

Collection #  
M 0865

## ROBERT DE FOREST LEE LETTERS, 1860–1861

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### COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 manuscript box, 2 cased images
COLLECTION DATES:	1860–1861
PROVENANCE:	Early American History Auctions, Inc., La Jolla, CA, January 2000
RESTRICTIONS:	None

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 2000.0279

**NOTES:**

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Robert De Forest Lee was born about 1838 in Pennsylvania and raised in Morris County, New Jersey, where his family lived in Morristown and Littleton. Sometime before March 1860 he immigrated to Ogden, Henry County, Indiana, to work in collaboration with his uncle D.O. Benjamin of Indianapolis in the lumber business.

Both Robert and his cousin Theodore Benjamin volunteered for service in the spring of 1861 at Indianapolis. At first Robert was accepted into the cavalry under Captain Moreau, but on 24 April was let go by Adjutant General Lew Wallace as being redundant. Four months later, on 5 September, he successfully volunteered at Knightstown, Indiana, for three years service in the volunteer cavalry, again under Captain Moreau. On 18 October he mustered into I Company, Indiana Third Cavalry. The village of Ogden gave him a horse and so he and the other mounted volunteers rode from Knightstown to Camp Fremont for training.

At the end of November the company left Indianapolis to join the Department of the Ohio. After taking the Louisville and Nashville railroad sixty miles into Kentucky, they joined General McCook at Camp Nevin near the newly secessionist General Buckner. Robert and his company rode thirty-five miles to Buckner's farm on the Green River to destroy any property that would give sustenance to the rebels.

Lee's military career and life were cut short only a few weeks later when he died in a hospital in Louisville. There is some dispute as to the cause of death and actual date. According to the company Muster Roll for 18 October to 31 December 1861, he died of typhoid fever on 28 December; according to the company Muster-out Roll of October 1864 he died of pneumonia on 31 December.

**Sources:**

Materials in collection.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection is the record of a short military career, less than four months, which gives a portrait of volunteer service in the first year of the war when supplies and men were plentiful. The fourteen letters in the collection are arranged in chronological order. Five of the letters are from Lee's family living in New Jersey, one from his uncle in Indianapolis about the lumber business, and three from his cousin Theodore when he was in the army and Lee was not. There are also four letters from Lee about his training and his interaction with Buckner's position. In addition, are copies of his company's muster rolls, biographical information, partial transcripts of the letters, and two daguerreotype

cased images of Lee as a boy and young adult.

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Typed transcripts of letters, n.d.

Letter from cousin S.W. Tuttle to Lee in Ogden, 5  
Mar. 1860

Military Discharge, 23 Apr. 1861

Letter from cousin Theodore at Camp Morton, 28  
Apr. 1861

Letter from cousin Theodore at Camp Morton, 3  
May 1861

Letter from cousin Theodore at Camp Morton, 11  
May 1861

Letter from uncle D.O. Benjamin in Indianapolis, 24  
May 1861

Letter from sister and mother in Littleton, New  
Jersey, 18 June 1861

Letter to family in Morristown, New Jersey, re:  
enlistment in the army, 25 Sept. 1861

Letter from brother Clarence in Littleton, New  
Jersey, 25 Oct. 1861

Letter to sister Emily in Littleton, New Jersey,  
written at Camp Fremont, 7 Nov. 1861

Letter to mother in Littleton, New Jersey, written at  
Camp Nevin, Kentucky, 25 Nov. 1861

Letter to sister Emily in Littleton, New Jersey,  
written at Camp Jenkins, 27 Nov. 1861

Letter from sister Emily, 8 Dec. 1861

Letter from mother, 9 Dec. 1861

Letter from cousin Ferdinand Benjamin in Ogden,  
Indiana, 15 Dec. 1861

Muster Rolls (photocopies), 1864

Biographical information (photocopies), n.d.

Robert D.F. Lee as a child, Daguerreotype, ca. 1840s

### CONTAINER

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Cased Images: Box 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 0865).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.