

IHLC MS 868

**Wilbur M. Wilson  
Papers, 1898-1961**

# **Manuscript Collection Inventory**

Illinois History and Lincoln Collections

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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Box 1

**Wilbur M. Wilson**

    Biographical Material

        Obituary and newspaper clipping on funeral service, [Champaign, Illinois, *News-Gazette*] 1958.

        Biographical Sketches

        Vita, 1942

        Bibliography, 1949

Oversize folder h001

    Newspaper clippings on Wilson’s life and career, circa 1920s-1950s

Box 1 (cont.)

    Letters from University of Illinois colleagues regarding Wilson’s death and  
        memorials to Wilson, 1958-1960 (including letters from Nathan M. Newmark)  
    Marriage Certificate, June 28, 1905

Photographs, including images from awards presentations and group photos  
[identified], circa 1930s-1950s  
Atomic Bomb Testing at Bikini

Note: Wilson was a non-participating scientific observer on the United States' Operation Crossroads mission during the summer of 1946. The Objective of that mission was to conduct two atomic bomb tests on Bikini Atoll, Marshall Islands, in the Pacific Ocean. During the tests, several ships were stationed at or near Ground Zero. It was Wilson's role to determine the structural damage to those ships. For more information on the tests, see the documentary film *Radio Bikini* (1988).

Oversize folder h002

Photographs related to Able Test (July 1, 1946), Baker Test (July 25, 1946), and group photos of Wilson with the officers and crew of *U.S.S. Panamint*

Box 1 (cont.)

"The Voyage of the Panamint," 1946 [Wilson's bound diary]

Diary, June 12 -August 11, 1946

"The Social Significance of the Atomic Bomb," 1946 [manuscript drafts of essay by Wilson]

Oversize folder f003

Media Coverage

Box 1 (cont.)

Correspondence

To Teresa and Grace Wilson [wife and daughter]

June 12, 1946, describing his stateroom on the *U.S.S. Panamint* and his first night aboard the ship

June 27, 1946, regarding a dinner with Captain William Bronley Ammon and several non-participating observers; stargazing; and playing shuffle-board with military men

General, March-December 1946, including official correspondence from Vice Admiral W. H. P. Blandy (Operation Crossroads); Frank B. Jewett, President, National Academy of Sciences, and Colonel H. B. Smith (U.S. Navy), Chief, Observers Group

Eyewitness Accounts, 1946

Information Bulletins for Non-Participating Observers, 1946

Notes on Baker Test, July 28, 1946

Official Memoranda, Reports, Statements on the Tests, 1946

*Panamint Press*, *U.S.S. Panamint* (AGC-13), July 14, July 25, August 3, 1946

Press Releases for Operation Crossroads, 1946

Rosters, Non-Participating Observers and *U.S.S. Panamint* Passengers, 1946

"Schematic Diagram Target Array - Test Baker, Operation Crossroads," circa 1946

Ephemera

War Agencies Employees Group Insurance brochure, circa 1940s

"Subpoena and Summons Extraordinary: the Royal High Court of the Raging Main," for mock trial on the *U.S.S. Panamint*. Wilson was charged with

“deliberately and for personal gain ... [falsifying his] age... [to] gain superior accommodations and other considerations...” circa 1946.

*The U.S.S. Panamint, Amphibious Force Flagship 13: Her Voyage and Her Missions, World War II*, circa 1945 [souvenir volume for officers and crew of U.S.S. *Panamint* (AGC-13)]

Box 2

To Teresa Stewart Wilson [wife], 1901, 1918, 1941 (photocopies)

Subjects, by date:

March 20, 1901: Wilson's travels through Kansas, where he encountered blowing sand and observed Carrie Nation's influence on the anti-saloon movement; Wilson's railroad journey from Kansas to Colorado; his description of the Grand Canyon; his work as an engineer at the "Anaconda" gold mine near Turret, Colorado; and discussions of gold strikes at Cripple Creek and Victor, Colorado

April 7, 1901: losing his engineering job, but finding a job as "a full fledged miner with pick, shovel, and drill;" building a shack in the mining camp [and installing his door on Easter Sunday, an act that Wilson ironically suggests will send him straight to Hell]; the topography surrounding the Anaconda mine; the moral decency of miners; and the establishment of a Sunday school at the mine

May 8, 1901: Wilson's explanation of "assessment work;" losing his job as a miner and finding work as a carpenter; and living with his sister and brother-in-law in Salida, Colorado.

June 16, 1901: mountain climbing, fishing, and hunting for deer and bears

July 14, 1901: working with a traveling carpentry outfit in Colorado; fishing; and watching deer in the wild

November 27, 1918: Wilson's travel plans from Camp Humphry, Virginia, to Chicago, Illinois

March 2, 1941: Wilson's travels from Urbana, Illinois, to Seattle, Washington, where he and a team of structural engineers (including Hardy Cross) would the structural deficiencies of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, which collapsed on November 7, 1940; and a description of Wilson and Cross's preliminary investigation

March 3, 1941: reading engineers' reports about the Tacoma Narrows Bridge collapse in Olympia and watching eyewitness footage of the collapse

[March 1941]: Wilson's travel plans back to Urbana

April 30, 1941: Wilson's travels from Urbana to Seattle, by way of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Butte, Montana

[May 1941]: Wilson's travel plans back to Urbana

To Grace Wilson [daughter], March 2, 1941, regarding Wilson's trip to Seattle, via Salt Lake City, Pendleton, Idaho, and Portland, Oregon, where he watched lettuce farmers work and saw salmon as big as his leg, and detailing his preliminary inspection of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge site (photocopy)

General Correspondence, mostly consisting of letters congratulating  
Wilson for winning Iowa State College's Marston Medal for  
Excellence in Engineering, 1937, 1949, 1954-56

#### Writings

"Fatigue of Structural Joints" [1949 Adams Lecture], presented before the  
Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the American Welding Society  
"What It Means to be a Professional Engineer" [manuscript draft] English  
translation of Theodor Storm's *Immensee* [bound manuscript]

#### Education Papers

Oversize folder h001 (cont.)

Diploma, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, 1914

Box 2 (cont.)

Iowa State College Alumni Day Program, June 9-11, 1950

#### Honors and Awards

Programs, Certificates, Citations, 1900-1959

Oversize folder h004

Tau Beta Pi certificate, 1900  
Society of the Sigma Xi

Box 2 (cont.)

#### Medals

James R. Croes Medal, 1936, awarded by the American Society of Civil  
Engineers in recognition of a paper that made "a great contribution to  
engineering science"  
Wason Medal for Most Meritorious Paper, 1938, awarded by the  
American Concrete Institute for Wilson's paper, "Tests of Rigid Frame  
Bridges"  
James F. Lincoln Arc Welding Foundation Medal, awarded to Wilson in  
recognition of his service, undated  
Newspaper clippings related to Wilson's honors and awards, 1923-1961  
[see also Oversize folder h001]

Oversize folder h005

#### Organizational Papers

Membership Certificates and Cards, 1922-1954  
Photograph, American Society of Civil Engineers Board of Directors, 1944

#### Professional Papers

Engineering Licenses and Certificates, 1945-1950

Box 2 (cont.)

University of Illinois, Lorado Taft's *Alma Mater* Dedicatory Program, June 11,  
1929  
University of Illinois Materials Testing Laboratory Dedication Program, May 2,  
1930

#### Ephemera

Visitor's Pass, granting Mrs. Wilson and the two Wilson children permission to  
visit Captain Wilson at Camp Cody, Deming, New Mexico, December 6, 1917

Oversize folder h001 (cont.)

Drawing of a building by Wilson, undated

**Teresa M. Stewart Wilson [wife of Wilbur M. Wilson]**

Education Papers

Iowa City (Iowa) High School Class Photo, 1898

Box 2 (cont.)

Postcards and Notes

Postcards from Grace [Stewart, Teresa's sister], Urbana, Illinois, regarding her lodgings at the University of Illinois and the start of exams, 1903-1904  
[postcards feature images of Engineering Hall and what is now Altgeld Hall]

Note from University of Illinois Registrar's Office, informing Mrs. Wilson that her son, Wilbur M. Wilson, had withdrawn from the University, March 24, 1941

Writings

Submission to "Life in U.S.," *Reader's Digest*, telling an anecdote about her grandmother, circa 1930-1950s [manuscript and typescript]

Thoughts on Scandinavian immigration to the U.S.

**Fannie Aylworth Stewart [mother of Teresa M. Stewart Wilson]**

"Memories of My Lifetime" [memoir]

Genealogy Papers

Including photocopies from family Bibles