



Gold Star Mothers Club of Beloit, Wisconsin, Chapter 17 (1948-1973)

Accession # 1978.43

Size: 1.5 linear feet

Condition: Good to fair

Processing to: Item level

BHS acquired the collection from Sylvia Carter (Mrs Merton Carter), May 18, 1978

1030 Third Street, Beloit, Wisconsin

Prepared by: Leith A Rohr, Project Archivist for the Beloit Historical Society, February 18, 2020

FINDING AID

FOUNDER HISTORY

The Gold Star Mothers was founded by Grace Darling Seibold of Washington, D.C. Her son, George Vaughn Seibold, 23 entered World War I and was assigned to the British Royal Flying Corps with the 148th Aero Squadron for combat duty in France, because the United States did not have an Air Force at that time. He died in October of 1918, his body was never recovered. Grace, convinced that self-contained grief is self-destructive, devoted her time and efforts not only to working with the hospitals, but also to supporting other mothers whose sons had lost their lives in military service. She organized a group consisting solely of these mothers, with the purpose of not only comforting each other, but giving loving care to hospitalized veterans confined in government hospitals far from home. The organization was named after the Gold Star that families hung in their windows in honor of the veteran.

LOCAL HISTORY

The Beloit Chapter of the Gold Star Mothers of Wisconsin, Inc. was organized in 1948 by Mrs Cora Croake. There were 35 charter members. Mrs Fred Dennis, 745 Highland Avenue, was the first President. Originally, they met once each month in Grinnell Hall. Any mother who had lost a son or daughter in the service of their country was eligible for membership. The aim of the organization was to help men in Veterans Hospitals, sending them money at Christmas and Easter. They also helped with canteen books, basketball games, sewing projects and the purchase of stationary. The women took part in civic projects and patriotic programs. In the on-going beautification program they planted a fir tree in Field Park as a living memorial to sons and daughters. At Christmas it is decorated with Christmas lights.

SCOPE OF COLLECTION

The collection consists of the Beloit Chapter By-laws and Rituals, Holy Bible dedicated to the memory of Robert Irwin Joy by his mother, 1948-1977 rollbook listing members and officers, third book of meeting minutes for 1967-1983, 1964 poem "Gold Star Mothers" by Doris Smith, newspaper articles, scrapbook, citations, and photographs of the fir tree in Field Park.

DESCRIPTION

Detailed description of items in collection:

1978.43.23a Poem, "Gold Star Mothers" by Doris Smith, March 26, 1964.

1978.43.11a Roll book presented to the Beloit Chapter #17 Mrs Mathilda Steffensen in memory of Orville Ceneth Steffensen and by Mrs Ruth Cox in memory of Marvin Frederick Geise. Members and officers for 1948-1977 are listed.

1978.43.15 Booklet, Gold Star Mothers of Wisconsin By-laws and Ritual.

1978..43.18b Third book of minutes (1967-1983) of Beloit Chapter Gold Star Mothers, #17, October 10, 1967, Flora Purviance, Secretary. Donated by Mrs Fred Denniss (?) and Mrs Flora Purviance in memory of their sons Donald Kautz and Norman Purviance.

1978.43.18a Minutes - loose leaf pages from May 10, 1983 to September 9, 1986.

1978.43.19a Holy Bible, presented to the Beloit Chapter #17 by Leitha Joy in memory of her son, Robert Irwin Joy ARM 3/c, May 1, 1948. (Bible presented to Robert Irwin Joy by his mother, December 25, 1936).

1978.43.20a Scrapbook - Certificates of Recognition, newspaper clippings, and photographs of Christmas trees in Field Park, Beloit.

1978.43.27 Newspaper clippings - Ruth A. Cox article (1991) about the death of her last child in World War II, obit for Lt. Linwood T. Allen (note on back read, "Brother Joseph Wyche Allen Deceased), and visiting notice for Ensign Helen Wu (1944).

History from newspaper article (no date) "Gold Star Mothers do Civic, Patriotic Work; The Beloit Chapter of the Gold Star Mothers of Wisconsin, Inc., was organized in 1948 by Mrs Cora Croake. There were 35 charter members. Mrs Fred Dennis, 745 Highland Avenue, was the first President. Originally they met once each month in Grinnell Hall.

Any mother who has lost a son or daughter in the service of their country is eligible for membership. There are 23 members and the club said they would welcome more. The aim is to try to help men in Veterans Hospitals. They concentrate their efforts on the one at Tomah. They send money to them at Christmas and Easter. They help with canteen books and basketball games. When there are sewing projects they help, and purchase stationary for them. The women take part in civic projects and patriotic programs. In the on-going beautification program they had a fir tree placed in Field Park as a living memorial to sons and daughters. At Christmas time it is decorated with Christmas lights.

Present Officers are: President Mrs Percy Purviance, Vice President Mrs Selmar Jordahl, Secretary Mrs Frank Steffens, and Treasurer Mrs Carl McClafin."

1978.43.28 (M1993.28) Scrapbook, contains a history book, "Gold Star Mothers of Wisconsin, Inc.", April 17, 1948. Other contents include: photographs of sons lost in World War II, correspondence, a dedication to all the sons and daughters of Gold Star Mothers, poems, newspaper articles, and an extensive hand written history of Chapter 17 for 1948-1949. Photographs of sons lost in World War II, and correspondence.

CONTAINER LIST

1978.43					
CONTAINER	FOLDER	CREATOR	DATE	TITLE	SUBJECTS
Box 01	1	Leith Rohr	9/2/2020	Portraits and certificate	Emma Jones, Founder
Box 01	0			Finding Aid for Navy Mothers	
Box 01	2			Minutes of the 3rd Wi State Convention	
Box 01	3		1958	Booklets	
Box 01	4			Meeting Record Book Vol.1	Record Book Military -Navy
Box 01	5			Meeting Record Book Vol.2	Military -Navy Military Record Book
Box 01	6		1942	Sheet Music "We are the Navy Mothers of America"	Music Military -Navy Photographs
Box 02	1		1942	Record book 1942	Ledger Book Military -Navy Record Book Financial Paperwork
Box 03	1			Scrapbook- Mabel Androne 1945-1956	Military -Navy Newsletter Newspaper Photographs Post Cards Programs Scrapbook
Box 03	2		1942	Scrapbook- Founding Year 1942 Photos and activities	Letter Military Military -Navy Newspaper Newspaper-Beloit Daily News Photographs Post Cards Scrapbook Wartime-WWII
Box 04	2			Scrapbook- 1960s-1970s	Newspaper Newspaper-Beloit Daily News Scrapbook Military -Navy Military
Box 04	1			Scrapbook- 1946-1959	Newspaper Newspaper-Beloit Daily News Scrapbook Military -Navy Military
Drawer 20	1			Oversized Items	
Box 6	2		1948	Roll book	
Box 1	1			Gold Star Mothers bylaws	
Box 1	Folder 3			Minutes	
Box 6	3		1967-83	Minutes	
Box 6	1		1948	Holy Bible	
Box 5				Scrapbook	
Box 1	2	Doris Smith	25-Mar-64	"Gold Star Mothers"	
Box 1	Folder 4			Newspaper clippings	
Box 5			1948	Scrapbook - History book	