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Lewis Walpole Library

Guide to the Lee Family Financial Records

LWL MSS 18



by Sandra Markham

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Lewis Walpole Library
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CALL NUMBER: LWL MSS 18

CREATOR: Lee family

TITLE: Lee Family Financial Papers

DATES: 1734–1799

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.9 linear feet (2 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Lee Family Financial Papers contains more than one hundred invoices, receipts, and letters that provide insight into the maintenance and repair of buildings and grounds owned by a wealthy family from Hartwell, Buckinghamshire, with properties there, in London, and in Hertfordshire. Expenditures by four members of the Lee family are represented in the collection: Sir William Lee (1688-1754), his brother Sir George Lee (1700-1758), William's son William Lee (1726-1778), and a nephew of the two brothers, Sir William Lee (1726-1799), 4th Baronet. The bulk of the papers detail construction work commissioned by George Lee for his residential and commercial tenants in Bell Yard, documenting the buildings in a London courtyard that is no longer in existence, as well as the many tradespeople involved. In addition to construction documents, the papers hold a 1778 estate inventory listing the contents of William Lee's thirty-room Bloomsbury Square residence with its extensive library, and shipping records for sculpture he acquired during his Grand Tour. A few invoices cover items of clothing, drink, transportation, and an investment in South-Sea Annuities.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/lwl.mss.018>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/lwl.mss.018>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Jarndyce, April 2016.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Lee Family Financial Records is the physical property of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the W. S. Lewis Librarian/Executive Director.

Preferred Citation

Lee Family Financial Papers. The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

Related Materials

Sir William Lee Family Papers (OSB MSS 52), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library.

Sir William Lee (1688-1754)

Sir William Lee was born at Hartwell House, the Lee family seat at Hartwell, Buckinghamshire. He was the son of Sir Thomas Lee (1661-1702), 2nd Baronet, and Anne Hopkins Lee (1662-1729). Lee was appointed Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales in 1737, a position he held until his death. He married twice, first to Anne Goodwin (1692-1729), and then in 1733 to a wealthy widow, Margaret Drake Melmoth (1694-1752).

Lee's London residence was in Bloomsbury Square, and he purchased his country seat, Totteridge Park in Hertfordshire, in 1748. He died at his London home after a stroke, on April 8, 1754, and was buried in the parish church at Hartwell; he left his fortune to his son William (1726-1778).

Sir George Lee (1700-1758)

Sir George Lee was born at Hartwell House, the Lee family seat at Hartwell, Buckinghamshire. He was the son of Sir Thomas Lee (1661-1702), 2nd Baronet, and Anne Hopkins Lee (1662-1729). A graduate of the University of Oxford, he was admitted as an advocate at Doctor's Commons and became an ecclesiastical lawyer and politician. He first entered parliament as member for Brackley, Northamptonshire, and later represented Devizes (1743-47), Liskeard (1747-54), and Launceston (1754-58). In 1742 Lee married Judith Morice (1710-1743); the couple lived in St. James Square, London, and had no children. Lee was buried in the parish church at Hartwell, and left his estate to his nephew William Lee (1726-1778), the son of his brother William.

William Lee (1726-1778)

William Lee was the son of Sir William Lee (1688-1754) and his first wife Anne (1692-1729). He was educated at Clare College, University of Cambridge (1744) and married Philadelphia Dyke, daughter of Sir Thomas Dyke. Lee inherited the estates of his parents, which included their Bloomsbury Square residence and the country house at Totteridge Park, as well as the estate of his uncle Sir George Lee. He was buried in the parish church at Hartwell.

Sir William Lee (1726-1799)

Sir William Lee of Hartwell, 4th Baronet, was the son of Sir Thomas Lee (1687-1749), 3rd Baronet, and Elizabeth Sandys Lee (-1728). He was the nephew of Lord Chief Justice Sir William Lee and Sir George Lee, and cousin to William Lee (1726-1778).

Lee married Elizabeth Harcourt (1739-1811) in 1763. He owned a home in Portland Place, London, but was known for his devotion to Hartwell, where he rebuilt the parish church, the ancestral burial place for the Lee family. He also served as sheriff of Buckinghamshire. He was buried in the parish church at Hartwell.

Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Sir William Lee (1688-1754) Papers, 1742-1753. II. Sir George Lee (1700-1758) Papers, 1734-1760. III. William Lee (1726-1778) Papers, 1757-1778. IV. Sir William Lee (1726-1799) Papers, 1781-1799.

Collection Contents

Series I: Sir William Lee (1688-1754) Papers, 1742–1753

b. 1, f. 1	Carpenter's invoice A six-page invoice for carpentry work performed by Phillmore & Co. at Lee's homes "in town" (Bloomsbury Square, London) and his "Seat at Totterage" (Totteridge Park, Hertfordshire), between April 1749 and October 1750. The invoice is signed by John Phillmore.	1750
b. 1, f. 2	Carver's invoice A signed invoice and receipt from the London carver James Dryhurst (fl. 1727-1762) describing work done on the order of John Phillmore.	1744
b. 1, f. 3	Clothing invoices Two invoices, one from the robe maker Mark Child, and one from M. Mather.	1742, 1744
b. 1, f. 4	Nursery invoice An invoice from the nurseryman Thomas Emmerton for scores of trees and grapevines purchased between 1751 and 1752, likely for Totteridge Park, Hertfordshire.	1753
b. 1, f. 5	Shipping invoices Three invoices for charges incurred in moving marble and plaster objects from Leghorne (Livorno) to London, including wharfage, carting, and customs. The sculptures were purchased by his son William Lee (1729-1778) during his extensive Grand Tour.	1753

Series II: Sir George Lee (1700-1758) Papers, 1734–1760

The financial documents in the series largely consist of invoices and receipts from practitioners of trades who were building, altering, or repairing properties owned by George Lee. Most of the paperwork pertains to his properties in Bell Yard (or Bell Inn Yard), formerly a courtyard reached by an alley that ran west from Gracechurch Street between Leadenhall and Lombard streets. An advocate at Doctors' Commons, Lee was always addressed as "Dr. Lee" by the contractors, including carpenter George Collings and his firm Phillmore, Collings, and Young. Subcontractors and tradesmen include bricklayers, painters, plumbers, joiners, masons, plasterers, pavers, and glaziers who were working on rental properties that included private homes, a snuff shop, bakehouse, poulterer, barber, tailor, green grocer, and the Bell ale house. Also present are invoices for work done at his own house on St. James Square and at Doctors' Commons, as well as for some personal purchases.

Bell Yard projects		
b. 1, f. 6	Invoices and receipts	1734
b. 2 (Oversize), f. 1	Invoices and receipts	1734
b. 1, f. 7	Invoices and receipts	1748–1749
b. 1, f. 8	Invoices and receipts	1750–1751
b. 1, f. 9	Invoices and receipts	1752–1753
b. 2 (Oversize), f. 2	Invoices and receipts	1753
b. 1, f. 10	Numbered set of invoices and receipts A set of eleven numbered invoices grouped together with a cover sheet.	1750–1752
b. 1, f. 11	Estimates and proposals Proposals submitted for repairing Lee's Bell Yard properties and for rebuilding the Bell ale house.	1751-1752, undated
b. 1, f. 12	Doctors' Commons project An invoice for repairs at Lee's house at Doctors' Commons located near St. Paul's Cathedral. Doctors' Commons was a self-governing teaching body of practitioners of canon and civil law, rather than common law taught at the Inns of Court, and its members held doctor of law degrees from the universities Oxford or Cambridge. The society was dissolved in 1858 under terms of the Court of Probate and Matrimonial Causes acts of 1857.	1753
b. 1, f. 13	St. James Square project Invoice for improvements made to Lee's London house.	1753
b. 1, f. 14	Other financial papers Four invoices and receipts unrelated to real estate: a printed receipt with manuscript annotations for joint-stock of South-Sea Annuities (1750); a receipt for a gold enameled watch (1757); an invoice for a carriage (chariot) and pair of harnesses (circa 1760); and an invoice for Judith Morice Lee's transportation by sedan chair (1760).	1750–1760

Series III: William Lee (1726-1778) Papers, 1757-1778

b. 1, f. 15	Invoice for garden work	1762
b. 1, f. 16	Other papers Three invoices: printed for tax on a four-wheel carriage (1757); invoice for coal (1758); and from David Stuart for dress bag wigs (1758).	1757-1758
b. 2 (Oversize), f. 3	Household inventory Filed here is an eight-page double-column estate inventory of Lee's Bloomsbury Square home with a room-by-room list of every item in all thirty rooms, from the bed chambers to the coachman's room, the servant's hall, and the kitchen, including objects ranging from furniture to utensils, including linens, china and glass. The inventory is followed by a forty-three-page listing of books in the house; the more than 1,400 volumes encompass a broad spectrum of works in philosophy, politics, classics, lexicography, law, and literature. Lee inherited the house from his father Lord Chief Justice Sir William Lee and had also inherited the estate of his uncle Sir George Lee, so the contents described in the estate inventory could represent an amalgamation of objects and books acquired by all three men and their spouses.	1778

Series IV: Sir William Lee (1726-1799) Papers, 1781-1799

Sir William Lee (1726-1799) of Hartwell, 4th Baronet, was the nephew of Lord Chief Justice Sir William Lee (1688-1754) and cousin of the justice's son William Lee (1726-1778), Esquire, of Totteridge Park, Hertfordshire.

b. 1, f. 17	Invoices for ale and beer Five invoices and letters for orders of ale and beer for Hartwell from purveyor James Wood Musgrave & Co. of Burton.	1781-1786
b. 1, f. 18	Invoices for coal Eleven invoices and letters from the purveyor Frederick Miller in London.	1784-1794
b. 1, f. 19	Estimate for roof on a new house at Hartwell Estimate and plan for a hipped roof on a new house at Hartwell submitted by F. Gurney of Aylesbury. The document is docketed as "F. Gurneys Estimate 1799 House at Watton Hill."	1798 December 8
b. 1, f. 20	Estimate for Portland Place house alterations A list of alterations and prices submitted by David Williams and Thomas Johnson.	1799 June 2
b. 1, f. 21	Samuel Wyatt certificate for Portland Place house Wyatt (1737-1807) was an English architect and engineer, and brother to architect James Wyatt (1746-1813).	1778 December 25

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.

Occupations

Building trades

Genres / Formats

Blank forms

Estate inventories

Invoices

Receipts (financial records)

Names

Lee, George, Sir, 1700-1758

Lee, William, 1729-1778

Lee, William, Sir, 1688-1754

Lee, William, Sir, 1726-1799