A BOOK OF HIDDEN STORIES

In 2004, during the move into The Seattle Public Library's newly built central library structure at 1000 Fourth Avenue, Carletta Wilson, an art department librarian, found the Scrap Book of Picture Cards at SPL's Queen Anne storage facility. Curious about its contents, she showed it to Heather McLeland-Wieser, CG, Manager of History, Travel & Maps and Arts, Recreation & Literature departments at the Central Library.

As they perused the scrapbook pages, Ms. Wilson and Ms. McLeland-Wieser saw handwritten ledger entries for steamships and propellers that traversed the Great Lakes ports of Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, and other towns in the 1850s. On top of the pages were picture cards, either glued or inserted into diagonal corner slits, that showed unique historical illustrations and advertisements. "Whose ledger was this? How did it end up in Seattle?" they wondered.

The inside cover frontispiece showed the scrapbook was assigned catalog no. qR741.5 Scr16 v.1, and it was given accession no. 463348. A library archivist determined from this acquisitions information that it was one of a set of three volumes donated to SPL in the 1920s; the whereabouts of the other two volumes is unknown.

Ms. McLeland-Wieser presented the scrapbook to Puget Sound Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists (PS-APG) at its December 9, 2006, meeting. She thought it would be an interesting project for members of the chapter to work on, to determine its provenance. The members present at the meeting agreed, and tentative plans were made for the pages to be digitally photographed and made available to volunteers.
By summer 2007, John LaMont, a genealogical librarian at SPL, had photographed the pages with the cards intact. He later rephotographed pages that had cards removed, which allowed for visibility of previously obscured handwritten text. Because many cards were glued tightly onto the pages, and removing them with a razor blade or other device would damage the paper, they were left as is.

PS-APG member Cathryn Vannice served as Scrapbook Project Coordinator until October 2007, after which time Evelyn Roehl agreed to do it. She and Bonnie Jean MacDonald, PS-APG president, met and reviewed the digitized pages to identify ship names. A Memorandum of Understanding between SPL and PS-APG was drafted, then finalized and signed by Heather McLeland-Wieser and Bonnie Jean MacDonald on December 28, 2007. An APG volunteer disclaimer form was also prepared, which volunteers have signed and the originals given to SPL.

SCOPe OF PROJECT

The Scrapbook Project had three main research areas:

- Determining the original owner(s) of the ledger and how it came to Seattle;
- Summarizing information on original ledger pages—identifying the ships, ship owners, and ports mentioned in the scrapbook.

SEARCHING FOR THE ORIGINAL OWNER

The scrapbook frontispiece has "Presented by Mr. G. W. Lee," so it was presumed that this person was the donor and original owner, or a descendant thereof, and that he had lived in Seattle. Initial attempts to find a likely match for G. W. Lee started by reviewing Seattle city directories and the 1910, 1920, and 1930 censuses.
One possible match, a George W. Lee, carpenter, lived in Seattle from 1910 until his death in 1947. He was born in New York and was married to Anna B., originally from Vermont. They had no children. The death certificate for this man showed he was born in Grandville, N.Y., on February 22, 1868, and died on November 17, 1947; his parents were listed as Hanson E. Lee and Eleanor Russell, both born in New York State. The 1880 census has Anson, Elenor, George, and Wallace Lee in Granville, Washington County, New York, ages 51, 52, 12, and 25, respectively, all born in New York. The males all worked on the farm. The 1870 census also shows this family in Town of Granville, post office South Granville, Washington County, New York. Anson's occupation was farm laborer, and he was not shown to have any real or personal property. Washington County is in northeastern New York, next to Vermont and a fair distance from the Great Lakes. It seemed somewhat unlikely for a farm-laboring family to have a Great Lakes shipping ledger. A more plausible scenario was that this George W. Lee, as a carpenter in Seattle, remodeled someone's house and the home owner gave him the scrapbook or asked him to give it to the library. Proving that would be very difficult.

Another possible donor, Guy Warren Lee, was a clerk and assistant to the general manager of the Northern Pacific Railway. He was born in Minnesota and lived in Tacoma prior to moving to Seattle in about 1923. The general offices of the Northern Pacific Railway relocated from Tacoma to the newly built Smith Tower in Seattle in 1922. The scrapbook ledger pages had a few entries for railroads . . . perhaps the general manager or his ancestors were involved in Great Lakes shipping, and maybe while cleaning his office he asked his assistant to give the scrapbook to the library. But who was the general manager?

In SPL's "Seattle Room" at the Central Library are vertical files with newspaper clippings. One, published in 1919, named the general manager of Northern Pacific Railway as J. M. Rayelje and the assistant general manager as E. C. Blanchard. After finding absolutely nothing else in any city directory, census, or Google search for anyone with the surname "Rayelje," one can only assume the newspaper misspelled the name.
However, by the time of the railway's office relocation in 1922, Mr. Edwin C. Blanchard had assumed the general manager position. He and his wife were in Tacoma in 1920; the census shows Mr. Blanchard was born in Iowa in about 1856, and his parents were born in New York. Tracing back, he worked in Duluth, Minnesota, as a superintendent for Northern Pacific Railway in 1900; that census gave his date of birth as July 1854. In 1880 he was a telegraph operator in Brookville, Saline, Kansas. The 1860 census showed an Edwin C. Blanchard, age 6, in the household of James Blanchard, age 50, farmer, born in New York, in Louisa County, Iowa. The 1856 Iowa state census listed him as Edwin Clark Blanchard, age 2. Unfortunately, the father, James Blanchard, farmer, age 40, was already in Louisa County, Iowa, at the time of the 1850 census. Since the scrapbook has ledger entries with dates in 1854, any connection between the Blanchard family and Great Lakes shipping seemed remote.

CHECKING THE SHIP OWNERS AND COMPANIES

Of the 88 vessels and railroad companies mentioned in the ledger pages of the scrapbook, 181 owners have been identified (see "Owners of Vessels" chapter). Four of them had the surname of Lee: Charles H., Franklin, James, and Uriah D., who were copartners, along with Wm. H. Abell and Newell Chamberlain, in the business firm of Lee, Abell & Co. This company owned the propellers F. W. Backus, Detroit, and Toledo. In addition, C. H. Lee & Co., made up of Charles H. and James W. Lee, owned the propeller Nile, and a boat named C H Lee was mentioned once in the book.

| VESSEL: Propeller F. W. Backus of Buffalo |
| CONSTRUCTION: Built at Amherstburg, Upper Canada (now Ontario) in 1846 |
| OWNERS: Managing Owner: Charles H. Lee of Silver Creek, New York; Wm. H. Abell and Uriah D. Lee of Buffalo; Newell Chamberlain of New York City; and Franklin Lee of Silver Creek, Co-partners in the firm Lee, Abell & Co. |
| MASTER: Frank Cameron |
The ledger pages also listed companies and individuals who apparently paid by check, cash, or gold coin for various shipments. Included among them was O. Lee & Co., in connection with the propellers Charter and Niagara and the steamer Queen of the West, and G. W. Lee, written under an entry for the steamer Queen of the West.

Since Lee is a common surname, we did not jump to conclusions but were cautiously optimistic that these Lees were connected to the "G. W. Lee" who donated the scrapbook.

**VIEWING THE PICTURE CARDS**

Many of the picture cards attached to the scrapbook pages are what ephemera collectors call "trade cards." Smaller than postcards but larger than business cards, they illustrated products or were captioned cartoons to promote the products. The names of 62 companies were imprinted on many of the 185 cards (see "Trade Cards" chapter).

While investigating the owners of one of the companies, "Montgomery and Talcott, Druggists and Grocers" of Silver Creek, New York, PS-APG member and APG national board member Trish Hackett Nicola, CG learned that Henry Montgomery married Helen Lee, and Chauncey G. Talcott married Maria Lee. Both women were daughters of Oliver Lee and Eliza Downer. An International Genealogical Index Family Group Record showed Oliver Lee and Elizabeth or Eliza Downer, both from New London County, Connecticut, as parents of nine children, including sons Charles H., James H., Franklin, and John M. Lee, all reportedly born in Silver Creek, Chautauqua, New York.18 Did any of these men have a son or grandson with the initials "G. W.‘?"

**LINKING THE LEES**

A review of various censuses of the Lees turned up a possible match:

1880 Census, Buffalo, Erie County, New York19:
Lee, Frank, age 53, coal merchant, born in New York, parents born in Connecticut
    Mary, age 48, wife, born in England, parents born in England

George, age 18, son, student, born in New York
Daisy, age 24, daughter, born in New York
Mary L., age, 22, daughter, born in New York
Nora, age 20, daughter, born in New York
Anna, age 15, daughter, born in New York; plus six servants and visitors

1870 Census, Lancaster, Erie County, New York:
Lee, Frank, age 45, dredging and coal business, born in New York
Marianne, age 38, born in England
Henrietta, age 17, born in New York
Daisy, age 14, born in New York
Mary, age 12, born in New York
Nora, age 10, born in New York
George, age 7, born in New York
Anna, age 5, born in New York
Pitts, Dora, age 21, born in New York
Waith, Sarah, age 80, born in England.

1860 Census, Silver Creek, Chautauqua, New York:
Lee, Frank, age 34, steam boat clerk, born in New York, (real estate valued at $12,000 and personal estate valued at $8,000)
Marion, age 38 [should have been 28], born in England
Henrietta, age 7, born in New York
Lizzy, age 5, born in New York
Mary, age 3, born in New York
Nora, age 5/12, born in New York
Peltier, Carrie, age 11, born in New York

In 1850, Franklin Lee, age 23, commission merchant, born in New York, was in Buffalo, Erie County, New York, in the household of Wm H. Abel, age 36, also a commission agent, born in Vermont. (These two men matched the co-owners of Lee, Abell & Co. who were found to be owners of several Great Lakes propellers mentioned in the scrapbook.) Also in this household were Eliza Abel, age 29, Wm. O., age 2, and a female infant, age 1/12, all born in New York. Eliza, not too surprisingly, turned out to be another daughter of Oliver Lee and Eliza Downer.

The Index of Marriages from Buffalo Newspapers 1881-1884 showed Franklin Lee married Marianne Waithe on 15 July 1851. The cited newspaper notice read: "MARRIED. At Silver Creek, on the 15th
Having established the identity of the parents of George Lee—now a prime candidate for the mysterious "G. W. Lee" we were looking for—the search turned to him in the years after 1880. No George or G. W. Lee born circa 1862-63 in New York with father born in New York and mother born in England was found on the 1900 census. In 1910, however, a Geo. W. Lee, age 47, born in New York, with a father born in New York and mother born in England, turned up in Omak, Okanogan County, Washington, approximately 225 miles from Seattle. He was listed as a farmer and had three hired hands in his household. Somewhat dubious: Why would a city boy move to Apple Country and become a farmer?

Well, actually an orchardist, which is how he was listed on the 1920 census (or at least someone whose age and birthplace matched: 58, New York; his mother's birthplace was shown as New York, however). Also in his household on Fourth Avenue, Okanogan City, were his wife, Adele, age 38, born in Florida, whose parents were reportedly born in New Hampshire and Georgia, and sister Etta L. Ferdon, age 68, widow, born in New York. Could Etta be the same person as Henrietta who was in Frank Lee's household in 1860 and 1870? Her age was a close fit.

To verify that these two people were children of Franklin Lee and Marianne Waith, Evelyn Roehl checked the Washington State Death Index on microfilm while at SPL. George Waith Lee died on August 25, 1926, in Omak, Okanogan County (the middle name practically gave it away); and Etta Lee Ferdon died on October 19, 1937, in Seattle. John LaMont then consulted the Washington State Death Index online through the "New FamilySearch" website, which, with subsequent review of the death certificates, confirmed the parents of both were indeed Franklin Lee and Marianne Waith.
But did this prove that the G. W. Lee who presented the "Scrap Book of Picture Cards" to SPL was this man? Not exactly. Ms. Roehl decided to review, page by page, the original scrapbook ledger, to not only cross-check ship names and dates and to examine the handwritten text exposed after picture cards were removed, but to look for other clues. On the back of a page marked 112, glued together with another page at the right-hand margin but visible from an angle when the pages were spread open from the bottom, were a signature (signed twice) and text that read: "Geo W. Lee, Lee & Loomis, 21 Michigan, Buffalo NY."

The final clincher was found in a biography of Oliver Lee in the History of Chautauqua County, New York:

Mr. Lee was married in Connecticut, Oct. 30, 1813, to Eliza Downer . . . They had 9 children, besides two who died in infancy . . . 6. Franklin, who married Marianne Waith, daughter of the late Rev. Wm. Waith, Sr., and resides at Lancaster; is a coal merchant, [firm of Lee & Loomis,] Buffalo.³⁰

WHAT NOW?

The problem (or opportunity) with research is, when you answer one question, three or more pop up: How did the "Scrap Book of Picture Cards" get to SPL? Was Franklin Lee the person whose handwriting appears on the ledger pages? What appealed to George W. Lee to collect trading cards?

To tackle the first question, which is an extension of an earlier dilemma, one has to start with the known and go towards the unknown. We now knew who "G. W. Lee" was, but did he bring the scrapbook to Seattle from Okanogan before his death?
Perhaps a local paper would offer some insight. The *Okanogan Independent* routinely published town gossip, and the following notice was found in the October 14, 1910, edition: “George W. Lee of the Three Buttes ranch left Sunday for Seattle, where he will spend a few days on business.” This, however, was at least ten years before the scrapbook was given an accession number at SPL. Perhaps it was in the library’s collection but not assigned a number until much later. If one looks very closely at the “Presented by Mr. G. W. Lee” tag (see page 3, above), the year 1927 is faintly visible at the top, before the words “Art Dept.”

Or did his sister or wife donate it after George passed away? The most likely scenario is Adele F. F. Lee, as executrix of his estate, donated it to SPL after she had moved to Seattle. The Seattle city directory entries in 1928 and 1934 through 1937 listed her and Etta L. Ferdon, widows of Geo. W. and Edwin J., respectively, at the same addresses on Boren and Prospect Avenues and on North Broadway, all on Capitol Hill. The 1930 census showed Adele F. Lee, age 47, widow, born in Florida, residing at Park Vista Apartments, 5810 Cowen Place, Seattle. (Many Seattleites today recognize this as the vintage, still-classy apartment complex across from Cowen Park in the Ravenna neighborhood.)

As for the next question, whether Franklin Lee was the scribe of the shipping ledger, a comparison of the handwriting of Franklin Lee and his brother, Charles Henry Lee, was made from documents found in the estate settlement papers of their father, Oliver Lee, which are on microfilm at Family History Library. In fact, Oliver Lee’s file takes up parts or all of four films, because settling his many business affairs (mill, mercantile, banking) resulted in hundreds of documents and receipts. Charles Henry Lee was the administrator.
While their writing is similar to that found in the scrapbook, the pen strokes for certain capital letters in the ledger pages do not match either gentleman's handwriting. Thus, the scrapbook ledger scribe, unfortunately, will remain a mystery person. Nevertheless, it seems highly likely that either Charles or Franklin gave the book to George W. Lee. Charles did not marry, and if the ledger was his, he may have given it to his nephew George W. Lee for use as a scrapbook twenty-some years after it was used in his business. Otherwise Franklin gave it to his son for the same purpose.

Bonnie Jean MacDonald had suspected, before the identity of the donor was determined, that the scrapbook was that of an adolescent male. The picture cards date from the 1870s (several have 1877 imprinted on them), and George Waith Lee, born on November 30, 1862, would indeed have been an adolescent at that time. Just as adolescent boys today collect baseball cards, George W. Lee no doubt was collecting the cards available in his era.

For more on George’s family, see the Lee Ancestry chapter.
A more complete biography of George and Adele can be found in the chapter entitled Three Buttes Ranch.


2 George W Lee, death certificate 945 (1947). Washington State Department of Health, King County, Seattle.
3 Anson Lee household, 1880 United States census, Granville (1st Election District), Washington County, New York, enumeration district 139, page 15, lines 8-11; National Archives microfilm series T9, roll 942.

4 Anson Lee household, 1880 United States census, Granville (1st Election District), Washington County, New York, enumeration district 139, page 15, lines 8-11; National Archives microfilm series T9, roll 942.

5 Guy Warren Lee, World War I Draft Registration Card no. 59, Tacoma, Pierce, Washington, precinct 62, draft board no. 3; Family History Library microfilm 1992113.

6 Guy W Lee entry, Polk's Seattle (Washington) City Directory, (Seattle: R.L. Polk & Co, 1923); also subsequent year by the same title (1922).

7 Guy W Lee household, 1930 United States census, Seattle, King, Washington, enumeration district 17-400, sheet 36A, lines 1-3; National Archives microfilm series T626, roll 2493.

8 "NP Offices to go under Smith Roof," Seattle Times, Seattle, Washington, February 1, 1922, 1.


10 Edwin C (Mary P) Blanchard entry, Polk's Seattle (Washington) City Directory (Seattle: R.L. Polk & Co, 1922), 365; also subsequent year by the same title (1923) 373.


12 Edwin Blanchard household, 1900 United States census, Duluth, St. Louis, Minnesota, enumeration district 259, roll 6A, lines 35-38; National Archives microfilm series T623, roll 789.

13 Edwin C. Blanchard household, 1880 United States census, Spring Creek Township, city of Brookville, Saline, Kansas, enumeration district 294, sheet 16, lines 5-7; National Archives microfilm series T9, roll 396.

14 James Blanchard household, 1860 United States census, Wapello Township and post office, Louisa County, Iowa, stamped page 929, written page 151, lines 21-24; National Archives microfilm series M653, roll 331.

15 James Blanchard household, 1856 Iowa state census, Louisa County, page 324, lines 1-6, household and family 73; Iowa census microfilm roll 59.

16 James Blanchard household, 1850 United States census, Wapello Township, Louisa, Iowa, stamped page 126, written page 251, lines 24-28; National Archives microfilm series M432, roll 187.

18 Oliver Lee and Elizabeth or Eliza Downer family entry, FamilySearch International Genealogical Index [IGI], Intellectual Reserve, Inc., 1999-2005, (http://www.familysearch.org) v.2.5.0.

19 Frank Lee household, 1880 United States census, Buffalo, Ward 2, Erie, New York, enumeration district 169, page 5, lines 38-50; National Archives microfilm series T9, roll 831.

20 Frank Lee household, 1870 U.S. Census, Lancaster, Erie, New York, stamped page 371, written page 9, lines 23-31; National Archives micropublication M593, roll 931.

21 Frank Lee household, 1860 United States census, Silver Creek, Chautauqua, New York, stamped page 388, written page 29, lines 25-32; National Archives microfilm series M653, roll 732. [Carrie Pettis, who married Geo. Bingham, was listed as "adopted dau of Frank Lee" in Index of Marriages from Buffalo Newspapers 1811-1884, 21.]


26 Geo W Lee household, 1910 United States census, Omak Precinct-West, Okanogan County, Washington, enumeration district 122, sheet 6B, lines 57-60; National Archives microfilm series T624, roll 1667.


32 Etta L. Ferdon entry, Polk's Seattle (Washington) City Directory, (Seattle: R.L. Polk & Co., 1928) 626 and 1029; also subsequent years by the same title: (1934) 526 and 874; (1935) 542 and 906; (1937) 520 and 913

33 Adele F. Lee, 1930 United States census, Seattle, King County, Washington, enumeration district 17-20, sheet 32B, line 66; National Archives microfilm series T626, roll 2492.

34 Young, History of Chautauqua County, New York, 421.

35 Oliver Lee estate papers, Erie County Surrogate Court case no. 25639, Buffalo, New York; Family History Library microfilms 965536-965538 and 965001.