see wives and children, below)
-----------maid/companion: Jennie Corbett
-----------Laura Cleanthe Kimball m. (1907) Charl
-----------Paul T. Kimball
-----------Reuel Kimball m. Caroline Knox ("Carri
-----------Alexander Kimball ("Sandy")
-----------Esther Kimball m. Bob Hartshorne
-----------Winfield Kimball

Edmund Wilson’s Wives and Children

Mary Blair (1897-1947)
-----m. EW, 1923
-----------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
Description of the Papers

The Edmund Wilson Papers consist of correspondence, literary manuscripts, subject files, photographs, drawings, documents, and other personal papers and artifacts documenting Wilson's life and work. The papers span the years 1829-1986, encompassing early family documents through materials concerning posthumous publication journals. The bulk of the collection dates from the beginnings of Wilson's literary career, ca. 1920, through his death in 1972.

The collection is housed in 330 boxes and is organized into seven series: Photographs and Drawings, Personal Papers, and Wilson and Kimball Family Papers. Oversize materials are stored in portfolios, and 3 broadside folders. Restricted Fragile Papers, stored in photocopies or photographic prints have been substituted in the main files.

Series I, Correspondence (boxes 1-81), consists of letters from literary colleagues, friends, family, and others. Most of the letters are incoming, with a small amount of outgoing drafts and carbons interfiled. An exception is correspondence between Wilson and his parents, which includes original letters from Wilson, most dating from his youth.

Additional correspondence relating to Wilson is located in a file of photocopies of letters collected by Elena for publication in Letters on Literature and Politics. Such correspondence includes files for John Peale Bishop, John Dos Passos, Powell, Mario Praz, Allen Tate, and Morton Dauwen Zabel. Other correspondence reflecting Wilson's literary interests and personal relationships includes files for Leonie Adams, Peggy Bacon, Alfred Bellinger, Louise 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, Gilbe Philippe Thoby-Marcelin, Gilbert McCoy Troxell, John...

Correspondence with family members concerns Wilson's relationships with the Wilson and...
children, and his wives' extended families. Letters from Baker Wilson, make up the bulk of family correspondence and reflect Wilson's complex relationships with each of Wilson's wives, Mary Blair, Margaret Helen Miranda Wilson; cousins Helen Augur, Alexander Kimball, Carolyn Crosby Wilson Link, and Susan Rullman, a childhood friend; and Jennie Corbett, a maid and... 

Most business letters are from publishers, editors, literary agents, translators, and Wilson's works. These letters reveal Wilson's intensive revision and editing habits, and document his close involvement in the publication process. Major publishers include Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Doubleday & Warburg, and W. H. Allen. Also represented are The New Republic wrote, and institutions where he lectured and taught courses. 

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Photocopies and carbons of third party letters are filed with the correspondent who wrote, and institutions where he lectured and taught courses. While most business correspondence is filed here, correspondents are cross referenced under corporate and personal names. 

Series II, Writings (boxes 82-173), is organized into nine subseries: Journals, Books, Essays and Poetry, Teaching Materials, Other Writings, and Writings by Others. 

The Journals subseries consists of holograph notebooks, dated 1908-1970, and were the source of Wilson's published autobiographical works: The Sixties. Journals contain notes, drafts of writings, and his research, travels, and daily life, family relationships, friendships, and sexual affairs. Several volumes were kept during trips, including a family trip to Europe in 1908, travel in England in 1914, Europe, 1945, and the American Southwest, 1947. 

Journals and associated materials are identified by volume numbers written by Wilson on notebook. A single date has been transcribed from each notebook's title page or initial entry, as typically subsequent entries are not dated consistently. Dates have been supplied in brackets for undated volumes kept from other sources. Items originally laid in notebooks have been removed and listed separately, with page numbers of original locations noted on enclosing sheets. 

For journals dated 1908-1947, Wilson prepared transcripts, which were typed by notebooks and integrating additional text. For most transcripts, varying complete or fragmentary versions are the earliest draft is represented by a typescript carbon, while the revisions. Most of Wilson's transcripts are filed here; exceptions are transcripts of early journals constituting Prelude and The Twenties, which are filed in the Books subseries. For later journals, additional transcripts prepared by editors are filed in the Books subseries.

The Books subseries encompasses all genres of Wilson's works, as well as fan mail and corrections offered by readers. For many titles, drafts and setting titles include contracts, publicity, and business and reader correspondence. For books containing essays, draft materials may include revised clippings from periodicals. Similar revisions of single essays are present in the Essays and Book Reviews subseries. While varying versions of essays and book chapters are not cross 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 draft posthumously published journals, were retained by his editors and publishers and transferred to the Library according to directions.

For the following works, complete drafts, setting copies, or proofs are present: *The Bit Between My Teeth, Classics and Commercials, Galahad and I Thought of Daisy, Memoirs of Hecate County, patriotic Gore, A Piece of My Mind, Red, Black, Blonde and Olive Finland Station, The Triple Thinkers, Upstate, Windy Sixties.

Drafts and proofs are listed in chronological order for *Europe Without Baedeker* and *To the Finland Station*, publication. Additional materials relating to books ma Correspondence series. Publisher accounting statements, usually listing multiple titles, are filed in the Financial proofs or published copies of books with Wilson’s cor Materials for *Letters on Literature and Politics*, edited

The Essays and Book Reviews subseries documents W 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 h wrote essays continuously throughout his career, typi essays addressing all major subject areas of his writing essays typically exist in multiple versions, which may l

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

Although Wilson’s best regarded works are in literary plays, short stories, and poetry. Materials for his nove *Story of Three Wishes*, are in the Books subseries. The to collections of plays in the Books subseries. While al subseries, the bulk of materials in the Plays subseries s scripts, programs, and reviews are present. Additio 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, a versions of poems appearing in the Journals subseries Books subseries: *A Christmas Delirium, Holiday Greet Note-Books of Night*, and *The Undertaker’s Garland*. these and other poetry collections may be found in
The Teaching Materials subseries contains notes and other materials for lectures and teaching at Chicago, Smith College, and Harvard University. As Wilson usually lectured on topics concerning his current work, some notes file here incorporate research materials or drafts for writings.

The Other Writings subseries consists of juvenile writings, notes, and unidentified items, including a scrapbook of clippings, drawings, poems, and stories. Similar juvenile collaborations by Wilson and his cousin, Alexander Kimball, and a scrapbook of clippings, drawings, poems, and stories. Notes include lecture notes taken by Wilson while a student at Princeton for a course on "Fundamental Problems of Philosophy," and a list of New Yorker book reviews.

The Writings of Others subseries is organized into two subseries: Writings About Edmund Wilson and Writings About Other Subjects. Writings About Edmund Wilson, arranged by other items collected by the Library after Wilson’s death. Unsigned articles are filed as "Other works" and works are filed under work titles in each of the Writings subseries.

Writings About Other Subjects, arranged by author, contain poems, stories, essays, and notes. These materials document Wilson’s interest and involvement in the work of these writers, some of whom were subjects of Wilson’s own works. Many of the materials collected by Wilson are typescripts, and may be either works or articles on literary subjects, while printed materials concerning other subjects are located in the Subject Files series.

Authors include Edna St. Vincent Millay: poems and a Real Life of Sebastian Knight, proof with annotations by Wilson, and translations and works of other Russian writers; and Philippe Thoby-Marcelin: poems, stories, and part of a novel.

Other authors include W. H. Auden, Irving Berlin (song lyric), John Peale Bishop, Marie Clarie Blais, E. E. Cummings, John Dos Passos, Boris Pasternak, Dawn Powell (drawings), and Elinor Wylie.

Files for People contain biographical information, articles, clippings, ephemera, and personal interests. In some cases, date spans reflect ongoing collecting beyond a particular area. Folder titles used in a preliminary listing, which may have included titles originally assigned by Wilson, have been retained or cross referenced. Some materials moved to subject files during preliminary enclosures to correspondence and returned to the Correspondence series.

Files for Other Subjects pertain to non-literary topics, bulk of materials date from ca. 1920-1970, files for Communism, Princeton University, and World War I include clippings and ephemera from 1915-1919. Subjects represented by a single type of item are described as publications and ephemera of organizations, published writings by others, clippings, and notes are present for: Dead Sea Scrolls, scholarship; income tax protest and Cold War spending; Iroquois land rights in the Depression.

Series IV, Financial Papers (boxes 191-197), is organized into two subseries: Publisher Accounts and Income Accounts. Publisher Accounts consist of statements from publishers showing sales, royalties, and transactions. As Wilson published continuously throughout his career and his books remained in print for extended periods, accounts list multiple titles for current and earlier works. Additional financial transactions are available for publishers in the Correspondence series.
Income Tax materials are organized by tax year, documenting Wilson's income and charges made by the Internal Revenue Service. Files for 1953-1957 contain tax documents completed retrospectively following initial charges of tax delinquency in 1958. Detailed records for 1958-1972 document Wilson's legal requirements during the years his case was active. A small amount of earlier material dated prior to 1953 is also present.

Tax documents include federal and state returns, lists collector's receipts, statements of tax due, and documents relating to audits. Additional tax documents may be found in the Correspondence series as enclosures to letters from lawyers and government agencies. Tax statements, including bank statements, bank deposit receipts, and payroll stubs; receipts, including receipts for purchases, bill stubs, and cancelled checks; and additional notes about income and expenses.

Series V, Photographs and Drawings (boxes 198-203), is organized into three subseries: People, Places, and Other. The bulk of materials are early family photographs showing Wilson as a child, with photographs of his parents, Edmund Wilson, Sr., and Helen M. K. Wilson; Kimball aunts, uncles, and cousins; and Wilson's children and fourth generation Wilson are filed with his other drawings in the Personal Papers series. Cross references have been made for additional enclosed with letters in the Correspondence series.

Photographs and Drawings of People are organized chronologically; Wilson and Kimball Families, arranged by name; and Other People, arranged by name. Photographs of Edmund Wilson include infant and child portraits, group portraits and snapshots through adulthood and old age; Wilson, Sr., and Helen M. K. Wilson; Kimball aunts, uncles, and cousins; and Wilson's children and fourth generation. Photographs of Other People include Wilson's Hill School classmates, Unidentified daguerreotypes, tintypes, and other photographs probably include additional family members.

Photographs and Drawings of Places include images of Wilson's homes in Wellfleet, scenes in Red Bank, New Jersey; a series of photographs possibly taken during a trip to England in 1914; and photographs of Eugene O'Neill's house in Provincetown, Massachusetts. The Other Photographs subseries consists of images of Wilson's mother, with photographs of Wilson as a child, his parents, and others.

Series VI, Personal Papers (boxes 204-205), is organized into six subseries: Awards, Drawings, Marriage and Divorce Records, School Records, and Other Papers. Awards include Presidential Medal of Freedom, an honorary doctorate from Princeton University, and medals received from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Edward MacDowell Association, the National Book Committee, and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Also present is a campaign medal for his service as a journalist in World War II. In addition to artifacts and certificates, some Wilson's Drawings include informal caricatures of his childhood, and other drawings similar to the doodles found in his journals and literary drafts. Marriage and Divorce Records contain legal documents pertaining to Wilson's divorces from Mary Blair and Mary McCarthy, the mother, with photographs of Wilson as a child, his parents, and others.

Marriage and Divorce Records contain legal documents pertaining to Wilson's divorces from Mary Blair and Mary McCarthy, the mother, with photographs of Wilson as a child, his parents, and others. Punch and Judy Puppets many representing standard characters. These puppets, magic, and illusion, and were used by him in connection with his interest in his ancestors and their history in New Jersey.
from family members other than Edmund Wilson; letters between family members and Edmund Wilson. Also present is one letter from his great-grandfather, Andrew Wilson, to his family.

Other correspondence includes letters written by family.

Genealogy Research materials consist of charts and notes compiled by Helen M. K. Wilson, Edmund Wilson. Other Papers contain personal papers of Edmund Wilson, Sr., include speeches for New Jersey University alumni and membership in other organizations, school classmates, a passport, and a document pertaining to her estate. Papers of Rosalind Baker Wilson include school records and juvenil writings, biographical information and memorials, an

*Oversize* (boxes 213-272, 4 portfolios, and 3 broadside folders) contains oversize photocopies or photographic prints have been substi