

# Guide to the Bernice Britton Fleckten Papers

WA MSS S-2566



by Kathleen T. Burns

July 2006

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** WA MSS S-2566

**CREATOR:** Fleckten, Bernice Britton, 1883-

**TITLE:** Bernice Britton Fleckten papers

**DATES:** 1900-1938 1919-1930

**BULK DATES:** 1919-1930

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers document social and family life in North Dakota and Saskatchewan in the early twentieth century. They consist primarily of Fleckten's personal correspondence with her father, with other family members, and with friends, as well as business correspondence, third-party correspondence addressed to her first and second husbands, financial and legal papers, receipts, and printed ephemera. Thirty-six letters from Judge Niederriter to Fleckten, spanning 1907-1928, document Niederriter's concern for his daughter and his interest in horticulture. His letters relay news about Kenmare, noting the sale of local property, town scandals including a suicide, his care of Kenmare parks, and social events with neighbors and friends. Fleckten's 19 letters to her father and his wife Malvina date between 1928 and 1929; the first five are written from Moose Jaw and apprise her father of monetary difficulties following Detlefson's departure. Letters written after Fleckten's divorce and return to North Dakota carry news of her personal life, including details of the accident and her hospitalization after she and Senator Fleckten were struck by a speeding driver in Bismark, North Dakota. The papers include 65 other letters, spanning from 1900 to 1937. These are primarily from Fleckten's female friends in Saskatchewan and North Dakota, relaying personal news, marriage and birth announcements, and opinions about local happenings. One letter includes a reference to North Dakota Ku Klux Klan leadership. Business correspondence documents Fleckten's struggles to pay off debts in Moose Jaw. Legal and financial papers include assessment notices and a 1917 insurance policy for a property in Neville, Saskatchewan. Printed ephemera in the collection includes a map of the 1925 Provincial Exhibition in Regina, Saskatchewan; a map of the "Willow Bunch Constituency"; a handbill for a public speech in Kenmare; and copies of Fleckten's Conciliation Court business card.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.fleckten>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.fleckten>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

- b. box
- f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Carmen D. Valentino on the Arthur Corbitt Hoskins Memorial Fund, 2006.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

The Bernice Britton Fleckten Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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### Preferred Citation

Bernice Britton Fleckten Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## BERNICE BRITTON FLECKTEN (b. 1884)

Bernice Britton ("Birdie") Fleckten, born circa 1884, was the daughter of Judge William F. Niederriter of Kenmare, North Dakota. Niederriter was a gardener, nurseryman, real estate speculator and public park promoter who corresponded regularly with his daughter after she married Canadian Fred R. Detlefson circa 1917 and moved to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan in 1920. After eight years in Moose Jaw, Detlefson abandoned Fleckten. The couple divorced in 1928, and Fleckten returned to Kenmare where she briefly assumed the name "Bernice B. Britton." She married North Dakota State Senator John E. Fleckten in 1929, the same year her father passed away. Fleckten, who supported herself in Moose Jaw by painting scarves, leasing property and assisting local lawyers with defense cases, later became a judge in the Ward County Conciliation Court in Kenmare, North Dakota.

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## Scope and Contents

The Bernice Britton Fleckten Papers document social and family life in North Dakota and Saskatchewan in the early twentieth century. The papers consist primarily of Fleckten's personal correspondence with her father, with other family members, and with friends, as well as business correspondence, third-party

correspondence addressed to her first and second husbands, financial and legal papers, receipts, and printed ephemera.

[Series I. Bernice Britton Fleckten Correspondence](#) includes thirty-six letters from Judge Niederriter to Fleckten, spanning 1907-1928, documenting Judge Niederriter's concern for his daughter and his interest in horticulture. His letters relay news about Kenmare, noting the sale of local property, town scandals including a suicide, his care of Kenmare parks, and social events with neighbors and friends. Fleckten's 19 letters to her father and his wife Malvina date between 1928 and 1929; the first five are written from Moose Jaw and apprise her father of monetary difficulties following Detlefson's departure. Letters written after Fleckten's divorce and return to North Dakota carry news of her personal life, including details of the accident and her hospitalization after she and Senator Fleckten were struck by a speeding driver in Bismark, North Dakota.

The papers include 65 other letters, spanning from 1900 to 1937. These are primarily from Fleckten's female friends in Saskatchewan and North Dakota, relaying personal news, marriage and birth announcements, and opinions about local happenings. One letter includes a reference to North Dakota Ku Klux Klan leadership. Business correspondence documents Fleckten's struggles to pay off debts in Moose Jaw.

[Series II. Third Party Correspondence](#) consists of letters to Fleckten's husbands, Fred R. Detfelson and John E. Fleckten.

[Series III. Other Papers](#) contains legal and financial papers, including assessment notices and a 1917 insurance policy for a property in Neville, Saskatchewan. Printed ephemera in the collection includes a map of the 1925 Provincial Exhibition in Regina, Saskatchewan; a map of the "Willow Bunch Constituency"; a handbill for a public speech in Kenmare; and copies of Fleckten's Conciliation Court business card.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Bernice Britton Fleckten Correspondence, 1905-1937

0.21' (0.5 box)

b. 1, f. 1-4	Niederriter, William F.	1907-29
b. 1, f. 5	Detleftson, Fred R.	1920 Jul 29
b. 1, f. 6	Fleckten, John E.	1928 Dec 18
b. 1, f. 7	Other family	1903-37
b. 1, f. 8-11	Friends	1900-37, n.d.
b. 1, f. 12	Business	1907-37
b. 1, f. 13	Unidentified	1914, n.d.
b. 1, f. 14-15	Empty envelopes	1905-30, n.d.

**Series II: Third Party Correspondence, 1919-1930**

*0.02' (0.1 box)*

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b. 1, f. 16	Detfelson, Fred R.	1919-25
b. 1, f. 17	Fleckten, Alec to John E. Fleckten	1930 Jan 7

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### Series III: Other Papers, 1904-1938

0.19' (0.4 box)

b. 1, f. 18	Legal and financial papers	1917-38, n.d.
b. 1, f. 19	Receipts	1920-37
b. 1, f. 20	Printed ephemera	1904-29, n.d.
b. 1, f. 21	Notes, manuscript	n.d.



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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

Divorced women -- North Dakota -- 20th Century  
Fathers and daughters -- North Dakota -- Kenmare -- 20th Century  
Female friendship -- North Dakota -- 20th Century  
Female friendship -- Saskatchewan -- 20th Century  
Gardeners -- North Dakota -- Kenmare -- 20th Century  
Judges -- North Dakota -- Kenmare -- 20th Century  
Legislators -- North Dakota -- 20th Century  
Parks -- North Dakota -- Kenmare -- 20th Century  
Tax assessment -- Saskatchewan -- Neville -- 20th Century  
Women -- North Dakota -- Kenmare -- Social conditions -- 20th Century

### Geographic Names

Kenmare (N.D.) -- Social life and customs -- 20th Century  
Moose Jaw (Sask.) -- Social life and customs -- 20th Century  
Neville (Sask.) -- Social life and customs -- 20th Century  
Willow Bunch (Sask.) -- Maps  
Willow Bunch (Sask.) -- Politics and government -- 20th Century

### Genres / Formats

Maps (documents) -- 20th Century  
Receipts (financial records) -- 20th Century

### Occupations

Gardeners -- North Dakota -- Kenmare -- 20th Century  
Judges -- North Dakota -- Kenmare -- 20th Century  
Legislators -- North Dakota -- 20th Century

### Names

Detlefson, Fred R.  
Fleckten, Bernice Britton, 1883-  
Fleckten, John E.  
Niederriter, Malvina  
Niederriter, William F., ca. 1848-1929

### Corporate Bodies

Ku Klux Klan (1915- ) -- North Dakota -- Grand Forks  
Regina Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition -- 1925 -- Maps