

INTRODUCTION

This compilation of the writings of Franklin Alexander Coates (1879-1961) was transcribed by his grandson. I have childhood memories of Grandpa asking me to read his stories as he wrote. At the time I was too young to grasp the significance, both of the content and of the task he'd undertaken.

As an adult, I've become increasingly interested in our family's history and Grandpa's writings were an untapped resource. Once I began reading, it was immediately obvious that he wrote primarily to share his experiences and ideas with all of us, his descendants.

Honoring his wish to share with future generations was, I decided, best accomplished by transcribing and compiling these writings into a more accessible format and then making them widely available.

In reading the various documents you will see that Grandpa not only apologizes for his poor writing skills, laments his abbreviated formal education, comments on the interruptions he endured during the time he was writing, apologizes for delays in writing, and expresses a fear that he will not finish all he wanted to accomplish.

One interesting characteristic of his writings that is not evident in the transcription is the fact that many were written or typed on paper that today we would call "recycled." The backs of many pages bear the letterhead of Technocracy Inc., the organization in which I remember him being very interested and active.

I have made every effort to leave the writings as they were, choosing not to make corrections to spelling, grammar, etc. because these influence the flavor of his writing. In a couple of cases the stories with dialogue were very hard to follow, so quotation marks and/or speaker's names were inserted as best as could be determined. Notes in the margins, inserts, etc. were included as he had written them.

Any descriptions I placed in the documents to aid the reader are italicized and enclosed in square brackets []. These descriptions were added to identify notes in the margins, writings on the outside of the envelopes, etc. I have also inserted the dates that the various pieces were written, when this could be determined.

The following document list summarizes the items I obtained from Mrs. Marion Aitken (nee Peers), and then transcribed. Grandpa's writings were in envelopes addressed to him at his Edmonton home on 66th Street. Those envelopes originally contained copies of The Technocrat, a magazine published by Technocracy Inc. Written on the outside of each envelope was the title of the article contained within. Some envelopes contained additional short writings, not identified on the envelope. Those are identified by an asterisk following the title in

the list. A complete table of contents with page numbers follows this introduction.

I divided his writings into five groups based on their content, with the first four leading to me to title his writings, “From Bewdley to Beverly.” The final group is miscellaneous items found scattered throughout, which I titled “Musings.” These help to give us a better understanding of his philosophy of life and his beliefs.

Included in some of the envelopes were writings by other members of the family. These are in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 contains copies of some relevant photographs. Of these, only the photo of FAC and Buster was in the material I received from Marion. The remainder were purchased from the Glenbow Museum Archives in Calgary, Alberta. One advantage of my paying to have the photos scanned by the Museum and sent to me on CD, is that several of them are now on their website (www.glenbow.org) for everyone’s enjoyment. These can be found by searching for Frank A. Coates in the photo archive link.

Document List

BEWDLEY

- “John Stevenson the originator of the board canoe” - hand written in 1954
- “Hookey from School” - hand written in 1954
- “The Lone Poplar Speakes” - hand written in 1956
- “Contents. Re Autobiography” - one section typed in 1953, one hand written in 1958, the remainder undated
- “Autobiography file. Start.” - typed pages 1 to 25 of autobiography - written in 1958

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE BOER WAR (starts part way through the first document below)

- “Long break in writing. Carry on from here” - typed pages 26 to 53 of autobiography - written in 1958, 1959 and 1960
- “Trooper Henry” - typed, undated*
- “Fitzgiven” - typed, undated*
- “Burgess” - hand written, undated*

HOMESTEADING

- “Doll The Best of Buckskin” - first part hand written, last part typed - 1957
- “Porter the Pioneer” - hand written in 1953
- “Clarkie” - hand written in 1950

BEVERLY

- “Buster” - hand written, undated

MUSINGS

“Aberhart and credit” - hand written in 1952

“Why do we strain at a gnat and swallow a camel?” - hand written, undated*

“You never can tell. Life is so full of tricks.” - hand written, undated*

“Thermodynamics” - hand written, undated*

“Historic Document” - typed, undated*

“Statement” - typed, undated*

“Anthropology” - typed, undated*

* writings not identified on the envelope in which they were found

If anyone has any additional writings, photos or other documents relating to Franklin Alexander Coates, his parents or his grandparents, please contact me. I would appreciate receiving copies to add to the record.

I'm also seeking more information for a companion document, “Franklin Alexander Coates, 1879-1961, Family History,” which contains historical information on family births, deaths, marriages, etc.

I look forward to hearing from you ...

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A copy of this compilation has been deposited with the Glenbow Archives.

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Tucson, Arizona

Since published, I have moved first to Sonoita, then Prescott, Arizona. New contact info:

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