

January 2016

## W.R. Walter Correspondence

W. R. Walter 1856-

Maine State Library

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Walter, W. R.

(North Waldoboro), March 1856

North Waldoboro, July 16, 1941.

Maine State Library,

Augusta, Maine.

Dear Officials:

Your second letter relative to my book, "Life's Pomes", was received yesterday and was much surprised to learn the good rating they received.

Have received many commendations from friends <sup>in</sup> the collection with just ordinary feelings of appreciation, but when such a good rating from such a high source was given them, humanity asserted itself, causing a feeling of a pardonable bit of pride.

You ask for a biography of my life, but I fear it would be wearisome to give it from childhood's earliest memories up to the time the poems were written. However, will do the best possible to make it interesting, knowing that with your alert minds you can speedily skip all that seems to you unnecessary, and are free to do so.

Was born in the month of March 1856 so near midnight that father and mother never could agree whether it was the 22d or 23d. But while thinking my mother would know best, my father's judgement (the 22d) was adopted for the selfish reason that freedom from parental rule would come one day sooner.

Nearly all of my life has been spent on a farm, in a cooper shop and in a mill. Was put in the work harness early in childhood by reason of stringent times and a large family to support. Have known father to <sup>haul</sup> two cords of hard wood five miles to pay for one barrel of flour, which is one example to show the hardships of the times.

My early education? was equally as difficult. Under the old district system each scholar drew a certain amount of money, and the number of scholars in a district determined the number of weeks of school each district would be legally entitled to. Our district had so few scholars that one term at least had but six weeks school, while the district above had twelve. Have known father to keep his boys at home for work that had to be done for a week or

so after the term began. That little "red schoolhouse, cherished so sweetly <sup>stands</sup> in memory, still intact, owned by the Methodist church of North Waldoboro, and occupied by its auxiliaries.

In later years was spent in a private school at Waldoboro village and a few terms in a high school in the same village, which completed my schooling until 22 years old, when a course was taking in a business college at Manchester, N. H. From there I went to Sutton, Mass. and Grafton, where a year was spent in labor. From there a call came to come home as father had become too feeble to carry on the farm and mill, which was turned over to an elder brother and myself. After several years the property was divided, jointly becoming responsible for the support of our parents. My business vision began to expand, and, abandoning the old mill, which was located on a small stream, a two story building 30x 80 ft. <sup>situated on the Medoma river ~~was built~~</sup> at a cost of \$6000 and the first dollar put in it was hired. The business consisted of long and short lumber. The mill was built in 1889 and was operated quite steadily by myself up to last spring when ill health forbad further work. The mill is now in the hands of a son-in-law.

Speaking of education, which is a broad term, the greatest and best knowledge to which I ever attained is when ascertaining how little I knew. And that reminds me of what the late President Theodore Roosevelt said in a speech at the University of Egypt, as he toured the world after his last term expired as President: "I have just begun my education".

In 1880 I united with the Methodist church, "believing that God is and that He is a rewarder of all those who diligently seek Him", and have been trying to "add to that faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperence, to temperence patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness charity". Have made some sorry expositions of it but it has been, and still is, all my hope and stay.

Married Addie L. Sidlinger in 1887 from which union one daughter was born, now the wife of Edwin G. Miller with seven children as a result, ranging from 19 down to 4 years--all happy, healthy and husky, and a comforting factor in the last lap of the lives of Mrs. and W. R. Walter. Thank you!

July 11, 1941

Mr. W. R. Walter  
North Waldoboro  
Maine

Dear Mr. Walter:

Reports have reached us concerning a book of your poems which has recently been published. We have not yet experienced the pleasure of seeing the book, but we shall hope to do so.

Perhaps you may be interested in the Maine Author Collection, which is an exhibit of about a thousand volumes written by Maine people. We have been delighted to find such enthusiasm among our authors. They inscribe and present these books, and also supply us with biographical information. Of course such a collection is fascinating at present, and steadily increases in value.

We have not found biographical information about you, and shall have to rely upon your kindness to tell us whether or not we may have the privilege of claiming you as a Maine author.

Very truly yours

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Encl--1



North Waldoboro, July 12, 1941.

Maine State Library,

Augusta, Maine.

Dear Officials:

Was somewhat surprised to receive a letter from you in today's mail relative to a book of poems of my authorship. In writing the poems I had no idea of being more than an amateur. They were written more for a pastime than any thought of notoriety or financial gain, but at the urgent request of close friends and the Pastor, Rev. George B. Davis, who wrote the foreword, I have had what could be salvaged from these laid aside and forgotten in a little book, thinking perhaps they might be of some little good to someone.

You will receive a copy of the book under separate cover, and, if not too much tresspass upon your valuable time, would appreciate your judgment on the collection.

Sincerely yours,

W. R. Walter.

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July 14, 1941

Mr. W. R. Walter  
North Waldoboro  
Maine

Dear Mr. Walter:

The complimentary copy of LIFE'S POEMS has been received; and we are glad of the opportunity to include these verses in the Maine Author Collection.

They have the charm of simplicity, and love of nature and fellow man, mingled with a quiet humor and wholesome philosophy. We are certain that your friends rejoice in your happy decision to gather them into one book.

Perhaps sometime you will be kind enough to help us complete our information about you as an author. We appreciate the assistance of our authors very much; and we do not have a record of your place and date of birth. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Please accept our good wishes for LIFE'S POEMS, and our sincere thanks for your generous presentation of the exhibit copy.

Very truly yours

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hmj  
Encl--4 $\frac{1}{2}$  postal refund

July 19, 1941

Mr. W. R. Walter  
North Waldoboro  
Maine

Dear Mr. Walter:

Thank you very much for sending us the  
biographical information for which we asked.  
This will make our file complete, and we  
appreciate your cooperation.

Very truly yours

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(The biographical information is attached to  
the first and second pages under this author's  
correspondence).