

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

JOHN LEE

Papers, 1840-65

Reel M678

**Buckinghamshire Record Office
County Hall
Aylesbury HP20 1UA**

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Filmed: 1954

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

John Lee (1783-1866) was born John Fiott, the son of John Fiott, a London merchant. In 1816 he changed his name to Lee on the death of his maternal uncle, William Lee, at the same time inheriting extensive estates in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. In 1827, on the death of his cousin Sir George Lee, 6th Baronet, he succeeded to the estate of Hartwell near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire.

Lee was educated at St John's College, Cambridge. He graduated as a Doctor of Law and was admitted to the College of Advocates in 1816. He practised at the courts of Doctors' Commons (the College of Civil Law) until they were abolished 1865. In addition to his legal activities and duties as a landlord, Lee had wide scientific and scholarly interests. He was a founding member of the Royal Astronomical Society (1824) and the Royal Geographical Society (1830), a fellow of the Royal Society, and a member of the Geological Society, Society of Arts, Society of Antiquaries of London and the Numismatic Society. In 1831 he erected an observatory at Hartwell House and he communicated with astronomers throughout Europe. In his young days, he had travelled widely in Europe and the Middle East and he built up an outstanding collection of books, manuscripts, coins, medals, rocks and fossils which was housed at Hartwell.

Charles and John Smith, who both emigrated to Melbourne, were the sons of Benjamin Smith, a colleague of John Lee at Doctors' Commons and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Carl Rümker (1788-1862) left Germany in 1809 and for ten years served in the navy of the East India Company and later the British Merchant Navy. He came to New South Wales in 1821 with Sir Thomas Brisbane and, under Brisbane's supervision, established the astronomical observatory at Parramatta. Governor Darling appointed him government astronomer in 1827. In 1830 he returned to Germany where he became director of the school of navigation and the observatory at Hamburg.

Note: In 1997 the Buckinghamshire Record Office merged with the Local Studies Library to form the Buckinghamshire Records and Local Studies Service. Its name was later changed to the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies. Its current (2017) address is County Hall, Walton Street, Aylesbury HP20 1UU.

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Note: The letters and documents were filmed from right to left on the reel, with the first letter appearing at the end of the reel.

Buckinghamshire Record Office

D-LE Estate deeds and papers of the Lee Family of Hartwell House

D-LE/H Papers of Dr John Lee (1783-1866)

6. Correspondence on Australian matters, 1840-65
 - 1 Charles Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 19 April 1842: voyage to Australia; climate of Melbourne; opportunities for farmers; poor class of emigrants; strike of 300 workers employed at government works; wages.
 - 2 Receipt for £3 on account of C. Smith, signed by W.H. and Margaret Smith, 5 June 1843
 - 3 Charles Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 28 March 1844: no information about property of C. Rümker; death of Smith's father; business failures; arrival of immigrants; wages of shepherds; prices; sends *Port Phillip Gazette*.
 - 4 Charles Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 18 Dec. 1845: acknowledges letter and Peace Society tracts; sends specimens of native birds; Mechanics Institute in Melbourne; Smith's employment with Capt. Cain; impending voyage to Adelaide and Batavia; labour shortages and need for more immigrants; bad influence of emancipated convicts from Van Diemen's Land; thanks for assistance to his mother and sisters.
 - 5 John L. Smith (Walworth) to Lee, 22 June 1847: proposal to directors of Australasian Assurance Company; preparations for departure; subscription to *Aylesbury News*.
 - 6 John L. Smith (Walworth) to Lee, 22 June 1847: application by Smith's mother for a position.
 - 7 John L. Smith (Walworth) to Lee, 24 June 1847: policy with Australasian Assurance Company; membership of Peace Society; financial arrangements.
 - 8 John L. Smith (Walworth) to Lee, 25 June 1847: sends insurance policies; delay in sailing of *Cecilia*.

- 9 John L. Smith (Walworth) to Lee, 29 June 1847: purchase of boots and shoes; imminent departure of *Cecilia*.
- 10 John L. Smith (off Deal) to Lee, c. 30 June 1847: departure.
- 11 John Lee (Hartwell) to John L. Smith, 5 Oct. 1847: business failures in England; report in *Athenaeum* of discovery of a large animal in interior of New South Wales. (copy)
- 12 John L. Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 23 Jan. 1848: dissolution of firm of Mackenzie & Smith; partnership with his brother Charles; requests assistance to bring mother and sisters to Australia.
- 13 Charles Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 23 Jan. 1848: favourable prospects of his business; requests Lee's assistance to bring his mother and sisters to Melbourne; suggests terms of repayment; price of cabin passages; donation to Mechanics Institute of Sir George Lee's Cases in the Ecclesiastical Court.
- 14 John L. Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 3 March 1848: remittances to Lee and Smith's mother; boots and shoes from Bilbao; presentation of books to Mechanics Institute; financial difficulties over passage money; sends *Port Phillip Patriot*.
- 15 John L. Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 9 March 1848: enclosed note to be opened by Lee only.
- 16 John L. Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 9 March 1848: requests that his mother and sisters remain in London and no money be advanced to them; Smith's prospects far less favourable than they were a week ago.
- 17 John L. Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 18 March 1848: improvement in his affairs; it would still be best if mother and sisters remained in England for time being.
- 18 John Lee (Hartwell) to John L. Smith, 21 April 1848: Smith's arrival in Melbourne; departure of emigrants from Aylesbury for Adelaide; hopes of Smith's mother in joining him in Australia; purchase of ink and clothing; friends of Lee in Ceylon and Cape Colony; seeks news about observatory at Parramatta. (copy)
- 19 Account for supply of clothing by S.W. Silver & Co. (London) totalling £30.9.6 on account of W.H. Smith, paid by Dr Lee, 6 June 1848
- 20 John L. Smith (Geelong) to Blake (London), 7 Dec. 1849: mutual friends; health of his mother; his sister Isabella; floods in Melbourne; shipwreck and other accidents; Smith's move from Melbourne to Geelong; drunkenness
- 21 John L. Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 8 Jan. 1856: inquiries made by Marsh; his son is probably in the bush; death of Sir Charles Hotham; Smith's litigation with Mason.
- 22 Printed notice seeking information about whereabouts of Henry Marsh, 29 Sept. 1855
- 23 John L. Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 23 May 1857: Smith's victory in litigation against his partner Mason; Louisa's passage to Australia; requests insurance policy; no news of Marsh's son; marriage of his sister who is on a voyage to South Sea Islands.
- 24 Samuel Farley (London) to Lee, 20 May 1858: insurance policy of John Smith.
- 24a John L. Smith (Melbourne) to Samuel Farley, 15 March 1858: death of his sister Louisa; Smith's illness; insurance policy. (extracts)

- 25 John L. Smith (Melbourne) to Lee, 13 July 1858: Smith's serious illness; long law suit; illness of his sister Isabella; fears that Henry Marsh is dead; mutual friends; insurance policy; wishes to leave his estate to his mother.
- 26 John Lee (Melbourne) to Lee, 15 Dec. 1858: death of Heyward; insurance policy.
- 27 Carl Rümker (Hamburg) to Lee, Sept. 1840: seeks advice about 2200 acres of land granted to Rümker in New South Wales; interest of Harper in purchasing it.
- 28 Carl Rümker (Hamburg) to Lee, 5 June 1841: resignation as teacher at Naval School; no news of his property in New South Wales; has received no advantage of it for ten years; George Harper has occupied land for eight years; Rümker's naval friends in England are all dead.
- 29 John Lee (London) to Carl Rümker, 23 Aug. 1841: Rümker's observations of the last comet; hopes Rümker will be able to devote his time exclusively to his observatory; property in New South Wales; will try to forward letters to Sir George Gipps. (copy)
- 30 Carl Rümker (Hamburg) to Lee, 4 Jan. 1842: thanks for assistance; Rümker's relations with Sir Thomas Brisbane; possibility of seeking Brisbane's help with Rümker's property.
- 31 S. Roberts (Sydney) to Edmund Westby, 25 June 1842: inquiries about Rümker's property in New South Wales; blunder of Government in cancelling a grant of 1000 acres; death of Harper. (extract)
- 32 Carl Rümker (Hamburg) to Benjamin Smith, 31 July 1842: thanks for assistance with affairs in New South Wales; arrival of Smith's son in New South Wales; the climate.
- 33 John Lee (London) to Carl Rümker, 27 Dec. 1842: sends papers forwarded by Charles Smith in Melbourne; power of attorney; formation of Philological Society in London; sends publication of Peace Society. (copy)
- 34 Carl Rümker (Hamburg) to A. Young (Sydney), 30 Dec. 1842: sends power of attorney; Rümker's position and circumstances; hopes of converting his property to money. (copy)
- 35 Carl Rümker (Hamburg) to Lee, 14 April 1843: sends 40 copies of his catalogue of fixed stars; hopes it can be distributed by a London bookseller; sends letter to Young; Rümker's pecuniary difficulties.
- 36 Carl Rümker (Hamburg) to Lee, April 1843: letter from Sparke in New South Wales; arrangement with Harper concerning payment for Rümker's property.
- 37 I. Haggard (London) to Lee, 12 June 1843: summarises letter from his nephew Adolphus Young about Rümker's property; land is worth very little.
- 38 Carl Rümker (Hamburg) to Lee, 18 Aug. 1843: thanks for copies of Brisbane's observations; erroneous method adopted in reduction; distribution of Rümker's catalogue; observations of comet.
- 39 W.H. Smith (London) to Lee, 27 Aug. 1843: sends copy of a letter from his brother Charles Smith about the need for Rümker to send a power of attorney to Sparke.
- 40 Carl Rümker (Hamburg) to Lee, 7 Nov. 1843: thanks for letter from Lieut. Raper; news from New South Wales; Prof. Henderson.

- 41 Capt. Phillip P. King (Bridport) to Lee, 30 Aug. 1849: probable cost of erecting a new observatory and residence at Parramatta; their conversation at Hartwell about the observatory; funding would have to come from British Government; magnetic observatory at Hobart; intention of King to establish observatory at his home if no observatory were set up in Sydney.
- 42 George Witt (Sydney) to Lee, 20 May 1853: thanks for book on history of Hartwell; Capt. P.P. King; Witt's plans to return to England
- 43 Miss B.N. Parkes (London) to Lee, 7 Aug. 1861: seeks subscription to society to send young female emigrants to Australia to work as governesses.
- 44 William Stratford Lee (Fremantle) to Lee, 26 Sept. 1865: Lee's kindness; William Lee's years of misery and degradation; as ticket-of-leave holder he has to remain in colony until 1868.