

# Mary Louise Defender-Wilson

**Mary Louise Defender-Wilson was the first woman from North Dakota to become Miss Indian America. After her time as Miss Indian America, she has focused on preserving Native American history and stories. In 2017, she was inducted into the North Dakota Native American Hall of Honor. This pathfinder will lead researchers to several resources available at the North Dakota State Archives highlighting the contributions of Mary Louise Defender-Wilson.**

## Archival Collections

### 11295 Louis Garcia Papers

Photocopies of research on Dakota place names, Hidatsa place names in Montana, photocopies of the 1944 membership record of the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, and newspaper clippings of Garcia's historical column in the Benson County Farmer's Press entitled "A Message from Garcia: The History and Culture of the Spirit Lake Dakota," a copy of "Where the Waters Gather" by Paul C. Durand, Durand's maps and research, correspondence with Alan Woolworth, James H. Howard and Paul C. Durand, biographical information about Henry Two Bear Owa and translations of Two Bear's papers from the Sioux language to English, and Garcia's articles in Whispering Wind magazine.

### 11517 Marilyn Cross Hudson Collection

Research, writings, working and subject files, and other materials created or collected by Hudson. Major subjects include the written, recorded or photographed tribal and oral histories of the MHA Nation, Elbowoods, the bottom lands of the Missouri River prior to development of the Garrison Dam, Native American veterans, Native American ranching, and the Cross family. Included are records of tribal, state and federal government proceedings leading up to construction of the Garrison Dam and the subsequent impacts on the tribe and its communities. The collection includes: writings and correspondence of Martin Cross, father of Marilyn Cross Hudson, who served 6 terms on the MHA Nation Tribal Council, 4 of those terms as Chairman; photographs, records and documents of Chief Old Dog, grandfather of Marilyn Cross Hudson; cemetery records, both on and off the Fort Berthold Reservation, and; boarding school records. The collection also includes histories, records and photos of the City of Parshall, North Dakota, the home of Marilyn Cross Hudson from 1953 until her death in 2020.

## Useful Search Guidance

### Subjects

- Miss Indian America

### People

- Mary Louise Defender-Wilson (Wagmuhawin (Gourd Woman)), 1930-

### Locations

- Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation

## Journal Articles

*North Dakota Native American Hall of Honor: Mary Louise Defender Wilson—Standing Rock Sioux Tribe*  
*North Dakota Blue Book 2021-2023*

**32179 Historical Society. State. Education & Interpretation, Events and Programs  
Videotapes**

This series consists of audiovisual material of various programming, conferences, and events hosted by the State Historical Society of North Dakota. Includes North Dakota History Conferences, History Alive!, Dakota Folks, Read North Dakota, Sensational Sundays, historic site programs, and education events. Also includes news footage of segments featuring State Historical Society of North Dakota staff and sites.

## Books

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### *The Taken Land*

1985 - submitted by the Standing Rock Landowner's Association; stories collected by Mary Louise Defender Wilson, James V. Fenelon; photography and text by James V.

Fenelon

Call Number: 333.2 F3322t

### *The Elders Speak*

1999

Dakotah and Ojibway stories of the land told by Gourd Woman (Mary Louise Defender Wilson) and Eagle Heart (Francis Cree)

Call Number: 970.7 E377 1999

### *My Relatives Say*

2001

Traditional Dakota Stories as Told by Mary Louise Defender Wilson

Call Number: 970.7 M995 Dakota

### *Un de' che cha pi: The Way We Are*

2003—Mary Louise Defender Wilson

Call Number: 970.7 U541 Dakota

### *Defender-Wilson, Mary Louise*

General Information File Biography

## Online Resources

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### [Mary Louise Defender Wilson](#)

Ann Erling—Dakota Datebook Archive on the Prairie Public Newsroom website

### [SHSND Photobook](#)

State Historical Society of North Dakota's Online Search Portal for all digitized photographs

### [Digital Horizons](#)

Online consortium of historic photographs from the collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota

### [WorldCat](#)

State Historical Society of North Dakota's publication search portal

## External Resources

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### [Mary Louise Defender Wilson](#)

North Dakota Native American Hall of Honor website

### [The Miss Indian America Pageant in Sheridan, Wyoming](#)

Gregory Nickerson—Wyoming History website

## State Archives

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For more information related to the collections and resources available at the North Dakota State Archives, please email [archives@nd.gov](mailto:archives@nd.gov) or call (701) 328-2668.



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