

John Wills Greenslade Correspondence Transcripts

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Collection Summary

Title: John Wills Greenslade Correspondence Transcripts

Span Dates: 1900-2010

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1900-1933)

ID No.: MSS85578

Creator: Greenslade, John Wills, 1880-1950

Extent: 7,000 items ; 9 containers and electronic files ; 3.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Naval officer. Transcripts of correspondence, biographical material, and electronic files relating to Greenslade's career in the United States Navy.

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.

People

Greenslade family--Correspondence.

Greenslade family.

Greenslade, John F. (John Francis), 1904- --Correspondence.

Greenslade, John Wills, 1880-1950.

Greenslade, Marie Taylor--Correspondence.

Greenslade, Nell Wills, 1858-1938--Correspondence.

Greenslade, Robert W., 1906-1970--Correspondence.

Greenslade, Sophia J. (Sophia Jane), 1878-1922--Correspondence.

Jamalul Kiram II, Sultan of Sulu, approximately 1863-1936.

Organizations

Galveston (Cruiser)

Housatonic (Minelayer)

Shawmut (Minelayer)

United States. Navy--History--World War, 1939-1945.

United States. Navy--North Sea.

United States. Navy--Submarine forces.

United States. Navy.

United States. Navy. Atlantic Fleet. Mine Squadron I.

United States. Navy. U.S. Fleet. Submarine Force.

Subjects

Battleships--United States.

Revolutions--Latin America.

Submarine mines.

World War, 1914-1918--Europe.

World War, 1914-1918--Mediterranean Region.

World War, 1914-1918--Naval operations.

Places

Caribbean Area--Foreign relations--United States.

Caribbean Area--History--20th century.

Latin America--Autonomy and independence movements.

Latin America--History--1898-1948.

Philippines--Description and travel.

Philippines--History--Philippine American War, 1899-1902--Naval operations.

Philippines--History--Philippine American War, 1899-1902.
Soviet Union--History--Allied intervention, 1918-1920.
United States--Foreign relations--Caribbean Area.
Veracruz Llave (Mexico)--History--American occupation, 1914.

Occupations

Naval officers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of John Wills Greenslade, naval officer, were given to the Library of Congress by John Wills Greenslade II and Rosemary G. Belson in 2010.

Related Material

A related collection in the Manuscript Division is the Naval Historical Foundation collection of [John Wills Greenslade Papers](#).

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of John Wills Greenslade in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of John Wills Greenslade are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Electronic Files

Electronic files were received as part of the papers of John Wills Greenslade. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for more information.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, John Wills Greenslade Correspondence Transcripts, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1880, Jan. 11	Born, Bellevue, Ohio
1898	Served on the <i>Chicago</i> (protected cruiser), Cuban campaign, and the <i>Montgomery</i> (cruiser), Puerto Rican campaign, Spanish-American War
1899	Graduated United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
1899-1902	Served in Philippines
1903	Married Marie Melanie Taylor (died 1936)
1904-1906	Instructor, electrical engineering, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

1909-1911 Instructor, electrical engineering, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

1914 Commanded *Vulcan* (collier)

1915-1916 Senior assistant to head, Department of Electrical Engineering, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

1917 Head, Department of Ordnance and Gunnery, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

1918 Commissioned captain; commanded *Housatonic* (minelayer), Northern Mine Barrage, North Sea

1919 Commanded *Galveston* (cruiser)

1920-1923 Inspector of ordnance, Naval Powder Factory and Proving Ground, Indian Head, Md.

1923-1925 Commanded Mine Squadron I, United States Fleet

1926-1928 Head, Operations Department, Naval War College, Newport, R.I.

1928-1929 Commanded *Pennsylvania* (battleship)

1929-1930 Chief of staff, battleship divisions, United States Fleet

1932 Commissioned rear admiral

1932-1934 Commanded Submarine Force, United States Fleet

1937 Married Mary Lee Gallagher (died 1943)

1937-1938 Commander, Battleship Division II, Battle Force, United States Fleet

1938-1939 Commander, Battleships, Battle Force, as vice admiral

1940-1941 Senior member, President's Board to Select Sites of Bases in British Possessions

1941-1944 Commandant, Twelfth Naval District with additional duty as Commandant, Pacific Southern Naval Coastal Frontier

1944 Transferred to retired list
Coordinator, naval logistics, Pacific Coast
Chair, joint boards for ship operations, building and repair, Pacific Coast
Married Alma Rudd Gunther (died 1975)

1945-1946 Resources coordinator, Western Sea Frontier

1946 Released from all active duty

1950, Jan. 6 Died, Bellevue, Ohio

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John Wills Greenslade (1880-1950) span the years 1900-2010, with the bulk of the material dating from 1900 to 1933. The collection is comprised almost entirely of transcripts of correspondence written between Greenslade and his first wife, Marie Taylor Greenslade, but also includes letters to and from his mother, Nell Wills Greenslade, and his sister, Sophia J. Greenslade, as well as letters written by his sons, John F. Greenslade and Robert W. Greenslade. The correspondence documents Greenslade's naval career at sea, notably during the Philippine American War, 1900-1902; the Banana Wars in the Caribbean, 1902-1904, 1906-1909, and 1912-1914; the North Sea mine barrage, 1918; as commander of the *Galveston* (cruiser) in European and Mediterranean waters, 1919; commander of Mine Squadron I, 1923-1925; as chief of staff, battleship divisions, 1929-1930; and commander, Submarine Force, 1932-1934. There are no letters for 1926 and only three for 1927. Included in a miscellany grouping are biographical material consisting of a résumé of his career written by a family member, a synopsis of his career provided by the United States Navy, and correspondence written by miscellaneous family members. Electronic files in the collection are unprocessed and unavailable.

The correspondence begins in March 1900 during the Philippine American War. Greenslade describes duty aboard the gunboats *Basco* and *Princeton* around Cavite and Cebu, differences between the Filipino and Moro insurrectionists and their activities, his life aboard ship and ashore, and sightseeing trips. In a letter dated October 13, 1900, he recounts the capture of the gunboat *Urdaneta* in September 1899 by insurrectionists and the recovery over a year later of the remains of Naval Cadet Wellborn C. Wood, commander of the gunboat, and one of his men. Also of interest is a letter from 1902 describing a visit by the Sultan of Jolo and his retinue.

After leaving the Philippines, Greenslade sailed in Caribbean waters where letters with his mother and sister were now joined by ones with his wife, Marie. A couple of letters from September 1906 recount his command of an expedition near Cienfuegos, Cuba, to relieve the marines guarding Plantation Constancia from looting by the rebels. From 1907 to 1909, Greenslade served aboard a number of ships and sailed to Nicaragua, Haiti, and Honduras during the revolutions in those areas. He returned to the Caribbean in 1912 aboard the *Michigan* (battleship) and commanded the Michigan Battalion during the occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico, landing on April 22, 1913.

Greenslade commanded the *Housatonic* (minelayer) during the North Sea mine barrage of May-October 1918 during World War I. His letters employed veiled comments about his activities and in one instance he refers to the laying and testing of mines as "laying and hatching eggs." Greenslade's next command was the cruiser *Galveston* based at Harwich, England. A few letters recount the ferrying of Allied troops to Kola and Murmansk and returning with others during the Russian civil war. His letters discuss the behavior of British, French, and Russian military personnel and the British motives in Russia. During his year-long command, Greenslade sailed to many ports including Vigo, Spain, Hamburg, Germany, Constantinople, Turkey, and Baku, Azerbaijan.

From 1923 to 1925, Greenslade commanded Mine Squadron I from aboard his flagship *Shawmut* (minelayer). While sailing the Atlantic coast, his letters mention drills, gunnery practice, and mine deployment practice. By 1924, the squadron had been deployed to the Caribbean. Of interest is Greenslade's letter of April 1 describing the first time that light minelayers had ever attempted to coordinate attacks with destroyers and light cruisers. Tactical instructions for minelayers were developed during Greenslade's command.

In May 1929, Greenslade was detached from the *Pennsylvania* (battleship) and reported for duty as chief of staff to Admiral Lucius Allyn Bostwick, commander battleship divisions. The letters are sparse after May 1929, with Greenslade's last letter written on May 5. His letters resume on February 22, 1930, while aboard the *West Virginia* (battleship) in the Caribbean for fleet exercises. Mostly Greenslade wrote about the exercises, unhappiness with superiors and subordinates, and family finances.

Greenslade served as commander, Submarine Force, from 1932 to 1934. He hoisted his flag on the *Bushnell* (submarine tender) in Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, in June 1932. During his command, Greenslade developed a manual on the employment of submarines.

The collection provides a comprehensive look at naval life as Greenslade discusses his family, his daily routines, drills, duties and obligations as an officer, foreign ports, people encountered, and entertainment aboard ship and ashore. Letters from his wife, Marie, reflect the life of a naval wife and family.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Transcripts of correspondence
BOX 1	1900-1906 (5 folders)
BOX 1	1907 (1 folder)
BOX 2	(3 folders)
BOX 2	1908 (3 folders)
BOX 3	1909-1911 (5 folders)
BOX 3	1912 (2 folders)
BOX 4	(1 folder)
BOX 4	1913 (4 folders)
BOX 4	1914 (1 folder)
BOX 5	(2 folders)
BOX 5	1915-1917 (3 folders)
BOX 5	1918 (2 folders)
BOX 6	(1 folder)
BOX 6	1919-1920 (6 folders)
BOX 7	1921-1929 (8 folders)
BOX 8	1930-1932 (5 folders)
BOX 8	1933 (1 folder)
BOX 9	(2 folders)
BOX 9	1934-1940 (2 folders)
BOX 9	Miscellany
BOX 9	"Life in the United States Navy," record of letters written between 1900 and 1940, 2010
BOX 9	Résumé of naval service, 2010
BOX 9	Synopsis of naval record, 1950
BOX 9	Transcripts of letters of family members, 1909, 1922, 1938-1942
BOX EF 1	Electronic files unprocessed and unavailable.