



Early Aviation Laws and History Collection

Collection Summary

Title:	Early Aviation Laws and History Collection
Call Number:	MS 92-18
Size:	0.25 linear feet
Acquisition:	Purchased from Charles Apfelbaum
Processed by:	KJC, 1992; JEF, 4-24-1998; MN, 12-15-2011; LMM, 7-17-14
Restrictions:	None

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Content Note

The Early Aviation Laws and History Collection covers several areas of aviation from 1905 to 1920. There are rough drafts of papers, typed reports, press releases, and commentaries. The collection has two themes: international aviation laws and the creation of federal aviation laws in the United States. Included in the collection are building specifications and weight schedules of planes built by Gosport Aircraft Company.

Administrative History

The creation of a uniform international aviation code came about as a reaction to the rapid world-wide growth of the aeroplane industry in the early 1900s. The proliferation of aeroplanes had become so great, that by World War I the creation of an aviation code was seen as necessary to each country's protection. Aviation laws were essential to the safety of the pilot, as well as the surety of strong national borders.

In the past there had been questions raised amongst the European nations about the sovereignty of airspace in relation to national security. These problems were magnified in the advent of World War I. After the war, a joint European effort was undertaken to codify existing aviation laws, one that would be satisfactory to all countries. The United States was not invited to take part in these colloquiums,

nor did they wish to participate. During this period of reform, the United States was involved in its own internal effort to quilt a uniform set of federal aviation laws from existing state laws.

Great Britain, in 1909, was the first nation to address the possibility of government control of aviation manufacturing and aviation transportation. British laws became a reality when the first successful cross-channel flight in 1909 jeopardized Britain's national security. That year, under British encouragement, the first International Conference in Paris was held. During the conference a host of aviation problems, from the sovereignty of airspace to the spread of contagious diseases, were debated. While no laws were enacted, it was apparent that aviation law was soon to become a reality.

Great Britain's first aviation government office, the Department of Air Ministry, came about because of the insistence of the Royal Aero Club. This club was to be the catalyst for international aviation code. At the club's behest, Parliament passed a series of laws (The Aerial Navigation Acts) limiting entry of foreign aeroplane into British international boundaries.

Then in 1917 Great Britain formed the Civil Aerial Transportation Committee to organize growing civil and commercial air traffic trade. The Committee suggested that the government regulate all forms of British aviation, both nationally and internationally. The creation of the committee was an important gesture; it signaled Britain's intent to transform its military strength from naval to air power, and instigate European aviation reform. The European community of nations was not far behind the British, for it was realized that aviation had become a force to be reckoned with in the final phase of World War I.

At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 the Aeronautical Commission (a legal subcommittee) drafted the first set of international aviation laws, The International Air Navigation Convention. The laws were patterned after British aviation laws and dealt with both concrete and abstract principles. There were abstract principles such as freedom of innocent passage, the right to prohibit passage of questionable craft, and the landing rights of a distressed craft. Other principles related to aircraft markings, licensing, log books, and the rules of the air. The International Air Navigation Convention was the first single authoritative point of contract for the conduct of all international aviation affairs.

Even though the United States was a world power, its government had no impact on the code drafted by Aviation Mission; apparently the United States did not desire to be involved in any law-making other than its own. This was obvious when Congress censored any press releases involving the Aeronautical Commission. Although, the same year the Convention was drafted, Congress appointed a fact-finding committee to address American aviation problems.

The committee, The American Aviation Mission, was comprised of military leaders, aeroplane industry presidents, and the manager of the Manufacture of Aircraft Association. Its purpose was to keep pace with European aviation development, and to work out a comprehensive aviation law system. These aviation leaders were instrumental in drafting national aviation laws, and infolding aviation transportation under federal regulation. The American Aviation Mission presented their findings to Congress July 1919, about the time the Aeronautical Commission presented their law draft at the Paris Peace Conference.

The findings of the Aviation Mission, entitled the *Crowell Report* mirrored conclusions made by their counterparts, the Aeronautical Commission. The report supported the incorporation of state aviation laws into a uniform nation aviation code, one much like the International Air Navigation Convention. Yet unlike their European counterparts, the United States government would not validate the reduction of the armed services existing air forces in order to create one centralized air service. The United States was not ready to commit to a future military which would be reliant on air power.

By 1920 Europe had made a conscious effort to keep pace with and control a flourishing aviation industry. These industrialized nations realized the possibilities air power brought as a military weapon for the maintenance of secure national borders. The International Air Navigation Convention represented European cooperation to control the skies. On the other hand, in 1920 the United States

had just begun to unify state aviation laws and regulate United States airspace.

Series Listing

Series 1	Box 1 FF 1	Telegrams, written to and from New York and Bordeaux, France. Telegrams are written in a code and two telegrams are written in French. The telegrams concern a business transaction between Gosport Aircraft Company, W. W. Young of New York, and a representative of the Societe Transports Aeronautiques. 1919-1920.
Series 2	Box 1 FF 2-5	Gosport Aircraft Company Materials. Contains Gosport Aircraft Company advertisements and aircraft general specifications. Single page advertisements with description of seven airplane models sold by Gosport. There are copies of each description. Included in the series are blueprints, general specifications, and weight specifications of several airplane models. There are photos of Avion Farman Type F. 60 "Goliath" airplane, and a patent description and general specifications of dirigible shelters.
Series 3	Box 1 FF 6-7	Convention on International Air Navigation Materials. Contains manuscript-typed reports, drafts and correspondence concerning the Convention on International Air Navigation. Includes typed reports, releases, and commentary, all over the Convention on International Air Navigation.
Series 4	Box 1 FF 8-9	Aviation Laws. Contains materials related to Aviation Law. Includes various typed reports about U.S. state and federal aviation laws. Includes the complete <i>Crowell Report</i> .
Series 5	Box 1 FF 10-11	Paris Peace Conference. Contains notes, amended papers, and rough drafts of various typed reports of national aviation laws and the Peace Conference in Paris.
Series 6	Box 1 FF 12	Other Documents. Contains other documents including typed reports, newspaper clippings, and notices.

Box and Folder Listing

Series 1 – Telegrams

Box 1	FF 1	Contains the following telegrams: 6 October 1919 - From Gosport Aircraft Co. to W. W. Young; 24 February 1920 - To Pollack Hotel in Bordeaux written in French; 25 February 1920 - From Ginder (Societe Transports Aeronautiques) to M. Le Commandant, Pollack Hotel, Bordeaux; 26 February 1920 - Telegram; 3 March 1920 - Correspondence from Ginder to M. Le Commandant, Pollack Hotel, Bordeaux, written in French; March 1920 - From Bordeaux to New York, written in code; 7 March 1920 – Telegram, written in code; 7 March 1920 - From Ernest C. Bass, Biarritz to New York, written in code; 7 March 1920 - From Ernest C. Bass, Biarritz to New York, written in code.
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Series 2 – Gosport Aircraft Company Materials

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| Box 1 | FF 2 | Contains Gosport Aircraft Co. advertisements and general specs. Contains Gosport two-seater Touring Boat, Gosport Mail Boat, Gosport Patrol Boat, and Gosport “Popular” Type. |
| Box 1 | FF 3 | Contains Gosport Aircraft Co. advertisements and general specs. Contains Gosport “Shrimp,” Gosport “Fire Fighter,” and Gosport “G. 5.A” Type Flying Boat (four copies). |
| Box 1 | FF 4 | Contains Gosport Aircraft Co. advertisements and general specs. Contains two photographs of Avion Farman Type F. 60 “Goliath,” specifications of Avion Farman Type F. 60 “Goliath,” correspondence from Gosport Aircraft Co., Southampton, to W. W. Young, New York, 6 October 1919, general specs, of F. 5 Type Flying Boat, general specs. for Avro 504K Royal Air Force Training Biplane, and patent description and general specs. of dirigible shelters. |
| Box 1 | FF 5 | Contains Gosport Aircraft Co. advertisements and general specs. Contains a weight schedule for Type-Land R, model H-3 Airplane, six pages and a weight schedule for Type S-4, model S-4 Airplane, six pages. |

Series 3 – Convention on International Air Navigation Materials

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| Box 1 | FF 6 | Contains press releases. Contains a release dated 30 July 1919, “On International Air Navigation and Civil Aviation, Enforcing Air Ministry’s Regulations,” and comments on air navigation. |
| Box 1 | FF 7 | Contains papers related to Air Navigation and Air Laws. Contains <i>Comments on Air Navigation Convention, Air Law: Convention on Inter-Air Navigation</i> . Issued by the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference of the Allied and Associated Nation, and <i>Air Law: Items in the American Aviation Mission, July 1919</i> . |

Series 4 – Aviation Law Materials

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| Box 1 | FF 8 | Contains documents related to Aviation Laws. Contains <i>Laws of Connecticut</i> , chapter 86 approved 8 June 1911, 16 December 1919, War Department, <i>U.S. Army Airport and Flying Rules</i> , and 12 July 1919, <i>Massachusetts Aviation Law: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Laws of 1919, Chp. #306</i> . |
| Box 1 | FF 9 | Contains a document related to Aviation Laws dated 27 August 1919, War Department, News Bureau newspaper release of the appended report of the American Aviation Mission. Includes the <i>Crowell Report</i> . |

Series 5 – Paris Peace Conference Materials

- Box 1 FF 10 Contains drafts and other documents related to aviation. Contains a draft of *Digest of Earlier British Law: Aerial Navigation Act of June 2, 1911*, draft of *Air Law: American Aviation Mission, July 1919 Report*, draft of report on the Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers of the Peace Conference in Paris; and other related documents.
- Box 1 FF 11 Contains drafts and other documents related to aviation. Contains a draft of report on the Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers of the Peace Conference in Paris, excerpts from the *Crowell Report*; and other related documents.

Series 6 – Other Documents

- Box 1 FF 12 Contains other documents related to aviation. Contains a typed report dated 8 August 1919, on the use of alcohol as airplane fuel, typed report on “Brief Historical Outline of Lighter Than Air Ships,” typed report on the history of the Avre Machine, with general specifications, a letter to Mrs. Hardy Carter from “a cousin” concerning the war dated 28 May 1917, typed report on “Aircraft Developed by War,” newspaper clipping, “Airplanes ‘See’ in the Dark by Invention of Boy of 20 Years, It Is Revealed,” list of “War and Enlistments Efforts,” notice of “Atlantic City Airport: Order of Running Events,” and an announcement of fall meeting of the Princeton University Graduate Council dated 1 November 1919.

For information, please contact us at:

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