

McLean County Museum of History

Bloomington Centennial, 1850-1950, Collection

Processed by
John Richmond
Winter 2026

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1950
RESTRICTIONS:	None
PROVENANCE:	Gifts primarily of Wayne E. Townley, Jr., and Mickey Drexler
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:	

Brief History

Although Bloomington was established and settled as early as 1831, it wasn't officially incorporated until 1850. Thus, the city's 100th birthday was held in 1950 and not 1931. Celebrations were many and varied, from a vast pageant to a "centennial queen" contest. Consequently, detailed planning was required, as appears in this collection.

Scope

The collection includes documents, legal and otherwise, required in the planning process for the Centennial celebrations held 17-23 September 1950. Schedules and scripts for events are included, along with publicity, souvenirs such as entry tickets, ribbons, et al.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: General

- 1.1 Gift agreement, Wayne C. Townley, Jr., accession number 2000-01-03.
- 1.2 Gift agreement, Mickey Drexler, accession number 12-98-04.
- 1.3 Souvenir of Bloomington Centennial 1850-1950, Sept. 17-23; map of Bloomington-Normal.
- 1.4 Cardstock souvenir, Mace Printing Company; September 1950 calendar (2 copies).
- 1.5 Wooden nickels on card stock, green printing on brown background (6 copies); one wooden nickel, red printing, handwritten date of 29 August on red ticket.
- 1.6 Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Remembrance Lodge No. 77; program and menu, dinner meeting, 9 September 1950; includes visitor I.D. tag.
- 1.7 Green ribbon, Bloomington Centennial Official, Wayne C. Townley, General Chairman.
- 1.8 Charter Member, the Bloomington Illinois "Pioneers," Bloomington Centennial, Sept. 17 Thru 23, 1950; cardstock membership document (3 copies).
- 1.9 Stickers, Bloomington Centennial 1850—Feb. 19—1950—with several buildings depicted; small banner style label reads "Hybrid Corn Center of the World" (4 copies).
- 1.10 Bloomington Pioneers document, agreement to grow a moustache, full beard, goatee or side-burns as part of centennial celebration.
- 1.11 Official Shaver's Permit, heavy card stock.
- 1.12 Logo, Bloomington on Parade, Centennial; two sizes printed on one sheet, glossy paper.
- 1.13 Seals or stamps, Bloomington Centennial, embossed on heavy yellow card stock; three larger impressions, one smaller (4 items, total).
Note: Nos. 1.10-1.13, inclusive, housed in clear plastic protective page.
- 1.14 Bloomington Centennial notice of/invitation for Trap Shoot, September 16 and 17, printed on pink card stock; courtesy of Davis-Tietge Sporting Goods Co., 108 S. Main St.
- 1.15 Booklet, tickets (nos. 1-41), pick-up order for centennial hat to be retrieved at Centennial Headquarters, 515 N. East St.; sun bonnet, \$1.53.

Folder 2: Bloomington on Parade pageant

- 2.1 "Bloomington on Parade" program, 4 pp., 8.5 x 11 green paper; 15 episodes and grand finale, cast members listed with individual episodes (3 copies).
- 2.2 "Bloomington on Parade" narrator's script; 36 pp.
- 2.3 Cast instruction sheet.
- 2.4 Receipt, pageant costume loan, printed on brown card stock.
- 2.5 "Bloomington on Parade" participant passes (3); printed on green card stock.
- 2.6 "Bloomington on Parade" tickets, Fred Carlton Field, various seating sections (8 tickets/copies).

Folder 3: Centennial Queen Contest

- 3.1 Bloomington Centennial Queen Contest Information and Regulations, 5 pp.
- 3.2 "Miss Bloomington" Queen Contest Coupon Book Record, 1 p.
- 3.3 Bloomington Centennial Queen Contest Record (1 p., 2 copies).
- 3.4 Booklets, voting for Bloomington Centennial Queen (2 copies).

Folder 4: Legal Documents

- 4.1 Occupational Diseases Act Notice, OD31.
- 4.2 Workmen's Compensation Act of Illinois Notice.
- 4.3 State of Illinois Industrial Commission Employer's Report of Compensable Injury.
- 4.4 Letter from Indemnity Insurance Company of North America re: liability/compensation policy.
- 4.5 Bloomington Centennial Incorporated official committee requisition form.
- 4.6 Requisition, purchase from U. O. Colson Co., Paris, Illinois, requested by E. M. Lebkuecher; aluminum license ad plates. Includes correspondence from Lebkuecher to other Centennial planners re: delivery of plates.
- 4.7 Telegram, Wilson Famous Shows to Wayne C. Townley re: acceptable contract; dated 12 August 1950.

Folder 5: Plan of Action and Committee Rules (separate legal document)

- 5.1 Document created by John B. Rogers Producing Company, Fostoria, Ohio; 49 pp. Rogers contracted with many entities/organizations for public celebrations, providing step-by-step, detailed instructions for all productions. It is obvious that, e.g., wooden nickels and other souvenirs were created and distributed by the Rogers Producing Company.

Folder 6: Planning -- Miscellaneous

- 6.1 Letter, Wayne Townley to J. Howard Rose, Bloomington Shrine Club, concerning Shrine assistance in providing for Centennial parade; dated 25 August 1950.
- 6.2 Budget of Income, Centennial celebration.
- 6.3 Announcement from Edgar M. Lebkuecher concerning Centennial novelties and merchandise, including profits from various sales.
- 6.4 Letter, Floyd D. Sperry, Bloomington Association of Commerce, to Edgar M. Lebkuecher, thanking Lebkuecher for assistance with Centennial celebration; dated 29 September 1950.
- 6.5 Template for letter of thanks from Wayne Townley to all helping with Centennial; dated 24 September 1950.

- 6.6 Seven envelopes without [significant] contents, to or from Wayne Townley from various offices and individuals in Bloomington, related to the Centennial.

Folder 7: Publicity

- 7.1 Publicity Division documents, outlining plans and duties of different groups; includes Press Committee, Distributive Committee, Speakers Committee, and Promotional Committee; 3 pp.
- 7.2 Template for letter, addressed "Reverend and Dear Sir," with general overview of Centennial celebrations; on back, separate template for letter of thanks (also included in folder for miscellaneous planning documents).
- 7.3 "Let's Celebrate our Centennial," trifold flyer/brochure with full details of activities (3 copies).
- 7.4 "Souvenir of Bloomington Centennial," cover page with map of Bloomington-Normal attached; William Cecil Randall, Towanda, written on map. Donated by Jane Randall, 26 January 2023, with note from Jane Randall; labeled with accession number 23-01-19.
- 7.5 *McLean County Courier*, Centennial Edition; Friday, 15 September 1950; 24 pp.
- 7.6 "Public Sale," satirical auction announcement, McLean County Republican Central Committee.
- 7.7 Three newspaper clippings, delivered to Wayne Townley from WJBC Radio, with program announcements about the Centennial and/or information on Townley in relation to WJBC.