Overview of the Collection

Creator: Wilson, M. L. (Milburn Lincoln), 1885-1969
Title: M. L. Wilson Collection
Dates: 1935-1960

Summary: The M. L. Wilson Collection consists of original copies of Wilson's unofficial correspondence; photoduplicates of original correspondence held by the National Archives and Records Administration documenting Wilson's activities as Undersecretary of Agriculture and Director of Extension; subject files; agricultural history and Thomas Jefferson material; speeches; statements; articles; and materials from his personal files. Topics include: the Agricultural Adjustment Administration; various agricultural bills; domestic allotment; Farm Bureau; various New Deal programs concerning labor, land, rural housing, extension schools, erosion, and subsistence homesteads; agricultural history; Thomas Jefferson; conservation, economics; social sciences; politics; and postwar reconstruction.

Repository: Montana State University Library, Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections
Montana State University-Bozeman Library
Merrill G Burlingame Special Collections
P.O. Box 173320
Bozeman, MT
59717-3320
Telephone: 406-994-4242
Fax: 406-994-2851
https://www.lib.montana.edu/archives/contact-form/

Access Restrictions: This collection is open for research.

Additional Reference: An alternative form of this finding aid can be found at http://www.lib.montana.edu/collect/spcoll/findaid/acc00003.html

Languages: English

Sponsor: Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

Biographical Note

Milburn Lincoln Wilson was born in Atlantic, Iowa on 23 October 1885, the son of John Wesley and Mary E. (Magee) Wilson. He received a B.S.A. from Iowa State College, Ames, in 1907 and his M.S. in agricultural economics and rural sociology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1920. He began his career as a farmer in 1907. He served as Assistant State Agronomist at Montana State College, Bozeman, 1910-1912; County Agent in Custer County, Montana, 1912-1914; Montana
State Extension Agent Leader, 1914-1922; and an extension agricultural economist at Montana State College, 1922-1924. Between 1924 and 1926 he took charge of the U.S.D.A. division of farm management and cost accounting. During his stint as professor and head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at Montana State College, 1926-1933, he provided consultation on large-scale wheat farming in the U.S.S.R., 1929. From May 16 to September 1, 1933, Wilson served as the Chief Wheat Production Secretary in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and then moved on to the directorship of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads in the Department of the Interior until June 30, 1934. In 1934, Wilson was appointed the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and in 1937 the Undersecretary of Agriculture until 1 February 1940 when he became the Director of Extension Work at U.S.D.A. While Director, he also filled in as the Chief of Nutrition Programs and in the Production and Marketing Administration between 1943 and 1949. He was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Farm Economic Association (president, 1925), Epsilon Sigma Phi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Alpha Zeta. He was also a Unitarian and belonged to the Cosmos club. His writings include Farm Relief and the Domestic Allotment Plan (1933) and Democracy Has Roots (1939). Married on December 17, 1913 to Ida Morse from Cromwell, Minnesota, Wilson made his home in Washington, D.C. where he died in October 1969 and is buried in Rock Creek Cemetery.

Content Description

This collection includes materials created or collected by M.L. Wilson and in turn collected and arranged by Montana State University. It contains original copies of Wilson's unofficial correspondence; photoduplicates of original correspondence held by the National Archives and Records Administration documenting Wilson's activities as Undersecretary of Agriculture and Director of Extension; subject files; agricultural history and Thomas Jefferson material; speeches; statements; articles; and materials from his personal files. Topics include: the Agricultural Adjustment Administration; various agricultural bills; domestic allotment; Farm Bureau; various New Deal programs concerning labor, land, rural housing, extension schools, erosion, and subsistence homesteads; agricultural history; Thomas Jefferson; conservation, economics; social sciences; politics; and postwar reconstruction. Photographs have been removed from files marked by an asterisk (*) and placed in Series 16. Large items have been also been removed for separate storage and files from which they have been removed marked by an asterisk (*).

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Series 1 Non-official Correspondence, 1935-1960
Series 2 Undersecretary of Agriculture Incoming Correspondence, 1933-1940
Series 3 Director of Extension -- Correspondence, 1940-1953
Series 4 Undersecretary of Agriculture -- Correspondence, 1932-1948
Series 5 Undersecretary of Agriculture Subject Files, undated
Series 6 Division of Subsistence Homesteads, 1933-1935
Series 7 Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Office of Farm Mgt., 1924-1925

M. L. Wilson Collection, 1935-1960
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv85577
Series 8 Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils and Agricultural Engineering, 1934-1941
Series 9 Mordecai Ezekial, Domestic Allotment Plan, 1929-1933
Series 10 Chester C. Davis Material, undated
Series 11 Agricultural History and Thomas Jefferson Material
Series 12 Speeches, Statements, Articles, etc., 1932-1956
Series 13 General and Miscellaneous Material, undated
Series 14 M.L. Wilson Personal Files, 1914-1955
Series 16 Photographs

**Acquisition Information**

Original documents and photocopies of material pertaining to the career and activities of M. L. Wilson were compiled by employees of Montana State University in the 1960s to create this artificial research collection. Provenance of much of this material has been lost, but many files were apparently copied from originals held by the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D. C.

**Processing Note**

This collection was processed 2009 April 30

**Detailed Description of the Collection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box</td>
<td></td>
<td>1935-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Series 1: Non-official Correspondence Letters, memos, and notes pertaining to a wide variety of subjects including extension work, various studies, addresses, travel, foreign aid, United Nations, and Ford Foundation material. This material is very scattered in content and volume, with no personal or family letters included. Wilson's official job related correspondence has been arranged in subsequent series.</td>
<td>1933-1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Series 2: Undersecretary of Agriculture -- Incoming Correspondence, A-Z Photocopies of original correspondence held by the National Archives. It is a selection of non-official and official correspondence received by Wilson while he served as Undersecretary; it does not represent the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Container(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>total volume of that correspondence. Subjects include: AAA, agriculture education, extension, land-grant colleges, agricultural experiments, sociology, science, and international relations. The letters have been arranged alphabetically by the author’s name.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Series 3: Director of Extension - Correspondence</strong> Photocopies of original correspondence held by the National Archives. It is a selection of non-official and official correspondence received by Wilson while he served as the Director of Extension; it does not represent the total volume of that correspondence. There is no correspondence for the years 1944 through 1946. The chronological arrangement, as received, has been retained.</td>
<td>1940-1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td><strong>Series 4: Undersecretary of Agriculture and Director of Extension Correspondence</strong> Photocopies of original correspondence held by the National Archives. It is a selection of non-official and official correspondence sent by Wilson while he served as Undersecretary and the Director of Extension; it does not represent the total volume of that correspondence. These letters may have originally been filed under a subject or name arrangement but were not received in such an arrangement. Some of the letters are duplicates of correspondence found in other parts of this series.</td>
<td>1932-1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td><strong>Series 5: Undersecretary of Agriculture, Subject Files</strong> This material includes photoduplicated letters, reports, articles etc. dealing with the various subjects listed for each folder. The subject headings which appeared on the cover envelopes have bee retained.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Series 6: Division of Subsistence Homesteads</strong> This contains correspondence and other records of Mr. Wilson as Director of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads within the Department of Interior, 1933-35. Listed as Record Group 96 in the National Archives.</td>
<td>1933-1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Series 7: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Office of Farm Management</strong> Records of the Office of Farm Management within the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1924-25. H.R. Tolley, Head. Includes those records relating to M.L. Wilson. Listed as Record Group 83 in the National Archives.</td>
<td>1924-1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Series 8: Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils and Agricultural Engineering Bureau Chief's Correspondence, 1934-41, F.D. Richey and E.C. Auchter, Heads of Bureau. (Records relating to M.L. Wilson) Listed as Record Group 54 in the National Archives.</td>
<td>1934-1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Series 9: Mordecai Ezekial, Domestic Allotment Plan Material from the files of Mordecai Ezekial, Economist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, on the Domestic Allotment Plan. This material consists of photoduplicated copies of material from the National Archives.</td>
<td>1929-1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Series 11: Agricultural History and Thomas Jefferson Material This material includes speeches, articles, notes, clippings and correspondence on the subjects of Thomas Jefferson and agricultural history. Included are materials from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, a proposed Agricultural Hall of Fame and agricultural museums. Much of the material is devoted to the Jefferson Bicentennial.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>Series 12: Speeches, Statements, Articles This material represents mostly the product of Mr. Wilson himself, or articles about him. Those which were attributed to others but retained by Mr. Wilson are so designated on the chronological listing attached to this inventory as Folder 36.</td>
<td>1932-1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-16</td>
<td>Series 13: General and Miscellaneous Material Subject files relating to the New Deal, agriculture, extension, economics, education, nutrition, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>Series 14: M.L. Wilson Personal Files Series 14 consists of materials from the personal files of M.L. Wilson forwarded with some comments by Dr. P.L. Slagsvold. Some of this material was drawn from the files of the Agricultural Economics Department, Montana State</td>
<td>1914-1955</td>
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</table>
College, but has been retained in this series as a file kept separately by Wilson.

18-20
Series 15: Miscellaneous Notebooks and Scrapbooks 1916-1956

Box

20-21 Oversize
Series 16: Photographs
This series includes photographs removed from various folders throughout the collection.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
Agricultural extension work-Government policy-United States
Agricultural laws and legislation-United States
Agriculture and state-United States
Agriculture-History
Farm law-United States
New Deal, 1933-1939
Reconstruction (1939-1951)

Personal Names:
Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826

Corporate Names:
American Farm Bureau Federation
United States-Agricultural Adjustment Administration
United States-Dept. of Agriculture-Officials and employees

Kim Allen Scott, 2009