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JAMES M. WILSON PAPERS, (1952) 1958-77

Collection Type

Personal Papers

Extent

2.4 linear feet (ca. 4,800 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

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Processed by

William H. McNitt, November 1985; Revised by Jennifer Sternaman, April 1995

Biography

James Morrison Wilson, Jr.

July 8, 1918 - Born, Mokanshan, China

1935-39 - A.B., Swarthmore College

1939 - Certificate, Geneva School of International Studies

1940 - M.A., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

1941-46 - U.S. Army (Lt. Colonel)

1948 - LL.B., Harvard Law School

1948-52 - Staff Officer, Department of the Air Force

1953-55 - Defense Department Advisor, Paris and Bonn

1955-58 - Director, Office of Foreign Military Sales, Department of Defense

1958-61 - Assistant Coordinator, Foreign Assistance Program, State Department

1961 - Appointed Career Foreign Service Officer

1961-64 - Counselor for Economic Affairs, American Embassy, Madrid, Spain

1964-66 - U.S. Minister, Bangkok, Thailand

1966-70 - U.S. Minister, Manila, Philippines

1970-72 - Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific

1972-75 - U.S. Deputy Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations

1975-77 - Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, State Department

1977 - Retired from the Foreign Service

Scope and Content Note

The James M. Wilson papers mainly concern his career in the State Department, 1958-77. The topics most completely documented are Micronesian status negotiations and State Department human rights and humanitarian affairs policies and activities.

Wilson joined the State Department on detail from the Department of Defense in 1958 to work on the foreign aid program. He became a foreign service officer in 1961 and served overseas in Spain, Thailand, and the Philippines before returning to Washington in 1970 as a Deputy Secretary of State.

In 1972 he was detailed to the White House as U.S. Deputy Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations. These negotiations, which began in the mid-1960's, involved possible changes in the political status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia), the far-flung, sparsely populated collection of former Japanese-held islands which was administered by the United States, nominally on behalf of the United Nations, under a special strategic trust agreement concluded in 1947.

Wilson's role, as deputy to Ambassador Haydn Williams, was to attend most of the negotiating sessions, meet with Micronesian officials, and assist with the drafting of potential agreements. The question of the overall status of Micronesia was not resolved during Wilson's tenure, but separate negotiations with part of Micronesia known as the Northern Mariana Islands led to the signing of the Marianas Covenant on February 15, 1975. This agreement was designed to lead to eventual commonwealth status for the Marianas, similar to the relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico. The Wilson papers relate to both sets of Micronesian negotiations and include his presentations, notes, memoranda of conversations and working papers from various meetings he attended.

In 1975 Wilson assumed the newly created post of State Department Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, handling departmental matters relating to human rights and refugees. Much of his initial work involved the Indochina refugee program. He also represented the United States at meetings of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, testified before Congress on human rights questions, and made numerous speeches. Small files of documents relating to all these aspects of his work are included in the collection. Also included is an unpublished memoir describing his activities.

The collection is also useful for examining certain aspects of Wilson's work in Thailand, 1964-66, and the Philippines, 1966-70. Mr. Wilson was the highest ranking U.S. official in these two countries for about one-third of his tenure, due to extended absences by the ambassadors or vacancies in that position. His correspondence reveals much about the personal and social life of a foreign service officer with occasional reference to his official duties. His speeches and remarks illustrate the public aspects of his work. No detailed records concerning the issues and crises handled by the embassy staff are included. Such materials apparently

became part of his official records retained by the Department of State.

The Wilson papers also include small amounts of material from the two periods in which he worked on the foreign aid program (1958-61 and 1972), his brief service as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific, and the early years of his career when he served in various capacities in the Defense Department.

Related Materials (November 1985)

Several White House Central Files categories contain related material. They include:

- CO 120 - Philippines
- CO 148 - Thailand
- FO 3-2- Foreign Aid
- HU - Human Rights
- ND 18-2 - Displaced Persons-Refugees
- ST 51 - Territories and Island (includes Micronesia)

Other materials concerning the status of Micronesia appear in the Congressional Relations Office files of Max Friedersdorf, Robert Wolthuis, and Vernon Loen and Charles Leppert. The Bentley Historical Library of The University of Michigan has numerous collections relating to the Philippines, including the papers of G. Mennen Williams who served as Ambassador to the Philippines during part of Mr. Wilson's tenure there.

Last Modified Date

2025-03-14

Subject File, 1972-77.

(Boxes 1-2, 0.6 linear feet)

Memoranda, testimony, meeting agendas and presentations, and occasional memoranda of conversations, press releases and clippings mainly concerning his work on Micronesian status negotiations, refugees from Indochina and elsewhere, and human rights questions. Included is Wilson's unpublished memoir of his service as State Department Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs. A small amount of material relates to his 1972 work on the foreign aid program.

Arranged alphabetically by subject

Box 1 - Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Foreign Aid
OPEN	Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs - FY 1977 Budget Estimates
OPEN	Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs - Office Organizational and Personnel Matters
OPEN	Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs - Wilson's Memoir
OPEN	Human Rights - General
OPEN	Human Rights - Linkage With Security Assistance
OPEN	Human Rights - Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance and Economic Policy, 12/4/75
OPEN	Micronesian Status Negotiations - 10/72-4/74

Box 2 - Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Micronesian Status Negotiations - 5/74-6/75
OPEN	Refugees - General
OPEN	Refugees - Indochina
OPEN	Wilson, James M. - Biographical Information

Correspondence File, 1952-77.

(Boxes 2-3, 0.6 linear feet)

Correspondence between Wilson and other foreign service officers, ambassadors, military personnel, and foreign officials and diplomats. Most of the correspondence is of a personal nature, relating to such topics as: embassy social affairs, exchange of gifts, contacts with old friends, and arrangements for speaking to various organizations. Frequent references to his official duties appear in the letters, however. The number of letters from the early and later years of his career is small, with relatively large files concerning his years as U.S. Minister to Thailand and the Philippines.

Arranged chronologically.

Box 2 (Continued) - Correspondence File

Status	Title
OPEN	Correspondence - 1952-1967

Box 3 - Correspondence File

Status	Title
OPEN	Correspondence - 1968-1977

Speeches and Remarks File, 1959-76.

(Boxes 4-5, 0.8 linear feet)

Drafts and reading copies of his speeches and remarks with occasional background information, programs, and correspondence. His earliest speeches almost all concern the foreign aid program. About half of the series dates from his service in Thailand and the Philippines. In these speeches he addressed such topics as the management of foreign affairs in overseas posts, U.S. policy in Southeast Asia, and U.S. political and economic relations with the two countries. After returning to the United States in 1970 he spoke to groups on the war in Indochina, the Nixon Doctrine in East Asia, Micronesian status negotiations, refugee policies, and human rights.

Arranged chronologically.

Box 4 - Speeches and Remarks File

Status	Title
OPEN	1959/05/26 - Conference on Foreign Affairs
OPEN	1960/02/17 - National Council of Churches of Christ
OPEN	1960/04 - Texas Speech Tour
OPEN	1960/04/17 - Associated Church Press
OPEN	1960/10/11 - Command and Staff College Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base
OPEN	1961/04 - Unidentified Speech
OPEN	1961/04/26 - Arkansas Womens' Clubs
OPEN	1964/08/18 - American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand
OPEN	1965/01/04 - Square and Compass Club, Bangkok

Status	Title
OPEN	1965/01/27 - Opening of Korat-Nonghai Highway
OPEN	1965/01/29 - Dedication of the Military Research and Development Center
OPEN	1965/01/29 - U.S. Operations Mission Technicians
OPEN	1965/02/05 - Time News Tour of Asia
OPEN	1965/03/14 - Dedication of New Mitraparb Foundation School, Batun, Thailand
OPEN	1965/04/27 - American Womens' Club of Bangkok
OPEN	1965/06/04 - International School of Bangkok
OPEN	1965/07/26 - American Field Service Students
OPEN	1965/09/17 - U.S. Operations Mission Participants Ceremony
OPEN	1965/09/21 - Peace Corps Volunteers
OPEN	1965/09/30 - Presentation of Books to the Neurological Research Foundation
OPEN	1965/11/10 - Marine Corps Birthday Ball
OPEN	1965/11/10 - Presentation of Legion of Merit to General Sinchai
OPEN	1966/01/27 - Peace Corps Volunteers
OPEN	1966/02/07 - Square and Compass Club, Bangkok
OPEN	1966/05/09 - Peace Corps Volunteers
OPEN	1966/05/16 - 20th Anniversary of the U.S. Information Service Library
OPEN	1966/06/15 - American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand
OPEN	1966/11/14 - Opening of Good Food USA Exhibit, Manila
OPEN	1967/02/14 - Third Far East Symposium on Nutrition
OPEN	1967/04/12 - National War College
OPEN	1967/05/05 - Ground Breaking Pacific War Memorial, Corregidor
OPEN	1967/07/11 - Philippine Community Chest Campaign
OPEN	1967/11/07 - 636th Combat Support Group

Status	Title
OPEN	1967/11/11 - Marine Corps Birthday Ball
OPEN	1967/11/20 - Opening Session of Laurel-Langley Discussions
OPEN	1967/12/13 -Voice of America Interview
OPEN	1967/12/15 - Distinguished Service Cross Award for Judge Julian Chua
OPEN	1967/12/20 - Awards Ceremony for U.S. Government Employees
OPEN	1968/01/20 - Turnover of Ships to the Philippine Navy
OPEN	1968/01/29 - Base Labor Negotiations
OPEN	1968/03/21 - Services for Otto Kaufmann
OPEN	1968/04/17 - Philippine Chamber of Industries
OPEN	1968/05/04 - American School Commencement, Makati, Philippines
OPEN	1968/05/15 - Mutual Defense Board of the Philippines Anniversary Meeting
OPEN	1968/05/30 - Memorial Day Service
OPEN	1968/06/03 - George Dewey High School Commencement, Subic Naval Base
OPEN	1968/06/06 - Turnover of Ships to the Philippine Navy
OPEN	1968/06/11 - Exchange of Notes on the Special Fund for Education
OPEN	1968/08/12 - Ceremony at Ruby Towers Site
OPEN	1968/09/11 - Orientation for New Arrivals
OPEN	1969/02/14 - Visiting Editors and Publishers
OPEN	1969/02/15 - Inauguration of the Pfizer Poultry Diagnostic Center, Philippines
OPEN	1969/02/22 - Scottish Rite Temple, Manila
OPEN	1969/03/04 - Peace Corps Volunteers
OPEN	1969/03/04 - Agency for International Development Returned Participants
OPEN	1969/03/21 - Subic Ship Repairs Facility

Status	Title
OPEN	1969/04/12 - Philippine Little League Closing Session
OPEN	1969/04/26 - Delivery of Helicopters to the Philippine Armed Forces
OPEN	1969/04/28 - U.S. Department of Agriculture
OPEN	1969/04/29 - Turnover of a Ship to the Philippine Navy

Box 5 - Speeches and Remarks File

Status	Title
OPEN	1969/05/09 - Opening of the Regional Public Affairs Officers Conference
OPEN	1969/05/10 - Philippine Department of the American Legion
OPEN	1969/05/12 - Mutual Defense Board of the Philippines Anniversary Meeting
OPEN	1969/05/30 - Memorial Day Ceremonies
OPEN	1969/06/14 - Flag Day Ceremonies
OPEN	1969/07/21 - Philippines ABS/CBN Television
OPEN	1969/07/28 - Ceremonies Marking the Signing of the Military Bases Collective Bargaining Agreement
OPEN	1970/07/23 - Departure from the Philippines Remarks
OPEN	1970/09/14 - National Interdepartmental Seminar
OPEN	1970/10/21 - Central Intelligence Agency Trainees
OPEN	1970/11/06 - Visiting Asian Journalists
OPEN	1970/11/18 - Southeast Asia Intensive Language Students
OPEN	1970/11/30 - Under Secretary's Breakfast Briefings for Selected Congressmen
OPEN	1970/12/02 - Nassau Club, Princeton NJ
OPEN	1971/04/06 - East Asia Municipal Planning Group
OPEN	1971/04/13 - Marine Corps Command Staff College
OPEN	1971/04/21 - Detroit Commission on Foreign Relations
OPEN	1971/05/20 - Walt Whitman High School
OPEN	1971/06/10 - Brookings Institution Conference for Business Executives on the Federal Government

Status	Title
OPEN	1971/06/18 - Republican Women's Conference
OPEN	1973/01/08 - Briefing for Businessmen's Group
OPEN	1973/01/24 - United Nations Visiting Mission
OPEN	1973/04/12 - American Society of International Law
OPEN	1974/03/25 - Congressional Staff
OPEN	1975/05/19 - Agency for International Development Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid
OPEN	1975/06/12 - Office of Refugees and Migration Affairs
OPEN	1975/09/25 - Cleveland World Affairs Council Executive Committee
OPEN	1975/09/26 - Cleveland World Affairs Council Student Conference
OPEN	1975/10 - United Nation High Commission on Refugees Executive Committee
OPEN	1975/10/14 - World Peace Through Law Conference
OPEN	1975/11/17 - International Council for European Migration
OPEN	1975/12/17 - State Department Open Forum Panel
OPEN	1976/02/19 - Foreign Service Institute Seminar
OPEN	1976/03/16 - Aerospace Industries Association
OPEN	1976/04/09 - American Immigration and Citizenship Conference
OPEN	1976/04/22 - American Society of International Law
OPEN	1976/05/20 - American Council for Nationalities Service
OPEN	1976/06 - Institute for International Policy
OPEN	1976/07/14 - National Conference of Catholic Bishops
OPEN	1976/10/04 - United National High Commission on Refugees Executive Committee
OPEN	1976/12/09 - Harvard Model United Nations

1986 Wilson Accretion, (1957) 1966-77.

(Box 6, 0.4 linear feet)

Reports, memoranda, and correspondence transferred in April 1986 to the Ford Library from the U.S. Department of State. Wilson had stored these papers with the State Department because of their security classification. The accretion documents Wilson's work as U.S. Minister in Manila, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Deputy Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiation, and State Department Coordinator for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Issues documented in the material include U.S. - Philippines relations, Micronesian status negotiations, human rights, the Vietnam War, and general consular activities. Almost all the documents bear classification markings and researchers will need to make mandatory review requests to see the material (April 1995).

Arranged chronologically.

Box 6 - 1986 Wilson Accretion

Status	Title
OPEN	1957 (report on U.S. overseas military bases) (1)-(2)
OPEN	1966-67
OPEN	1968
OPEN	1969
OPEN	1970-71
OPEN	1/1972 - 5/1972
OPEN	6/1972 - 12/1972
OPEN	1973
OPEN	1/1974 - 2/1974
OPEN	3/1974 - 12/1974
OPEN	1/1975 - 4/1975
OPEN	5/1975 - 8/1975
OPEN	9/1975 - 12/1975
OPEN	1/1976 - 8/1976
OPEN	9/1976 - 8/1977