



## University Libraries Special Collections & University Archives

### Autogiro Company of America Papers

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#### Collection Summary

<b>Title:</b>	Autogiro Company of America Papers
<b>Call Number:</b>	MS 91-08
<b>Size:</b>	2.5 linear feet
<b>Acquisition:</b>	Purchased from Charles Apfelbaum Rare Books and Collections and Phillip Pirages
<b>Processed by:</b>	KFS, 7-13-1991; JWA, 5-1-1994; JEF, 10-14-1998; MN, 5-24-2011
<b>Restrictions:</b>	None

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#### Content Note

These papers relating to the Autogiro Company of America consist of business agreements, photographs, pamphlets, blueprints, correspondence, and technical reports. Early autogiro technology and the development of the aviation industry between 1925 and 1952 are the main themes throughout the collection. Besides the correspondence, the collection contains technical reports, business agreements, promotional pamphlets, photographs and magazine articles related to the manufacture of autogiros, rotorcycles, airplanes, and helicopters. Although the collection includes items from 1925 through 1956, most of the collection is from the 1930s.

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#### Administrative History

Initially the Autogiro Company of America, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was the licensing and patent holding company of autogiros with exclusive rights. The Pitcairn Aircraft Company, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, the parent company of Autogiro Company of America, manufactured the autogiro. (A second company, the Kellett Aircraft Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was also involved in the

manufacturing, but information about it is not included in this collection.) In 1940 Pitcairn Aircraft was acquired by AGA Aviation Corporation. In 1942 AGA changed its name to G&A Aircraft. Firestone Aircraft Company acquired the company in 1943.

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## Series Listing

Series 1	Box 1	Pitcairn Aircraft Company Correspondence, 1925-1946. Arranged chronologically, this series contains correspondence related to the early development of the autogiro and Pitcairn Aircraft Company who manufactured it. Correspondence includes both the initial letter and a copy of the reply made by the Autogiro Company of America. Most of the correspondence is from 1929 to 1939.
Series 2	Box 2	Aviation-Related Publications and Documents, 1925-1956. Pamphlets, technical notes, journal articles, blue prints, and photographs related to aviation. Arranged chronologically.
Series 3	Box 3	Burlington Transportation Company Documents. Copy of exhibits presented to the Civil Aeronautics Board by the Burlington Transportation Company.

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## Box and Folder Listing

### Series 1 – Pitcairn Aircraft Company Correspondence, 1925-1946

Box 1	FF 1	Contains correspondence (1925) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania. Correspondence regards the supply of brass and copper from U. T. Hungerford Brass and Copper Co. Contains correspondence to and from Black and Decker regarding electric drills, correspondence with Halcomb Steel about chrome vanadium.
Box 1	FF 2	Contains five letters (1926) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, C. B. Chupp, purchasing agent, regarding telephone service at the new address in May.
Box 1	FF 3	Contains correspondence (1927) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, H. F. Pitcairn, president, regarding the possibility of establishing an airport, and stock in the Aeronautical Expositions Corporation; Includes a letter from Truscon Steel Co., (8 September 1927) regarding construction of a woodworking shop at Bryn Athyn with blue prints. Contains letters from Department of Commerce (1 November 1927) regarding the PA3 and PA3A.
Box 1	FF 4	Contains correspondence (1928) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, regarding the possibility of establishing an interest in the Australian market (5 June 1928). Includes letters to and from suppliers of parts such as struts, starters, and ball bearings.

Box 1	FF 5	Contains correspondence (January-March 1929) to and from the Pitcairn Aircraft Co., contains correspondence regarding stock in the Aeronautical Expositions Corp., contains correspondence regarding advertising ideas. Includes correspondence with various companies requesting technical information.
Box 1	FF 6	Correspondence (April-June 1929) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., contains correspondence with the Maryland National Guard regarding the autogiro; Contains several letters with Nicholas-Beazley Airplane Co. Inc. regarding entry into the export market.
Box 1	FF 7	Contains correspondence (July-September 1929) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., contains correspondence with the West Coast Auto Parts, Tampa, Florida (August 1929) regarding the autogiro and the possibility of becoming a subagency; contains correspondence with various advertising agencies; contains correspondence with Bankers Casualty Companies regarding entry into a Distributors Agreement.
Box 1	FF 8	Contains correspondence (October-December 1929) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., contains correspondence with various aviation and engineer firms requesting information. Several letters reference a fire in the plant.
Box 1	FF 9	Correspondence (1930) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., miscellaneous business correspondence; Includes correspondence with Associated Aviation Underwriters (September 1930) regarding aviation insurance; resume for Albert L. Whitney, includes a photograph and advertisement. Contains correspondence regarding many air shows and flying the autogiro at them.
Box 1	FF 10	Contains correspondence (January-March 1931) to and from the Pitcairn Aircraft Co., regarding the hazards and problems in the flying industry that the autogiros will hopefully solve; correspondence with the Parks Air College, Inc., contains correspondence with Bendix Manufacturing (12 January 1931) and Transcontinental and Western Air Inc., (13 March 1931) regarding the manufacturing and distributing rights to the autogiro; Contains several reports from Bradstreet's, New York, with information on various business. Includes correspondence with Cox and Stevens Aircraft Co., regarding a business venture.
Box 1	FF 11	Contains correspondence (April-June 1931) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., with Fred Schaub of the War Department regarding the autogiro and promoting it for the private owner; Contains Bradstreet's reports on various companies. Includes correspondence regarding Juan de la Cierva's Wings of Tomorrow, including a letter from Kansas Senator Arthur Copper.

Box 1	FF 12	Contains correspondence (July-September 1931) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc. Includes correspondence regarding the book <i>Wings of Tomorrow</i> . Requests of information and suggestions on possible business ventures; contains correspondence with Dixie Air Service, Inc. (3 August 1931) regarding dealership possibilities; the reply contains facts about the autogiros; contains correspondence with Santa Barbara Airport, California (August) regarding the terms of the agreement. Includes correspondence with the Aeronautical Exposition Corp. regarding stock.
Box 1	FF 13	Contains correspondence (October-December 1931) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Contains correspondence regarding the book <i>Wings of Tomorrow</i> . Contains correspondence regarding the salvage of salvageable parts (30 October 1931). Contains a letter from William E. Berchtold about a chapter in his book concerning autogiros. Contains Bradstreet's report about Trans-American Airlines Co.
Box 1	FF 14	Contains correspondence (January March 1932) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, regarding advertising and promotional ideas. Includes a letter from G. Childs, Autogiro Co. to H. H. Haeberly, Jr., Pitcairn Aircraft (27 January 1932). Contains correspondence from Terrance F. Brown, Consulting Aeronautical Engineers (30 January 1932) requesting a job. Includes a letter from Dale Smith of the Stearman Company, Wichita (26 March 1932).
Box 1	FF 15	Contains correspondence (April-June 1932) to and from the Pitcairn Aircraft Co. Contains correspondence regarding partnerships to build the Vanderslip Engine. Includes correspondence concerning employment. Contains correspondence from various individuals requesting technical information on autogiros.
Box 1	FF 16	Contains a special memorandum from the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America (1 June 1932) and a booklet, <i>Draft of Memoranda Covering Procurement Situation</i> .
Box 1	FF 17	Contains correspondence (July-September 1932) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc. Contains correspondence with engineers to the Chilean Government (16 July 1932) regarding the use of Autogiros and terms of export sales. Includes correspondence regarding radio advertising with WLW Cincinnati (27 August 1932). Contains letter to Morris Hinkle Airways asking them to stop stunt flying the autogiro.
Box 1	FF 18	Contains correspondence (August-December 1932) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc. Contains correspondence regarding the sale of demonstration ships. Includes correspondence with flying services regarding establishment of flight instruction at several locations. Contains correspondence regarding the new cabin model in testing at the time.

Box 1	FF 19	Correspondence (January-March 1933)to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., miscellaneous business correspondence. Contains correspondence from Walter C. Hurty, Hutchinson, Kansas, then a recent University of Wichita, graduate with a B.S. degree in aeronautical engineering. Contains correspondence with 1st National Bank in St. Louis regarding using the autogiro for intercity mail. Contains specification for the Franklin Institute Model Demonstration. Contains correspondence from the Aeronautical Corp. of America (30 March 1933) regarding the changes in engines.
Box 1	FF 20	Contains correspondence (April-June 1933) to and from the Pitcairn Aircraft Co., Includes correspondence with Houde Engineering regarding engineering problems. Includes correspondence from Consolidated Aircraft Corporation regarding the sale of Kinner Engines. Contains a letter congratulating Agnew Larsen on becoming Vice President of Autogiro Company of America. Includes a letter thanking Otto Kappan for his dihedral information used in the PA-19.
Box 1	FF 21	Contains correspondence (July-August 1933), including correspondence with Andrew Lucas (10 July 1933) regarding rights to the Koolhoven plane. Includes a description of the plane and a photograph. Contains a memo announcing resignation of Edward Dasnaw.
Box 1	FF 22	Contains correspondence (September-December 1933) to and from the Pitcairn Aircraft Co., Contains correspondence with Larson regarding the Engineering Committee. Contains correspondence with W. C. Clayton, Chief Engineer, Eclipse Aviation Corp., New Jersey, regarding new technology. Includes letters from people seeking employment.
Box 1	FF 23	Contains correspondence (1933) to and from the Pitcairn Aircraft Co. and the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) and Department of Commerce, Aeronautics Branch. Original order retained. Contains correspondence regarding the engineering and testing of autogiros and assemblies for the PAA-1, XOP-1 and PA-19. It also deals with Mr. Cierva's visit to the United States.
Box 1	FF 24	Contains correspondence (1934) miscellaneous business correspondence and a list of pilot licenses issued to 3 February 1934. Includes a letter from Southland Motor Company regarding the refusal of an engine.
Box 1	FF 25	Contains correspondence (January-July 1935). Contains miscellaneous business correspondence with suppliers. Includes several letters requesting technical information on the autogiro.
Box 1	FF 26	Contains correspondence (August-December 1935). Contains miscellaneous business correspondence with various aviation and engineer firms requesting information. Includes a letter from Everglades Fire Control District (2 August 1935) regarding the use of an autogiro for fire patrol. Contains an accident report for 10 August 1935. Includes a letter to the American Trade Press Clipping Bureau regarding suspension of "Autogiro News" since 1933 (4 October 1935).

Box 1	FF 27	Contains miscellaneous business correspondence (1936). Contains a letter regarding engine trouble in an autogiro (29 January 1936). Includes correspondence with Robert E. O'Crowley (12 February 1936) that includes sketches of helicopters. Contains a letter from Gordon Hood, Syracuse Air Show (20 August 1936) regarding public demonstration of the autogiros.
Box 1	FF 28	Contains correspondence (1937) to and from the Pitcairn Aircraft Co., including information from the EDO Aircraft Corporation (January). Contains a letter regarding the inclusion of a Sperry Automatic Pilot in the Autogiro (1 July 1937). Includes a letter regarding a dealership in Portugal (26 November 1937)
Box 1	FF 29	Contains correspondence (1938) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc. Contains letters from suppliers with product lists. Includes a Navy Department Pamphlet "Theory and Practice of Magnaflux Testing" (2 August 1938). Contains a news release for National Air Travel Week (12 September 1938).
Box 1	FF 30	Contains correspondence (January-March 1939) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc. Contains correspondence from Bobson Statistical Organization including the booklet "Another Bid for Power." Includes correspondence from large machinery manufactures including photos and technical drawings.
Box 1	FF 31	Contains correspondence (April-June 1939) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Includes correspondence from large machinery manufactures with photos and technical drawings. Contains correspondence with Advance Engineering and Maintenance Company regarding construction of a flying model (25 April 1939)
Box 1	FF 32	Contains correspondence (July-September 1939). Contains a letter with E.M. Bradford regarding reversible propellers. Includes several letters with George Lane Motion Picture Engineer regarding using ultra-slow motion picture for research. Contains correspondence from large machinery manufactures including photos and technical drawings.
Box 1	FF 33	Contains correspondence (October-December 1939). Contains correspondence with the engineering department. Contains correspondence with George Lane.
Box 1	FF 34	Contains correspondence (1940) to and from the Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc. Contains correspondence with A. O. Evans, Chamber of Commerce, Monroe, Louisiana (2 July 1940) regarding a survey. Includes a letter from Memphis Chamber of Commerce regarding airport and possible expansion of aircraft plants. Includes weather data, photographs and map of principal rail lines entering Memphis.
Box 1	FF 35	Contains correspondence (1941) to P. H. Stanley Chief Engineer, Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., from Air Associates regarding the sale of radios.
Box 1	FF 36	Contains correspondence (1942) to P.H. Stanley, Pitcairn Aviation Co., Inc., from Wickwire Spencer Steel Company regarding propellers.

Box 1	FF 37	Contains correspondence (1943) to the Pitcairn Aircraft Co., from Sperry Gyroscope Company regarding Madame Chiang Kai-Shek's visit.
Box 1	FF 38	Contains miscellaneous correspondence (1946) addressed to A. Larson.
Box 1	FF 39	Contains undated miscellaneous correspondence arranged alphabetically. Included are "Technique for Airplane Pilot to observe in Flying an Autogiro" and "Military and Naval Uses of Autogiros."

## **Series 2 – Aviation-Related Documents and Publications, 1925-1956**

Box 2	FF 1	Contains miscellaneous documents including shipping orders (1925) and bills (1928).
Box 2	FF 2	Contains promotional pamphlets for the Pitcairn Aviation Co. Contains pamphlet announcing the "PA-7 Mailwing, PCA-2, and PA-19 Whirl Wing," with photographs and drawings. Contains an issue of "Today" (6 October 1936) with an autogiro on cover. Contains pamphlet (1943) "Some Facts of Interest about Rotating Wing Aircraft and the Autogiro Company of America"
Box 2	FF 3	Contains blueprints from the Wright Aeronautical Corporation, Patterson New Jersey. (1927) regarding a Revolving Final Assembly Stand.
Box 2	FF 4	Contains the "Agreement dated February 14, 1929, as amended between the Cierva Autogiro Company, Ltd. and the Autogiro Company of America."
Box 2	FF 5	Contains a second copy of the document in FF 4.
Box 2	FF 6	Contains unused copies of lease agreements. Includes license agreements. Lists patents and rights of licensees.
Box 2	FF 7	Contains miscellaneous telegrams (1929-1942) sent and received by the Pitcairn Aviation Co.
Box 2	FF 8	Contains "The Vacuum Oil News," (December 1930). Contains an article on the Dornier "Flying Boat" (p. 1-2) and "Autogiro Visits New York" (p. 10-11) with photographs.
Box 2	FF 9	Contains articles clipped from the Literary Digest, on aviation, (1931). Including "The Perils of Aerial Rescuers," "Hush! It's Uncle Sam's Mystery Plane," "Ruth Nichol's 'High Old Time,'" and "Scrambling for South America's \$8,000,000,000 Air Trade," (2 May 1931). Last article mentions the autogiros and has a photograph, "Piccard's Marvelous Plunge in to the Blue."
Box 2	FF 10	Blueprints from the Bendix Research Corporation South Bend, Indiana, (1931-34) regarding a shock strut, wheels, and brakes.
Box 2	FF 11	Contains pamphlets receive by Pitcairn Aviation Company with photographs of a helicopter.

Box 2	FF 12	Contains legal documents regarding purchase of Model 57 White Truck, Equipment Lease of a T180-11b 2bbl. outfit for the storage and handle of standard fuel. Includes an Agreement for Automotive Oils & Greases. Contains the shipping documents for one Aero Engine and Accessories.
Box 2	FF 13	Contains blueprints from the Houde Engineer Corporation Buffalo, New York, (1933) regarding engineered components.
Box 2	FF 14	Contains "The Mainspring" (1933-39) published by the Wallace Barnes Company, Bristol Connecticut, 20 issues.
Box 2	FF 15	Contains eight copies of a promotional pamphlet for the Pitcairn Autogiro Co. announcing the "Whirl Wing," with photographs and drawings.
Box 2	FF 16	Contains Pitcairn form blanks, including "Bill of Sale," "Subscription Blank" and a completed "Gasoline and Oil Record Pitcairn Field" (1939).
Box 2	FF 17	Contains blueprints from the Aircooled Motor Corporation Syracuse NY. (1939) regarding aircooled engines.
Box 2	FF 18	Contains "Opportunities for the Aviation Industry in Monroe, Louisiana" prepared by the Industrial Department Chamber of Commerce, (c. 1940). Includes maps and charts.
Box 2	FF 19	Contains miscellaneous information on airports and airport planning.
Box 2	FF 20	Booklet entitled Structural Testing at Strawberry Point published by the Glenn L. Martin Company of Baltimore, Maryland (1945). Contains many photographs.
Box 2	FF 21	Contains "Autogiro Company of America Schedule I." Lists patents and inventors, 1931-1947 (1947).
Box 2	FF 22	Contains two copies of the same document as found in FF 21.
Box 2	FF 23	Blueprints from the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Corporation, East Hartford Connecticut, (1948) regarding installation of aircooled engines.
Box 2	FF 24	Contains documents originally in a folder labeled "Rotorcycle Proposal II, De Lackner Helicopter, Inc., Mount Vernon, New York" (1955). Includes contract proposal for the rotorcycles and photographs.
Box 2	FF 24A	Contains the folder.
Box 2	FF 25	Contains a Newsletter of American Helicopter Society, Inc., (December 1956) with articles about the rotorcycle and photographs.
Box 2	FF 26	Contains a copy of "Ripley's Believe It or Not" advertisement that appeared in various publications (1956) featuring the Rotorcycle, with photographs.
Box 2	FF 27	Contains six copies of undated "Dealers Agreement" and "Appendix to Deals Agreement" for Pitcairn Autogiro, Pitcairn Aircraft Inc., Willow Grove, Pennsylvania.



Box 2	FF 28	Contains two promotional pamphlets; "Union Special Sewing Machines for Aircraft Operations" from the Union Special Machine Co., Chicago; "Junior Xacto Fuel Consumption Meter" from the S. F. Bowser & Co., Inc., Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Box 2	FF 29	Contains a pamphlet on propellers from the Fay-Egan Manufacturing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio.
Box 2	FF 30	Contains miscellaneous envelopes.
Box 2	FF 31	Contains a blueprint from Variety Mfg. Co., Dayton Ohio regarding aircraft tail wheels.

### **Series 3 – Burlington Transportation Company Documents**

Box 3	Contains a document labeled "Before the Aeronautics Board, Exhibits of Burlington Transportation Company" includes Docket No. 415, "The North Central Cases" and Docket No. 1615, "Application of Burlington Transportation Company," (c.1940s). Agnew Larson is listed as a reference for the company. Includes company history, maps for proposed air routes, schedules, public need, proposed fares, traffic potential, economic and census characteristics, financial, operation data, specifications of a helicopter, estimated expense and income.
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