

Finding Aid to the Kate Selby Wilder Papers

Wilder, Kate Selby, 1876-1946

Kate Selby Wilder Papers, 1861, 1906, 1940-1946

.2 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 367

[Biography](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Box and Folder List](#)

OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Mary Prichard, 2005 (Acc. 2964).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Kate Selby Wilder Papers (Ms 367), Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

Kate Selby was born January 23, 1876 at Meadville, Pennsylvania, the daughter of William A. and Adelia (Watson) Selby. When four years old the family moved to Caledonia, N.D. where William homesteaded and opened a law office. Shortly thereafter the family moved to Grand Forks, N.D. In 1901 she married Frederick H. Wilder and moved to Fargo where she lived until 1940 when she returned to Grand Forks, a widow. Frederick Wilder was born December 4, 1864 at Sterling, Massachusetts, graduated from Tufts College in Boston. He moved to Devils Lake, N.D. and later Grand Forks in 1892.

Kate Selby Wilder was active in civic affairs in Fargo as well as state and nationally, including the W.C.T.U., North Dakota League of Women Voters, Florence Crittenden home, Eastern Star and Fargo Fortnightly Club. In 1919 she was elected to the Fargo City Commission, being the first woman in North Dakota to hold such a position. While a commissioner she was named Fargo Police Commissioner, and later served as health commissioner.

Frederick Wilder died in October 18, 1937 and Kate Wilder on April 12, 1946. They had one daughter Elizabeth Wilder who married Roy Holand of La Moure, N.D.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Kate Selby Wilder Papers** are an eclectic collection of documents related to her life, as well as the Selby and Wilder families. The collection has been arranged by the type of document. All of the files are quite small and give only a brief look into Mrs. Wilder's life.

The correspondence is letters of condolence sent to Mrs. Wilder's daughter upon her death, all from 1946. There is a pocket diary in which Mrs. Wilder recorded various events in which she was involved, but covers only from January to May 1940. There are two mortgage deeds for property she purchased in 1906 in Fargo, located in Lot 8, Block 30 or the Original Town Site. The few newspaper clippings relate to her membership in the Fargo Fortnightly Club and W.C.T.U.

The Selby family file includes a short obituary of her brother John R. Selby of Palo Alto, Calif. and a handwritten copy of information on William A. Selby's service in Civil War that she received when joining the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The World War II ration file contains three ration books of Mrs. Selby contained in a hard-cover folio.

The file of Frederick H. Wilder includes a copy of his will and a small booklet on the 'History of The Class of 1886, Tufts College.' In it he is listed as secretary of the Merchants National Mutual Fire Insurance Co. of Fargo. The Wilder family file includes an undated handwritten letter with Wilder family history information written by a Harrison Wilder, and a letter written by unknown author on Aug. 5, 1861 from Brooklyn, N.Y. The W.C.T.U. file includes an unused mailing label of the Institute Department of which Mrs. Wilder was director, notes from the 1937 convention, and a copy of the *White Ribbon Bulletin* (issued by the W.C.T.U. of North Dakota) of March-April 1946 with a notice of her death.

SEPARATION RECORD

Photographs (Processed as Photo Collection 495)

- 17 Photographic prints of Kate Selby Wilder with family, in Florida and group of Fargo Fortnightly Club

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Content
1/1	Finding aid, and Biographical information
1/2	Correspondence, 1946
1/3	Diary, 1940
1/4	Mortgage deeds, 1906
1/5	Newspaper clippings
1/6	Selby family
1/7	War Ration books, 1940s
1/8	F. H. Wilder
1/9	Wilder family, 1861
1/10	W.C.T.U., 1946