

John Adams Walters, Sr. Papers, 1905-1958 (8 Ms. Boxes)

Processed by Susan Wheatley, 2002

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Biographical Sketch

John Adams Walters, Sr. was born on January 25, 1877 in Estill County, Kentucky to William Henry and Martha Wilson Walters. Mr. Walters received an eighth grade education in the common schools of Estill County. On January 13, 1898 Adams married Jennie Mable Easter in Estill County. Out of the thirteen children they had ten lived to adulthood with twins Virgil and Myrtle dying in early infancy and Richard Carl Walter drowning in the Kentucky River in 1917 at age nine.

The Walters' family entire life was spent in and around the Kentucky River. Mr. Walters worked in log booms for 50 cents per day and rode log rafts down the Kentucky River. In 1900 the family moved to Ford Kentucky, where Mr. Walters worked at Burt and Brabb Lumber Company. In 1906 Adams was employed as a laborer at U.S. Lock 10 on the Kentucky River at Boonesborough. The next year he became lockmaster at Lock 10. In 1912 Walters was transferred to Lock 7 at High Bridge on the Kentucky as lockmaster. Two years later he was transferred back to Lock 10 and remained there as lockmaster until he retired in October 1941. His son J.A.Walters, Jr., briefly replaced his father, but soon left for service in World War II. John Adams Walters, Sr. was reinstated as lockmaster until his son returned from the war in 1946 to assume the lockmaster position. Walters, Sr., lived in the lockmaster house until 1952. He died on November 21, 1959 and was buried in the Richmond Cemetery.

Scope and Content Note

The John Adams Walters, Sr. papers consist of two collections that have been assembled into one. In the journals Walters had carefully recorded the daily water levels and weather activities, at Lock 10, near Boonesborough on the Kentucky River. The seventy five volumes cover the years 1905 to 1946. The journals and diaries reflect life styles and activities on the Kentucky River. Mr. Walters recorded the day and times various water crafts passed though Lock 10. The diaries for the most part record daily weather conditions, and family activities, travel to friends houses, the death of relatives and friends, and major river events.

Donor Information

In the mid-1980s the family of Mr. Walters donated his original daily log books and journals to the Kentucky Historical Society. In November 1996 Mrs. Dorothy Richards, one of Mr. Walters' daughters, donated his original personal diaries covering the years 1936 to 1958 to the Eastern Kentucky Special Collections and Archives. The archives made several photocopies of the diaries for distribution to the Walters family and sent one copy to the Kentucky Historical Society. This collection also includes photocopies of the original daily log books that are housed at the Kentucky Historical Society.

Box List

Box 1

- f.01 Survey for County Road opposite Lock # 10 near Ford, Ky., 1905. Photocopy of a notebook that included survey plats and diagrams as well as measurements of each section on the road.
- f.02 Boonesborough Lockmaster Time books for the years 1907-1941. These photocopied pages show names of men employed by the lockmaster and the hours they worked.
- f.03 - 33 Boonesborough Lockmaster Log books, January 13, 1905- December 31, 1926. These photocopied volumes record the weather, river conditions and temperature and water level above and below the lock.

Box 02

- f.01 - 37 Boonesborough Lockmaster Log books, January 1, 1927 - September 1, 1946. Photocopies. January 1928 is missing.

Box 03

- f.01 - 12 Daily Journals tell about life on the Kentucky River prior to World War II. Mr Walters talks about weather, river conditions and events, his garden, family activities and people in the neighborhood. February 3, 1936 - December 31, 1946.

Box 04

- f.01 - 12 Daily Journals from January 1, 1947 - December 28, 1958.

Box 05

- f.01 - 07 Photocopies of daily journals, January 1, 1936 - December 30, 1942.

Box 06

- f.01 - 05 Photocopies of daily journals, January 1, 1943 - December 30, 1947.

Box 07

- f.01 - 05 Photocopies of daily journals, January 1, 1948 - December 30, 1952.

Box 08

- f.01 - 06 Photocopies of daily journals, January 1, 1953 - December 30, 1958.