



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

Colonel W. Sumpter Smith Collection

2002

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Colonel W. Sumpter Smith Collection
Date:	1918-1939
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.0023
Creator:	Smith, Walter Sumpter, 1897-1943
Extent:	4.76 Cubic feet (4 records center boxes, 1 flatbox)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

No donor information, Gift, unknown, XXXX-0023, unknown

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Colonel Walter Sumpter Smith (1897-1943) was an engineer, Army pilot, government aviation official, and promoter of aviation. He served as an Army pilot and instructor in World War I and afterwards as commandant of Roberts Field in Birmingham, AL, and helped to establish new air mail routes in the South during the late 1920s. In 1935 he was made head of the Airport Division of the Works Project Administration and was later appointed chairman of the Safety Board of the Civil Aeronautics Authority. In January 1939 he was appointed as chairman of the commission to build Washington National Airport. During World War II, he returned to active duty and was made chief of Transport and Facilities Division of Army Air Support in March 1942. On 24 January 1943 his aircraft disappeared over the Caribbean Sea. In 1943 he was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

Scope and Contents

The majority of the collection was compiled by Mrs. W. Sumpter Smith and consists of newspaper clippings and photos. The clippings come primarily from newspapers in and about the Birmingham, AL region and deal with general aviation news from the time period 1918-1935. There are clippings dealing with Sumpter and his activities throughout the collection. Four volumes were compiled by Sumpter himself and deal with the activities of the Civil Aeronautics Authority (1938-39), Civil Works Administration (1933-39), and Works

Projects Administration (1935-36). The collection also contains a scrapbook of a WPA Airport Inspection trip in October/November 1937 containing captioned photographs of the trip's high points, as well as photographs documenting the construction of Washington National Airport (1939-1943).

General

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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
- Aeronautics -- Law and legislation
- Aeronautics and state
- Aeronautics, Commercial
- Aeronautics, Commercial -- United States
- Aeronautics, Military
- Air pilots
- World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

- Clippings
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks

Names:

- United States. Civil Aeronautics Authority
- United States. Federal Civil Works Administration
- United States. Works Project Administration. Airport Division
- Washington National Airport