**George N. Wakefield Papers**

**Date Range: 1936-1937, 1982**

**Historic Homestead Town Hall Museum**

**41 North Krome Avenue, Homestead, FL 33030**

**Creator(s):** George N. Wakefield

**Extent:**  1.68 linear feet (4 boxes)

**Accession Numbers:** 2012.006 and 2015.005

**Language:** English

**Processed by:** Katherine Fleming

**Acquisition Information**:

John Fredrick received these papers from George Wakefield and later donated them to the museum.

**Cite as:** George N. Wakefield Papers

**Biographical and Organizational History:**

George Norton Wakefield (February 18, 1899-January 20, 1984) was born at Carrabelle, Florida, to Francis Bryan Wakefield (1863-1935) and Ethel Kilbourn Wakefield (1872-1956). He is buried at Forest Meadows Memorial Park East in Gainesville, Florida. Wakefield married Helen Margaret Draper (June 9, 1904-December 17, 1991) on August 11, 1927, in Boykins, Virginia. Her parents were Andrew J Draper (1861-1918) and Margaret Jane Draper (1864-1956). Helen trained both as an elementary teacher and a home economics teacher. Together they had two children, Barbara Gene Wakefield (who married William Folger Wainwright on October 9, 1947 at Homestead, Florida), born in [May] 1929, and George Norton Wakefield, Jr. (November 29, 1931-November 23, 2004). (Information internal to the Collection, Find-a-Grave, Family Search, *A Florida Sandpiper, or A fool rushed in where angels fear to tread* by George N. Wakefield, 1982, page 29, 202)

As a child, George Wakefield’s family moved to Apalachicola, Florida, where he attended elementary and high school. While in secondary schools, he spent his vacations on his grandfather’s farm near Carrabelle. After graduating from Chapman High School in 1917, he enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Florida. In June 1918, Wakefield obtained a job as a Government Checker in a Cantonment at Edgewater, Maryland. When the War Department called for registrations for the Student Army Training Corps, he returned to the University of Florida and was inducted into the service on October 23, 1918. Discharged in December, he returned to Apalachicola. For the next three years, he worked various jobs to accumulate the funds to return to the University. In 1921, he secured a scholarship from Franklin County to the College of Agriculture at the University of Florida. With odd jobs and the scholarship, he was able to graduate with a B.S.A. degree in 1925.

In August of 1925, the Columbia County School Board employed Wakefield to teach Vocational Agriculture at the high school in Fort White, Florida. While at Fort White, he organized the first chapter of the Future Farmers of Florida and the group participated in the Florida State Fair in Jacksonville. To raise funds to buy an electric generator and install lights and water at the high school, the F.F.A., with Wakefield as their advisor, produced “The Fort White follies.” They also produced other plays and musicals to raise funds to send the basketball team to the district tournament.

Wakefield met his wife, Helen Draper, at Fort White. She began teaching at the primary level about the same time he began to teach there. Wakefield taught agriculture at Fort White until July 1928 when he accepted a similar position at the Plant City, Florida, high school and his wife accepted a position as director of home economics. In 1930, he resigned his position and became the vocational agriculture teacher at Homestead, Florida, teaching at both Homestead and Redland high schools. In July of 1931, he began working full-time with junior and senior high students in Homestead. Continuing his education part-time and during the summers beginning in 1927, Wakefield received his M.A. degree in 1932.

While in Homestead, Wakefield worked as advisor to the Future Farmers of America (F.F.A.), Homestead chapter, and his wife Helen worked with the Homestead High School 4-H girls. Wakefield was adviser to the Redland Chapter of F.F.A. at its organization in 1930 as the Royal Palm Chapter. He helped the F.F.A, Homestead Chapter, renovate and furnish their club house. The boys rebuilt the hurricane damage piano donated to the club house by Lily Lawrence Bow. The Homestead chapter of F.F.A. won first place out of all of the chapters in the state and fourth place in the national contest in 1934 (*Leader-Enterprise*, March 29, 1935). The F.F.A. Homestead chapter had a baseball team and played other groups including Walton’s Nurseries, W. D. Horne Company (Horne Hardware), Fertilizer Row, Brooker Lumber Company, and the Rotary Club.

In April 1935, nine boys went with Wakefield to visit different F.F.A. chapters on the west coast of Florida (*Leader-Enterprise*, April 19 & 26, 1935). On June 18-20, they attended the seventh annual state convention at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida (*Leader-Enterprise*, June 14 & 28, 1935). When 54 visitors from Merriam, Kansas, 42 from the F.F.A. Shawnee Mission Chapter (winners of the last F.F.A. chapter contest) visited Florida, they were guests of the Homestead chapter. Homestead presented them with George Homestead (named after George N. Wakefield), a foot-long baby alligator, for a mascot and in turn received a walnut gavel and a block of wood from Shawnee’s first school building built over 100 years ago for Native Americans (*Leader-Enterprise*, December 27, 1935). On February 28, 1936, the chapter put on a play “Young and Healthy,” a comedy, at Neva King Cooper School auditorium. The chapter won the grand prize at the Dade County Tropical Fair in March 1936 (*Leader-Enterprise*, March 6, 1936). The chapter, along with the Redland chapter, even received fire fighting training so that they could fight farm and grove fires (*Leader-Enterprise*, March 13, 1936). In April 1936, nine boys went with Wakefield for a four-day tour of central Florida to visit other chapters to play baseball (*Leader-Enterprise*, April 10 & 17, 1936). Students from the chapter won the nitrate prizes in a contest sponsored by the Division of Agricultural Education of Florida (*Leader-Enterprise*, May 22, 1936).

In order to fund a trip to Merriam, Kansas, the chapter hosted a series of events including a chicken supper at the fire station and a dance at the Homestead Country Club (*Leader-Enterprise*, May 15, 1936). They made their trip in July. John Fredrick, from the chapter, won the F.F.A. district convention public speaking contest, and later won the state contest (*Leader-Enterprise*, September 4, 1936) and student Myron Grennell was elected state president of F.F.A. (*Leader-Enterprise*, May 15 & June 19, 1936). Wakefield wrote articles for the local newspaper to describe their trip. At that time, they had “motion pictures” of their tour (*Leader-Enterprise*, September 25, 1935).

Wakefield and his wife were also active in the Homestead Home Demonstration Club, Ag Club, Teachers Bridge Club, and Supper Club. George was a member of Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce, superintendent of the St. John’s Episcopal Church Sunday School, chairman of a committee on the beautification of State Road 4A, and chairman of the Christmas Cheer Committee in 1936. George worked with the South Dade Boy Scouts. His wife belonged to the church’s Women’s Auxiliary and the Order of the Eastern Star.

M. A. Barker of the Redland School had been judged master vocational agricultural teacher of the state in 1933 and Wakefield came in second in 1935. (*Leader-Enterprise*, March 29, 1935). Wakefield then won the rated master teacher, or the Best Agriculture Instructor in Florida in 1935-1936 at the vocational agriculture teachers convention in Daytona Beach (*Leader-Enterprise*, August 21, 1936). He went on to compete as Florida’s candidate for Master Teacher of the South in 1937. The notebooks in this collection were compiled by Wakefield as his application for this award.

Wakefield resigned his position as an agricultural teacher in February 1944 to develop a new business, the South Dade Quick Freezing Plant, a quick-freeze and locker plant. The company ended up in bankruptcy in June 1948. Wakefield blamed his “lack of know-how,” the popularity of home freezers after World War II, and a lack of capital for the failure (Wakefield 1982, 271). He then began teaching war veterans at Redland High School. A few years later, he applied to the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, a branch of the United States Department of State and received an appointment with the United States Overseas Mission Quito, Ecuador, in 1951. In early November, he was accepted as an advisor of agriculture education, resigned his teaching position at Redland High School, and traveled to Washington, D.C. for training. He finished the course in December and left for Ecuador. From 1957 until 1961, he worked for the United States Agency for International Development in Port-au-Prince, Haiti (Wakefield 1982:31, 273-274). After he served ten years overseas, Wakefield returned to Dade County and was hired to teach Spanish at Redland Elementary School for a year. He and Helen then moved to Kendall, Florida. In 1979, they moved to the Lakes Area of Putnam County.

**Scope and Content:**

The George N. Wakefield Papers consist primarily of Wakefield’s application for “Florida’s Candidate for Master Teacher of the South.” The application is composed of nine “books” with nine chapters. Included are maps, graphs, photographic prints and other images. The collection also includes an announcement for Wakefield’s book and an article by Wakefield, not originally from Wakefield’s collection.

**Arrangement:**

“Florida’s Candidate for Master Teacher of the South” volumes are numbered and have been kept in numerical order. There are duplicate copies of four of the volumes. This is followed by materials that were not in his original application.

**Subjects:**

Agricultural education—Florida.

Agriculture—Study and teaching.

Agriculture—Vocational guidance.

George Norton Wakefield, 1899-1984.

Teachers—Florida—Biography.

**Related Collections:**

Report of Homestead Chapter, Future Farmers of America, 1936 (AC 2012.005)

Box Folder Contents

1 1A **Introduction, pages i-xxv and unpaginated [11** **pages]**

**Original copy**

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Wakefield’s biography

The Settlement of Dade County

Community organizations

The importance of farming in the county

The school system in Homestead

School transportation

School finance

Wakefield’s letters of recommendation

1 1B **Introduction, pages i-xxv and unpaginated**

**Carbon copy**

Missing page xvi Homestead in 1915

Missing page xviii Municipal Power Plant – Homestead

Missing page xix Avocado Drive, Homestead, Fla.

Includes 3 maps for bus routes [xxi in copy 1A has all three on one map]

Includes 2 copies of chart [xxi in copy 1A has one copy]

Carbon copies of letters of recommendation

Missing back cover

1 2 **Chapter I – Evidence of Knowledge of Community, pages 1-182**

Acquainting self with community

Soil types

Topography

Climate

Precipitation

Winds and sunshine

Tourists and recreation

Transportation

Agricultural enterprises

Types of farming

Program of work for 1935-1936

Five-year agricultural program

1 3A **Chapters II & III – Types of Instruction and Enrollment, pages 183-201**

**Original copy**

Types and enrollment

All-day classes

Part-time classes

Evening classes

Day-unit classes

Missing page 193, Figure 114, Camping trip

1 3B **Chapters II & III – Types of Instruction and Enrollment, pages 183-201**

**Carbon copy**

Page with Figure 107 has a plastic ruler from Hyde Shipping Corporation [probably an unintended addition]

Missing page 185, Figure 107a

Two copies of Figure 108

Two copies of Figure 109

Two copies of Figure 111

Figure 112 map listed as 113

Two copies of Figure 113

Missing page 193, Figure 114

Missing page 194, Figure 114a

Missing page 195, Figure 114b

Two copies of Figure 115

Figure 118 Evening classes is a different image than that in 3A

Missing back cover

2 4 **Chapter IV – Preparation for and Methods of Instruction, pages 202-277**

All-day classes

Selecting the type of farming, Selecting enterprises, Analysis of enterprises into jobs, Course calendar, Methods of teaching, Lesson plans, Individualized instruction

Unit-day classes

Methods of instruction, Lesson plans

Part-time classes

Survey blank, Course of study, Methods of teaching, Lesson plans

Evening classes

Course of study, Methods of teaching, Schedule of tour, Lesson plans

Includes insert—Suggestions for home landscaping

2 5A **Chapter V – Supervised Practice Program, pages 278-373**

**Original copy**

All-day classes

Practice program for 1935-1936, Results of Practice work for 1935, Quality of products grown, Comparison of student and county yields, Improved practices, Farm mechanics skills

Unit-day classes

Practice program for 1935-1936, Results of practice work

Part-time classes

Results of practice work for 1935, Practice work planned for 1936, National Youth Administration Project

Cooperation

Problems, Potatoes, Poultry, Beautification, Miscellaneous

Evening classes

Course of study, Improved practices adopted, Improved practices for 1935, Project records

Missing page 362, Figure 178

Missing page 371, Figure 187

Roy Martin, 1935-1939 [student accomplishments], page 290

Robert Grubbs, 1935-1939 [student accomplishments], page 294

Images in Copy 5A Record Books, not included in index:

Pink Lamb farm—4 photographs

D. K. Ritch farm—4 photographs

Carl Deden farm—3 photographs

Leo West farm—2 photographs

W. F. Beam farm—2 photographs

J. M. Tate farm—4 photographs

Arrant farm—3 photographs

3 5B **Chapter V – Supervised Practice Program, unpaginated [pages 278-373]**

**Carbon copy**

Missing Figure 122

Missing Figure 126

Missing Figure 131

Missing Figure 132

Missing Figure 133

Missing Figure 165

Missing Figure 170

Missing Figure 178

Missing Figure 186

Missing Record Books

3 6 **Chapter VI – Physical Equipment, pages 374-399**

Button attached to cover “Go Democratic” with image of a donkey

School plant

Classroom furniture

Agricultural bulletins

Reference books

Magazines

Farm shop and land laboratory equipment

Missing page 398, Figure 203

3 7A **Chapter VII – Group Leadership Activities, pages 400-473**

**Original copy**

FFA competition

F.F.A. activities

Program of work for 1935-1936, Accomplishment report of 1935-1936

[Route schedule for the Kansas trip]

[Correspondence]

Farm and civic organizations

Former pupils who are farming

Contacts with former pupils

Community service program

Individual Services

Instructor’s weekly work

Figure 205, page 408 is a photograph of F.F.A. members (1935-1936). The individuals were identified by John Frederick on a photocopy in his collection.

Top Row: Mr. Wakefield, Randy Caves, Labon Bishop, Clayton Lehman, ? Van Winkle

Middle Row: Robert Grubbs, Ed Little, Virgil Grennell, Alvin Simmons, Virgil Bailey, Earl Rohrer, Richard Mattson, and Billy Moffett

Bottom Row: Glen Simmons, J. B. Cloninger, ?, Tommy Moffett, Francis Irwin, John Fredrick, Whitney Beam

Record Book [records of student work, not paginated]

Frank Irwin

Robert Klick

Laban Bishop

Benj. Pulley

Aubrey Chesline

James Burny Redd

Whitney Beam

Earl Smith

James Gibbs

Alvin Simmons

Alton Horne

Eugene Allen

James Simmons

Glen Simmons

Mrs. Marion Campbell

Mrs. Gus Hooks

Missing page 425, Figures 214 [In copy 7B listed as Figure 198]

Missing page 428, Figures 216 [In copy 7B listed as Figure 200]

Missing page 438, Figures 227 [In copy 7B listed as Figure 211]

Missing page 457, Figure 238 W.P.A. Sewing project [also missing in 7B]

Missing pages before page 444 [these are in copy 7B] are examples of the block-stamped pages in the F.F.A. alligator hide covered book that placed second in national FFA competition

3 7B **Chapter VII – Group Leadership Activities, unpaginated [pages 400-473]**

**Carbon copy**

Figures are misnumbered

Missing page 430, Figure 202 [218]

Missing page 432, Figure 204 [220]

Missing page 433, Figure 205 [221]

Missing page 434, Figure 206 [222]

Missing page 435, Figure 207 [223]

Missing page 437, Figure 210 [226]

Missing page 445, Figure [230]

Missing page 448, Figure 216 [232]

Missing page 455, Figure [237]

Missing page 457, Figure [238]

Missing page 459, Figure 222 [239]

Missing page 464, Figures 226 [243]

Missing back cover

4 8 **Chapter VIII – Publicity Program, pages 473-565**

**Original copy**

Newspaper publicity

Includes (page 515) copy of *Future Farmer News*, June 2, 1936, published by the Homestead Chapter of F.F.A.

Includes (page 536) invitation to a series of musical teas

Addresses

Fairs and exhibits

Parents and son banquet

Musical teas

Mother’s Day reception

Joint Rotary, Lions, and F. F. A.

Luncheon

Entertaining Shawnee-Mission Chapter

Return visit to Kansas

Radio program

Page 539, Figure 250, Shawnee-Mission Chapter Annual, is attached to back inside cover

4 9 **Chapter IX – Reports and Reporting, pages 566-615 and unpaginated 9 pages**

Missing front and back covers

Monthly reports

Program of work

Preliminary statement of supervised practice

Final statement of supervised practice

Salary vouchers

Sample reports

4 10 **Announcement**

Shorter Printing Company, Inc. at Gainesville, Florida, July 30, 1982, announces that it has been commissioned to publish an autobiography written by George N. Wakefield entitled *A Florida Sandpiper*. LA2317.W28 A34 1982[see Museum book collection].

4 11 **Article written by Wakefield**

“Home Practice Work is Homestead’s Secret” in *Agricultural Leader’s Digest*,

March 1937, pages 27-29. The article summaries the activities and achievements of the Homestead Chapter of F.F.A. [not in original collection]