

The Filson Historical Society

**Hance, Robert Milton, 1918-1988
Papers, 1929-1988 (bulk: 1942-1945)**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, see the Curator of Collections.

Size of Collection:
0.66 Cubic Feet

Location Number:
Mss. A H234

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Scope and Content Note

This collection documents Robert Milton Hance's military service during World War II with the 224th Field Artillery, 29th Infantry Division. Hance's papers detail his training in the United States and service abroad, including combat during D-Day. His papers primarily consist of correspondence with two sisters: Lucile Farmer of Louisville and Doris Vaught of Warsaw, Gallatin County, Kentucky. The collection also includes a photograph of Hance in military uniform, an address book, and newspaper clippings related to his service and subsequent life events.

Folders 1-6 contain Hance's correspondence with his sister Lucile Hance Farmer of Louisville. His letters frequently mention his romantic interests, including Betty (from his hometown of Warsaw, Kentucky), Patty Greenwell in Louisville, and a young married woman, Peggy Bartlett, in England. Hance's letters also include frequent requests for various items from home, including foodstuffs, cigarettes, and presents for his lady friends. Personal finance is another topic of correspondence, with Hance directing the purchase of bonds and insurance policies; there is also the occasional reference to his gambling habits.

Folders 7-12 consist of Hance's correspondence with his sister Doris and her husband Clint Vaught of Warsaw, Kentucky. Hance's letters to Doris also include mentions of his romantic interests and requests for various items from home. Hance also mentions his social and leisure activities, including places he visits in off duty time, picture shows he sees, his interest in music, and his reading habits. His letters also frequently comment on Clint's military training and service, as well as the birth of Clint and Doris's first child.

Folder 13 contains a photograph of Hance and correspondence re: his service from the War Department. Also included is a certificate commemorating Hance's participation in D-Day.

Folder 14 contains a flash drive with digital files. The files are primarily scans of documents in the collection. However, a few items relate to Robert Hance's father, Milton Lee Hance, and sister, Lucile Hance Farmer. See O:\DIGITAL COLLECTIONS - Reference Room Access\Mss. A H234 – Robert Milton Hance papers

Folder 15 contains Robert Hance's address book, circa 1940s.

Folder 16 contains newspaper clippings relating to Hance's military service in the 1940s, and notices of his marriage and death.

Folder 17 contains two Christmas cards, in color, c. 1940s.

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Biographical Note

Robert “Bob” Milton Hance was born January 6, 1918 to Milton Lee and Inda Darneille Hance, the youngest of ten children and the only living son. He grew up on the family farm near Jackson’s Landing, Gallatin County, Kentucky. His mother died of cancer when he was 12. In 1937 during the Great Depression, his father committed suicide due to the eminent loss of the farm. After his father’s death, Bob lived briefly with a sister, Lucille Farmer, in Louisville.

In July 1942, at age twenty-four, he enlisted as a private into the Army at Fort Benjamin Harrison. He served as a field artilleryman and forward observer with the 224th Field Artillery, 29th Infantry Division, which experienced heavy casualties at Normandy. On D-Day, he was dropped behind enemy lines to direct artillery fire. During his time overseas, he frequently corresponded with two of his sisters: Lucille Hance Farmer and Doris Octavia Hance Vaught. He was discharged on September 19, 1945, having attained the rank of sergeant. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his service.

After returning home from the war, Bob worked for a short time as a surveyor and for the U.S. Postal Service. Both jobs were short-lived because of his struggles with alcoholism and PTSD. In 1969, Bob married a woman named Elizabeth K. Phillips, with whom he had one son, Robert Hance. He died on March 15, 1988 at his Dosker Manor apartment in Louisville. He is buried in Warsaw Cemetery.

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Folder List

Box 1

- Folder 1: Correspondence with sister Lucile Hance Farmer and family, 1942.
- Folder 2: Correspondence with sister Lucile Hance Farmer and family, Jan.-June 1943.
- Folder 3: Correspondence with sister Lucile Hance Farmer and family, July-Dec. 1943.
- Folder 4: Correspondence with sister Lucile Hance Farmer and family, Jan.-June 1944.
- Folder 5: Correspondence with sister Lucile Hance Farmer and family, July-Dec. 1944.
- Folder 6: Correspondence with sister Lucile Hance Farmer and family, 1945.

Box 2

- Folder 7: Correspondence with sister Doris Hance Vaught and family, 1942.
- Folder 8: Correspondence with sister Doris Hance Vaught and family, Jan.-June 1943.
- Folder 9: Correspondence with sister Doris Hance Vaught and family, July-Dec. 1943.
- Folder 10: Correspondence with sister Doris Hance Vaught and family, Jan.-June 1944.
- Folder 11: Correspondence with sister Doris Hance Vaught and family, July-Dec. 1944.
- Folder 12: Correspondence with sister Doris Hance Vaught and family, 1945.
- Folder 13: Robert M. Hance photograph, War Department correspondence, & 29th Infantry Division certificate, 1942-1945
- Folder 14: Flash drive with digital files, 1929-1988 – O:\DIGITAL COLLECTIONS - Reference Room Access\Mss. A H234 – Robert Milton Hance papers
- Folder 15: Robert M. Hance address book, c. 1940s.
- Folder 16: Newspaper clippings, 1940s-1988.
- Folder 17: Christmas cards, c. 1940s.

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Subject Headings

Anti-Catholicism.

Courtship.

Crime.

England – Social life and customs – 20th century.

Finance, Personal.

Fort McClellan (Ala.)

Farmer, Lucile Hance, 1904-2003.

Gambling.

Greeting cards.

Hance, Milton Lee, 1870-1937.

Military education.

Motion pictures.

United States. Army. Infantry Division, 29th.

United States. Army – Military life.

Vaught, Doris Hance, 1913-2016.

World War, 1939-1945.

World War, 1939-1945 – Campaigns – France – Normandy.

World War, 1939-1945 – Public opinion.