



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
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.0394
Date:	1892-1913 (bulk 1895-1897)
Extent:	1.8 Cubic feet ((4 legal document boxes))
Creator:	Means, James, 1853-1920
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
Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Correspondence with Aero Club of America, November 23 - December 14, 1908
Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Correspondence with Aero Club of Washington, February 19, 1909 - January 4, 1910
Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Correspondence with Aeronautic Society of New York, November 3, 1908 - February 6, 1909
Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, January 3, 1894 - May 31, 1895
Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, September 6, 1895 - January 1, 1896
Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, January 10 - February 21, 1896
Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, February 22, 1896 - March 25, 1897
Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Correspondence regarding Aeronautical Annuals, March 29, 1897 - February 24, 1913
Image(s) |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | "Flying Pioneers at Hammondsport, New York, 1901-1914" by Lyman J. Seely - photostat
Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 1 | Correspondence from Octave Chanute, January 10, 1895 - May 31, 1897
Image(s) |
| Box 2, Folder 2 | Correspondence from Octave Chanute, June 10, 1897 - November 21, 1902 |

- [Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 3 Correspondence between Means and Chanute's daughters, 1910-1912
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 4 Correspondence from Octave Chanute - letter and photographs of gulls, February 15, 1898
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 5 Correspondence from Octave Chanute - photographs of Chanute gliders, undated
[Image\(s\)](#)
- 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
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 7 "Soaring Flight" - speech by Chanute, undated
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 8 Correspondence with Glenn Curtiss, March 4, 1909 - October 28, 1912
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 9 Correspondence on House Resolutions H.R.7653 and H.R.24649 [Additional Protection for Owners of Patents], 1907-1910
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 10 Correspondence with E. L. Jones of "Aeronautics" magazine, January 4, 1909 - February 3, 1912
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 11 Correspondence with Otto Lilienthal, August 1895 - May 28, 1896
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 12 Correspondence with Henry Cabot Lodge, December 27, 1907 - March 6, 1913
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 13 Correspondence with A.V. Roe, October 31, 1911 - April 8, 1912
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 1 Correspondence on technical matters, March 27, 1894 - August 31, 1896
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 2 Correspondence on technical matters, March 28, 1896 - April 12, 1897
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 3 Correspondence on technical matters, April 1, 1897 - January 29, 1913

- [Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 4 Correspondence on technical matters (oversize); Le Bris "Voiture Aérienne" blueprint, 1896-1897
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 5 Correspondence with U.S. Army Signal Corps, January 14, 1908 - September 24, 1909
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 6 Correspondence with U.S. Army Signal Corps, February 9, 1912 - March 19, 1913
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 7 Correspondence on the James Means Signal, 1912-1913
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 8 Correspondence with Hiram Maxim, September 12, 1895 - March 13, 1909
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 9 Correspondence with A.F. Zahm, February 20, 1896 - April 16, 1913
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 10 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1908-1913
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 5, Folder 1 Correspondence with Alexander Graham Bell, September 20, 1895
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 2 Correspondence with Thomas W. Benoist, January 2, 1913
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 3 Correspondence with Louis Charles Breguet, April 14 - April 24, 1913
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 4 Correspondence with William Starling Burgess; Burgess Company and Curtiss, December 20 - December 21, 1912
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 5 Correspondence with T.W.K. Clarke and Co., December 15, 1911 - December 16, 1912
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 6 Correspondence with Joseph R. De Lamar, September 3 - November 2, 1895
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 7 Correspondence with Charles Edgar Duryea, April 6 - August 12, 1896

- Folder contents were not scanned
- Box 5, Folder 8 Correspondence from William Abner Eddy, January 3, 1895 - January 6, 1896
Folder contents were not scanned.
- 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
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 10 Correspondence from William J. Hammer, August 9 - November 1, 1908
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 11 Correspondence with Lawrence Hargrave, June 25, 1895 - March 24, 1908
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 12 Correspondence from Henry Allen Hazen, March 19 - September 28, 1896
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 13 Correspondence with Albert S. Heinrich; Heinrich Bros., December 24, 1912 -
May 20, 1913
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 14 Correspondence from Augustus Moore Herring, January 26, 1895 - May 26,
1897
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 15 Correspondence from Edward Chalmers Huffaker, April 4, 1897 - November 1,
1910
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 16 Correspondence from Rudyard Kipling, March 4, 1896
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 17 Correspondence from Gustav Koch, January 10, 1898
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 18 Correspondence from Charles Henry Lamson, March 9, 1895 - November 2,
1908
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 19 Correspondence with Samuel Langley, May 16 - October 5, 1896
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 20 Correspondence with John A.D. McCurdy, December 18, 1908 - June 17, 1912
Folder contents were not scanned.

- Box 5, Folder 21 Correspondence from Charles Frederick Marvin, U.S. Weather Bureau, March 27, 1894
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 22 Correspondence from Albert Adams Merrill, August 17, 1895 - April 11, 1897
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 23 Correspondence with Earle L. Ovington, March 13 - April 25, 1912
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 24 Correspondence with William Henry Pickering, March 25, 1895 - May 16, 1896
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 25 Correspondence from Percy Pilcher, March 25 - July 28, 1897
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 26 Correspondence with Abbott Lawrence Rotch, Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory, January 1, 1896 - July 28, 1908
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 27 Correspondence from Thomas E. Selfridge, February 18 - May 6, 1908
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 28 Correspondence with George Alexander Spratt, January 25 - February 7, 1913
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 29 Correspondence with Wallace Rupert Turnbull, January 16, 1908 - February 9, 1909
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 30 Correspondence from Charles Doolittle Walcott, December 21, 1910
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 31 Correspondence with Orville and Wilbur Wright, May 18, 1908 - December 9, 1911
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 32 Correspondence on the James Means Control System, 1911 - 1913
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 33 Correspondence on the James Means Launch Apparatus, November 26 - December 17, 1912
Folder contents were not scanned.
- Box 5, Folder 34 Lilienthal research report, 1896
Folder contents were not scanned.

Box 6, Folder 1

Correspondence from Otto Chanute, January 3, 1904
Folder contents were not scanned.

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Photographs

Box 3, Folder 11

Means photo album - Chanute and Lilienthal gliders; Netherlands; Egypt; India; England

[Image\(s\)](#)

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

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Clippings and Magazines on Aeronautics

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 4, Item 1 | "Aeronautica" clippings, 1892-1893
Image(s) |
| Box 4, Item 2 | Aeronautical Scrapbook - clippings and pamphlets, 1892-1897
Image(s)
Not all contents have been copied. |
| Box 4, Folder 1 | French language magazines; Means' French patent for an aerial signaling device, 1909-1911
Image(s) |

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