



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

## Louis Gathmann Collection

Gathmann, Louis, Collection

Patti Williams

2018

National Air and Space Museum Archives  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Louis Gathmann Collection
<b>Date:</b>	1887-1907
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.XXXX.1095
<b>Creator:</b>	Gathmann, Louis
<b>Extent:</b>	0.05 Cubic feet (1 folder)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection consists of three patents issued to Louis Gathmann.
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): Louis Gathmann Collection</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Unknown - found in collection, unknown, unknown, NASM.XXXX.1095

### Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Patti Williams, 2018.

### Preferred Citation

Louis Gathmann Collection, NASM.XXXX.1095, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access

### Conditions Governing Use

Material is subject to Smithsonian Terms of Use. Should you wish to use NASM material in any medium, please submit an Application for Permission to Reproduce NASM Material, available at [Permissions Requests](#) .

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## Biographical / Historical

Louis Gathmann was an engineer and inventor who held numerous patents in many different fields. Initially, Gathmann created equipment for screening and sifting wheat and flour and held a number of patents for these devices. In the 1880s, Gathmann built three astronomical observatories in the Chicago area and was working on a new type of telescope lens. His Chicago home also included a domed observatory tower. Gathmann received a patent in the 1890s based on his research in weather modification. Gathmann later became interested in ordnance development and in 1901 invented the Gathmann Gunn, an 18 inch gun to be mounted on ships that was designed to send large charges of high explosives at water level. The gun

was tested at the Government Proving Ground at Sandy Hook but was rejected by the U.S. military. In 1916, Gathmann invented a new type of battleship armor based on the use of air chambers and shock absorbers. Gathmann also had an interest in aviation and proposed an idea for a type of helicopter that he called an "Aero Locomotive" in the early 1900s. It is unclear if a patent was ever sought or issued for this invention. In 1904, Gathmann earned a patent in Great Britain for a propeller for flying machines. Gathmann died in June 1917.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of three patents issued to Louis Gathmann in Great Britain. The first, number 5,150, was issued on April 13, 1886 for an invention for "improvements in grain driers." The second patent, issued for invention for "improvements in machines for bending or coiling metal bars" is numbered 14,128 and dated October 2, 1888. The third patent, dated March 6, 1904, is numbered 18,560 and was issued for the invention of "improvements in air propellers for flying machines." The collection also contains two 1907 memoranda on applying for patents in Great Britain as well as the top portion of a piece of Gathmann's personal stationery which includes his name and address along with an illustration of his home in Chicago.

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## Arrangement

Arranged at item level.

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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
- Patents
- Propulsion systems