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National Air and Space Museum

Darrell C. Romick Papers

2012

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Darrell C. Romick Papers
Date:	(bulk 1940s-1980s)
Identifier:	NASM.2014.0015
Creator:	Romick, Darrell C.
Extent:	50 Cubic feet ((40 boxes))
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Randy Liebermann, Gift, 2013

Preferred Citation

Darrell C. Romick Papers, Accession 2014-0015, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

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Biographical / Historical

Darrell C. Romick (1915-2008) was a missile engineer for Goodyear during the 1950s and 1960s and one of the most significant American visionaries of space travel. He made hundreds of presentations all over the country, appeared on national television and was quoted in most major newspapers and magazines. Romick's best known design was Project METEOR, an acronym for Manned Earth-satellite Terminal evolving from Earth-Orbit ferry Rocket vehicles. The project was a space exploration plan to produce a fleet of reusable Shuttle-like orbital launch vehicles to service an orbiting space city. Romick graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana with a Bachelor of Science in engineering physics. He became an engineer in the aircraft industry, and he worked for Taylorcraft as a chief engineer. He then worked as a designer for Moulton Taylor on a flying car project before he was hired by Goodyear in 1946 as a project engineer for an experimental missile project. While that particular missile project was canceled, Romick continued working for Goodyear in its missile department. During this time he became very active in the American Rocket Society (ARS) and the British Interplanetary Society, and began his long friendships with other rocket visionaries, including Hermann Oberth, Werner Von Braun, Willy Ley, and Krafft Ehricke. In 1949, Romick became head of Goodyear's General Missile Design Group and he started his staff working unofficially on a space ship design that would become part of METEOR. The design work became an official project of

Goodyear after Romick's presentation at the ARS annual meeting in 1954, which made an immediate impact as many of the leading magazines and newspapers covered the story. By 1957 Romick and his Goodyear design team had devised a reduced-scale plan, due to the projected expense of METEOR. Romick presented the METEOR Jr. System Concept at the International Astronautical Federation Congress shortly after the launch of Sputnik 1. However, even as Project METEOR generated headlines, its direct contribution to the development of space flight as the reusable vehicle model was eclipsed as the United States space programs turned to expendable boosters as opposed to reusable vehicles. In 1964, Goodyear shifted its resources from the METEOR project to defense missile work and water-recovery balloons for the Gemini Project. While this shift in resources ended the METEOR Project, several of its basic principles survived and influenced the proposed reusable single stage to Earth orbit vehicles.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of approximately 45 cubic feet of papers, photographs, audio recordings, reports, drawings, correspondence and film, created or collected by Darrell Romick. The papers highlight his visionary space engineering, especially during his time at Goodyear during the 1950s and early 1960s.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Astronautics
- Manned space flight
- Space colonies
- Space shuttles

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Correspondence
- Drawings
- Photographs
- Reports

Names:

- Goodyear Aerospace Corporation