

Guide to the David Bushnell Papers

MS 1107



compiled by Staff of Manuscripts and Archives

April 1980

Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
(203) 432-1735
(203) 432-7441
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	4
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	4
Collection Contents	5
Selected Search Terms	7

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
(203) 432-1735
(203) 432-7441
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

CALL NUMBER: MS 1107

CREATOR: Bushnell, David, 1740-

TITLE: David Bushnell papers

DATES: 1783-1956

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.25 linear feet (1 box)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Miscellaneous papers by and about Bushnell. Only two items are in his hand: a letter (1787) claiming land due him as a result of his service in the American Revolution, and a description of a model for a sailing torpedo [1824?]. Papers on his inventions include a letter by Ezra Lee (1815) with an account of Bushnell's submarine and Lee's operation of it in August 1787 in New York harbor. Also three letters by Joel Abbot (1825) to Bushnell (then known as David Bush) on his attempts to promote Bushnell's naval warning device. Correspondence (1826-1827) between his executor and his heirs, Ezra and Nehemiah Bushnell of Saybrook, Connecticut, includes a final accounting of Bushnell's estate. In the later papers (1881-1956) are four letters to Anson Phelps Stokes with biographical information on Bushnell and publications on his submarine.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1107>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1107>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use

Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator(s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation

David Bushnell Papers (MS 1107). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

David Bushnell: inventor of the submarine mine and the submarine; in 1779 captain of sapping and mining company in the Revolutionary Army; in 1783 placed in command of the Corps of Engineers; in 1795 taught in private schools and several years later began practicing medicine in Warrenton, Georgia.

Scope and Contents

The David Bushnell Papers consist of miscellaneous papers by and about the inventor David Bushnell. Only two items are in his hand: a letter (1787) claiming land due to him as a result of his service in the American Revolution, and a description of a model for a sailing torpedo [1824?]. Papers on his inventions include a letter by Ezra Lee (1815) with an account of Bushnell's submarine and Lee's operation of it in August 1787 in New York harbor. Also included are three letters by Joel Abbot (1825) to Bushnell (then known as David Bush) on his attempts to promote Bushnell's naval warning device. Correspondence (1826-1827) between his executor and his heirs, Ezra and Nehemiah Bushnell of Saybrook, Connecticut, includes a final accounting of Bushnell's estate. In the later papers (1881-1956) are four letters to Anson Phelps Stokes with biographical information on Bushnell and publications on his submarine.

Collection Contents

Personal Papers

b. 1, f. 1	Abbot, Joel. 3 ALS to David Bush with enclosure to Secretary of the Navy. Re: Bushnell's "device for drawing off the invading foes of our country..."	1825 January 19, February 28, undated
Bushnell, David		
b. 1, f. 2	2 signed receipts (photostatic copies) for rations	1783 July 4, 11
b. 1, f. 3	ALS to Captain Thomas Machin. [Re: Land due him as a result of his military service during the American Revolution]	1787 December 14
b. 1, f. 4	Description of a model of a sailing torpedo	[ca. 1824?]
Estate		
b. 1, f. 5	Bushnell, Nehemiah. Correspondence re: estate	1827 May 16, 27
b. 1, f. 6	Griswold, Charles. ALS to Ezra or Nehemiah Bushnell	1826 March 27
Hargraves, George		
b. 1, f. 7	3 ALS to Ezra Bushnell re: Estate of "David Bush"	1826 January 26, March 17, August 16
b. 1, f. 8	2 ALS to Ezra Bushnell re: Estate of "David Bush" with enclosure showing the accounts for the estate of David Bush A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1827 February 25, April 10
Legal Documents:		
b. 1, f. 9	Will (copy)	1820
b. 1, f. 9	Indemnifying bond	undated
b. 1, f. 9	Receipt	1826
Writings about David Bushnell		
b. 1, f. 10	Abbot, Henry L. "The beginning of Modern Submarine Warfare." N.Y., Battalion Press of the U.S. Corp of Engineers. 196p. [2 copies]	1881
Lee, Ezra		
b. 1, f. 11	ALS to David Humphreys. [Describing his operation of the Bushnell submarine in August of 1776. With a printed biographical note on Humphreys] A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1815 February 20
b. 1, f. 12	Biographical note, including information on the Lee letter in folder 11	undated

b. 1, f. 12	Newman, Louis I. "Sergeant Ezra Lee and his 'American Turtle'" (Poem)	undated
b. 1, f. 13	Miscellaneous letters to Anson Phelps Stokes re: David Bushnell A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1911-1914
b. 1, f. 14	Miscellaneous printed matter re: David Bushnell A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1867, 1875 January 2, undated
b. 1, f. 15	Schieffelin, Edward Loomis. "David Bushnell and the First American Submarine" [student paper]	1956

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Science
Submarines (Ships)
Submarine warfare
Torpedoes

Geographic Names

United States -- History -- Revolution,
1775-1783

Occupations

Inventors

Names

Abbot, Henry L.
Bushnell, David, 1740-
Lee, Ezra, 1749-1821
Schieffelin, Edward, 1847-1897