

Francis Watts Lee Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2016

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

Catalog Record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2015086029>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms016076>

Prepared by Chelsea Fairley

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2016

Collection Summary

Title: Francis Watts Lee Papers

Span Dates: 1845-1951

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1880-1943)

ID No.: MSS86029

Creator: Lee, Francis Watts, 1867-1945

Extent: 300 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/mm2015086029>

Summary: Photographer and printer. Correspondence, diaries, articles, theological books, and printed matter relating chiefly to the family of Francis Watts Lee, longtime employee and chief of the printing department at the Boston Public Library.

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

Bridges, Lucy Lee, 1912-1990--Correspondence.

Guiney, Louise Imogen, 1861-1920.

Lee, Francis Lincoln, 1915-1985--Correspondence.

Lee, Francis Watts.

Lee, Marion Lewis, 1874-1947--Correspondence.

Lewis, Caroline L. (Schoolteacher)--Correspondence.

Savonarola, Girolamo, 1452-1498. *De contemptu mundi*. English.

Watts, Francis Osborn, 1803-1860--Correspondence.

Titles

Lee family--Genealogy.

Lee family.

Occupations

Photographers.

Printers.

Provenance

The papers of Francis Watts Lee, photographer and printer, were transferred to the Manuscript Division from the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress in 2015.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Francis Watts Lee is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

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

Preferred Citation

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

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1867, Oct. 24	Born, Roxbury, Mass.
1890	Married Martha Agnes "Mattie" Rand (divorced 1910)
1892	Birth of daughter Harriet "Peggy" Templeton Lee (died 1900)
1892	Opens Elzevir Press, Boston, Mass., and prints the <i>Knight Errant</i> magazine
1894	Begins work in the Catalogue Department, Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass.
1895	Becomes first head of Printing Department, Boston Public Library
1898	<i>Photograms</i> magazine reproduces Lee's photograph <i>Theodora</i>
1898-1900	Several members of the Lee family photographed by Gertrude Käsebier
1900	Lee's photography on exhibition with the Boston Camera Club, Boston, Mass.
1900-1901	Lee's photography included in <i>New School of American Photography</i> exhibition in London, England, and Paris, France
1902	Lee's work exhibited twice before withdrawing from photographic circles
1903	Birth of Daughter Alice S. Lee
1911	Married Marion Lincoln Lewis (died 1940)
1912	Birth of daughter Lucy Lee
1915	Birth of son Francis Lincoln Lee
1937	Retires from Boston Public Library
1945	Died, Springfield, Mass.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Francis Watts Lee (1867-1945) span the years 1845-1951, with the bulk of the material dated between 1880 and 1943. The collection consists of correspondence, diaries, clippings, addresses, genealogical information, poems, printed matter, and liturgical books.

Francis Watts Lee was an American printer and photographer raised and educated in Boston, Massachusetts. Lee worked for forty-three years at the Boston Public Library until his retirement in 1937 as chief of the printing department. As a printer, Lee's most notable work was a cultural magazine entitled *The Knight Errant*, which he produced in his own short-lived printing house, the Elzevir Press. Lee was also a photographer.

Throughout the 1890s until his withdrawal from photography in 1902, he was very active in producing photography as art. His work was reproduced in outlets like *Photograms* magazine and was on exhibition locally in Massachusetts, and internationally in London and Paris. Notable photographic works produced by Lee include *Theodora*, *The Vision*, *Portrait of Miss E. H.*, *Portrait: Mr. H.*, *The Cloister Door*, and *Portrait of Mr. B.*

Although Lee achieved moderate fame through his photographic work, the papers included within this collection are primarily personal in nature, and relate to Lee's family. The sole item in the collection related to Lee's professional life is a bound volume of clippings, filled with examples of Lee's writings to newspapers and magazines of the time. There is correspondence written by or addressed to Lee, two of his children, Lucy Lee Bridges and Francis Lincoln Lee, his second

wife, Marion Lewis Lee, and Marion's sister, Christine L. Lewis. The letters mostly concern family matters, school, and personal business. In addition to the correspondence, there are several bound volumes of a personal nature. These include a diary of Lee's maternal grandfather Francis Osborne Watts, a bound volume of letters written by Francis Osbourne Watts, a notebook of collected quotes, and a pocket diary. Additionally, there are several volumes of a liturgical nature, including personal copies of *The Eucharistic Offering*, and most notably, a handwritten English translation of Girolamo Savonarola's *De Contemptu Mundi*, 1485, transcribed by poet Louise Imogen Guiney for Francis Watts Lee.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence Bridges, Lucy Lee, 1921-1943, undated Lee, Francis Lincoln, 1935-1943, undated Lee, Marion Lewis, 1935-1947, undated Lewis, Christine L., 1918-1945, undated Miscellaneous, 1857-1943 Watts, Francis Osborne, transcriptions 1845-1851
BOX 1	Diaries Lee, Francis Watts, 1871 Watts, Francis Osborne, 1856-1860
BOX 1	English translation of Girolamo Savonarola's <i>De Contemptu Mundi</i> , 1485, 1900
BOX 2	Genealogical information
BOX 2	Liturgical books <i>The Daily Ablution</i> , 1909 <i>The Eucharistic Offering</i> , 1896, 1906 (2 folders) <i>The Holy of Holies</i>
BOX 3	Printed matter Bound vol. of clippings, "Ephemeral Scribblings" by Francis Watts Lee, 1889 Poems and miscellany
BOX 3	Miscellaneous Collected street addresses Collected quotations