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BIOGRAPHY

Agatha Jane Rochester (1832-1896), the daughter of William Henry Rochester (1794-1934) and Georgianna Preston McDowell (1808-1839), was born at the family estate of Waveland near Bowling Green, Kentucky. Her father, a prosperous farmer, died when she was two years old, leaving a widow and four small children. Agatha had two brothers to reach manhood: William Henry (1826-1902) and James Nathaniel (1830-1850). In 1836 her mother, Georgianna Rochester, married Robert Wenn Ogden (1796-1873), who had been her husband’s proficient business manager. Their only child, Robert McDowell Ogden, was born in 1837 and died in 1838. Georgianna Rochester’s demise occurred the next year. Ogden and his four stepchildren continued residing at Waveland until his death. His will designated his stepchildren as his heirs, but also gave fifty thousand dollars for the establishment of a college for Warren County white males. Ogden College, opening its doors in 1877, was the fulfillment of his generosity. In 1927 Ogden College merged with Western Kentucky State Normal School and Teachers College, with the understanding that the name would be perpetuated in the Ogden Department of Science.

During 1846 and 1847 Agatha attended the Poplar Hill School in Frankfort, Kentucky. She then enrolled in the Spring of 1848 in The Columbia [Tennessee] Female Institute, graduating in June 1849. In 1853 Agatha married Bowling Green’s Robert F. Strange (1824-1891). After touring the east on their honeymoon, the newlyweds lived briefly at the Morehead House in Bowling Green, but soon made Waveland their home. Their children were: Nathaniel Rochester (1854-1925), David Birney (1855-1932), Georgianna Preston Barclay (b.1857), Robert Covington (1860-1861), Carrie Madison (b.1826), Frank Landon (b.1865), Robert McDowell (1868-1869), Marie Sophie (b.1870), Lizzie Sharp (b.1872), and Florence Conway (b.1876).

The Stranges were Confederate sympathizers during the Civil War. Both armies camped on their farm because of its abundance of wood and Barren River frontage. The soldiers caused much damage to their property, but in spite of these hardships Agatha and Robert were able to retain their homestead. Agatha, interested in family

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

The Collection.


**THE COLLECTION**

Writings of Agatha (Rochester) Strange comprise about one-third of the collection and are the most interesting items in the collection. Her 1852-1883 journal relates details mainly about her eastern tours, Bowling Green news, and family information. Another manuscript of importance is “House of Madison and McDowell in Kentucky,” which she copied and presented to Dr. Sylvanus Johnson in 1888. Agatha compiled two scrapbooks in the collection: one concerning 1890s’ happenings, while the other is possibly of an earlier era. Little correspondence is included (most of which is undated), but those letters dated are for the years 1864 to 1878. Additionally, there are slave records of the Rochester family and of Robert Strange.

**SHELF LIST**

**BOX 1  STRANGE Family Papers**

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Folder 2  Obituaries, etc., written by Agatha Strange  n.d.  6 items


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1949.15.1

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1. Artifacts:

2. Books:

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4. Cards, Invitations, etc.:

5. Certificates:

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8. Land Grants:

9. Magazines:

10. Newspapers: Courier-Journal Sunday Magazine, April 10, 1921
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11. Pamphlets:

    2. Watts Mill at Lost River
    3. Potter College
    4. Steamboats - unidentified
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14. Recordings:
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