



Guide to the David H. Watters Journals, 1999-2016

Administrative Information

Title and Dates:

David H. Watters Journals, 1999-2016

Repository:

New Hampshire Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-228-6688
nhhistory.org

Collection Numbers:

2016.037

Author of Finding Aid:

Sandra L. Wheeler

Creator:

Watters, David H., 1950-

Language:

The materials in this collection are in English.

Extent:

3 boxes ; 1.25 linear feet

Abstract:

This collection consists of the journals of David H. Watters for the years 1999 to 2016. Watters kept detailed journals with lengthy entries for most days, writing extensively about his professorial life teaching at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH; daily life and family concerns; his work on many boards and committees of New Hampshire cultural and historical institutions; and his participation in politics.

Access and Use

Acquisition Information and Provenance:

David H. Watters gave his journals from the years 1999 to 2016 to the New Hampshire Historical Society in 2016, instructing that they be closed for 10 years.

Processing Information:

This collection was processed by Sandra L. Wheeler in August 2025. The finding aid was written by Sandra L. Wheeler in August 2025. This finding aid follows the standards set-forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Access Restrictions:

Available for research.

Location:

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

The materials in this collection are paper based and have no special technical requirements for use.

Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:

For permission to reproduce or publish materials from this collection, please contact the New Hampshire Historical Society. Users are responsible for following all copyright and intellectual property laws.

Preferred Citation:

Item title, David H. Watters Journals, 2016.037. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date accessed.

Collection Overview

Biographical Information:

David H. Watters was born on December 28, 1950, in West Hartford, CT. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College (1972), where he majored in English Literature/letters. In 1978, he completed his PhD in Philosophy, English Language and Literature/Letters at Brown University. His academic career has been as professor of American Literature, New England Studies, and New Hampshire Literature and Culture at The University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH.

He has been active in local and state politics, serving as a member of the Board of Selectmen, Ward 1, for the Town of Dover, NH; a representative in the New Hampshire State House of Representative, District 4; and as senator in the New Hampshire State Senate beginning in 2012. In addition to holding public office, he has served on numerous boards of directors and as a trustee of historical organizations including the New Hampshire Historical Society, the New Hampshire Humanities Council, the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail, Pontine Movement Theatre, Strawberry Banke Museum's Center for the Study of Community, and the Robert Frost Farm.

He is married to Janet Alberghene, a professor of English at Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg, MA. Their son, Harper Watters, is a principal dancer with the Houston Ballet Company.

Collection Scope and Content Note:

David H. Watters kept detailed journals with lengthy entries for most days. During the years in this group of journals, Watters wrote extensively about his professorial life teaching English Literature, New Hampshire Studies, and Native American Studies at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH. He discussed departmental issues, books read and taught, conferences attended, talks given, and museum exhibitions.

He also wrote about daily life and family concerns: his aging parents, his wife's intermittent struggles with depression, parenting his adopted son, chores, hobbies, home maintenance, shopping trips, interactions with friends and neighbors, ski trips, and time spent at the family's second home on Peaks Island, Maine. These ordinary activities sometimes also raise matters of deep concerns, like the racism to which his son is subjected and the bullying of which he is the target at school, for example. Watters was sensitive to social injustice of all kinds and worried about it frequently.

His work on many boards and committees of New Hampshire cultural and historical institutions was constant during the years in the journals; he often mused on the accomplishments and challenges they face. He served on boards, recruited new members, raised funds, and advised on educational and cultural programs. He wrote extensively about his involvement with and knowledge of the Native American community and culture in New Hampshire, Maine, and New England and described his attendance and participation at their gatherings and attempts to craft objects and art in that genre. Despite being primarily a professor of English, his interest in New Hampshire and New England history and culture is deep and his involvement with many institutions with that focus has been long-lasting (among others, New Hampshire Historical Society, Strawberry Banke, Sabbathday Lake Shaker Museum, and the Robert Frost Farm).

These journals were written before Watters began his tenure in the New Hampshire legislature, first as a representative and then as a senator. They contain accounts of his local political activity and the local Democratic party organization, as related to the national scene and presidential politics. As an active member of the Democratic party, he evaluates candidates at all levels of government, meets many of them, attends rallies and speeches, and raises funds.

The journals end just as his son, Harper, moved to Houston, TX, at the age of 16 to become part of that city's professional ballet company.

Arrangement:

The journals are bound volumes, arranged in chronological order.

Contents List

Box 1

Volume 1 Journal, 1999 April 18-October 6
Volume 2 Journal, 1999 October 7-2000 July 13
Volume 3 Journal, 2000 July 15-December 9
Volume 4 Journal, 2000 December 9-2001 June 8
Volume 5 Journal, 2001 June 19-December 20
Volume 6 Journal, 2001 December 21-2002 March 29
Volume 7 Journal, 2002 March 29-June 12
Volume 8 Journal, 2002 June 13-December 31
Volume 9 Journal, 2003 January 1-August 17
Volume 10 Journal, 2003 August 18-December 31

Box 2

Volume 1 Journal, 2004 January 1-March 29
Volume 2 Journal, 2004 March 30-November 15
Volume 3 Journal, 2004 November 16-2005 May 7
Volume 4 Journal, 2005 May 7-August 25
Volume 5 Journal, 2005 August 27-2006 January 2
Volume 6 Journal, 2006 January 3-June 6
Volume 7 Journal, 2006 June 7-December 1
Volume 8 Journal, 2006 December 2- 2007 July 22
Volume 9 Journal, 2007 July 23-December 23
Volume 10 Journal, 2007 December 24-2008 June 17
Volume 11 Journal, 2008 June 16-October 14

Box 3

Volume 1 Journal, 2008 October 15-2009 April 11
Volume 2 Journal, 2009 April 12-September 13
Volume 3 Journal, 2009 September 14-2010 February 10
Volume 4 Journal, 2010 February 11-July 2
Volume 5 Journal, 2010 July 3-November 27
Volume 6 Journal, 2010 November 10-2011 July 30
Volume 7 Journal, 2011 July 31-December 14
Volume 8 Journal, 2011 December 15-2012 February 13 and 2015 July 4-August 29
Volume 9 Journal, 2015 August 29-2016 April 11

Subject Headings**People:**

Alberghene, Janet
Watters, David H., 1950-
Watters, Harper, 1992-

Organizations:

Berwick Academy (South Berwick, Me.)
Democratic Party (N.H.)
Democratic Party (U.S.)

Houston Ballet
Native American Cultural Association
New Hampshire Historical Society
New Hampshire Humanities
New Hampshire. General Court. House of Representatives
New Hampshire. General Court. Senate
Robert Frost Farm Historic Site
Shaker Museum (Sabbathday Lake, Me.)
Shaker Village, Inc.
University of New Hampshire
Walnut Hill School (Natick, Mass.)

Subjects:

African Americans
Aging
Ballet
Bullying in schools
Committees
Depression in women
Diaries
Education
Gay people
Indians of North America
Museum exhibits
Parenthood
Politics and government
Racism
Second homes
Social justice
Teaching
Universities and colleges

Locations:

Dover, NH
Durham, NH
Houston, TX
Peaks Island, ME

Occupations:

College teachers
Dancers
Legislators
Politicians

Related Materials

Archives

David H. Watters Papers, 2009, 2009.050

David H. Waters Journals, 2016-2024, 2024.069 [**closed until 2034**]