

Samuel Phillips Lee Papers

A Finding Aid to the Papers in the Naval
Historical Foundation Collection in the
Library of Congress

Prepared by John P. Butler



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

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Collection Summary

Title: Samuel Phillips Lee Papers

Span Dates: 1860-1869

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1861-1865)

ID No.: MSS52639

Creator: Lee, Samuel Phillips, 1812-1897

Extent: 19,000 items; 65 containers; 26 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Naval officer. Correspondence, logbook abstracts, reports, lists, memoranda, requisition orders, and printed material relating to the naval activities of the Union forces in the Civil War and pertaining chiefly to Lee's service commanding the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and the Mississippi Squadron.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Butler, Benjamin F. (Benjamin Franklin), 1818-1893.

Devoe, James B.--Correspondence.

Foster, John G. (John Gray), 1823-1874--Correspondence.

Lee, Samuel Phillips, 1812-1897.

Welles, Gideon, 1802-1878--Correspondence.

Organizations

Mississippi (Paddle frigate)

United States. Navy Dept--Correspondence.

United States. Navy. Mississippi Squadron.

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

Places

Mississippi River Valley--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Campaigns.

Newport News (Va.)--History.

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

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

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

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

Occupations

Naval officers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Samuel Phillips Lee, naval officer, were deposited in the Library of Congress by the Naval Historical Foundation in 1949 and converted to a gift in 1998.

Processing History

The papers of Samuel Phillips Lee were arranged and described in 1967. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Additional Guides

In 1967 the Library published Samuel Phillips Lee, a Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of *Samuel Phillips Lee is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States* (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Samuel Phillips 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, Samuel Phillips Lee Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1812, Feb. 13	Born at "Sully," Fairfax County, Va.
1825	Appointed midshipman in the United States Navy
1828-1832	Served in frigate <i>Java</i> , Mediterranean Squadron
1833	Promoted to passed midshipman
1834-1835	Served in frigate <i>Brandywine</i> , Pacific Squadron
1836-1837	Served in sloop <i>Vincennes</i> , Pacific Squadron
1837	Promoted to lieutenant
1839-1842	Served in USS <i>Hornet</i> , West India Squadron
1842-1844	Coast survey duty
1843, Apr. 27	Married Elizabeth Blair
1845-1846	Coast survey duty
1852-1854	Hydrographic duty
1855	Duty in the Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C.
1856-1860	Special duty
1861-1862	Commander of the sloop-of-war <i>Oneida</i> , Mississippi Squadron

1862	Promoted to captain and ordered to command of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron with the rank of acting rear admiral
1862-1864	Commander, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron
1864-1865	Commander, Mississippi Squadron
1866	Promoted to commodore
1866-1867	President, Naval Board to Examine Volunteer Officers
1868-1870	Special duty, Washington, D.C.
1870	Promoted to rear admiral
1870-1872	Commander, North Atlantic Squadron
1873	Retired from United States Navy
1874-1897	Lived in Washington, D.C.
1897, June 5	Died, Silver Spring, Md.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Samuel Phillips Lee (1812-1897) span the years 1860-1869, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1861-1865. The collection deals entirely with the naval activities of the Union forces in the Civil War and consists primarily of letterbooks, letterpress books, retained copies of correspondence, and logbook abstracts supplemented by copies of reports, lists, memoranda, requisition orders, and miscellaneous material. There are comparatively few original documents in the papers. Most of the documents are copies of originals sent to the Navy Department or the Naval War Records Office. One notable exception is a file of indexed correspondence, in a [Miscellany](#) series, which originally was designated for the Naval War Records Office. The papers are organized into four series: [Letter and Letterpress Books](#), [Copies of Incoming Correspondence](#), [North Atlantic Blockading Squadron](#), and [Miscellany](#)

Lee served three tours of duty during the Civil War. His first duty station was with the Mississippi Squadron from 1861 to August 1862, when he commanded the sloop-of-war *Oneida* under Admiral David Glasgow Farragut. There is relatively little material in the collection for this duty station. A logbook for the USS *Mississippi* in the summer of 1861 and some printed matter comprise the documentation for these months.

In September 1862 Lee was made an acting rear admiral and put in charge of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. This tour of duty lasted until October 1864. The bulk of the material in this collection relates to these two years. Most of it is concerned with the routine details of the Union blockade and the Confederate efforts to break it. These details present insights into the everyday activities of the fleet of ships responsible for the blockade of the Confederate coastline. There are reports from most of the Union vessels in the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron describing the conditions under which they labored, the morale of the crews, the physical requirements of the fleet, and their attempts at disrupting Confederate shipping and blockade running. Abstracts from the logbooks of most of the vessels in the fleet, combined with monthly reports, prize lists, communications to and from the Navy Department, and squadron dispatches, present a detailed

account of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron's activities in relation to the Confederate and Northern blockade runners. Details are also supplied for the interaction of the navy with the army on land maneuvers, especially with the command of General Benjamin F. Butler in and around the Newport News, Virginia, area.

In October 1864 Admiral Lee exchanged places with David D. Porter, commander of the Mississippi Squadron. His third tour of duty in the Civil War lasted until September 1865. Although the material for Lee's months as commander of the Mississippi Squadron is neither as detailed nor as illuminating as the material for his previous command, it is similar in type and arrangement. There is a good deal of information on the final months of the Mississippi River campaign, affording detailed descriptions of the everyday activities of the fleet. The papers for the year 1865 continue well past the end of hostilities in April. The correspondence, lists, memoranda, and reports describe the dismantling of the Mississippi Squadron in the months immediately following the end of hostilities. The examination, inspection, and sale of several of the Mississippi Squadron vessels, along with the fuel requirements, discharge requests, requisition orders, and resignations, give valuable insights into the immediate postwar problems of the navy on the Mississippi River.

From 1862 to 1865 Admiral Lee maintained files on such diverse matters as court-martial trials, confidential and miscellaneous correspondence, printed copies of the general orders, and communications with the Navy Department and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. These files all reflect the degree of interaction between the fleets and the central headquarters in Washington, D.C. Of special interest are two files of correspondence in the miscellany section: one with James B. Devoe, 1864-1865, a "special agent" of Admiral Porter, and the other with Major General John G. Foster, 1863, which concerns a projected attack on the Confederate military bases in the Cape Fear, North Carolina region.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [Letter and Letterpress Books, 1862-1865](#)
- [Copies of Incoming Correspondence, 1861-1865](#)
- [North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, 1863-1864](#)
- [Miscellany, 1860-1869](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-15	<p><u>Letter and Letterpress Books, 1862-1865</u></p> <p>Copies of letters, telegrams, and reports sent by Lee as commander, first of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, then of the Mississippi Squadron.</p> <p>The letter and/or letterpress books are arranged chronologically by the first date in each volume, are indexed, and are divided into subject categories.</p>
BOX 16-53	<p><u>Copies of Incoming Correspondence, 1861-1865</u></p> <p>Retained copies and a few originals of correspondence received by Lee as commander, first of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, then of the Mississippi Squadron, supplemented by copies of reports, lists, memoranda, requisitions, charts, drawings, and other miscellaneous papers.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by name of vessel.</p>
BOX 54-58	<p><u>North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, 1863-1864</u></p> <p>Retained copies and a few original of correspondence, reports, prize lists, and logbook abstracts received by See as commander of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Includes supplementary memoranda, charts, drawings, and miscellaneous papers.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by name of vessel in the squadron.</p>
BOX 59-65	<p><u>Miscellany, 1860-1869</u></p> <p>Originals and typescripts of correspondence sent and received by Lee, printed matter, a logbook, record books, a diary, captured Confederate documents, administrative Confederate States of America forms, maps, and muster rolls.</p> <p>Arranged by subject heading and chronologically therein.</p>

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-15	Letter and Letterpress Books, 1862-1865 Copies of letters, telegrams, and reports sent by Lee as commander, first of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, then of the Mississippi Squadron. The letter and/or letterpress books are arranged chronologically by the first date in each volume, are indexed, and are divided into subject categories.
BOX 1	North Atlantic Blockading Squadron
BOX 1	Miscellany Letterbook, 4 Sept.-15 Oct. 1862
BOX 1	Squadron Letterbook, 16 Oct. 1862-4 July 1863
BOX 2	Navy Department Letterbook, 18 Oct. 1862-4 July 1863
BOX 2	Confidential Correspondence Letterbook, 2 Dec. 1862-12 Nov. 1863
BOX 2	Navy Department Letterbook, 13 Jan.-14 Mar. 1863
BOX 2	Squadron Letterbook, 2 Feb.-14 Apr. 1863
BOX 3	Navy Department Letterbook, 14 Mar.-22 June 1863
BOX 3	Letterbook of Correspondence Forwarded, 26 Mar.-7 Dec. 1863
BOX 3	Squadron Letterbook, 14 Apr.-4 July 1863
BOX 3	Navy Department Letterbook, 22 June-10 Dec. 1863
BOX 4	Squadron Letterbook, 4 July-10 Nov. 1863
BOX 4	Confidential Correspondence Letterbook, 4 July 1863-25 Apr. 1864
BOX 4	Miscellany Letterbook, 6 July 1863-4 June 1864
BOX 4	Squadron Letterbook, 10 Nov. 1863-20 Mar. 1864
BOX 4	Letterbook of Medical Surveys Ordered, 6 Dec. 1863-9 Aug. 1864
BOX 5	Letterbook of Correspondence Forwarded, 7 Dec. 1863-16 May 1864
BOX 5	Navy Department Letterbook, 10 Dec. 1863-31 May 1864
BOX 5	Squadron Letterbook, 20 Mar.-5 July 1864
BOX 5	Squadron Letterpress Book, 5 Mar.-2 May 1864
BOX 6	Navy Department Letterpress Book, 5 Mar.-1 July 1864
BOX 6	Miscellany Letterpress Book, 5 Mar. -7 Sept. 1864
BOX 6	Confidential Correspondence Letterpress Book, 25 Apr.-2 Oct. 1864
BOX 7	Squadron Letterpress Book, 2 May-23 July 1864
BOX 7	Official Letterbook, 4 May-25 June 1864
BOX 8	Letterbook of Correspondence Forwarded, 16 May-11 Oct. 1864
BOX 9	Navy Department Letterbook, 1 June-11 Oct. 1864
BOX 9	Miscellany Letterbook, 5 June-10 Oct. 1864
BOX 9	Navy Department Letterpress Book, 1 July-15 Oct. 1864
BOX 10	Miscellany Letterbook, 1 July-15 Oct. 1864
BOX 10	Squadron Letterbook, 5 July-10 Oct. 1864
BOX 10	Detail Forwarding Letterbook, 16 July-10 Oct. 1864
BOX 11	Squadron Letterpress Book, 25 July-10 Oct. 1864
BOX 11	Miscellany Letterpress Book, 8 Sept.-10 Oct. 1864
BOX 12	Mississippi Squadron

Letter and Letterpress Books, 1862-1865

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 12	Squadron Letterpress Book, 1 Nov. 1864-27 Apr. 1865
BOX 13	Miscellany Letterpress Book, 3 Nov. 1864-31 May 1865 and Squadron Letterpress Book, 25 Apr.-31 May 1865
BOX 13	Detail Forwarding Letterpress Book, 28 Feb.-12 Aug. 1865
BOX 14	Letterbook of Correspondence Forwarded, 1 Apr.-13 Aug. 1865
BOX 14	Detail Forwarding Letterbook, 27 Apr.-17 July 1865
BOX 14	Court-Martial Letterpress Record Book, 24 Apr.-1 Aug. 1865
BOX 15	Miscellany Letterpress Book, 31 May-24 July 1865
BOX 15	Detail Forwarding Letterbook, 17 July-13 Aug. 1865
BOX 15	Miscellany Letterpress Book, 24 July-12 Aug. 1865 and a Letterpress Book of Fleet Captain Bryson, 22 June-1 Aug. 1865
BOX 15	Detail Forwarding Index and Letterbook, undated
BOX 16-53	Copies of Incoming Correspondence, 1861-1865 Retained copies and a few originals of correspondence received by Lee as commander, first of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, then of the Mississippi Squadron, supplemented by copies of reports, lists, memoranda, requisitions, charts, drawings, and other miscellaneous papers. Arranged alphabetically by name of vessel.
BOX 16	North Atlantic Blockading Squadron
BOX 16	Department of the Army, Sept. 1862-Oct. 1864
BOX 17	Court-Martial Record Cases, Feb. 1863-Nov. 1864
BOX 18	Miscellaneous Correspondence
BOX 18	Oct. 1861-Apr. 1863
BOX 19	May-Dec. 1863
BOX 20	Jan.-Oct. 1864
BOX 21	Department of the Navy
BOX 21	Sept. 1862-Sept. 1863
BOX 22	Oct. 1863-Oct. 1864
BOX 23	Squadron Dispatches
BOX 23	Beaufort, N.C., Sept. 1862-Dec. 1863
BOX 24	Hampton Roads, Va.
BOX 24	Sept.-Nov. 1862
BOX 25	Dec. 1862-Feb. 1863
BOX 26	Mar.-May 1863
BOX 27	June-Nov. 1863
BOX 28	Dec. 1863-Mar. 1864
BOX 29	Apr.-Oct. 1864
BOX 30	Upper James River, May-June 1864
BOX 31	Sounds of North Carolina
BOX 31	Jan.-Nov. 1863
BOX 32	Dec.-Sept. 1864
BOX 33	Wilmington, N.C.
BOX 33	Sept. 1862-Mar. 1863
BOX 34	Apr.-Oct. 1863
BOX 35	Nov. 1863-Jan. 1864

Copies of Incoming Correspondence, 1861-1865

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 36	Feb.-May 1864
BOX 37	June-Oct. 1864
BOX 38	York River and Chesapeake Bay Area, Md.
BOX 38	Sept. 1862-Aug. 1863
BOX 39	Sept. 1863-Sept. 1864
BOX 40	Secretary of the Navy
BOX 40	Sept. 1862-Jan. 1863
BOX 41	Feb.-May 1863
BOX 42	June-Oct. 1863
BOX 43	Nov. 1863-Apr. 1864
BOX 44	May-Sept. 1864
BOX 45	Mississippi Squadron
BOX 45	Captured and Abandoned Property, Nov. 1864-June 1865
BOX 45	Confidential Correspondence, Nov. 1864
BOX 45	Desertion of United States Seaman, Mar.-Aug. 1865
BOX 45	Discharge Requests, Apr.-Aug. 1865
BOX 45	Fuel (coal) Requirements, Mar.-Aug. 1865
BOX 46	Acknowledgments of General Orders, Apr.-Aug. 1865
BOX 46	Medical Survey Reports, 1864-Aug. 1865
BOX 47	Miscellaneous Correspondence
BOX 47	Jan.-May 1865
BOX 48	June-July 1865
BOX 49	Aug. 1865
BOX 49	Department of the Navy, Apr.-Aug. 1865
BOX 49	Reports of Prisoners and Refugees Taken, Nov. 1864-June 1865
BOX 50	Requests for Leave, Acceptances of Resignation, and Appointments, Feb.-Aug. 1865
BOX 51	Requisition Requests, Apr.-Aug. 1865
BOX 51	Inventories and Quarterly Returns of Stores
BOX 51	Jan.-June 1865
BOX 52	July-Aug. 1865
BOX 53	United States Vessels
BOX 53	Inspection Reports, Apr. 1865
BOX 53	Lists and Descriptions, May-Aug. 1865
BOX 53	Repairs Needed, Apr.-Aug. 1865
BOX 53	Reports on Vessels Sunken or Destroyed, May-June 1865
BOX 53	Vacancies in Crews, Apr.-Oct. 1865
BOX 54-58	North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, 1863-1864 Retained copies and a few original of correspondence, reports, prize lists, and logbook abstracts received by See as commander of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Includes supplementary memoranda, charts, drawings, and miscellaneous papers. Arranged alphabetically by name of vessel in the squadron.
BOX 54	<i>Alabama</i>
BOX 54	<i>Aries</i>

North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, 1863-1864

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 54	<i>Ascutney</i>
BOX 54	<i>Banshee</i>
BOX 54	<i>Britannia</i>
BOX 54	<i>Calypso</i>
BOX 54	<i>Cambridge</i>
BOX 54	<i>Cherokee</i>
BOX 55	<i>Connecticut</i>
BOX 55	<i>Cuyler</i>
BOX 55	<i>Dacotah</i>
BOX 55	<i>Daylight</i>
BOX 55	<i>Dumbarton</i>
BOX 55	<i>Emma</i>
BOX 55	<i>Eutaw</i>
BOX 55	<i>Fakhee</i>
BOX 55	<i>Florida</i>
BOX 55	<i>Fort Donelson</i>
BOX 55	<i>Fort Jackson</i>
BOX 55	<i>Gettysburg</i>
BOX 55	<i>Governor Buckingham</i>
BOX 56	<i>Grand Gulf</i>
BOX 56	<i>Howquah</i>
BOX 56	<i>Iron Age</i>
BOX 56	<i>Isonomia</i>
BOX 56	<i>James Adger</i>
BOX 56	<i>Kansas</i>
BOX 56	<i>Keystone State</i>
BOX 56	<i>Maratanza</i>
BOX 56	<i>Mercedita</i>
BOX 56	<i>Montgomery</i>
BOX 56	<i>Monticello</i>
BOX 57	<i>Mount Vernon</i>
BOX 57	<i>Nansemond</i>
BOX 57	<i>Nereus</i>
BOX 57	<i>Newberne</i>
BOX 57	<i>Niphon</i>
BOX 57	<i>Oneida</i>
BOX 57	<i>Pequot</i>
BOX 57	<i>Quaker City</i>
BOX 58	<i>Santiago de Cuba</i>
BOX 58	<i>Sassacus</i>
BOX 58	<i>Shenandoah</i>
BOX 58	<i>State of Georgia</i>
BOX 58	<i>Tuscarora</i>
BOX 58	<i>Vicksburg</i>

North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, 1863-1864

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 58	<i>Victoria</i>
BOX 59-65	Miscellany, 1860-1869 Originals and typescripts of correspondence sent and received by Lee, printed matter, a logbook, record books, a diary, captured Confederate documents, administrative Confederate States of America forms, maps, and muster rolls. Arranged by subject heading and chronologically therein.
BOX 59	General Orders, 1862-1869
BOX 60	Extracts, Circulars, and Notices, 1860-1865
BOX 60	Printed Matter, 1861-1869
BOX 61	Logbook, USS <i>Minnesota</i> , 8 May-8 Aug. 1861, and Money Request Book, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, Apr. 1862-Oct. 1863
BOX 61	Descriptive List Book of Blockade Runners, 1862-1864
BOX 61	Cargo List Book, USS <i>Antonica</i> , May-Dec. 1863
BOX 61	Diary of Events on the James River by Lieutenant M. Mullin, 5 May-14 June 1864
BOX 61	Death List Book, Mississippi Squadron, Oct. 1864-June 1865
BOX 61	Record Book of Documents Forwarded, May 1864-June 1865
BOX 61	Court-Martial Record Book, Mississippi Squadron, Feb.-July 1865
BOX 61	Signal Record Book, USS <i>Tempest</i> , Mississippi Squadron, 26 May-12 Aug. 1865
BOX 62	Correspondence Designated for the Naval War Records Office, indexed, Nov. 1862-Nov. 1864
BOX 63	Typescript copies of correspondence in this collection, Nov. 1860-May 1865, selected from the main body of this collection in 1898 and apparently used in compiling sections concerning Lee in the <i>Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion</i> , serial I, vols. 7-10, published 1898-1900
BOX 64	Appointment Book, Mississippi Squadron, 1864-1865
BOX 64	Vacancy Book, Mississippi Squadron, 1864-1865
BOX 65	Muster Rolls, Mississippi Squadron, Apr.-Aug. 1865
BOX 65	Correspondence with Major General John G. Foster, July-Nov. 1863
BOX 65	Correspondence with "special secret agent" J. B. Devoe, Feb. 1864-June 1865
BOX 65	Copies of captured Confederate documents, Nov. 1862
BOX 65	Index to Consular Reports of Blockade Runners, undated
BOX 65	Two maps of Little Muscle Shoals, Tenn.
BOX 65	Blank administrative forms of the Confederate States of America