

Finding aid for the Lee family collection

Collection 135

Finding aid prepared by Cathleen Ross

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
September 1991
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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator	Lee
Title	Lee family collection
Date [inclusive]	1800-1989
Extent	4.0 Linear feet Nine boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Lee family collection documents the lives of the children and grandchildren of Jefferson Lee (d.1902) and Eliza Jane Dennis Lee (1833-1919). It focuses on two of their sons, Frank Lee (1869-1959) and Benjamin Hubbard Lee (c.1875-1950), and their wives and children. The material concentrates on family life in Middleville and later Grand Rapids, Michigan, including the education of both males and females at the turn of the century (1900), and aspects of a well-to-do Grand Rapids family. It also provides insight into the lives and influences of a prominent Grand Rapids family with numerous political and social ties. Materials consist mainly of photographs, personal papers and correspondence of the family members.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

The collection contains much biographical information of the family members, mainly in photographs, personal papers and correspondence. What follows is a brief summary of that data.

Jefferson Lee (c.1815-1902) was the son of Charles Lee and Mary (nee Almy) Lee. Eliza Jane Dennis Lee (1833-1919) was the daughter of David Dennis and Mary (nee Trego) Dennis. Jefferson and Eliza Jane owned two houses, one in Middleville, MI and later one in Edgeley, ND where Jefferson died. Jefferson and Eliza Jane had five children; George, Minnie, David Dennis, Frank (1869-1959), and Benjamin Hubbard.

Jefferson Lee was a farmer, both in Middleville, MI and Edgeley, ND. Eliza Jane was a schoolteacher in Middleville until 1856 when she married Jefferson. Eliza Jane and her family moved to Middleville from Middletown, Pennsylvania in 1851. She lived in Thornapple Township, Barry County, Michigan forty-five years before she and Jefferson followed three of their children to North Dakota. David, George, and Minnie helped to build Edgeley, ND. Eliza Jane and Jefferson moved back and forth between Edgeley and Middleville from 1884 until their deaths.

Frank and Ben remained in Middleville and both married. Frank married Myrtle Hodge on 7 December 1892. Myrtle Hodge was the daughter of Marcus M. and Francis Hodge. They had two daughters, Ruth (1894-1944) and Edna (1897-?). Frank was a prominent Middleville businessman who was a partner in and later owner of a grocery store. Both daughters received degrees beyond high school. Ruth received her teaching certificate in 1915 from the Indianapolis Conservatory. She married Frank M. Brown, a professor of Aeronautical Engineering at the University of Notre Dame. Edna received her degree in 1924 from the Women's Institute. She never married and remained with her father until his death in 1959. The date of her death is not known.

Ben H. Lee graduated from the University of Michigan School of Dentistry in 1892. He married Francis Slayton (d.1957) of Gratiot Township on 27 August, 1895. Lee became a dentist in downtown Grand Rapids and also active in state politics. His correspondences include many with various Michigan governors and congressmen. He was chairman of the committee in charge of laying the cornerstone of the Masonic Temple in 1915 and was a member of the Saladin Temple's Noble of the Mystic Shrine.

Ben and Francis had two children, Benjamin Hubbard Jr. and Margery. Ben H. Jr., after graduating from Grand Rapids Central High School in 1920, followed his father's footsteps and attended the University of Michigan. In Ann Arbor he met his future wife. Ben spent his life in a banking career with Union Bank and Trust Company. He was a member of the Sons of the American Revolution and a member of the Peninsular Club from 1952. He married Loyce Cushing (1902-c.1985) of Ann Arbor on 3 April 1922. The two of them moved to 143 N. Lafayette in 1950 where they remained until their deaths. Margery Lee married Wallace C. Brown, was a teacher in the Grand Rapids Public Schools, and later joined the Board of Education. She was an active member of the American Cancer Society. For 15 years she headed the Small Change Division of the yearly cancer drive. She resided on Lake Dr. until her death.

Scope and Contents note

The collection provides a detailed look at three generations of the Lee family. Of particular note is the vast amount of photographs of family, friends and places. Along with the letters, newspaper clippings and personal papers, the pictures tell a story of the changes that a family and society underwent during a century. The number of pictures of the children of Frank and Ben Lee shows the great interest these two had in their family. Of note is the collection of letters from Ben Lee to his son Ben Jr. while he was away at school. All accomplishments and successes of family members are documented.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department September 1991

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Anonymous, accession number 1990.003

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- family papers

Geographic Name(s)

- Edgely (N.D.) -- History -- Photographs
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- Middleville (Mich.) -- History -- Photographs

Personal Name(s)

- Lee, Benjamin, 1875-1950
- Lee, Eliza Jane Dennis, 1833-1919
- Lee, Frank, 1869-1959
- Lee, Jefferson, d. 1902

Series I. Papers.

Collection Inventory

Series I. Papers.

Scope and Contents note

The papers are primarily those helpful for genealogy including birth, obituary, and family history information.

	Box	Folder
Cushing Genealogy, 1960s.	1	1
Ben H. Lee personal papers, 1900-1922.	1	2
Ben H. Lee Jr. baby memories, 1902.	1	3
Edna Lee personal papers, 1942-1965.	1	4
Lee Family History, 1892-1974.	1	5
Birth Announcements, 1894.	1	6
Marriage Certificates, 1856-1922.	1	7
Obituaries, 1901-1972.	1	8

Series II. Correspondence

Obituary, Brown, Ruth Lee. 1944.	1	9
Obituary, Lee, Frank. 1959.	1	10
Announcements and Invitations, 1891-1989.	1	11
Commencement Exercises Programs, 1916-1924.	1	12
Dedication of Congregational Church, 1911.	1	13
Misc. 1903-1914.	1	14

Series II. Correspondence**Scope and Contents note**

Included are letters from various generations of family members from as early as 1866 and as late as 1968.

	Box	Folder
Ben Almy letters, 1907-1911.	2	1
Brown, Margery (nee Lee).letters, n.d.	2	2
Brown, Ruth. letters, 1911-1916.	2	3
Lee, Ben H. letters, 1881-1928, n.d.	2	4-6

Series III. Newspaper Clippings

Lee, Ben H. Jr. letters, 1920-1968.	2	7
Lee, Edna. letters, 1906-1952.	2	8
Lee, Eliza Jane Dennis. letters, 1908-1910.	2	9
Lee, Francis Slayton. letters, 1866-1870.	2	10
Lee, Frank and Myrtle. letters, 1883-1950.	2	11
Letters, misc. 1895-1908.	2	12

Series III. Newspaper Clippings

Scope and Contents note

The clippings appear to be those documenting family events, rather than general Western Michigan history.

	Box	Folder
Brown, Margery (nee Lee). newspaper clippings, ca.1940-1955.	2	13
Brown, Margery. newspaper clippings, ca. 1940-1955.	2	14
Cushing Family. newspaper clippings, n.d.	2	15
French Family, newspaper clippings, n.d.	2	16

Series IV. Ephemera

Lee, Ben H. newspaper clippings, 1915.	2	17
Lee, Ben H. Jr. newspaper clippings, 1955-1965.	2	18
Slayton-Lee marriage. newspaper clippings, 1895.	2	19
Misc. newspaper clippings,(people) 1908-1980.	2	20
Houses. newspaper clippings, ca. 1972.	2	21
Marriages and Anniversaries. newspaper clippings, ca, 1954.	2	22
Misc. newspaper clippings, 1924-1953.	2	23
Series IV. Ephemera		
Scope and Contents note		
Ephemera includes primarily diplomas and certificates, several of which are oversized.		
	Box	Folder
U. of Mich. Dental Dept. 1892, Grad. Class listing and invitation, including Ben Hubbard Lee	2	24
Lee, Ben H. Jr. diploma, 1916.	2	25
Lee, Ruth. Diploma, Middleville H.S. 1914.	2	26

Oversized Print Box

Inventions-Ben H. Lee	8	13
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Inventions-Ben H. Lee	8	14
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Book, Sons of the American Revolution Roster, 1975.	8	15
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Oversized Print Box

	Box	Folder
LIFE magazine, 1946.	3	1

Slayton, Francis S.	3	2
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Lee, Ben H. certificate, 1912.	3	3
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Lee, Edna. diploma, 1913.	3	4
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Lee, Edna. certificate, 1913.	3	5
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Lee, Edna. diploma, 1924.	3	6
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Lee, Ruth. diploma, 1910.	3	7
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Lee, Ruth. certificate, 1910.	3	8
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Lee, Ruth. certificate, 1915.	3	9
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Series V. Photographs

3 oversized folders (6, 13 and 15) which are part of the Lee Collection are housed in Coll. 216, the GRPL Ephemera Collection, along with other oversized certificates. Lee, Ben H. Jr., GR Central diploma, 1920. Lee, Ruth. Indianapolis Conservatory of Music, diploma, 1915. Lee, Ruth. GR Junior College, music, degree, 1916.

216

5

Series V. Photographs**Scope and Contents note**

Included in this series are individual photographs and photograph albums. Some negatives are also found, but have not yet been matched to the images. Note that the processor has placed the figure for the number of items after the folder number, instead of at the usual location at the end of the folder description.

Photographs include images of people both individuals and in groups, with some unidentified. Also included are images of buildings, events, and places. There are several images of Middleville, Michigan, and travel photographs from other U.S. States. One album documents Ann Arbor (Michigan) High School. Some of the albums may contain other scrapbooks type ephemera.

People

	Box	Folder
Brown, Margery (nee Lee)	4	1(31)
Brown, Ruth (nee Lee)	4	2(12)
Brown, Ruth (nee Lee)	4	3(19)
Brown, Wallace C.	4	4(2)

People

Cushing, Laverne.	4	5(1)
Lee, Ben Hubbard.	4	6(8)
Lee, Ben Hubbard Jr.	4	7(21)
Lee, David.	4	8(5)
Lee, Edna M.	4	9(10)
Lee, Francis Slayton.	4	10(12)
Lee, Frank.	4	11(18)
Lee, Jefferson.	4	12(7)
Lee, Loyce (nee Cushing).	4	13(2)
Brondstetter, Family.	5	1(8)
French, Family.	5	2(2)
Gardner, Family.	5	3(1)
Hiller, Family.	5	4(12)
Hodge, Family.	5	5(6)

People

Lee, Ben H. Jr. and Loyce C.	5	6(11)
Lee, Ben H., Francis S., Margery, and Ben H. Jr.	5	7(23)
Lee, Extended Family.	5	8(18)
Lee, Family, Group photos.	5	9(6)
Lee, Frank, Myrtle, Ruth, Edna and Eliza Jane.	5	10(12)
Lee, Frank, Myrtle, Ruth, and Edna.	5	11(7)
Quinlan, Family.	5	12(3)
Swift, Family.	5	13(11)
Brown, Margery and others.	5	14(14)
Lee, Ben H. Jr. and others.	5	15(7)
Lee, Edna and others.	5	16(10)
Lee, Frank and others.	5	17(1)
Lee, Myrtle (nee Hodge) and others.	5	18(2)
Lee, Ruth and others.	5	19(54)

People

People: Edla Armstron, Attwood family, Margaret Barrell, Nancy Braley, Jennie Biswen, Mary Briggs, Gerald Buss, Mrs. Sam Campbell, Cassidy family, Gordon Cove, Edward C. Corwin, George S. Dennis, Robert Dennis, Ms. Doz.	6	1(20)
Jim Faulkner.	6	2(8)
Nora H., Bobbi Hanish, Joe Hannish, Eve Hanley, Etta Hubbard, Rose Hubbard, Emma Kratafel, C, Slayton O'Earson, Harold Otto, Edith Page, Mary Paul, Mrs. Rich, Thomas Salemo, K.P. Schell, Ann Smilk, G.E. Tribby, George A Whinery.	6	3(21)
Unidentified groups	6	4(31)
Unidentified groups	6	5(31)
Unidentified groups.	6	6(24)
Children, Female-unidentified.	6	7(13)
Children, Male-unidentified.	6	8(8)
Children, Groups-unidentified.	6	9(11)
Men, Unidentified.	6	10(24)
Women, Unidentified.	6	11(43)

Photographs. Objects, Places or Events.

Photographs. Objects, Places or Events.		
	Box	
Photos. Objects, Places and Events.	6	
Houses.	6	
	Box	Folder
143 Lafayette NE	7	1(44)
143 Lafayette NE.	7	2(34)
Lee Farm.	7	3(7)
Miscellaneous.	7	4(4)
Interiors-unidentified.	7	5(8)
Unidentified	7	6(24)
Unidentified.	7	7(9)
Landscapes.	7	8(12)
Churches.	7	9(5)
Vacations		

Events

	Box	Folder
California, 1934.	7	10(6)
Florida, 1931.	7	11(36)
Hunting Trip, n.d.	7	12(17)
Travel Postcards.	7	13(2)
Events		
	Box	Folder
Bridge Construction (Middleville).	7	14(9)
Lee Store Fire (Middleville).	7	15(4)
Middleville Parade/Carnival, ca. 1934.	7	16(22)
Road Construction, 1957.	7	17(6)
Photos. Places		
	Box	Folder
Lee Grocery Store.	7	18(8)
Middleville, MI.	7	19(14)

Photos.

Middleville Dam.	7	20(5)
Thornapple River in Middleville.	7	21(18)
Thornapple River (high water).	7	22(4)
Mt. Hope Cemetery, Middleville, MI.	7	23(10)
Gun Lake.	7	24(6)
Spring Lake, MI. 1954.	8	1(11)
Cleveland, OH.	8	2(5)
Edgeley, North Dakota.	8	3(1)
Chile.	8	4(4)
Unidentified.	8	5(15)
Photos.		
	Box	Folder
Miscellaneous.	8	6(13)
Miscellaneous-Cars.	8	7(6)

Negatives

Miscellaneous-Transportation	8	8(6)
Negatives		
	Box	Folder
Negatives-numbered.	8	9(11)
Negatives-unnumbered.	8	16(5)
Albums.		
	Box	Folder
Photo Album-Margery Brown	8	10(57)
Photo Album-Margery Brown	8	11(43)
Photo Album-Margery Brown	8	12(45)
Folders of Loose items from the Photo Albums.		
	Box	Folder
Cushing, Loyce- Photo album, ca. 1916	9	1(33)
Ditto	9	2(23)
Cushing, Loyce- Photo album - Ephemera	9	3

Photo Albums

Lee, Ben H. Jr.-Photo album, ca. 1915.

9

4(12)

Photo Albums

Box

Folder

Album [#1] 60 photo, plus ephemera

9

1

Album [#2] "Ann Arbor High School", 132 photos, plus ephemera

9

2