

Preface

This guide is the fifth commemorative tribute to the Wright brothers prepared by the Library of Congress since 1949, when the Wright papers were given to the Library by the Orville Wright estate, and is one of two publications originating in connection with the seventy-fifth anniversary of powered flight. Its companion, entitled *Photographs by the Wright Brothers: Prints from the Glass Negatives in the Library of Congress* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1978), includes all but two of 303 photographic glass-plate negatives taken by the Wright brothers in highly reduced form as positive images on five microfiche. The publication was prepared for the press by Leonard C. Bruno.

Twenty-five years earlier, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of powered flight, a two-volume edition of *The Papers of Wilbur and Orville Wright, Including the Chanute- Wright Letters and Other Papers of Octave Chanute* (New York: McGraw-McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1953) was published under the sponsorship of Oberlin College. In that major initial tribute, the Wrights' letters, diaries, notebooks, and other records of their scientific and technical work in inventing and perfecting the airplane were edited by Marvin W. McFarland of what was then the Library's Aeronautics Division.

As a contributor to that work, the present writer compiled several auxiliary files to supplement and help in organizing the wealth of material in the Wright papers. Two of these, later expanded, updated, and published to mark other anniversaries, were *Wilbur & Orville Wright: A Bibliography Commemorating the Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Wilbur Wright, April 16, 1867* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1968) and *Wilbur & Orville Wright: A Chronology Commemorating the Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Orville Wright, August 19, 1871* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1975).

In 1953, in conjunction with the editing task, an extensive collection of photographs was assembled as a file from which to select illustrations for the Wright papers volumes. At the core were the glass negatives, which had been presented to the Library in 1949 by the executors of the Orville Wright estate, Harold S. Miller and Harold W. Steeper. These were augmented by approximately 750 photoprints from other sources. The present writer also maintained a working card file that identified photographs in the Wright collection and those acquired from other sources, including pictorial materials relating to the Wright brothers' careers appearing in the world literature,

whether in books, periodicals, or other pertinent sources. That working card file formed the basis for the present guide, which is intended to make more generally available the information that was assembled. Its purpose is to serve as a ready informational reference that will provide a comprehensive guide and working tool for librarians, picture searchers, historians, and other serious students of science and technology. Judging from inquiries received by the Library, there is continuing interest in illustrative materials relating to the Wright brothers. Not surprisingly, this interest was heightened in 1978 with the many observances of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the first powered flight. It is hoped that this guide will facilitate the handling of requests made to the Library for such materials and assist others seeking such materials here and elsewhere as well.

Although the guide is based primarily on examination of the extensive aeronautical holdings of the Library of Congress, including the bequeathed Wright papers and photographic collection, extensive use was made also of the comprehensive Wright photographic collection in the documentary research files of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum Library. The museum's collection contains photographs of virtually all of the Wright aircraft. Also included are related Wright family photographs, photographs of their early flying experiments, and photographs of their later flight trials in the United States and Europe. It was not possible to list all items in the museum's collections, particularly the numerous photographs of the Wright 1903 airplane, some of which were taken before the return of the airplane to the United States from England in 1948, others at the presentation ceremonies on December 17, 1948, when the airplane was formally presented to the Smithsonian Institution, and still others before and after the airplane's installation in the museum. Likewise some photographs, such as those of the museum's William J. Hammer collection, which could not be readily identified by a catalog code number were not included. This was also true of some photographs in the Library of Congress. No examination was made of the outstanding Wright brothers collection of photographs at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. This collection of nearly three thousand photographs was acquired by Wright State University on December 19, 1975, by deed of gift from the surviving Wright heirs. The photographs are described and many illustrated in an excellent guide published under the title *The Wright Brothers Collection: A Guide to the Technical, Business and Legal, Genealogical, Photographic, and Other Archives at Wright State University*, by Patrick B. Nolan and John A. Zamonski (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977). Some additional, less extensive Wright brothers photographic collections are cited in an excellent recent study by Dominick A. Pisano, reference librarian at the National Air and Space Museum, appearing in *The Wright Brothers: Heirs to Prometheus*, edited by Richard P. Hallion (Washington: National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1977), pp. 137-46.

Following this preface is a list of abbreviations of books, periodicals, and other sources cited in the guide. A total of 1,555 individual entries are then listed, some representing a

series of photographs, bringing the total number of images described to more than 1,600. The inclusion of photographs is selective. Obviously no such list can be exhaustive and no claim is made for completeness. Illustrations from 104 monographs, primarily biographies of the Wright brothers and aeronautical histories and reference works, are listed. Numerous contemporary periodicals were examined for photographs, but only twenty-nine titles—because they were long or often cited—appear in the list of abbreviations, the remainder being cited in full in the main text. Special collections in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress cited include: (1) the Wright brothers original glass-plate negative collection (LC W85 and W86); (2) the George Grantham Bain collection of news photos of aviation activities of Orville and Wilbur Wright, 1908-17 (LC-BAIN); (3) the Mabel Beck collection of Wright brothers photographs (LC-BECK); (4) the Alfred Hildebrandt collection of photographs of Orville Wright's flights in Germany, 1909 (LC-HILDEBRANDT); (5) the Ernest L. Jones collection of photographs concerning the history of aviation, particularly Army Signal Corps photographs relating to the flight trials of the Wright brothers at Fort Myer, Virginia, 1908 and 1909 (LC-JONES); and (6) a collection of copy negatives made from prints in the Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62). Photographs in the Papers of Wilbur and Orville Wright in the Library's Manuscript Division are cited as LCPWOW. Other special collections often cited include the extensive photographic collections of the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution (SMIN), the photographic collection of the U.S. Air Force (USAF), and the photographic collection of the Wright Air Development Center, Dayton, Ohio (WADC). The numerous photographs published in *The Papers of Wilbur and Orville Wright*, edited by Marvin W. McFarland, are designated MCFWP. Most of these photographs, particularly for the earlier years, are from the Library's Wilbur and Orville Wright photographic collection.

Although one sees many sources cited for the photographs of the Wright brothers' gliding and flight experiments taken during the period 1900 to 1905, all the photographs for this period, except for a few taken by Octave Chanute in 1902, are prints from the Wright brothers' original glass-plate negatives in the Library of Congress or from prints made from them. Most of the views on the glass-plate negatives were taken by the Wright brothers between 1898 and 1911, primarily to document their successes and failures in developing their airplane and to provide visual evidence of their spectacular achievements. Wilbur and Orville were aware of the important relationship of photography to their work, both scientifically and historically. They maintained a notebook in which they listed time of exposure, f-stop setting, date, place, type of plate used, and subject matter for each photograph. They occasionally used flashlight techniques for interior views. Their camera was big and bulky, had to be mounted on a tripod, and permitted only one exposure at a time. The Wrights purchased their first camera at about the same time they began their kite and gliding experiments. It cost \$85 and was one of the finest and most expensive on the market in those days—a Korona-V manufactured by Ernst Gundlach, a

German craftsman who had emigrated to the United States from Berlin in 1873.

The date of publication of prints made from the glass negatives may be significant, because on March 25-27, 1913, a flood in Dayton did considerable damage to the Wright family home and property, including a wooden shed behind the home where the Wright brothers had a darkroom and kept their negatives and prints. Since the flood did affect the negatives in varying degree, a print made and published before that date may, in some instances, be in better condition than the existing negative.

The photographs listed here are grouped under twenty-two broad subject categories indicated in the table of contents, based on a combination of subject classifications used in the Library's earlier Wright brothers publications. The arrangement under each subject category is generally chronological, although this was not always feasible, particularly when no date could be determined for a photograph. The first five categories are devoted to the Wright family members: Wright brothers together, Wilbur, Orville, their father Bishop Milton Wright, and their sister Katharine Wright. The Wright brothers' gliding experiments and flights are listed in a following group of nineteen chronological categories covering the years 1900-1911, as used in the Wright brothers *Chronology* flight log. Photographs of specific Wright aircraft are next grouped in seventeen categories. A series of fourteen subject categories form the last main group. An appendix listing audiovisual materials is the concluding section. Materials cited in the appendix include audiotapes, microfiche, motion pictures, phonorecords, and slides.

Although the primary use of the guide is to assist those seeking photographs, it will serve also as a bibliography of materials relating to the Wright brothers, since the student or researcher seeking specific photographic sources will usually find accompanying text describing the individual, airplane, flight, or other event or subject depicted when the citation is to a book or periodical.

A comprehensive index of persons, institutions, and geographic names cited is provided to facilitate use of the guide.