

**McLean County Museum of History**

**Bloomington Fire (1900) Collection**

Processed by  
Mary Alice Wills  
Fall 2013

**Collection Information**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1900 - 1980
PROVENANCE:	
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	See also Photo Collections.

**Historical Sketch**

The Bloomington Fire took place on June 19, 1900. The fire started at 12:30 a.m. several blocks away from the Court House. It quickly spread along the north and east sides of the Court House. Nearly fifty of the best businesses in the five block heart of downtown were destroyed by fire. The McLean County Court House was gutted, but the records were saved. Also, the Windsor and Phoenix hotels burned while the guests escaped. Fire engines came to help from as far away as Chicago. Successful rebuilding began almost immediately.

**Scope and Content Note**

This collection includes newspaper clippings and photos for the day after the fire; anniversaries of the fire; and memories of those witnessing the event, including a fireman's letter. Sample

booklets of "Before and After the Great Fire," various souvenir brochures marking one year including the Jubilee Carnival celebration of one year recovery, the Business Men's Proclamation and photos round out this collection.

## Folder Inventory

### Folder 1: Newspaper Clippings 1900

- 1.1 "Big Fire At Bloomington," *The New York Times*, June 20, 1900.
- 1.2 "Incidents Of The Fire," *Daily Bulletin*, June 22, 1900.
- 1.3 "In Perfect Condition," *Daily Bulletin*, June 22, 1900.
- 1.4 "Visits Court House," *Sunday Bulletin*, June 24, 1900.

### Folder 2: Newspaper Clippings 1901 - 1905

- 2.1 "Building The New," *The Daily Pantagraph*, June 19, 1901, 6 pages.
- 2.2 "Over \$1,300,000 for New Buildings," *Pantagraph*, June 19, 1901.
- 2.3 "The Town Clock," *Pantagraph*, June 19, 1901.
- 2.4 "5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Of The Big Fire," *Daily Bulletin*, June 19, 1905.

### Folder 3: Newspaper Clippings and Photos 1920, 1950 - 2000

- 3.1 "C.W. Klemm Store is Celebrating Forty-Seventh Anniversary," *Pantagraph*, November 8, 1920.
- 3.2 "1900 Blaze Stays 'Hot' in Memories," *Pantagraph*, June 18, 1950.
- 3.3 "Ralph Green Gives Boy's Picture of City's Big Fire," *Pantagraph*, June 17, 1958.
- 3.4 "When Fire Struck: June 19, 1900 The Day the Town Burned," *Pantagraph*, June 19, 1960 (2 copies).
- 3.5 "Disaster Lurked Unseen," *Pantagraph*, June 19, 1960 (2 copies).
- 3.6 "Old Papers Tell of Fire, Rapid Reconstruction Job," *Pantagraph*, June 24, 1962.
- 3.7 "Witness Describes Day Bloomington Burned," *Pantagraph*, July 28, 1968.
- 3.8 "Big fire of 1900 stirs his memory," *Pantagraph*, June 15, 1975.
- 3.9 "Great fire of 1900: 'It was awful,'" *Pantagraph*, June 15, 1980.
- 3.10 "Ring of Destruction," photo, *Pantagraph*, June 15, 1980.
- 3.11 "Remembering the Great Fire of 1900," *Twin City Community News*, June 14, 2000, 2 pages.
- 3.12 Panoramic photo of downtown destruction by 1900 fire, "Major Fires Downtown," list, *Pantagraph*, June 18, 2000
- 3.13 "Desperate hours: Firefighters lost battle to save much of downtown," by Michael Freimann, *Pantagraph* staff, no date, 2 pages with photos.
- 3.14 "Remembering the Great Fire of 1900," *Twin City Community News*, June 14, 2000, with photo.
- 3.15 "Bloomington Will Build Again," one page with excerpts from *Pantagraph* on June 20, 1900.

#### **Folder 4: Bloomington Fire Commemorative/Souvenir Booklets**

- 4.1 "Bloomington, Illinois: Before and After the Great Fire of June 19, 1900," by Corn Belt Printing and Stationery Co., incomplete booklet of photos, no date, 2 copies.
- 4.2 "City of Bloomington, Illinois: Before and After the Great Fire of June 19-1900," by Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Co., no date, 8 pages with photos, 4 copies.
- 4.3 "Bloomington, Illinois, U. S. A. 1901 Souvenir, 2 page brochure with advertising and photos, no date, 2 copies
- 4.5 "Bloomington Business Men's Proclamation," 5 page booklet includes businessmen's signatures, advertisements and photos, 2 complete copies, 2 incomplete copies, no date.

#### **Folder 5: Jubilee Carnival, *Pantagraph* articles unless noted**

- 5.1 "Phoenix Sale: W. H. Griesheim & Son," June 18, 1901.
- 5.2 "Jubilee Carnival Programme," June 17, 1901.
- 5.3 "Creations of Splendor," June 17, 1901.
- 5.4 "Carnival Opens Today," June 18, 1901, 3 pages.
- 5.5 "Auspiciously Opened: The Jubilee is Inaugurated," June 19, 1901, 3 pages.
- 5.6 "Bloomington's Big Day," June 20, 1901, 4 pages.
- 5.7 "See The Fire Relics," and advertisements, June 20, 1901.
- 5.8 "This Is Clean-Up Day," June 24, 1901.

#### **Folder 6: Bloomington Fireman's Letter - 1900**

- 6.1 Fireman's firsthand account of the fire, June 19, 1900, 2 pages.

#### **Folder 7: Bloomington Fire Photos – 1900**

- 7.1 Ruins after the fire, by Spafford & Cable, 8 photos.

#### **Folder 8: Research and other writing**

- 8.1 "Get the Horses: The Great Bloomington Fire of 1900," Miller, Kenneth E., a presentation for the College Alumni Club, Oct 20, 2017.