

James D. Lee Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm2022086518>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms023004>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Manuscript Division staff, 2023

Collection Summary

Title: James D. Lee Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1852-1890

Bulk Dates: 1861-1866

ID No.: MSS86518

Creator: Lee, James D., 1844-1910

Extent: 200 items

Extent: 3 containers

Extent: 1.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2022086518>

Summary: United States Navy officer. Correspondence and other papers relating primarily to Lee's military service during the American Civil War.

Acquisition Information

The papers of James D. Lee were purchased by the Library of Congress in 2022.

Processing History

The papers of James D. Lee were arranged and described by Emily Flint in 2023.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of James D. Lee is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of James D. Lee are open to research. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, James D. Lee Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1844, June 8	Born, Philadelphia, Pa.
1863-1866	Third assistant engineer, United States Navy
1868	Married Helena Sutter (died 1898)
1868-1910	Attorney in private practice, Philadelphia, Pa.
1888-1890	Member, Pennsylvania House of Representatives
1910, Apr. 5	Died, Philadelphia, Pa.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of James D. Lee (1844-1910) span the years 1852-1890, with the bulk of the material dating from 1861 to 1866. The collection documents Lee's military service during the American Civil War as a United States Navy engineer.

The collection primarily consists of letters from Lee to his fiancée Helena Sutter during his service aboard the *Minnesota* (steam frigate) in the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Lee describes encounters with blockade runners, an attack on the *Minnesota* by the Confederate torpedo boat *Squib*, the events of the First and Second Battles of Fort Fisher, and interactions with African American sailors. A December 7, 1863, letter includes a secondhand account of the Battle of Hampton Roads as told to Lee by his shipmates. After the *Minnesota* was decommissioned in February 1865, Lee transferred to the *Pontoosuc* (gunboat) until the end of the war and then served on board the *Rhode Island* (side-wheel steamer) until November 1866. Postwar letters to Helena Sutter describe the *Rhode Island's* trips to Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Haiti. The collection also contains a small amount of correspondence from other family and friends. Additional items include a military pass to Fort Monroe in Virginia, a prayer book belonging to Helena Sutter's sister Mary, bills and receipts, and event programs.

Arrangement of the Collection

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material and thereunder chronologically.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Lee, James D., 1844-1910.

Sutter, Helena, -1898--Correspondence.

Organizations

Minnesota (Steam frigate)

Pontoosuc (Side-wheel gunboat)

Rhode Island (Side-wheel steamer)

Squib (Torpedo boat)

United States. Navy--African Americans.

United States. Navy.

United States. Navy. North Atlantic Blockading Squadron (1861-1865)

Subjects

Blockade.

Hampton Roads, Battle of, Va., 1862.

Torpedo-boats.

Places

Fort Fisher (N.C.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

North Carolina--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Blockades.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Campaigns.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Naval operations.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Participation, African American.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Virginia--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Occupations

Engineers.

Lawyers.
Naval officers.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	1861, Jan. 1-1864, Sept. 18 (6 folders)
BOX 2	1864, Sept. 22-1866, July 2 (7 folders)
BOX 3	1866, July 5-1889, undated (4 folders)
BOX 3	Miscellany, 1852, 1864-1872, 1889-1890, undated (2 folders)