

Guide to the Wilbour family papers, 1849-1896

in the Brooklyn Museum Archives

**Brooklyn Museum
200 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11238**

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Original processing and finding aid completed by Kristen Iemma 03/08/2017.

Collection Summary

Collection Number:	S30
Title:	Wilbour family papers
Dates:	1849 -1896 (bulk 1880-1885)
Extent:	2.00 linear feet
Creator/Collector:	Robert DeLage, donated December 30, 2004
Level of Description:	Single-level Value Added
Language:	Collection materials are in English and French
Repository:	Brooklyn Museum Libraries and Archives, Brooklyn, New York.
Processed by:	Kristen Iemma, 2017
Conservation note:	Documents were dry cleaned using brushes and HEPA vacuum. A bird wing was photographed and discarded.

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Information for Researchers

Related Collections: [Wilbour Archival Collection, S24.](#)

LC Name Authorities: [Wilbour, Charles E. \(Charles Edwin\), 1833-1896](#)
[Wilbour, Charlotte B. \(Charlotte Beebe\), 1833-1914](#)
[Wilbour, Theodora, -1947](#)

Biographical and Administrative History

Charles Edwin Wilbour (1833–1896) was born in Little Compton, Rhode Island to Sarah Soule Wilbour (née Wilbor, 1804–1891) and Charles Wilbour (1805–1882). Charles enrolled at Brown University for two years, from 1850 to 1852, before moving to New York City in 1854. In 1858, Charles married Charlotte Beebee Wilbour (aka Lottie, 1833–1914), who was a founding member of the women’s club Sorosis and was also extremely active in the fight for women’s suffrage. Charlotte was close personal friends with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Julia Ward Howe, and Alice Fletcher (letters from all of whom are included in this collection). Charlotte gave birth to the couple’s first two children, Evangeline (aka Eveline/Linne, 1859–1918) in 1859 and Theodora (aka Dora, 1860–1947) in 1860. In 1862 Charles translated Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, which is still considered the definitive English translation. In 1863 the couple’s only son, Victor (1863–?), was born, and their final child, Zoe (1864–1885), was born in 1864. In 1869, Charles was appointed by William Magear “Boss” Tweed to manage the *New York Transcript*, the major New York City newspaper of the day. Charles established the New York Printing Company under “Boss” Tweed in the 1870s. In 1871, Charles’ association with Tweed prompted him to move his family to Paris, where Charles studied Egyptology with Gaston Maspero. From 1880 to 1891 Wilbour regularly traveled back and forth between the United States and Egypt, while his family moved between Paris, Little Compton, and New York. In 1881, Evangeline married the esteemed American painter and muralist Edwin Howland Blashfield (1848–1936). Zoe was enrolled in school in Paris where she excelled in her studies. However, Zoe battled chronic illness throughout her short life and died on April 4, 1885 at the age of 21. Charles died on December 17, 1896, Charlotte in 1914, and Evangeline in 1918. The date of Victor’s death is unrecorded, while Theodora outlived her family members by many years. When Theodora died in 1947, her will dictated that she should be buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, along with her family members Charles Edwin, Zoe, Charlotte, and Evangeline, who were exhumed from the Wilbour Family Cemetery in Little Compton and moved to Woodlawn. Theodora left a large sum of money to Brown University for the establishment of a series of fellowships in her family’s memory. She also left a separate sum of money to the department of Egyptology at Brown, which precipitated the renaming of Wilbour Hall in honor of Charles Edwin Wilbour’s contributions to the field. Theodora also left funds to the Brooklyn Museum to establish the Wilbour Endowment, as well as a substantial sum of money to the Boston Art Museum, along with a coin collection she had donated in honor of Zoe.

Administrative History

This collection was donated to the Museum on December 30, 2004. The documents were found by a descendant of the Wilbour family in Rhode Island and sent to the Museum by Robert DeLage. It is not clear if Mr. DeLage is the descendent who discovered the documents. The documents were partially processed in November of 2005. In September of 2016 the collection was revisited by Archives staff and was processed between October 2016 and February 2017. This involved conservation work on 0.25 linear feet of materials with potential mold damage.

Scope and Content

Dates: 1849 -1896 (bulk 1880-1885)

Extent: 2.00 linear feet

The collection is comprised of documents pertaining to Charles Edwin Wilbour, an American Egyptologist, his children, Evangeline, Theodora, Victor, and Zoe, and his wife, Charlotte Beebee Wilbour.

The bulk of this collection consists of letters, though documents such as balance sheets, drawings, postcards, calling cards, and ephemera (including pressed flowers and the remnants of a bird's wing) are present as well.

The collection is split into four series, with the largest being the letters of Zoe Wilbour, the youngest daughter of Charles and Charlotte Wilbour. The vast majority of these letters were written to Zoe between 1880 and 1885, when she passed away. Many of these letters were either from Zoe's close friend Mammie or someone named Leo, who seems to have been a fiancé of Zoe's. There are a number of letters written entirely in French, and there are a small number of letters written by Zoe to friends and potential love interests. Pressed flowers were included in a few of the letters written to Zoe, and one envelope contained the remains of a bird's wing. The wing was photographed before it was removed for preservation purposes.

Other items of interest in this collection include letters between Charlotte Beebee Wilbour and members of the women's group Sorosis. A letter from Susan B. Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton is included in the "Charlotte Wilbour Letters & Papers" series. Also included in this series is a letter from Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Charlotte Wilbour, a letter from Julia Ward Howe to Charlotte Wilbour, and a number of letters between the Anthropologist Alice Fletcher and Charlotte Wilbour. Materials pertaining to meetings of Sorosis, including calling cards, pamphlets, and receipts for the payment of dues are included in the subseries "Charlotte Wilbour Papers". The series titled "Charles Wilbour Papers" contains a balance sheet for the New York Printing Company, as well as a number of letters from Charles to Sarah Soule Wilbour, his mother, who was also an active suffragist throughout her life.

Series Outline

Series 1: Charles Wilbour Papers (1849 – 1892, n.d.)

Series 2: Charlotte Wilbour Letters & Papers (1869 – 1896, n.d.)

2.1: Letters

2.2: Papers

Series 3: Zoe Wilbour Letters (1870 – 1885, n.d.)

Series 4: Letters, Papers, Notes & Ephemera (n.d.)

4.1: Ephemera

4.2: Letters, Papers, & Notes

Series Descriptions

Series 1: Charles Wilbour Papers

Dates: 1849 – 1892, n.d.

Extent: .10 linear feet

Arrangement: chronological

This series is comprised of the personal papers of Charles Edwin Wilbour. There are a number of letters from Charles to his mother, Sarah Soule Wilbour, as well as a balance sheet for the New York Printing Company, tax receipts, and other letters to Charles.

Series 2: Charlotte Wilbour Letters & Papers

Dates: 1869 – 1896, n.d.

Extent: .15 linear feet

Organization:

2.1 Letters

2.2 Papers

This series contains both the letters and papers of Charlotte Beebee Wilbour. There are a number of materials pertaining to the women's group Sorosis, of which Charlotte was a founding member. The series contains both letters and ephemera, including pamphlets, receipts, and calling cards.

Subseries 2.1: Letters

Dates: 1869-1896, n.d.

Arrangement: chronological

This subseries consists of letters to and from Charlotte Wilbour. Many of these letters pertain to her work with Sorosis, including a letter addressed to Sorosis from Julia Ward Howe. The subseries contains a number of letters between Charlotte and Charles Wilbour, as well as two letters to Charlotte from Alice Fletcher.

Subseries 2.2: Papers

Dates: n.d.

Arrangement: original order maintained

This subseries consists of documents pertaining to the suffrage work of Charlotte Wilbour as well as letters that are neither to nor from Charlotte, but do relate to her work with Sorosis. These documents include calling cards, Sorosis pamphlets, a newspaper clipping regarding Sorosis, and a letter from Susan B. Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton concerning Sorosis.

Series 3: Zoe Wilbour Letters

Dates: 1870 – 1885, n.d.

Extent: 1.50 linear feet

Arrangement: chronological

This series is primarily comprised of letters to Zoe Wilbour from friends and love interests. The vast majority of the letters in this series are from 1880 – 1885. Many of the letters are from Zoe's friends Mammie and May, as well as from her purported fiancé Leo. There are two letters definitively written by Zoe. The series also contains letters from many other friends of Zoe's, with a sizeable number of letters written entirely in French.

Series 4: Letters, Papers, Notes & Ephemera

Dates: 1847—1885, n.d.

Extent: .25 linear feet

Organization:

4.1: Ephemera

4.2: Letters, Papers, & Notes

This series contains ephemera, letters, papers and notes relating to other members of the Wilbour family not named in the above series, as well as materials belonging to friends of the family. Items of interest include cards with a poem relating to Zoe's death, two photographs, and a hand drawn map.

Subseries 4.1: Ephemera

Dates: n.d.

Arrangement: original order maintained

This subseries contains ephemera that are not strongly associated with any subjects of the other collection series. It includes calling cards, a menu, a number of small cards with a poem regarding Zoe's death, and two photographs, among other items.

Subseries 4.2: Letters, Papers, & Notes

Dates: 1847—1885, n.d.

Arrangement: chronological

This subseries contains letters and papers that are not directly associated with any subjects of the above collection series. Items include two ledgers annotated with the name Philip Wilbour, multiple letters from unknown authors, a shopping list for "Ned" which contains Edwin Blashfield's name, a hand-drawn map, a valentine to Alice Fletcher from unknown (likely Charlotte Wilbour), and a number of letters that appear to be missing pages, generally with unknown authors or recipients.

Folder Descriptions

Series 1: Papers

1.1.001, S30, 1849-1892, n.d.

Miscellaneous envelopes address to Charles Wilbour; multiple letters to Mother; multiple letters to Mother and Father; letter to Father which references Lottie [Charlotte's nickname] and says "a kiss to Victor and Zoe"; letter to Charles from Andrew Jackson Davis; letter to Edwin and Lottie from Mother; tax receipt from city of Fall River, October 22, 1872 for \$34.44; balance sheet for the New York Printing Company, October 1, 1884; letter to Sarah Soule from unknown; balance sheet with Charles Edwin Wilbour's name, no date.

Series 2: Letters & Papers

Letters 2.1.001, S30, 1869-1896

Two letters to Mrs. C. B. Wilbour from the Wyoming Territory Executive Department, 1870; multiple letters to Lottie [Charlotte's nickname] from Edwin; letter to Charlotte from Alice Fletcher, 1871; letter to children from Moma [sic], references Dora [Theodora's nickname] not feeling well; letter to Charlotte from H.P. Ross of the Young Men's Association rejecting a submission, 1873; letter to Sorosis from Julia Ward Howe; two balance sheets listing Charlotte B. Wilbour's expenses on letterhead from the Everett Board, Real Estate and Insurance Agency.

Letters 2.1.002, S30, n.d.

Letter from Lottie to unknown; letter from C. B. Wilbour to friends; letter to unknown from Moma [sic]; multiple letters to Lottie from Edwin; miscellaneous letters to Charlotte from unknown people; letter to Charlotte from Linnie [Evangeline's nickname]; letter to Charlotte from Theodora; letter to Charlotte from Alice Fletcher regarding Sorosis; letter to Mrs. Wilbour from Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Papers 2.2.001, S30, 1870-1871, n.d.

Charlotte's calling cards; card for Brooklyn Women's Club reception; printed pamphlet from March 14, 1870 entitled The Enfranchisement of Women to Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, President of the National Women's Suffrage Association and Reverend Henry Ward Beecher. President of the American Woman Suffrage Association, calling for a meeting in New York City on April 6, 1870 to work toward uniting the two organizations; letter to Mrs. Stanton from SBA [Susan B. Anthony]; two booklets on Sorosis; multiple Sorosis meeting cards; newspaper clipping regarding Sorosis meeting, n.d.; miscellaneous calling cards.

Series 3: Letters

Letters 3.1.001, S30, 1870-1879

Letter to Zoe from Charlotte, on New York Printing Company letterhead; letter to Zoe from Charles Wilbour regarding a trip to the Delaware Water Gap, hand drawing of a trout by Charles; multiple letters to Zoe from unknown friends; letter to Zoe from Sara with small drawing of Zoe, 1879.

Letters 3.1.002, S30, January –November 1880

Letter to Zoe from Grandmother; multiple small letters from Mary Jarasson to Zoe; letter from unknown to Zoe, October 1880; October –November 1880 large number of small letters from Leo [fiancé?] to Zoe; October –November 1880 large number of small letters from Mammie to Zoe; multiple letters to Zoe entirely in French.

Letters 3.1.003, S30, December 1880

Many small letters, almost all from Mammie or May.

Letters 3.1.004, S30, January 1881

Pressed flowers; many letters from Leo to Zoe in Paris; many small letters from Mammie to Zoe, some entirely in French; a letter to Zoe from Leo with pressed flowers.

Letters 3.1.005, S30 February –March 1881

Many small letters from Mammie to Zoe; many small letters from Leo to Zoe; letters to Zoe from unknown people.

Letters 3.1.006, S30, April 1881

Many small letters from Mammie to Zoe; many small letters from Leo to Zoe; letter in French to Zoe from Claire (sic).

Letters 3.1.007, S30, May –June 1881

Many small letters from Mammie to Zoe; many small letters from Leo to Zoe.

Letters 3.1.008, S30, July –August 1881

Letter from Zoe to Mrs. Jarasson; letter entirely in French to Zoe from unknown; many letters from Mammie to Zoe; letter from Leo to Zoe.

Letters 3.1.009, S30, September 1881

Letter from Zoe to unknown; letter from Mammie to Zoe that references Zoe's fiancé; many letters from Mammie to Zoe; telegram to Paris from Mary Jarasson in London [most likely to Zoe, asking "why don't you write"].

Letters 3.1.010, S30, October –December 1881

Many small letters from Mammie to Zoe; many small letters from Leo to Zoe; multiple letters to Zoe from Mammie entirely in French.

Letters 3.1.011, S30, January –April 1882

Letter to Zoe from Grandma; many small letters from Mammie to Zoe; many small letters from Leo to Zoe.

Letters 3.1.012, S30, April 1882 Continued –December 1882

Many small letters from Mammie to Zoe; many small letters from Leo to Zoe; letter to Zoe from Grandma; telegram, potentially from Zoe, aboard steamer La France Havre which states "thanks for the flower Mary et moi vous envoyons our best love bon voyage".

Letters 3.1.013, S30 1883

Many small letters from Mammie to Zoe; many small letters from Leo to Zoe; letter from Florie (sic) Huntington to Jack in envelope addressed to Zoe; three letters to Zoe from May.

Letters 3.1.014, S30, January –July 1884

Multiple letters to and from unknown; multiple letters from May to Zoe; multiple letters from Leo to Zoe; letter to Zoe from Jane (sic); multiple letters from Mammie to Zoe; letter to Zoe from “ever your caring sister Dodd”; letter to Zoe from George.

Letters 3.1.015, S30, August 1884

Multiple letters to Zoe from George Howard on San Francisco stationary; letter from Leo to Zoe; letter from George Howard to Zoe asking about her health; letter from Mammie; letter to Zoe from Louie S. Whitney (sic); letter to Zoe from John.

Letters 3.1.016, S30, September 1884

Letter to Zoe from Abby P. Cunliff (sic); letter to Zoe from Edwin Frost (sic); multiple letters to Zoe from May; letter from George Howard, San Mateo, California to Zoe; letter from Leo to Zoe; Letter from Dick to Zoe; letter to Zoe from unknown.

Letters 3.1.017, S30, October –December 1884

Letter from Dick to Zoe; multiple letters to Zoe from Leo; multiple letters to Zoe from Mammie; letter to Zoe from Florie (sic); letter to Zoe from unknown entirely in French; letter to Zoe from R.A.

Letters 3.1.018, S30, January 1885

Letter from unknown to Zoe; letter from R.A at Harvard University to Zoe; letter from George Howard, San Francisco, California to Zoe; letter from Leo to Zoe; small card with Sam (sic) C. Muldon name printed, asking Zoe to accept the flowers and wishing that the “sunny south” will bring her a full restoration of health; letter from S. C. Muldon to Zoe at the Battle House.

Letters 3.1.019, S30, March 1885

Multiple letters from S. C. Muldon to Zoe at the Battle House; letter from R.A. at Harvard University; letter from Leo to Zoe; letter from S. C. Muldon to Zoe on March 3, 1885 asking after her health; letter from George Howard, San Mateo California to Zoe.

Letters 3.1.020, S30, n.d.

Letter from Zoe to Mammie; letter to Zoe from Eskinie L. Waif (sic), accusing her of having a dishonest heart, telling lies, etc.; multiple letters to Zoe from Leo; letter from unknown to Zoe entirely in French; letter to Zoe from Grandmother; multiple letters to Zoe from Mammie; letter to Zoe from Moma.

Letters 3.1.021, S30, n.d.

Manuscript submission to the Woman’s Journal entitled My Flirtation, signed Z.W.; letter from Paul to Zoe, entirely in French; multiple letters from Mammie to Zoe; letter from Lilly to Zoe; letter from Leo to Zoe.

Letters 3.1.022, S30, n.d.

Letter to Zoe from unknown; letter from George, San Mateo, California; bird's wing in envelope [note: a photograph has been inserted in the location of the bird's wing, which has been discarded]; multiple letters to Zoe from unknown; letter from Dick to Zoe; letter from R.A. to Zoe; multiple letters to Zoe from Mammie; envelope and attached letter to Miss May Jarasson from unknown.

Letters 3.1.023, S30, n.d.

Multiple letters from unknown to Zoe; multiple letters to Zoe from Mammie; multiple letters to Zoe from Leo; letter to Zoe from Dick A. [R.A. and Dick A. potentially same person, similar handwriting]; ripped letter missing top half from OW Wilkinson, potentially a love letter, states "I am afraid you don't care for me any more but I love you as much as I ever did"; letter to Zoe from Moma; single sheet of paper that says "10,000 kisses for my only darling", unsigned; letter to Zoe from Theodora Wilbour; letter to "dear 4th daughter" from Jane, Zoe's name written on back.

Letters 3.1.024, S30, n.d.

Multiple letters to Zoe from Mammie; multiple letters to Zoe from Leo; letter to Zoe from Sarah Theo (sic) Brown; card for an appointment for Zoe with Dr. R. M. Streeter; letter to Zoe from Jane Jarasson; letter to Zoe from Mammie signed "your own true little fiancé Mammie"; small daguerreotype or tintype, rusted over face, with accompanying letter to Zoe from unknown.

Letters 3.1.025, S30, n.d.

Postcard from Wadie (sic) to Zoe; two postcards from unknown, entirely in French; newspaper clipping regarding Zoe winning two prizes at her academy in Paris; multiple letters from Leo to Zoe; multiple letters to Zoe from unknown, entirely in French; small card to Zoe from unknown; multiple envelopes to Mary Jarasson /Madame Jarasson, no accompanying letters.

Series 4: Letters, Papers, Notes & Ephemera**Ephemera 4.1.001, S30, n.d.**

Calling cards; cards with poem regarding Zoe's death, from her funeral?; menu; two photographs; newspaper clippings; postcards, some blank, some with notes

Letters, Papers, Notes 4.2.001, S30, 1847—1885, n.d.

1847, two ledgers with Mr. Phillip Wilbour's name on top; August 30, 1867, letter to Aunt Sarah from C. Chapin Sawin (sic); April 22, 1879, two letters to Susan (sic); July 10, 1881, letter to Mrs. Lecoq (sic), second page missing; May 29, 1884, letter to unknown from "E. Latier Naif" (sic); June 19, 1884, shopping list for Ned, Edwin Blashfield's name is written on side of list; miscellaneous letters/fragments of letters to/from unknown people; hand-drawn map with title 4th story of no. 48 Avenue Josephine; drawing of what appear to Greek or Roman gods.

Letters, Papers, Notes 4.2.002, S30, n.d.

Letter to Jack from D; poem; letter to "Aunt Sarah" from Emily (sic); poem or story titled Mother Hubbard for the preciously Erudite; a sheet of prayers regarding Christmas; letter to Victor from Grandma; envelope addresses to S. S. Wilbour; miscellaneous letters/fragments of letters to/from unknown people.

Letters, Papers, Notes 4.2.003, S30, n.d.

Two envelopes to Miss Jarasson; wedding invitations; card with drawings from Henry Bisau (sic); letter to Mother from John; letter to Miss Anthony [potentially Susan B. Anthony] from Olympia Brown; note titled A Valentine to Alice Fletcher regarding the state of the suffrage movement; pressed flowers; miscellaneous letters/fragments of letters to/from unknown people; two more letters from H. Bisau (sic); multiple letters entirely in French; letter to Sir from Mammie Dickinson regarding “the girl in Paris”, most likely Zoe Wilbour.