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# Guide to the Napier Wilt Papers 1899-1975



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## **Descriptive Summary**

<b>Identifier</b>	ICU.SPCL.WILTN
<b>Title</b>	Wilt, Napier. Papers
<b>Date</b>	1899-1975
<b>Size</b>	9.25 linear feet (19 boxes)
<b>Repository</b>	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

**Abstract** Napier Wilt (1896-1975), theatre scholar, was an alumnus and faculty member of the University of Chicago's Department of English. He was heavily involved in research into American literature and especially the history of theatrical performances in Chicago theaters during the late nineteenth century. He also served as the Dean of the Division of the Humanities at the University of Chicago. This collection consists of 9.25 linear feet of material from 1899-1975, documenting Wilt's research, course materials, correspondence, and personal life. Dr. Wilt's research notes and drafts of indexes make up the majority of this collection, including his type-written and hand-written notes from his personal research and newspaper consultation. The rest of the collection is primarily comprised of his course materials and copies of student papers.

## **Information on Use**

### **Access**

Series VI contains student grades and evaluations of student papers. This material is restricted for 80 years.

The rest of the collection is open for research, with no restrictions.

### **Citation**

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Wilt, Napier. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

### **Biographical Note**

Born to John and Susie (Napier) Wilt on December 20, 1895 in Hillsboro, Indiana, Napier Wilt attended Indiana University, where he earned an A.B. in 1917. He then came to the University of Chicago, where he earned an M.A. in 1921 and completed a Ph.D. in 1923. His area of

interest was American literature, with a focus on American drama and humor. His dissertation for the University was a day-by-day history of the Chicago Theatre, entitled, "The History of the two Rice Theaters in Chicago from 1847 to 1857." After serving in World War II, he became a professor of English at University of Chicago. From 1951 until his retirement in 1962 he was Dean of the Humanities. During the 1950's he helped fund a visiting writers program to bring in American's great writers to Chicago to inspire students in writing programs and offer critiques of student works. He wrote extensively on the history of Chicago theaters, compiling a massive index on the history of Chicago theatrical productions during the nineteenth century, as well as editing several books, including "Some American Humorists." Wilt was also involved in a controversial university takeover of the Chicago Review, and installed a faculty board to watch over the journal's financial operations.

### **Scope Note**

This collection documents Napier Wilt's research into the history of Chicago theatrical productions, his teaching work, his associations with colleagues, and his personal life. It spans the years 1899-1975 and is arranged into six series.

Series I: Chicago Theater History, contains Wilt's work on the history of Chicago theatrical productions during the nineteenth century. This includes a large amount of Wilt's handwritten and typewritten notes on newspaper articles, books, and reviews. There are several drafts of different indexes that Wilt compiled, including a play index, theater index, star index, and author index. These indexes relate to a larger aggregation of performance data, known as the Chicago Drama Performances Index. This series has been arranged alphabetically and then chronologically.

Series II: Course Materials, contains Wilt's course materials, including calendars, notebooks, class notes, and copies of student papers. The notebooks relate mainly to Wilt's English classes in American literature in the early twentieth century. There are also extensive copies of student papers for his various classes in the Humanities. This series has been arranged alphabetically and then chronologically.

Series III: Publications, contains publications by Wilt and others. This includes articles, published versions of Wilt's convocation addresses, and draft chapters of China's Black Chamber by Herbert O. Yardley and Carl Grabo, and an article on Herman Melville. This series has been arranged alphabetically.

Series IV: Correspondence, contains incoming and outgoing material. The bulk of this series is made up of Wilt's correspondence with Kenneth Faulkner, a close friend, during World War I. Also included is correspondence with Ambrose Bierce. his series has been arranged alphabetically and then chronologically.

Series V: Biographical and Personal, contains some personal materials related to Wilt's final will and death. This includes correspondence with a lawyer over Wilt's final will, as well as condolence letters to William McCollum after the death of Napier Wilt in 1975. This series has been arranged alphabetically and then chronologically.

Series VI: Restricted, contains graded student papers for Dr. Wilt's courses. This series has been arranged alphabetically.

## **Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Chicago Drama Performances. Index

## **Subject Headings**

- Wilt, Napier, b. 1896
- Drama -- History and criticism
- Theater -- Illinois -- Chicago

## **INVENTORY**

### **Series I: Chicago Theater History**

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 1**

1855-1878, chronological index, 1839-1856, original draft, circa 1938-1941

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 2**

1855-1878, chronological index, 1856-1864, original draft, circa 1938-1941

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 3**

1855-1878, chronological index, 1856-1859, first copy, circa 1938-1941

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 4**

1855-1878, chronological index, 1860-1870, first copy, circa 1938-1941

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 5**

1855-1878, chronological index, 1856-1864, second copy, circa 1938-1941

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 6**

1855-1878, chronological index, 1865-1871, second copy, circa 1938-1941

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 7**

1855-1878, chronological index, 1865-1871, third copy, circa 1938-1941

**Box 1**

**Folder 8**

1855-1878, chronological index, references and correspondence, 1937-1938

**Box 2**

**Folder 1**

"A History of the Chicago Theaters – 1837-1937," pages 1-175, draft, circa 1938-1941

**Box 2**

**Folder 2**

"A History of the Chicago Theaters – 1837-1937," pages 176-374; A-585-A-634, draft, circa 1938-1941

**Box 2**

**Folder 3**

"A History of the Chicago Theaters – 1837-1937," pages 375-536, draft, circa 1938-1941

**Box 2**

**Folder 4**

"A History of the Chicago Theaters," pages 1-39; 53-86; A-635-A-643, draft, circa 1938-1941

**Box 2**

**Folder 5**

"A History of the Chicago Theaters," pages 26-139; 170-216; 250-271; 366-369, draft, circa 1938-1941

**Box 2**

**Folder 6**

Alphabetical list of Chicago theaters, circa 1938-1941

**Box 2**

**Folder 7**

"Annals of the Theatre," notes and draft of first pages, 1938

**Box 2**

**Folder 8**

Author's index, alphabetical, final draft, circa 1938-1941

**Box 3**

**Folder 1**

Author's index, carbon copies, circa 1938-1941

**Box 3**

**Folder 2**

Author's index, carbon copies, circa 1938-1941

**Box 3**

**Folder 3**

Catherine Sturtevant, chronological outline, handwritten notes, circa 1931

**Box 3**

**Folder 4**

Chronological list, 1839-1857, circa 1938-1941

**Box 3**

**Folder 5**

Chronological list, 1858-1868, circa 1938-1941

**Box 3**

**Folder 6**

Chronological play and actors list, 1839-1858, circa 1938-1941

**Box 3**

**Folder 7**

Chronological play and actors list, 1859-1867, circa 1938-1941

**Box 3**

**Folder 8**

Chronological play and theaters list, 1858-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 1**

Notes on the Arlington Hall, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 2**

Notes on the Arlington Minstrel Hall, circa 1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 3**

Notes on the Arlington Minstrel Hall, schedule and journal notes, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 4**

Notes on the Chicago Theater, 1839-1847, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 5**

Notes on the Chicago Theater, history and newspaper articles, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 6**

Notes on the Chicago Theater, typewritten, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 7**

Notes on the Chicago Theater, circa 1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 8**

Notes on Chicago theaters, handwritten and typed, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 9**

Notes on Chicago theaters, lists and descriptions, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 10**

Notes on Chicago theaters, miscellaneous, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 11**

Notes on Chicago theaters, plays, 1839-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 4**

**Folder 12**

Notes on Chicago theaters, plays, 1842-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 5**

**Folder 1**

Notes on Chicago theaters, plays, 1847-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 5**

**Folder 2**

Notes on Chicago theaters, plays, 1855-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 5**

**Folder 3**

Notes on Chicago theaters, plays, 1868, circa 1938-1941

**Box 5**

**Folder 4**

Notes on Chicago theaters and New York theaters, circa 1940

**Box 5**

**Folder 5**

Notes on the Colonel Wood's Museum," circa 1941

**Box 5**

**Folder 6**

Notes on Crosby's Opera House, 1865-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 5**

**Folder 7**

Notes on Dansk Theater, programs and information, 1920-1935

**Box 5**

**Folder 8**

Notes on Dearborn Theatre, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 1**

Notes on Globe Theatre, 1870-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 2**

Notes, handwritten, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 3**

Notes, handwritten, 1856-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 4**

Notes, handwritten and typed, 1868-1870, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 5**

Notes, handwritten notes and edits on chronology, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 6**

Notes on history of theaters and newspaper articles, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 7**

Notes on the Kingsbury Music Hall, notes, circa 1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 8**



Notes on McVickers Theater, 1857-1858, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 9**

Notes on Minstrel Hall, 1858-1859, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 10**

Notes on National Theatre and People's Theatre, 1842-1847, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 11**

Notes from newspapers, 1846-1868, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 12**

Notes on newspaper articles about theaters, 1856-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 6**

**Folder 13**

Notes on newspaper consultation, 1864-1873, 1938

**Box 7**

**Folder 1**

Notes on newspaper consultation, chronology, 1938

**Box 7**

**Folder 2**

Notes on theater productions, circa 1938-1941

**Box 7**

**Folder 3**

Notes on reviews, part one, circa 1938-1941

**Box 7**

**Folder 4**

Notes on reviews, part two, 1839-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 8**

**Folder 1**

Notes on reviews, part three, circa 1938-1941

**Box 8**

**Folder 2**

Notes on reviews, part four, 1851-1917, circa 1938-1941

**Box 8**

**Folder 3**

Notes on the Sauganash Hotel, circa 1938-1941

**Box 8**

**Folder 4**

Notes on The Varieties Theatre, 1862-1867, circa 1938-1941

**Box 8**

**Folder 5**

Notes on the Western Museum, 1844-1847, circa 1938-1941

**Box 8**

**Folder 6**

Notes to be checked against play indexes and actor lists, circa 1938-1941

**Box 8**

**Folder 7**

Play index, A-H, undated

**Box 9**

**Folder 1**

Play index, I-M, circa 1938-1941

**Box 9**

**Folder 2**

Play index, N-R, circa 1938-1941

**Box 9**

**Folder 3**

Play index, S-T, circa 1938-1941

**Box 9**

**Folder 4**

Play index, U-Z, circa 1938-1941

**Box 9**

**Folder 5**

Play index, A-G, circa 1938-1941

**Box 9**

**Folder 6**

Play index, H-M, circa 1938-1941

**Box 9**

**Folder 7**

Play index, N-R, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 1**

Play index, S-Z, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 2**

Play index, A-D, final list, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 3**

Play index, E-H, final list, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 4**

Play index, carbon copies, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 5**

Play type index, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 6**

Star and author index, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 7**

Star index, 1838-1871, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 8**

Star index, alphabetical, A-C, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 9**

Star index, alphabetical, C-J, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 10**

Star index corrections, circa 1938-1941

**Box 10**

**Folder 11**

Star index errata, A-W, circa 1938-1941

**Series II: Course Materials**

**Box 11**

**Folder 1**

Examination booklets, circa 1938-1941

**Box 11**

**Folder 2**

Examination booklets and passages, circa 1938-1941

**Box 11**

**Folder 3**

Notebooks, handwritten, three, 1938

**Box 11**

**Folder 4**

Notebooks, handwritten, two, undated

**Box 12**

**Folder 1**

Notebooks, handwritten, three, undated

**Box 12**

**Folder 2**

Notebooks, handwritten, six, undated

**Box 12**

**Folder 3**

Notebooks, handwritten, two, and examination booklets, undated

**Box 12**

**Folder 4**

Notes, bibliographies, English 396, American Literature 1919-1925, undated

**Box 13**

**Folder 1**

Notes, bibliographies, English 396, American Literature 1926-1929, undated

**Box 13**

**Folder 2**

Notes, handwritten, undated

**Box 13**

**Folder 3**

Notes, in-class discussion, undated

**Box 13**

**Folder 4**

Student papers, undated

**Box 13**

**Folder 5**

Student papers, 1937-1949

**Box 13**

**Folder 6**

Student papers, 1941-1972

**Box 13**

**Folder 7**

Student papers, 1946-1947

**Box 13**

**Folder 8**

Student papers, "Attitudes of Seventeenth Century New England Annalists toward the Indians," by William P. Randel, undated

**Box 14**

**Folder 1**

Student papers, "Chapter Two of Dissertation – English Critical Conceptions of the Poet," by Jason C. Grant, Jr., undated

**Box 14**

**Folder 2**

Student papers, "The Confidence-Man His Masquerade," by Louise E. Acker, undated

**Box 14**

**Folder 3**

Student papers, "A Consideration of the Blank Verse of Percy Bysshe Shelley," by Robert B. Ogle, English 353, undated

**Box 14**

**Folder 4**

Student papers, "Critical Comment on 'Yillah and Hautia' by H.P. Miller," by Marie Killheffer, English 363, 1937

**Box 14**

**Folder 5**

Student papers, "Dictionary Catalogue of the Short Stories About New England Published in the Atlantic Monthly from 1857-1895," by Sylvia Chace, 1933

**Box 14**

**Folder 6**

Student papers, dissertation, "Henry James – A Critic of Nineteenth Century America," by Louise Roberts, 1946

**Box 14**

**Folder 7**

Student papers, dissertation, "The Prefaces of Henry James," by Darilyn Winifred Bock, 1972

**Box 14**

**Folder 8**

Student papers, English 372 and English 387, 1947-1948

**Box 15**

**Folder 1**

Student papers, English 372 and English 387, class notes, 1947-1954

**Box 15**

**Folder 2**

Student papers, "The Face of Ambiguity – A Study of Confidence Men in American Literature Before 1900," by Gary Engle, undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 3**

Student papers, "The Family – An Experience in Democratic Living," by Margaret Snapp, English 281, undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 4**

Student papers, "Local Color in the Stories of Cable, King, and Stuart and other Short Fiction in Louisiana, 1867-1900," by Russell B. Parks, 1933

**Box 15**

**Folder 5**

Student papers, "The Magazine Story of the Southwest 1869-1900," by Luella Ruth Culbertson, English 211, undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 6**

Student papers, "Melville and the Writing of Mardi," by W.B. Moffett, English 363, undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 7**

Student papers, "Melville's Attitude toward Democracy as Revealed in Mardi," undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 8**

Student papers, "New York State in Periodical Fiction, 1867-1900," by Dorothy Richardson, English 211, 1933

**Box 15**

**Folder 9**

Student papers, "On the Beach at Night," undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 10**

Student papers, "Part I – Expatriate America, 1919-1933," undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 11**

Student papers, "Primitivism and Anti-Primitivism in Certain Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Writings Concerning New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey," by Alice J. Russell, English 270, undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 12**

Student papers, "Primitivism in Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina from 1606-1740," by Hugh Sebastian, English 270, 1933

**Box 15**

**Folder 13**

Student papers, "Quentin Anderson's Interpretation of The Wings of the Dove," Marilyn Lyde, undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 14**

Student papers, "The Relationship of the Main Characters in Melville's Redburn, Typee, Omoo, and White-Jacket," by G.A. Korntheuer, English 378, 1947

**Box 15**

**Folder 15**

Student papers, "The Religion of Matthew Arnold," undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 16**

Student papers, "Review of Hemingway's Work During the Nineteen-Twenties and A Review of The Smart Set, 1920-1921," by Walter E. Puckett, 1953

**Box 15**

**Folder 17**

Student papers, "A Review of 'Mardi' by Melville," by Emily B. Garrett, English 363, 1937

**Box 15**

**Folder 18**

Student papers, "Shelleyan Morality – A Study of Opinions to the Twentieth Century," by James Light, undated

**Box 15**

**Folder 19**

Student papers, "A Study of the Prose Fiction of Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin Appearing in the Leading American Periodicals from 1865 to 1900," thesis by James K. Ray, 1933

**Box 15**

**Folder 20**

Student papers, "Thomas Wolfe," by Edith Calstein, English 305, 1946

**Box 16**

**Folder 1**

Student papers, "Time Held Me Green and Dying," by John Stuart Williams, 1955

**Box 16**

**Folder 2**

Student papers, "The Use of Symbolism in Melville's Earlier Novels, With Special Consideration of Redburn," undated

**Box 16**

**Folder 3**

Student papers, "Whitman's America," by Julia White, English 380, 1946

**Box 16**

**Folder 4**

Student thesis, partial copy, undated

**Series III: Publications**

**Box 16**

**Folder 5**

"China's Black Chamber," by Herbert O. Yardley and Carl Grabo, chapters 1-18, draft, 1938

**Box 16**

**Folder 6**

"China's Black Chamber," by Herbert O. Yardley and Carl Grabo, chapters 19-21, drafts, 1938

**Box 16**

**Folder 7**

Convocation addresses and publications, 1927-1962

**Box 16**

**Folder 8**

"Herman Melville's Gedankengut," by Dr. K.H. Sundermann, copy, undated

**Box 16**

**Folder 9**

Publications, articles and addresses, 1938-1958

**Box 16**

**Folder 10**

Writers' Project and Sponsors' Contributions records, 1940

**Series IV: Correspondence**

**Box 16**

**Folder 11**

1929-1975

**Box 16**

**Folder 12**

Bierce, Ambrose, 1899-1905

**Box 17**

**Folder 1**

Faulkner, Kenneth, 1914-1918

**Box 17**

**Folder 2**

Faulkner, Kenneth, 1917-1974

**Series V: Biographical and Personal**

**Box 17**

**Folder 3**

Condolence letters to William McCollum on the death of Napier Wilt, 1975

**Box 17**

**Folder 4**

Convocations and rewards for Napier Wilt, 1955-1974

**Box 17**

**Folder 5**

Correspondence about and draft of Napier Wilt's final will, 1955

**Box 17**

**Folder 6**

Correspondence, Charles Good to Catherine Sturtevant, on theater premieres and shows, 1930-1932

## **Series VI: Restricted**

### **Box 18**

#### **Folder 1**

Student papers, circa 1920s-1940s

### **Box 18**

#### **Folder 2**

Student papers, 1925-1946

### **Box 18**

#### **Folder 3**

Student papers, 1936-1941

### **Box 18**

#### **Folder 4**

Student papers, 1940-1946

### **Box 18**

#### **Folder 5**

Student papers, 1946-1956

### **Box 19**

#### **Folder 1**

Student papers, "A Comparative Study of the Critical Viewpoints of Matthew Arnold and Thomas Stearns Eliot," by Edith Stover, English 357, circa 1943-1946

### **Box 19**

#### **Folder 2**

Student papers, "John Steinbeck – His Technique in Some of His Fictional Works," by Catherine W. Davis, English 305, 1946

### **Box 19**

#### **Folder 3**

Student papers, "Memories of Joan," by Philip A. Davis, English 282, 1946

### **Box 19**

#### **Folder 4**

Student papers, "Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind'," by B.L. Foyer, English 352A, circa 1943-1946

### **Box 19**

#### **Folder 5**

Student papers, "The Relation Between Shelley and Keats," by Flora Bramson, English 353, 1943

### **Box 19**

#### **Folder 6**

Student papers, "A Technical Study of the Novels of Gwen Bristow with Special Emphasis upon Tomorrow is Forever," by Henry C. Grant, English 305, 1946

### **Box 19**

#### **Folder 7**

Student papers, "William Faulkner," by John Breckshot, circa 1943-1946