



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

Montgolfier Family Library Catalogue

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Montgolfier Family Library Catalogue
Date:	1883
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.0955
Source:	Montgolfier, Joseph-Michel, 1740-1810. (Attributed name) Montgolfier, Jacques-Etienne, 1745-1799 (Attributed name) Tissandier, Gaston, 1843-1899 (Associated name)
Extent:	0.05 Cubic feet (1 folder)
Language:	French .
Summary:	At the request of an acquaintance, Alphonse de Montgolfier created <i>Catalogue des Livres des Aérostats</i> in 1883. Handwritten in French cursive, the catalogue begins with an introductory letter and then alphabetically records materials held in the Montgolfier family archives relating to Aérostats and their inventors - items likely amassed by his aviation ancestors Joseph and Etienne Montgolfier.
Digital Content:	Image(s): NASM-9A18907: First page of Catalogue, 1883 Image(s): Catalogue des Livres des Aérostats

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Library of Congress, Transfer, Unknown date, NASM.XXXX.0955.

Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Amara Pugens, 2022.

Preferred Citation

Montgolfier Family Library Catalogue, NASM.XXXX.0955, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

The National Air and Space Museum Archives received this catalogue as a transfer from the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, who first obtained it - as a gift or purchase - from the Library of Congress. This transfer likely happened in 1966. From its second bookplate, it can be assumed that the Library of Congress procured the catalogue with the Daniel Guggenheim Fund for Aeronautics. The Library of Congress used this fund between 1926 and 1930 to facilitate technical development, improve safety, and expand the popularity of aviation. In 1930, the fund purchased books, manuscripts, and illustrations of The Tissandier Collection from Maggs Brothers of London.

From the "Ex Libris" bookplate, it can be postulated that the bibliographic inquest resulting in this catalogue came at the request of French chemist, aviator, and editor Gaston Tissandier (1843-1899) while collecting information for his aeronautic bibliography later published in 1887. The preface of this bibliography, titled *Bibliographie aéronautique: catalogue de livres d'histoire, de science, de voyages et de fantaisie, traitant de la navigation aérienne ou des aérostats*, further supports this conclusion when Tissandier cited consulting the catalogues of various private holdings and specifically noted the library of "M. le colonel de Montgolfier."

Alphonse de Montgolfier (1831-1897) was a lieutenant-colonel, public figure, and great-grandnephew of the aviation pioneers Joseph and Etienne Montgolfier. As the head of the eldest branch, de Montgolfier became the heir of his family's heritage and memories, which he maintained at his historical property Varagnes-le Bas, colloquially known as Varagnes-les-Annonay, in their small ancestral town of Annonay in southern France. Although written by de Montgolfier in 1883, it was likely his aviation ancestors who collected the materials itemized in *Catalogue des Livres des Aérostats*.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains one hardcover, bound book titled *Catalogue des Livres des Aérostats* on the spine. Created in 1883 by Alphonse de Montgolfier, the catalogue recorded materials in his custody that related to Aérostats and their inventors. When compiled, the term Aérostats described 1700s and 1800s ballooning as well as other lighter-than-air aircrafts. Items in this catalogue mostly consist of books and other published materials; however, some unpublished works such as correspondence, essays, and papers are also included and annotated. The inventory is listed on 40 pages and arranged alphabetically by the author's surname then title (or title if no author identified).

de Montgolfier also provided a four-page introductory letter noting the catalogue's inception for an acquaintance requesting aeronautics titles in de Montgolfier family archives. Although unidentified, it can be speculated that the acquaintance and recipient of this letter was French chemist, aviator, and editor Gaston Tissandier (1843-1899).

This catalogue is completely handwritten in French cursive. Two bookplates pasted in the inside front cover: one stating "Ex Libris Gaston Tissandier" and the other "The Library of Congress / The Daniel Guggenheim Fund."

Arrangement

Alphabetically arranged by the author's surname then by title. If no author or title listed, alphabetically arranged by type of material.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Aeronautics
Ballooning
Balloonists
Hot air balloons

Names:

Montgolfier, Jacques-Etienne, 1745-1799
Montgolfier, Joseph-Michel, 1740-1810.
Tissandier, Gaston, 1843-1899