

McLean County Museum of History

Fleming Family Collection

Processed by
JoAnna Mink
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	2 Boxes
COLLECTION DATES:	1850 – 1970s
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 Photos – People –Fleming Photos – Subject – Normal Post Office

Brief History

The Birney-Fleming family, of Scotch-Irish extraction, emigrated from Ulster, Ireland, to Harrison County, Ohio in 1812-14. Members of the Fleming family moved to Central Illinois in the 1840s from Pennsylvania. Isabel and William Fleming married in 1855. Isabel Fleming, mother of John H. and Robert Lincoln Fleming, was principal of University High School. Robert Lincoln Fleming was called to the bar in the State of Illinois in 1887 and set up his practice first in Normal, then in Bloomington. In 1894 he was first elected as State's Attorney. After serving in World War I, his son Birney F. Fleming followed in his footsteps, being certified to practice law in Illinois in 1924. His son, Robert Thomas Fleming, was the third generation of Fleming attorneys, in the same law practice that his grandfather Robert Lincoln Fleming had formed in the 1880s, and, like them, held the post of city attorney for the Town of Normal.

Scope

The collection includes family history documents; family correspondence, scrapbooks, and books; certificates of land purchase; memorabilia connected to World War I and World War II; correspondence relating to the Fleming law practice; and newspaper clippings relating to three generations of the Fleming family.

Box and Folder Inventory

Box 1:

Folder 1: Family History

- 1.1 Family tree, hand-drawn by Nancy Snyder
- 1.2 Dekins—Brown Gates family information
- 1.3 Fleming family description from John Fleming to Birney Fleming, Jan. 17, 1941
- 1.4 Letter from Robert T. Fleming to Mrs. Walter Lundquist thanking for family photos, Dec. 5, 1973
- 1.5 Affidavit - family record of Fleming family photographed from Fleming Family Bible, attested by Birney Fleming, Oct. 3, 1960
- 1.6 Letter from Margaret to Bob [Fleming] about Birney family visit, July 4, 1966
- 1.7 Birney—Fleming family history copied from Methodist Church of Normal record book 1850-91
- 1.8 typescript of article (obituary?) of Mary Jane Birney, undated
- 1.9 The Birney Family, 3pp (no citation provided)
- 1.10 Baptismal certificate of Elisabeth G. Schnebleg (b. Aug. 11, 1824), daughter of Johaniss Schnebleg. Also English translation
- 1.11 Obituary for Isabelle Fleming, *The Pantagraph*, March 31 (no year provided), photocopy

Folder 2: Miscellaneous

- 2.1 Note: "1879-1888 Bernie Bright will receive her friends Saturday May the fifth at two o'clock" in envelope (2x3"), handwritten, addressed to Myrtle Deacons, Normal

- 2.2 Invitation from Mrs. R. W. Gray to a reception in Normal for her brother Duell Brown, December 7, 1888.
- 2.3 Copy of *The Normalite*, Jan. 31, 1919
- 2.4 Indenture between M. A. Brown and John P. Shields regarding dispute over division fence, Feb. 19, 1927
- 2.5 Envelope of OPA Red Points from WWII period
- 2.6 Letter to sister Fall from Leota, Sept. 13, 1946, 5pp handwritten
- 2.7 Engraving of horse Robert Lee, 2 copies
- 2.8 Poem "My Dutiful Son" handwritten
- 2.9 Poem "Lean Upon My Arm, Mother" newspaper clipping
- 2.10 Child's drawing
- 2.11 Christmas card from President Nixon, 1972
- 2.12 Miscellaneous obituaries

Folder 3: John H. Fleming

- 3.1 Receipt for shipment of box of books on Northern Pacific Railroad, Nov. 28, 1893
- 3.2 Letter from Robert Lincoln Fleming, Nov. 25, 1904, 2pp handwritten
- 3.3 Petition of Probate of will of Julia Cheek showing John H. Fleming on list of heirs, Feb. 16, 1941

Folder 4: Robert L. and Laura Fleming

- 4.1 Photocopy of page from *The Pantagraph*, Oct. 8, 1889, advertising Beaver & Fleming law firm
- 4.2 Pencil drawing by Fred W. Douglas dated January 17, '89. In 6x9" wooden frame, brown paper backing. On back is written "Atty. Robert Lincoln Fleming / Sketched 1/17/1889."
- 4.3 "God knoweth best" handwritten (by Laura Birney?)
- 4.4 Card announcing marriage of Robert L. Fleming and Laura B. Birney, Aug. 6, 1891, photocopy
- 4.5 "Fleming is in Favor" article regarding Robert Lincoln Fleming's candidacy for State's Attorney, *Colfax Leader*, February 28, 1896, photocopy
- 4.6 "She Knew Lincoln" recounting Isabel Fleming's memories, Eaton County, Michigan, newspaper, February 11, 1909, photocopy. Includes poems "The Fatal Bullet" and verse from "O Captain! My Captain"
- 4.7 "County Judge" article/letter from Robert Lincoln Fleming regarding his stance on the "wet or dry question," undated
- 4.8 "Won Merited Honor," newspaper article regarding Robert Lincoln Fleming's nomination for State's Attorney, photocopy, undated
- 4.9 Certificates of membership in the First Methodist Episcopal Church for R. L. Fleming and for Mrs. R. L. Fleming, January 1, 1895
- 4.10 Home Class Department card for Methodist Episcopal Sunday School, unsigned and undated
- 4.11 Diplomas of Merit from the First Methodist Episcopal Church Sunday School for R. L. and Mrs. R. L. Fleming for 1897, 1898, 1899
- 4.12 "The Bench and Bar of Illinois" 1899, photocopy of title page and paragraphs on Robert Lincoln Fleming's qualities
- 4.13 "Members of the Grand Army of the Republic," text of speech, 10pp, laminated

- 4.14 "Bar's Memorial to F. L. Fleming," *The Daily Pantagraph*, undated, photocopy
- 4.15 "Former States' Attorney Dies," *The Daily Bulletin*, undated, photocopy
- 4.16 "Friends' Tribute to R. L. Fleming," undated newspaper article, photocopy
- 4.17 Deed to burial plot, February 26, 1896
- 4.18 Address of Robert L. Fleming State's Attorney / People vs Merritt Chism, February 1st and 3d, 1902 / Murder. 57pp.

Folder 5: R. L. Fleming – Mississippi land

- 5.1 Map and business directory of Jackson County, undated [Note: All documents relate to land in Jackson County, Mississippi]
- 5.2 Abstract to land, January 11, 1917
- 5.3 Abstract of title, June 22, 1917
- 5.4 Deed of Trust, March 25, 1915, and receipts
- 5.5 Receipt for payment of taxes, April 2, 1917
- 5.6 Insurance endorsement
- 5.7 Deed, January 17, 1917
- 5.8 Abstract of Title, February 14, 1912

Folder 6: R. L. Fleming - Texas land

- 6.1 Earnest Receipt and correspondence relating to land purchased January 1910. [Note: All documents relate to land in Galveston, Texas]
- 6.2 Various deeds for purchase of land in 1901, 1909, 1910
- 6.3 Correspondence 2915

Folder 7: Prince Arthur Mining Co. - I

Payroll lists 1910-1914, receipts for machinery and services, contracts, correspondence relating to the Prince Arthur Mining Co, Colorado

Folder 8: Prince Arthur Mining Co. - II

Annual reports, receipts, proxy forms, etc. relating to the Prince Arthur Mining Co, Colorado

Folder 9: Mascot Gold Mining and Milling Co.

Correspondence 1899, stock certificates, payroll records, minutes of stockholders meetings, and various receipts relating to the Mascot Gold Mining and Milling Co., Idaho

Folder 10: Land – Miscellaneous

Correspondence, warranty deeds, contracts for sale relating to miscellaneous properties

Folder 11: Birney Fleming – Miscellaneous

- 11.1 Receipt for spring 1915 ISNU term fee
- 11.2 "Birney Fleming in Aviation Camp," newspaper article, undated
- 11.3 Luggage tag, berthing card, dining card for HMS Orduna for Birney Fleming
- 11.4 Three calling cards for Birney Fleming of 11th Aero Services Squadron
- 11.5 Permission to be absent form for Birney Fleming, April 1919
- 11.6 Pay Record Book for Birney Fleming
- 11.7 Note to Carrie [from Birney] regarding pearls for Christmas present

- 11.8 Honorable Discharge from US Army for Birney Fleming, May 21, 1919
- 11.9 Marriage Certificate, Birney F. Fleming and Carrie B. Brown, July 22, 1922, in envelope
- 11.10 Copy of original certificate of marriage, in envelope
- 11.11 Correspondence from T. M. Birney to Birney Fleming regarding Laura Fleming's will: letter dated March 19, 1923; letter dated March 14 and receipt for \$50.
- 11.12 Letter from Service Recognition Board, voucher, and warrant, in envelope postmarked July 12, 1924
- 11.13 Endorsement for homeowners insurance policy, April 21, 1925
- 11.14 *Pantagraph* photo "The Family Touch for Homeless Children, June 18, 1933
- 11.15 War ration book and certificates, 1942
- 11.16 Letter from US Veterans Bureau regarding Adjusted Service Certificate, January 1, 1925, in envelope
- 11.17 Mileage Rationing Record and stamps, September 21, 1944, in envelope
- 11.18 Account statement from Model-Paris cleaners, in envelope

Folder 12: Birney Fleming – Insurance policies

Folder 13: Carrie B. Fleming

- 13.1 Dance program that belonged to Carrie Fleming's mother
- 13.2 Letter to Carrie Brown from Aviator Buckley, postmarked January 1916. Also enclosed is letter from Buckley to his parents from prisoner of war camp in Germany
- 13.3 Miscellaneous and various statements and receipts for home maintenance, drug store items, life insurance premiums, rents, etc. 1949-1952
- 13.4 Carrie Fleming's personal stationery
- 13.5 Carrie Fleming obituary, photocopy

Folder 14: Robert T. Fleming

- 14.1 Birth certificate for Robert Thomas Fleming, June 19, 1923
- 14.2 Postcard photo of Hindenberg, from Aunt Gale, 1929
- 14.3 Eighth grade diploma, Metcalf School and graduation exercise program, June 3, 1937, in envelope
- 14.4 Packet of miscellaneous items from senior year of high school
- 14.5 Alpha Iota, Sigma Chi initiation banquet program, 1942
- 14.6 Kappa Kappa Gamma Pledge Dance card, 1943
- 14.7 Letter to Aunt Florence, August 1, 1941
- 14.8 Envelope addressed to Robert T. Fleming, empty
- 14.9 Announcement for Ensign commission program, US Naval Academy, May 5, 1942, in envelope
- 14.10 Invitation to Commencement, Illinois Wesleyan University, June 11, 1945, in envelope
- 14.11 Invitation to Senior Breakfast for Commencement, 1945, in envelope
- 14.12 Note to Illinois Wesleyan University baseball players regarding their draft status, February 2, 1944
- 14.13 Order to report for pre-induction physical exam for selective service, April 1, 1944, in envelope
- 14.14 Birthday card to mother, 1946
- 14.15 Receipt for Normal Masonic Lodge, June 1950

- 14.16 Certificate of acceptance into Scottish Rite, March 9, 1954
- 14.17 "Fleming Law Firm Adds 2 Members," *The Pantagraph*, January 30, 1964
- 14.18 Letter from Ruth Lundquist, November 28, 1973
- 14.19 "Fleming to share Normal Legal duties," *The Pantagraph*, October 1982
- 14.20 Article mentioning Theodore Gates, Robert T. Fleming's first cousin
- 14.21 "University High Honor Society Chooses Members," *The Normalite*, November 15, 1940
- 14.22 Diploma from University High School in folder, June 6, 1941

Folder 15: R. T. Fleming – Sports Related

- 15.1 Goldsmith Official Base Ball Score Book inscribed "Bob Fleming 1933." Black cloth with gold lettering, 8x5.25"
- 15.2 Scrapbook "Baseball B. F. Goodrich" on first page, "Summer of 44" on second page in crayon. Newspaper clippings pasted into spiral bound notebook, 9x11.5"
- 15.3 Cardboard advertising Basketball Game Metcalf vs N. Public. On reverse Class-A Light Weight County Tournament – 37, Feb. 18, 19, 20 with schematic of teams

Folder 16: Nancy, Elizabeth, Robert, Steve Fleming

- 16.1 Invitation for party for Bobbie, with envelope
- 16.2 Letter from Robert Underwood, March 7, 1964, with envelope
- 16.3 *Pantagraph* photo of U-High homecoming court, undated
- 16.4 Christmas photocard of all children, 1971

Folder 17: Post Office

- 17.1 "Children Buy First Stamps" undated uncited newspaper clipping
- 17.2 Envelope containing first stamps sold at new post office
- 17.3 Envelope postmarked March 3, 1936, commemorating dedication of post office
- 17.4 *Pantagraph* photo "Joan Fleming Buys First Stamp at New Normal Postoffice," February 25, 1936, 2 copies
- 17.5 "Normal Post Office to be Thrown Open to Public Sunday" newspaper clipping, undated
- 17.6 Photocopy of house on site of post office
- 17.7 Copy of blueprints
- 17.8 Correspondence relating to the Normal Post Office 1934. Includes letters about investigation of proposed sites; land acquisition; terms and conditions; deeds; telegrams; and receipts

Folder 18: Ridgemont Addition

Correspondence, petitions, plat map, handwritten notes, and expense invoices relating to the Ridgemont Subdivision, Normal

Folder 19: Revision to Bloomington Subdivision Ordinance

Correspondence regarding proposed revision, 1952.

Folder 20: Community Party 1962 Election

Correspondence, newspaper ads, clippings, and candidate statements relating to Town of Normal 1962 municipal election; Classification of Tax Rates in McLean County for 1952-1960

Folder 21: Election Rolls 1962

Lists of registered voters for Districts 1-12 in Normal, March 6, 1961

Folder 22: United Normal Ticket 1964

Correspondence, notes, newspaper clippings, and election returns related to the 1964 election for the United Normal Ticket

Folder 23: Precinct 9

Clippings, tabulations, and miscellaneous correspondence relating to Precinct 9 in Normal. Includes lists of registered voters October 6, 1958, and October 5, 1954; Speciman ballot April 10, 1962

Folder 24: R. T. Fleming Correspondence A-D

Copies of miscellaneous correspondence relating to various matters, filed mainly in alphabetical order by addressee or by subject

Folder 25: R. T. Fleming Correspondence E-F, J-P

Copies of miscellaneous correspondence relating to various matters, filed mainly in alphabetical order by addressee or by subject

Folder 26: R. T. Fleming Correspondence R-Z

Copies of miscellaneous correspondence relating to various matters, filed mainly in alphabetical order by addressee or by subject

Folder 27: Bar Association 1950-70

Correspondence, lists of committees and members for McLean County Bar Association for the 1950s and 1970s

Folder 28: Home Decorating Ideas

Catalogs, newspaper clippings of ideas for home redecorating, from 1950s

Folder 29: Office Furniture

Steelcase catalogs of office furniture

Folder 30: 1958 Election Materials

Eight thank you letters to Normal residents for working on the successful David Davis nomination plus precinct map, April 1958.

Folder 31: World War I Materials

These items were originally tucked into the *Army and Navy Service Record for WWI*. (In Loose Items)

- 31.1 Letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt, Asst Secy of navy, to R. L. Fleming with thanks for response to Navy's call for binoculars, 25 Jan 1918.
- 31.2 US Registered Package label for R. L. Fleming at Normal from Naval Observatory, Washington D.C. Note: "Binoc." Presumably represent return of binoculars loaned in item 31.1 above.

- 31.3 Tongue-in-check recognition document from "Society for the Preservation and Provocation of Big Game Hunters and Early-Morning-Bird-Call-Listeners" for Birney F. Fleming of Normal, undated.
- 31.4 Western Union telegraph to R. L. Fleming from "Fleming" announcing his safe arrival in England, Jan 1, 1918.
- 31.5 Letter from Glenn at Aero Training Squadron in Belleville, Ill to R.L. Fleming at Bloomington, concerning verses received, missing Fleming, squadron activities, etc. 13 Dec 1917.
- 31.6 Part of letter to "dear Dad," from APO 703, 18 Dec 1818.
- 31.7 YWCA Postcard from Sergt. B.F. Fleming to Mrs. R. L. Fleming at Noraml, undated
- 31.8 Two holiday greetings, undated.
- 31.9 Six picture postcards of Guitres (Gironade), unused.
- 31.10 Window placard: Subscriber V Victory Liberty Loan, approx 6.5 x 8.5". Missing lower right corner.
- 31.11 Home card by U. S. Food Administration with advice on saving food to send to soldiers overseas. "Chicago, Sept.—17"
- 31.12 Song lyrics "My Liberty Bond" composed by Mrs. Clara Simpson, Jan. 22, 1918, Normal, Illinois. 2 copies.
- 31.13 "To My Knitting Sweetheart" song apparently composed by R. L. Fleming. On back of card is note "Dear Soldier Boy" which ends, "I do not claim that it will win the war, but I am sure it will win you at least one wife." Four copies on cards.
- 31.14 YMCA package tag from P. F. Fleming to R. L. Fleming
- 31.15 AEF Christmas Package Coupon for Birney Fleming
- 31.16 Cardboard from US Service Pin with note: "New York US Mother from Birney"
- 31.17 Titeward Bill Fold advert.
- 31.18 Two photos.
- 31.19 Assorted newspaper clippings from *Pantagraph* and *Chicago Tribune*.

Box 2:

Folder 1: 1299 Abstract

1299 Abstract of Title to Sec. 5 T. 23 N. R. 6 East of the 3rd P. M. situated in McLean County. By Peoples Abstract & Title Co. In goldenrod canvas folder. 3.5x9" folded.

Folder 2: Robert L. Fleming Diaries 1916-1919

Diaries of Robert Lincoln Fleming for 1916, 1917, 1918, and 1919. Each black leather in fragile condition, 2.75x5.5".

Folder 3: Victory Stamp Album

The Victory Stamp Album belonging to Bob Fleming. Some stamps adhered. Red cloth boards, 7x9".

**LOOSE
BOOKS**

The American Lawyer, and Businessman's Form-Book. New York: Ensign, Bridgman & Fanning, 1854. Tan leather, front cover loose, foxed papers, 5x7.5".

The Aviation Pocket-Book for 1918, by R. Borlase Matthews. 6th ed. London: Crosby Lockwood & Son, 1918. "Birney Fleming - World War I" written on front endpaper. Also contains Advertisement section and Aeroplane and Airship Manufacturers section. Navy blue boards, gilt printing on front cover, 4.5x6.5".

Bible. Genesis–Exodus through chapter 38 missing. Inscribed Eliza O. Birney (b. May 22, 1843) and Laura Bell Birney (b. July 7, 1895). Fragile condition.

Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Diamond ed. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1883. "Property of Birney Fleming, Normal, Illinois" written on front endpaper. "R. L. Fleming" written on title page. Embossed brown boards, spine in extremely poor condition, 4x5.5".

The Pioneer Family by the Author of "Summer Scenes." New York: Lane & Scott, 1850. 44pp. Marbled boards with red leather spine, foxed, 3.5x5.5". Inscription inside "to Laura Birney from Grandpa Birney." Note on post-it (removed): Laura Birney married Robert Lincoln Birney. She was Birney Fleming's mother & grandmother of Bob Fleming Sr.

The Soldiers' Hymn Book. 2.5x4", fragile condition.

Take Me to France: A French Phrase Book for the American Soldier. Inscribed Birney Fleming. Red cloth boards, 4.5x6".

PERSONAL DOCUMENTS and MISCELLANEOUS

Army and Navy Service Record for WWI. Not inscribed, probably for Birney Fleming. Contents are now in Folder 31.

Beloved Memories funeral book [for Carrie Fleming]. Contains names of bearers and attendees. Brown leather covers, spiral bound, 7x9.5".

Certificate for Robert L. Fleming to practice law in State of Illinois, June 20, 1887.

Certificate for Robert L. Fleming to practice law in State of Kansas, January 4, 1888.

Certificate commissioning Robert Lincoln Fleming as State's Attorney in State of Illinois, November 30, 1900.

Certificate for Birney Fifer Fleming to practice law in State of Illinois, June 12, 1924.

Good Luck Diary 1917. Belonged to Birney Fleming. 2.5x4" in leather pouch.

Handwritten recipes book belonging to Elizabeth Y. Snavely, dated February 13, 1853. Handstitched papers in handmade cover. Fragile.