



The New York Public Library  
Music Division

Guide to the

**Pretzfeld family papers**

1924-1994

JPB 14-15

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

## Summary

**Creator:** Pretzfeld family

**Title:** Pretzfeld family papers

**Date:** 1924-1994

**Size:** .25 linear feet (1 box)

**Source:** Donated by Roberta Pretzfeld, unknown date.

**Abstract:** Ray and Robert Pretzfeld were patrons of music. They were friendly with many musicians and, with their wives, hosted private performances in their homes. The Pretzfeld family papers date from 1924 to 1994. They hold two guestbooks and two scrapbooks documenting the home performances, as well as the political activism of Mrs. Robert Pretzfeld.

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**Preferred citation:** Pretzfeld family papers, JPB 14-15. Music Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014 Original order was preserved. All content was rehoused.

## Creator History

Ray and Robert Pretzfeld were patrons of music. They were friendly with many musicians and hosted private social performances in their homes. This tradition began with their parents, and continued in their adulthood in New York in the 1940s and 1950s, and in Los Angeles in the 1960s. Ray Pretzfeld's widow gifted his cello to Stephen Kates, a frequent guest performer, in the mid-1960s. Robert

Pretzfeld's wife was active in political causes and was a contributing member of the League of Women Voters.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Pretzfeld family papers date from 1924 to 1994. They hold two guestbooks and two scrapbooks.

The first guestbook, dating from 1924 to 1931, logs visitors to the Pretzfeld home, and contains a few photographs of attendees. Starting in the late 1920s, the log also notes the repertoire performed by musicians during these visits. The second guestbook, dating from 1931 to 1965, is titled "Ray & Bob Pretzfeld," and also logs visitors and repertoire performed. Both guestbooks contain the signatures of musicians and other notable people attending these performances, such as Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, Willem Willeke, Walter Edelstein, Stephen Kates, Joseph Reilich, and Georges Enesco.

The first scrapbook, dating from 1961 to 1994, contains lists of guests of Pretzfeld-hosted performances from 1915 to 1939, compiled retrospectively in the 1960s. It also holds guest lists for performances between 1961 and 1967, clippings about musicians, a signed photograph of and letters from Stephen Kates, and a 1994 photograph of Roberta W. Pretzfeld. The second scrapbook dates from 1940 to 1966. It partially documents the political activities of Mrs. Robert Pretzfeld through letters from the League of Women Voters, Robert Oppenheimer, and Hubert Humphrey. It also holds letters to Mrs. Pretzfeld from E.B. White, Albert Sprague Coolidge and Stephen Kates, as well as letters to Ray Pretzfeld.

**Arrangement:** The four books are arranged chronologically.

### **Key Terms**

#### **Geographic Names**

Los Angeles (Calif.)

New York (N.Y.)

#### **Subjects**

Music patrons

#### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Scrapbooks

Visitors books

#### **Names**

Kates, Stephen, 1943-2003

## **Container List**

- b. 1 f. 1 Guestbooks 1924-1965
- b. 1 f. 2-3 Scrapbooks 1940-1994