

Lebaudy-Julliot Airship Postcards

SC-119

Special Collections and Archives
Paul Laurence Dunbar Library
Wright State University

Processed by:
John Sanford
November 3, 1998

Introduction

The Lebaudy-Julliot Airship postcard collection was purchased from New York City book dealer Gabriel Laderman (Zita Books) in early October, 1998. The collection's provenance prior to Laderman's is unknown, however it is said to have been purchased from France. Very little has been written about the Lebaudy airship, one of the first successful dirigibles. This collection of postcards provides good documentation of its early flights. Labels in French on the photographs provide good technical information, especially when read serially.

There are no known restrictions on the use of this collection. Copyright ownership is uncertain because the name and date of death of the photographer is not known.

Scope and Contents

This small collection consists of 26 different black and white, photographic postcards documenting the several flights of the "Lebaudy" airship in and around the Champ de Mars, Paris in November, 1903. The airship was moored in the hall of machinery building left over from the 1900 Paris Exposition at the Champs de Mars, near the Eiffel Tower. There is thus considerable visual documentation of the grounds of the Exposition. The pilot, M. Juchmès, and mechanic, M. Rey, are also pictured.

The postcards appears to be a nearly complete set from an issue of 30 postcards by an unknown photographer. Missing from the set are numbers 19 through 22. Number 5 appears to have been misnumbered as number 4. The first four postcards are autographed by "A. Salques" in the same hand of the addressor. All are addressed to a M. Martin at a Paris address. There are no messages so it might be surmised that the set was stamped, and cancelled, for purposes of adding to the potential financial value of the collection. All of the cards were mailed individually, but at the same time and day, January 24, 1904.

History

The Lebaudy-Julliot I was designed by French engineer, M. Henri Julliot. It was commissioned by wealthy sugar manufacturers Pierre and Paul Lebaudy. A nickname, "Le Jaune", was also given to it because of the yellow color of the lead chromate paint on its cloth envelope. The airship introduced the rigid keel in the form of an oval truss from which the nacelle was suspended. The craft's first flights seem to have taken place in November 1902. The Lebaudy-Julliot I is considered to be one of the most successful dirigibles of its time, making 63 flights in all. It was flown to the Champs de Mars, near the Eiffel Tower, on November 12, 1903. On November 20, 1903, the airship was almost completely destroyed when it drifted into a grove of trees during a landing attempt after a flight from the Eiffel Tower to the Park at the Chalais Meudon. It was later rebuilt and in 1906 was sold to the French government. The Lebaudy-Julliot combine went on to build other airships for France, Russia, Austria and Britain. Quite complete technical specifications are included in an article appearing in Scientific American, December 5, 1903.

Inventory

1. Landing at the Champ de Mars, November 12, 1903. 3/4 left front view.
2. Landing at the Champ de Mars, November 12, 1903. Right profile view.
3. Aeronaut M. Juchmes and mechanic M. Rey in the nacelle, November 12, 1903.
4. Rear view of nacelle, engine and propellers, November 20, 1903.
5. Airship at moorage in the Hall of Machines, November 20, 1903.
6. Detail of propeller, airship at moorage, Hall of Machines, November 20, 1903.
7. Detail, nacelle, airship at moorage, Hall of Machines, November 20, 1903.
8. Front of nacelle, airship at moorage, Hall of Machines, November 20, 1903.
9. Engineer, Aeronaut Juchmès in front of nacelle, November 20, 1903.
10. Mechanician Rey, and technicians from Lebaudy Company, Nov. 20, 1903.
11. Airship in flight from Champ de Mars to Chalais-Meudon Park, photographed from Eiffel Tower.
12. Preparation of airship for flight, November 20, 1903.
13. Airship leaving moorage in the Hall of Machines, November 20, 1903.
14. Leaving moorage outside the Hall of Machines, November 20, 1903.
15. Leaving the Hall of Machines, November 20, 1903.
16. Final preparations before the flight, November 20, 1903.
17. The airship at the moment of casting off, November 20, 1903.
18. Passing the Eiffel Tower, November 20, 1903.
23. Arrival of the airship at the Chalais-Meudon Park, November 20, 1903.
24. Wreck of the airship against a tree at the Chalais-Meudon Park, Nov. 20, 1903.
25. After the accident and the rescue of the aeronauts, November 20, 1903.
26. Wreckage of the nacelle, November 20, 1903.
27. The body and the nacelle of the airship after the accident, November 20, 1903.
28. Dismantling the framework of the body of the airship after the accident.
29. Envelope of the airship after the dismantling of the framework, Nov. 20, 1903.
30. The airship "Lebaudy" at moorage in the Hall of Machines, November 15, 1903.