

Aeronautical Products Corporation Papers

MS – 179

Wright State University
Department of Special Collections and Archives

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Introduction

The collection of the Aeronautical Products Corporation (hereafter called APC) comprises the documents generated and received by this company and the principal individuals connected with it. Although the collection is made up mostly of correspondence, there are other items of a different nature that may be of genealogical and historical interest. The time period of the APC papers include the years 1929 to 1941.

The collection was purchased from Charles Apfelbaum by and for the archives of Wright State University on October 28, 1987. No restrictions have been imposed on the collection.

Brief History

Having been incorporated on July 24, 1929, and dissolved on or about December 31, 1931, APC existed for about two and a half years. With an office located at 803 Security Title Insurance Building in Los Angeles, California, its sole product, called the Distinctive Beacon, was a beacon light to guide airplanes to airfields and around obstacles such as high buildings and mountain tops. It was promoted as being unique insofar as it could flash combinations of interchangeable colors indicating a particular airfield or high building.

As far as can be gathered from the collection, few beacons were ever produced. Seemingly, all of them were for demonstrations. It also appears that the component parts were made by subcontractors and assembled at 218 Larchmont Avenue, Hollywood, California, probably the home of Albert B. Scott. The collection suggests that the patent for his invention, although applied for, was never cleared.

Three beacons were installed as demonstrators. One was located at the Grand Central Terminal in California which was the western terminal of the Maddux Airline. Sometime after the light's installation, APC was informed that the beacon could not remain there on a permanent basis. Another beacon was put on the roof of the club house of Sunset Field which was not an airfield. A third location was on top of the Austin hangar at Cleveland. This beacon was later given to the people of Cleveland where it resided on top of the Public Auditorium.

If none of the beacons were sold, it was not for the lack of effort. The collection contains documents showing APC to have been engaged in a considerable amount of advertising and marketing. Furthermore, it sent a great deal of promotional literature to prospective customers and it kept several lists of sales contacts. It is evident, however, that no beacons were sold. This is substantiated by copies of the California Franchise Tax forms which show no income for 1929, 1930, and 1931. Additionally, a letter from W.B. Mendenhall of October 28, 1931 indicates that APC did not do any business in the prior two years.

The main office holders of the corporation were Albert B. Scott, president and inventor of the beacon light, and two brothers, Thomas M. and Dushane Hyson. Apparently, Albert B. Scott was not very much involved in the daily operation of the company. It was Thomas M. Hyson, as vice-president, as well as Dushane Hyson, as secretary-treasurer and sometimes sales manager, who actually conducted the daily business. The Hysons seemed to have been quite wealthy due to holdings in real estate, stocks and bonds, in addition to gas and oil leases. In the vein of today's venture capitalist, they provided the start-up capital for APC. Thomas Hyson later furnished the seed money for the Los Angeles Speedway operated by Colonel Hubbard. Neither APC of the Speedway turned out to be profitable enterprises.

Even though there are no records of Dushane Hyson in the collection after 1931, documents of and in regard to Thomas Hyson continue to be numerous. Apparently, he had a somewhat difficult time during the Depression, having to put up many of his holdings as collateral for much needed loans. It also seems that he had to sell his home to the state for overdue taxes although it was later redeemed.

Other individuals prominently mentioned are Charlotte Hyson; Thomas Hyson's wife, who handled the family's private business affairs; and W.B. Mendenhall, Thomas Hyson's agent and business manager.

Scope and Content

The APC collection consists of sixty-seven files contained in three boxes. It has been arranged into two series. Series 1 covers the years 1929 to 1931, the life span of APC. The second series, 1932 to 1941, is made up of documents produced and received by the principal personalities involved with APC after it became defunct. The sub-series within each series have been arranged in alphabetical order, each dealing with an agency or person associated with APC. In grouping the sub-series, provenance has been given first consideration.

Series 1 is composed of twenty-six sub-series with fifty-two files. Some of the sub-series include both business and private correspondence. In these, the files containing the business correspondence appear first with the files of the private papers coming thereafter.

Series 2 comprises twelve sub-series of fifteen files. Since APC had been dissolved at the end of 1931, it deals mostly with the private documents of the individuals involved with the former APC.

The following files document the evolution of APC:

- File 3 – Deals with the organization of APC
- File 4 – Contains three California Franchise Tax copies showing the exact date of the incorporation and dissolution. They also show that APC had no gross income in 1929 and 1930, as well as not doing any business in 1931.
- File 5 – Deals with workmen compensation and the assignment of Albert B. Scott's patent. It also sheds light on APC's business activities and gives a slice of life of that period.
- File 10 – Contains a letter from Bosfort, Hurt, and Schumaker dating the dissolution of APC circa July 1932.
- File 17 – Includes a letter from Firestone Tire and Rubber Co., dated January 27, 1930, stating that it would not buy a beacon.
- File 23 – Contains the following letters: To Rand, McNally of August 27, 1929, explaining that Sunset Field is not an airfield; To Albert B. Scott, January 28, 1930, suggesting that he seek a patent in Great Britain; to various agencies involving several complaints.
- File 44 – Incorporates a notarized testimony, December 4, 1928, in regard to the erection of the first beacon light and a letter of September 2, 1929, presenting the Distinctive Beacon to the people of Cleveland.

These files may furnish some clarification regarding the life of the Hyson family:

- File 21 – Has letters of various private business activities including a letter of August 19, 1929, concerning a delinquent account at the Roosevelt Hotel.
- File 25 – Contains the business card of Thomas M. Hyson. In the same file is a policy from the Pan American Insurance Company that may indicate the approximate age of Thomas Hyson.

- File 26 – Incorporates a letter addressed to the Penn Hotel on August 12, 1929, showing that Dushane is the brother of Thomas Hyson.
- File 27 – Includes a letter to Richard Hile, Los Angeles, stating that W.B. Mendenhall was the agent and business manager of Thomas Hyson.
- File 31 – Consists of photographs of Thomas and Dushane Hyson and their associates.
- File 57 – Contains a maintenance agreement for the perpetual care of a family grave. In this file there is also a letter of April 2, 1932, from Dan C. Smith, attorney, regarding the precarious financial state of an orange grove.
- File 59 – Includes a letter concerning a much needed federal loan
- File 60 – Incorporates a tax receipt of December 5, 1934, showing that real estate had been sold for taxes and later redeemed.
- File 63 – Includes letters indicating the dubious financial status of the Hysons at this time as well as correspondence with Colonel Hubbard in regard to the Los Angeles Speedway.
- File 65 – Contains a letter, dated February 20, 1934, suspending Thomas Hyson from the Redland Country Club.
- File 59, 63, and 66 – Include the Stillion correspondence. These letters are of human interest insofar as they show the relationships of Thomas Hyson with his tenant J.C. Stillion and the latter's effort to evade rent payments.

The following files may be considered to be of historical significance:

- File 6 – Has foreign trade bulletins dealing with the Latin American and Pacific markets. It also contains a sales catalogue listing helmets, goggles, and flight jackets among other items. Of further historical interest is a booklet of flight instructions titled Modern Flight, copyright 1929. The inside cover holds the business card of the flight instructor.
- File 12 – Consists of Department of Commerce bulletins regarding the construction and lighting of modern airports as well as the designing of adequate and safe airports.
- File 25 – Comprises the European itinerary of Thomas and Charlotte Hyson as well as a Pan American insurance form. This insurance, dated 1929, was especially designed for business executives and might have been one of the first of its kind.
- File 30 – Consists of foreign invoices each having at least one foreign receipt stamp (marca da bollo) attached.
- File 34 – Is made up of job applications that give a slice of life of that period.
- File 60 – In general should be of historical importance. Among other items, it contains a letter of March 31, 1933 from the Iowa Traveling Mens' Association that makes mentions of the bank holiday. Also included are letters from the Stendal Art Gallery of June 28, 1930, and March 31, 1932, anxiously pleading for money indicating the tight financial situation of that time. Dated July 16, 1933, are a bill and tickets, as well as paper badges, for a Sheriff's Relief Fund.

File 62 – Contains two letters written in 1946 to President Truman by the Association of World War II Pilots.

File 67 – Is made up of a pamphlet published by AT&T circa 1941. It deals with the Bell System's war effort in World War II.

Container Listing

Series I: 1929-1931

<u>Box</u>	<u>Sub-Series</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Aero Digest Magazine	1	Advertisements, service bulletins, Western Aircraft Show, exhibit applications, convention reports, requested payments for overdue bills
	Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce	2	Sponsor of the Second Annual International Aircraft Exposition
	Aeronautical Products Corporation	3	Papers indicating the organization, financing, and hierarchy of APC
		4	Correspondence
		5	Correspondence received
		6	Assorted catalogues
		7	Business literature
		8	Photos, 15 prints of the beacon light
	Austin Company	9	Correspondence
	Bortsford, Hurt, and Schumaker	10	Correspondence
	<u>Cleveland Plain Dealer</u>	11	Newspaper clippings
	Department of Commerce	12	Various bulletins
		13	Literature regarding bidders and policies; list of aeronautical schools
<u>Box</u>	<u>Sub-series</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>
2	Department of Commerce	14	Correspondence
	Grand Central Terminal	15	Correspondence
		16	Photos, 13 Prints – 5 negatives
	Firestone Tire and Rubber Company	17	Correspondence
	Flintridge County Club	18	Correspondence
	Friel, Grant (Sales Manager)	19	Correspondence
	Hyson, Charlotte	20	Correspondence
		21	Correspondence received
	Hyson, Dushane	22	Sales Manager, Correspondence. There are several duplicates of promotional letters in this file either because of marginal notes or because they are addressed to close-by communities
		23	Secretary, Correspondence
		24	Treasurer, Correspondence

<u>Box</u>	<u>Sub-Series</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	
2	Hyson, Thomas M.	25	Itinerary, Pan American Insurance policy	
		26	Business Correspondence	
		27	Business Correspondence	
		28	Personal Correspondence	
		29	Personal Correspondence received	
		30	Invoices from Italian and Parisian shops	
		31	Photos, Austin hanger, 9 prints – 6 negatives	
		32	Photos, T.M. Hyson in front of General Tire airplane, 2 prints – 2 negatives	
		33	Photos, T.M. Hyson at Sunset Field, 2 prints	
		34	Job Applications	
		<u>Los Angeles Examiner</u>	35	Newspaper clippings
		<u>Los Angeles Times</u>	36	Newspaper clippings
		Mendenhall, W.B.	37	Personal correspondence for T.M. Hyson
			38	Correspondence concerning APC
	39	Correspondence received		

<u>Box</u>	<u>Sub-Series</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>
3	National Air Race Exposition, Cleveland, 1929	40	Correspondence, floor diagram, rules regarding attendance, list of exhibitors
		41	<u>Hollywood News, Los Angeles Evening Examiner</u>
	Newspaper clippings	42	Provenance Unknown
	Redland Water Co. Scott, Albert B.	43	Correspondence
		44	Correspondence, beacon light specifications, penciled copy of notarized testimony regarding the erection of the first beacon
		45	Correspondence received
		46	Testimonies of pilots regarding the beacon
	Second Annual Aircraft Exposition, St. Louis, 1930	47	Advertisement
	Suess, J.J. Millie	48	Correspondence with Charlotte Hyson
	Western Aircraft Show	49	Correspondence
		50	Photos of beacon on the grounds of show, 8 prints
		51	Photos of APC booth, 7 prints
	Wilkshire Common- wealth Corporation	52	Correspondence

Series II: 1932-1941

<u>Box</u>	<u>Sub-Series</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>
3	Bank of America	53	Correspondence
	City of Redland	54	Correspondence
	First Trust and Savings Bank	55	Correspondence
	C.J. Gibson Co.	56	Correspondence
	Hyson, Charlotte	57	Correspondence
		58	Correspondence received
	Hyson, Thomas M.	59	Correspondence
		60	Correspondence received
	Jonathan Club	61	Correspondence
	Association of World War II Pilot	62	Letters to President Truman
	Mendenhall, W.B.	63	Correspondence
		64	Correspondence received
	Redland Country Club	65	Correspondence
	Stillion, J.C.	66	Correspondence
	AT&T	67	Pamphlet: <u>All Out for Defense</u>