

185 GRANTLAND, FLEMING

Printer & Publisher

Richmond, Lynchburg

Printer and engraver in the Richmond office of Seaton Grantland (186), his brother; also founding publisher of the *Lynchburg Press* (1809-10) with Samuel K. Jennings (236).

Fleming Grantland is the lesser known of two brothers who became major figures in the political life of Georgia during the War of 1812; as with his brother, that prominence was founded on a career in the Virginia printing trade. Fleming was born on the old Byrd estate in Charles City County and was evidently trained as a printer and engraver in the Richmond press office of his older brother Seaton in the years before 1807, when he was seventeen. In January 1807, he first appears in the trade producing copperplate images for *The American Gleaner*, Seaton's biweekly magazine that reprinted items from other U.S. periodicals – its gleanings – that he believed of interest to his peers. But a lack of interest and content brought about the *Gleaner's* death in December 1807 after just eighteen numbers. Fleming apparently remained with Seaton in his next venture, printing a new twice-weekly campaign paper, *The Virginian*, edited by Gerard Banks (019), backing the presidential candidacy of James Monroe that year. While the Grantland shop's involvement was just three months that spring, that was evidently long enough to solidify their Republican credentials.

With the dawn of 1809 and the installation of Madison in March, both Grantland brothers sought new opportunities outside Richmond. In early spring, Fleming left Seaton's employ to found his own Republican newspaper in Lynchburg, the long-lived *Lynchburg Press*. He brought in Samuel K. Jennings, a popular local physician and Methodist minister, to edit the paper for him, so establishing the journal solidly in the face of the competing *Lynchburg Star* of Dr. James Graham (183). Meanwhile, Seaton took his press to Milledgeville, Georgia, then that state's capital. The town was founded on the site of a frontier fort in 1803 after the Creek land cessions of 1802 added much of the northern and western lands now within the state's boundaries; in 1807, it was made the state capital for its central location in this new geography; but the weekly paper then published there, the *Georgia Argus*, was unfriendly to Madison, and his Republican supporters there wanted a journal that favored the new President. Grantland's affiliation with Richmond's Republicans made him a suitable choice. That September, he issued the first number of the *Georgia Journal* at Milledgeville and immediately became an influential political figure in the state. That quick success increased his business to the point where he needed reliable assistance; in the spring of 1810, he convinced Fleming to sell his Lynchburg office and paper in order to join him in Georgia; Grantland sold his *Lynchburg Press* to William Waller Gray (193), nephew of the noted legal scholar William Waller Hening (213), also a leader among Virginia's Republicans.

Once in Milledgeville, Fleming evidently focused on the printing side of the joint venture with his brother, while Seaton built a political career founded on his legal practice in the capital. They built a political alliance with George M. Troup, expressive of the interests of north Georgians and those of Virginia origin, against John Clark, a Revolutionary militia general who represented the interests of south Georgians and those of North Carolina origins. Thus Troup and the Grantlands embodied and advanced the democratization of the

state's government and laws in the face of the old colonial elite; Fleming's standing in that role was enhanced by his service in the War of 1812 under Gen. John Floyd, a key figure in the state's campaign against the Creeks (The Creek War) on its northwestern frontier. At the war's end, Grantland was elected unopposed to the State Senate from Baldwin County, Milledgeville's location. But his time in the public eye was brief. In January 1819, Fleming died unexpectedly from some form of fever; he left a wife and three infant children behind, as well as a social and political potential that was never fulfilled.

His brother was evidently undone by his passing; Seaton retired (temporarily as it turned out) from journalism; he sold his interest in the *Journal* to John B. Hines, publisher of the *Reflector* in Milledgeville, who then merged the two under the *Journal* banner. But Seaton was soon dissatisfied with the resulting paper's views; he acquired the new-born and then-struggling *Georgia Republican* in league with Richard McAllister Orme, his former editor, recasting the paper as the *Southern Recorder*, and using it to check Clark's ambitions. In the end, it was Orme who helped preserve Fleming's legacy, marrying his daughter Sarah, who bore him a son that they named Fleming Grantland Orme.

Personal Data

Born: in 1790 Westover, Charles City County, Virginia.
Married Feb. 15 1813 Eliza Agnes Jones @ Augusta, Georgia.
Died: Jan. 28 1819 Milledgeville, Georgia.
Children: Sarah Caroline (b. 1813); Eliza (1816-38); Fleming Jr. (1818-27).

Sources: Imprints; Brigham; Hubbard on Richmond;; Brannan, *Grantland Family*; Martin, *Georgia Bicentennial History*; Richmond newspaper notices (1809-19); Milledgeville newspaper notices (1809-38).