

McLean County Museum of History

Bracken Family Collection

Processed by
JoAnna Mink
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 box
COLLECTION DATES:	1894-2022
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:	Photographs: See end of finding aid

Brief History

William Kerrick Bracken (1865-1947) was a Bloomington lawyer and Lincoln historian. At his death, his collection of Lincoln books was estimated at 900 volumes, as well as photographs, two original Lincoln letters, and other rare documents. His historical interest included George Washington, and his collection included several volumes of research.

William Bracken was born in Brookville, Indiana (September 14, 1865). After teaching in a rural school, he entered Illinois Wesleyan University as a law student, graduating in 1895. He established a law office with T. C. Kerrick that same year, which he maintained until his death. He married Grace Funk in 1896. He was a prominent railroad attorney, a member of the McLean County and State of Illinois bar associations, and Rotary Club. He was a 32nd degree Mason and a member of the First Methodist Church. He died December 10, 1947.

His son Dwight Bracken (1897-1980) graduated from University High School (1916) and the University of Illinois. He received a master's degree from the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1924. He married Waneta Guttery in 1925. He worked much of his life in employment

and placement services associated with the YMCA and universities. After returning to Bloomington, he worked in life insurance companies, employment services, and public relations. He was curator for the McLean County Historical Museum.

Scope

This collection includes biographical information about William K. Bracken and his career as attorney and collector of Lincoln ephemera, his collection of the snowflakes which he made, manuscripts of speeches which he gave, and a presentation made by his son Dwight Bracken.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Biographical and Miscellaneous

Note: Newspaper clippings from *The Pantagraph* unless noted otherwise.

- 1.1 "W. K. Bracken Died After Long Illness," obituary, December 11, 1947.
- 1.2 William Kerrick Bracken, from < findagrave.com> includes immediate family listing, May 16, 2022.
- 1.3 "Just Hard Luck--a Sad, Sad Tale," September 15, 1932, photo of Rotary Club luncheon.
- 1.4 Newspaper photo of Bracken, undated, and "Who Will Stand In His Place?" December 13, 1947.
- 1.5 "W. K. Bracken Gives Display For Rotarians," undated.
- 1.6 "Reasons for Peace Failures," by W. K. Bracken, October 28, 1944.
- 1.7 "Lincoln Collection Includes 1,000 Pictures, 600 Books," newspaper photo, undated.
- 1.8 "Clock Collection To Be Scattered," undated.
- 1.9 Newspaper photo of clock collection, undated.
- 1.10 Certificate showing William K. Bracken owns five shares of capital stock in the Union Broadcast Service, Inc., September 16, 1931.
- 1.11 Certificate showing William K. Bracken owns eighteen and one-third shares of capital stock in International Oddities, Inc., August 14, 1933.
- 1.12 Two postcards sent to Dwight Bracken at Camp Minne-Wonka, postmarked August 20, 1915.
- 1.13 Telegram from W K Bracken to Laura Guttery, landed safely, June 17, 1929.
- 1.14 "Dwight F. Bracken," obituary, October 23, 1980.
- 1.15 Gift Agreement for donation from Douglas D. Fox, February 28, 2022.

Folder 2: Correspondence

Note: All include envelopes

- 2.1 From Wm. J. [Radonos?], Acme Hotel, Evansville, IN, to Wm. K Bracken, Esq. Bloomington, IL, September 25, 1894.
- 2.2 From George O. Robinson, South Paris, Maine, to Messrs. Kerrick and Bracken, Bloomington, IL, September 20, 1901.
- 2.3 From George O. Robinson, South Paris, Maine, to Messrs. Kerrick and Bracken, Bloomington, IL, October 28, 1901.

- 2.4 From George O. Robinson, North Cambridge, Massachusetts. to Messrs, Kerrick and Bracken, Bloomington, IL, March 19, 1902.
- 2.5 From George O. Robinson, North Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Messrs. Kerrick and Bracken, Bloomington, IL, March 25, 1902.
- 2.6 From George O. Robinson, South Paris, Maine, to Messrs. Kessick and Bracken, Bloomington, IL, February 22, 1904.
- 2.7 From George O. Robinson, South Paris Maine, to Messrs Kerrick and Bracken, Bloomington, IL, February 3, 1905.
- 2.8 From [H.B. Baut....?], Evansville, IN, to W.K. Bracken, Bloomington, IL, April 28, 1906.
- 2.9 From George O. Robinson, South Paris, Maine, to Messrs. Bracken, Young, and Pierce, Bloomington, IL, January 11, 1907.
- 2.10 From George O. Robinson, South Paris, Maine, to Messrs. Bracken, Young, and Pierce, Bloomington, IL, December 26, 1907, with an enclosure of a copy of a letter from Kerrick and Bracken to George O. Robinson, December 31, 1906.
- 2.11 From George O. Robinson, South Paris, Maine, to Messrs. Bracken, Young, and Pierce, Bloomington, IL, January 22, 1908.
- 2.12 From Mrs. M.E. Benedict, Charlevoix, Michigan, to Mrs. W.K. Bracken, Bloomington, IL, August 5, 1915.

Folder 3: Photographs, Miscellaneous

- 3.1 Photo of William Bracken's car, possibly a 1949 Ford, 4.25 x 3.25".
- 3.2 Photo of unidentified building, faded, 4.25 x 2.5".
- 3.3 Photo of several men on swing set, 2.5 x 4.5".
- 3.4 Photo of men with bicycles (caption has been cut), note on reverse "the bicycles were called a [...] Flyer, for Douglas," 8 x 10".
- 3.5 Print of above photo, with identifying caption, 5.25 x 4".
- 3.6 Photo of William Bracken, "Louie" on reverse, 6.5 x 9.5".

Folder 4: Photographs, Lincoln

- 4.1 Three photos (from exhibit?) mounted on cardstock: Thomas Lincoln, Marriage cabin of Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush Johnson, Lincoln's Indiana Home, each c. 4 x 3".
- 4.2 Three photos (from exhibit?) mounted on cardstock: Lincoln's Knob Creek School House, Lincoln's first Illinois Home, Little Prairie Baptist Church, each c. 4 x 3".
- 4.3 Two photos (from exhibit?) mounted on cardstock: Rutledge Tavern - at New Salem, Rock Spring-LaRue County, KY, each c. 4 x 3".

Folder 5: Snowflakes

- 5.1 "Snowflakes Part of Legacy," *Pantagraph*, January 23, 1966.
- 5.2 Seven sheets (double-sided) in mylar sleeves of snowflakes.
- 5.3 Two photos of snowflakes, 5 x 7".
- 5.4 Snowflake mounted on black construction paper, 7 x 10".
- 5.5 Snowflake mounted on black construction paper, 4 x 4".
- 5.6 Snowflake mounted on red construction paper, 4.5" diameter.
- 5.7 Snowflake mounted on red construction paper, 8 x 11".

- 5.8 Snowflakes mounted on red construction paper, 9 x 12", captioned "'Some' of the thousands snowflakes made by W. K. Bracken. Over 75 were displayed at the Chicago Fair in 1933, in the Ripley's 'Believe It or Not' exhibit. Mr. Bracken was a well known attorney in Bloomington IL."
- 5.9 Snowflakes mounted on violet construction paper, 9 x 12", captioned "'Some' of the thousands snowflakes made by W. K. Bracken. Over 75 were displayed at the Chicago Fair in 1933, in the Ripley's 'Believe It or Not' exhibit. Mr. Bracken was a well known attorney in Bloomington IL."

Folder 6: Brown's Business College Address, 1929

- 6.1 Typed and handwritten notes for Graduate Address which W. K. Bracken delivered at the Brown's Business College Commencement Exercises, June 4, 1929, 14pp on 5 x 8" sheets.
- 6.2 Program for 63rd Annual Commencement Exercises of Brown's Business College, June 4, 1929.

Folder 7: "George Washington"

- 7.1 Typed manuscript of "George Washington" by W. K. Bracken, 1938, 34pp.
- 7.2 Subsequent manuscript of "George Washington" with handwritten emendations, 34pp.
- 7.3 Index card with handwritten notes.

Folder 8: "Memorial Day"

- 8.1 Typed manuscript of paper delivered by W. K. Bracken before Young Men's Business Club, Bloomington, IL, May 27, 1930, 15pp on 5 x 8" sheets.
- 8.2 Typed draft of above paper.
- 8.3 Handwritten notes, 2pp on 5 x 8" sheets.
- 8.4 Handwritten notes, 2pp on 5 x 8" sheets.

Folder 9: Travelogue

- 9.1 Handwritten manuscript by Dwight Bracken describing visits to art centers of the Southwest, undated, 24pp on lined paper.

See also:

MC1-AL-21 - Large Poster Board with 21 photographs of Lincoln, including inside Lincoln's home in Springfield, Chicago Wigwam, Ford's Theater, Statues (William K. Bracken Collection--A Bloomington Attorney and Lincoln Collector)

MC1-AL-22 - Large Poster Board with 13 photographs relating to Lincoln, including Statues, Photographs of Lincoln, the Hearse used in Springfield, Lincoln's Funeral at his home in Springfield (William K. Bracken Collection--A Bloomington Attorney and Lincoln Collector)