

McLean County Museum of History

Vern Gray Collection

Processed by Torii Moré
Summer 2010

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1966-
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:	None

Brief History

Vern Gray (December 19, 1897- June 28, 1972) was a former curator of the McLean County Historical Society. Gray became curator in April, 1965, when the museum was located in the McBarnes Memorial Building.

Gray lived in Bloomington since 1916, when his parents, James E. and Elvira Munro Gray moved from Saunemin, Livingston County, Illinois. Gray lived at 1209 E. Jefferson St. for more than fifty years. Gray's first job was teaching in a one-room school called Frog Alley near Towanda. He left in spring of 1917 to enlist in the army. He served overseas with the 33rd division. When he was discharged in 1917 he worked for oil drilling companies in Texas and Mexico, and worked on newspapers in Texas and Tennessee. He returned to Bloomington in 1929.

History was Vern Gray's main hobby and work. He spent much of his time refinishing old furniture and wood carvings. Gray was a member of Wesley United Methodist Church, Bloomington Masonic Lodge 43, Bloomington Consistory, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Illinois State Historical Society, the McLean County Historical Society and the Smithsonian Associates, to name a few.

Vern Gray died June 28, 1972 at the age of 74, after six months of failing health.

Scope Note

This collection contains speeches, manuscripts, and notes written by Vern Gray. There are also newspaper articles, correspondence, and books.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Historical Speeches

- 1.1 Subject: History of automobiles in McLean County
- 1.2 Subject: Horse and buggies in McLean County
- 1.3 Title: Bloomington--- As it was in 1870, 100 Years Ago
- 1.4 Genealogy speech June 15, 1970
- 1.5 Title: The deep snow of 1830-1831 and the quick freeze of 1836 (2 copies)
- 1.6 Title: The deep freeze of 1836 (2 copies)
- 1.7 Subject: history of Dawson Township

Folder 2: Notes

- 2.1 Notes on banks
- 2.2 Notes on brick pavement
- 2.3 Notes on 129th infantry
- 2.4 Notes on transportation

Folder 3: McLean County Historical Society

- 3.1 Excerpt from Scrap Book No. 1, author not known (2 pages)
- 3.2 "Educational Value of Historical Collections" address by Rev. M. Harry (3 pages)
- 3.3 The need for the preservation of local history and historical items (2 pages)
- 3.4 "Why I am interested in Local History" by Mrs. S. C. Silliman
- 3.5 About the McLean County Historical Society
- 3.6 "A Good Move" from *The Weekly Bulletin* March 11, 1892
- 3.7 Notes
- 3.8 "County History" from *The Daily Bulletin* March 21, 1892
- 3.9 "For County History" from *The Daily Bulletin* June 5, 1892
- 3.10 Excerpt from *The Daily Bulletin* June 6, 1892
- 3.11 Notes

Folder 4: McLean County History

- 4.1 History of Normal
- 4.2 History of Bloomington
- 4.3 Articles regarding John McBarnes and Memorial Building
- 4.4 Notes on history of McLean County Historical Society
- 4.5 Handwritten notes on postmasters, post offices, street names, the corn belt, G.A.R posts, old houses, businesses no longer operating, social science club, McLean County schools, Lexington, Colfax, Heyworth, food prices, Pauda township, LeRoy, Gridley, Randolph-Downs, McLean County, Memorial Day, Methodist church, prices
- 4.6 McLean County Fair article- Silver cup
- 4.7 The Illinois Area and Early settlers
- 4.8 North Bloomington notes
- 4.9 "A Flying Machine"
- 4.10 Newspaper excerpts regarding transportation

- 4.11 Notes on talk over WJBC regarding Railroads
- 4.12 Material regarding Railroads
- 4.13 Article "P.O. Occupies Several Sites- History of Mail Receiving Buildings One Move After Another" dated April 27, 1930

Folder 5: Black History Material

- 5.1 notes- local source material on black history
- 5.2 correspondence between Jay Jones and Vern Gray about underground railroad

Folder 6: White's Gate

- 6.1 page of notes
- 6.2 Correspondence between Mr. and Miss R. J. Moran and Vern Gray about White's Rocking Oscillating Arm Swing Gate dated November 17, 1970-December 31, 1970

Folder 7: McLean County Legislators

- 7.1 Correspondence from Vern C. Gray to Miss Caroline R. Heath regarding legislators and attached list of legislators from McLean County (2 copies)
- 7.2 Notes (26 pages)
- 7.3 Correspondence regarding research for legislators (21 pages, between Vern Gray, Miss Davenport, Richard Nicholes, Mr. N. Elmo Franklin Jr., Illinois Bar Association, Mill Caroline R. Heath, William A. Wright, Ancel Stubblefield, Edgar E. Lundeen, Mable V. Vaughan, Carl W. Cusey)

Folder 8: Hubbard Source Material

- 8.1 Correspondence from Vern C. Gray to Mrs. Ralph O. Frazer regarding Elbert Hubbard dated September 6, 1966
- 8.2 Notes (4 pages)
- 8.3 Correspondence from Ralph O. Frazer to McLean County Historical Society

Folder 9: Old Settlers Meetings Abstracts

- 9.1 abstracts, 12 pages

Folder 10: Misc. Correspondence

- 10.1 Correspondence from Vern C. Gray to Richard A. Middleton regarding Third National bank of Bloomington
- 10.2 Comedic correspondence from "Subscriber" to "My Dear Sirs" regarding reasons why a check can not be sent

Folder 11: Newspapers

- 11.1 100th Anniversary Edition of *The Pantagraph*
- 11.2 Pantagraph advertising rates and subscription costs and weekly Pantagraph files
Daily Bulletin notes
- 11.3 Daily Leader notes
- 11.4 "City directories on file in cabinet" (notes)
- 11.5 Newspapers on file (notes)
- 11.6 "Bloomington Newspapers" (typed list, 2 copies)

- 11.7 Weekly Pantagraph excerpts (typed)
- 11.8 Weekly Pantagraph files north cabinet (typed notes)
- 11.9 "Regarding Old Records"

Folder 12: Old Towns book

- 12.1 Book containing information and notes on towns in McLean County

Folder 13: Historic Books

- 13.1 Tri-Annual Atlas & Plat Book
- 13.2 McLean County Centennial, Arrowsmith Battlefield, Historic Stewart house and other Historic Papers (Book)

Folder 14: Biographical Information

- 14.1 "Museum Curator, Vern C. Gray, Dies" *Pantagraph* June 28, 1972.
- 14.2 Obituary in the *Pantagraph* Thursday, July 6, 1972

Folder 15: Thirty-third Illinois Volunteer Infantry

- 15.1 Set of index cards on members of 33rd Illinois Volunteer Infantry