

MS-471, Wright Company Records

Collection Number: MS-471

Title: Wright Company Records

Dates: 1905 – 1917

Creator: Wright Company

Summary/Abstract:

The Wright Company was formed in November 1909 with Wilbur Wright as President and Orville Wright one of two Vice-Presidents. In 1915, Orville sold the company to a group of investors, which later merged the company with the Martin Company. The records consist of copies of material from the Wright Company Records held by the Museum of Flight in Seattle, Washington. Included in the records are Wright Company board of directors meeting minutes, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and legal documents, including articles of incorporation, selling of the company, and the merger with the Martin Company. Also included are copies of ledgers that document a variety of financial transactions. The records do not include any information concerning Wright Company personnel.

Quantity/Physical Description: .6 linear feet

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-471, Wright Company Records, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

Acquisition:

The records in this collection are a copy of the original records held by the Museum of Flight in Seattle, WA. The copies were made in January 2004 by a staff member of Special Collections and Archives.

Location of Originals:

The original Wright Company Records are located at the Museum of Flight Research Center, 9303 East Marginal Way South, Seattle, WA 98108

Related Material:

MS-1, Wright Brothers Collection

MS-398, Wright Company Glass Plate Negatives

Wright Company Records, Museum of Flight Research Center, Seattle, WA 98108

MSS46706, Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Processed by: John Armstrong, May 2013

Arrangement: The Wright Company Record is arranged in one series.

Biographical/Historical Note

The Wright Company was founded in November 1909 with the financial backing of New York investors who were interested in backing the fledgling aviation industry. In January 1910, the Wright Company set up a factory in Dayton, Ohio, and established a flying field and flight school at Huffman Prairie. The Wright Company rented factory space from the Speedwell Motor Car Company in Dayton, from January 1910 until the Wright Company factory at 2701 Home Road in Dayton was completed in Nov 1910.

The brothers hired Roy Knabenshue, an experienced balloon and airship pilot, to manage an exhibition flying team. Although the Wrights were not eager to enter the “mountebank business,” as they referred to stunt flying and exhibitions, they recognized that an exhibition team would add to their income. The Wright exhibition team first performed at Indianapolis, Indiana, in June 1910. It stayed in business until November 1911, when the deaths of several team members prompted the Wrights to discontinue it. The Flight School the Wright brothers taught ran at Huffman Prairie from 1910-1911. Orville Wright and Charlie Taylor, their longtime mechanic, also set up a flying school in Montgomery, Alabama, from January to May of 1910, where Maxwell Air Force Base would later be located.

The summer of 1910 the Wright Company introduced what would become their most popular aircraft—the Wright Model B, which was produced from 1910-1914. Orville sold the Wright Company in 1915.

Scope and Content

The Wright Company was formed by the Wright Brothers in November 1909. In 1915, Orville sold the company to a group of investors, which later merged the company with the Martin Aircraft Company becoming the Wright-Martin Aircraft Company. The records consist of copies of material from the Wright Company Records held by the Museum of Flight in Seattle, Washington. The records are arranged in one series and organized into major concentration areas including: board of directors meeting minutes, correspondence, newspaper clippings, legal documents, and financial ledgers. There is no information on personnel who worked for the Wright Company.

The first major concentration area in Board of Directors meeting minutes, including a portion of the Wright Company by-laws. The records primarily document meetings held from 1909 to 1912 and 1915 when the company was sold. The second major concentration is correspondence. Much of the correspondence pertains to the Wright Exhibition Team and its director, Roy Knabenshue. The third concentration is newspaper clippings. Most of the clippings pertain to Orville's selling of the company and the later merger with the Martin Aircraft Company. The fourth concentration is legal documents, which includes the Certificate of Incorporation, the documents selling the Wright Company in 1915, and the Wright-Martin Aircraft Company merger documents of 1916. Finally, the last concentration of materials includes a copy of a financial ledger. The ledger documents a variety of financial transactions made by the company from 1909 to 1915.

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Wright, Wilbur, 1867-1912

Wright, Orville, 1871-1918

Organizations/Corporate Names

Wright Company

Wright Flying School

Places

Dayton (Ohio)

Subjects (General)

Airplanes - - History

Aeronautics - - United States - - History

Material Types

Meeting Minutes

Correspondence

Legal Documents

Newspaper Clippings

Ledger

Collection Inventory

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Chronology and Inventory of Wright Company Records at Museum of Flight, Seattle, WA	Undated
	2	Wright Company By-Laws	c.a.1909
		Board of Directors	
	3	Meeting Minutes	1909

	4	Meeting Minutes	1910
	5	Meeting Minutes	1911
	6	Meeting Minutes	1912
	7	Meeting Minutes	1915
		Correspondence	
	8	Correspondence Log	1910-1911
	9	Correspondence	1905-1908
	10	Correspondence	1909
	11	Correspondence	1910
	12	Correspondence	Jan.-Jul. 1911
	13	Correspondence	Aug.-Dec. 1911
	14	Correspondence	1912
	15	Correspondence	1913
	16	Correspondence	1914-1915
		Newspaper Clippings	
	17	Newspaper Paper Clipping Research List	Undated
	18	Newspaper Clippings	1896-1898
	19	Newspaper Clippings	1909
	20	Newspaper Clippings	1914
	21	Newspaper Clippings – Purchase of Wright Company	1915
	22	Newspaper Clippings	1916
	23	Newspaper Clippings	1917
	24	Newspaper Clippings – Curtiss-Wright Corporation	Undated
		Legal Documents	
2	1	Certificate of Incorporation and Shares Certificate	Nov. 22, 1909
	2	Reduction in the Number of Directors	Nov. 1914
	3	Selling Wright Company	1915
	4	Merger of Wright Company and Martin Company	1916
		Account Ledgers	
	5	Index and Ledger	1909-1911
	6	Ledger	1909-1915