

Guide to the Stanley Yale Beach Papers

GEN MSS 802



by Sandra Markham

2012

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 802

CREATOR: Beach, Stanley Yale

TITLE: Stanley Yale Beach papers

DATES: 1911–1948

BULK DATES: 1917–1933

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 5.42 linear feet (14 boxes)

LANGUAGE: In English, German, and French.

SUMMARY: The papers primarily contain correspondence between Stanley Yale Beach and his family, friends, and colleagues in the aeronautical and engineering fields. The bulk of the collection is his correspondence with engineers and manufacturers, in particular those in Germany, as well as with his friend, poet Harry Arthur Powell. A small group of files reveal Beach's investigation into the missing French aviators Charles Nungesser and François Coli, and his relationship with the New York clairvoyant Mrs. Almira Gaylord Beach, who practiced as Vesta la Viesta. Family correspondence largely deals with Beach's chaotic personal life and finances, and a group of legal and financial files serve as well to document that aspect of his life. Also present is a group of early aviation and engineering photographs, some including American Brigadier General William Mitchell, and ephemera related to Beach's personal and professional interests.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.beach>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.beach>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from William Reese Company (Swann Galleries sale, 2010 March 18, lot 43) on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2010.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Stanley Yale Beach Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Stanley Yale Beach Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

Collection are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

When the papers were received by the library, certain materials (particularly photographs, newspaper clippings, and letters from certain correspondents) had been separated out and put in files to advertise their prominence in the collection; most of the papers were folded and in their original envelopes. The collection was arranged and described in 2012.

Stanley Yale Beach (1877-1955)

Stanley Yale Beach, an American inventor, descended from a prominent family of noted inventors, engineers, and publishers in New York and Connecticut. His great-grandfather was Moses Yale Beach (1800-1868), an inventor, publisher of the *New York Sun*, and founder of the Associated Press. His grandfather was Alfred Ely Beach (1826-1896), for fifty years the editor and publisher of the journal *Scientific American*, though best remembered for two of his inventions, a Braille typewriter for the blind and the Beach Pneumatic Railway, the first subterranean transit system in New York City. His father was Frederick Converse Beach (1848-1918), an 1868 graduate of the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University, a New York patent attorney, photographer, founding editor of the journal *American Amateur Photographer*, publisher and editor of *Scientific American*, and editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopedia Americana*.

Stanley Yale Beach was born on July 9, 1877, in Stratford, Connecticut, to Frederick and Margaret Gilbert Beach. Like his father, he attended the Sheffield Scientific School, graduating in 1898, and afterward developed a lifetime interest in aeronautics, engineering, and inventing. In 1897 Beach eloped with Helen

Birdseye Curtis, a student at Wellesley College and a resident of Stratford, where the couple settled and raised their children Frederick, Alfred, and Margaret. Even though he had a career as first "Automobile Editor" and then "Aeronautic Editor" of *Scientific American*, Beach appears to have been primarily supported by income from a trust set up by his father in 1914, and by checks received periodically from his mother. During the week Beach operated out of the Beach Building at 125 East 23rd Street in New York City, and from there ran various entrepreneurial enterprises such as the Beach Engineering Company, the Beach Laboratories, the Scientific Aeroplane Company, and associations including the Aero Science Club. Also during the week and in New York, Beach maintained an apartment and a secret second family: his paramour Marie Danner, also known as Caroline Watson, and their daughter Winifred, also known as Marguerite. Helen Beach was aware of her husband's infidelity from Winifred's birth in 1908, but refused his request to grant him a divorce so that he might marry Marie and allow Winifred to be legally recognized in the Beach family inheritance his other children would receive. His wife, sister, son, and other family members collaborated to suspend Beach's trust payments when the affair became public in 1925, and when Beach subsequently took them to court, the proceedings were covered in the New York newspapers with headlines such as "Stirs Skeleton of Blue Bloods." Stanley and Helen Beach were divorced in 1928 and he married Marie Danner on June 14 of that year.

Although he fell out with most of the members of his family over his finances and life choices, Beach maintained a good relationship with his wealthy aunt, Jennie Beach Gasper, who was one of his trustees. He was also a favorite of his grandmother, Harriet Holbrook Beach, who had developed a great interest in Spiritualism. Within a year of her husband Alfred's death Harriet Beach married a medium, Henry Richardson Rogers, in Alexandria, Egypt, and soon after her two children, upon finding that their mother had signed their late father's significant fortune over to Rogers, began legal proceedings to declare her mentally incompetent; they succeeded, and the marriage was annulled in May 1899. A quarter-century later, Stanley Yale Beach also took an interest in Spiritualism and formed a friendship with the blind New York clairvoyant Vesta la Viesta, known for her detailed public presentations on her journeys to Mars and Venus. He appears to have worked as a secretary to her, and used the verso of her letterhead to make carbon copies of his outgoing correspondence.

Stanley Yale Beach died in New City, New York, on July 13, 1955.

Beach Family Tree

Principal correspondents are underlined.

Moses Yale Beach (1800-1868) m. Nancy Day

- - **1** Alfred Ely Beach (1826-1896) m. 1847 Harriet Eliza Holbrook (1828-1905)
- - - - **2** Frederick Converse Beach (1848-1918) m. 1875 Margaret Allen Gilbert (1848-1932)
- - - - - **3** Stanley Yale Beach (1877-1955) m. 1897-1928 Helen Birdseye Curtis (1878-1947)
- - - - - - **4** Frederick Converse Beach (1898-1940) m. 1934 Matilda Florence Sparling (1911-1941)
- - - - - - - **4** Alfred Birdseye Beach (1899-1985) m. ca. 1929 Alice Elizabeth Perkins (1901-1978)
- - - - - - - **4** Margaret Stanley Beach (1901-1983) m. 1933 Elwyn Moore Deakins (1905-1986)
- - - - - - - m. 2nd 1928 Marie Danner [also known as Caroline Watson] (1888-1961)
- - - - - - - **4** Winifred [also known as Marguerite] (1908-2002) m. 1933 Leonard Martin
- - - - - **3** Alfred Gilbert Beach (1879-1890)
- - - - - **3** Ethel Holbrook Beach (1886-1937) m. 1909 James Albert Wales (1879-1970)
- - - - - - **4** James A. Wales Jr. (1913-1985)
- - - - - - - **4** Richard B. Wales (1917-2009)
- - - - - - - **4** Nancy Holbrook Wales (b. 1927) m. 1947 Gordon Douglas Swaffield (1919-2003)
- - - - **2** Jennie Holbrook Beach [called "Tante"] (1850-1932) m. 1896 Marquis Cossitt Gasper (d. 1908)

Scope and Contents

The papers primarily contain correspondence between Stanley Yale Beach and his family, friends, and colleagues in the aeronautical and engineering fields. The bulk of the collection is his correspondence with

engineers and manufacturers, in particular those in Germany, as well as with his friend the poet Harry Arthur Powell. A small group of files reveal Beach's investigation into the missing French aviators Charles Nungesser and François Coli. Family correspondence largely deals with Beach's chaotic personal life and finances, and a group of legal and financial files serve as well to document that aspect of his life. Also present is a group of early aviation and engineering photographs, and ephemera related to Beach's personal and professional interests.

Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. General Correspondence and Photographs, 1911-1948. II. Family Correspondence and Personal Papers, 1915-1933. III. Other Papers, 1924-1935.

Collection Contents

Series I: General Correspondence and Photographs, 1911-1948

3.13 linear feet (8 boxes)

The series contains correspondence with Beach’s friends and professional colleagues, including engineers, aviators, manufacturers, and others working in aeronautical and mechanical pursuits. Several files hold both sides of the correspondence, as Beach kept carbon copies of many of his outgoing letters, typed or handwritten. In addition to research for his own projects, he was often trying to interest potential investors in his ideas and inventions, and topics covered in the letters include television systems, astrology, patents, patent attorneys, inventors, oil exploration, and aeronautical fabrics. Prominent among the correspondents are the German engineers Nikolaus Basenach, C. W. Erich Meyer, and Max U. Schoop; manufacturers such as the Centrifugal Hammer Company; aviators such as Frank C. Wright (François Raiche); and inventors including Henry House and Ernest Peter Vincent. One of the largest sets of correspondence is with Harry Arthur Powell, a friend and poet who had worked for a time for *Scientific American*. Also in the series is his correspondence with the psychic Mrs. Almira Gaylord Beach (familial relationship to Stanley Beach unknown) who practiced under the name Vesta la Viesta, and some correspondence she had received from others. Beach appears to have worked for her, as well as having consulted her for his investigation of the fate of the French aviators Charles Nungesser and François Coli, whose biplane, the White Bird, disappeared in 1927 while attempting the first non-stop transatlantic flight between Paris and New York. Also present is Beach’s correspondence with M. A. Thoms of Toronto, J. T. Richards at the Anglican Mission of Flower’s Cove, Newfoundland, and John Stone, a local resident who heard the White Bird pass overhead. In a single letter to Howard Hughes, Beach asks for an appointment to present his plans for a dirigible for Hughes’s use; his reply is not in the papers.

Photographs follow the correspondence files; some may have once been enclosed in letters but were later separated, while others may have been collected or taken by Beach. The images are predominantly related to aeronautics and engineering, and had already been grouped by subject before the Beach papers arrived at the library. Among the photographs are a set related to a stunt flying event at the airfield in Mineola, on New York’s Long Island; noted American Brigadier General William (Billy) Mitchell is among the participating aviators. Additional photographs appear in correspondence files in this series, in particular the folders for Basenach and Meyer which contain early aviation images, and Schoop, a pioneer developer of thermal spray devices for coating metals, whose letters included photographs of him and his tools.

Series I is organized into two subseries: Correspondence and Photographs.

Correspondence		
Folders of chronologically arranged general correspondence follow the alphabetically arranged files.		
b. 1, f. 1	Adams, Evangeline	1930 July 11
b. 1, f. 2	Aero Corporation of America	1926
b. 1, f. 3	Aero Science Club	1925-1927
b. 1, f. 4	Aircraft Development Corporation	1925
b. 1, f. 5	Airships Incorporated	1924
b. 1, f. 6	Altherr, John	1927-1931
b. 1, f. 7	American Institute of the City of New York	1925-1927
b. 1, f. 8	Atkinson, William Mayo	1926

Correspondence (continued)

b. 1, f. 9-11	Basenach, Nikolaus	1925-1931, undated
b. 1, f. 12-13	Beach, Almira Gaylord (Vesta la Viesta)	1927-1931
b. 1, f. 14	Bureau for Scientific Investigation and Demonstration of Psychic Phenomena	1932-1933
b. 2, f. 15	Centrifugal Hammer Company	1926
b. 2, f. 16	Cohen, Ch. R., Miss	1926
b. 2, f. 17	Cotton, Sidney	1927 August 9
b. 2, f. 18	Curtiss, Sadie	1926-1933
b. 2, f. 19	Dey, Harry E.	1926 June 23
b. 2, f. 20	Dickson, William Bradford	1920
b. 2, f. 21	Durant, Ed	1924-1931
b. 2, f. 22	Fraprie, Frank Roy	1932 -1933
b. 2, f. 23	Gluck, M. B.	1931-1932
b. 2, f. 24	Goldberg, Israel	1928
b. 2, f. 25	Gregory, Elizabeth Hiatt	1931
b. 2, f. 26	Grey, C. G. (Charles Grey)	1924-1930
b. 2, f. 27	Hart, M. M.	1921
b. 2, f. 28	Harworth, Julius W.	1924-1931
	Heinen, Anton See: Aero Corporation of America	
b. 2, f. 29	Heinkel, E.	1929
b. 2, f. 30	Hopkins, William Perry	1931-1932
b. 2, f. 31	House, Henry A.	1920-1930
b. 2, f. 32	Hughes, Howard	1930 Oct 2
b. 2, f. 33	Jarosch, W. M.	1926
b. 2, f. 34	Kettler, Fred	1924-1926
b. 2, f. 35	Knight, William	1927, 1930
b. 3, f. 36	Lescarbours, Austin C. (Austin Celestin)	1924-1933
b. 3, f. 37	Lewis, Henry E.	1924
	Martin, Robert P. See: Centrifugal Hammer Company	

Correspondence (continued)

b. 3, f. 38-41	Meyer, C. W. Erich	1922-1931, undated
b. 3, f. 42	Miller and Miller	1928
b. 3, f. 43	Nydegger, James A.	1930
b. 3, f. 44	O'Brien, Eoghan	1930-1932
b. 3, f. 45	Pelman Institute of America	1927-1928
b. 3, f. 46	Petzoldt, Clara	undated
b. 3, f. 47	Pluecker, Max A. and Katherine D.	1919-1926
b. 3, f. 48	Polglase, Julyan	1919-1930
b. 3, f. 49	Pollock, Leland Wells	1931-1932
b. 3, f. 50	Postal Telegraph-Cable Company	1927
b. 4, f. 51-55	Powell, H. Arthur (Harry Arthur)	1924-1933
	Raiche, François See: Wright, Frank C.	
b. 5, f. 56	Richards, J. T.	1927
b. 5, f. 57	Rush, Ada L.	1930, 1931
b. 5, f. 58	Schoop, Max Ulrich	1927-1931
b. 5, f. 59	Scientific American	1912-1926
b. 5, f. 60	Scott, Emma Louise	1927
b. 5, f. 61	Shadecki, William J.	1924-1927
b. 5, f. 62	Slady, J. D.	1924-1925
b. 5, f. 63-64	Stevens, A. Leo (Albert Leo)	1911-1931
b. 5, f. 65	Stone, John	1927
b. 5, f. 66	Thoms, M. A.	1927-1928
	Viesta, Vesta la See: Beach, Almira Gaylord	
b. 5, f. 67-68	Vincent, Ernest Peter	1927-1948
b. 5, f. 69	Walter H. Baker Company	1930
b. 5, f. 70	Willis, F. Milton	1925-1932
b. 5, f. 71	Wright, Frank C.	1920-1933
b. 6, f. 72-73	Zimmerman, James G.	1928-1931

Correspondence (continued)

b. 6, f. 74-77	General correspondence	1914-1927
b. 7, f. 78-81	General correspondence	1928-1933
b. 7, f. 82	General correspondence	undated
b. 7, f. 83	Letter fragments	undated
b. 7, f. 84-85	Empty envelopes	undated
Photographs		
b. 8, f. 86	Dirigibles	undated
b. 8, f. 87	Model airplanes	undated
b. 8, f. 88	Motors and engineering	undated
b. 8, f. 89	Motor vehicles	undated
b. 8, f. 90	Seaplanes	undated
b. 8, f. 91	Stunt flying, Mineola, New York Includes photographs of Brigadier General William Mitchell	undated
b. 8, f. 92	Family Also contains unlabeled photographs of an elderly woman who may be Jennie Beach Gasper, Margaret Gilbert Beach, or possibly Almira Beach (Vesta la Viesta)	undated
b. 8, f. 93	Miscellaneous	undated

Series II: Family Correspondence and Personal Papers, 1915-1933

1.67 linear feet (4 boxes)

The series contains Beach's correspondence with his mother, aunt, children, cousins, and others, primarily related to the financial and legal issues with which Beach vexed his family over many years. Also present are folders of insurance and financial documents, the latter mostly related to his disputes with banks and firms to which he owed money for services rendered. Following those are legal files largely regarding the administration of Beach's trust account and his attempts to engage counsel to argue on his behalf against his family and various business firms.

Series II is organized into two subseries: Correspondence and Personal Papers.

Correspondence		
b. 9, f. 94-95	Beach, Frederick Converse See also: Powell, H. Arthur (in Series I, box 4, folder 52)	1919-1933
b. 9, f. 96	Beach, Helen Birdseye Curtis	1916-1925
b. 9, f. 97	Beach, Hubert C.	1920-1931
b. 9, f. 98-101	Beach, Margaret	1914-1931
b. 10, f. 102	Beach, Winifred	1931-1933
b. 10, f. 103	Deakins, Margaret Beach	1931-1932
b. 10, f. 104-105	Gasper, Jennie Beach	1915-1931
b. 10, f. 106-107	Rider, Stanley Forbes	1928-1933
b. 10, f. 108	Wales, James Albert, and Ethel Holbrook Beach	1919-1933
b. 10, f. 109	Family, miscellaneous	1923-1928
Personal Papers		
b. 11, f. 110-113	Financial papers	1917-1933
b. 11, f. 114-115	Insurance papers	1924-1932
b. 12, f. 116-134	Legal papers	1914-1933, undated

Series III: Other Papers, 1924-1935*0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)*

The series holds miscellaneous material, primarily ephemera, related to Beach's life and work. The clippings were cut from newspapers; some may have been enclosed in letters in Series I and II, but were later separated and grouped together before the collection arrived at the library. The topics are varied but many are stories and news reports on themes predominant in Beach's life: airplanes, divorces, and inheritances. Technology ephemera contains published brochures and trade catalogs for machines, air and motor vehicles, and other advances such as the Telegraphone; it also contains a copy of Beach's own brochure "To Make America the Birth Place of the Vertically Rising Aeroplane" with one of his business cards. Writings contains manuscripts, typescripts, and printed versions of writings by Beach. The final folders contain scraps of paper and other ephemera too varied for classification.

Series III is arranged in alphabetical order.

b. 13, f. 135-137	Newspaper clippings	circa 1924-1933
b. 13, f. 138	Psychic readings, diary notes, lists	undated
b. 13, f. 139	<i>Scientific American</i> issues	1933-1935
b. 13, f. 140	Technology ephemera	undated
b. 13, f. 141	Theatre programs	1927-1933
b. 13, f. 142-143	Writings	undated
b. 14, f. 144-146	Miscellaneous ephemera and papers	undated

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Aeronautical engineers -- Germany
Aeronautical engineers -- United States
Aeronautics -- Germany
Aeronautics -- United States
Airplanes -- Germany
Airplanes -- United States
Airships -- United States
Clairvoyance -- United States
Clairvoyants -- United States
Inventors -- United States
Psychic ability -- United States
Psychic readings -- United States

Corporate Bodies

Aero Science Club
Beach Engineering Company

Genres / Formats

Photographs -- Germany -- 20th Century
Photographs -- United States -- 20th Century

Occupations

Aeronautical engineers -- United States -- 20th Century
Clairvoyants -- United States -- 20th Century
Inventors -- United States -- 20th Century

Names

Basenach, Nikolaus
Beach, Almira Gaylord
Beach, Frederick Converse, 1898-1941
Beach, Margaret Gilbert, 1848-1932
Beach, Stanley Yale
Coli, François, 1881-1927
Gasper, Jennie Holbrook, -1932
Gregory, Elizabeth Hiatt, 1872-1955
Meyer, C. W. Erich
Mitchell, William, 1879-1936
Nungesser, Charles, 1892-1927
Polglase, Julian
Powell, H. Arthur (Harry Arthur), 1877-
Schoop, M. U.
Stevens, A. Leo (Albert Leo), 1877-1944
Vincent, Ernest Peter
Wright, Frank C.