



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

James Means Collection

2001

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	James Means Collection
Date:	1892-1913 (bulk 1895-1897)
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.0394
Creator:	Means, James, 1853-1920
Extent:	1.8 Cubic feet ((4 legal document boxes))
Language:	English .
Summary:	James Means (1855-1920) was an American industrialist who sacrificed his business to devote himself to the promotion of aviation. The collection consists of correspondence, publications, photographs, and scrapbooks.
Digital Content:	Image(s): James Means Collection

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

James H. Means, gift, unknown, XXXX-0394, unknown

Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Liz Dawson, 1992." Revised by Jessamyn Lloyd, 2012. Revised and digital assets attached by Allan Janus, 2020.

Preferred Citation

James Means Collection, Acc. NASM.XXXX.0394, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

James Means (1855-1920) was an American industrialist who sacrificed his business to devote himself to the promotion of aviation. Determined to disseminate information on flying, he collected and edited the most significant

works of Otto Lilienthal, Octave Chanute, Samuel Langley and others, producing the 'Aeronautical Annuals' which appeared in 3 volumes in 1895, 1896 and 1897. Dr. Means studied bird-flight, kites and gliders, and designed model gliders in the early 1890s. He was awarded patents for his aircraft smoke signal device (1909), his aircraft launcher (1909), and his simplified control column for airplanes (1909-1911).

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of correspondence and scrapbooks. The correspondence is arranged into 15 sub-series: Aerial Experiment Association, Aero Club of America, Aero Club of Washington, Aeronautic Society of New York, Aeronautical Annuals, Octave Chanute and his daughters, Glenn Curtiss, House Resolution #7653, Ernest Jones, Otto Lilienthal, Henry Cabot Lodge, Hiram Maxim, Technical Matters, U.S. Signal Corps, and Albert Zahm. Of the three scrapbooks, one is a photograph album containing early glider photos and travel postcards. The second contains photos and news clippings regarding aviation in the 1890's, especially the work of Langley and Maxim with kites, balloons, and aerial bicycles. Clippings are in English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Dutch. The third scrapbook is labeled 'James Means 1892' and consists of photos, letters, manuscripts, clippings in English and German, copies of legislation, and book excerpts.

Note: The digital images shown for this collection were repurposed from scans made by an outside contractor for a commercial product which did not reproduce all materials found in this collection; some items have not been scanned.

Arrangement

The James Means Collection is arranged by content type.

General

NASMrev

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics -- pre-1903
- Aeronautics, Commercial
- Aeronautics, Military
- Airships
- Balloons
- Gliding and soaring
- Kites
- Periodicals

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Manuscripts

Photographs
Publications
Scrapbooks

Names:

Aerial Experiment Association
Aero Club of America
Aero Club of Washington
Aeronautic Society of New York
Chanute, Octave, 1832-1910
Curtiss, Glenn Hammond, 1878-1930
Jones, Ernest La Rue, 1883-1955
Langley, S. P. (Samuel Pierpont), 1834-1906
Lilienthal, Otto
Lodge, Henry Cabot, 1850-1924
Maxim, Hiram S., 1840-1916
Means, James, 1853-1920
United States. Army. Signal Corps
Zahm, Albert Francis, 1862-

Preferred Titles:

Aeronautical Annuals (annual)

Container Listing

Correspondence, 1895-1913

Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence regarding Aerial Experiment Association, January 2, 1909
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence with Aero Club of America, November 23 - December 14, 1908
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence with Aero Club of Washington, February 19, 1909 - January 4, 1910
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence with Aeronautic Society of New York, November 3, 1908 - February 6, 1909
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, January 3, 1894 - May 31, 1895
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, September 6, 1895 - January 1, 1896
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, January 10 - February 21, 1896
Box 1, Folder 8	Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, February 22, 1896 - March 25, 1897
Box 1, Folder 9	Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, March 29, 1897 - February 24, 1913
Box 1, Folder 10	"Flying Pioneers at Hammondsport, New York, 1901-1914" by Lyman J. Seely - photostat
Box 2, Folder 1	Correspondence from Octave Chanute, January 10, 1895 - May 31, 1897
Box 2, Folder 2	Correspondence from Octave Chanute, June 10, 1897 - November 21, 1902
Box 2, Folder 3	Correspondence between Means and Chanute's daughters, 1910-1912
Box 2, Folder 4	Correspondence from Octave Chanute - letter and photographs of gulls, February 15, 1898
Box 2, Folder 5	Correspondence from Octave Chanute - photographs of Chanute gliders, undated
Box 2, Folder 6	"On Some Conditions of Aerial Flight" - speech by Francis Herbert Wenham, presented by Chanute at the Boston Aeronautical Society, March 1, 1897
Box 2, Folder 7	"Soaring Flight" - speech by Chanute, undated

Box 2, Folder 8	Correspondence with Glenn Curtiss, March 4, 1909 - October 28, 1912
Box 2, Folder 9	Correspondence on House Resolutions H.R.7653 and H.R.24649 [Additional Protection for Owners of Patents], 1907-1910
Box 2, Folder 10	Correspondence with E. L. Jones of "Aeronautics" magazine, January 4, 1909 - February 3, 1912
Box 2, Folder 11	Correspondence with Otto Lilienthal, August 1895 - May 28, 1896
Box 2, Folder 12	Correspondence with Henry Cabot Lodge, December 27, 1907 - March 6, 1913
Box 2, Folder 13	Correspondence with A.V. Roe, October 31, 1911 - April 8, 1912
Box 3, Folder 1	Correspondence on technical matters, March 27, 1894 - August 31, 1896
Box 3, Folder 2	Correspondence on technical matters, March 28, 1896 - April 12, 1897
Box 3, Folder 3	Correspondence on technical matters, April 1, 1897 - January 29, 1913
Box 3, Folder 4	Correspondence on technical matters (oversize); Le Bris "Voiture Aérienne" blueprint, 1896-1897
Box 3, Folder 5	Correspondence with U.S. Army Signal Corps, January 14, 1908 - September 24, 1909
Box 3, Folder 6	Correspondence with U.S. Army Signal Corps, February 9, 1912 - March 19, 1913
Box 3, Folder 7	Correspondence on the James Means Signal, 1912-1913
Box 3, Folder 8	Correspondence with Hiram Maxim, September 12, 1895 - March 13, 1909
Box 3, Folder 9	Correspondence with A.F. Zahm, February 20, 1896 - April 16, 1913
Box 3, Folder 10	Miscellaneous correspondence, 1908-1913
Box 5, Folder 1	Correspondence with Alexander Graham Bell, September 20, 1895
Box 5, Folder 2	Correspondence with Thomas W. Benoist, January 2, 1913
Box 5, Folder 3	Correspondence with Louis Charles Breguet, April 14 - April 24, 1913
Box 5, Folder 4	Correspondence with William Starling Burgess; Burgess Company and Curtiss, December 20 - December 21, 1912
Box 5, Folder 5	Correspondence with T.W.K. Clarke and Co., December 15, 1911 - December 16, 1912

Box 5, Folder 6	Correspondence with Joseph R. De Lamar, September 3 - November 2, 1895
Box 5, Folder 7	Correspondence with Charles Edgar Duryea, April 6 - August 12, 1896
Box 5, Folder 8	Correspondence from William Abner Eddy, January 3, 1895 - January 6, 1896
Box 5, Folder 9	Correspondence with Elisha N. Fales, including paper "The Center of Pressure Travel on Aeroplane Surfaces and Bird Wings", October 5, 1911 - February 21, 1912
Box 5, Folder 10	Correspondence from William J. Hammer, August 9 - November 1, 1908
Box 5, Folder 11	Correspondence with Lawrence Hargrave, June 25, 1895 - March 24, 1908
Box 5, Folder 12	Correspondence from Henry Allen Hazen, March 19 - September 28, 1896
Box 5, Folder 13	Correspondence with Albert S. Heinrich; Heinrich Bros., December 24, 1912 - May 20, 1913
Box 5, Folder 14	Correspondence from Augustus Moore Herring, January 26, 1895 - May 26, 1897
Box 5, Folder 15	Correspondence from Edward Chalmers Huffaker, April 4, 1897 - November 1, 1910
Box 5, Folder 16	Correspondence from Rudyard Kipling, March 4, 1896
Box 5, Folder 17	Correspondence from Gustav Koch, January 10, 1898
Box 5, Folder 18	Correspondence from Charles Henry Lamson, March 9, 1895 - November 2, 1908
Box 5, Folder 19	Correspondence with Samuel Langley, May 16 - October 5, 1896
Box 5, Folder 20	Correspondence with John A.D. McCurdy, December 18, 1908 - June 17, 1912
Box 5, Folder 21	Correspondence from Charles Frederick Marvin, U.S. Weather Bureau, March 27, 1894
Box 5, Folder 22	Correspondence from Albert Adams Merrill, August 17, 1895 - April 11, 1897
Box 5, Folder 23	Correspondence with Earle L. Ovington, March 13 - April 25, 1912
Box 5, Folder 24	Correspondence with William Henry Pickering, March 25, 1895 - May 16, 1896
Box 5, Folder 25	Correspondence from Percy Pilcher, March 25 - July 28, 1897
Box 5, Folder 26	Correspondence with Abbott Lawrence Rotch, Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory, January 1, 1896 - July 28, 1908

Box 5, Folder 27	Correspondence from Thomas E. Selfridge, February 18 - May 6, 1908
Box 5, Folder 28	Correspondence with George Alexander Spratt, January 25 - February 7, 1913
Box 5, Folder 29	Correspondence with Wallace Rupert Turnbull, January 16, 1908 - February 9, 1909
Box 5, Folder 30	Correspondence from Charles Doolittle Walcott, December 21, 1910
Box 5, Folder 31	Correspondence with Orville and Wilbur Wright, May 18, 1908 - December 9, 1911
Box 5, Folder 32	Correspondence on the James Means Control System, 1911 - 1913
Box 5, Folder 33	Correspondence on the James Means Launch Apparatus, November 26 - December 17, 1912
Box 5, Folder 34	Lilienthal research report, 1896
Box 6, Folder 1	Correspondence from Octave Chanute, January 3, 1904 Image(s): Correspondence from Otto Chanute

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Photographs

Box 3, Folder 11

[Means photo album - Chanute and Lilienthal gliders; Netherlands; Egypt; India; England](#)

Notes:

A photographic album including images of Chanute and Lilienthal gliders, and photographs of Egypt, India, Greece, France, and Britain. 39 of the 56 photographs in the album were copied at an earlier point, and were assigned National Air Museum numbers - contact the NASM Archives Department for more information.

Box Shared Box 105,
Folder 1

[Pilcher glider, 1898](#)

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Clippings and Magazines on Aeronautics

Box 4, Item 1 ["Aeronautica" clippings, 1892-1893](#)

Box 4, Item 2 [Aeronautical Scrapbook - clippings and pamphlets, 1892-1897](#)
Notes: Not all contents have been copied.

Box 4, Folder 1 [French language magazines; Means' French patent for an aerial signaling device, 1909-1911](#)

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