

## Finding Aid to the Thorstina Jackson Walters & Émile Walters Papers

**Walters, Thorstina Jackson, 1887-1959, and Émile, 1893-1971**

Thorstina Jackson Walters and Émile Walters Papers, 1918-1959

1.4 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 630

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### OVERVIEW

**Links:** Finding Aid to the [Thorstina and Émile Walters Photograph Collection](#).

**Access:** The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

**Provenance:** Donated by Émile and Thorstina Walters, Poughkeepsie, New York, March 4, April 8, May 1, 1956 (Acc. 630).

**Property rights:** The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

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**Citation:** [Identification of item]. Thorstina Jackson & Émile Walters Papers, MS 630, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

### BIOGRAPHY

Thorstina Jackson was born, according to the 1910 Census, July 1887 in Pembina County, N.D., the daughter of Icelandic immigrants, Thorleifur Jóakimsson and Gudrún (Jónsdóttir) Jackson. In 1903, the family homesteaded near Leslie, Saskatchewan. Thorstina attended United College in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where she obtained a B.A. in modern languages. She taught several years at the high school and junior college level and following World War I, she served as a social worker in France and

Germany. In 1924, Thorstina did post-graduate work at Columbia University and began her lecture and writing career. In 1926, she lectured in Iceland on the Icelandic settlements in America, for which she received the Icelandic Order of the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon, from King Kristian of Denmark and Iceland. In 1928, Miss Jackson married Émile Walters. For having taken a prominent part in the Millennial Celebration in Iceland in 1930, Mrs. Walters was awarded the Order of the Millennial Celebration. From 1933 to 1942, Thorstina was employed as a social worker for the New York City Department of Welfare, and thereafter served in the Censorship and War Information Department until June 1944. She was then forced to resign due to the advancement of multiple sclerosis. That same year, Mrs. Walters was awarded a fellowship from the University of Minnesota to compile a history of the Icelandic settlements in North Dakota, which resulted in her book, *Modern Sagas*, published in 1953. In 1926, Thorstina had published *Saga Íslendinga Nordur-Dakota* and in 1930, she had translated and prepared for publication Matthias Thordarson's *Vinland Voyages*. Mrs. Walters also did a considerable amount of free-lance writing. She lived with her husband, Émile, on their farm at Poughkeepsie, New York, until her death on February 2, 1959.

Émile Walters was born at Winnipeg, Manitoba, on January 31, 1893, the son of Icelandic immigrants, Paul and Bjorg (Jónsdóttir) Valtýr. Since his father died very young, Émile was brought to Gardar, North Dakota, in 1898, where he grew up, and later became a naturalized United States citizen. Having always wanted to become a painter, Émile studied at the Art Institute in Chicago, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the Tiffany Foundation.

In 1928, he married Thorstina Jackson. Mr. Walters became a well-known landscape artist, especially noted as a painter of Iceland and Greenland. He exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the United States, Canada, and England. His works of art are represented in permanent collections throughout the world including the Smithsonian Institution, Fogg Museum, the National Museum of Iceland, and the University Museum at Bangkok, Thailand. He has received many prizes and decorations, including the Icelandic Order, and the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon, in 1939, from King Kristian of Denmark and Iceland. Mr. Walters died in 1977.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Thorstina (Jackson) and Émile Walters Papers** consists of the papers of Thorstina and Émile Walters, with those of Mrs. Walters being larger. Mrs. Walters' papers have been divided into six series: correspondence, manuscripts, subject, biographical files, pamphlets, and newspaper clippings.

The [Correspondence Series](#), which includes both incoming and outgoing letters, is arranged chronologically, dating from 1918 to 1958. The correspondence covers mainly the period from 1940 to 1956, dealing with her research and book *Modern Sagas*. It includes letters from Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Senator John F. Kennedy, Margaret Truman, Gov. Thomas Dewey, Lowell Thomas, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

The [Manuscripts Series](#) of Mrs. Walters are typed copies arranged alphabetically by title, and include her father's handwritten manuscripts in Icelandic for the books he published.

The [Subject Files Series](#) contain a variety of material, mostly Icelandic related, including a diary dating from 1884 to 1887, which is written in Icelandic by a North Dakota pioneer.

The [Biographical Files Series](#) contain a variety of manuscripts, newspaper clippings, and some correspondence on prominent individuals of Icelandic descent.

The [Pamphlets Series](#), arranged alphabetically by subject, cover a wide range of topics, again mostly Icelandic related.

The [Newspaper Clippings Series](#), also extensive, have been arranged by subject, with the largest files covering Mrs. Walters' career, plus reviews of *Modern Sagas*.

The **Émile Walters Papers** are divided into two series: Correspondence and Subject Files. The [Correspondence Series](#), both incoming and outgoing, is arranged chronologically and covers mainly the years from 1940 to 1949. The [Subject Files Series](#) includes articles and newspaper clippings on Mr. Walters' career and about Theodore Roosevelt.

## SEPARATIONS RECORD

The following non-manuscript items were removed from the *Thorstina and Émile Walters Papers* and have been sent to the section indicated.

### **Books** (Institute book collection)

- *Saga Íslandinga i Nordur-Dakota*, by Thorstina Jackson Walters, Winipeg, Canada, 1926

### **Newspapers** (Institute newspaper collection)

- *Fálkinn*, Reykjavik, Iceland, Altingis-hatidin 930-1930, June 21, 1930
- *Löberg*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 60th Anniversary edition, September 25, 1946
- *Heimskringla*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 60th Anniversary edition, September 25, 1946 (Incomplete)

### **Photographs** (Institute photograph collection)

- The collection (475 items) includes photographs and post cards covering a wide variety of subjects to include Iceland, famous Icelanders and Icelandic-Americans, Icelandic settlements in America, the Millennial Celebration and Icelandic Art.

### **Paintings** (Institute paintings collection)

- Painting by Émile Walters, done early in his career, 16x20 cm.

### **Artifacts** (Institute artifacts collection)

- Sterling silver spoon with the letter "E," made by Paul Valtyr and given to his son, Émile Walters, on the occasion of showing his first tooth.

## BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Content
1/1	Finding aid, and Biographical material

## Thorstina Jackson Walters Papers

### Correspondence Series

1/2	1918-1929
1/3	1930-1939
1/4	1940-1944
1/5	1945
1/6	1946-1947
1/7	1948-1949
1/8	1950-1953
1/9	1954
1/10	1955-1956
1/11	1957-1958
1/12	Undated

### Manuscripts Series

1/13	"When the American School Moved in on the Icelandic Pioneers on the Dakota Prairie"
1/14	"Christmas in Iceland"
1/15	Leif Ericsson
2/1	"The Hermit of the North Atlantic"
2/2	"The Hermit of the North Atlantic"
2/3	"Iceland Looks Ahead"
2/4	"Iceland, Past and Present"
2/5	"Iceland, the Hermit of the North Atlantic"
2/6	"The Hermit of the North Atlantic"
2/7	"Icelandic Athletics"
2/8	"The Icelandic Colonies in the United States"
2/9	"The Icelandic Immigrants and Alaska"
2/10	"Introducing America to Iceland"
2/11	"The Land of Light and Shadow"
2/12	"Life On and Around a Frozen Lake"
2/13	"The Long Road of the Immigrant Boy Was Lighted by His Own Electrical Inventions— Chester Hjortur Thordarson"
2/14	"The Queen, the Poodle and I"
2/15	"Sagas of Western Vikings"
2/16	"Vilhjalmur Stefansson"
2/17	"A visit to Iceland's Kitchens"
2/18	"War Clouds over Sagaland"
2/19	"The Vikings" ( <i>Modern Sagas</i> ) excerpts
2/20	"The Vikings" ( <i>Modern Sagas</i> ) criticisms
2/21	Thorleifur Jóakimsson Jackson manuscript, p. 1-123

- 2/22 Thorleifur Jóakimsson Jackson manuscript, p. 1-100
- 2/23 Thorleifur Jóakimsson Jackson manuscript, p. 101-234
- 2/24 Thorleifur Jóakimsson Jackson misc. manuscript pages
- 2/25 Einar Kvaran manuscript -- "Hopes" (translation by Thorstina Jackson Walters)
- 2/26 Miscellaneous -- Canada and Confederation

### **Subject Files Series**

- 2/27 Althing Millennium Commemoration
- 2/28 Diary (August, 1884 - August, 1887) of Icelandic Pioneers in North Dakota (in Icelandic)
- 2/29 Miscellaneous
- 2/30 Music, including Icelandic National Anthem
- 3/1 Notes of Thorstina Jackson Walters, written at Akra, N.D.
- 3/2 Poems (authors unknown)
- 3/3 Programs, 1930-1939
- 3/4 Research material - Icelanders in American

### **Biographical Files Series**

- 3/5 Dr. Olafur Bjornson (1869-1937)
- 3/6 Brandur Jonsson Brandson (1874-1944)
- 3/7 William A. Craige (1867-1957)
- 3/8 Dr. Gudmundur J. Gislason ( -1934)
- 3/9 Judge Gudmundur Grimson (1878-1965) Family
- 3/10 S.K. Hall (1877- )
- 3/11 Guðrún Jónsdóttir Jackson (1845-1912)
- 3/12 Sveinbjorn Johnson (1883-1946)
- 3/13 Einar Jónsson
- 3/14 Dora Sumarlidason Lewis
- 3/15 Dr. Harriet G. McGraw
- 3/16 Vilhjalmur Stefansson (1879-1962)

### **Pamphlets Series**

- Canada—
- 3/17 *Opid Bréf til Séra Rögnvaldar Péturssonar og Heimfararljóð Dularfull yrirbrigdi og Fleira*, S.B. Benedictsson, Winnipeg, Canada, 1930;  
*Saga Heimfararmálsins*, Hjalmar A. Bergman, Winnipeg, Canada, 1919;  
*Gjódabóbók*, 59. ársþing, 1943, Winnipeg Canada; "Sameiningin," May, 1900,  
December, 1925
- 3/18 "A Skald in Canada" by Watson Kirkconnell; *The Icelandic Canadian*, Winter, 1947;  
Autumn, 1957
- 3/19 Miscellaneous
- 3/20 G.B. Gulagson

3/21 Iceland  
4/1 Iceland  
4/2 *Ríkardur Jónsson: Myndir, 1930*  
4/3 Miscellaneous  
4/4 Miscellaneous  
4/5 Multiple Sclerosis  
4/6 North Dakota

### **Newspaper Clippings Series**

4/7 Iceland  
4/8 Icelandic America  
4/9 Miscellaneous  
4/10 *Modern Sagas* reviews  
4/11 Multiple Sclerosis  
4/12 North Dakota  
4/13 Martin Talbert  
4/14 Thorstina Jackson Walters  
5/1 Scrapbook of Thorstina Jackson Walters articles

### **Émile Walters Papers**

#### **Correspondence Series**

4/15 1921, 1928-1939  
4/16 1940-1948  
4/17 1950-1959

#### **Subject Files Series**

4/18 Articles  
4/19 Biographical manuscripts  
4/20 Exhibition programs  
4/21 Miscellaneous  
4/22 Newspaper clippings  
4/23 Theodore Roosevelt