

**Guide to the Bushnell Family Papers, circa 1869-1950  
MS0398**

**The Mariners' Museum Library  
at  
Christopher Newport University**

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Processed by Jay Moore, 2011

## DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

**Repository:** The Mariners' Museum Library

**Title:** Bushnell Family Papers

**Inclusive Dates:** circa 1869-1950

**Bulk Dates:** 1885-1920

**Catalog number:** MS0398

**Physical Characteristics:** 21 items, including clippings, letters (correspondence), booklets, obituaries, picture postcards, mimeograph copies, stats (copies), books, and photographs

**Language:** English

**Creator:** Bushnell family; Bushnell, Cornelius S. (Cornelius Scranton), 1826-1896; Bushnell, Samuel Clarke, 1852-1930; Bushnell, Sereno Scranton; Bushnell, Alice K.; Bushnell, George; Love, James Sereno; Love, John Bushnell; Love, Gilbert Watson; Milhoan, Susan Love

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The Bushnell family, descendants of Cornelius Scranton Bushnell (1826-1896), has collected over the past century documents belonging to or referring to the life and legacy of the great industrialist whose efforts helped bring about the construction of the Union ironclad, US Steam Battery *Monitor*.

C. S. Bushnell was born in Madison, Connecticut to parents Nathan Bushnell and Chloe Scranton Bushnell on July 19, 1829. His parents were descended from English immigrants who arrived in the New Haven Colony in 1638 and were members of the company which purchased the Guilford plantation from the American Indians there. C. S. began working life on a coasting vessel at age 15 and continued coastwise trade for 5 years. He married Emily Fowler Clark at age 21, and they had nine sons and one daughter. Eight children survived into adulthood: Sereno S. Bushnell, Rev. Samuel C. Bushnell, Charlotte Bushnell Watson, Cornelius J. Bushnell, Nathan Bushnell, Ericsson F. Bushnell, Winthrop G. Bushnell, and Edward W. Bushnell. C. S. made his fortune in the railroad business, having facilitated the extension of the failing New Haven and New London railroad line and then being made its president. He was one of the organizers of the Union Pacific Railroad Company and was the only one of the organizers to stay with the project until completion. He was also an investor in the Western Pacific Railroad, but lost a great deal of money in the venture during the financial panic of 1873. He lost much of his fortune in the next decade, and lived out his life in New York City, where he died in 1896.

C. S. Bushnell is best remembered for his work in shipbuilding. He founded a shipyard in New Haven before the Civil War, and gained a contract from the Ironclad Board to build the ironclad *Galena*. Trying to decide if she would bear all the iron plate designed for her, Bushnell asked the advice of C. H. Delamater, who advised him to ask John Ericsson. During the first meeting between Ericsson and Bushnell, the former presented his model of a turreted ironclad to Bushnell, who immediately recognized this as a

worthy design. Bushnell used his powerful influence in Washington and his previous relationships with John Griswold and John F. Winslow to gain a contract for Ericsson and his partners to build the ship later known as US Steam Battery *Monitor*, during the fall and early winter of 1861-62.

C.S. Bushnell's eldest son was Sereno Scranton Bushnell, who married Margaret Crofts. Their daughter, Charlotte Livingston Bushnell, married John Potter Love. They had 4 children: James Sereno Love, John Bushnell Love, Gilbert Watson Love and Charlotte Livingston Love. Their son James S. was the father of the donor of the collection, Susan Love Milhoan, and of her brother and sister, James Brewster Love and Elise Bushnell Love.

C. S. Bushnell's second son, the Rev. Samuel C. Bushnell, was the father of Alice K. Bushnell, who wrote letters in the collection and who sent items included here to James S. Love.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Bushnell Family Papers include a wide variety of materials that deal principally with Cornelius Scranton Bushnell. These items, collected from several family members by brothers James S., John Bushnell and Gilbert Watson Love, tend to concentrate on Bushnell's legacy as one of the Battery Associates who built the US Steam Battery *Monitor*. There are many items in the collection that narrate the story of the building of *Monitor* and the contest against CSS *Virginia* in the Battle of Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862. They include C. S. Bushnell's obituaries, papers written by and about him, and publications that were done as part of the effort to fund a memorial to him and John Ericsson in New Haven, CT.

Two items of interest concern the pioneering work of the Bushnell family in the development of submarines. One of these is a manuscript copy of a plaque found in New York City pertaining to *Intelligent Whale*, a submarine built by C. S. Bushnell and Scovel Sturgis Merriam in 1863 for the United States Navy. Ultimately, *Intelligent Whale* was not accepted. The manuscript accompanies a clipping in the collection on David Bushnell and his submarine *Turtle*, which was used in the American Revolution in Boston Harbor.

The letters in the collection are both business and personal correspondence, some written by C. S. Bushnell.

The collection is organized into 15 folders, and is arranged chronologically.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

#### **Accession Number**

A2007.29

#### **Accession Date**

2007, 2012

### **Restrictions**

The collection is open to all researchers.

### **Publication Rights**

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### **Preferred Citation**

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### **Other Finding Aids**

A list of books from this collection is available in the library. A full electronic catalog record for these books can be found in the catalog. Full records and electronic reproductions of the original photographs in this collection can be found in Museum's photograph database.

### **Note to Users**

Due to the fragile and rare nature of the collection, researchers are requested to handle the materials with caution and in accordance with prescribed archival practices. When using these materials, please preserve the original order of the collection.

### **RELATED MATERIALS**

Three books from this collection have been accessioned separately into the Library's book collections with accession numbers 85130 through 85132.

## **FILE GUIDE**

### **BOX 1**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Folder1</b> | Finding Aid   |
| <b>Folder2</b> | Article, 1885<br>January 10, 1885 article from "Mechanical Engineer" on <i>Monitor</i> construction, enclosed with letter from Bushnell to Egbert Watson and Son (see Folder 2) |
| <b>Folder3</b> | Correspondence, 1885<br>Letter from Egbert Watson to C.S. Bushnell<br>Letter from C.S. Bushnell to Egbert Watson & Son  |
| <b>Folder4</b> | Booklet, 1888<br><i>Prang's War Pictures</i> text on the Battle of Hampton Roads  |
| <b>Folder5</b> | Booklet, 1892<br>Paper read by C. S. Bushnell at the National Association of Naval Veterans conference  |
| <b>Folder6</b> | Correspondence, 1892<br>Letter from C. S. Bushnell to his children  |

- Folder7** Obituaries, 1896  
Obituaries for C. S. Bushnell
- Folder8** Postcards, circa 1908  
"Principal Scene in the Great Naval Battle Spectacle" with note verso by a C.S. Bushnell child
- Folder9** Articles, 1913  
How the "Merrimac" Fought the "Monitor," by Arthur Sinclair for *Hearst's Magazine*
- Folder10** Correspondence, 1914  
Letter from Winthrop G. Bushnell to Rev. Samuel C. Bushnell concerning enclosed letter (from William Wells to W. G. Bushnell) and drawing of the *Intelligent Whale*, built 1863-64 by C.S. Bushnell. Undated note from Alice K. Bushnell also enclosed, circa 1942
- Folder11** Correspondence, 1920  
Letter from Rev. Samuel C. Bushnell to the Editor of the New York *Times*, dated Aug. 12
- Folder12** Booklets, 1942  
Envelope and enclosed booklet entitled "Capt. John Ericsson and the *Monitor*" sent to James S. Love from his brother, John Bushnell Love
- Folder13** Correspondence, 1942  
Letter from Charlotte L. Bushnell Love to an unidentified correspondent she called "Bush," probably her son John Bushnell Love, enclosing the letter from Alice K. Bushnell to her (see below).  
  
Letter from Alice K. Bushnell to her sister-in-law Charlotte L. Bushnell Love.
- Folder14** Articles, undated  
By George Bushnell, Jr. about David Bushnell and his submarine *Turtle*.  
  
Mimeograph story by a woman friend of Mrs. C.S. Bushnell entitled "How Bushnell Came to Build the *Monitor*."
- Folder15** Report, undated  
Undated photostat of an 1868 US Senate report on payment for *Monitor*
- Folder 16** Photograph, undated  
Cornelius Scranton Bushnell and Emily Fowler Clark Bushnell

#### **SOURCES CONSULTED**

"Cornelius S. Bushnell Biography." Madison Historical Society.

[http://www.madisoncthistorical.org/visit\\_us/cornelius\\_bushnell\\_biography.htm](http://www.madisoncthistorical.org/visit_us/cornelius_bushnell_biography.htm).

Accessed January 3, 2012.

Wells, William S., comp. *The Original United States Warship "Monitor."* New Haven, CT: Cornelius S. Bushnell National Memorial Association, 1899.

**SUBJECTS**

Bushnell, Cornelius S. (Cornelius Scranton), 1826-1896

Monitor (Ironclad : 1862)

Hampton Roads, Battle of, Va., 1862

Ericsson, John, 1803-1889