



# Smithsonian

## *National Air and Space Museum*

### Glenn H. Curtiss Collection

Mark Kahn

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National Air and Space Museum Archives  
14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway  
Chantilly, VA 20151  
Business Number: Phone: 703-572-4045  
NASMRefDesk@si.edu  
<https://airandspace.si.edu/archives>

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical Note .....	2
Scope and Contents .....	2
Arrangement .....	2
Names and Subjects .....	
Container Listing .....	
Series 1: Professional materials .....	4
Series 2: Legal materials .....	10

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Glenn H. Curtiss Collection
<b>Date:</b>	1905-1931 (bulk 1911-1930)
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.XXXX.0053
<b>Creator:</b>	Curtiss, Glenn Hammond, 1878-1930
<b>Extent:</b>	2.7 Cubic feet (6 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection consists of documents and memorabilia relating to Curtiss during the years of his active aviation pursuits. The bulk of the material relates to patent suits, including Wright v. Curtiss, Herring v. Curtiss, and Curtiss v. Janin.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Glenn H. Curtiss, Jr., gift, 1963, XXXX-0053

### Processing Information

The collection is arranged into two broad series. First, is the material relating to Curtiss' professional life. This includes corporate correspondence, miscellaneous corporate materials, reports, photographs, programs and tributes, books, journals, newsletters, newspaper clippings, patent materials and a scrapbook. The second series contains items pertaining to legal cases involving Curtiss, Augustus M. Herring and the Wright brothers.

In Series 1, correspondence, miscellaneous corporate and non-corporate materials, reports, photographs, menus, programs, tributes, books, journals, newsletters, patent materials and legal documents are arranged chronologically. The small amount of personal correspondence found in this collection follows the corporate correspondence in the finding aid. Newspaper clippings, journals, newsletters and articles are grouped by title of publication. Photographs are grouped by subject and then chronologically. Patent materials are organized into two groups: patent applications filed by and issued to Curtiss and those filed by and issued to the Wright brothers. In Series 2, the legal documents are organized chronologically by specific legal case.

### Preferred Citation

Glenn H. Curtiss Collection, Acc. XXXX-0053, National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Inst.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access

## Conditions Governing Use

[Permissions Requests](#)

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## Biographical Note

Glenn Hammond Curtiss (1878-1930) is best known as an aviation pioneer and inventor and founder of the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Co. Initially a bicycle repairman and designer, by 1902 Curtiss had begun to manufacture motorcycles using a lightweight internal combustion engine of his own design and founded the Curtiss Manufacturing Co. By 1904 Curtiss' engine had been co-opted by Thomas Baldwin for his airship experiments. This activity led to a connection between Curtiss and Alexander Graham Bell and, in 1907, to the foundation of the Aerial Experiment Association. In 1909 Curtiss joined with Augustus M. Herring to form the Herring-Curtiss Co to manufacture powered vehicles, but Herring's unsubstantiated claims to priority over the Wright Brother's aeronautical patents led to the Wright and Curtiss patent suits which continued until the merger of Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor with Wright Aeronautical in 1929. Curtiss and Herring split after the Wright's filed suit and Herring sued Curtiss, claiming that Curtiss had failed to turn his air race winnings over to the company. Despite these, and other, suits, Curtiss continued to advance the cause and technology of aviation, founding the first public flying school (1910) and later a chain of schools across the US, inventing the aileron (1909), the dual-control trainer (1911) and the hydroaeroplane (1911). In 1920 Curtiss retired from active aviation pursuits. After Curtiss died, his wife continued the legal fight on her husband's behalf until a judge decided in Herring's favor (1931).

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of the personal papers of Glenn H. Curtiss. These papers relate to his career as an aviation pioneer and aircraft manufacturing business owner. This collection also includes a small amount of personal correspondence. Moreover, materials pertaining to patents filed by Curtiss and the Wright brothers, as well as legal documents and testimony, are found in this collection.

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## Arrangement

Series 1: Professional materials:

- Subseries 1.1: Corporate correspondence
- Subseries 1.2: Personal correspondence
- Subseries 1.3: Miscellaneous corporate materials
- Subseries 1.4: Patent materials
- Subseries 1.5: Reports
- Subseries 1.6: Photographs
- Subseries 1.7: Menus, programs and tributes
- Subseries 1.8: Books, journals, newsletters, and miscellaneous materials
- Subseries 1.9: Newspaper clippings and articles

Series 2: Legal materials:

- Subseries 2.1: Curtiss versus Herring
- Subseries 2.2: Curtiss versus Wright Brothers
- Subseries 2.3: Lena P. Curtiss versus Herring

## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics, Commercial -- United States
- Aircraft industry
- Patent suits

### Types of Materials:

- Drawings
- Financial records

### Names:

- Aerial Experiment Association
- Bell, Alexander Graham, 1847-1922
- Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company
- Curtiss, Glenn Hammond, 1878-1930
- Curtiss-Wright Corporation
- Herring, Augustus Moore, 1867-1926
- Herring-Curtiss Co.

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Professional materials

Arrangement: This series is arranged into subseries:

- 1) Corporate Correspondence
- 2) Personal Correspondence
- 3) Miscellaneous Corporate Materials
- 4) Patent Materials
- 5) Reports
- 6) Photographs
- 7) Menus, Programs and Tributes
- 8) Books, Journals, Newsletters and Miscellaneous Materials
- 9) Newspaper Clippings and Articles

Scope and Contents: This series contains correspondence, miscellaneous corporate materials, reports, photographs, menus, programs, tributes, books, journals, newsletters, newspaper clippings, patent materials and a scrapbook. Correspondence, miscellaneous corporate and non-corporate materials, reports, menus, programs, tributes, and legal documents are organized chronologically. Journals, newspaper clippings, newsletters and articles are arranged by title of publication. Photographs are grouped by subject and then chronologically. Patent materials are organized into two groups: patent applications filed and issued to Curtiss and those filed by and issued to the Wright brothers.

#### Subseries 1.1: Corporate correspondence

Box 1, Folder 1	<a href="#">Correspondence, 1910</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	<a href="#">Correspondence, 1911</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	<a href="#">Correspondence, 1912</a>
Box 1, Folder 4	<a href="#">Correspondence, 1913</a>
Box 1, Folder 5	<a href="#">Correspondence, 1921 - 1930</a>

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#### Subseries 1.2: Personal correspondence

Box 1, Folder 6	<a href="#">Correspondence, 1911 - 1915</a>
Box 1, Folder 7	<a href="#">Correspondence, 1922 - 1925</a>
Box 1, Folder 8	<a href="#">Correspondence, 1928 - 1929</a>

Box 1, Folder 9      [Correspondence, 1931 - 1935](#)

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### Subseries 1.3: Miscellaneous corporate materials

Box 1, Folder 10      [Agreement, Frank Bouton and Curtiss for 1000 shares of stock, October 17, 1905](#)

Box 1, Folder 11      [Shipping documents and receipts, to and from Curtiss, 1914 - 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 12      [Miscellaneous materials, Curtiss estate, 1923 - 1925](#)

Box 1, Folder 13      [List of exhibits, Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corporation, August 27, 1928](#)

Box 1, Folder 14      [Blank copy, Curtiss Exhibition Company contract, undated](#)

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### Subseries 1.4: Patent materials

Arrangement: Patent materials are organized into two groups: patent applications filed by and issued to Curtiss and filed by and issued to the Wright brothers. These papers from the United States Patent Office, are further arranged chronologically. This grouping also includes one article from The Aero discussing the Wright airplane patents.

#### Subseries 1.4.1: Curtiss patent materials

Box 1, Folder 15      [Patent No. 1011106, Flying-Machine, Dec. 5, 1911](#)

Box 1, Folder 16      [Patent No. 1108490, Flying-Machine, Aug. 25, 1914](#)

Box 1, Folder 17      [Patent No. 1204380, Flying-Machine, Nov. 7, 1916](#)

Box 1, Folder 18      [Patent No. 1210373, Exhaust-Heater for Air-Inlets, Dec. 26, 1916](#)

Box 1, Folder 19      [Automobile improvement patent application, July 3, 1930](#)

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#### Subseries 1.4.2: Wright patent materials

Box 1, Folder 20      [Patent No. 821393, Flying-Machine, May 22, 1906](#)

Box 1, Folder 21      [Patent No. 908929, Mechanism for Flexing the Rudder of a Flying-Machine or the Like, Jan. 5, 1909](#)

Box 1, Folder 22      [Patent No. 987662, Flying-Machine, Mar. 21, 1911](#)

Box 1, Folder 23      [Patent No. 1075533, Flying-Machine, Oct. 14, 1913](#)

Box 1, Folder 24      [Patent No. 1122348, Flying-Machine, Dec. 29, 1914](#)

Box 1, Folder 25      Magazine article, The Aero, Dec. 28, 1909

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### Subseries 1.5: Reports

Box 1, Folder 26      Assets report, Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corporation, July 10, 1916

Box 1, Folder 27      Report, Annual Report and Condensed Balance Sheet and Income and Deficit Account of the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corporation , Dec. 13, 1922

Box 1, Folder 28      Report, The Final Report of the Guggenheim Fund for the Promotion of Aeronautics 1929, Sept. 1930

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### Subseries 1.6: Photographs

Box 1, Folder 29      U.S. Army Dirigible #1 (with engine built by Curtiss), official test, Aug. 12, 1908

Box 1, Folder 30      Curtiss in the June Bug , circa 1908

Box 1, Folder 31      Curtiss Model D airplane, 1911

Box 1, Folder 32      Curtiss in front left seat of McCormick flying boat, May 27, 1913

Box 1, Folder 33      Flight of Curtiss flying boat, America, 1914

Box 1, Folder 34      A.H. Hydro and Group with Curtiss (center), undated

Box 1, Folder 35      Curtiss automobiles, airplanes and dirigibles, undated

Box 1, Folder 36      Curtiss aircraft plant, Hammondsport, New York, undated

Box 1, Folder 37      Curtiss airplane, Silver Dart , undated

Box 1, Folder 38      Curtiss at the controls, undated

Box 1, Folder 39      Curtiss E- Model flying boat, undated

Box 1, Folder 40      Curtiss (far left), undated

Box 1, Folder 41      Curtiss Military Flying School, San Diego, California, undated

Box 1, Folder 42      Curtiss Owl, three-quarter view short tail boat, undated

Box 1, Folder 43      Curtiss with field glasses, undated



Box 1, Folder 44	U.S. Army Captain Tom Baldwin and Curtiss, undated
Box 1, Folder 45	McCormick flying boat, May 27, 1913
Box 1, Folder 46	H.F. McCormick, undated
Box 1, Folder 47	Samuel P. Langley's Aerodrome, Hammondsport, June 2, 1914
Box 1, Folder 48	Blanche Scott, undated

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### Subseries 1.7: Menus, programs and tributes to Curtiss

Box 2, Folder 1	Menu, dinner given to honor Albany-New York flight by Curtiss, Hotel Astor, New York, New York, May 31, 1910
Box 2, Folder 2	Program, presentation of the Langley Medal to Curtiss by the Smithsonian Institution, May 6, 1913
Box 2, Folder 3	Program and menu, The Dinner to Pioneers of American Industries, October 24, 1928
Box 2, Folder 4	Program, Curtiss Marine Trophy Race, Aero Club of Washinton, D.C., May 25, 1929
Box 2, Folder 5	Resolution of Tribute for Curtiss, Board of Governors, Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America, Inc., July 23, 1930
Box 2, Folder 6	Sympathy memorial and tribute to Curtiss, Board of Directors, Curtiss-Wright Corporation, Aug. 13, 1930

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### Subseries 1.8: Journals, newsletters and articles

Arrangement: Journals, newsletters and articles are arranged by title of publication (miscellaneous materials such as a book, scrapbook and a Christmas greeting card are listed at the end of this subseries.)

Box 2, Folder 7	Journal, Niagara Area Journal of Commerce, vol. 21, Aug. 1930
Box 2, Folder 8	Journal, The North American Review, vol. 224, no. 3, Sept. - Oct. 1927
Box 2, Folder 9	Newsletter, The Fyr-Fyter News, vol. 14, no. 18, Sept. 10, 1927
Box 2, Folder 10	Newsletter, Stepping Stones, Western Union, vol. 2, no. 2, 1941
Box 2, Folder 11	Excerpted magazine article, Motorcycle Illustrated, Aug. 1, 1910
Box 2, Folder 12	Article, Value of Airplane, Jacksonville Aeronautic Association, April 25, 1924

Box 2, Folder 13	Commemorative book, The Flight Across the Atlantic, Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corporation, 1919
Box 2, Folder 14	Illustration, Curtiss Landing at Governor's Island , May 1910
Box 2, Folder 15	Scrapbook, containing photographs regarding the construction of the Curtiss transatlantic flying boat, America, circa 1914 Notes: (please note --this scrapbook is in very fragile condition)
Box 2, Folder 16	Christmas greeting card, Bell Aircraft Corporation (featuring British Airacobra aircraft), undated

### Subseries 1.9: Newspaper clippings

Arrangement: Newspaper clippings are arranged by title of publication.

Scope and Contents: The subject matter varies from patent disputes between Curtiss and the Wrights, development of Curtiss aircraft as well as Curtiss' death and aviation legacy.

Box 2, Folder 17	The Ashville Citizen, Ashville, North Carolina, 1928-10-04
Box 2, Folder 18	The Boston Transcript, Boston, Massachusetts, undated
Box 2, Folder 19	The Buffalo Express, Buffalo, New York, 1910-02-03
Box 2, Folder 20	Cleveland Plain Dealer, Cleveland, undated
Box 2, Folder 21	The Courier, Waterloo, Iowa, 1914-03-06
Box 2, Folder 22	The Curtiss Wright-Er , 1943-05-26
Box 2, Folder 23	The Detroit Free Press, Detroit, Michigan, 1910-01 - 1910-02
Box 2, Folder 24	The Detroit Journal, Detroit, Michigan, 1910-01
Box 2, Folder 25	The Detroit News, Detroit, Michigan, 1910-01 - 1910-02
Box 2, Folder 26	Elmira Sunday Telegram, Elmira, New York, 1943-05-30
Box 2, Folder 27	The Hammondsport Herald, Hammondsport, New York, 1920-08-18
Box 2, Folder 28	The Havana Post, Havana, Cuba, 1931-02-05 - 1931-02-06
Box 2, Folder 29	The Miami Daily News, Miami, Florida, 1932-06-26
Box 2, Folder 30	The Miami Herald, Miami, Florida, 1929-03-10
Box 2, Folder 31	The New York Herald, New York, New York, 1909-10

Box 2, Folder 32	The New York Times, New York, New York, 1910 - 1930
Box 2, Folder 33	<a href="#">The New York Tribune, New York, New York, 1909-08-24</a>
Box 2, Folder 34	<a href="#">Rochester Democate, Newspaper Article, Lincoln Beachey Featured, 1909-08-24</a>
Box 2, Folder 35	<a href="#">The Rochester Republican, Rochester, New York, 1930-07-31</a>
Box 3, Folder 1	The San Diego Union, San Diego, California, 1911 - 1931
Box 3, Folder 2	<a href="#">The Sunday Citizen, Asheville, North Carolina, 1928-10-04</a>
Box 3, Folder 3	The Union and Advertiser, Rochester, New York, 1909-01-06
Box 3, Folder 4	<a href="#">Miscellaneous newspaper clippings, 1910 - 1931</a>
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Box 7	Oversized Certificates

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 2: Legal materials

**Scope and Contents:** This series contains materials relating to the long-running legal disputes involving Curtiss. The litigants were Curtiss versus Augustus M. Herring, Curtiss' wife, Lena versus Herring (she replaced her husband in the litigation upon his death in 1930) and Curtiss versus the Wright brothers. The last protracted case involved patent infringement alleged by the Wrights against Curtiss. The other two cases revolved around Herring's false claims of possessing aeronautical patents (Curtiss had hoped to use these patents in his legal battle with the Wrights) and a hostile bid by Herring to win control of the Herring-Curtiss Company in 1910. This failed maneuver did succeed in bankrupting the firm and placing it in receivership.

These papers include U.S. District Court (Western District of New York) and State of New York Supreme Court testimony, other types of court documents (including a court-issued injunction filed by the Wright brothers against Curtiss) as well as Herring-Curtiss Company bankruptcy reports and papers. They are organized chronologically.

Please note that volume 1, 2 and 6 of the Testimony, State of New York Supreme Court, Curtiss versus Herring, is missing from this collection.

**Arrangement:** This series is arranged into subseries:

- 1) Curtiss versus Herring
- 2) Curtiss versus Wright Brothers
- 3) Lena P. Curtiss versus Herring

### Subseries 2.1: Curtiss versus Herring

Box 3, Folder 5	Testimony, U.S. District Court. Western District of New York, concerning bankruptcy of the Curtiss-Herring Company., 1910-07-20
Box 3, Folder 6	Testimony, U.S. District Court. Western District of New York, concerning bankruptcy of the Curtiss-H., 1910-08-17
Box 3, Folder 7	Testimony, U.S. District Court. Western District of New York, concerning bankruptcy of the Curtiss-Herring Company., 1910-12-02
Box 3, Folder 8	Notes for Curtiss. Preparation for testimony., circa 1921
Box 3, Folder 9	Lists of article referring to Curtiss-Herring litigation, compiled, 1921-09-21
Box 3, Folder 10	Testimony, State of New York Supreme Court, Curtiss versus Herring, pp. 1469-2142, vol. 3, circa 1921-1922
Box 4, Folder 1	Testimony, State of New York Supreme Court, Curtiss versus Herring, pp. 2142-2860, vol. 4, circa 1921-1922
Box 4, Folder 2	Testimony, State of New York Supreme Court, Curtiss versus Herring, pp. 2861-3558, vol. 5, circa 1921-1922

Box 4, Folder 3	Testimony, State of New York Supreme Court, Curtiss versus Herring, pp. 4299-4960, vol. 7, 1933-05-17
Box 5, Folder 1	Testimony, State of New York Supreme Court, Curtiss versus Herring, pp. 4961-5705, vol. 8, 1922-05-17
Box 5, Folder 2	Testimony, State of New York Supreme Court, Curtiss versus Herring, pp. 5707-6372, vol. 9, circa 1922
Box 5, Folder 3	Testimony, State of New York Supreme Court, Curtiss versus Herring, pp. 6373-7026, vol. 10, circa 1922

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### Subseries 2.2: Curtiss versus Wright brothers

Box 6, Folder 1	Curtiss versus Wrights Testimony by Albert F. Zahm, 1941-10-04
Box 6, Folder 2	Injunction, U.S. District Court. Western District of New York, filed by Orville Wright against the Curtiss-Herring Company., 1914-09-23
Box 6, Folder 3	Paper, Heavier Than Air Flying Machines, author unknown, undated

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### Subseries 2.3: Lena P. Curtiss versus Herring

Box 6, Folder 4	Legal brief, Supreme Court, Steuben County, New York, Curtiss versus Herring, circa 1930-1931
Box 6, Folder 5	Legal brief, Supreme Court, Steuben County, New York, Curtiss versus Herring, circa 1930-1931
Box 6, Folder 6	Legal brief, Supreme Court, Steuben County, New York, Curtiss versus Herring, circa 1930-1931
Box 6, Folder 7	Legal brief, Supreme Court, Steuben County, New York, Curtiss versus Herring, circa 1930-1931
Box 6, Folder 8	Legal brief, Supreme Court, Steuben County, New York, Curtiss versus Herring, circa 1930-1931
Box 6, Folder 9	Legal brief, Supreme Court, Steuben County, New York, Curtiss versus Herring, circa 1930-1931
Box 6, Folder 10	Legal brief, Supreme Court, Steuben County, New York, Curtiss versus Herring, circa 1930-1931
Box 6, Folder 11	Legal brief, Supreme Court, Steuben County, New York, Curtiss versus Herring, circa 1930-1931

Box 6, Folder 12

Supreme Court Decision, Steuben County, New York, Curtiss versus Herring,  
1931-05-23

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[Return to Table of Contents](#)