

NEWCOMB COLLEGE ARCHIVES
Newcomb Center for Research on Women
Caroline Richardson Building
Tulane University
New Orleans, LA 70115
504/865-5238

INVENTORY OF THE COLLECTION OF
KATHARINE LUCINDA WILSON ELDER
11 NOVEMBER 1989

Elder, Katharine Lucinda Wilson, 1891 -1989, Collection

Elder, Katharine Lucinda Wilson, 1891 - 1989.
Collection, c. 1917 - 1919.
Open. 3.10 cubic ft.

Location: NCCRW: NAB-014-018, NAF-001-002; SCR-2; OV-1.
Accession number: 89-0231

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION:

Donation of sons, Thomas Elder of New Orleans and James Elder, Box 369, Plain Dealing, LA 71064.

RESTRICTIONS:

None.

ORGANIZATION AND ARRANGEMENT:

This material is organized into eight series: I. Artwork; II. Calendar; III. Examinations; IV. Fabric items; V. Memorabilia; VI. Photographs; VII. Pottery; VIII. Scrapbook.

NOTES:

Several pieces of pottery, lace, two watercolor sketches, and linens are displayed in an exhibit (1989 -). The remainder of the pottery is packed in foam peanuts and bubble sheets. Entire inventory must be rechecked when display is dismantled.

FINDING AIDS:

Inventory, with complete descriptions of the series, is available in the repository.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Elder studied Domestic Science at Newcomb College and graduated with the Class of 1918. After graduation, she was hired by Dominican College to head its first Domestic Science program. She married in 1926, adopted two sons, and lived for many years in Crowley, Louisiana.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The collection of Katharine Lucinda Wilson Elder spans the years ca. 1917-1919. Included are two boxes of lace, some of which was handmade by Elder, designs for embroidery and clothing, patterns, sketches, a rug, a doll, a piece of embroidery, art supplies, a 1918 calendar, several exams from her domestic science courses, and several pieces of china hand painted by Elder while a Newcomb student. Several photographs have been removed to the photographic collection. Elder's scrapbook details her life as a Newcomb student in domestic science, with snapshots of friends frolicking on the beach and on campus, and at a May Day celebration. It also contains invitations, letters, comments on dormitory rules, as well as lists of costs and amount of time that she and other students spent on projects.

Elder's collection of material from her time as a Newcomb student gives us a rare glimpse of student life. The informality of the photographs and the momentos she saved are a very different picture than the one seen through the formal files of Newcomb College. Her involvement with the domestic science program and the resulting materials tell us not only of the quality of work she was capable of doing, but also of the quality of the program. As a record of the life of an educated, talented Southern woman, it is unfortunate that there is nothing from her later life, however, since the collection contains things that she chose to keep, the lack of later materials is also informative of Elder's life.

Elder, Katharine Lucinda Wilson, 1891 -1989, Collection

Series:

- I. Artwork;
- II. Calender of New Orleans (1918);
- III. Examinations;
- IV. Fabric items;
- V. Memorabilia;
- VI. Photographs;
- VII. Pottery;
- VIII. Scrapbook.

Elder, Katharine Lucinda Wilson, 1891 -1989, Collection

Series description:

I. Artwork: designs, patterns, & sketches made during studies at Newcomb College, including studies of clothing, hats, embroidery designs, watercolor sketches;

II. Calendar of New Orleans (1918), designed by Anne MacK. Robertson; (N'07)

III. Examinations;

IV. Fabric items: Rug (probably not hand-made), embroidery (table runner decorated with orange flowers), doll (handmade of fabric); table linens (edged linen napkins, placemats, doilies), lace (some handmade by Elder);

V. Memorabilia: 2 boxes china paints, rughook, photograph frame, tatting hooks;

VI. Photographs: five photographs (three different images), 89PA002.

VII. Pottery: matching plate and fluted edged candy bowl, decorated with pink roses on a green background; five piece matching dressing set (footed powder container with lid, footed hair receptacle with lid, rectangular pin tray, small plate, footed rectangular comb and brush tray) decorated with a pale blue border around a blue flower border within gold lines, and blue bouquets; matching chocolate pot and four cups, decorated with blue and gold flowered borders and a gold design; salad plate with oranges.

VIII. Scrapbook: includes 110 photographs reflecting daily student life, also cataloged as 89PA002.

Elder, Katharine Lucinda Wilson, 1891 -1989, Collection

Box list:

NAB-014 Mementos;
NAB-015 Artwork, examinations;
NAB-016 Rug, embroidery, doll;
NAB-017 Lace;
NAB-018 Lace;
NAF-001 & NAF-002 Pottery;
OV-1 Calendar;
SCR-2 Scrapbook;
Photographic archives: 89PA002.

Elder, Katharine Lucinda Wilson

NAB 014-018, 2 boxes of pottery, and NAF 001: Addition to Pottery

NAB 014, Box 1 of 7

small swinging picture frame

rug needle: in original Sears, Roebuck, & Co. box

corsage and dried flower

small tubes of paint and art knife in Marshall Field candy box

small round basket weave mat

larger box of art supplies:

4 smaller boxes-

Sleepers Crucible, Roman Gold box, contains round glass plate with brown paint

Hasburg's Plated Phoenix, Roman Gold box, contains square glass plate with brown paint

Shneider's Ruby China Colors, contains 6 small corked glass tubes of powdered color

D.M. Compana Art Company box, also contains 6 small corked glass tubes of powdered color

small glass bottles-

cylindrical corked alum bottle

square corked ink bottle

cylindrical bottle with metal screw on cap

smaller brown glass stoppered bottle

small watercolor picture of George Washington

thick pink corded brush

3 thin wooden sticks

1 black marking pencil

3 small paint brushes

2 small art knives

piece of square tile

pressed golden metal case containing two metal crochet needles(?)

1 white crochet needle

NAB 015, Box 2 of 7

doll: long bendable, flapper like appearance with red sewn shoes

embroidered tapestry: fringed, with green, blue, yellow, red floral pattern-Newcomb Seal of Approval

NAB 016, Box 3 of 7

various sketches and papers

NAB 017, Box 4 of 7

40-50 scraps and lengths of old lace

NAB 018, Box 5 of 7

10 pieces of old lace and trim

3 square linen napkins

2 small round linen doilies

3 medium round linen doilies

1 mid-size round linen doily

2 large round linen doilies

Box 6 of 7, Pottery

Linen table mat: rectangular with brown, olive, orange embroidery in floral design

Linen and lace pieces:

- 2 square napkins
- 4 small round doilies
- 3 medium round doilies
- 2 large round doilies
- 1 larger round doily
- 1 large oval doily

6 small chocolate cups with handles: off-white with light blue and gold edging, painted floral and leaves design

6 matching saucers

matching chocolate pitcher/pot with top

small circular dish/bowl: light blue glaze with gold edging and painted collar and button at dipped part of edge

Box 7 of 7, Pottery

1 square linen napkin

2 large round linen doilies

4 lengths of handmade lace, all different patterns

small round plate: white, gold edging and pink floral design

small round plate: off-white, light blue border, blue edging and blue floral design

small rounded bowtie shaped dish: light blue border, gold accents matching floral design

2 round light blue pots each with three golden feet

- tops: blue border, gold accents, blue floral design,
- one top has round center hole

light olive green bowl with two golden handles. fluted rime, black edging, pink floral design

NAF 001**Addition--Pottery**

1 rectangular platter: white with light blue and gold edging and blue painted floral design

1 round plate: gold and off-white trim with orange tree design

**NEWCOMB COLLEGE
CENTER FOR RESEARCH
ON WOMEN**

TO: Jean Wilkinson
Alumni Development and Information Service

FROM: Beth Willinger

RE: Gifts-In-Kind

DATE: March 8, 1989

James Elder and S. Thomas Elder have donated to the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women several items belonging to their mother Katherine Wilson Elder N^o 18. These items include:

- 1 Scrapbook (1917-1919), of Kate Wilson Elder N^o 18
- 1 Photograph in frame
- Vanity Set consisting of
 - 1 Powder container with top
 - 1 Hair receptacle with top
 - 1 Pin Tray
 - 1 small plate
 - 1 Comb & Brush tray
- 6 Cups and Saucers with matching chocolate pot with top
- 1 Small plate
- 1 Larger plate with apples
- 1 Candy bowl

Sally Spinola Newcomb Art School curator, estimates the value of the ceramic pieces to be approximately \$7,800-8,800.

The gift has been acknowledged by the Center.

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The following is a statement made by Dr. S. Thomas Elder, at the funeral of his mother, KATHARINE LUCINDA WILSON ELDER, on 15 July 1989 in Crowley, Louisiana.

According to most available records, KATHARINE LUCINDA WILSON ELDER was born October 2, 1891. She was educated at Sophie Newcomb College; and, on May 20, 1926 married James Harrelison Elder. They had two sons: James Harrelison Elder, Jr., born April 9, 1932 and adopted April 9, 1935; and myself, born June 11, 1929 and adopted December 15, 1936. There are five grandchildren, two of whom were adopted. To date, there are six great grandchildren, several of whom are present here this morning.

KATHARINE LUCINDA WILSON ELDER died July 12, 1989. In addition to leaving behind her sons, grandchildren, great grandchildren, cousins, nieces and nephews, friends, and former students; she left behind a statement, a legacy, written not with pen and ink but in deeds. Her forum was not the printed page, the debating podium, or the conference table; it was the world-at-large---the home economics classroom, her pew in church, the vegetable garden, the flower bed, the sidewalk, the sewing room, and the kitchen. Her tools were not pen and paper; they were the fine strokes of a brush early in life, at times the trowel and hoe, and in her later years, a tating spindle and a ball of string. I will not attempt to recite her statement in its entirety to you here because it is too long; it is 97 years in length. There are, however, some precepts, which appear in it over and over again; and I must mention them because they stand out in such bold print. Translating from her deeds into words, I quote:

There is no substitute for excellence. Everything must be done well; and, if you say you have not the ability to do it well, then you need to improve your ability.

There is no substitute for hard work. Whether you labor with a tiny brush or a back-breaking hoe, hard work is good for the hands and it is good for the soul.

There is no substitute for honor, integrity, honesty, valor, and fair-play. If you have these qualities, you will always have the respect of the people around you.

There is no substitute for individual freedom, liberty, dignity, and responsibility under God and under the flag of these United States.

In the presence of your fellow man, stand straight and tall; and when required to do so, defend your ground. In the presence of God, bow your head, close your eyes, clasp your hands, and fall on your knees in silence, reverence, and awe.

No life is complete without some regard for beauty. Careful attention should be paid to art and its characteristics such as color, form, pattern, design, and perspective, for they are manifestations of God's glory.

And perhaps the most frequently appearing statement in the lengthy unwritten legacy she left was: There is no substitute for an unyielding faith in the Almighty God.

KATHARINE LUCINDA WILSON ELDER came into this world an infant, and she left a gallant lady.

The Lord giveth and we are grateful; and in due time, the Lord taketh away and we are saddened, lonely, and confused. Nevertheless, blessed by the name of the Lord.

PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

The Newcomb College Center for Research on Women is pleased to have received a varied collection of ceramic pieces that represent an important part of the history of Newcomb College and a way of life almost unknown today. The collection consists of the work of Kate Wilson Elder, Newcomb Class of 1918 and a longtime resident of Crowley, Louisiana. Mrs. Elder was a domestic science major at Newcomb and as such, she designed and painted ceramic pieces that she later used in her home. In a delicate hand, Mrs. Elder decorated the cups, saucers, trays, and pots with apples, flowers, and geometric shapes in browns, golds, light greens and blues. On many of the pieces, she painted her tiny handwritten signature. One piece is inscribed "to Mother and Father from Kate." These pieces are now appraised as skillful works of art worth thousands of dollars.

Other Newcomb domestic science majors in the early part of the twentieth century were also taught to design their own china, to weave and embroider their own table cloths and table mats. Although the domestic arts and sciences were discontinued at Newcomb in the early 1930s, girls of an early period were instructed on the importance of both the practical and theoretical aspects of art. The record of such an education is also documented in another donation which is the work of Mrs. Elder's -- her scrapbook from 1917 and 1918. In this carefully preserved album are the receipts for the

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purchase of material; notes about classwork, about hours spent in each project, about the specific cost involved in each project; lists of coursework in such classes as costume and lingerie design; and newspaper clippings about exhibits of clothes and hats made by Newcomb students. When Mrs. Elder graduated from Newcomb, she was hired by Dominican College to head its first domestic science department. Her scrapbook ends by providing information on the cost to start this program: receipts indicate her purchase of all the items needed for a cooking class -- from glass measuring cups, rollings pins, and egg beaters to tables and chairs.

The donation of Mrs. Elder's work to the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women is an important addition to the Center's efforts to document the education of women in the early part of the twentieth century. Her skills and her record of her years perfecting these skills at Newcomb will be of great interest to scholars investigating the lives of southern women.

PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

The Newcomb College Center for Research on Women, Tulane University is pleased to announce the exhibit of a varied collection of ceramic pieces, embroidery, lace, and paintings by the late Katherine Wilson Elder, a resident for many years of Crowley, Louisiana.

The displayed works, donated by the Elder family, are from a permanent collection within the Newcomb Center. A few prominent pieces from the collection have been selected and will be on display through August, 1990. The Elder collection is one which documents the domestic arts program at Newcomb in the early part of the century. Like other applied arts students of the period, Elder designed and painted ceramic pieces and wove and embroidered table cloths and linen. The ceramic pieces especially have brought much attention to the exhibit. On these cups, saucers, plates and pitchers, Elder painted apples, flowers, and geometric shapes in browns, golds, light greens and blues. On many of the pieces she painted her tiny handwritten signature, initials, or a special message, such as "to Mother and Father from Kate."

Mrs. Elder's work has also called attention to the type of education many women students of the past received. Although the domestic arts and sciences were discontinued at Newcomb in the early 1930s, girls of the early period were instructed on the importance of both the practical and theoretical aspects of art. The record of such an education is also documented in another collection within the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women, the scrapbook of Mrs. Elder. Social historians have delighted in this album which is complete with receipts for the purchase of material; notes about classwork, about hours spent in each project, about the specific cost involved in each project; lists of coursework in such classes as costume and lingerie design; and newspaper clippings about exhibits of clothes and hats made by Newcomb students. When Mrs. Elder graduated from Newcomb, she was hired by Dominican College to head its first domestic science department. Her scrapbook ends by providing information on the cost to start this program; receipts indicate her purchase of all the items need for a cooking class -- from glass measuring cups, rolling pins and egg beaters to tables and chairs.

Elder's skill and her record of learning these skills will be of interest to many people in the area. For more information, please call the Newcomb College Center for Research on women, 504-865-5238.

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