

# Robert E. Wilson Papers

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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff  
Revised by Melinda K. Friend

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Robert E. Wilson Papers

**Span Dates:** 1920-1964

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1945-1964)

**ID No.:** MSS46011

**Creator:** Wilson, Robert E. (Robert Erastus), 1893-1964

**Extent:** 3,500 items ; 35 containers ; 14 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Summary:** Chemical engineer, businessman, and public official. Speeches and articles, correspondence, clippings, printed matter, reports, congressional testimony, and other material dealing mainly with Wilson's career with the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, the petroleum industry in general, and the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### People

Compton, K. T. (Karl Taylor), 1887-1954--Correspondence.

Davies, Ralph K. (Ralph Kenneth), 1897-1971--Correspondence.

Holifield, Chet, 1903- --Correspondence.

Tremmel, Ernest B., 1916- --Correspondence.

Wilson, Robert E. (Robert Erastus), 1893-1964.

### Organizations

Standard Oil Company (Indiana)

U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

### Subjects

Nuclear energy.

Petroleum industry and trade--Indiana.

Petroleum industry and trade.

### Occupations

Businessmen.

Chemical engineers.

Public officials.

## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The papers of Robert E. Wilson, chemical engineer, businessman, and public official, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Pearl M. Wilson, in 1964.

### Processing History

The papers of Robert E. Wilson were arranged and described in 1965. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

### Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Robert E. Wilson in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Robert E. Wilson are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Robert E. Wilson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

| <i>Date</i>   | <i>Event</i>  |
|---------------|---|
| 1893, Mar. 19 | Born, Beaver Falls, Pa.   |
| 1914          | Ph.B., College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio  |
| 1916          | B.S., chemical engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.<br>Research assistant, Research Laboratory, General Electric Co.<br>Married Pearl M. Rockfellow |
| 1916-1917     | Research associate, Research Laboratory of Applied Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.   |
| 1917-1918     | Consulting chemical engineer, Bureau of Mines, Washington, D.C.   |
| 1918-1919     | Captain and later major, Chemical Warfare Service, during World War I   |
| 1919          | Director, Research Laboratory of Applied Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.   |
| 1919-1922     | Associated with Arthur D. Little, Inc.  |
| 1922-1958     | Worked for Standard Oil Co. of Indiana; chairman of the board and chief executive officer, 1945-1958  |
| 1934-1945     | Vice president and president, Pan American Petroleum and Transport Co., principal subsidiary of Standard Oil Co. of Indiana   |
| 1949-1950     | Member, Special Advisory Group to the Chairman, Research and Development Board, National Military Establishment   |
| 1960-1964     | Commissioner, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission   |
| 1964, Sept. 1 | Died, Geneva, Switzerland   |

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Robert Erastus Wilson (1893-1964) span the years 1920-1964 with the bulk of the material dated from 1945 to 1964. The papers are organized into the following series: [Speeches and Articles I](#), [Speeches and Articles II](#), and [Subject File](#).

Speeches and articles delivered and written by Wilson, mostly during his employment with Standard Oil Company of Indiana, comprise the bulk of the papers and are organized under the series [Speeches and Articles I](#) and [Speeches and Articles II](#). The correspondence relates to his public speaking engagements and published articles. Prominent among the articles is "We the Accused," his denunciation of the Federal Trade Commission's inferences of corruption in big business, published in the January 24, 1953, issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*. Also included in [Speeches and Articles I](#) are publications for the stockholders of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana written by Wilson.

The [Subject File](#) consists of files compiled by Wilson relating to the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, the United States Atomic Energy Commission, the Special Advisory Group to the Chairman of the Research and Development Board, and the petroleum industry and atomic energy in general. Correspondents include K. T. Compton, Ralph K. Davies, Chet Holifield, and Ernest B. Tremmel.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Speeches and Articles I, 1926-1957](#)
- [Speeches and Articles II, 1945-1964](#)
- [Subject File, 1920-1964](#)

## Description of Series

*Container*

*Series*

BOX 1-2

**Speeches and Articles I, 1926-1957**

Publications for stockholders of Standard Oil Co. of Indiana, printed copies of speeches and articles written by Wilson, and related correspondence.

Publications arranged as received. Speeches and articles arranged chronologically.

BOX 2-3

**Speeches and Articles II, 1945-1964**

Printed copies of speeches and articles written by Wilson and related correspondence. An index precedes the file.

Arranged chronologically.

BOX 34-35

**Subject File, 1920-1964**

Correspondence, memoranda, printed matter, clippings, fact sheets, reports, and congressional testimony.

Arranged alphabetically by title of work or topic.

# Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i>   |
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| <b>BOX 1</b>     | Printed copies of speeches and articles by Wilson, 1926-1944<br>(36 folders)  |
| <b>BOX 2</b>     | Publications for stockholders of Standard Oil Co. of Indiana, 1944-1957<br>(2 folders)  |
| <b>BOX 2-3</b>   | <b>Speeches and Articles II, 1945-1964</b><br>Printed copies of speeches and articles written by Wilson and related correspondence. An index precedes the file.<br>Arranged chronologically.  |
| <b>BOX 2</b>     | Indexes   |
| <b>BOX 2</b>     | To articles, 1945-1964<br>(2 folders)   |
| <b>BOX 2</b>     | To talks  |
| <b>BOX 2</b>     | Alphabetical by name of city, 1945-1964   |
| <b>BOX 2</b>     | A-I   |
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| <b>BOX 3</b>     | Alphabetical by title of talk, 1946-1964<br>(2 folders)   |
| <b>BOX 3</b>     | To talks and addresses, 1945-1954<br>(2 folders)  |
| <b>BOX 4</b>     | Printed copies of speeches and articles by Wilson   |
| <b>BOX 4</b>     | 1945, Jan. 8-1946, Aug. 7   |
| <b>BOX 5</b>     | 1946, Aug. 21-1947, Oct. 15   |
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| <b>BOX 10</b>    | 1951, Mar. 7-Dec. 29  |
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| <b>BOX 18</b>    | Aug. 30-Nov. 29   |

## Speeches and Articles II, 1945-1964

### Container

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| BOX 19 | 1955, Dec. 10-1956, Apr. 12 |
| BOX 20 | 1956, May 1-Oct. 12         |
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| BOX 22 | 1957, Jan. 13-June 29       |
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| BOX 27 | 1960, Feb. 16-Sept. 22      |
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| BOX 29 | 1961, Jan. 17-Nov. 14       |
| BOX 30 | 1961, Dec. 30-1962, Apr. 16 |
| BOX 31 | 1962, May 15-Nov. 19        |
| BOX 32 | 1962, Nov. 27-1963, June 13 |
| BOX 33 | 1963, July 30-1964, June 24 |

BOX 34-35

#### **Subject File, 1920-1964**

Correspondence, memoranda, printed matter, clippings, fact sheets, reports, and congressional testimony.

Arranged alphabetically by title of work or topic.

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| BOX 34 | Atomic power, 1945-1958   |
| BOX 34 | Depletion allowance in the petroleum industry, 1951-1963  |
| BOX 34 | Energy requirements for the future, 1958-1961   |
| BOX 34 | "Evolution of Weather," 1930-1939, undated  |
| BOX 34 | "Industry and the Private Liberal Arts College," 1953   |
| BOX 34 | "Letter to an Industrial Historian," 1955   |
| BOX 34 | Letter to W. Averell Harriman on the importance of concentrating attacks on Axis oil supplies, 1942                             |
| BOX 34 | Letter to Ralph K. Davies on the increase in movement of petroleum products to the Atlantic Coast area, 1941                    |
| BOX 34 | Letter to Ralph K Davies on principal functions of Petroleum Unit in Office of Production Managment, 1941                       |
| BOX 34 | Midgley, Thomas, Jr., 1937, 1947-1953   |
| BOX 34 | One-hundred octane gasoline, correspondence and memoranda, 1940-1941  |
| BOX 34 | Patents held by Wilson, 1920-1932   |
| BOX 35 | Private ownership of nuclear fuels, 1961-1964   |
| BOX 35 | Single administrator of the Atomic Energy Commission, 1961-1963   |
| BOX 35 | Solar and other remote sources of energy, 1948-1955   |
| BOX 35 | Special atomic energy material, 1957  |
| BOX 35 | Stanolindex, 30th anniversary issue with remarks by Wilson, 1959  |
| BOX 35 | <i>Trends in the Petroleum Industry, 1918-1944</i> , Petroleum Industry War Council Committee on Petroleum Economics, 1945-1947 |
| BOX 35 | U.S. Research and Development Board and Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1949-1953   |
| BOX 35 | Weaver, Warren, publications, 1954-1962, undated  |
| BOX 35 | <i>1925-1950: The Widow's Investment</i> (1950) and "Science and the Supernatural" (1946), 1946-1950                            |