The Descriptive Finding Guide for the John J. Montgomery Personal Papers
SDASM.SC.10101

Alan Renga
San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
11/10/2014
2001 Pan American Plaza, Balboa Park
San Diego 92101
URL: http://www.sandiegoairandspace.org/
The Descriptive Finding Guide for the John J. Montgomery Personal Papers SDASM.SC.10101

Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
Title: John H. Montgomery Personal Papers
source: Wright, Wilbur
source: Montgomery, John J. (John Joseph)
Identifier/Call Number: SDASM.SC.10101
Physical Description: 1.44 Cubic Feet
Four archival boxes 5” X 10” X 12.5”. Many of the items in this collection were damaged by a fire at the museum in 1978.
Date (inclusive): 1858-1911
Abstract: John J. Montgomery was born in Yuba City, California on February 15, 1858. He attended St. Ignatius College and received a degree in physics. In 1883 he moved from Oakland, CA, to his family’s ranch on Otay Mesa. He began conducting flight experiments culminating in a glider which he launched in August 1883.
Conditions Governing Access
The collection is open to researchers by appointment.
Conditions Governing Use
Some copyright may be reserved. Consult with the library director for more information.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
The materials in this Collection were donated to the San Diego Air and Space Museum.
Preferred Citation
[Item], [Filing Unit], [Series Title], [Subgroups], [Record Group Title and Number], [Repository “San Diego Air & Space Museum Library & Archives”]
Biographical / Historical
John J. Montgomery was born in Yuba City, California on February 15, 1858. He attended St. Ignatius College and received a degree in physics. In 1883 he moved from Oakland, CA, to his family’s ranch on Otay Mesa. According to his biography, in that year he saw a flock of pelicans, studied their movements, and their shapes, and reasoned that if birds could be supported in the air, why not a man?
He began conducting flight experiments culminating in a glider which he launched in August 1883. This glider flew a total of 600 feet and landed safely. He continued his experiments with gliders, making a different design in 1894. In 1905 he moved to Santa Clara, CA, and became a Professor at the University of Santa Clara, and in the meantime designed and flew the Evergreen glider and continued his experiments. During this time, he patented various control systems. In October 1911, Montgomery was killed while flying his latest design.
Decades later, however, there emerged some controversy regarding the viability of his first glider design, though it is still largely believed to have taken place. In 1973 a contest was proposed to settle this controversy. There were no clear winners.
Scope and Contents
Four archival boxes 5” X 10” X 12.5”. Many of the items in this collection were damaged by a fire at the museum in 1978. Due to space and preservation requirements, the original collection has been reorganized within the original order. The original Monuments and Memorials folder was divided in two folders: Monuments and Memorials, and Montgomery Monument, focusing on the monument in Chula Vista.
Due to size, the John J. Montgomery folder was divided into two parts. The Glider Drawings and Information Files were divided into two parts. Additional materials found loose in the original container were assembled into The Additional Montgomery Articles and Information folder numbers I and II.
Note: Only items of particular relevance have been individually listed in the Box Listing.
Related Materials
Related SDASM Resources: Montgomery Manuscript Soaring Flight 1893-1895.
https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/sets/72157632368152612
Subjects and Indexing Terms
University of Santa Clara
Giders (Aeronautics)
Otay Ranch
Wright, Wilbur
Wright, Orville
Waterman, Waldo Dean
Chanute, Octave
Montgomery, John J. (John Joseph)

Box 01
Folder 01

Folder 02 - Montgomery Monument Information

Folder 03 - Glider Design
Physical Description: Information on basic Montgomery glider design, including: 1. A handwritten letter to Don Driese from Garland Godwin. 2. Drawings of glider # 1.

Folder 04 - Flights Otay

Folder 05 - Montgomery Manuscript & Correspondence

Folder 06 - Newsprint Articles
Folder 07 - Photographs of Montgomery Monument
Physical Description: Containing 23 items: 1. Photographs of William Chana at Montgomery Memorial.

Folder 08 - Articles on Newsprint from Flights Otay folder (containing 5 items):
Physical Description: 1. Is glider legend fact or fancy, San Diego Union-Tribune Nov.3, 1996.

Box 02
Folder 09 - Montgomery Glider Contest

Folder 10- Drawing of Control System.
Physical Description: This folder is restricted due to brittleness. (1 item)
Folder 11 - Montgomery Experiments
Physical Description: Containing 27 items, includes non-Otay Mesa experiments.

Folder 12 - Reproductions folder

Folder 13 - News articles & Information from film: “Gallant Journey”
Folder 14 - Montgomery lawsuit documents and news articles
Folder 15 - Montgomery patent correspondence
Physical Description: Containing 4 items: 1. Statement by Charles Perry regarding Montgomery research.

Folder 16 - Albert Arnhym folder
Folder 17 - Charles Leahy folder
Physical Description: Containing 1 item: 1. Affidavit regarding 1905 flight.

Folder 18 - Additional Montgomery Articles and Information

Folder 19- Waldo Waterman folder

Folder 20 - Octave Chanute folder
Folder 21 - Thomas Baldwin folder
Physical Description: 1. Letter from Thomas Baldwin to J.J. Montgomery regarding “great Ship”, June 20, 1903.

Folder 22 - Victor Loughead book, Aeroplane Designing for Amateurs
Physical Description: 1. Letter from Glenn Curtis to James E. Plew regarding Montgomery patents, Oct. 20, 1911

Folder 23 - Articles on newsprint from Glider Contest folder

Folder 24 - Photographs from the Glider Contest folder
Physical Description: Containing 2 items: 1. Thirteen sleeved photos of glider contest entries.

Folder 25 - Articles on newsprint from Reproductions folder

Folder 26 - Articles on newsprint from Waldo Waterman folder
Folder 27 - Articles on newsprint from Gallant Journey folder
Folder 28 - Articles on newsprint from Montgomery Experiments folder

Box 03
Folder 29 - Montgomery Glider Drawings and Information I

Folder 30 - Montgomery Drawings and Information II

Folder 31 - Articles on newsprint from Montgomery gliders and information folder I
Folder 32 - Articles on newsprint from Montgomery gliders and information folder II
Folder 33 - Articles on newsprint from Montgomery Monument folder
Folder 34 - Montgomery Monument folder

Folder 35 - General glider information folder

Box 04
Folder 36 - Articles on newsprint from J.J. Montgomery I

Folder 37 - J. J. Montgomery file I

Folder 38 - Articles on newsprint from J.J. Montgomery file II
Physical Description: 1. Article, California’s first flier, Harry P. Bagley, Sacramento Bee, Nov. 16, 1940.
Folder 39 - J.J. Montgomery folder II

Folder 40 - Rev. A. D. Spearman, S.J. folder

Folder 41 - J.J. Montgomery Youth Glider Program, Inc.

Folder 42 - Montgomery/Chanute correspondence folder

Folder 43 - Articles on newsprint from Montgomery family and genealogy folder
Folder 44 - Montgomery family and genealogy folder

Folder 45 - Correspondence from Everett Vail Church
Folder 46 - Winsor Josselyn Book folder

Folder 47 - Victor Loughead book, Vehicles of the Air
Folder 48 - Bob Wilson book on John J. Montgomery
Folder 49 - Martin Cole folder
Folder 50 - Wright brothers folder
Physical Description: 1. Article Montgomery’s information helps Wright brothers.

Folder 51 - Glider drawings folder
Physical Description: Containing 6 items: 1. Institute of Aeronautical Sciences drawings.

Folder 52 - Montgomery/Chanute/Wright correspondence folder

Folder 53 - Cemetery plot folder