
Guide to the Isabel Wiel Papers, 1875-1998

Collection number: 99/15

Western Jewish History Center

Berkeley, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Isabel Wiel Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1875-1998

Collection number: 99/15

Creator: Wiel, Isabel

Extent: 3 boxes, 1 oversize folder

Repository: The Western Jewish History Center.

Berkeley, California 94705

Language: English

Access

Collection is open for research by appointment only every Monday-Thursday, except for those Jewish and Federal holidays when it is closed.

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Introduction

In 1999, Isabel Wiel donated a small collection of her personal and family papers and photographs to the Western Jewish History Center. She made a second donation of personal writings a few months later, which have been added to the original collection. Other family papers and photos (including the Lilienthal/Wiel Wedding Album) have been donated to the California Historical Society.

Brief Biographical Note

Isabel Wiel, born in 1916, was the second daughter of Dr. Harry Isaac Wiel and Sarah Sloss Lilienthal Wiel, who married in 1910. Her maternal grandparents were Ernest R. Lilienthal and Hannah Isabelle [Bella] Sloss. Isabel Wiel graduated from Miss Burke's School [Katherine Delmar Burke] in San Francisco and attended Mills College in Oakland for two years. Her sister Barbara married Frank Dunn October 26, 1935.

After leaving Mills Isabel Wiel worked for Paul Elder & Company (1938-1941), before opening the Personal Bookshop with Gladys E. Seymour (also a former Paul Elder employee). Their partnership dissolved in 1946. Isabel Wiel then worked for the San Francisco Museum of Art (1946-1948), the Mills College Shop (1948-1954), White House (1954-1956), Grace Bell Secretarial College (1956-1957) and finally worked for McGraw-Hill, as Regional Benefits coordinator (1957-1973), before retiring. An active volunteer since the age of seven, Isabel Wiel has continued to volunteer for a variety of arts and cultural organizations. The constantly changing list of organizations include: the Oakland Museum, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (docent), the Golden Gate Park Carousel, and Angel Island.

Scope and Content

This collection contains documents relating to both Isabel Wiel's work and volunteer activities, and to the Sloss, Lilienthal, Gerstle[y], and Wiel families. The collection includes correspondence, photographs, family documents, wedding invitations, wedding album [photocopy], birth and death certificates, obituaries, Gerstley/Sloss reunion invitations, Wiel family genealogical research, clippings, and a medical pamphlet by Harry Wiel. Also included is a copy of the Oakland Tribune, from April 20, 1906, reporting the control of the fires in San Francisco. Of special interest are a series of drafts of writings by Isabel Wiel describing her childhood, her education, and her work and volunteer activities, as well as a series of trips.

The collection is divided into five series: Correspondence, Personal and Family Papers, Subject Files, Photographs, and Writings.

Condition Report

Overall, the collection is in good condition. Numerous newspaper clippings need preservation photocopying or encapsulation.

- Other Collections:
- Gerstley (Gerstle) Family, 1902-1978. 73/1
- Lilienthal, Ernest, collector. 84/9
- Lilienthal, Samuel, 1900-1957. 73/2
- Lilienthal, Sophie Gerstle, 1859-1934. 67/19
- Lilienthal Family (Seligmann), 1780-1961. 71/11 & 73/79
- Sloss, Richard L., 1904-1975. 76/1

Related Material

Oral Histories

- Levison, Alice Gerstle

Series I Correspondence, 1875-1998

Physical Description: 2 folders

Scope and Content Note

This series contains both Isabel Wiel's correspondence with family members and friends and other family correspondence, primarily to her parents Harry and Sarah (1920-1959), but also photocopies of letters from Ernest Lilienthal (1875), Samuel Lilienthal (1875), Louis Sloss (1879), and Bella Lilienthal (1882), and other original letters from 1884-1916. Isabel's personal correspondence includes letters from her parents, Ralph Clifford (World War II letters from Europe), and others. Topics include her 18th birthday (congratulations and gifts), admission to Mills College, donations, and other activities.

Series II Personal And Family Papers, 1880-1997

Physical Description: 18 folders and 2 oversize items

Scope and Content Note

This series contains 3 folders containing personal documents relating to the life and activities of Isabel Wiel and 15 folders containing family and genealogical records. Personal documents include a copy of Isabel Wiel's birth certificate, College Admission form, High School diploma, bankbooks, passports, and driver's licenses, as well as photographs and documents pertaining to the Personal Bookshop (includes photographs and clippings about the artist/writer Wolo), folk dancing, employment, Daughters of California Pioneers membership, and other certificates and memorabilia. Family papers include a copy of Sarah Lilienthal and Harry Wiel's wedding certificate and wedding album, as well as announcements/ clippings from other family weddings, and obituaries for family members and close friends. Also included are a reprint of a medical paper, "Angioneurotic Edema," by Harry Wiel and Sarah Lilienthal Wiel's will, legal documents pertaining to various trust funds, and genealogical research done by Isabel Wiel and Stephen Wiel into the Wiel family. A 1927 appraisal of the contents of the Wiel home at 3511 Clay street is accompanied by undated drawings of drapery design ideas for the house. There are also three folders of clippings pertaining to the Lilienthal, Sloss, Gerstley families and historic properties.

Series III Subject Files, 1906-1998

Physical Description: 13 folders and 1 oversize item

Scope and Content Note

This series includes a series of subject files collected by Isabel Wiel documenting her interests and activities. The majority of material consists of clippings with annotations by Isabel Wiel, with scattered correspondence or other documents included as well. Files include information on organizations that Isabel Wiel volunteered for, and general information on historical and cultural activities primarily in San Francisco. Of special note is a complete copy of the April 20, 1906 Oakland Tribune, with headlines reporting the containment of the fires several days after the earthquake.

Series IV Photographs, c.188?-1978, n.d.

Physical Description: 4 folders, 1 oversize item

Scope and Content Note

This series contains photographs (including a tintype and a ferrotype), negatives, and slides of the Wiel, Lilienthal, Sloss, and Dunn families, other relatives (including a number of Caroline Esberg and grandchildren) and friends. Also included are photographs documenting family owned buildings, and activities. The Wiel/Lilienthal wedding photos are copy prints. The originals are at the California Historical Society (CHS). Some of the older negatives/prints are also copies of photos whose originals are elsewhere.

Series V Writings, 1993-1995, n.d.

Physical Description: 13 folders

Scope and Content Note

This series contains drafts of autobiographical writings by Isabel Wiel describing her childhood, education and work experience, as well as several trips. "Education" is divided into three parts: "My Early Life," "School Bells are Ringing," and "Onward to College." "Went to Work" is divided into eight "chapters" of which the collection includes the first six describing her work experiences from "Early in 1936" to "The White House Department Store: Sep-Jan 1956." Other pieces include a two part piece on "Houses of Prostitution" and brief descriptions of San Francisco "History," her early volunteer experiences, and her "Steinway Piano." Some notes are included on her father, Harry I. Wiel. The trips described include two cruises to Panama with her mother and sister in 1935 and 1936, a family trip to Hawaii in 1959, and her first solo trip, a cruise to Ecuador and New Orleans in 1962, followed by trips to Denmark, Italy and Spain in 1963, and to Guatemala in 1964. The two Panamanian trips and the Ecuadorian trips were taken on United Fruit Company ships. Most of these writings were dictated by Wiel and typed by a secretary.

Correspondence

Box-folder 1/1 **Family Correspondence 1875-1959, n.d.**
Box-folder 1/2 **Isabel Wiel Correspondence 1930-1998, n.d.**

Personal And Family Papers

Box-folder 1/3 **Personal Documents (Isabel Wiel) -- [photos] 1916-1992, n.d.**
Box-folder 1/4 **Personal -- Bankbooks, Passports, I.D.'s 1950-1997**
Box-folder 1/5 **Personal -- Sayings c. 1940-1997, n.d.**
Box-folder 1/6 **Family -- Marriage License, publications, etc. 1901-1959**
Box-folder 1/7 **Family -- Weddings 1910-1998**
Box-folder 1/8 **Family -- Obituaries 1919-1993**
Box-folder 1/9 **Family -- Invitations (Reunions) 1907-1994**
Box-folder 1/10 **Family -- Trust Funds and Settlements 1880-1951**
Box-folder 1/11 **Family -- Appraisal - Contents of 3511 Clay St. 1927**
Box-folder 1/12 **Family -- Appraisal - [leather report cover] 1927**
Oversize Oversize **Family -- 3511 Clay Street - Drapery Designs n.d.**
Box-folder 1/13 **Family -- Sarah Lilienthal - Kirmess -- [photos] 1909**
Box-folder 1/14 **Family -- Will and Estate -- Sarah Lilienthal Wiel 1957-1968**
Box-folder 1/15 **Family -- Historical (Genealogical) Narratives 1914-1952**
Box-folder 1/16 **Family -- Genealogical Research 1968-1992**
Box-folder 1/17 **Family -- Genealogical Research (Stephen Wiel) 1991**
Box-folder 2/1 **Family -- Clippings - Lilienthal Family 1881-1984**
Box-folder 2/2 **Family -- Clippings - Gerstley Family and others 1955-1995**
Box-folder 2/3 **Family -- Clippings - Historic/Family Buildings 1972-1986, n.d.**

Subject Files

Box-folder 2/4 **Art (Including Photography) 1939-1991, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/5 **Art /Architecture 1974-1982, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/6 **Biographies 1972-1991, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/7 **Cable Cars 1979-1984, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/8 **California History 1990, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/9 **Golden Gate National Recreation Area 1979-1986, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/10 **Golden Gate Park 1980-1985, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/11 **Lick, James 1906-1987, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/12 **Muir Woods 1977-1979, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/13 **Music 1957-1985, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/14 **Oakland Museum 1987-1994, n.d.**
Oversize Oversize **Oakland Tribune [complete edition] April 20, 1906**
Box-folder 2/15 **San Francisco History 1974-1998, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/16 **Society of California Pioneers 1984-1988, n.d.**

Photographs

Box-folder 2/17 **Wiel/Lilienthal Wedding - [originals at CHS] 1910**
Box-folder 2/18 **Family (Wiel, Lilienthal, Sloss, Dunn) 1923-1990, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/19 **Other People and Places 1945-1978, n.d.**
Box-folder 2/20 **Photographs and Negatives -- Older Forms, etc. c.188?-1921, n.d.**
Oversize Oversize **Richard Hyland and Adela Rogers St. John c.1927**

Writings

Box-folder 3/1 "Education" 1-3 1995
Box-folder 3/2 "Volunteering" n.d.
Box-folder 3/3 "Went to Work" Chapters 1-6 n.d.
Box-folder 3/4 San Francisco History and Early Life n.d.
Box-folder 3/5 "Houses of Prostitution" 1 & 2 1994-1995
Box-folder 3/6 "Steinway Piano" 1994
Box-folder 3/7 "Harry I Wiel" -- notes 1994, n.d.
Box-folder 3/8 Trips -- Panama (1935, 1936) n.d.
Box-folder 3/9 Trips -- Hawaii (1959) n.d.
Box-folder 3/10 Trips -- Ecuador and New Orleans (1962) 1995, n.d.
Box-folder 3/11 Trips -- Denmark, Italy and Spain (1963) -- notes n.d.
Box-folder 3/12 Trips -- Guatemala (1964) 1995
Box-folder 3/13 Notes, Miscellani 1993, n.d.