

# Guide to the Roy P. Wilcox Papers, 1890-1925

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## Summary Information

**Title:** Roy P. Wilcox Papers

**Inclusive Dates:** 1890-1925

**Creator:** Wilcox, Roy P., 1873-1946

**Call Number:** Eau Claire Mss AV

**Quantity:** 3.0 c.f. (8 archives boxes)

**Repository:** Housed at the Area Research Center, William D. McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society, Library-Archives Division

**Archival Locations:** UW-Eau Claire McIntyre Library / Eau Claire Area Research Ctr.

**Abstract:** Papers of Roy P. Wilcox, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, attorney, Republican state senator from 1917 to 1920, and unsuccessful primary candidate for governor in 1918 and 1920 and for senator in 1925. The papers consist of materials from his political campaigns and his State Senate term, speeches, and a small subject file concerning the city commission form of government and workmen's compensation legislation. The political materials include lists of supporters, campaign literature, a few financial reports, and materials from the Guardians of Liberty. The 1925 correspondence is especially revealing of the daily inside operations of the campaign and of relationships with party leaders in Wilcox' race against Robert M. La Follette, Jr., for the senior La Follette's vacant Senate seat.

**Language:** English

## Search Terms/Subject Terms

- Guardians of Liberty
- Republican Party—Wisconsin
- Elections—Wisconsin o Legislators—Wisconsin
- Municipal government by commission
- Workers' compensation—Law and legislation—Wisconsin
- Wisconsin—Politics and government

# Biography/History

Roy Porter Wilcox, a life-long resident of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was born there in June, 1873. After attending Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and gaining admission to the Wisconsin Bar in 1896, Wilcox practiced law in his hometown until his death in 1946. He served as president of the State Bar Association in 1925-1926.

Active all his life in the Republican party, he was originally a Progressive but later split with Robert LaFollette on the issue of American intervention in World War I which Wilcox enthusiastically supported. From 1917 to 1920, he served as a state senator. Twice, in 1918 and 1920, he conducted unsuccessful primary campaigns for the Republican gubernatorial nomination. Finally, in 1925 he ran in the Republican primary for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by the death of Robert LaFollette, Sr., but was defeated by Robert M. LaFollette, Jr.

## Scope and Content Note

The Roy P. Wilcox Papers cover the period from 1890 to 1925 and deal primarily with his political activities. They are organized into three categories: papers relating to political campaigns and his term of office as a state senator, speeches, and subject files.

Materials on his political campaigns and activities as a state senator are arranged chronologically. Wilcox first ran for public office in 1916; papers from that campaign include nomination papers, lists of supporters, publicity materials, and the tabulation of election results. Also included are pamphlets and letters from the Guardians of Liberty, an anti-Catholic organization, and correspondence, principally letters of congratulation and solicitations of support.

Except for a file of newspaper clippings and a notebook listing supporters, papers from the 1917 and 1919 legislative sessions consist entirely of routine correspondence from constituents concerning legislation, appointments and other political favors. A few items of personal correspondence are also included. Correspondence from N-Z for the 1919 session is missing.

Materials documenting Wilcox's 1918 gubernatorial campaign are missing completely and are meager for the 1920 campaign. The latter consists of a single file of letters and newspaper clippings plus a scrapbook of newspaper clippings.

The 1925 campaign is documented by nomination papers, incomplete financial reports, campaign literature, and four groups of correspondence. Out-of-state correspondence and general correspondence, arranged by county, consist of letters of congratulation plus offers and solicitations of support. The correspondence files of Frank G. Smith and C. P. McAssey, Milwaukee supporters and campaign managers, are especially revealing of the daily inside operations of the campaign and of relationships with party leaders. Finally, there are the papers relating to Wilcox's withdrawal after his primary defeat and refusal to run as an independent.

The second series, speeches, documents Wilcox's popularity as a Public speaker whose services were in demand for a great variety of functions. The collection includes the texts, arranged chronologically, of many commencement addresses, speeches to civic and fraternal groups and in behalf of the Liberty Loan Drive as well as campaign and other political speeches. Patriotism, civic

duty, and support of the war effort were frequent topics.

The Wilcox Papers also include a small group of subject files: on city commission government documenting Wilcox's long advocacy of that governmental form; on the Industrial Insurance Commission of 1911 and its activities in behalf of workman's compensation legislation; and a group of miscellaneous legal papers of uncertain origin.

## Administrative/Restriction Information

## Acquisition Information

Presented by Francis Wilcox, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, July 8, 1971. Several speeches presented by Mr. Wilcox, August 10, 1954. Accession Number: M71-155

## Processing Information

Processed by Karen Baumann, April 3, 1973.

## Contents List

	<b>Series:</b> 1916 - Campaign for State Senator
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