

# Edward Lee

Model Employer and Man of Moral Courage

## An exhibition curated by Michael Lee

5 September - 5 November 2016

Levels 4 and 5 dlr LexIcon, Moran Park, Dún Laoghaire

A book entitled  
*Edward Lee: Model Employer and Man of Moral Courage*  
by Michael Lee  
will be available from all dlr Libraries and from bookshops,  
price €10.00

[libraries.dlrcoco.ie](http://libraries.dlrcoco.ie)



Edward Lee.



Tyrrellspass Green 1900. Photo was probably taken by Robert or Joe Lee. Note, most children have no shoes.

# EDWARD LEE & Co.

J.P. 1853-1927



Protestant School, Newtownlow, Co. Westmeath (now demolished).

Tyrrellspass, Co. Westmeath 1900.



Rathmines Road with Edward Lee & Co. single storey shop extreme right, 1900. Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

Edward Lee was born on the 27th March 1853. He was the eldest son of Edward Lee and Hannah Bagnall. The Lees were farmers who lived in the townland of Cornahir, Tyrrellspass Co. Westmeath. There were eight children in the family, Edward, Eliza, Robert, Annie, Joe, Pamela-Harriet, William and Mary (Molly). The Lees were Methodists and of modest means. Little is known of Edward's early life, but he likely attended the local Protestant school in Newtownlow. His education after that is not known, but he was a clever young man with an eye for an opportunity.

As the eldest son, it would have been natural that Edward would work alongside his father on the farm, but he was ambitious and began work as an indentured assistant draper, probably in Tullamore. In the late 1870s with £100 in his pocket, Edward left Westmeath to make his fortune in Dublin. On the 25th July 1878 in the Methodist Church in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Edward married Annie Sheckleton from Dungar, Co. Offaly. The newly married couple moved to No.2 Goldsmith Terrace in Bray, Co. Wicklow, where the first of nine children, Edward Sheckleton Lee was born in 1879. Annie and her son changed the name Sheckleton to Shackleton soon after. Five of their children, including one girl Annie, would die in infancy, but four boys, Edward Shackleton, Robert Ernest, Joseph Bagnall and Alfred Tennyson survived.

By 1883, Edward Lee was working as Manager of Penrose Bowles and Co in Kingstown, all the time gaining experience in the drapery trade. In 1885, Edward and Annie opened their first shop Edward Lee and Co, on the ground floor of their home at Goldsmith Terrace in Bray. This was quickly followed by another in Kingstown the same year. The shops operated on the "Cash Only" system, with the motto, "ONE PRICE! PLAIN FIGURES! SMALL PROFITS! CASH!" The shops proved successful in a short time. Over the following years, new shops were opened in Rathmines and Mary Street in Dublin, a wholesale office in Abbey Street and a small shop in Tyrrellspass. In 1904 the business was converted into a private limited company and the Board of Directors was appointed from managers of the various shops.



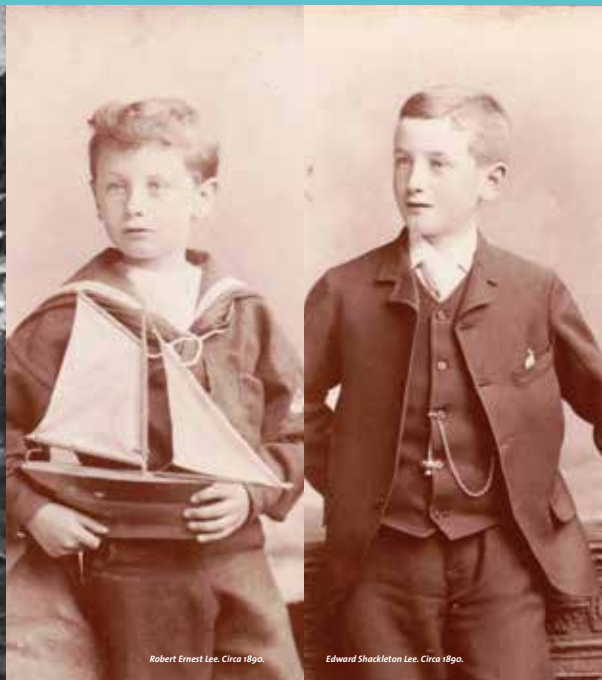
The earliest known photograph of Edward and Annie Lee. Taken 6th September 1886. One year after opening the business in Bray.



Numbers 7, 8 and 9 Anglesa Buildings. Original premises in Kingstown now Dún Laoghaire.



Edward Lee (standing extreme right) and extended family at Powerscourt waterfall. Circa 1906



Robert Ernest Lee. Circa 1890.

Edward Shackleton Lee. Circa 1890.



Annie Lee 1903.



Edward Lee 1903.

# The Lee Family Through the Years

J. I. 1853-1927



1922 Wedding of Alfred Tennyson Lee and Winifrid Butler-Cranwill.

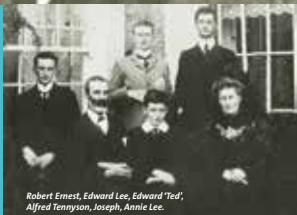
Edward Shackleton Lee and Robert Ernest Lee were educated at Wesley College Dublin. The two younger boys, Joseph Bagnall Lee and Alfred Tennyson Lee were sent to Epworth College in Rhyl, Wales. Both schools were of Methodist ethos. All four brothers attended Trinity College Dublin. Robert Ernest graduated from Medical School and Joe, after graduating, entered the Kings Inns to study Law. Edward Shackleton studied Accountancy and Alfred was awarded a Master of Arts Degree.



Joseph Bagnall Lee. Circa 1909.



Alfred Tennyson Lee 1921.



Robert Ernest, Edward Lee, Edward 'Ted', Alfred Tennyson, Joseph, Annie Lee.



Edward Lee 1920s.



Annie Lee in the 1930s.



Edward Shackleton Lee. 1921.



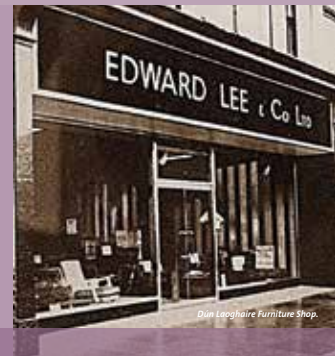
Robert Ernest Lee. Circa 1910.



Rathmines with newly built Edward Lee & Co Ltd shop 1910. Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland



Upper Georges Street, Kingstown with Edward Lee & Co. on left.



Dún Laoghaire Furniture Shop.



Abbey St.



Bray.

# EDWARD LEE J.P. 1853-1927

## The Enlightened Employer



Original granite carving Dún Laoghaire.

*“A good day’s pay for a good day’s work.”*

Edward Lee was an astute and shrewd businessman, but he also possessed a strong moral and caring attitude towards the welfare of his staff. He believed that working people deserved a good day’s pay for a good day’s work.



Edward Lee & Co. Ltd., Dún Laoghaire (1920s). Courtesy: Debra Pearson.



Rathmines.

In 1889 he initiated the half day holiday for all his staff on Thursdays, later changed to Wednesdays with the Shops Act of 1912. He was the first employer in Ireland to do this, firmly believing that the working day should be shortened if possible.



22-24 Upper Georges Street, Dún Laoghaire (2013).

*“Where long hours are worked on Saturdays, some compensation should be given by concession, on another day of the week and therefore in itself, it was but an act of simple justice.”*

Edward also initiated a system of profit sharing for all his employees.



48 Mary Street Dublin.



48 Mary Street Dublin (Now Toymaster).

*“The bonus, or rather profit sharing system is my highest ideal of what a business ought to be.”*



Town Hall Bray.

# EDWARD LEE LEE J.P. 1853-1927

## Housing Crisis in early 20th Century

Edward Lee was much concerned with the desperate plight of working families and the poor and to this end he entered local politics. He was elected as a Unionist member of Bray Urban District Council in 1900. In the 1903 council elections he topped the poll with 303 votes. In 1906, at the instigation of Lord Powerscourt, he was appointed a Justice of the Peace. In a newspaper article in 1903, the following was noted:

“Mr Lee has been upon the side of the people invariably and there is no member of the community who will not give him credit for the tenacity with which he has held to his democratic convictions. He has been constant in his efforts to abolish slumdom and to enable the working men of his town to enjoy decent and sanitary homes.”

As Chairman of the Public Health and Artisans dwelling Committee of Bray Urban district Council, Edward Lee actively promoted the erection of houses for working people and the poor of the town, believing that “It is the first duty of the council to have the poor properly housed.”



St Kevin's Square Bray.

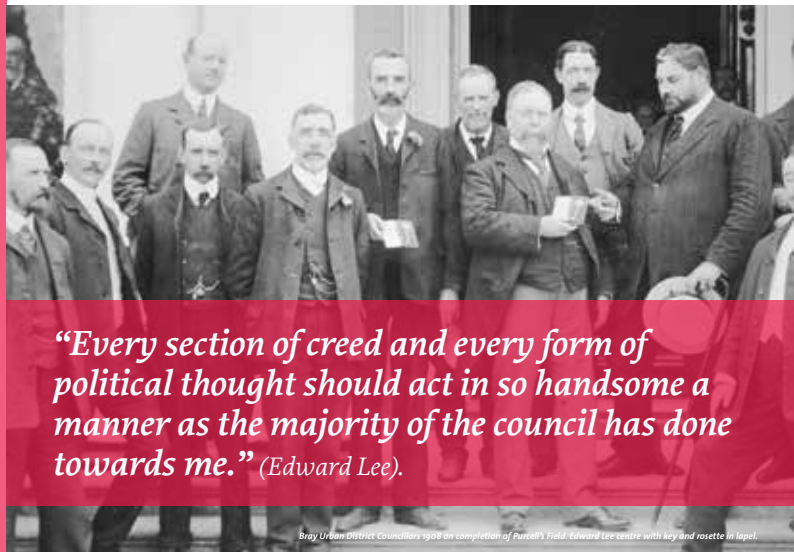
*“It is the first duty of the council to have the poor properly housed.” (Edward Lee).*

In 1908 Edward Lee was elected Chairman of Bray UDC.

*“Mr Lee was a broad-minded liberal gentleman, who had rendered yeoman service to Bray in his advocacy of schemes for the better housing of the working classes and his services deserved this recognition.”*

*(Councillors of Bray UDC)*

Edward Lee held liberal and democratic convictions and was delighted by the vote of confidence.



Bray Urban District Councillors 1908 on completion of Purcell's Field. Edward Lee centre with key and rosette in lapel.

*“Every section of creed and every form of political thought should act in so handsome a manner as the majority of the council has done towards me.” (Edward Lee).*

The Purcell's Field housing scheme of 1908 in Bray (now Connolly Square and St. Kevin's Square) was one of Edward Lee's proudest achievements.



Purcell's Field, now Connolly Square, Bray.



Nanny with Baby Geoffrey Patrick and Annie Lee, 1906.



Left to right, Edward "Ted" Annie Lee, Tennyson, Unknown, Unknown, Joseph, Edward Lee enjoy afternoon tea listening to Gramophone in The Grange garden circa 1906.



The Grange, Stillorgan Road 1900s.

# EDWARD The Grange LEE J.P. 1853-1927



Joseph Bagnall Lee studying in The Grange.

By the early 1900s, the Lee family had moved from Bray into a large and imposing mansion on the Stillorgan Road in Co.Dublin. "The Grange" was surrounded by extensive grounds, including a garden, a tennis court and a small lake. Today, "The Grange" is a large development of prime apartments situated on the site of the original house which was demolished in the 1960s. This home must have been a magical place for the family. Photographs of the time show a family with all the attendant privileges of a prosperous middle class. There were tennis matches, croquet on the lawn and afternoon tea in the garden listening to John McCormack and Sir Edward Elgar on the cylinder gramophone.

The staff included a gardener, a butler/ chauffeur, two housemaids, a cook and for a short time in 1906, a nanny for their youngest son Geoffrey Patrick who died at the age of 4 months. Edward and Annie loved to entertain guests in the ballroom, where dancing and parties took place. In 1903, Edward and Annie's Silver Wedding Anniversary was celebrated with a lavish party for family, friends and Lee's employees. The highlight of the event was a presentation to the couple of a beautiful illuminated picture of Edward Lee's achievements, by all the staff of Edward Lee & Co.



Extended family gathering at the Grange. Circa 1906-8.



Joseph Bagnall Lee on small boating lake.



Silver Wedding illuminated scroll 1903.



Edward Shackleton Lee, Unknown, Joseph Bagnall Lee.



Three unknown relatives with Annie, Alfred Tennyson, Robert Ernest and Edward.



Cluster of skyscrapers, New York. Circa 1900. Publisher, Detroit Publishing Co. Source, Library of Congress via Detroit Publishing Company Photograph Collection.



Memoranda of a Hurried Visit to America and Canada. Privately published 1904.



King Street looking West, Toronto, 1900s. John Cluckman Collection - Vintage Toronto Postcards



Quebec Port. Circa 1900. Author, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, collection Nelson Cazais, 050\_1903P3.

# EDWARD LEE J.P. 1853-1927

## America and Canada 1904



Print showing bird's-eye view of fairgrounds at the St. Louis fair. Drawn by C.N. Dry. Source, Library of Congress.



View of Brooklyn Bridge and New York skyline. Circa 1904. William Herman Rau, 1855-1920, photographer. Copyright by William H. Rau, No. 9521. [PO-US] - published in the US before 1923 and public domain in the US.

In May and June of 1904, Edward Lee, along with his good friend Robert Reid Thomson, undertook a month long journey to America and Canada. On his return to Ireland, he published a small book in diary form, detailing his thoughts and experiences along the way.

“Memoranda of a Hurried Visit to America and Canada” was only intended for private circulation amongst his family and friends, but the book reveals much about the man. The skyline of New York was his first sight; “Sky-scrappers, you have to see them, 20 to 32 stories is quite usual.” However, whilst riding a railway car in Washington, they were shocked by the separation of black and white citizens in the carriages. As the two friends travelled towards St. Louis, Edward Lee surveyed the fine scenery that they passed during their journey, but his bias towards Ireland was never far away; “However beautiful, the fine homesteads of the old country have no counterpart in this.”

The two men were headed for the St. Louis World’s Fair. Unfortunately, he was not impressed by many of the exhibits representing the best of Ireland; “It was apparent that too much was attempted by even so great a nation as America. One felt indignant to see our finest street, Sackville Street outraged in such a fashion, a hideous nightmare.” However, the Agricultural Building did find favour with him; “The most magnificent show I have ever seen.”

Other cities and states visited were Louisville, Kentucky, Philadelphia, Virginia, Boston and Chicago. Although they had enjoyed America, they were happy to reach Canada in early June, feeling more at ease there; “The Americans certainly have a way of putting themselves en evidence that no old worlder can match. We are soon under the British flag again. The country seems different, their manners different and to our way of thinking, more in accord with old world sentiment.” Cities visited were, Toronto, Montreal and Quebec.



Agriculture Building, World Fair, St. Louis. © St. Paul & F. Stebbins, 1904. Source, Library of Congress.



Dungar Terrace 1910.



Dungar Terrace looking towards Northumberland Avenue.



Edward Lee (profile left of centre) at formal handing over of Dungar Terrace road to Urban District Council, June 13 1910.

# EDWARD LEE J.P. 1853-1927

## Dungar Terrace 1910

## Avenue Hotel 1921

### DUNGAR TERRACE 1910

In keeping with Edward Lee's philosophy of building houses to a proper standard for working people, he built two terraces of houses in a small cul-de-sac at the back of his premises in Kingstown. He felt rents in Kingstown were too high for ordinary citizens. Completed in 1910, the houses were rented out to some Lee's staff and other tenants from Dublin, Rathmines and Rathgar. The cost of the building was seven thousand pounds, a very large sum in 1910, but he said that he felt the houses were wanted and he would only expect a small return on his capital. He felt happy that the Urban Council was doing its bit; "To beautify the town and render it a pleasant, healthy place to live in, especially for the working classes." He hoped that the improvements would be of benefit to the township. At the handing over of care of the road to the Council on the 13th June 1910, Edward Lee said "I could not call the road 'Dunleary', because there was one so named in Kingstown, but I called it Dungar, after a township in the south - west of Ireland, which gave birth to one of the best women in the world, my wife." After the completion of formalities, the Lee family entertained about 100 guests to luncheon at the Royal Marine Hotel.



Edward Lee and Co. Ltd. Dun. Loughaire (1920). Courtesy Peter Pearson.

### AVENUE HOTEL 1921

In 1921, in the aftermath of the 1916 Easter Rebellion, many hotels in Dublin City had still to be rebuilt and not many new ones had been created. The authorities were concerned over the lack of tourist accommodation available, especially as the Dublin Horse Show was set to open on the 9th August. Due to the abolition of staff of various establishments, "living in", Edward Lee saw an opportunity to help the tourist industry and make use of his now vacant top floors as a hotel. His entrepreneurial spirit was acknowledged by the authorities and the Avenue Hotel was established. The Hotel survived until the closure of the Lees shops in 1979.



Luncheon menu at formal handover of Dungar Terrace road to Council.

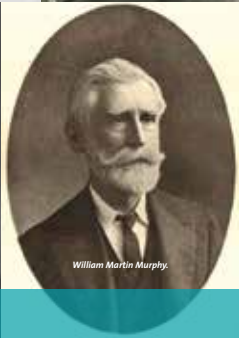
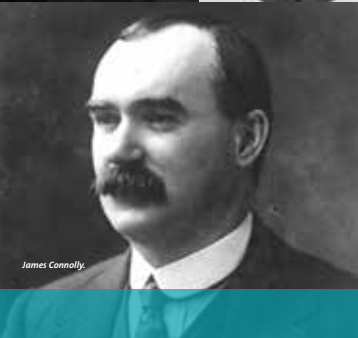




# EDWARD LEE

## 1913 Dublin Lockout

### J.P. 1853-1927



During the Dublin Lockout of 1913, Edward Lee was deeply concerned with the terrible consequences for the families of the strikers and also with the effects of the strike on commerce. He disagreed with the tactics being used against the workers by William Martin Murphy and the business community. Murphy, the owner of the Irish Independent and the Dublin United Tramways Company, was the chief architect of the Lockout. Edward Lee broke ranks with Murphy and the other employers and tried to find a solution that would be acceptable to workers and employers. In a letter to the Irish Independent published 23rd September 1913, he addressed both sides;

“Employers ought rather to seek to elevate those whom they employ than to inflict an indignity on them.” It is not known what Edward Lee thought of the two leaders of the strikers, Jim Larkin and James Connolly, but Connolly did respond to his letter;

“My complaint about Mr Lee’s letter is that he appears to wish both sides to give way at the outset on the very points that are alleged by both sides to be in dispute.”

Edward Lee joined the Dublin Industrial Peace Committee, the only employer to do so. The committee was chaired by Tom Kettle. In the Mansion House at the end of October, Edward Lee felt there were wrongs on both sides, but concluded;

“The workers must give up the baneful doctrine of “tainted goods” and the consequent sympathetic strike. The employers should withdraw the pledge requiring their employees to cease to belong to the Transport Workers Union. To my way of thinking such a pledge is an unfair interference with the personal liberty of the worker, though I am sure the employers did not intend it as such.”

*“Men of capital ought to be ashamed to have it go out to the ends of the earth that so many families were living each in one room.”*

Although he was careful not to lecture the other employers, his letter clearly showed his respect for the workers;

Unfortunately, the Peace Committee failed to find a solution.

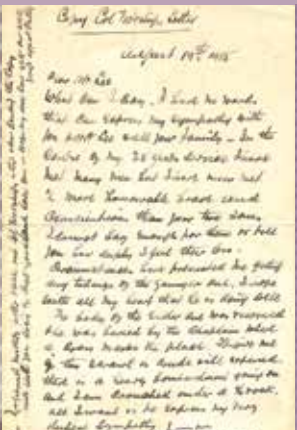


**PLEA FOR A CONFERENCE.**  
 To the Editor "Irish Independent."  
 Sir—In my opinion if any common feeling should be to be found as a prelude to the determination of the present unhappy industrial dispute, both employer and employees must renounce from their respective antagonistic attitudes.  
 The workers must give up the baneful doctrine of "tainted goods" and the consequent "sympathetic strike" which has been rightly repudiated by the more responsible English trade unions, and must also give effective guarantees for the keeping of any agreements entered into.  
 The employers should withdraw the pledge requiring their employees to cease to belong to the Transport Workers' Union. To my way of thinking such a pledge is an unfair interference with the personal liberty of the worker, though I am sure the employers did not intend it as such. Employers ought rather to seek to elevate those whom they employ than to inflict an indignity upon them. The more independent and manly the worker is, the more valuable are the services he can render.  
 Surely there are some public men whom each side can trust who would bring about a conference to consider again the whole question in a spirit of sanity and reason.  
 EDWARD LEE.  
 8 and 7 Upper Abbey street, Dublin.

Edward Lee Letter Irish Independent 23 September 1913.



Alfred Tennyson Lee (standing) conversing in the 3rd Southern General Hospital Oxford after being wounded at Suvla Bay Gallipoli in August 1915.



Letter to Mr and Mrs Lee from Col. V. Worship, Commanding Officer 6th RMF.



Cap Badge belonging to Alfred Tennyson Lee.



Certificate awarded to Annie Lee for services to British Red Cross.

# EDWARD The Great War 1914-1918 LEE J.P. 1853-1927



Lieutenant Joseph Bognall Lee, 6th Royal Munster Fusiliers.



Captain Robert Ernest Lee, Royal Army Medical Corps, 14th Field Ambulance, 5th Division.

*“Oh, we do feel so terribly poorer for the loss of our brave boys. They died as they lived, bravely and unselfishly, giving inspiration to us all, but their spirit lives and can never die. We are very, very proud but very, very sad.”*

(Letter from Edward Lee to his son Alfred Tennyson 10/11/1918).



Post Card from Lieut. Joseph Bognall Lee to his older brother Edward from Basingstoke. (Lieut. Bognall was reputed to be one of the shortest officers in the 10th (Irish) Division).



6th Royal Munster Fusiliers. Joe Lee is 5th from the right (standing). Alfred Tennyson is standing tallest with back to door.

The Lee family were supporters of Britain's war effort. Edward Lee was on the recruiting committee of the 10th (Commercial) Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Annie Lee was a volunteer helper with the Red Cross. The shops were used as drop off points for the collection of comforts for the troops. Three of the boys joined the colours in September 1914. Robert Ernest was a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps, attached to the 14th Field Ambulance. Promoted to Captain after the second battle of Ypres in 1915, he would serve for four years in France and Flanders with the 5th Division.

Joseph and Alfred Tennyson joined the 6th (Service) Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers as 2nd Lieutenants. As part of the 10th (Irish) Division, the 6th RMF went into action for the first time at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli in August 1915. This disastrous campaign in Turkey claimed the lives of hundreds of Irishmen. Joseph was killed on the Kiretch Tepe

Sirt Ridge on the 7th August. Alfred Tennyson was wounded on the 9th.

On the 10th October 1918 the Mail Boat "Leinster" set sail from Kingstown for Holyhead. On board were hundreds of civilians, postal sorters and army personnel. Also on board was Captain Robert Ernest Lee RAMC, who was returning to France. Passing the Kish bank, the "Leinster" was hit by two torpedoes fired by a German submarine, UB-123. Despite the panic, Robert was able to help a fellow officer and a nurse put on their life jackets. He then managed to board a lifeboat but seeing a woman and a child in distress in the water he jumped back in to help them. He got them safely onto the lifeboat but then he drifted away and was drowned. His remains were recovered a week later. Sometime later, there was a knock at the Lee's front door. It was the woman from the lifeboat. She wished to express her gratitude to Edward and Annie for their son's gallantry in saving her and her child's life.

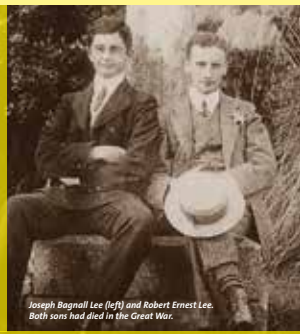


Bachelors Walk/ Lower Sackville St, Dublin, 1920.

RTÉ Archives

locked - possibly you have not heard of the strike at Arnotts the place is closed since Wednesday night - I fear the firm are wrong as they refused to discuss matters with the union - that day is gone and the workers are determined to get a place in the sun which I think is quite as it should be - I have no doubt that our fault are both sides and our thing very certain loss on both sides - I must say I respect father  
Edward Lee

Edward Lee letter to Tompkin, November 24 1918. (Note his thoughts on workers rights.)



Joseph Bagnall Lee (left) and Robert Ernest Lee. Both sons had died in the Great War.



Lower Sackville Street, Dublin (1916).

RTÉ Archives



Nobletts Corner Circa 1920

RTÉ Archives



Army skirmish, Sackville Street 1921.

RTÉ Archives

# EDWARD LEE J.P. 1853-1927

## A Place in the Sun

At the end of 1918, the effects of the war and the rebellion still resounded on the commercial life of Dublin. There were also labour troubles brewing. Although the family had been through a traumatic few years, with the devastating loss of his two sons, Joe and Robert Ernest, Edward Lee continued to concern himself with his business and with workers' rights. In a very telling letter to his youngest son Alfred Tennyson in November 1918, it is plain to see where his sympathies lay; "Possibly you have not heard of the strike at Arnotts, the place is closed since Wednesday night. I fear the firm are wrong as they refused to discuss matters with the union - that day is gone and the workers are determined to get a place in the sun which I think is quite as it should be."

At the 1919 AGM of the Dublin Mercantile Association, Edward Lee gave his opinion on the social upheavals affecting Irish society; "There was nothing that would settle the unrest like giving every worker a stake in the country and a stake in the business in which he worked. There should be a system of profit sharing with the worker. What they had to do was to give labour a good wage and good conditions of employment and to give capital a fair return." In a speech in Blackrock in November 1919, he elaborated on this theme; "If production only meant more profit for the capitalists, I do not agree with it.

The time is coming when labour is going to have a place in the sun, but labour has its duties as well as its rights and its duties are to the whole community."

Of course profit sharing, or the bonus system, had been a fundamental principle in Edward Lee's shops since the beginning. The comments and opinions expressed by Edward Lee, were based on fairness for all, for the common good. In 1919, these were forward thinking and even radical, socialist ideals coming from an employer. Apart from a few other enlightened businesses, such as Guinness and Bewleys, it is likely these ideals were not shared by the majority of employers.



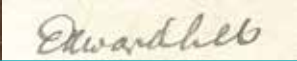
1922 Advertisement. Note: Remarks about Saturday closing and working hours.



Annie Lee on left of picture in black fur coat and fur hat next to Taoiseach W.T. Cosgrave. Also in photo, Ted and Orynthia Lee and Ernest Blythe, Minister for Finance, late 1920s.



Edward Lee JP 1920s.



Ann, Edward, Orynthia and Edward "Ted" enjoy a picnic at side of road 1932.



Annie Lee 1920s.

# Never Did a Bad Turn to Anybody

J.P. 1853-1927



Bellevue, Cross Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.



Annie Lee and Tennyson Lee 1930s.



Edward (Grandson), Unknown, Ann (Granddaughter), Orynthia Lee, Annie Lee, John (Grandson), Winifrid Lee, circa 1935.



Ted, Unknown, Mrs Collings, Orynthia (Ted's wife) Annie and Edward Lee 1920s.



During the 1920s, Edward Lee still kept a shrewd eye on the business, although he was beginning to take a less active part in the day-to-day running of it. Over the previous decades, he had promoted members of staff into managerial positions and his two surviving sons, Edward Shackleton (Ted) and Alfred Tennyson were both Directors as well as employees in the firm. Ted had been working in the business for some years. Although Tennyson had completed his studies and had originally intended to follow an engineering career, he was strongly encouraged to join the firm. It had been made plain to him, that the family duty was to join his brother Ted in the business. The business ticked over but did not expand and grow during this period. Ted and Tennyson both wed in the early 1920s. Ted married Orynthia Collings from Cardiff in 1921 in London. Tennyson married Winifrid Butler Cranwill from Monkstown, Co. Dublin, in Monkstown Protestant Church in 1922.

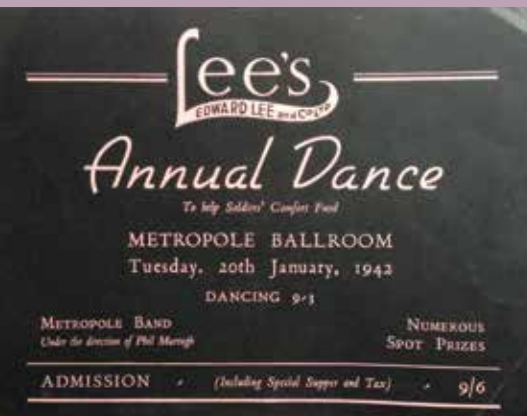
Edward Lee, known as the Governor to his sons, continued with his involvement in the Town Tenants League. During the Civil War, concerned with the murders of Protestants in Cork, Edward Lee joined the committee of the Irish Protestant

Convention. He also was a member of the Lord Mayors Fund, set up to help victims of the Belfast Pogrom. This was the expelling, intimidation and murder of Catholics and their families. In April 1923, a bomb exploded in the Rathmines branch of Lee's, causing £8,000 worth of damage. The bomb had been planted by Anti-Treaty forces. There had been much intimidation of businesses, including Protestant owned ones, and Lee's had been warned that any firm advertising in certain newspapers would have their premises destroyed.

All this took its toll on Edward Lee's health and by 1926, he was spending more time in Tyrrellspass. He had been a smoker all his life and had recently been diagnosed with throat cancer.

Edward Lee passed away at his home "Bellevue" in Blackrock on the 14th February 1927 at the age of 73. On his death, Annie became Chairman of the business until her death in 1938. Among the tributes paid to Edward Lee, was one from Mr Frane of Bray Urban District Council;

"A finer type of honest Christian man I never met. He never said a harsh word or never did a bad turn to anybody."



# EDWARD LEE J.P. 1853-1927

## A Story Worth Telling



After the death of Edward Lee, the business settled into comfortable middle age. Throughout the 1930s and up to its demise in the 1970s it continued to trade as a family firm. There were social gatherings, dances and trips to the seaside for the staff. The family atmosphere continued for many years. Edward (Ted) died in 1965 and Alfred (Tennyson) died in 1982. The business was now run by their sons Edward Lee and John Lee, along with a Board of Directors. But by the 1970s, the family business was failing and would not survive the end of the decade.

In 2013, Edward Lee was recognised by the Dún Laoghaire 1913 Commemorative Committee as being worthy of commemoration for his principled stand as a member of the Peace Committee during the 1913 Lockout. He is named, along with James Byrne, Patrick Moran and Dora Montefiore on the Lockout Centenary Plaque opposite the LexIcon on Queen's Road, Dún Laoghaire.



For many years, that was the end of the story of Edward Lee. As a family we knew next to nothing about our great grandfather and his inspiring story. Our father, another Edward, died young in 1974. He was the son of Edward Shackleton Lee, the eldest son of Edward and Annie Lee. He did not talk much about the old family. I don't think he knew much about them. Of course, we didn't ask either. It was the same situation with Tennyson's two sons, John and David. The family seemed to forget the early history. It was only when Pádraig Yeates published his definitive work, "Lockout" in 2000, did we learn something about Edward Lee's life and the incredible times he had lived in. As we researched his story, we came to realise that Edward Lee was someone special and that his story was worth telling.



Lee's Advertisement 1950s or 1960s.

Lockout Centenary Plaque, Dún Laoghaire 2013.

Joe Duffy unveils the Lockout Centenary Plaque in Dún Laoghaire, 24th August 2013.

Michael, Stephen, Edward, Edward Frederick and Freya Lee, 2013.



House in Tyrrellspass Village Green.



Elizabeth Rose, (daughter),  
John Grehan, John Joe Grehan (son).



Farming Tyrrellspass.



Tyrrellspass Catholic Church.



Newtown Church of Ireland.

# EDWARD Tyrrellspass 1900 - 1911 LEE J.P. 1853-1927



John Grehan,  
Farmer and Shopkeeper.

In September 1888, George Eastman coined the word Kodak. Up until that time cameras were quite bulky, made of wood and required emulsion coated glass plates to make a photograph. The equipment was heavy and difficult to use and it was also expensive. So, while there were professional photographic studios that could take stiff and formal portraits of families, there was no way that informal photographs of friends or family occasions could be memorialised. All that changed with Eastman's Box Camera invention. This small, leather - covered wooden box was capable of taking 100 photographs. The genius of the system was roll film and it would revolutionise photography for the masses. The era of the snapshot had begun.

Lee's mother, Hannah, was a member of the Bagnall family of Rahugh. They were a farming family that owned land and were also in the threshing business. Robert Bagnall owned two threshing machines, which he hired out during the threshing season from the end of September to January. Each machine required up to twenty farm labourers. The machines went from townland to townland for about a week at a time and about 10 to 15 acres of corn and oats were threshed each day.

Some turf cutting images also reveal the hardships faced by many. One old man holding a turf brick, was probably born before the famine, a life of hardship, etched into his face.



Unknown Tyrrellspass Family

The Lee Family were no different to most middle class families of the time and had at least one member who possessed a camera. In their case it was probably Robert Ernest or Joe. There are some wonderful snapshot photographs of the family taken at The Grange around 1903 - 1906. But there are also some haunting photographs of Tyrrellspass village and surrounding area in the period 1900 - 1911. Edward

There are photographs of John Grehan, farmer and shopkeeper, outside his shop and with his son and daughter, John and Elizabeth. Catholic and Protestant churches are represented as well as the very old and the very young. It is a revealing photo essay of Tyrrellspass, over one hundred and ten years ago. Although the Lee family were now well-to-do Dubliners, they had not forgotten their roots.



Unknown Tyrrellspass Family



Unknown Tyrrellspass Family



Rev. James McGinley, or Rev. H.N.C. Hughes, C of I outside Sallyfield Rectory parish of Newtown.

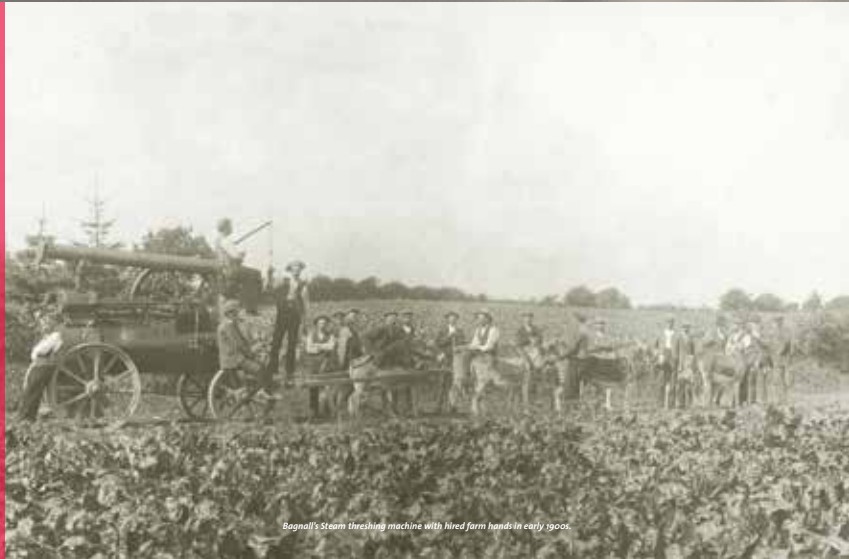


Unknown old woman from Tyrrellspass.



Two unknown young women at Newtownlow Castle.

# EDWARD Tyrrellspass 1900 - 1911 LEE J.P. 1853-1927



Bagnall's Steam threshing machine with hired farm hands in early 1900s.



Turf Cutting near Tyrrellspass.



Turf Cutting near Tyrrellspass.



Bagnall's large threshing machine at work in early 1900s.