

James Harrison Wilson Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79045997>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms011068>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2011
Revised 2023 September

Collection Summary

Title: James Harrison Wilson Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1861-1923

Bulk Dates: 1890-1915

ID No.: MSS45997

Creator: Wilson, James Harrison, 1837-1925

Extent: 25,000 items

Extent: 55 containers

Extent: 19 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79045997>

Summary: Soldier, railroad builder, and author. Correspondence, journal, drafts of literary manuscripts, notes, typescripts, galley proofs of published works, speeches, articles, military orders, and memorabilia relating to Civil War campaigns, the postwar army, railway building in the Mississippi Valley, life in China in the 1880s and in 1900, and the interests of Wilson as a biographer.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Adams, Charles Francis, 1835-1915--Correspondence.
Badeau, Adam, 1831-1895--Correspondence.
Baldwin, Simeon E. (Simeon Eben), 1840-1927--Correspondence.
Bliss, Tasker Howard, 1853-1930--Correspondence.
Carnegie, Andrew, 1835-1919--Correspondence.
Corbin, Henry Clark, 1842-1909--Correspondence.
Crowder, E. H. (Enoch Herbert), 1859-1932--Correspondence.
Cullom, Shelby M. (Shelby Moore), 1829-1914--Correspondence.
Dana, Charles A. (Charles Anderson), 1819-1897--Correspondence.
Dana, Charles A. (Charles Anderson), 1819-1897.
Dodge, Grenville M., 1831-1916--Correspondence.
Fish, Stuyvesant, 1851-1923--Correspondence.
Garland, Hamlin, 1860-1940--Correspondence.
Kingsbury, Frederick John, 1823-1910--Correspondence.
Lincoln, Robert Todd, 1843-1926--Correspondence.
Lodge, Henry Cabot, 1850-1924--Correspondence.
McKinley, William, 1843-1901--Correspondence.
Moore, John Bassett, 1860-1947--Correspondence.
Putnam, George Haven, 1844-1930--Correspondence.
Rawlins, John A. (John Aaron), 1831-1869--Correspondence.
Rawlins, John A. (John Aaron), 1831-1869.
Reid, Whitelaw, 1837-1912--Correspondence.
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919--Correspondence.
Root, Elihu, 1845-1937--Correspondence.
Smith, William Farrar, 1824-1903.
Stetson, Francis Lynde--Correspondence.
Storey, Moorfield, 1845-1929--Correspondence.
Villard, Oswald Garrison, 1872-1949--Correspondence.
Warburg, Paul M. (Paul Moritz), 1868-1932--Correspondence.
White, Horace, 1834-1916--Correspondence.

Wilson, James Harrison, 1837-1925.

Wilson, James Harrison, 1837-1925. Heroes of the great conflict; life and services of William Farrar Smith, major general, United States volunteers in the civil war; a sketch. 1904.

Wilson, James Harrison, 1837-1925. Life of Charles A. Dana. 1907.

Wilson, James Harrison, 1837-1925. Life of John A. Rawlins, lawyer, assistant adjutant-general, chief of staff, major general of volunteers, and secretary of war. 1916.

Wilson, James Harrison, 1837-1925. Under the old flag; recollections of military operations in the War for the Union, the Spanish War, the Boxer Rebellion, etc. 1912.

Winslow, Edward Francis, 1837-1914--Correspondence.

Young, John Russell, 1840-1899--Correspondence.

Organizations

China Relief Expedition (1900-1901)

Republican Party (U.S. : 1854-)

St. Louis and Southeastern Railway Company.

United States. Army.

Subjects

International relief--China.

Railroads--Mississippi River Valley.

Railroads--United States.

Spanish-American War, 1898.

Places

China--Social conditions--1644-1912.

Cuba--History--1895-

United States--Foreign relations--1865-1921.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Campaigns.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

United States--Politics and government--1865-1933.

Occupations

Authors.

Railroad builders.

Soldiers.

Acquisition Information

The papers of James Harrison Wilson, soldier, railroad builder, and author, were given to the Library of Congress in 1946 by his daughter, May Wilson Thompson, via her cousin, Lucy Bender.

Processing History

The papers of James Harrison Wilson were arranged and described in 1964. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of James Harrison 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 James Harrison 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, James Harrison Wilson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1837, Sept. 2	Born, near Shawneetown, Ill.
1854-1855	Attended McKendree College, Lebanon, Ill.
1855-1860	Graduated, U. S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
1860-1863	Member, U. S. Topographical Engineers
1864	Chief of Cavalry Bureau, Washington, D.C.
1864-1865	Cavalry commander; brevet major general
1866	Married Ella Andrews (died 1899)
1866-1870	Superintended navigation improvements for the army in the Mississippi Valley
1870-1883	Engaged in railway construction and management in the Mississippi Valley and New England
1871-1875	Official, St. Louis and Southeastern Railway
1878-1883	President, New York and New England Railways Co.
1883	Settled in Wilmington, Del.
1885-1886	Surveyed railroad development possibilities in China
1898	Spanish-American War service in Puerto Rico and Santa Clara, Cuba
1900	Served in relief expedition, Boxer Rebellion, China
1901	Retired from army as brigadier general
1902	Represented U. S. Army at coronation of King Edward VII, London, England
1907	Trustee, Mutual Life Insurance Co.
1925, Feb. 23	Died, Wilmington, Del.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of James Harrison Wilson (1837-1925) span the years 1861-1923, with the bulk from the period 1890-1915. Included in the collection are correspondence, letterpress copy books, letterbooks, business papers, speeches, articles, books, newspaper clippings, a scrapbook, and poems by the sculptor James Edward Kelly. The collection is organized in five series: [General Correspondence](#) ; [Letterpress Copy Books](#) ; [Letterbooks](#) ; [Book, Article, and Speech File](#) ; and [Subject File](#) .

The [General Correspondence](#) series forms the bulk of the collection, documenting a portion of Wilson's life and dealing with subjects such as the Civil War, railroad affairs, politics, foreign policy, the Spanish-American War, Cuban affairs, and the China Relief Expedition of 1900. A large amount of the correspondence deals with Wilson's writings and business ventures.

Much of the correspondence is with political figures and military officers. Correspondents include Charles Francis Adams, Adam Badeau, Simeon E. Baldwin, Tasker Howard Bliss, Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clark Corbin, E. H. Crowder, Shelby M. Cullom, Charles A. Dana, Grenville Mellen Dodge, Stuyvesant Fish, Hamlin Garland, Frederick John Kingsbury, Robert Todd Lincoln, Henry Cabot Lodge, William McKinley, John Bassett Moore, George Haven Putnam, Whitelaw Reid,

Theodore Roosevelt, Elihu Root, Francis Lynde Stetson, Moorfield Storey, Oswald Garrison Villard, Paul M. Warburg, Horace White, and John Russell Young. An especially large amount of personal and business correspondence is with Edward Francis Winslow, Wilson's comrade-in-arms and business associate on railway construction and operations of the St. Louis and Southeastern Railway Company.

In the [Book, Article, and Speech File](#) are drafts and typescripts of a number of Wilson's writings, including his *Life and Services of William Farrar Smith* (1904), *The Life of Charles A. Dana* (1907), and *The Life of John A. Rawlins* (1916). The file also includes extracts of Rawlins's letters. *Under the Old Flag* (1912), Wilson's memoirs, appears in many incomplete drafts, one set with corrections and suggestions by Bluford Wilson, the brother of the author. The papers also contain several unpublished manuscripts, including the incomplete "Heroes of the Great Rebellion."

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

- [General Correspondence, circa 1862-1923](#)
- [Letterpress Copy Books, 1867-1898](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1898-1900](#)
- [Book, Article, and Speech File, 1863-1915](#)
- [Subject File](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-29	<p><u>General Correspondence, circa 1862-1923</u></p> <p>Letters sent and received. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or organization.</p>
BOX 30-42	<p><u>Letterpress Copy Books, 1867-1898</u></p> <p>Letter press copy books of correspondence dealing mainly with Wilson's railroad ventures. Three of the books contain copies of letters to Edward F. Winslow. Two volumes contain letters by Winslow and other officials of the St. Louis and Southeastern Railway. Some of the volumes contain incomplete indexes.</p>
BOX 43-45	<p><u>Letterbooks, 1898-1900</u></p> <p>Carbon copy letterbooks, with indexes, of personal, private, and semi-official letters. Additional carbons of some of the same letters are filed in the <i><u>General Correspondence</u></i> .</p>
BOX 46-52	<p><u>Book, Article, and Speech File, 1863-1915</u></p> <p>Handwritten and typewritten notes and copies of speeches, articles, books; also galley proof of <i>Under the Old Flag</i> and several unpublished manuscripts. Includes a scrapbook containing a typed narrative of a trip to China in 1900 with copies of orders, newspaper clippings, and miscellany.</p>
BOX 53	<p><u>Subject File</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, reports, tabulations, newspaper clippings and printed items, and poems by the sculptor James Edward Kelly. Organized by subject.</p>

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	Letter press copy books of correspondence dealing mainly with Wilson's railroad ventures. Three of the books contain copies of letters to Edward F. Winslow. Two volumes contain letters by Winslow and other officials of the St. Louis and Southeastern Railway. Some of the volumes contain incomplete indexes.
BOX 30-I	Personal, military, and business letters of Wilson
	1867, Nov. 25-1881, June 30
	Part I
BOX 30-II	Part II

Letterpress Copy Books, 1867-1898

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BOX 31	1871, Oct. 31-1874, Nov. 10
BOX 32	1875, May 26-1876, Aug. 29
BOX 33	1879, Oct. 13-1882, July 26
BOX 34	Personal, military, and business letters of Wilson, 1881, July 25-1883, Dec. 6
BOX 35	1889, Jan. 27-1896, Oct. 6
BOX 36	1896, Oct. 7-1897, July 28
BOX 37	1897, July 4-1898, May 7
BOX 38	Wilson letters to Edward Francis Winslow 1871, July 24-1872, May 9
BOX 39	1872, May 14-1873, Feb. 15
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BOX 41-I	Letters of Wilson, Edward Francis Winslow, and other officers of St. Louis and Southeastern Railway, 1873, Oct. 1-1874, Nov. 30 Part I
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BOX 42	1874, Nov. 30-1875, July 2
BOX 43-45	Letterbooks, 1898-1900 Carbon copy letterbooks, with indexes, of personal, private, and semi-official letters. Additional carbons of some of the same letters are filed in the <i>General Correspondence</i> .
BOX 43	1898, Oct. 21-1899, Jan. 6 1899, Jan. 12-Apr. 12
BOX 44	1899, Apr. 13-June 29 1899, July 1-31 1899, Aug. 1-Sept. 30
BOX 45	1899, Oct. 1-Nov. 24 1899, Dec. 5-1900, Jan. 31 1900, Feb. 1-Mar. 31
BOX 46-52	Book, Article, and Speech File, 1863-1915 Handwritten and typewritten notes and copies of speeches, articles, books; also galley proof of <i>Under the Old Flag</i> and several unpublished manuscripts. Includes a scrapbook containing a typed narrative of a trip to China in 1900 with copies of orders, newspaper clippings, and miscellany.
BOX 46	Books <i>Life and Services of William Farrar Smith</i> , 1904 <i>The Life of Charles A. Dana</i> Draft corrected by Wilson Copies of Dana's war dispatches, 1863-1864
BOX 47	Index to newspaper clippings on Dana, circa 1897 Dana miscellany <i>Under the Old Flag</i> Corrected draft, vol. 2, chapters 2-11 Incomplete drafts of vols. 1-2 Miscellaneous drafts and related matter. Vols. I-II

Book, Article, and Speech File, 1863-1915

Container	Contents
BOX 48	Vols. III-IV Uncorrected galley proof
BOX 49	<i>The Life of John A. Rawlins</i> Draft corrected by Wilson, 1916 Draft corrected by editor, 1905-1908
BOX 50	Additional draft Miscellaneous drafts, notes, contract, etc. Extracts of Rawlins's letters to his wife, circa 1861-1869
BOX 51	Unpublished works "Journal-Vicksburg Campaign," 1863 "Memoir of the Campaign and Siege of Vicksburg," 1901 "Life and Services of General Peter Smith Michie," 1901 Robert Henry Hall, biographical sketch ["The Heroes of the Great Rebellion"], biographical sketches of Ulysses S. Grant and George Brinton McClellan Incomplete draft Duplicate pages Miscellaneous notes, drafts, and miscellany.
BOX 52	Biographical sketch of Wilson Speeches and articles: 1888 "Manifest Destiny in Asia" "Remarks of General James H. Wilson before the Committee on Commerce, House of Representatives" 1898, "America's Interests in China," printed 1899 "Remarks Made by Major General Wilson at a Banquet in the Ayuntamiento, Cardenas, Cuba" "La Lucha at Matanzas" "Remarks Made by General James H. Wilson at a meeting of the American Aid Society in Havana, Cuba" "Notes of an Interview between General Wilson and General Bartolomé Maso..." 1901, "Our Trade Relations with the Tropics" 1903, "Address before the Graduating Class of 1903 at Delaware College" 1904, "An Address Delivered before the Mohonk Conference" 1909, "The Future of Cuba" 1914, "The Address of James H. Wilson on Founders' Day . . ." 1915, "The Public Defense" Undated China "Notes from the Far East" "Questions of the Far East as Affected by the Peace" "Remarks of General James H. Wilson" "The Settlement of Political Affairs in the Far East" Cuba "Cuba Revisited" "The Historic Importance of the Day"

Book, Article, and Speech File, 1863-1915

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Miscellany

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Speeches by others

“Extract from a Speech of Hon. Charles Sumner,” 1872

“Notes of Interviews between Senator Henry M. Teller and Various Persons”

Scrapbook, journal of trip to China, typed narrative with copies of orders, newspaper clippings, and related material kept by Wilson's aide, 1900

BOX 53

Subject File

Correspondence, memoranda, reports, tabulations, newspaper clippings and printed items, and poems by the sculptor James Edward Kelly.

Organized by subject.

BOX 53

China

Cuba

Insurance

Railroads

Civil War

Correspondence, typescripts, 1864-1865

Military documents, 1862-1865

Kelly, James Edward, poems

Miscellany