

Two flags:

1. Union Jack. Small repair sewn on it. Sterling. Reg. U.S. Patent Office . Fast Color--Double Warp All Wool Bunting. The name Annin Guarantees Quality. Pen or pencil mark: 6.20.

128x80 cm. Two brass eyelets. Sewn out of different colors of fabric, not just one piece of cloth dyed or printed.

2. US Flag. 3'x5'. Two eyelets. Little strips of cloth through them to act as ties (?). 48 stars. Sewn out of different colors of fabric for the stripes. The stars are printed or dyed on one piece of cloth. No maker's label.

3. 1 roll of color film. 25 x 19mm exposures on 35mm film. Woman in garden, boats, etc. No identifying band on it.

4. 35mm film. Cermonial pictures. Looks like some kind of group in formation. Government building in Suva? Military barracks? Amphibious jeep. Woman being honored?

5. Leica camera. Film looks ruined. Notes say: 1938 From first loading stores on HMNZ "Wellington" at Suva wharf for Canton and landing Hull Is. Jack Jones, House, and drought-struck trees. Naval party ashore. Canton Island buildings. Self manning Farquhar and ANr??? Outside "office"

6. Leica camera. Canton Is. 1938-41. Fairy Tern. Unloading stores for US party. Calley gets haircut. Jimmy Kamakaiwi on wharf. Ah Leong radio op Dept of Interior USA. Shots of British government station. Some of gear inside. Two of Bunna. Langdale and helper put pont in water to go across east end of island. 1938

7. Half frame film: groups of women.

8. Slip: "To Users of 'Half Frame' 35mm Cameras" ...

July 10, 1916: Appointed Second Lieutenant, Special Reserve of Officers, Royal Flying Corps Military Wing.

22/11/16 Graduation Certificate--Royal Flying Corps. Qualified for service.

1/11/18 Temporary appointment as Lieutenant in Royal Air Force, from 1 April 1918.

Nov. 33 Souvenir card carried by Air-Australia to New Zealand.

Faith in Australia (VH-UXX????) Seems to be signed.

October 1934 Two-shilling passport stamp.

17/11/37 Photo of 10 men with the cornerstone of a lighthouse on Howland Island. "Sirs: This photograph shows the group present at the laying of the cornerstone of a lighthouse dedicated to the memory of Amelia Earhart on lonely Howland Island. The stone was laid by Dr. Ernest H. Gruening (fourth from right), director of the Division of Territories and Insular Possessions, Department of the Interior, on Nov. 17, 1937, when the Coast Guard Cutter Roger B. Taney visited the island. It was Howland Island that Amelia Earhart was heading for when she was forced down on her round-the-world-flight early last summer. The lighthouse dedicated to this gallant flier will be a 20-foot structure to be completed sometime in January. The photograph was taken by H.H. Warner of the University of Hawaii and shows the blueprints of the lighthouse above the stone. John Warner. Honolulu, T.H."

In pen: R.B. Black, Esq. Capt. Coffin of Taney. Dr. Gruening. Black is "head man" in the Pacific Islands Occupation Scheme. He was with Byrd in Antarctic.

6 Photocopies of first day covers addressed to Mrs. FI Fleming, Canton Island

7/12/38 Sir Harry Luke commissioned Fleming as a Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific with jurisdiction within the district of the Phoenix Islands in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.

Pages of a visitor's book for Canton Island, 1938--

Three first-day covers. 1938-1941.

16/8/40 "Clipper Held Up by Slight Accident": "Canton has a British administrative officer, Mr. F.I. Fleming, who lives with his wife in a bungalow built of packing-cases. This is comfortable and home-like and on our way north we drank tea under a lonely Union Jack a quarter of a mile from a lot of Stars and Stripes."

## Contents of Francis Ivor Fleming's Box

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17/8/40 Newspaper article: "Clippers Direct to Australia." Talks about how Fleming would raise the Union Jack daily on Canton.

Undated manuscripts for five pieces by Noel Coward.

12/12/41 List of British subjects evacuated by Fleming from Canton Island after Pearl Harbor.

13/9/45 From Colonial Secretary thanking him for acting as an Assistant Censor during the war years.

19/3/45 10 shilling deposit to Carnegie Library in Suva, entitling Fleming to borrow from the library

19/12/47 10 shilling deposit to Carnegie Library in Suva, entitling Fleming to borrow from the library

Undated: "Please see notes marked with a cross." Seems to be a reply for a request for a birth certificate.

2/12/59 Certified copy of an entry of birth. 5/9/1888. Frances Ivor Fleming--a girl! Occupation of father: engine driver.

26/1/68 From his sister: Lucy is dead. "I want to make the rest of your life happy. ... I know you have seen me but I don't have any knowledge of seeing you."

29/1/68 From John G. Heffernan: "Your sister's plan to go out and bring you back is best. ... you have never met and you are both about to tie your future happiness in the same home."

30/1/68 From his sister: "I can hardly believe after all that we'll spend our final years together."

30/1/68 From Bank of New Zealand: 200 pounds sterling to Mrs. Durant. Balance 892.9.9.

31/1/68 From Doc Murphy to "Caretaker Nukulau". Thanks for the booze. Some business "for Lucy's insertion" in the Fiji Times--probably a death notice of some kind.

[This was Suva's holiday island and the place where the Fijians burned down an American shop, which in turn caused the Fijians to seek help from the British against the Americans. Regrettably, it is now a prison island for rebels.]

- 7.3.68 Notice of rate increase for radio telegrams to all ships.
- 14/2/68 Letter from his sister. Says he should talk about Lucy and not bottle everything up.
- 20/2/68 Letter from his sister: just got the bad news about the spots on his lungs. Upset.
- 20/2/68 From sister: "I wonder whether you are now in Suva. I expect you'll be sad to leave your island after all these years. ... You may be sorry you did me out of a trip to Fiji."
- 21/2/68 O.H.M.S. Crayon: "Rough inventory & key of quarters Nukulau." 1 sheet inside. Two columns of household goods.
- 26/2/68 Letter from Fleming's sister inviting him home. Spots on his lungs. He had TB, says Bob Nairne.
- 26/2/68 Receipt for reply cable to his sister.
- 26/2/68 Derrick Technical Institute thanks him for offer to donate radio equipment and hopes to follow up on the offer.
- 27/2/68 From his sister about their house.
- 28/2/68 Reservations for FI Fleming to travel to San Francisco and London, 28-30 May. Note attached from T. F. (Tom) French: "Frank, I send you this letter from Hunts so that you can keep it by you as a guide to your future movements. As I said the dates can be varied to suit you. I sent a letter to your old mate Noel C. and hope it reached him. See you soon." In red ink--Murphy's hand: "This is Noel Coward the well known playwright."
- 6.3.68 From his sister: "So you are in hospital which I hope will do you good."
- 19.3.68 Letter from his sister. "I'm glad Noel came to see you. It must have been nice to talk to him. Did it make a stir in the hospital?!"
- 19/3/68 Letter from his sister trying to calculate finances for living together.
- Undated note--looks like a draft for a letter: "such short notice ... sick in hospital ... larger notice necessary turn assets

cash ... Cannot work financial deals from sickbed.  
You decide about house. Cannot obtain cash while  
handicapped and weak in hospital."

19/3/68 From Margaret E. Lucas: Parcel rec'd, no charge.

19/3/68 From his sister: "End of May--or before--should be OK."  
Take your doctor's advice.

1968 diary:

Jan 1: Noel Coward  
Les Avants  
Sur Montreux  
Switzerland

Jan 9: Denis agrees my idea of going U.K.

Jan 10: John Herrernan BOAC.

Jan 24: Burnt all diaries Canton onwards.

Feb 13: X-ray XXXX

Feb 14: Wrote sad news cancellation trip to Brambles  
advising my state of health.

Feb 28: Learn that Noel is in Suva for a fortnight.  
Phoned TF to contact Noel and tell him  
about me.

Feb 29: Visit from Noel at 3:30 PM with books and  
fruit. Long talk.

Mar 20: Sent cable explaining unable to transact  
financial deals from hospital bed

Mar 27: last entry--"Hair cut."

Undated letter in red ink from Murphy to Rupert Neelands, Christie's Auctioneers,  
in London. The two flags belonged to Fleming during his time on  
Canton. He flew the American flag on special occasions.  
The real jewel in the box is the unpublished poetry of Noel  
Coward, a good friend of Fleming's--came to see him before  
he died in 1968.

## Contents of Francis Ivor Fleming's Box

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2/4/92 Christie's says the property is not of sufficient value to include in one of their sales.



*This is a transcription of the poems that Noel Coward wrote out for Fleming when they were on Canton Island. They have all been published in Coward's collected works.*

Sonnet to a Hermit Crab

These lines are written to a Hermit Crab,  
A singular amphibian recluse!  
Your predatoriness has this excuse  
That nature fashioned you to smash and grab;  
To be content with neither stone nor slab  
But to appropriate for your own use  
The homes of others. What perverse, obtuse  
Unkindly God designed a life so drab?  
You have strong forward claws; a heart of steel  
But when your stolen shell becomes too tight  
On you must go, a larger one to find.  
How sad to think that your Achilles heel  
Lies in your mortifying, brownish-white,  
Too vulnerable and too soft behind!

Noel Coward  
Canton Island 1941

Onward Christian Soldiers

Now we have it on impeccable authority  
(Without a trace of irony or mirth)  
That when the Day of Judgement come, the meek will take priority  
And set about inheriting the earth.

For so far as I'm concerned  
They can have it if they've earned  
So dubious and thankless a reward.  
For if all their moral sanctity and smug superiority  
Can seriously gratify the Lord,  
Let 'em have it--let 'em keep it  
Let 'em plough it--let 'em reap it  
Let 'em clean it up and polish it and garnish and sweep it  
Let 'em face up to its puzzling complexities  
And, to their gentle diffident dismay,  
Discover what a crucible of hate and crime and sex it is.  
And start re-organizing right away.  
But when they begin to fail  
It will be of small avail  
For them to turn the other silly cheek

For the Lord will smile remotely on their worries and perplexities  
And serve them damn well right for being meek.

Noel Coward,  
Canton Island 1941

Open Letter to a Mayor

Dear Mr. Mayor, I feel myself impelled  
By some strong impulse that will not be quelled  
To ask you, just for once, to put aside  
Your urban dignity, your civic pride  
And answer me a question fair and square.  
Now, Man to Man, or rather man to Mayor:  
What evil circumstances; what witches' fire;  
What aberration; what obscure desire;  
What hidden complex in your early life  
Caused you to choose quite such a horrid wife?  
Were you ensnared? If so, with what? And how?  
To what bleak magic did your spirit bow?  
How could she, even in her younger years  
Ever have not bored everyone to tears?  
How e'en when dandled on her mother's arm  
Could she have shown the slightest sign of charm?  
Could I but see in this her present mould  
Some remnant of a beauty since grown old,  
Could I imagine, in some vanished spring  
This squat, unliassom figure gambolling,  
Could I, for just one instant, find a trace  
of erst-while kindness in that metal face  
Then Mr Mayor I would have held my peace,  
But as it is I find I cannot cease  
To ponder, wonder, query, question, why?  
(Considering the adequate supply  
Of women amiable, of women kind  
Of women clever, flexible of mind,  
Of women glamorous, of women smart  
Of women sensuous and warm of heart)  
Why why why why dear Mayor did you select  
A woman so determined to reject  
All canvas of politeness, every grace,  
A woman so determined to efface  
From social life all pleasantness and tact,  
A woman so unfitted to enact  
A role quite obviously not designed  
To suit a paltry soul, a meagre mind?



A role in fact of graciousness and charm  
 Of kindness to strangers and of calm  
 Untroubled manners. Now Mr. Mayor I hate  
 So unequivocally to have to state  
 That she to whom you gave your honoured name,  
 With whom you proudly from the altar came  
 With whom you cheerfully agreed to share  
 The arduous travail of being Mayor,  
 This creature whose exaggerated sense  
 Of her importance, whose grotesque immense  
 Conviction that she's witty, worldly-wise  
 Unfailingly attractive in men's eyes,  
 Outspoken, frank, unmatched in repartee,  
 Bewilders me. What can the basis be  
 For these delusions? Is she stricken blind  
 Before her mirror? Has God been too kind  
 And cunningly contrived her inner ear  
 So that each time she speaks she cannot hear  
 The cliches and the antiquated quips  
 That fall with such assurance from her lips?  
 Oh, Mr. Mayer, forgive me if you can  
 Reply to me quite frankly, Mayor to man,  
 Why did you marry her? What bitter fate  
 Led you towards so sinister a mage?  
 What Syren's call; what shrill malignant voice  
 Lured you to such a miserable choice?  
 What devil's angel with dark wings outspread  
 Persuaded you to share your civic bed  
 With such a dull, unprepossessing, rude,  
 Unequalled Queen of social turpitude?  
 Why did you do it and thus let her loose  
 Upon the city? What was your excuse?  
 Answer me please, pray set my mind at ease  
 What did you do it for? Please tell me--please  
 With curiosity my mind's devoured  
 I am yours most sincerely, Noel Coward.

Canton Island 1941

Canton Island

Accept this testimonial from one  
 Who's travelled far, who's travelled fairly wide.  
 Who's sought for many an island in the Sun  
 And breasted many a changing tropic tide.  
 Who, in the varied course of his career,  
 Has journeyed North and South and West and East  
 Sharing with pleasure, not unmixed with fear,  
 The diverse habitats of man and beast.  
 This testimonial need not be scorned  
 Folly dismissed or casually ignored  
 Especially as he who writes was warned  
 That here on Canton Island he'd be bored.  
 Bored! On this self sufficient coral reef  
 Bored with this fascinating personnel?  
 Bored with this luxury beyond belief  
 Of this irrelevant and strange hotel?  
 Where every meal provides a different thrill  
 Of gay anticipation; where each dish,  
 No matter how it is listed on the bill  
 Tastes doggedly of oranges or fish.  
 Where modern science has so deftly brought  
 Refrigeration to the finest art  
 That even a red snapper freshly caught  
 Smells unmistakably of apple tart.  
 Where all the bedrooms are equipped with showers  
 With, written on the faucets, Cold and Hot.  
 So that the passengers can pass the hours  
 Endeavoring to find out which is what.  
 Where, when you find your bed has not been made  
 Little avails your anger or your sorrow  
 Swiftly you learn to let emotion fade  
 Then ring the bell and \_wait\_ for a Chamorro  
 (Chammorros! Children of the Southern Seas  
 Natives of Guam, incapable of crime,  
 Uncertain, coy, but striving hard to please.  
 So vague, so blissfully unaware of time  
 How have they guessed, these innocents abroad  
 That service in a Democratic state  
 Has, in its nonchalance, its own reward.  
 They also serve who only ring and wait).  
 Who could be bored when each new day brings forth  
 Some psychological or comic twist.  
 Rain from the West; a cyclone from the North;  
 A new bug for the Entomologist;

A clipper zooming down out of the night,  
 Disgorging passengers of different sorts:  
 Elderly bankers blinking at the light,  
 Ladies in strained, abbreviated shorts  
 Fat men and thin men, quiet men and loud,  
 Out of the sky them come to rest below.  
 Then when they've fed and slept, unshaven, cowed  
 At crack of dawn into the sky they go.  
 What sort of man is he who on this dot,  
 This speck in the Pacific; this remote  
 Arena full of plot and counterplot,  
 Could not be interested, could fail to note  
 The vital dramas, comedies, burlesques,  
 The loves, the hates, the ceaseless interplay;  
 The posturings, the human arabesques  
 Performed interminably day by day?  
 Who if he's human would not almost swoon  
 With pleasure as he dives from off the dock  
 Into the limpid depths of the lagoon  
 And meets an eel advancing round a rock?  
 Where is the witless fool who could deny  
 The fun of swimming gently in the dark  
 And finding later that which bruised his thigh  
 Was just a sting ray or a six-foot shark?  
 The man who could be bored in this strange place  
 The man unable to appreciate  
 The anguished look on everybody's face  
 When told the North-bound \_isn't\_ late.  
 The man too unreceptive and too slow  
 To be responsive to the vibrant beat,  
 The pulse, the Life-force, throbbing full below  
 The surface of this coral bound retreat.  
 Dear God, that man I would not care to know  
 Dear God, that man I would not wish to meet.

Noel Coward  
 1941

Bread and Butter Letter

Canton Island

March 16, 1941

Dear Lordee, Dear Jack, How delightful it's been

To have stayed in this lovely hotel.

The food was delicious. God, what a 'cuisine'!

(The drink was delicious as well.)

The beds were so soft and the weather so fine,

The water so fresh in the showers,

The service indeed was completely divine

I could go on about it for hours.

And as for these wonderful movies we saw

(You didn't because you were busy

Remember you left us just outside the door

complaining you felt a bit dizzy?)

And as for the time when the plane was delayed

What fun we all had with the flight crew.

I'm glad that they only drank iced lemonade

For Clippers can't fly with a tight crew.

I'll always look back on our halcyon days

And a sigh of regret I shall utter

When I think of the many and various ways

You managed to flavour the butter!

Dear Lordee, Dear Jack, when I get to New York

I'll discuss the whole thing with Ward Morehouse

For the Waldorf, in spite of the way people talk

Compared with this place is a whorehouse.

So thank you dear Lordee and thank you dear Jack

With my head and my heart and my soul.

This is but 'Au Revoir' for I'm bound to come back

your affi-'Stop Over'-Noel.