Ohio University
Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center for
Archives & Special Collections

Athens County Pioneer Association
Collection
MSS# 51

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Author: Archibald B. Walker
Title: Athens County Pioneer Association
Date: 1841-1883
Abstract: Letters, ledger, and newspaper articles
Quantity: .3 cu. ft.

BIOGRAPHY OF

The Pioneer Association of Athens County was formed in Athens, Ohio on December 26, 1868. The object of this association was to “gather together and preserve reminiscences, statistics, or other information connected with the settlements and history of our town, (Athens) county, and the southern part of Ohio previous to the year 1820.” The Pioneer Association maintained a policy of preserving and recollecting special historical events in Ohio and surrounding areas. The association served the purpose of recording a large part of the history of Athens and Athens County. (See Box 1, Folder 17)

Among the association’s members were prominent merchants, lawyers, and/or political figures in the Athens area during the latter half of the 19th century. A list of members can be obtained by referring to either the Centennial Contribution of the Pioneer Association (Folder 2) or the History of Hocking Valley, Ohio pages 210-219.

It’s not exactly clear when the association disbanded, however, 1886 has been proposed as a possibility. The History of Hocking Valley, Ohio provides, perhaps, the most comprehensive, detailed sketch of the association’s activities.
SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

This collection contains materials covering a 42 year period (1841-1883). The majority of the contents are correspondence and/or letters written to or by Archibald B. Walker. Walker was the recording secretary for the association from its organization in 1868 until his death in 1886. The correspondence deals mainly with the dispute over the location of the first public library in the Northwest Territory, activities of the association, and information regarding the formation of the association. Mr. Walker prepared biographical sketches of several Athenians that are also contained in the collection.

“In Memoriam,” contains a chronological account of the deaths of 23 association members. This ledger contains biographical information on most of these individuals. Also authored by Walker is the “Centennial Contribution of the Pioneer Association of Athens County,” which contains various types of historical information. Included in this ledger is information concerning Athens County and the surrounding areas, historical information on other states of the Union, and information that would be pertinent to colonial and/or pioneer days in the United States. A table of contents is located in the index of the ledger; there is a copy of this table in Folder 2.

Other items contained in the collection are a facsimile of the Ulster County Gazette (New York), January 4, 1800; newspaper articles concerning the first public library in the Northwest Territory, 1875-1879 (all articles from the Cincinnati Gazette); a letter regarding the first books purchased for the Ames Library (1879); and other historical/social information concerning Athens.


ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

These records are organized into the following series:

Series I: Journals/Record Books
Series II: Correspondence/Letters
Series III: Information/Biographical Sketches

Abbreviations with in content list:

N.W. – Northwest
TLS – Typed letter, signed
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Restrictions: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Ohio University Libraries.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to cite the collection name, collection number, and the Ohio University Libraries, in all footnotes and bibliographical references.

Accession Number: Unknown

Provenance: The Ohio University Archives received a portion of the collection by donation from Miss Lucy Ballard in the early 1960s. She donated the ledger, “Centennial Contributions from the Pioneer Association,” which her grandfather, A.B. Walker, prepared. The remaining materials were a gift from the Athens County Historical Society and Museum.

Property Rights: Ohio University retains all property rights to the collection.

Copyrights: Ohio University retains all copyrights unless retained by the donor, other correspondents, or other artists.

Photoduplication: Ohio University will entertain requests to photocopy reasonable amounts of material from the collection for the convenience of individual researchers.

Processing: Carolyn Copper processed the collection on April 1986.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.

CONTAINER LIST

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2  “Centennial Contributions from the Pioneer Association of Athens County” 1876, 320 pgs. 21.25x35 cm. (see folder for list of contents)

**Series II: Correspondence/Letters**

3  First Public Library in the N.W. Territory (Dispute) 1841-1969, 4 items

4  First Public Library in the N.W. Territory (Dispute) 1877-1878, 15 items (most with A.B. Walker)
First Public Library in N.W. Territory (Dispute)  
1879-1880, 12 items

First Public Library in the N.W. Territory  
(Dispute) 1878-1879, 8 items, includes copy of correspondence pertaining to the first public library in the N.W. Territory – November 8, 1877 to October 26, 1878, prepared by A.B. Walker, 20 pgs.

Athens County Pioneer Association, general correspondence, 1856-1883, 28 items

Letter from L. Brown concerning the first books published for the Ames Library, 1879, 3 pgs.

Letters to A.B. Walker, 1833-1877, 16 items

TLS to Mrs. George Pilcher from Carl D. Sheppard, 1 pg., December 29, 1937

Series III: Information/Biographical Sketches

Early military matters in the N.W. Territory, 2 pgs. prepared by A.B. Walker, no date, limits of Athens County, April 7, 1874 prepared by A.B. Walker, 3 pgs.

Biographical information on Edwin Corner, 8 pgs. prepared by Alice C. Brown, May 25, 1881
Biographical information on John Beasley, 1 pg. prepared by A.B. Walker
Biographical information on William Smith Doan, 4 pgs. prepared by Charles Doan, January 1871
Biographical information on Phebe Sprague, 1 pg. October 7, 1872
Biographical information on Betsey P. Walker, 1 pg. prepared by A.B. Walker, October 7, 1872
Biographical information on M.A. Patrick, William on, William Dyson, no date, 1 pg.
Biographical information on Ezra Walker, 1 pg. no date
Biographical information on Alexander Caldwell, 1
Biographical information on Samuel Brown, 1 pg.
September 25, 1872
Ancestry of Wilkin Family, early 1700s to 1830, no date
Biographical information on John Brown, 1 pg.
prepared by Pearly Brown (son), no date

13 Written account of memorial services held for
William Henry Harrison in Athens, April 21,
1841 prepared by A.B. Walker, 1 pg.

14 Information on early schools in Athens County,
Ohio, no date, 1 pg.

2, No. 88, Saturday, January 4, 1800

16 Newspaper articles regarding the dispute about the
First Public Library in the N.W. Territory
1875-1879, 8 items, most are from the
*Cincinnati Gazette*

17 Historical information about the Pioneer
Association by Edna McKnight, 1 pg. no date
TL from Clark Williams to Edna McKnight, November
13, 1967, 1 pg.