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## FINDING AID

# **LEE COLEMAN PAPERS**

## **1930-1977 (bulk dates: 1931-1965)**

Prepared by  
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09/24/2008

National Park Service

Catalog Number: YELL 182622

***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

Copyright and Restrictions .....ii

History .....1

Scope and Content .....2

Container List ..... 4

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## ***HISTORY***

Lee Lambert Coleman was a Park Ranger at Yellowstone National Park 1931-1961. Born September, 28, 1903, in Forsyth, Wyoming, he worked on the Medicine Bow National Forest on the trail crew in 1929. He graduated with a degree in Animal Husbandry from University of Wyoming in 1930. Lee took and passed the United States Federal Civil Service entrance exam in 1930. He was appointed to his first Park Ranger position in 1931, and served at the Gallatin Ranger Station (RS) of Yellowstone National Park. Lee worked as a park ranger throughout the park: Snake River RS, Mammoth Headquarters, West Yellowstone RS, Cooke RS, Thorofare RS, Lake RS, Antelope Creek Buffalo Corral, Hellroaring RS, West Thumb RS, Soda Butte District. He was promoted to District Ranger in 1938, and worked in Canyon District, Bechler District, Mammoth District, Snake River District, Lamar District, Tower Falls District, West Yellowstone District, finishing his career in Mammoth Hot Springs at Headquarters. In his regular duties, Lee was a law enforcement and investigative officer, and supervised entrance stations. Lee worked as a firefighter, fire crew boss, and supervised summer season park rangers and a trail crew. Lee served as coordinator and go-to guy on the elk reduction program, bison reduction program, bighorn sheep study.

Lee's interests ranged from Yellowstone history, exploration, and archeology to hunting, firearms and wildlife. He kept records of his reading, his employment and his hunting. Perfecting his understanding of hunting, Lee kept records of the firearms and ammunition used wildlife reduction, wildlife population and distribution, and historic weaponry. He was physically active, skiing, hunting, riding horseback. From correspondence he is told to be taciturn until prompted. Upon prompting, Lee could relate stories of the Yellowstone country, its inhabitants and their history.

Lee married Phyllis Samson in 1939. She was the niece of C.A. Hamilton, of the Hamilton Stores of Yellowstone National Park. They had two children, Michael and Gail. Lee retired April 17, 1961 from the National Park Service as a District Ranger in the North District, which includes Mammoth sub-District. Upon retirement, he and Phyllis moved from Gardiner to Billings, Montana.

In retirement, the Colemans retained their friends and contacts from the Park Service. Lee maintained interests in archeology, history and hunting. Archeological collections Lee made in the park are part of the Yellowstone National Park lithic artifact collection. These include arrowheads, projectile points, bifaces, and spears. Throughout his life, Lee continued his correspondence with historical firearms collectors, writers and gunsmiths. He was a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association.

## ***SCOPE AND CONTENT***

LEE COLEMAN PAPERS  
1930-1977 (bulk dates: 1931-1965)

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>CATALOG NUMBER</i> | YELL 182622                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>VOLUME</i>         | 2.00 LF                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>DESCRIPTION</i>    | <p>Personal papers of Lee Coleman, former park ranger, includes personal correspondence, penned notes, firearms and ammunition correspondence, firearms and ammunition suppliers and pricelists, magazine articles, hunting tags and targets, employment records, retirement cards and letters. A box of index cards is included, with addresses of friends, NPS staff, gun enthusiasts, and Indian contacts; and references to his reading and hunting; and firearm, ammunition and animal specifications. There are few photographs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>ORGANIZATION</i>   | <p>Organized into three series, all arranged chronologically: Series I: The Hunter; Series II: The Writer; Series III: The Park Ranger.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>PROVENANCE</i>     | <p>Collection assembled by Lee Coleman from 1930-1978. Upon his death, his son, Michael Coleman separated materials from the greater household for donation to the National Park Service, Yellowstone National Park, Museum Collections. When the collection was reviewed for acceptance and accession prior to 2004, it was determined that many materials were products of work from Lee Coleman's NPS employment, and other federal papers. The archival collection was separated from the museum collection at this time.</p> <p>Kelly Cahill, detail archivist 2008, began to process the archival collection in September, 2008. The personal papers were separated from the federal papers. During processing, an item database was created of the documents in the personal collection. The federal papers were processed and sorted chronologically (1916-1961). The federal collection will be re-united with the original federal collection, and that order will be re-created.</p> |

*RESTRICTIONS*

NO

*ASSOCIATED  
MATERIALS*

Archeology from federal lands, archival collection from federal collections. Yellowstone NP Museum and Archival Collections house both.

***CONTAINER LIST***

## Box 1

| Folder # | Folder Title                          |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 01       | Gun Correspondence 1932-1939          |
| 02       | Gun Correspondence 1940-1948          |
| 03       | Gun Correspondence 1952, 1961-1978    |
| 04       | Hunting News 1939-1957                |
| 05       | Targets, Used 1931-1964               |
| 06       | Hunting Permits 1940-1958             |
| 07       | Montana Hunting Regulations 1960-1961 |
| 08       | Guns and Ammo Suppliers and Supplies  |

## Box #2

| Folder # | Folder Title                      |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 09       | Coleman Penned Notes 1930s        |
| 10       | Coleman Penned Notes 1959-1961    |
| 11       | Personal Correspondence 1931-1960 |

## Box 3

| Folder # | Folder Title                                   |
|----------|------------------------------------------------|
| 12       | Employment, Personal 1939-1959                 |
| 13       | Employment, Forms 1953-1961                    |
| 14       | Fire – Regional Training Conferences 1951-1960 |
| 15       | Fire – Training Notes 1949-1961                |
| 16       | Retirement 1961                                |
| 17       | Certificates 1961                              |
| 18       | Post Retirement to 1977                        |

Box 4

Index Box

Addresses: Friends, NPS Staff, gun enthusiasts, Indian contacts.

References: reading and hunting; firearm, ammunition and animal specifications.