

An Inventory  
of the  
Margaret and Geoffrey Andrew papers  
Ethel Wilson collection

by  
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Geoffrey and Margaret Andrew Papers  
Ethel Wilson correspondence

Geoffrey and Margaret Andrew were close personal friends of Ethel Wilson during her later years. Geoffrey Andrew was Dean and Deputy President of the University of British Columbia from 1947 until he left to become executive director of the A.U.C.C. in Ottawa. During his period at U.B.C. he taught in the Department of English.

Margaret Andrew is the daughter of the principal, W. L. Grant, and granddaughter of George Grant, the distinguished president of Queen's University. She is a graduate in economics, social work and librarianship.

Both the Andrews have a lively interest in the creative arts and the culture of Canada. Their friendship with Ethel Wilson was a warm one and the correspondence when they were separated from her indicates their close ties.

Ethel Wilson, daughter of Robert William and Lila (Malkin) Bryant, was born at Port Elizabeth, South Africa in 1888. On the death of her mother in 1890 she was taken to England and cared for by maternal grandparents and other relatives. Eight years later her father also passed away and once again she moved, this time to her grandmother in Vancouver, British Columbia. After receiving her Teacher's Certificate in 1907, Wilson taught at several Vancouver public schools until 1920. In 1921, she married Dr. Wallace Wilson. The Wilsons became highly respected and admired citizens, she for her writing and he for his work with the Canadian Medical Association and the World Health Organization.

It was not until 1937 that Wilson "found it imperative to write".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> a letter quoted in: Desmond Pacey, Ethel Wilson (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1967), p. 24.

At that period, however, she was not a prolific writer. Aside from a few short stories, she produced very little work until 1947, when her first novel, Hetty Dorval, appeared. Her main period of productivity occurred during the next ten years, in which she wrote her other four novels, The Innocent Traveller, The Equations of Love, Swamp Angel and Love and Salt Water and a small number of short stories. In 1961 her last published work, Mrs. Golightly and Other Stories, appeared; in the same year she was awarded a special medal by the Canada Council for her contribution to Canadian literature.

This collection of letters written by Ethel Wilson which was donated by the Andrews in 1981 will serve to fill out the existing Wilson collections in the Special Collections Division which were donated by Mrs. Wilson herself, and John Gray of MacMillans.

The collection consists of 33 original letters from Ethel Wilson to Margaret Andrew, undated, ca 1950 - 1970, 2 original letters from Ethel Wilson to [Margaret Andrew] n.d. and 3 original letters from Ethel Wilson to Geoffrey Andrew, n.d. Also included is one photocopied letter from Ethel Wilson to Mary [McAlpine Dobbs].

Correspondence

from Ethel Wilson to Geoffrey Andrew,  
Margaret Andrew and Mary [Dobbs]

(letters have been arranged in  
rough chronological order. Dates  
in pencil were put on by Mrs. Andrew.  
MA = Margaret Andrew GA = Geoffrey Andrew)

<u>Letter no.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>
1	To GA  "As a reader, a writer and an individual who is interested..."  Signed: Ethel Wilson	Nov. 20 [1952]	2
2	To GA  "The extraordinary success of Book Week..."  Signed: EW (with cover)	Nov. 23 1952	1
3	To GA  "It is no exaggeration to say that Vancouver feels nicer now that you're home again."  Signed: Ethel Wilson	Oct. 17 1954	1
4	To MA & GA  "although I do not think that you both wrote that fine article in the Queen's Quarterly..."  Signed: Ethel	Mon. Oct. 18	2
5	To MA  "thank you so much for your letter of yesterday."  Signed: Ethel	Saturday	3

<u>Letter no.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>
6	To MA  "you are indeed a darling to write, in your busy life"  Signed: Ethel Wilson	Good Friday	1
7	To MA & GA  "first Margarets re-assuring note of happiness in wet weather..."  Signed: Ethel	1954?	3
8	No salutation [To GA]  "People are continually trying to swim the lake like lemmings..."  Signed: E. W.	n.d.	2
9	To MA from San Francisco  "We move & move about from wharf to wharf..."  Signed: Ethel	Monday?	3
10	To MA from Scheldt River  "what an absurd situation..."  Signed: Ethel	Dec. 30	1
11	To MA from Estoril Portugal  "no travel talk..."  Signed: Ethel W.	Feb. 4	1
12	No salutation [To MA]  "A nice long day in bed, following the socials and Personals of the last few days."  Signed: E.	Fri. May 8	1

<u>Letter no.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>
13	To MA  "I read it yesterday, The darling Mrs. Grant!"  Signed: Ethel	Sun. Feb. 10	2
14	To MA  "don't faint because I answer your letter so fast."  unsigned	May 8	2
15	To MA  "I'm a little crestfallen. But it is just in line with the way things are..."  Signed: E	May 10	3
16	To MA  "I do resent so much that you have been ill..."  Signed: Ethel	Oct. 27	2
17	To MA & GA  "I can't tell you how much pleasure your lovely Kitten brought me yesterday"  Signed: Ethel	June 29	1
18	To MA  "please don't bother to answer."  Signed: Ethel	Monday	1

<u>Letter no.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>
19	To MA  "in theory I have answered your welcome letter with the greatest appreciation"  Signed: Ethel	Sept. 11 1956?	1
20	To MA  "thank you for your nice letter, so welcome..."  Signed: Ethel	Wed. Dec. 10 1959	1
21	To MA  "I have been re reading your last letter since July..."  Signed: Ethel	Aug. 10 1960	1
22	To MA  "I've just mailed to you & Geoff - but you know about my non-memory -"  Signed: Ethel	n.d.	1
23	To MA  "how I'd love you to be sitting beside me."  Signed: Ethel	July 26	1
24	To MA & GA  "So much pleasure your family gives!"  Signed: Ethel	Nov. 1	1
25	To MA  "first a word of love..."  Signed: Ethel	Oct. 24	1

<u>Letter no.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>
26	To MA  "Yesterday I re-read your welcome letter, & today I can't find it!"  Signed: Ethel	1967?	1
27	To MA & GA  "a lovely letter from <u>you</u> ..."  Signed: Ethel	Jan. 4 1968	1
28	To MA  "I have no news except that the moon is a gorgeous golden circle..."  Signed: Ethel	Feb. 14 1968	1
29	To MA  "I must tell you that Geoff left me only about 1/2 hour ago"  Signed: Ethel	Oct. 19 1968/9	2
30	To MA  "how I loved the letter from busy you"  Signed: Ethel	Sept. 2	1
31	To MA & GA  "I have your address in Toronto"  Signed: Ethel	Sept. 14	1
32	To MA & GA  "I had a lovely card all wrote out for you..."  Signed: Ethel	Nov. 16	1



<u>Letter no.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>
33	To MA  "I have had a supreme pleasure and a sad disaster..."  Signed: E	Dec. 20	2
34	To MA  "I can't refrain from assailing you with another letter."  Signed: Ethel	Mar. 5 approx. 1969	1
35	To MA  "what an age it seems since we have exchanged a few words of true love"  Signed: Ethel	July 2 1970	1
36	To MA  "what a darling you are to have written to me a letter of love..."  Signed: Ethel	July 31 1970	2
37	To MA  "how are you & Geoff & Shossie & one & all?"  Signed: Ethel	Feb. 17 approx. 1971	1
38	To MA  "How lovely to hear from you..."  Signed: Ethel	Mar. 10 1971	1
39	To Mary  "Well what a serio-comic situation."	Xerox	7