COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 11 manuscript boxes, 1 oversize box (5 linear feet)

COLLECTION DATES: 1877-1938
William Fortune (1863-1942) was born in Boonville, Indiana, the son of William Harrison and Mary (St. Clair) Fortune. After rudimentary schooling, he became an apprentice on the Boonville Standard at the age of thirteen. In 1881 he published a history of Warrick County. Later the same year he accompanied General James Veatch on a trip to Spencer County to interview people who had known Abraham Lincoln during his Indiana years (1815-1830). This began a lifelong interest in Lincoln.

In 1882 Fortune moved to Indianapolis. He took a job at the Indianapolis Journal, and soon became city editor. Resigning because of ill health in 1888, he served as local correspondent for several eastern papers during Benjamin Harrison's presidential campaign, then briefly edited a weekly paper, then worked for two years at the Indianapolis News.

In the early 1890s he became involved with civic improvement. In 1890, working with Colonel Eli Lilly, he helped found the Commercial Club, which in 1911 became the Chamber of Commerce. He pushed for paving the city's streets, and in early 1890 organized a Paving Exposition. With Lilly, he got the city its first big convention, the 1893 27th Encampment of the GAR. From 1898 to the early 1920s, he was chairman of the Commercial Club's Elevated Track Commission. During the winter of 1893-1894, the Club under his direction operated a made-work program which helped two thousand families through the winter's depression.

Though he never learned to drive, Fortune was an enthusiastic advocate of automobiles, heading an early automobile club and working for good roads. In 1904 he took a lead in hosting a visit to Indianapolis by Prince Pu Lun of China. He became a good friend of two of the prince's entourage, Wong Kai Kah and Kee Owyang, and maintained an interest in China for some years.

For twenty years Fortune operated a trade magazine for the paving industry, Municipal Engineering. From 1908 to 1924 he was president of a group of independent telephone companies which provided stout competition to the local Bell companies.

Invited to buy some stock in Eli Lilly and Company in 1916, Fortune served as a director of the company from 1916 to 1927, and as head of the company's finance committee from 1917 to 1921. Through most of his life he was a close friend of J. K. Lilly. He was a member of Lilly's group of "Rowdy Revelers," and went on a world cruise with Lilly in 1923. When Lilly's son Eli was divorced from Fortune's daughter Evelyn in 1926, the fathers disagreed. Fortune kept his lawyer, William H. Thompson, busy for some years scrutinizing every action taken by the Lilly company's board.

In 1916 Fortune organized the Indianapolis area chapter of the American Red Cross. He raised large amounts of money and organized hundreds of volunteers. He also organized the local War Chest and raised over $3 million in a
In the 1920s, Fortune was active in the national Red Cross and in the national Chamber of Commerce, to which he made in 1925 a proposal for tax reduction which received national attention. In 1928-1930 he headed the American Peace Society, which sought to make practical application of the principles of the Briand-Kellogg pact.

On the death of his friend James Whitcomb Riley in 1916, Fortune bought the poet's Lockerbie Street home, and held it until it could be taken over by an association. In 1931, to make sure that a Veterans Administration hospital would be built in Indianapolis, he bought and donated a $16,000 site on Cold Spring Road.

In 1926-1927 Fortune headed a commission to erect a memorial to George Rogers Clark, but resigned before the project was completed. In 1927 he was active in organizing a Nancy Hanks Lincoln memorial in Spencer County. He wrote several papers about Lincoln's Indiana boyhood, and corresponded with several Lincoln biographers, notably Ida M. Tarbell and Albert J. Beveridge.

After his wife's death in 1898 and the marriage of his children in the early 1900s, Fortune was essentially a public man. He enjoyed the limelight, and used his prominence to promote what seemed to him worthwhile causes.

Sources: Materials in collection

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection, filling eleven manuscript boxes and one oversize box, contains correspondence, speeches, pamphlets, photographs, and drawings, dated 1877 to 1938. The material was received in three installments, the first two of which were originally separate collections, M 0350 and M 0462. The second group, containing correspondence 1922-1936, came arranged alphabetically by correspondent in two date groups, 1922-1932 and 1933-1936; this order has been retained, in Boxes 6-11. In Boxes 1-5, material in the other two groups has been arranged by category, the categories being arranged chronologically as they occurred in Fortune's life.

In Box 1 are biographical materials including portraits; correspondence 1881-1918; and material on Fortune's early activities, including Century Club, Commercial Club, paving, and the 1893 GAR Encampment.

In Box 2, Folders 1-9 contain material about track elevations. In Folders 2-4 are responses to a questionnaire Fortune sent out to other cities about the effect of track elevation. Folders 5-7 contain petitions circulated by the Public Safety League in 1899, demanding action about elevation. Folders 10-11 contain material about a loving cup given to Fortune in 1899 by Indianapolis citizens when his morale was very low after his wife's death. In Folders 12-15 is material about Prince Pu Lun's visit to Indianapolis in 1904. Other activities covered are J. K. Lilly's "Rowdy Revelers" (Folder 16); the Indiana Society of Chicago (Folder 17); the American Red Cross (Folders 18-19); and Fortune's world cruise (Folders 20-21). Folder 22 contains a Cirkut photograph by N. H. Losey of T.R. Roosevelt addressing a crowd on the Circle from the English Hotel, 13 October 1910.

Box 3 contains material on Fortune's 1929 homecoming at Boonville (Folder 1); his gift of land for a VA hospital (Folders 2-5); and his work on the U. S. Chamber of Commerce (Folders 6-9). Invitations, programs, and clippings are in Folders 11-14, and photographs are listed in Folders 19-28. Scrapbooks about Fortune's activities are in Folder 29, BV 2859-1863, and OMB 0005.

Box 4 contains material documenting Fortune's interest in Abraham Lincoln's Indiana years, 1815-1830. In Folders 2-6 are notes of his 1881 interviews with people who had known Lincoln, and in Folder 7 affidavits about the Lincoln family's route in Indiana. Fortune's correspondence about Lincoln, and about a Lincoln memorial in Boonville, is in Folders 9-18. Folder 32 contains a photograph album of Lincoln’s Last Journey. The albums is of copy photographs of originals by Ira M. Hough, and is the sixth of six sets made (ca. 1934)

Box 5 contains more material about Lincoln (Folders 1-2). Folders 3-7 contain material about Fortune's friend James
Whitcomb Riley, and letters written to Riley, 1903-1917, by Young E. Allison, a friend of Fortune.

Newspaperman Anselm Chomel got to know Fortune about 1918 when he and his sister wrote a book about the World War I activities of the local chapter of the Red Cross (A Red Cross *Chapter at Work* (Indianapolis: Hollenbeck Press, 1920). He later, apparently hoping for a patron, wrote draft biographies of Fortune (Folders 8-9) and Colonel Eli Lilly (Folders 10-14). Neither was published.


Box 11 contains correspondence 1927-1937 with Fortune's lawyer, William H. Thompson, about the operation of Eli Lilly and Company. Having disagreed with J. K. Lilly in 1926, Fortune questioned almost every action taken by the company, objecting especially to incentive bonuses paid to the top executives and to what he considered a low rate of dividend.

**BOX AND FOLDER LISTING**

**BOX 1: Biographical: Correspondence, 1881-1918; Activities, 1890-1893**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOLDER</th>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Biographical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reprint, <em>Cyclopaedia of American Biography</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Obituaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(VC) Portraits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>(VC) Oversize portraits (OVB and OVC storage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Boonville <em>Standard</em> carrier's greeting 1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Correspondence-- 1881-1882</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Correspondence-- 1886-1890</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Correspondence-- 1892-1894</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Correspondence-- 1896-1902</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Correspondence-- 1904-1905</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Correspondence-- 1906-1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Correspondence-- 1911-1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Correspondence-- 1915-1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Century Club 1890-1894</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16 Commercial Club 1890, 1897
17 Articles about Paving
18 (VC) Photos--GAR Encampment 1892; USS Kearsarge on State House lawn 1893
19 GAR Encampment 1893-- programs
20 GAR Encampment 1893-- correspondence
21 GAR Encampment 1893-- "Fortune's Five Thousand"
22 Encampment 1894 at Pittsburgh

BOX 2: Activities, 1894-1923

FOLDER CONTENTS
1 Material on track elevations 1894-1903
2-4 Responses to questionnaires about elevation
5-7 Petitions-- Public Safety League 1899
8 Speech by William Fortune about track elevation 1905
9 Clippings re track elevation
10 Loving Cup 1899
11 (VC) Photo of Loving Cup
12 Wong Kai Kah-- Banking in China
13 (VC) Photos of Pu Lun visit 1904
14 (OMB 0005) Chinese print ca 1905 (folder 1)
15 (OMB 0005) Chinese proclamation (ffF-13, folder 5)
16 "Rowdy Revellers" ca 1910
17 Indiana Society of Chicago 1911-1924
18 American Red Cross
19 (VC) Photos-- American Red Cross (see also OVC-folders 1 & 2)
20 Log of world cruise 1923
21 (VC) Album of world cruise
22 (VC) T.R. Roosevelt at Indianapolis, October 13, 1910 (VC-Cirkut)

BOX 3: Activities 1929-1934; Invitations and programs; Photographs

FOLDER CONTENTS
Boonville homecoming 1929

VA Hospital gift 1931-- correspondence Jan.-Mar.

VA Hospital gift 1931-- correspondence Apr.-Dec.

VA Hospital gift 1931-- construction of additional facility 1932

VA Hospital gift 1931-- clippings

U. S. Chamber of Commerce--correspondence (see also, VC-Cirkuts: 1933 Dinner)

U. S. Chamber of Commerce-- printed material

Address on taxation 1926

(OMB 0005) Memorial about taxes 1924 (folder 6)

United States Society 1932; Thrift and Security Foundation 1934

Invitations

Programs

Clippings

Printed material

Reports of Star Savings and Loan Association 1892-1894

Woodruff Place school enumeration 1896

Typescript-- Daniel Webster at Madison 6-1-1837

(VC) Photos-- George Rogers Clark Memorial Commission 1927; (OMB 0005) Plans for G. R. Clark Memorial (folder 3)

(VC) Photos-- WF memorial in Boonville 1938

(VC) Photos -- Welcome of Paul V. McNutt from Philippines 1940

(VC) Photos -- Illustrations for biography

(VC) Photos -- Copy negatives for illustrations

(VC) Photos -- Portrait of Col. Eli Lilly

(VC) Photos -- John Uri Lloyd

(VC) Photos -- Portraits-- J. L. Hoggatt, Ben D. House, Nathan Morris, Prince Pu Lun, Tsai Ting Kan

(VC) Album-- unidentified

Scrapbook #1

(BV 2859-2863) Scrapbooks #2, 3, 6, 7, 8
**BOX 4: Lincoln material**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>FOLDER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(VC) Portraits of Lincoln</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(VC) Lincoln family cabin</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Evidence re; Lincoln-- Gen. Veatch, Gentry family</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Transcript of WF's notes taken in 1881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>WF interview with Mrs. Joseph Crawford 1881</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>WF trip with Ida M. Tarbell 1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1916 affidavits re: Lincoln family route</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Resolution re: Lincoln memorial 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Correspondence re: Lincoln and memorial--Wm. L. Barker, J. Christian Bay</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>Correspondence re: Lincoln and memorial-- George Honig</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Correspondence re: Lincoln and memorial -- John E. Iglehart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>Correspondence re: Lincoln and memorial -- Roscoe Kiper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Correspondence re: Lincoln and memorial -- Philip Lutz, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Correspondence re: Lincoln and memorial -- Ernest W. Owen</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Correspondence re: Lincoln and memorial -- miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>(OMB 0005) Plans for Lincoln memorial (folder 3 &amp; Flat File: FF 11-k, folder 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>(VC) Photos-- Lincoln memorial and Lincoln route</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Publicity-- Lincoln memorial</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>(OMB 0005) Publicity -- oversize (folder 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Miscellaneous material on Lincoln</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Nancy Hanks Lincoln memorial</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td><em>Lincoln Lore</em> #1-38</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>WF speeches before SW Indiana Hist. Soc. 1925, 1926, 1930</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>WF speech at Boonville 1932</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Speeches and papers by others about Lincoln</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Roscoe Kiper-- &quot;Lincoln in Indiana&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
30 Abraham Lincoln in Illinois
31 Booklets about Lincoln
32 (VC) Copy photographs of Lincolns Last Journey (see VC Album Storage)

BOX 5: Lincoln continued; Young E. Allison- J. W. Riley; Anselm Chomel biographies of WF and Col. Eli Lilly
FOLDER
1: Lincoln route-- booklets
2: Lincoln-- clippings
3: Material on James Whitcomb Riley
4: Young E. Allison to Riley-- 1903-1906
5: Young E. Allison to Riley -- 1907-1908
6: Young E. Allison to Riley -- 1915
7: Young E. Allison to Edmund Eitel-- 1916-1917
8: Chomel-- Pro Bono Publico-- pp. 1-70
9: Chomel-- Pro Bono Publico -- pp. 71-140
10: Chomel-- Lilly-- Founder -- pp. 1-50
11: Chomel-- Lilly-- Founder -- pp. 51-100
12: Chomel-- Lilly-- Founder -- pp. 101-150
13: Chomel-- Lilly-- Founder -- pp. 151-200
14: Chomel-- Lilly-- Founder -- pp. 201-267

BOX 6: Correspondence 1922-1932, A to E
FOLDER
1-2: A
3-6: B
7-9: C
10: D
11-12: E

BOX 7: Correspondence 1922-1932, F to L
FOLDER
1: F
2-4: G
5: H
6: I - J
7-9: K
10: L

11: J. K. Lilly -- 1922-1923
12: J. K. Lilly -- 1924-- January-June
13: J. K. Lilly -- 1924-- July-December
14: J. K. Lilly -- 1925
15: J. K. Lilly -- 1926

**BOX 8: Correspondence 1922-1932, L to Z**

**FOLDER**

1: L continued
2-5: M
6: N
7-10: O
11: P
12: Q to Z

**BOX 9: Correspondence 1933-1936, A to L**

**FOLDER**

1: A
2-4: B
5: C
6: D
7: E
8-9: F
10-11: G
12: H
13: I
14: J-K
15: L
BOX 10: Correspondence 1933-1936, L to Z
FOLDER
1-2: L continued
3-5: M
6: N
7-8: O
9: P
10: R
11-12: S
13-14: T
15: U-V-W

BOX 11: Correspondence with William H. Thompson re: Lilly Company
FOLDER
1: 1925-1927
2: 1928
3: 1929
4: 1930
5: 1931
6: 1932
7: 1933
8: 1934
9: 1935
10: 1936
11: 1937

OMB 0005
FOLDER
1: Chinese print ca. 1905
2: Lincoln clippings
3: Plans for memorials at Boonville and Vincennes
4: Plans for memorials at Boonville and Vincennes (Flat File: FF 11-k)
5: Chinese proclamation ca. 1905 (Flat File: FF 11-k)

6: Memorial about taxes ca. 1924

7-8: Scrapbooks #4 and 5

**CATALOGING INFORMATION**

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:


2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.

3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.

4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0462).

5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.