



ARCHIVES

TRINITY COLLEGE

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Description and Finding Aid
G. WILSON KNIGHT COLLECTION
F2066

Prepared by Tatiana Rogova 2014

6 Hoskin Avenue Toronto Ontario Canada M5S 1H8
archives@trinity.utoronto.ca www.trinity.utoronto.ca
Tel: 416-978-2019 Fax: 416-978-2797

G. WILSON KNIGHT COLLECTION

Dates of creation:

[1926-1982]

Extent:

7 cm of textual records

Biographical sketch:

George Richard Wilson Knight, professor, writer, critic, actor, Shakespearean expert, was born on 19 October 1897 at Sutton, Surrey, England to George Knight and Caroline Louisa Jackson. Knight attended Dulwich College, London, from 1904 to 1914. Upon graduation, he worked as a clerk at the Phoenix Insurance Company and then at Alliance Assurance Company until 1916. At the age of 19, Knight enlisted in the army as a motorcycle despatch rider and was deployed to Mesopotamia in 1917 (present day Iraq). His battalion was not transferred back to England until 1920. On his return to civilian life he became a mathematics master, teaching at the preparatory schools Seaford House and St. Peter's in Sussex between 1920 and 1922.

In January of 1922, Knight began his studies of English at St. Edmund Hall at the University of Oxford. He earned a second class from the Honour School of English Language and Literature in the summer of 1923. In the autumn of the same year, he took up the position of a mathematics master at Hawtreys School in Kent where he remained until 1925. In 1926 Knight became the Senior English Master at Dean Close School in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. His time at the school marks the beginning of his active involvement in theatre productions of Shakespearean plays and his publication of scholarly work as well as novels and short stories. The bulk of his writings pertain to the study of Shakespeare and spiritualism, with a few works dedicated to the study of Byron and Powys. He continued to teach at the school until his appointment as Chancellor Professor of English at the University of Trinity College, Toronto in 1931.

At Trinity College, Knight continued his involvement with the theatre, both directing and acting in numerous Shakespearean plays at Hart House Theatre. In 1934 he was appointed President of the Shakespearean Society in Toronto. In 1940, he returned to England where he gave recitals on Shakespeare. In 1941, he became a temporary war replacement at Stowe School, Buckingham, teaching mathematics, geography and English. In 1946 Knight was appointed as a Reader in English at the University of Leeds where he taught a two-year course on World Drama. He also was also a member of the Leeds University Union Theatre Group from 1949, participating in numerous productions of Shakespearean drama. In 1956, he was given a chair as a Professor of English at the University where he remained until his retirement in 1962.

After 1962, Knight continued to publish a variety of academic and biographical material, as well as tour universities in the UK, United States and Canada with guest lectures recitals. In 1965 he was given an Honorary Fellowship at St. Edmund College, Oxford and was awarded Honorary Degrees at the Universities of Sheffield and Exeter in 1966 and 1968 respectively. He lived in Exeter, Devon until his death on 20 March 1985.

Scope and content

The collection consists mainly of material relating to Knight's theatrical performances and productions in Toronto and the United Kingdom, including theatre programs, review articles and newspaper clippings pertaining to the theatre, as well as a few published articles.

Notes

Acquisition history:

G. Wilson Knight donated much of the material in this collection, in particular the clippings and programs. Correspondence and manuscripts are from other donors.

Restrictions on access:

None

Terms governing use and reproduction / publication:

Various copyright holders, it is the researcher's responsibility to obtain permission to publish any part of the collection.

Related groups of records in different fonds:

The Trinity College photograph collection contains several photographs of G. Wilson Knight.

Provenance access points:

Knight, George Richard Wilson (1895-1985)

Location / File Listing:

FOLDER/UNIT TITLE	START DATE	END DATE	CONTENTS	BOX/ FILE #
Early Theatre/ Romeo and Juliet at Hart House.	1926(?)	1932	Newspaper article (source and date unknown) "Merry Wives' by Chetlenham Amateurs" commenting on Wilson Knight's first performance in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" as Nym. Theatre program for "Romeo and Juliet" at Hart House Theatre, 15-17 November 1932, where Knight was the director and Romeo. Invitation card to the production of "Romeo and Juliet", November 1932. Assembly of four press cuttings [source and date unknown] reviewing Knight's production of "Romeo and Juliet".	1-1
Early Theatre/Hamlet	1933	1933	Advertisement from the <i>Saturday Theatre</i> for "General Montcalm" performed February 18 th , [1933?] where Knight played Chevalier Gaston-Francois. Invitation Card for Knight's production of "Hamlet" at Hart House Theatre, 26-28 October, 1933. Theatre program for Knight's "Hamlet" at Hart House, 6-28 October, 1933. Excerpt from <i>The Curtain Call</i> (Vol.5, No.1, Toronto, Oct. 16 th , 1933) with a review of Knight's "Hamlet" production. Article from the <i>Varsity</i> , October 1933, with a review of "Hamlet". Press cuttings from the <i>Star, Globe and Mail</i> [undated] with reviews on Knight's "Hamlet".	1-2

			Theatre program for "Hamlet" with Knight's autograph for 25 November, 1933.	
Henry VIII and Othello	1934	1934	<p>Article from <i>Saturday Night</i> (?), October 1934, with a review of Knight's production of "Henry VIII".</p> <p>Theatre program for "Henry VIII" at Hart House, 11-13 October, 1934.</p> <p>Three press cuttings [source and date unknown] with review on Knight's "Henry VIII".</p> <p>Review from <i>Saturday Night</i> (?) [date illegible] of "Henry VIII".</p> <p>Letter from U of T president H.J. Cody, 16 October 1934, congratulating Knight on the "Henry VIII" production.</p> <p>Theatre program for "Othello", at Hart House, 6-8 December, 1934.</p> <p>Advertisement for "Othello" with press opinions for "Hamlet" from the <i>Globe</i>, the <i>Star</i> and the <i>Mail and Empire</i>.</p> <p>Assembly of four press cuttings [sources and dates unknown] with reviews for Knight's "Othello".</p> <p>Review article from <i>Saturday Night</i>, 15 December 1934, on "Othello".</p> <p>Extracts from press notices of Knight's production of "Othello", 1934. Newspapers such as the <i>Toronto Star</i>, <i>Saturday Night</i>, the <i>Globe</i>, the <i>Mail and Empire</i> and <i>Varsity</i> are quoted.</p>	1-3
Theatre Productions in UK and Toronto, 1935	1935	1935	<p>Article from the <i>Varsity</i>, 17 January 1935, on Trinity College Dramatic Society's small productions with Knight's participation. Another short piece on the same page addresses Knight's presentation of two scenes from "Hamlet" at the Players' Guild.</p> <p>Press cutting from the <i>Daily Telegraph</i>, London, 27 June 1935, on Knight's performance as Hamlet.</p> <p>Theatre program for Knight's "Hamlet", 26-28 June 1935, at Rudolf Steiner Hall in London.</p> <p>Advertisement for Knight's "Hamlet" at Rudolf Steiner Hall with press opinions on Knight's interpretation of the role from the <i>Toronto Star</i> and the <i>Ottawa Journal</i>.</p> <p>Article from the <i>Times</i>, London, 27 June 1935, on Knight's performance in "Hamlet".</p> <p>Theatre Program for "King Lear" at Hart House Theatre, 7-9 November 1935.</p> <p>Two press cuttings from the <i>Globe</i> [undated] and <i>Star</i>, 8 November 1935, with reviews on Knight's "King Lear".</p>	1-4
Winter's Tale, King Oedipus	1936	1936	<p>Theatre program for "The Winter's Tale", 5-7 November 1936, presented by Knight and the Shakespeare Society at Hart House.</p> <p>Two press cuttings from an unknown source [not dated] and from the "Scarboro' Post" [hand written note, no evidence that such a newspaper existed], 12 November 1936, on Knight's production of "Winter's Tale".</p>	1-5

			Article from <i>Globe and Mail</i> , [hand-written year of 1936] on The Canadian Drama League's production of "King Oedipus" in which Knight appears to have played a small role.	
Anthony and Cleopatra	1937	1937	<p>Program with list of events offered by the Shakespeare Society of Toronto, 1937-1938, mentioning Knight's production of "Anthony and Cleopatra".</p> <p>Theatre program for "Anthony and Cleopatra" at Hart House, 10-13 November 1937.</p> <p>Assembly of five press cuttings from various local Torontonians newspapers, circa November 1937, with reviews of Knight's "Anthony and Cleopatra".</p> <p>Article by Nancy Pyper [source and date unknown] on Knight's production of "Anthony and Cleopatra".</p>	1-6
Hamlet, Macbeth, The Tempest	1938	1938	<p>Advertisement by the Shakespeare Society of Toronto for Knight's production of "Hamlet" in 18th century dress at Hart House, 5-7 April 1938.</p> <p>Theatre program for "Hamlet" at Hart House, 5-7 April 1938.</p> <p>Three press cuttings from the <i>Evening Telegram</i> and two unknown sources [dates unknown] with reviews of Knight's production of "Hamlet".</p> <p>Article "Among the Amateurs" by Nancy Pyper [source and date unknown] on Knight's "Hamlet".</p> <p>Theatre program for "The Tempest" at Hart House, 3-5 November, 1938.</p> <p>Two articles [date and source unknown] with critiques on Knight's staging of "The Tempest".</p> <p>Announcement by the Canadian Drama League for the presentation of "Macbeth" at Hart House, 9-15 November 1938, where Knight played the leading role.</p> <p>Three press cuttings, from the <i>Evening Telegram</i>, 10 November 1938, and two unknown sources [one possibly from the <i>Varsity</i>, date unknown] with reviews on Knight's performance in "Macbeth".</p> <p>Two press cuttings, possibly from the <i>Varsity</i>, and <i>Globe and Mail</i> [the date 10 November 1938, written in by-hand] with reviews on Knight's "Macbeth".</p>	1-7
Final Productions in Toronto	1939	1940	<p>Announcement by the Shakespeare Society of Toronto, 27 March 1939, on their annual production of "Romeo and Juliet" under Knight's direction.</p> <p>Theatre program for "Romeo and Juliet" at Hart House, 20-22 April 1939.</p> <p>Article [source and date unknown] on Knight's performance in "Romeo and Juliet".</p> <p>Image of Wilson Knight in costume as Romeo from unknown newspaper [1939] with actress Grace Irwin as Juliet.</p> <p>Press cutting from an unknown source [circa 1939] with a review of Knight's performance as Brutus in the Canadian Drama League's production of "Julius Caesar".</p> <p>Article "Isaiah in Renaissance Dress" by Wilson Knight,</p>	1-8

reprinted from the *Trinity University Review*, February 1940 on "Timon of Athens".

Article "Shakespeare on Gold Standard" by Wilson Knight [hand written note identifies the source as *Saturday Night*, 17 February 1940] on "Timon of Athens".

Press opinions for Knight's production of "Timon of Athens", 1940, from the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, and *Telegram*.

Three press cuttings [undated] on Knight's production of "Timon of Athens", including an image of him in costume.

War Time Dramatic Recitals, University of Leeds	1940	1947	<p>Advertisement for the dramatic recital, "Shakespeare's England" organized by Wilson Knight in Cheltenham, England, 19 July 1940.</p> <p>Extract from the <i>Herald and Express</i>, Torquay, 17 January 1941, on Knight's dramatic recital on Shakespeare during the war.</p> <p>Theatre program from Westminster Theatre for "This Sceptred Isle", a dramatic recital organized by Knight and Henry Ainsley. A hand-written note, possibly by Knight, indicates that this event occurred in July 1941, and that most of the acting was done by him.</p> <p>Poster by the Leeds University Union Theatre Group for "The Agamemnon of Aeschylus" directed by Knight, at Riley-Smith Theatre, 3-5 December [year not specified].</p> <p>Theatre program for "The Agamemnon of Aeschylus" with hand-written year of 1946.</p> <p>Assembly of five press cuttings, 1946-1947, from various UK newspapers on Knight's production of "Agamemnon".</p> <p>Advertisement from the Leeds University Theatre Group for "Athalie", produced by Knight, 9-13 December, 1947.</p>	1-9
Timon of Athens	1948	1948	<p>Theatre program for "Timon of Athens" directed by Knight with the Leeds University Theatre Group, 7-11 December 1948, at Riley-Smith Theatre. On the back are printed some press comments about Knight's earlier work on "Timon of Athens", "Agamemnon" and "The Sceptred Isle".</p> <p>Re-printed notice from the <i>Yorkshire Evening Post</i>, 8 December 1948, congratulating Knight on his production of "Timon".</p> <p>Assembly of six press cuttings, prepared by the International Press-Cutting Bureau and Durrant's Press Cutting with notices on Knight's production of "Timon of Athens" in December 1948.</p> <p>Extract from a letter of Roy Walker to G. Wilson Knight, 12 December 1948, on his recent production of "Timon of Athens".</p> <p>Extract from <i>The Stage</i>, London on Knight's repeat performance of "Timon" at the N.U.S. Arts Festival on 7 January 1949. Same document also contains an article</p>	1-10

			<p>from the <i>Festival Review, Journal of the National Students Arts Festival</i>, 8 January 1949, on the same topic.</p> <p>Article by Roy Walker [source and date unknown] titled "G. Wilson Knight's production of "Timon of Athens" with an analysis of Knight's earlier performances and published works.</p>	
Theatrical Work of the 1950's	1951	1955	<p>Five press cuttings from various UK newspapers on Knight's performance and production of "King Lear", 1951.</p> <p>Extract from the <i>Theatre Newsletter</i>, 23 June 1951, titled "Leeds Lear" on Knight's production of King Lear. Hand written note identifies Roy Walker as the author. Two pages from an unknown journal with an editor's note on the production of Knight's own play, "The Last of the Incas" [circa 1954-55] and a small description of his most notable professional works.</p> <p>Biographical sketch of Knight composed by Barbara Tarran, Publicity Manager of the Leeds University Theatre Group, in preparation for his role in "Othello", produced by the group in 1955.</p> <p>Theatre program for "Othello" presented by the Leeds University Union Theatre Group, 7-12 March 1955, in which Knight held the star role.</p> <p>Press cutting from the <i>Daily Telegraph</i>, 8 March 1955, on Knight's participation in "Othello".</p> <p>Re-print of Kenneth Young's article in the <i>Yorkshire Post</i>, 13 April 1955, titled "G. Wilson Knight, critic and man of the theatre" on Knight's professional career in academics and theatre.</p>	1-11
Retirement and Work After Leeds	1960	1979	<p>Theatre program for "The Merchant of Venice", presented by the Leeds University Union Group, 1960, where Knight played Shylock. The program also contains an advertisement for Knight's book, <i>The Starlit Dome</i>.</p> <p>Three press cuttings from various UK newspapers on Knight's performance in the "Merchant of Venice", February 1960.</p> <p>A review of Leeds theatre group's production of Merchant of Venice in the <i>Union News</i>, 4 March 1960.</p> <p>Article "The Many Roles of Professor Wilson Knight Critic and Creator" by Robin Skelton in the <i>Yorkshire Post</i>, 24 May 1962 in honour of Knight's retirement.</p> <p>Two articles from the <i>Stratford Beacon-Herald</i>, Ontario, August 1963, on Knight's participation in as a guest-lecturer in the Stratford Festival.</p> <p>Program for the 37th Annual Birthday Dinner held by the Shakespeare Society of Toronto, 23 April, 1965, which Knight attended as a speaker.</p> <p>Order form for Knight's book <i>Symbol of Man</i>, published in 1979.</p>	1-12
Miscellaneous Records	1970	1982(?)	<p>Wilson Knight's Stage Record from 1926 to 1980, containing a list of all recitals and plays in which he</p>	1-13

participated, annotated by him c.1980.
Library suggestion card for Knight's book *Jackson Knight: a Biography* published in 1975 and containing short biographies of Knight and his brother. There is also press-opinion from the *Times*, annotated by Knight [?]

Article by Knight, "Our contacts with T.S. Elliot" [date and source uncertain] on his academic collaboration and interaction with writer T. S. Elliot. It was annotated by Knight perhaps around 1982.

Article from the *Globe Magazine*, Toronto, February 1970, titled "Other actors, other times" on the development of theatre in Toronto from the 19th century to the First World War, included by Knight in his own collection.

Letter	1935	1935	Personal letter written by Knight, 17 December 1935, from Trinity College to an unknown recipient.	1-14
--------	------	------	--	------