

MS-134, Wright Memorial Commission Records

Collection Number: MS-134

Title: Wright Memorial Commission

Dates: 1912-1943

Creator: The Wright Memorial Commission

Summary/Abstract:

The Wright Memorial Commission was organized in 1912 to build a monument near Huffman Prairie in honor of the Wright Brothers' contribution to aviation. Records include minutes, financial reports, correspondence, and other materials that document the physical development of the monument.

Quantity/Physical Description: .4 lin. ft.

Language(s): English

Repository:

Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-001, (937) 775-2092

Restrictions on Access:

There are no restrictions on accessing material in this collection.

Restrictions on Use:

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Preferred Citation:

[Box #, Folder #], MS-134, Wright Memorial Commission Collection, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

Acquisition:

This collection was donated to the Wright State Special Collections and Archives by Phyllis Smith of the Miami Conservancy District October 1983.

Revisions:

The finding aid for this collection was reformatted and additions were added November 2012 by Victoria Penno.

Related Material:

MS-1 Wright Brothers Collection

MS-128 Miami Conservancy District Records
MS-136 Dayton Air Service Incorporated Committee

Processed by: Vicki A. Cooper, Fall 1983

Arrangement:

This collection is arranged chronologically.

Biographical/Historical Note:

The Wright Brothers Memorial dates back to 1912 when a group of Dayton citizens recommended that an appropriate memorial should be erected to celebrate the Wright Brothers contribution to aviation. In February of 1913, a sculptor was commissioned to design a memorial. March that year was the great 1913 Flood. Immediately after the flood, completion of the flood control projects by the Miami Conservancy District were given top priority, thus suspending further planning of the monument.

After completion of Huffman Dam in 1922, Colonel Edward A. Deeds reorganized The Wright Brothers Memorial Commission for the purpose of completing the memorial. The site selected for the memorial was Tate Hill, at the south end of Huffman Dam. The location chosen was significant in that it overlooks the site of the hangar where the Wrights prepared for their history-making flight at Kitty Hawk. It also overlooks the site of the first complete circle completed in flight in a heavier-than-air machine, made in September 1904.

The Miami Conservancy District Board of Directors approved a resolution in September 1938 to proceed with the design and development of a Wright Brothers Memorial Park. The labor to construct the memorial was provided by the Civilian Conservancy Corps.

The Miami Conservancy District Court approved an appraisal of the benefits of the park to the City of Dayton in January 1939. The City of Dayton has provided funds for maintenance since 1939, and the Miami Conservancy District has maintained the park.

The memorial and park were completed in 1940. The dedication ceremony was held on August 19, 1940. This was National Aviation Day and Orville Wright's 69th birthday. Orville Wright was present for the ceremony.

The city of Dayton requested the District to seek an alternate source of funds for maintenance in 1974. The District Board of Directors on December 31, 1975 authorized the transfer of property to the United States Air Force. Henceforth, the park and memorial shall be maintained by the Air Force for the people of the United States of America.

Scope and Content:

The collection contains a variety of material describing the organization and development of the Wright Brothers Memorial Park outside of Dayton, Ohio. The park was finished in 1940 and was opened on National Aviation Day. The park was transferred to The United States Air Force in 1975 who maintains the park to this day. Most of the correspondence in the collection dates from 1938-1940 when the memorial was being completed.

The collection contains correspondence from 1912-1943 dealing with the organization and physical development of the Wright Memorial. There are also minutes from meetings and articles of dissolution. Most of the correspondence is written by Ezra Kuhn, secretary of the commission, concerning the commission's business proceedings. The materials for the development of the memorial date from 1938-1940 and consists mainly of the correspondence of C.H. Eiffert, chief engineer, Miami Conservancy Commission and include extensive correspondence with the Olmstead Brothers, the landscape architects of the memorial. There are also financial records for the development and a summary leaflet about the memorial, its history and the transfer of ownership from The Miami Conservancy District to The United States Air Force.

Subject Terms:**Organizations/Corporate Names**

Wright Memorial Commission

Places

Miami River Valley

Dayton (Ohio)

Subjects (General)

Wright, Orville, 1871-1948--Monuments

Wright, Wilbur, 1867-1912--Monuments

Wright Memorial Commission--Archives

Material Types

Correspondence

Photographs

Newspaper clippings

Collection Inventory

| <u>Box</u> | <u>File</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1 | Correspondence and Records | 1912-1913 |
| | 2 | Correspondence and Records | 1914-1920 |
| | 3 | Correspondence and Records | 1922-1936 |
| | 4 | Correspondence and Records | 1938 |

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|--|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| | 5 | Correspondence and Records | Jan 1939-Jul 1939 |
| | 6 | Correspondence and Records | Aug 1939-Dec 1939 |
| | 7 | Correspondence and Records | 1940-1943 |
| | 8 | Financial Records | 1936, 1939-1940 |
| | 9 | History of Wright Brothers Memorial | Sep 9, 1978 |
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