

Collection #
SC 3511
BV 5447

**WENDELL WILLKIE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN EPHEMERA
COLLECTION, CA. 1940S**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: Two manuscript folders and one bound volume

COLLECTION DATES: ca. 1940s

PROVENANCE: Beth and Rod Peabody

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: James H. Madison. *Wendell Willkie: Hoosier Internationalist*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Wendell L. Willkie. *One World*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966.

Wendell L. Willkie and Stanley Walker. *This is Wendell Willkie: A Collection of Speeches and Writings on Present-Day Issues*. Dodd, Mead & Company: New York, 1940.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2000.0213

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Wendell L. Willkie was born on 18 February 1892 in Elwood, Indiana, to lawyer parents, Herman and Henrietta Willkie. Willkie earned bachelor and law degrees from Indiana University in 1913 and 1917, respectively. He practiced law at his family's law firm in Indiana, and also practiced in Ohio and New York. He met his wife, Edith, in Ohio and they married in January 1918.

In 1933, Willkie became the President of the largest utilities holding company in the U.S., the Commonwealth and Southern Corporation, a New York utility company that served eleven states. Willkie served in this role until 1939. As the head of the company, he fought against the federally funded New Deal and the Tennessee Valley Authority, which directly competed with his company. Willkie was a strong opponent against government and private monopolies.

Willkie was nominated as the Republican candidate for the 1940 Presidential election against two-term incumbent Franklin D. Roosevelt. Willkie had never held a political office before and his unlikely candidacy earned his campaign the moniker of the 'Dark Horse.'

Formerly a Democrat, Willkie campaigned against the New Deal and admonished the government for a lack of military preparedness. And when FDR began preparing the country for war, Willkie accused him of warmongering. Willkie campaigned on the idea of internationalism, an ideology that strives for greater political and economic cooperation between people and nations. Willkie was also a strong proponent in defending the rights of African Americans, calling for improved housing, education, and health.

Ultimately, Willkie lost to Roosevelt, earning only 82 electoral votes to Roosevelt's 449. Despite losing the election to FDR, the men became close political allies. In 1941, Willkie supported ending America's isolationist stance and giving unlimited aid to Britain. He also defended and supported FDR's Lend-Lease program. FDR appointed Willkie as a U.S. emissary, which allowed him to travel with the Army and Navy and visit foreign leaders in the Middle East, Britain, China, and the USSR. He wrote the book *One World* following his travels in 1942-1943. The book called for world peace and spent months on the bestseller list and proved to be an influential text for the soon to be founded United Nations.

Willkie suffered a series of heart attacks and died 8 October 1944. He is buried in the East Hill Cemetery in Rushville, Indiana.

Sources:

Material in the collection.

Justin Clark, "Wendell Willkie: The Dark Horse," *Indiana History Blog: Indiana Historical bureau of the Indiana State Library*, May 17, 2016.

Thomas Mallon, "Can the G.O.P. Even Reclaim Wendell Willkie's Legacy?" *The New Yorker*, September 17, 2018.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of news clippings and ephemera pertaining to Wendell Willkie's 1940 Presidential Campaign. Included in this collection are booklets sharing Willkie's stance on a variety of topics. There is also a large scrapbook of images, news clippings, and ephemera relating to the campaign.

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CONTENTS

Presidential Campaign Ephemera, 1940, n.d.

News clippings, 1940, n.d.

Campaign Scrapbook

CONTAINER

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