



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

Sir Hiram S. Maxim Collection

2001

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Sir Hiram S. Maxim Collection
Date:	1890-1916 (bulk 1890-1894, 1912)
Identifier:	NASM.1989.0031
Creator:	Maxim, Hiram H.
Extent:	1.09 Cubic feet ((1 records center box))
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Hiram H. Maxim, gift, 1989, 1989-0031, NASM

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Sir Hiram Maxim (1840-1916) was an engineer and inventor. In 1878, while serving as Chief Engineer of the United States Electric Lighting Company, he contested and lost a priority battle with Thomas Edison over the invention of the electric light. He then turned to Mechanical Engineering and invented the first efficient machine gun. The United States government was not interested in the gun, so Maxim traveled to England in 1881 and established the Maxim Gun Company. The company merged with Nordenfeldt Company (1888) and Vickers Company, which eventually formed Vickers Sons and Maxim (1896). The British War Office adopted the gun and Maxim became a British citizen (1901). In 1901 Queen Victoria knighted Maxim. Maxim experimented in aeronautics during the thirty years before his death including and wrote a number of books and articles on the subject, including 'Artificial and Natural Flight' in 1908. Maxim also built a steam-powered aircraft, the Maxim (H.S.) Flying Machine, in 1894.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains material by or about Maxim. The bulk of the collection consists of published works, but does include an unpublished paper about Maxim's aeronautical experiments and a collection of newclippings regarding Maxim's life. This accession includes the following five books: Li Hung Chang's

Scrapbook by Sir Maxim, 1913; The Life and Work of Sir Hiram Maxim: Knight, Chevalier de la Legion D'Honneur, by P. Fleury Mottelay, 1920; A Genius in the Family: Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim through a small Son's Eyes, by Hiram P. Maxim, 1936; My Life: Sir Hiram S. Maxim, by Sir Maxim, 1915; and A New System for Preventing Collisions at Sea, by Sir Maxim, 1912. This collection also includes two binders of material: 'Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim, February 5, 1840 - November 25, 1916. Chevalier de Legion d' Honneur Photos, Press Notices, Etc.' and 'Sir Hiram Maxim's Airplane about 1890' which includes a description and photographs of the steam powered heavier than air flying machine designed and built in 1890 in England by Sir Maxim.

General

NASMrev

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics -- 1903-1916
- Aeronautics -- pre-1903
- Airplanes -- Design and construction
- Machine guns
- Maxim 1894 Flying Machine
- Maxim gun
- Periodicals

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Publications

Names:

- Maxim Gun Co.
- Maxim, Hiram S., 1840-1916
- United States Electric Lighting Co.