

# CAPE ANN Museum

## Library & Archives

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### LESLIE BUSWELL PAPERS

<b>Creator:</b>	Leslie Buswell
<b>Dates:</b>	1915-1928
<b>Quantity:</b>	1.0 linear foot (2 document boxes)
<b>Acquisition:</b>	Accession #: unknown; Donated by: unknown
<b>Identification:</b>	A47; Archive Collection #47
<b>Citation:</b>	[Document Title]. The Leslie Buswell Collection, [Box #, Folder #, Item #], Cape Ann Museum Library & Archives, Gloucester, MA.
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<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Finding Aid:</b>	Processed by Elysian McNiff, 2007, supervised by Stephanie Buck, Archivist.

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### Biographical Note

Lt. Colonel Henry Leslie Farmer Buswell was born on December 3, 1887, to Charles and Caroline (Croft) Buswell in Richmond, England, the grandson and great-grandson of English Navy Admirals. He attended Winchester and then Caius College, Cambridge, where he studied chemistry, physiology and zoology. He worked in his uncle's chemical works for five years before starting his own firm - the Lavola Soap Company. He became interested in acting, and in 1913 was invited to tour with an American company led by Mr. Cyril Maude. While appearing in Boston he met Henry Davis Sleeper, A. Piatt Andrew and John Hays Hammond Jr., all of whom became lifelong friends.

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On the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Buswell resigned from the stage and tried to enlist. He was rejected on issues of health so briefly turned to experimentation on radio communication and incendiary bombs with Hammond Jr. before traveling on to Paris where he joined the American Ambulance Field Service. Between June and October of 1915 Buswell exhibited such valor under fire while driving ambulances from the front that he was awarded the French Croix-de-Guerre. He was then persuaded to return to America to assist Hammond Jr. in his experiments on radio controlled guided missiles. On America's entry into the war in 1917, he joined the U.S. Signal Corps, undertaking several special assignments but, after armistice, returned to research projects with Hammond Jr..

In the early 1920s he built a house on thirty-three acres of woodland above the Hammond estate in the Fresh Water Cove area of Gloucester, Massachusetts. He named it Stillington for his mother who was the daughter of Admiral Henry Croft of Stillington, Yorkshire, England. The house, designed by Harold B. Willis and decorated by his friend Henry Davis Sleeper, was according to one source a replica of his family's 16th Century English home. Buswell became a world class collector of "Americana" of all kinds, especially scrimshaw, glass and pewter. He was also a playwright as well as an actor and in 1926 built the addition to his house known as Stillington Hall which contained a professionally equiped stage, and seated a hundred and seventy. Many performances were presented there by his own amateur theatrical group - the Stillington Players - as well as such notables as violinist Ephraim Zimbalist and the American Opera Company.

Buswell became an American citizen in 1933, and at the outbreak of World War II earned a commission in the U.S. Air Force. He served in the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces in England and was involved in the D-Day invasion, for which he received the Bronze Star and a second Croix-de-Guerre with Palm. He was also liaison officer to the Royal Family, for which he received the King's Medal.

In 1946 he joined The Military Order of the World Wars becoming Commander-in-Chief ten years later.

He married Mary Armstrong Robinson of Pittsburgh, heir to the Armstrong cork fortune in the 1920s, and had one son, Peter Croft Buswell, who was born about 1936.

Buswell died on October 13, 1964, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

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## Scope and Content of the Collection

This collection consists primarily of correspondence between Leslie Buswell and John Hays Hammond Jr. between 1915 and 1928, as well as more general correspondence. There is also a

smaller grouping of documents referencing his property, vital records, diplomas, etc., and several photograph albums.

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## Collection Outline [OR] Series Description

- I. Letters and telegrams.
  - II. Legal documents, certificates, checks, newspaper articles, misc. papers.
  - III. Photographs and ephemera.
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## Container List

### Box #1

#### Series I

##### Folder 1: 24 items

General correspondence from John Hays Hammond Jr. to Leslie Buswell from 5/29/1915 to 11/13/1918, WWI, including: Letters and Telegrams

##### Folder 2: 13 items

General correspondence from Leslie Buswell to John Hays Hammond, Jr. from 6/3/1915 to 11/12/1918, WWI, including: Letters and Telegrams

##### Folder 3: 8 items

General correspondence from John Hays Hammond Jr. to Leslie Buswell from 1920-1928, including: Letters, 1920-1928 and Telegrams, 1922-1928.

##### Folder 4: 68 items

General correspondence from John Hays Hammond, Jr. to Leslie Buswell, Rome, 1925-1927, including: Letters and Telegrams

##### Folder 5: 28 items

General correspondence from John Hays Hammond Jr. to Leslie Buswell, undated, including: Letters

##### Folder 6: 8 items

Documents relating to affairs of John Hayes Hammond, Jr. including: Letter from John Hayes Hammond, Jr. 5/9/1924 re: radio patent; Letters re: radio and Hammond estate; Letter from Nathalie Hammond, 8/22/1925

##### Folder 7: 28 items

Correspondences to Leslie Buswell from 1916 to 1929 including: Mary. R. Buswell; Nathalie Hammond; Caroline Buswell; Charles Buswell; Phelps, Ells, McKee, of Stock Exchange; Huggins; Hummel; Auntie Mab; etc.

##### Folder 8: 9 items

Correspondences from Leslie Buswell from 1922-1937, including: Telegram and Letters to Mrs. John Hays Hammond, Jr., 4/7/1928. Letters to Mary R. Buswell,

1/28/1937, John Hays Hammond, Jr., Mr. Hammond Sr., Gloucester Safe Deposit and Trust Co., 4/1/1924.

Series II

Folder 9: 21 items

Documents relating to Estate Affairs of Leslie Buswell from 1923 to 1969 including: Assignment of land from Mary E. Woodbury to Leslie Buswell, 1923. Mortgage from Leslie Buswell to William H. Robinson, 1935. Assignment of Mortgage from William H. Robinson and Thomas. A. Robinson to Mary R. Buswell, 1937. Letters to/from Mary R. Buswell re: estate; Essex Registry of Deeds, 1937; John R. Cahill, re: estate; Robert A. Peterson, Esq., re: estate. Statute form of discharge of mortgage, 1967. Copy of Estate Tax Receipt, 1969.

Folder 10:

Miscellaneous documents including checks; letters; notes; plans; newspaper articles; birth/death certificates; diplomas, etc.

Box #2

Series III

Photographs: 3 photograph albums, 2 folders of loose photographs, *The Redcoat* Guest Book