

## **SC-323: McFarland Collection of Wright-Findley Correspondence**

**Collection Number:** SC-323

**Title:** McFarland Collection of Wright-Findley Correspondence

**Dates:** 1910-1928

**Creators:** Haskell, Katharine Wright, 1874-1929  
Findley, Earl N. (Earl Nelson), 1878-1956

### **Scope and Content:**

The collection consists primarily of correspondence between Katharine Wright Haskell and Earl N. Findley, as well as a typed copy of correspondence to Katharine from Lord Northcliffe. Also included are a few newspaper clippings, articles, and photographs. Topics of discussion between Katharine and Earl Findley include the possibility of Findley's writing a book about the Wrights; the patent lawsuit with Glenn Curtiss; the Langley Aerodrome; visits to Dayton; and other (primarily aviation-related) topics of mutual interest and concern.

**Quantity/Physical Description:** 144 Megabytes (1 PDF file, 75 documents, 243 pages)

**Language(s):** English

### **Repository:**

Special Collections and Archives, Paul Laurence Dunbar Library, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-0001, (937) 775-2092.

### **Restrictions on Access:**

There are no restrictions on accessing paper-based material in this collection. All electronic records listed in this finding aid are processed and available; however, researchers are requested to provide **two days advance notice** when requesting electronic records. Call (937) 775-2092 or e-mail us at [library-archives-ref@wright.edu](mailto:library-archives-ref@wright.edu).

### **Restrictions on Use:**

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### **Preferred Citation:**

[Description of item, Date], SC-323, McFarland Collection of Wright-Findley Correspondence, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.

### **Acquisition:**

This digital collection was donated to Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University Libraries, by Leigh McFarland, daughter-in-law of Marvin W. McFarland, in January 2019.

**Existence and Location of Copies:**

Reference prints of all pages are available in the Small Collections storage area.

**Existence and Location of Originals:**

The original items were auctioned by Christie's in New York on June 14, 2018. The current owner of the original items is unknown to Special Collections.

**Custodial History:**

The original manuscript materials were given personally by Earl Findley to Marvin W. McFarland, chief of the science and technology division at the Library of Congress and editor of *The Papers of Wilbur and Orville Wright*. Though the original manuscripts were sold at auction in 2018, these digital scans were made by the owner Leigh McFarland prior to the auction. The digital scans were sent directly to Special Collections directly by mail on a flash drive.

**Other Finding Aid:**

The finding aid is available on the Special Collections & Archives, Wright State University Libraries web site at <http://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/sc323.pdf>.

**Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:**

A computer with hardware and software capable of reading a single 144-megabyte PDF file will be required to view the original color digital scans (600ppi) provided by the donor. However, black-and-white reference prints are available.

**Related Material:**

[MS-1: Wright Brothers Collection.](#)

[MFM-117: Katharine Wright Haskell Papers.](#)

**Processing Information:**

Page numbers indicated at the lower right-hand corner of each page in the print reference copy were added by the archivist for ease of filing and do not appear in the digital scans.

**Processed by:**

Finding aid written according to DACS standards by Lisa Rickey, September 2019.

**Arrangement:**

The collection is arranged in original order, which seems to be chronological.

**Biographical/Historical Note:**

Katharine Wright was born August 19, 1874, in Dayton, Ohio, the youngest child (and only surviving daughter) of Bishop Milton Wright and Susan (Koerner) Wright, and a younger sister to the Wright Brothers. When Susan Wright died in 1889, Katharine assumed many of the household duties. Katharine graduated from Oberlin College in 1898 and returned to Dayton, where she taught Latin at Steele High School. She was a strong supporter of her brothers' work in aviation. In September 1908, when Orville was injured in the crash at Fort Myer, Virginia, she rushed to his side, ultimately resigning her teaching position for good. In 1909, she and Orville

sailed for Europe to meet Wilbur, as he was making demonstration flights in France. After Wilbur died in 1912 and Bishop Milton Wright died in 1917, it was just Orville and Katharine in the mansion at Hawthorn Hill for several years. It was much to Orville's dismay and disapproval when Katharine wed a long-time Oberlin friend and widower Harry Haskell in 1926 and moved to Kansas, where he was editor of the Kansas City *Star*. Katharine died on March 3, 1929, from pneumonia, at age 54.

Earl Nelson Findley was born May 29, 1878, in Xenia, Ohio, which is very near Dayton. He became a journalist with the New York *Tribune*, and around 1908 he began specializing in aviation reporting. It was actually in New York City that Findley first made the acquaintance of (and obtained an interview with) fellow Miami Valley native Wilbur Wright, during the Hudson-Fulton celebration in 1909. Findley later met Orville and Katharine as well and became one of Orville's closest, long-time friends, visiting Hawthorn Hill on several occasions. Shortly after serving in the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War I, Findley became an editor of the *U.S. Air Services* magazines, and he became its owner and publisher in 1925. When Findley died on July 11, 1956, Marvin McFarland wrote a piece *in memoriam* for which included the following:

*Earl Findley needs no monument of marble or granite. He built his own by writing, as he would put it, "a column a day" every day for all the 48 years since he first became an aviation writer. Total it up and you get the stupendous sum of more than 5,000,000 words—a lifetime of work in any man's language.*

*But Earl wrote more than that because he kept up a voluminous correspondence with friends, personal and professional, everywhere. To him a letter, like a piece for publication, was no cut-and-dried thing. It was something that came from the brain and was revised by the heart...<sup>1</sup>*

## **Subject Terms:**

### **Persons/Families**

Findley, Earl N. (Earl Nelson), 1878-1956

Harmsworth, Alfred, Viscount Northcliffe, 1865-1922

Haskell, Katharine Wright, 1874-1929

Wright, Orville, 1871-1948

### **Subjects (General)**

Aeronautics -- History

### **Material Types**

Correspondence

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<sup>1</sup> Marvin W. McFarland, "In Memoriam: Earl Nelson Findley," *U.S. Air Services* (July 1956): 7.

## **Collection Inventory**

**The original electronic PDF file of scanned documents can be found in the E-Archive at e-item sc323\_e0001, file “KW final.pdf.”**

**Reference prints of all pages are available in the Small Collections storage area.**