



# Smithsonian

## *National Air and Space Museum*

### 1908 James Gordon Bennett Aeronautic Cup Race Balloon Log

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2024

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## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical .....	2
Scope and Contents .....	2
Arrangement .....	3
Names and Subjects .....	

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	1908 James Gordon Bennett Aeronautic Cup Race Balloon Log
<b>Date:</b>	1908
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.XXXX.0981
<b>Extent:</b>	0.05 Cubic feet (1 folder; Cloth-bound notebook; 6.5 x 4.2 inches (16 x 10 cm))
<b>Language:</b>	German , English .
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection consists of a small cloth-bound notebook published by the Deutschen Luftschiffer-Verbandes (German Airship Association) and used by Lieutenant Fogman to record details of his flight with balloon pilot James Comly (J. C.) McCoy in the gas balloon "America II" as one of the American entries in the 3rd Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett (Gordon Bennett Balloon Trophy) international race starting at Berlin, Germany, on October 11, 1908.
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): 1908 James Gordon Bennett Aeronautic Cup Race Balloon Log</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Unknown, found in collection, 2010, NASM.XXXX.0981

### Related Materials

"Proofs for an article by Mr. J. C. McCoy describing his participation in the Third Gordon Bennett Balloon Race from Berlin, October 1908." *National Air and Space Museum Technical Reference Files*, NASM.XXXX.1183, Biographical Series, Folder CM-239000-01 McCoy, James Comly [Documents].

### Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Melissa A. N. Keiser, 2024.

### Preferred Citation

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### Restrictions

No restrictions on access

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

In 1906, James Gordon Bennett, Jr. (1841-1918), publisher of the *New York Herald* newspaper, announced a prize for the furthest continuous flight by a balloon from its launch site. Bennett, a wealthy American yachtsman and sporting enthusiast, had already established an international competition awarding a Gordon Bennett trophy for automobile racing (Coupe International, 1900). The Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett (Gordon Bennett Balloon Trophy) competitions were open to national Aero Clubs affiliated with the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), with each country able to enter up to three balloons in the annual race. The first race was launched from Paris, France, on September 30, 1906, with the winning team's country to host the following year's race. The United States entered three balloons in the 1908 competition: the "America II," the "Conqueror," and the "St. Louis." Accomplished American balloonist James Comly McCoy (1862 -- 1934) had the 2200 cubic meter gas balloon "America II" built by French manufacturer Édouard Surcouf (Astra) specifically for use in the 1908 competition. On October 11, 1908, the "America II" started the race as the first balloon to take off from the launch site in the Schmargendorf suburb of Berlin, Germany, followed at two-minute intervals by 22 other balloons representing eight different countries. Balloon pilot J. C. McCoy's aide Lieutenant Fogman recorded the date, time (3:07 p.m.), altitude, and location in this small brown notebook published for the purpose by the Deutschen Luftschiffer-Verbandes (German Airship Association). As fate would have it, the winds carried the "America II" not towards the expanse of Russia to the northeast, but towards the southwest. Early the next morning the wind changed, carrying the balloon back to the northeast, but heavy mists and clouds obscuring the ground made it difficult for the balloonists to be sure of their exact location throughout the day. When the mists cleared and the moon rose that evening, they realized they were flying over water along a coastline. Fearing that they were in danger of heading out over the North Sea, McCoy and Fogman landed the balloon on a small, forested peninsula, coming to a stop at the top of a 50-foot cliff at the edge of the water. At the conclusion of their 31 hour 59 minute flight, they had landed not on the shore of the North Sea but farther east near the city of Wismar in northern Germany, at the western end of the Baltic Sea. Although unsuccessful in the 1908 race, the "America II" would go on to win the 1909 Gordon Bennett Balloon Race as a French balloon piloted by American balloonist Edgar W. Mix and his French aide André Roussel on a 696-mile flight from Zurich, Switzerland, to Poland.

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## Scope and Contents

This single-item collection consists of one brown cloth-bound notebook, 6.5 x 4.2 inches (16 x 10 cm), with an embossed image of a gas balloon in flight on the front cover; includes loop for pencil (not found with notebook), 126 numbered pages with black ink annotations on some inside pages; rear flyleaf has attached 11.75 x 13.8 inch (30 x 35 cm) map of Central Europe ("Mitteleuropa"). The German-language book, entitled *Anweisung für die Ballonfuhrer des Deutschen Luftschiffer-Verbandes sowie Allgemeine Bestimmungen für die Ballonfahrten des Deutschen Luftschiffer-Verbandes und Bestimmungen über die Erteilung von Fuhrerpatenten: Im Anhang einige Tabellen, Vordrucke für Fahrberichte und eine Karte* [Instructions for the balloon pilots of the German Airship Association as well as general regulations for balloon flights of the German Airship Association and regulations on the granting of pilot licenses: Attached are some tables, forms for flight reports and a map] was published by the Deutschen Luftschiffer-Verband [German Airship Association], Berlin (Germany), in 1908 (second supplemented and expanded edition) and printed by Hofbuchdruckerei Gebr. Radetzki [Radetzki Brothers Court Book Printing Company], Berlin. The book includes information useful for balloon pilots (see table of contents), a section to record information gathered during a balloon flight (date, time, altitude, ballast released, location, and wind and weather data), and phrases translated into several European languages for the use of German-speaking balloonists who have landed in a foreign country. Ink annotations in the notebook appear to have been made by aide Lieutenant Fogman during his flight with balloon pilot James Comly (J. C.) McCoy in the gas balloon "America II" as one of the American entries in the 3rd Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett (Gordon Bennett Balloon Trophy) international race starting at Berlin, Germany, on October 11, 1908. The annotations record the balloon's landing at 11:06 p.m. on October 12, 1908, near Wismar, Germany. Note that McCoy's name is incorrectly spelled on page 45 of the notebook as "Mac Coy," lending credence to the assumption that Lt. Fogman was the author of the annotations.

Not all pages of the notebook have been digitized; included online are views of the front cover and title pages, pages 1-13 (including the table of contents), annotated pages recording information about the flight (pages 44-55), German to English phrases (pages 92-95), and the map attached to the rear flyleaf. The notebook contains a book plate identifying it as part of The Library of Congress - Smithsonian Institution Langley Aeronautical Library, with a date stamp of October 10, 1930.

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## Arrangement

Single item. Scans of pages are presented online in page number order.

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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 -- 1903-1916
- Aeronautics -- Competitions
- Aeronautics -- Germany
- Ballooning

Names:

- McCoy, James Comly, 1862-1934