



J. Maple Wilson Letters (CG0081)

Collection Number: CG0081

Collection Title: J. Maple Wilson Letters

Dates: 1893-1898

Creator: Wilson, Joseph Maple (J. Maple), 1864-1943

Abstract: This collection consists of letters written to Grace (Senne) Wilson. The majority of the letters are written from her husband J. Maple Wilson, with one letter written by her friend Anna Stuart. In addition, there is one letter from Carrie Cline to J. Maple Wilson.

Collection Size: 0.1 cubic feet
(5 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Cape Girardeau](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at capegirardeau@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *J. Maple Wilson Letters* (CG0081); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Cape Girardeau [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Cape Girardeau].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Bill Eddleman on September 4, 2025 (Accession No. CGA0076).

Processed by: Processed by Ann Lowe, 2025

Historical Note:

Joseph Maple Wilson, Sr. was the fifth of nine children of Dr. William B. and Ann Eliza Wilson. He was born in Cape Girardeau on August 10, 1864. He attended the State Normal School in Cape Girardeau and then the University of Missouri-Columbia. He trained as a pharmacist. After graduation he taught science and penmanship at the Normal School before establishing a pharmacy in Cape Girardeau with his father and brother. The first pharmacy was at 111 North Main Street, then was moved to 1230 North Main Street to serve the Red Star area. Maple operated the pharmacy for nearly 50 years, retiring in 1939.

Grace Senne was born to John Christian and Mary Ann (Copeland) Senne in St. James, Missouri, in 1873. She also attended the State Normal School in Cape Girardeau and graduated in June 1893. She spent six months teaching at the “No. 2 school” in St. James in 1892. She wrote several essays during her time as a student; her piece “Idleness” was published in the newspapers in 1890, and for the graduation ceremony in 1893 she read her essay titled “The Advantages of Solitude.” After graduating she taught in Shawneetown until her marriage.

Maple Wilson married Grace Senne in 1894 and occupied a frame house at the southeast corner of North and Ellis in Cape Girardeau. Here, they took in boarders, mainly unmarried female students who were attending the State Normal School. Maple commissioned a new home for their family in 1903 from Lewis Brenton Blackwood. It was built for \$7000. This is the house their family has occupied through three generations, and which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Grace Wilson passed in 1930, and Maple passed in 1943.

Arrangement:

This collection has been arranged chronologically into a single series.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection consists entirely of correspondence, with nearly all of the correspondence addressed to Grace (Senne) Wilson. The earliest letter is dated August 1893, and was written by her friend Anna Stuart. Anna updates her on various social news and also urges her to consider marrying J. Maple Wilson. From December 1893 onwards, nearly all letters are from J. Maple to Grace. He wrote her nine letters in December 1893, describing his work, life, and touching on their plans to be married. These letters are addressed to Grace Senne in Shawneetown, where she was teaching school.

In the winter of 1894, Grace took a trip home to see her parents. The next nine letters from J. Maple were written during this time, from December 1894-January 1895. Again, he describes work, the home life (they had several boarders living with them at this time), and also how much he misses her. In one of the letters is a note from Lida Copeland, a longtime boarder and cousin of Grace, asking her to please bring a few things when Grace returned home to Cape Girardeau.

The final three letters from J. Maple to Grace were written in August of 1898, when she had taken their two sons John “Senne” and William Berry home to visit her family. He writes about work, how things are going there, particularly with their cow, asks about their sons, and tells her that he misses them. Included in the final envelope is a letter from Carrie Cline to J. Maple, explaining why she had applied to be a boarder elsewhere. This collection is arranged chronologically, with Carrie Cline’s August 1893 letter found in the same folder as the J. Maple letter that contained the note originally; the dates range from 1893 to 1898.

Container List:

- f. 1 Anna Stuart to Grace, August 1893
- f. 2 J. Maple to Grace, December 1893
- f. 3 J. Maple to Grace, January 1894
- f. 4 J. Maple to Grace, January 1895
- Lida Copeland to Grace, January 1895
- f. 5 J. Maple to Grace, August 1898
- Carrie Cline to J. Maple, August 1898

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