



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

Hungerford Rocket Car Photograph Collection

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2008

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Hungerford Rocket Car Photograph Collection
Date:	1929-1934
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.0882
Creator:	Rocket Cars, USA, Hungerford
Extent:	0.05 Cubic feet (1 folder)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Daniel D. Hungerford and his brother Floyd S. Hungerford designed a rocket-powered automobile that they debuted on November 2, 1929 in their hometown of Elmira, New York. This collection consists of eight black and white photographs, of various sizes, showing the Hungerford Rocket Car, Daniel D. Hungerford, Floyd S. Hungerford, the car's rocket motor and other components, and interior views of the rocket car from the pilot's seat.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Daniel S. Dwyer, Gift, Unknown, NASM.XXXX.0882

Processing Information

Arranged and described in 2008 by Jessamyn Lloyd, encoded in 2020 by Jessamyn Lloyd.

Preferred Citation

Hungerford Rocket Car Photograph Collection, NASM.XXXX.0882, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Daniel D. Hungerford and his brother Floyd S. Hungerford shared a great interest in rockets. They began by studying lighter than air craft and built an airplane engine in 1909. By 1913, they had bought their own airplane. In addition, the Hungerford brothers worked as glider mechanics, during which time they invented a rocket-powered soldering iron to aid in their work. They had plans for a rocket lawn mover, but this was

never completed. The Hungerfords designed a rocket-powered automobile that they debuted on November 2, 1929 in their hometown of Elmira, New York. The Hungerford Rocket Car, named the *Shirley Lois Moon Girl* after Daniel's daughter, was based on a 1921 Chevrolet 490 chassis covered with a framework made of basswood strips, isinglass windows, and plate glass covered with heavy cardboard that had been painted black. The Hungerfords then had a special fuel injection pump and the rocket motors installed at Gould Pump Works in Seneca Falls, New York. The car's design featured four exhaust pipes in the rear, although only one was actually utilized. In 1932, after operating the *Shirley Lois Moon Girl* on public roads for more than two years, the Hungerfords decided to register the car with the state of New York. After much debate, the New York Bureau of Motor Vehicles agreed to register the car provided "rocket" was listed on the form under type. *Shirley Lois Moon Girl* was given New York license plate number 4J74-78 and was registered until 1952. Over time, the car was improved including the addition of new parts and equipment, new paint, and the replacement of the original Chevrolet cooling system with a 1927 Waco airplane radiator. The Hungerford brothers exhibited *Shirley Lois Moon Girl* at fairs and other events throughout New York and Pennsylvania, and a letter about the car written by the Hungerfords was read on the radio program "Buck Rogers in the 25th Century" on January 15, 1934. The last exhibition of *Shirley Lois Moon Girl* took place at Colussy's Airport at Coudersport, Pennsylvania on July 29, 1934. The Hungerfords had initially planned on large-scale manufacturing of the Hungerford Rocket Car with the *Shirley Lois Moon Girl* being simply a prototype, but no other rocket cars were ever made. The Hungerfords also discussed building a rocket that could reach the moon, a project that never made it past the planning phase. Floyd S. Hungerford died in December 1963. Daniel Hungerford allowed Ralph Hodge of Cohoes, New York to take possession of the car in the mid-1960s with the understanding that, in the event of Hungerford's death, it would become Hodge's property. Hodge cleaned the vehicle and replaced the rotting cardboard with aluminum, and the *Shirley Lois Moon Girl* took part in a number of parades and civic events in New York. Daniel S. Hungerford died in 1968. For a time, *Shirley Lois Moon Girl* was on display at "Harrah's Automobile Collection" in Las Vegas, Nevada. Upon the death of Ralph Hodge, his attorney, and one time assistant district attorney of Albany county, Daniel Dwyer took ownership of *Shirley Lois Moon Girl*. Before his death in 1992, Dwyer donated *Shirley Lois Moon Girl* to the New York State Museum at Albany.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of eight black and white photographs, of various sizes, showing the Hungerford Rocket Car, Daniel D. Hungerford, Floyd S. Hungerford, the car's rocket motor and other components, and interior views of the rocket car from the pilot's seat. Extensive caption information is written on the reverse of the photographs.

Arrangement

Collection is in original order.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Automobiles
- Rocket engines

Types of Materials:

- Photographs

Names:

Hungerford, Daniel D
Hungerford, Floyd S.