Descriptive Finding Guide for Commander Henry James White Personal Papers
SDASM.SC.10155

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San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
2014
2001 Pan American Plaza, Balboa Park
San Diego 92101
URL: http://www.sandiegoairandspace.org/
Commander Henry James White (1892-1962) was a naval aviator, linguist, translator, inventor, flight instructor and Commander of Naval Air Station Ream Field.

Biographical / Historical
He was born on October 7, 1892 in Catonsville, MD. He was educated at St. George’s school in Newport, RI. Appointed to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, he qualified as a pilot at just 19 years of age. His earliest license was signed by Orville Wright. He served in the Navy from 1916 to 1920 and again from 1940 to 1945. He was also a United States Naval seaplane pilot. He instructed the famed Charles Lindbergh in seaplane operations. He was the test pilot for Sikorsky’s giant amphibian which weighed about 9,000 pounds. He set an unofficial altitude record with passenger load when he flew to a height of 18,500 feet with nine people on board. He was also the test pilot for the self-landing plane, which was a success in his demonstrations to the public.

Commander White was a linguist and served as a Naval Air Attache in Berlin in the 1940’s. He last served the military as Commander of Ream Field in San Diego, California. He was the translator for Dr. Wernher von Braun for the books “The Mars Project” and “Life on Mars” and wrote fluently in German to Dr. von Braun in many of his letters. His inventions included devices for improvement of spark plugs and propellers.

Commander White was a salesman and flight instructor for Lockheed, Mack Truck and Socony Vacuum and as a test pilot and sales manager for the Sikorsky Company. He retired in 1945.

Commander White died on May 31, 1962, and was survived by his wife, Kathleen, son Henry J. White, Jr., brother Walter W. White, and a sister Mrs. Norman Schaff.

Conditions Governing Access
The collection is open to researchers by appointment.

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Scope and Contents
One box, 13” x 15.5 x 5”, of Commander Henry J. White includes the personal and business letters written in both English and German. Also included are certificates and civilian identification such as a driver’s license, pilot’s licenses, mechanics licenses and National Aeronautical Association badges as well as various manuscripts and a scrapbook. There are also newspaper clippings and maps in written in German, English, and Spanish.

Related Materials
Naval Air Stations Subject Files.

Immediate Source of Acquisition
The materials in this Collection were donated to the San Diego Air and Space Museum.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Sikorsky helicopters
Lockheed Aircraft
Ream Field (NAS Imperial Beach)
White, Henry J.
von Braun, Wernher
Folder 01: Badheim University Certificate March 20, 1942
Folder 02: Civilian Identification January 1933 – February 1955
Physical Description: Paper describing Henry J. White having a commercial aviator’s license #248

Folder 03: Correspondence in English 1938-1947

Folder 04: Correspondence in English 1949
Physical Description: 1. Letter dated March 7, 1949 from James P. Hamill to Chief of Ordinance regarding translation of manuscript. 2. Letter dated March 8, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 3. Letter dated March 23, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 4. Letter dated March 30, 1949 with envelope from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 5. Letter dated April 19, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 6. Letter dated May 8, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 7. Letter dated May 17, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 8. Letter dated May 24, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 9. Letter dated June 3, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 10. Letter dated June 6, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 11. Letter dated June 8, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 12. Letter dated June 12, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 13. Letter with envelope dated June 13, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 14. Letter dated July 26, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Mr. White regarding the translation of his manuscript. 15. Copy of letter dated September 29, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to The British Interplanetary Society regarding becoming an Honorary Fellow.

Folder 05: Correspondence in English 1950
Physical Description: 1. Copy of a letter and envelope dated September 15, 1950 to Dr. Wernher von Braun from American Rocket Society Inc. regarding his manuscript.

Folder 06: Correspondence in English 1951
Folder 07: Correspondence in English 1952
Folder 08: Correspondence in English 1953
Folder 09: Correspondence in English 1954-1959
Folder 10: Correspondence in English 1986
Folder 11: Copies of Translation of Manuscripts in English
Folder 12: Copy of Untitled Manuscript translated to English pages 93-200 by Henry J. White
Folder 13: Various Identification Cards for Henry J. White
Physical Description: 1. 1 California Driver’s License dated May 1, 1952. 2. 1 Pilot’s License Dated June 18, 1939. 3. 2 Mechanics Licenses dated July 26, 1927 and July 31, 1933. 4. 1 Pilot’s License dated March 17, 1933. 5. 2 National Aeronautical Association of the U.S.A ID badges dated September 20, 1926 and July 31, 1928. 7. 1 Civil Aeronautics Administration ID Badge (n.d). 8. 1 German ID Folder dated August 28, 1941.
Folder 14: Miscellaneous Papers in English
Folder 15: Report on Air Trip London, Bangkok and Return
Folder 16: Commercial Cable Co. of Cuba and Western Union Cables 25 pages
Folder 17: “This Week Magazine” from the Arizona Republic Dated April 24, 1960.
Folder 18: Correspondence in German 1936-1949

Physical Description:
1. 1 cable dated January 17, 1936 written in German.
2. 1 letter dated July 26, 1948 written in German.
3. 1 letter and envelope dated March 23, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
4. 1 handwritten letter dated July 8, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
5. 1 handwritten letter dated July 31, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
6. 1 typewritten letter dated September 22, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
7. 1 handwritten letter dated October 11, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
8. 1 handwritten letter and envelope dated September 2, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
9. 1 handwritten letter and envelope dated October 26, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
10. 1 handwritten letter dated November 28, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
11. 1 handwritten letter dated December 25, 1949 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.

Folder 19: Correspondence in German 1950

Physical Description:
2. 1 handwritten letter and envelope dated January 27, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
3. 1 handwritten letter and envelope dated February 12, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
4. 1 handwritten letter and envelope dated February 20, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
5. 1 handwritten letter and envelope dated March 9, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
6. 1 handwritten letter and envelope dated March 15, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
7. 1 handwritten letter dated March 31, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
8. 1 handwritten letter and envelope dated April 24, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
9. 1 typed letter dated June 21, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
10. 1 typed letter dated August 4, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.
11. 1 handwritten letter and envelope dated September 18, 1950 from Wernher von Braun to Henry J. White written in German.

Folder 20: Correspondence in German 1951
Folder 21: Correspondence in German 1952
Folder 22: Correspondence in German 1953-1959
Folder 23: Manuscripts written in German

Physical Description:
1. 6 pages of an untitled manuscript in German.
2. 16 pages of the manuscript titled “MENSCHEN ZWISCHEN DEN PLANETEN” by Wernher von Braun given to Henry J. White for translation.
3. 8 page manuscript MENSCHEN ZWISCHEN DEN PLANETEN Franz Ludwig Heher paperwork.
4. 17 page manuscript of WIR BRAUCHEN EIN KOORDINIERTES RAUMFANTPROGRAMM by Dr. Wernher von Braun August 1953.
5. 18 pages of a manuscript titled Space Superiority by Wernher von Braun.
6. 17 pages NINEAUFGABE FUER DIE INTERNATIONALE WISSENSCHAFT LICHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT by Dr. Wernher von Braun.

Folder 24: Miscellaneous Papers written in German
Folder 25: 1939 Newspaper Clipping in German

Physical Description: 1. Newspaper clipping from July 15, 1939.
Folder 26: Various Newspaper Clippings in German, Spanish, and English


Folder 27: Weather related articles in German

Physical Description: 1. The Renseinments Meterologiques from May 28, 1926. 2. The Renseinments Meterologiques from October 17, 1949.

Folder 28: Map of Croquis in German from 1933

Folder 29: Maps written in English and German and Portuguese

Physical Description: 1. Paper map of Union of Socialist Republic in English (No Date). 2. Paper map of Australia in English (No Date). 3. Linen map of La Pampa (No Date). 4. Linen map of La Rioja and Los Andes (No Date). 5. Linen map of Chaco Boreal and San Pedro Paraguay (No Date). 6. Linen map of General Villegas Buenos Aires Date: 1929. 7. Linen map Carta de la Republica Argentina No. 46 Date: 1931. 8. Linen map of Islas Malvinas and Santa Cruz Date: 1937.

Folder 30: Vacuum Oil Company Advertising Department

Physical Description: 1. Scrapbook about the visit of Mr. White and Mr. Faust, August 1934 written in Swedish

1. Scrapbook about the visit of Mr. White and Mr. Faust, August 1934 written in Swedish