

C Keefe, James F. (1923-1999), Papers, 1915-1998
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INTRODUCTION

Writings, speeches, correspondence, and photographs of James F. Keefe, a conservationist with the Missouri Conservation Commission. Keefe was also an editor, sportsman, and black powder gun enthusiast.

DONOR INFORMATION

James F. Keefe donated his papers to the University of Missouri on 7 July 1987 (Accession No. 4783). An addition to the papers was made by his son, Kevin Keefe, on 8 April 2002 (Accession No. 5902).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James F. Keefe was a conservationist with the Missouri Conservation Commission for 34 years. In 1986, he retired as the Information Officer and began his book, *The First Fifty Years of the Missouri Conservation Commission*. It was published in 1987. He was a prolific writer who wrote over 240 articles, speeches, and pamphlets.

Keefe was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on September 15, 1923, to Ruby Gail Ratliff and Festus Wade Keefe. His father was a sales manager for Brunswick-Balke-Callendar Company, and the family moved frequently- to New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Memphis, and eventually, St. Louis.

He went to high school in St. Louis and graduated in June 1941. He spent two weeks at the University of Missouri, and then went back to St. Louis to work at various jobs until he was drafted into the army on December 24, 1942. He was stationed at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas; Shepherd Field, Texas; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Mountain Home, Idaho. He was in charge of base files, and achieved the rank of assistant first sergeant. He received a medical discharge in June 1945. He married Doris Jeanne Royse of St. Louis in 1943 and had four children: Kathleen Ellen (1945), Kevin Ian (1949), Kerry Allyson (1951), and Kelly James Royse (1958). He was a member of the St. Louis Meeting, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

After military service, Keefe attended Purdue and Indiana University, and worked for a newspaper in Indiana. He returned to the University of Missouri where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Education in 1950, and a Master of Arts in Field Zoology in 1951.

He began work for the Missouri Department of Conservation in 1951 as a news writer. In 1955, he took over editorship of the *Missouri Conservationist* magazine, and in 1957 was named chief of the information section. He was the author of several children's books, such as *The Little Stream* (1951), *Meet My Neighbors* (1952), *In Your Hands* (1952), *Buteo's Forest* (1953), and *Citizens of the Soil* (1956). He also designed and wrote *This is Your Conservation Commission*, which was named outstanding conservation publication for 1964 by the American Association for Conservation Information. Keefe also wrote *Facts, Fancies and Folklore*, and, along with Mike Milonski, co-authored *The World of the Opossum*, published in 1967. He also had many

articles published in every major outdoor conservation magazine.

Keefe also wrote narrative scripts for the Conservation Department's motion pictures: *This is the Mallard* (1963), *A Place to Live* (1964), *Headwaters* (1966), *Downstream* (1968), and *Return of the Wild Turkey* (1970).

Keefe was also president of the Missouri Outdoor Writers from 1958 to 1959, and was active in the Great Rivers Outdoor Writers and Outdoor Writers Association of America. He was president of the American Association for Conservation Information from 1963 to 1964, and trustee of the Missouri Archaeological Society in 1966.

Along with his professional interests, Keefe was active in the Boy Scouts, and also had an extensive interest in black powder muzzle loading guns. Some of his correspondence focuses on this subject. He built his own long rifles and participated in "rendezvous," which often featured individuals in period dress who held shooting contests. He became captain of a muzzle loader group known as the Howard's Bluff Militia. In addition, he frequently contributed short articles to *Muzzleloader* and *Muzzle Blast* magazines, giving tips and advice on flintlock building and care to fellow enthusiasts. James F. Keefe died in 1999.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Keefe Papers consist of articles and manuscripts about conservation, wildlife, sports, children's education, literature, publications, photographs, and correspondence, and memos and notes from the Missouri Conservation Commission. The collection is divided into six series: **Articles and Speeches**, **Missouri Conservation Commission**, **Correspondence**, **Literature and Publications**, **Photographs**, and **School Notes**.

The **Articles and Speeches** series is arranged alphabetically by title. The articles were published mostly in the *Missouri Conservationist* and fishing and hunting magazines.

The **Missouri Conservation Commission** series is arranged into three sections. The first section is the manuscript of Keefe's book, *The First Fifty Years of the Missouri Conservation Commission*. The second section is research material and contains notes, newspaper clippings, interviews recorded on audio cassette along with interview notes, programs, and correspondence. This section is arranged alphabetically and dates from the fifty years being investigated, 1936 to 1986. The third section, arranged chronologically, contains copies of the commission's minutes from 1936 to 1987, notes from the minutes, newspaper articles, and copies of the Missouri Conservation Commission manual.

The **Correspondence** series consists of correspondence from friends and colleagues in the field of conservation. Topics include a discussion of articles dealing with conservation, deer hunting, artifact hunts, and black powder shooting. This material is arranged generally in chronological order, while keeping Keefe's original order in which he sometimes arranged folders topically.

The **Literature and Publications** series consists of additional articles Keefe wrote for conservation magazines, including *The Missouri Conservationist*, *National Wildlife*, *Sports Afield*, *Outdoor Life*, *Muzzle Blasts*, *Muzzleloader*, and *Sports Illustrated*. Also included is his book, *The World of the Opossum*, and material used in the editing of the *Silas T. Turnbo Papers*. These were papers focusing largely on life in the White River area of the Ozarks in the early 19th century. Other types of publications include

Keefe's reference material, Park Service literature, legislation, brochures, and flyers. In addition, various awards and certificates received by Keefe, and numerous other miscellaneous short articles, along with publications from the conservation department of the Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation are included. This material is arranged alphabetically by subject.

The **Photographs** series includes photographs of conservation group functions, archaeological digs, black powder muzzle loading equipment and rifle shooting, fishing and hunting, and Missouri Department of Conservation sites. This material is arranged alphabetically by subject.

The **School Notes** series consists of Keefe's notes and papers from his classes at the University of Missouri. This material is arranged alphabetically by subject.

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