

Collection #
M 0830,
OM 0417

CAPTAIN LEE O. HARRIS PAPERS, 1864–1921

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Processed by

Emily Castle
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 manuscript box, 1 oversize folder, 1 upright graphics folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1864–1921
PROVENANCE:	Ryan Risselman, Virtual Garage Sale, Hobart, IN, 3 December 2004
RESTRICTIONS:	None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2005.0073

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lee O. Harris was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, 30 January 1839. As a child he attended school and worked in the fields. At the age of thirteen he came with his parents to Fayette County, Indiana, and spent five years there. He then returned to Pennsylvania to finish his schooling. When he was about eighteen he joined a party of engineers who were surveying through the mountains to Puget Sound.

When Harris returned from the Northwest, he began teaching at Fountaintown, Indiana. In 1858 Harris moved to Greenfield, Indiana. On 14 March 1861 he married America Foster, daughter of John Foster who was a pioneer of Hancock County and member of the state legislature. They had two children, Anna and Lizzie who both became teachers in Greenfield schools.

When Ft. Sumter fell in April 1861 and President Lincoln called for volunteers, Harris enlisted in Company I, 8th Indiana Infantry. During his three-month service he was promoted to second lieutenant. At the expiration of his first enlistment, Harris re-enlisted in September 1862. He was commissioned into Company G, Fifth Indiana Cavalry. Due to a physical disability he resigned in November 1862. He re-enlisted in February 1865 and was commissioned into C Company, 148th Indiana Infantry, and was promoted to first lieutenant. This regiment was employed on guard and garrison duty in central Tennessee. Harris resigned on 11 June 1865.

When the war ended Harris resumed teaching. With the exception of four years as principal of the Lewisville high school, and one term in Douglas County, Illinois, his teaching was confined to the Greenfield area. He assisted in founding the *Home and School Visitor*, a journal devoted to literature and education, and for a number of years was its editor. He was also editor of the *Greenfield Republican* for two years. In addition he also contributed articles to various papers and magazines.

In 1897 Harris was elected superintendent of Hancock county public schools. In this capacity he gave new momentum to the cause of education by inaugurating a number of reforms in the schools and advancing the standards of proficiency and professional training of the teachers. One of the more important of the improvements was the establishment of the township high school system.

Harris is also among the literati of Indiana. When he was a boy he wrote poems which were published in local papers and attracted admiration for their beauty of thought and elegance of diction. Under the nom-de-plume of Larry O'Hannegan he wrote a number of poems which gained wide publicity. Among his published books is *The Man Who Tramps*, about a farmer boy, who was driven from home and obliged to wander from place to place in order to obtain a livelihood. *Interludes*, another published volume, contains some of Harris' best poems: "Songs of Nature," "Home and Affection," "Retrospective," "Flights of Fancy," "Echoes of War Times," and "Miscellaneous." Harris was also a teacher and friend to James Whitcomb Riley. Riley wrote a poem about Harris, "A Summer Sunrise," and the two

wrote a new version of "Father William."

Harris was also involved in fraternal organizations and rose to a high degree in Masonic circles, belonging to Lodge No. 101 in Greenfield. He was a member of Greenfield Chapter No. 96, Royal Arch Masons, and of Greenfield Commandery No. 72. In addition he belonged to the Pythian fraternity and the Grand Army of the Republic, both of which honored him with important official positions. He died in 1909.

Sources:

Glascock, Will H. *Young folks' Indiana: a story of triumphant progress*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1902, c1898. (General Collection: F526 .G54 1902)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of documents owned by Lee O. Harris. Included are letters from the Department of the Interior regarding Harris' Civil War pension and the envelopes they were sent in. There are also two certificates signed by Oliver P. Morton, a memoir of James Whitcomb Riley, and clippings of Harris' poems. There is a list of servicemen, a letter regarding payment for luggage storage to Harris' daughter Lizzie, a list of games and quizzes, and a drawing of Lassie. The items in the collection have remained in the order they arrived in.

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Correspondence with Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions to Lee O. Harris, re: his Civil War soldier's pension, 19 Sept. 1881–19 Feb. 1909	Box 1, Folder 2
Envelopes from Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions to Lee O. Harris, 22 Sept. 1891–10 May 1909	Box 1, Folder 3
Memoir of Jim (James Whitcomb) Riley, unknown author, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 4
<i>How Yo' All Spell Marie?</i> , Poem, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 5
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Certificates from Oliver P. Morton, 8 Aug. 1864–24 Jan. 1865	OM 0417, Folder 1
Correspondence and shipping bill to Lizzie Harris from P.A. Johns, 10–12 June 1905	Box 1, Folder 7
List of games and quizzes, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 8
<i>H.M.S. Pinafore</i> handbill, 5–6 June 1879	Box 1, Folder 9
Studebaker Corporation announcement (clipping), 23	Box 1, Folder 10

June 1921

Lassie, drawing, n.d.

Visual Collections:
Upright Graphics,
Folder 1

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the “Basic Search” icon.
3. Select “Call Number” from the “Search In:” box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0830).
5. When you find the collection, go to the “Full Record” screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.