



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

## Octave Chanute Papers

2001

National Air and Space Museum Archives  
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Chantilly, VA 20151  
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<https://airandspace.si.edu/archives>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Octave Chanute Papers
<b>Date:</b>	1890-1911
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.XXXX.0482
<b>Creator:</b>	Chanute, Octave, 1832-1910
<b>Extent:</b>	1.35 Cubic feet ((3 legal document boxes))
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Octave Chanute Estate, gift, unknown, XXXX-0482, unknown

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Octave Chanute, born in Paris in 1832, was one of America's leading civil engineers, specializing in railroads and railroad bridges with the first bridge across the Missouri River to his credit. After developing a reputation as a scientist, writer and speaker, Chanute's interests turned to the possibility of flight. Beginning in 1891 he wrote a series of articles on his research and published them in book form, making him the first aviation historian. In 1896 he designed and constructed four gliders aided by William Avery and Augustus Herring, testing them on the Indiana shores of Lake Michigan. The Chanute team made more than 1,000 manned flights without accident, and with a few modifications his 2-surfaced glider was to become the prototype of all modern biplanes. As he grew older, Chanute turned to writing, speaking and corresponding with inventors to encourage them to continue where he had left off. He died at the age of 78 in 1910, one of the foremost pioneers in aviation.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection consists of two manuscripts by Octave Chanute, "Conditions and Success in the Design of Flying Machines" and "Recent Experiments in Gliding Flight;" and three series of correspondence. The first series, Miscellaneous Correspondence, dates from September 21, 1891 to November 2, 1911. The second series, Correspondence with Louis P. Mouillard, consists of originals and three sub-series of copies, none

of which are complete runs. The originals date from April 1891 to May 1897; the first sub-series of copies dates from April 1890 to June 1894; the second sub-series of copies from April 1891 to April 1894; and the third sub-series of copies from July 1891 to July 1894. The last major series is Correspondence with Wilbur Wright, dating from May 1900 to October 1911.

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## 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
- Gliding and soaring

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Manuscripts

Names:

- Avery, William
- Chanute, Octave, 1832-1910
- Herring, Augustus Moore, 1867-1926
- Mouillard, Louis-Pierre, 1834-1897
- Wright, Wilbur, 1867-1912