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. 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 APOLOGIES TO THE IROQUOIS. Additional material in RBR flat drawer #4.
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.


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


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


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


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


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


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 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, 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.


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.


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.


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


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.