

MS-477 – Louis P. Christman, 1903 Wright Flyer Drawings

Collection Number: MS-477

Title: Louis P. Christman, 1903 Wright Flyer Drawings

Dates: c. 1947-1951

Creator: Christman, Louis P.

Summary / Abstract:

Orville and Wilbur Wright never constructed a complete set of drawings for any of their flyers or gliders. In the mid-1940s, friend of the Wright's, Edward Deeds, commissioned Louis P. Christman, to complete, not only a set of drawings for the famous 1903 Flyer, but also the 1900, 1901, and 1902 Gliders, and the 1903 and 1904 Flyers. This collection contains Christman's original drawings of the 1903 Flyer's Engine Support Rails and Wing Ribs. In addition, the collection also consists of 23 blue-line or "working" drawings of various parts of the 1903 Flyer.

Quantity/Physical Description: 3 linear feet

Language(s): English

Repository:

Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, OH
45435-0001, (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:

MS-477, Louis P. Christman, 1903 Wright Flyer Drawings, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

Acquisition:

Materials were purchased at auction from Cowan's in June, 2013.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

All materials are on paper and written in pencil. The 23 working drawings are in flat storage and stored in large folders. The other two prints are rolled on tubing.

Related Material:

MS-1 – The Wright Brothers’ Collection

MS-286 – Charlie Taylor - Howard DuFour Collection

Processing Information:

Materials came to us from Cowan’s wrapped in plastic and enclosed in cardboard tubes. They have been placed in acid free map folders and put in flat storage.

Processed by: Gino Pasi, November, 2013

Arrangement:

Due to its small size, no series or subseries for the collection has been established. The collection maintains the original order of its creator and is organized simply by the drawing itself. The 23 working drawings maintain the organization of Christman as well, who identified each with an alpha-numeric code, e.g. “B-2, Upper Center Wing.

Biographical/Historical Note:

Upon creating Carillon Park in the early 1940s, Colonel Edward Deeds wished to reconstruct the original Wright Brothers’ 1905 Flyer in one of the park’s buildings. As Orville and Wilbur Wright had never produced a complete set of drawings or blueprints for any of their flyers, Deeds commissioned Louis P. Christman to complete not only a set of drawings for the 1905 Flyer, but also the 1900, 1901, and 1902 Gliders, and the 1903 and 1904 Flyers.

Christman, (1893-1972), an employee of National Cash Register, worked closely with Orville Wright to produce an accurate set of drawings. In creating plans for the 1903 Flyer, Christman traveled to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. to take measurements and make drawings from the original 1903 Flyer displayed there and later the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia to study, and trace, informal drawings the Wright brothers had done. Back in Dayton, he would discuss these notes with Orville Wright.

Continued meetings and conversations between Orville Wright and Christman resulted in a refined set of drawings of the numerous gliders and planes. Christman, under the direction of Deeds, then began the restoration of the 1905 Flyer in 1947, on the grounds of the National Cash Register Co. Final construction and assembly was completed at Carillon Historical Park, where the plane was reassembled and fabric was stretched. The plane is on display there today.

In June of 2013, Special Collection and Archives purchased at auction Christman’s original pencil drawings of the 1903 Flyer’s engine support rails, an original pencil tracing of Flyer’s wing ribs, and 23 “working” drawings made from the original ‘03 Flyer including notations by

Orville Wright and Christman. These materials were purchased from Cowan's Auction in Cincinnati, OH.

Scope and Content:

The collection contains only drawings; no other supplementary materials are contained therein.

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Christman, Louis P., 1893-1972

Wright, Wilbur, 1867-1912

Wright, Orville, 1871-1948

Organizations/Corporate Names

National Cash Register Company

Places

Dayton (Ohio)

Subjects (General)

Airplanes - - History

Aeronautics - - United States - - History

Wright Flyer (Airplane) - - Design and Construction

Material Types

Drawings

Collection Inventory

Series I: Administration

<u>Location</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
WB 5	1	B-2, Upper Center Wing	c. 1947-1951
		B-3, Left Upper Wing	c. 1947-1951
		B-4, Right Upper Wing	c. 1947-1951
		B (5)-1 Lower Center Wing	c. 1947-1951
		B-5, Wing Struts	c. 1947-1951
		G-2, Rear Rudder	c. 1947-1951
		G-3, Strut Diagram	c. 1947-1951
		G(3)-1, Control Wire	c. 1947-1951
		F-2, Elevator	c. 1947-1951
		F(2) 1 Canard - Front Rudder	c. 1947-1951

<u>Location</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
WB 5	1	D(5)-1, Right/Aft Side Propeller	c. 1947-1951
		D-5, Tubes & Chain	c. 1947-1951
		D-4, Chain Rollers	c. 1947-1951
		D-3, Fly Wheel	c. 1947-1951
WB 5	2	E-2, Struts & Runners	c. 1947-1951
		E-3, Strut Support Brackets & Front Rudder	c. 1947-1951
		E-4, Front Rudder	c. 1947-1951
		E-5, Control Wire Pulley	c. 1947-1951
		C (3)-1 Strut Diagrams	c. 1947-1951
		C-3, Skid Rail Cross Tie	c. 1947-1951
		C-2, Skid Rail Connectors	c. 1947-1951
		D-2, Propellers & Shaft	c. 1947-1951
		E (5)-1, Front Elevation-Pilot's Cradle	c. 1947-1951
WB 5	Roll	Original Pencil Tracing of Wing Ribs of 1903 Flyer	c. 1947-1951
		Original Pencil Drawing of 1903 Flyer Support Rails	c. 1947-1951