



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

John and Charles Wise Ballooning Collection

Allan Janus

2018

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | National Air and Space Museum Archives |
| Title: | John and Charles Wise Ballooning Collection |
| Date: | 1850-1870 |
| Identifier: | NASM.2001.0002 |
| Creator: | Wise, John, 1808-1879 |
| Extent: | 0.35 Cubic feet (1 box) |
| Language: | English . |
| Summary: | The John and Charles Wise Ballooning Collection contains material related to American ballooning pioneer John Wise (1808-1870) and his son Charles. |
| Digital Content: | Image(s): John Wise (NASM.2001.0002-M0000004-00070) |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Jeanne Grist, Gift, 2000, NASM.2001.0002

Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Allan Janus, 2018.

Preferred Citation

John and Charles Wise Ballooning Collection, Acc. 2001.0002, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

John Wise (1808-1879), known to his contemporaries as the "Father of American ballooning", made his first balloon ascension in 1835, flying from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Haddenfield, New Jersey. During his long career, he was to make 446 free balloon ascensions in such craft as the *Meteor*, the *United States*, the *Experiment*, the *Vesperus*, and the *Comet*. In 1855, Wise flew 1,200 miles in 19 hours and 50 minutes in the *Atlantic*, setting a duration record that would stand until 1910. In the 1850s, Charles Wise, the aeronaut's

son, joined him in his activities. In 1879, at the age of 71, John Wise made an ascension with passenger George Burr from St. Louis in the balloon *Pathfinder*; the balloon, Wise, and Burr were lost in Lake Michigan.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of the following material relating to American ballooning pioneers John and Charles Wise: correspondence between John Wise and Major Albert J. Meyer during the Civil War, several unfinished manuscripts, including "Electricity of Instinct", envelopes, letterhead, and newspaper articles relating to the 150th anniversaries of John Wise's famous flights. Most importantly, this collection includes a scrapbook full of newspaper accounts, circa 1850-1870, of both John and Charles Wise's ballooning careers.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series:

- I. Documents
 - II. Scrapbooks
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Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Ballooning
- Balloons -- History
- Balloons -- pre-1900

Names:

- Wise, Charles

Container Listing

Series 1: Documents, 1850-1870

Box 1, Folder 1 [Manuscripts and Stationery](#)

Box 1, Folder 2 [Clippings](#)

Box 1, Folder 3 [Correspondence](#)

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Series 2: Scrapbooks, 1850-1870

Box 1, Folder 4 [Scrapbook 1](#)

Box 1, Folder 5 [Scrapbook 2](#)

Box 1, Folder 6 [Scrapbook 3](#)

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