

Finding Aid to the Rufus E. Fleming Papers

Fleming, Rufus, E., 1839-1902

Rufus E. Fleming papers, 1881-1900

1 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 315

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OVERVIEW

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BIOGRAPHY

Rufus Eberle Fleming was born July 11, 1839 at New Madison, Ohio. In 1841 the family moved to New Paris, Ohio, where Mr. Fleming was educated. In 1855 he was employed as a civil engineer by the Wabash railroad. In 1856, he moved to Warren County, Indiana, where he was a merchant with his father. On August 26, 1861, Mr. Fleming enlisted in the Third Indiana Battery, Light Artillery, and served for three years being discharged on September 23, 1864. He then became a merchant in his home town of New Paris until 1873 when he was appointed secretary of the Soldiers' Home at Dayton, Ohio. On June 12, 1865, he married Anna B. Dickey of Butler County, Ohio. They had three children of whom only Earl Fleming lived to adulthood. In 1880, Mr. Fleming was transferred to the Soldiers' Home in Milwaukee,

Wisconsin, serving there until 1881 when the family moved to Fargo, Dakota Territory. He immediately purchased three sections of land near Wheatland which became a bonanza farm. The family resided in Fargo. Mr. Fleming was very active in the Masons, becoming an Honorary Inspector General in 1884, and later the first Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in North Dakota. He was largely responsible for the erection of the Masonic Temple in Fargo. He was a Cass County Commissioner, on the Fargo Board of Education, the first president of the Fargo Electric Light and Power Company, and a real estate dealer. He also looked after the farming interests of Lewis F. Watson and, in his later years, was an agent for the Mutual Reserve Fund Life Association. On March 20, 1902, Mr. Fleming died in Fargo and was buried in a crypt of the Masonic Temple. In 1967 his body was taken out of the Temple and interred in Sunset Memorial Gardens because of the razing of the Temple.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Fleming papers consist entirely of correspondence from the period 1881 to 1891, and 1896 to 1900. The first section and the most extensive and complete is four letter press books which are copies of outgoing correspondence, chronological, and hand-written. Many papers have deteriorated to the point of being illegible or have sustained water damage. Yet, portions are in good condition and include correspondence with Col. C.T. Yerkes, Lewis F. Watson, and the Brush Electric Company of Cleveland, Ohio. Of special note, and the most legible, is his presidential correspondence of the Fargo electric Light and Power Company when they were constructing the first electrical system in Fargo in 1882. Also there are some of his letters as Inspector General of the Masonic bodies. The later correspondence consists of incoming correspondence related to his work as agent for the Mutual Reserve Fund Life Association. It has been arranged alphabetically following Mr. Fleming's original order and relates mainly to policy holder's payments and requests.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Content
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1/1	Biographical material and finding aid
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Correspondence Series

1/2	Letterpress book, November 21, 1881 - May 27, 1882 (index)
1/3	Letterpress book, February 14, 1883 - November 27, 1886 (no index)
1/4	Letterpress book, January 7, 1886 - April 12, 1888 (no index)
2/1	Letterpress book, April 12, 1888 - May 9, 1891 (index)
2/2	A-C, 1897-1898
2/3	D, 1897-1898
2/4	F, 1897-1899
2/5	G, 1897-1899

2/6	H, 1897-1899
2/7	I-J, 1896-1899
2/8	K-L, 1897-1898
2/9	M-N, 1896-1899
2/10	P, 1896-1899
2/11	R, 1896-1898
2/12	S, 1896-1899
2/13	T-V, 1897-1899
2/14	W, 1896-1900
2/15	Y, 1897