

**EDMUND WILSON COLLECTION**  
COLLECTION #10

**SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE**

This collection consists primarily of correspondence between Edmund Wilson and William Fenton during the years 1957-1972. The 59 letters are concerned primarily with New York State Indians, for Fenton, the Assistant Commissioner of the New York State Museum and Science Service, was an expert on Indians who helped Wilson with the research for his book *APOLOGIES TO THE IROQUOIS*. The two were friends, however, so personal information on both men also is found in the letters. The collection is especially useful for Fenton's critical comments on Wilson's book and for his discussions of the various instances during those years of flooding of Indian land for power projects. St. Lawrence does not own the literary rights to this collection.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Edmund Wilson, literary and social critic, was born in Red Bank, New Jersey, in 1895. As early as his prep school and college days, he showed an aptitude for literary criticism. While editing a literary magazine at Princeton, he helped form the career of his friend F. Scott Fitzgerald. During his lifetime, he served as a writer for, or editor of, such journals as *VANITY FAIR*, the *NEW REPUBLIC*, and the *NEW YORKER*. In addition, he wrote some 25 books of satiric verse, fiction, drama, history, literary criticism, and social commentary.

Wilson was a socialist who felt increasing discomfort in America as the years went by. He disagreed with the way his taxes were being spent, refused to pay, and ran into considerable trouble with the Internal Revenue Service; the details of this situation were described in his book, *THE COLD WAR AND THE INCOME TAX: A PROTEST*. The book *APOLOGIES TO THE IROQUOIS* which is the main focus of this collection of letters developed from a series of articles written for the *NEW YORKER*. In it, Wilson gives an account of life among the Iroquois Indians today in New York State and Ontario and considers how to right the injustice he feels has been done to them. In spite of his disillusionment with the U.S., he won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963.

In his later years Wilson lived mainly in Wellfleet on Cape Cod and in Talcottville, a small North Country town which was his mother's birthplace. He died in 1972.

**SERIES**

## BOX FOLDER

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | Correspondence between Edmund Wilson and William Fenton 1957-72.<br>Also includes several letters by others relating to Wilson. Arranged chronologically. |
|   | 2 | Photocopies of letters in Folder 1.   |
|   | 3 | Supporting material relating to Wilson and to <i>APOLOGIES TO THE IROQUOIS</i> .<br><br>Additional material in RBR flat drawer #4.                        |

**DESCRIPTION OF SERIES**

BOX / FOLDER

## 1 1 CORRESPONDENCE

Christmas Card from Wilson

Christmas Card from Wilson

[n.d.] "Dear Edmund" from [?] talks about Apologies and a new book he is starting The People of the Longhouse.

1957, October 29. "Dear Mr. Fenton" from "Edmund Wilson" thanking him for the Iroquois literature and information.

1957, November 1. "Dear Mr. Wilson" from "W.N. Fenton" about his recent manuscript on the Iroquois Confederacy.

1958, November 1.[2 leaves] "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about his Iroquois research.

1958, November 6. "Dear Edmund" from "W. N. Fenton" talks of Bill Rockwell an Indian chief.

2 typewritten page article not titled. Includes quotes from various sources.

1959, February 28. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" discusses Mad Bear.

1959, March 4. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" talks about Tuscaroras' refusal to accept money for land.

1959, May 13. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about setting up a lunch date when Wilson comes through Albany and about the possibility of an article in the Nation.

1959, May 28. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" about on-going research.

1 1 1959, October 16. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" note about sending photographs of royal progress.

1959, October 24. [2 leaves] "Dear Bill and Olive" from "Edmund" asking for a copy of photo of Falseface and asking what is meant by "The Tuscarora Deep".

1959, November 5. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about problems with a check and mountains of mail from lawyers.

1959, November 28.[5 leaves] "Dear Edmund" from [?] gives a list of specific things that may be helpful when proof-reading his book.

1960, February 11. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" talks about Apologies to the Iroquois.

1960, February 15. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" short note asking for an update on Kinzua Dam and Corbett Sundown.

1960, February 23. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenter" talks about the Kinzua Dam and Corbett Sundown.

1960, August. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" thanking him for books sent.

1960, August 29. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" discusses a reporter for the Times Union by the name of Douglas.

1960, September 7. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" asking about someone by the name of Reuel and also about a Mrs. Barse.

1960, September 18. "Dear Edmund" from [Fenton] about his writing and Herb West of Dartmouth Library.

1960, December 13. "Dear Bill" from "Phil" [Philip J. Holt, North Evans, NY] about the Regional Counsels Office in NYC.

1961, January 5.[2 leaves]"Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about his travels and his research.

1 1 1961, February 14. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" mentions memoirs of an anthropologist.

1961, March 10. [2 leaves] "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" about the death of William Rockwell and about Dr. van Loon of Hawaii.

1961, April.[?] from "Edmund" about an English translation by John Russell and about the charms of Bridget Bardot.

1961, April 7. "Dear Edmund" from [?] about Levy-Straus Tristes Tropiques.

1961, June 20. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" won't be stopping in Albany; invites Fenton to Talcottville.

1961, July 6. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" about Levi-Straus' translating Apologies into French.

1961, July 31. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about his work and several personal friends.

1961, August 15. "Dear Edmund and Elena" from [?] about their recent visit, with directions for a return visit.

1961, August 23. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" telling him about their plans for a visit.

1961, October 11. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" about meeting Peter Nabokov of the Columbia University Department of Anthropology.

1961, November 13. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" short note about coming to visit.

1962, June 18. [2 leaves] "Dear Edmund" from "William N. Fenton" about Patriotic Gore and a self-interview in the New Yorker.

1962, June 22. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" what he is reading and writing.

- 1963, April 10. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" about the Lunar Society and about a draft of a chapter in his book.
- 1 1 1963, April 11. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about a possible trip to Europe if the IRS leaves him something [see Folder 3 for IRS article] and an upcoming trip to Talcottville.
- 1963, April 17. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" about getting together on his way to Talcottville.
- 1963, May 8. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Studies at Wesleyan University.
- 1963, May 10. "Dear Edmund" from [Fenton?] about Paul Horgan, Careton S. Coon; the fellowship at Wesleyan University.
- 1963, August 1. "Dear Edmund" from [Fenton] about some gathering of a thousand people, whites, Indians, Black Watch in kilts, Royal Cameron Highlanders, etc.
- 1964, January 6. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about his trip to Canada.
- 1964, June 11. "Dear Bill and Olive" from "Edmund" informing him he is back from Europe.
- 1964, June 28. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about Mrs. Mary Lo Gerfo's wanting more information about the Pickering Treaty; tells how worried she is about the Kinzua situation.
- 1965, December 18. [2 leaves] "Dear Edmund" from [Fenton] updating him on his reading, traveling and research.
- 1966, January 10. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about Sherman Paul book; updates him on personal friends.
- 1967, January 22. [2 leaves] "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" asking him to send copies of Tug Hill Mammals to several people.
- 1967, January 31. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" thanking him for a copy of the review of his academic play and stating that there would be no charge for sending the Tug Hill report.
- 1 1 1967, August 29. "Dear Edmund" from "W.N. Fenton" about Levi-Strauss' translating his Apologies.
- 1967, September 2. [2 leaves] "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about a trip to Talcottville, and the translation of his book.
- 1970, April 15. "Dear Bill" from "Art" about Edmond [sic] Wilson having a minor heart attack.
- 1970, May 1. "Dear Edmund" from "William N. Fenton" about Wampum Belts of the Onondaga Indians and the State Museum.
- 1970, May 2. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" says he has been in and out of the hospital but is going up to Talcottville and staying through June; he's spent the winter writing a book about Talcottville.
- 1970, July 8. "Dear Edmund" from "William N. Fenton" about Len Tucker, the State Historian.
- 1971, June 29. "Dear Bill" from "Edmund" about a fall; he would be unable to travel for awhile.

2 Wilson-Fenton Correspondence - Photocopies of Folder 1

3 Supporting Material

Clipping - "Un-American Activities" by D.W. Brogan Manchester Guardian Weekly.

Clipping - "Book of the Times" by Charles Poore The New York Times March 12, 1960. Photo of Edmund Wilson.

Clipping - "Musings of A 'Man of Letters': Edmund Wilson Speaks of Many things in 20-Year Journal" by Duane LaFleche.

Clipping - "Edmund Wilson Fined \$7,500 on Tax Charge" Failed to Report \$16,949 in Income" New York Herald Tribune November 15, 1960. Photo of Wilson.

Clipping - "With Tribal Rites, TV: Apologies to the Iroquois" by Oliver LaFarge New York Times Book Review March 20, 1960 p.7.

1 3 Book Jacket The Scrolls From the Dead Sea by Edmund Wilson.

Material in RBR flat drawer #4.

Ad for Wilson's published books. Ad is for Farrar, Straus & Giroux Publishers.