



# Smithsonian

## *National Air and Space Museum*

### Fred Howard Vin Fiz Special Papers

Jordan Ferraro

2009



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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Fred Howard Vin Fiz Special Papers
<b>Date:</b>	1911
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.2007.0002
<b>Creator:</b>	Howard, Fred.
<b>Extent:</b>	0.8 Cubic feet (2 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The first crossing of the United States by airplane was achieved by Calbraith Perry Rodgers in 1911 in his Wright EX biplane, named the <i>Vin Fiz</i> .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Eileen F. Lebow , Gift, 2006, NASM.2007.0002

### Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Jordan Ferraro in 2009.

### Preferred Citation

Fred Howard Vin Fiz Special Papers, NASM.2007.0002, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical Note

The first crossing of the United States by airplane was achieved by Calbraith Perry Rodgers in 1911 in his Wright EX biplane, named the *Vin Fiz*. Rodgers decided to attempt the coast-to-coast flight in response to publisher William Randolph Hearst's New York American challenge which offered a prize of \$50,000 for the first transcontinental flight to be competed in 30 days. Rodgers began his journey from Sheepshead Bay, New York, on September 17, 1911, and as the flight was punctuated by numerous stops, delays, and accidents the 30-day time limit Hearst imposed for the prize had expired before Rodgers reached California on November 5, 1911.

To finance the trip, Rodgers had secured backing from the Armour Company, a Chicago firm which was then introducing a new grape-flavored soft drink called *Vin Fiz*. Armour provided Rodgers with a special train, called the *Vin Fiz Special*, with cars for the accommodation of Rodgers' family and his support crew, and a "hangar" car, which was a rolling workshop, filled with spare parts to repair and maintain the airplane over the course of the flight. There was even an automobile on board to pick up Rodgers after forced landings away from the rail line. Fred Howard, the division passenger agent for the Erie Railroad, was placed in charge of the *Vin Fiz Special* and soon also took charge of the command center, juggling both railroad matters and aviation repairs. In Chicago, Howard was commended for his effort and asked to continue with the flight to California, but he declined.

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## Scope and Content

This collection consists of the following material relating to Fred Howard and his role with the *Vin Fiz Special*: correspondence, newspaper clippings and articles, schedules and logs for both the *Vin Fiz* and the *Vin Fiz Special*, telegrams; train registration sheets, miscellaneous notes, passenger lists, and financial paperwork.

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## Arrangement

Arranged by type of material.

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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
- Railroad cars
- Railroad travel
- Vin Fiz Special (train)
- Wright (Co) Model EX "Vin Fiz"

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Financial records
- Logs (records)
- Newspaper clippings
- Telegrams

Names:

- Armour Company
- Rodgers, Calbraith Perry

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## Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence
Box 1, Folder 2	Financial Paperwork for Vin Fiz Special
Box 1, Folder 3	Cal Rodgers' Vin Fiz Log Pages
Box 1, Folder 4	Vin Fiz Special Log Pages
Box 1, Folder 5	Miscellaneous Notes
Box 1, Folder 6	Telegrams, 1911 September 17-21
Box 1, Folder 7	Telegrams, 1911 September 22-27
Box 1, Folder 8	Telegrams, 1911 September 28- October 4
Box 1, Folder 9	Passenger Lists
Box 1, Folder 10	Train Schedules, circa 1911
Box 1, Folder 11	Newspaper Clippings, 1917-1961
Box 2, Folder 1	Train Registration Tables, circa 1911
Box 2, Folder 2	Morning Times Democrat, Huntington, Indiana, Volume XXVI, No. 159, 1911 October 4
Box 2, Folder 3	The Daily Record, Wooster, Ohio, 1961 July 18