

The James L. G. Fitz Patrick Papers

Archives & Special Collections
College of Staten Island Library, CUNY
2800 Victory Blvd., 1L-216
Staten Island, NY 10314

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Finding Aid by James A. Kaser

Overview of the Collection

Collection No. :	CM-4
Title:	The James L. G. Fitz Patrick Papers
Creator:	James L. G. Fitz Patrick (1906-1998)
Dates:	c. 1926-1998
Extent:	Approximately 1.5 Linear Feet
Abstract:	Prof. James L. G. Fitzpatrick was a faculty member and administrator at the Staten Island Community College from 1959 to 1976. He taught and served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Technology. He was appointed the first Academic Dean of the college in 1959, serving as Dean of the Faculty and acting under the college president to administer the academic program. He also coordinated a large part of the planning for the college's campus in Sunnyside, completed in 1967. Fitz Patrick became Dean for Operations and Development in 1971 and held that position until his retirement in 1976. Fitz Patrick was widely recognized as an expert on natural flight and aeronautics. This fragmentary collection mostly documents some of Fitz Patrick's research activities.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

The James L. G. Fitz Patrick Papers, Archives & Special Collections,
Department of the Library, College of Staten Island, CUNY, Staten Island,
New York

Acquisition

The papers were donated by Fitz Patrick's stepson, Harold J. Smith.

Processing Information

Collection processed by the staff of Archives & Special Collections.

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**Restrictions
Access**

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

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Biographical Sketch

James L. G. Fitz Patrick, the son of Joseph and Mary Fitz Patrick, was born in the Grand Central Station area of Manhattan on July 23, 1906. He was a noted engineer, scientist, aviator, artist, humanitarian, philosopher, academician and educator with strong faith and religious convictions.¹

Fitz Patrick earned bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering from Manhattan College, receiving his bachelor's degree in 1929 and his master's degree in 1931.² He also pursued post-graduate studies at New York University and Fordham University.³

James L. G. Fitz Patrick's career in education spanned forty-six years. He moved to Staten Island in 1930 and taught science at St. Peter's Boys High School in New Brighton from 1930-1938.⁴ In 1938, He received his teaching license in Applied Physics for service in day secondary schools other than junior high schools.⁵ He later taught at Textile High School in Manhattan, eventually becoming Head of the Mechanical Arts Department and Curriculum Department and serving as a student counselor and General Assistant to the Principal.⁶ At the founding of Staten Island Community College in 1956, Fitz Patrick was part of the faculty and served as Head of the Department of Mechanical Technology.⁷ He was appointed the first Academic Dean of the college in 1959, serving as Dean of the Faculty and acting under the college president in administering the academic program. He also coordinated a large part of the planning for the college's campus in Sunnyside, completed in 1967.⁸ Fitz Patrick became Dean of the College for Operations and Development in 1971 and held that position until his retirement in 1976.⁹

¹ Raymond A. Wittek, "Profile: James L.G. Fitz Patrick," *Staten Island Advance*, February 19, 1995, A17, A25; and Michael Danza, "James L.G. Fitz Patrick, 91, Educator, Inventor (Obituary)," *Staten Island Advance*, March 24, 1998, Obituary Section.

² Wittek, A25; and James L. G. Fitz Patrick, Notebook 1926-1982. Fitz Patrick Papers, College of Staten Island Archives, Department of Special Collections & Archives, College of Staten Island, CUNY.

³ "Fitz Patrick Named First Dean," *Staten Island Advance*, June 17, 1959.

⁴ Danza, "Obituary"; and Wittek, A25.

⁵ "The Teaching Staff," *New York Times*, September 13, 1938, 46.

⁶ "Mount Loretto Will Honor 3 with Drumgoole Award," *Staten Island Advance*, April 6, 1989; "Fitz Patrick named First Dean"; Wittek, p. A25.

⁷ "Fitz Patrick named First Dean"; and Wittek, A25; and Staten Island Community College Catalog 1958.

⁸ "Fitz Patrick named First Dean"; and Wittek A25.

⁹ "On the Retirement of Jim Fitz Patrick" Tavern-On-The-Green, Staten Island, NY, Friday December 19, 1975; and Wittek, A25.

Fitz Patrick was a member of many educational and engineering associations. He had a particular interest in railroads, natural flight, aviation and aeronautics. A licensed pilot, he completed a solo flight in a Piper Cub in 1931. During World War II, he served as an executive officer of the Staten Island Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, a civil defense organization, and was a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.¹⁰ A long-time member of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, he was a life-member and past chairman of the New York City Chapter of the American Society of Tool and Manufacturing Engineers.¹¹

Fitz Patrick's greatest research project focused on the ornithopter. The ornithopter is a type of aircraft that relies on the movement of flapping wings for lift, thrust and flight. Fitz Patrick sought to develop the ornithopter as a safer and more efficient means of transportation than automobiles and other types of aircraft. Ideally, the ornithopter would need little room for take off and landing and be more fuel efficient than other aircraft due to its folding wings and gliding capabilities. The difficulty of converting the technology of natural flight and beating wings into a functional ornithopter is an ongoing challenge in the field.¹² Fitz Patrick's work spanned several decades, ending only after he suffered a stroke in 1992. Fitz Patrick studied natural flight, especially in birds, and conducted experiments in his home and at Princeton University's Forrestal Flight Research Center.¹³ Fitz Patrick experimented with flow studies, gliders, model wings, beating wing free flight devices, swinging arm studies, hand dynamometers and full-scale ornithopters, and he did complete a successful ornithopter flight late in his research career.¹⁴ The full-scale ornithopter was stored at Princeton University for many years, but unfortunately it has been lost.¹⁵ Fitz Patrick was considered a leading authority on natural flight and aeronautics in the United States during his lifetime and contributed to the field through papers, presentations and membership in professional organizations.¹⁶

Fitz Patrick was also active in the Staten Island community and in Roman Catholic religious organizations. He was a life member and president of the Knights of Columbus, and was created a Grand Knight Commander of Manresa in 1974.¹⁷ He was involved in his local parish, St. Peter's in New Brighton, and the First Friday Club, a Catholic laymen's club, where he had served as president. He was also active at the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin at Mount Loretto. Fitz Patrick served as president for the Mission's Board of Trustees for seven years, retiring in 1988, and was honored with

¹⁰ Wittek, A17, A25.

¹¹ "On the Retirement of Jim Fitz Patrick" and "Fitz Patrick named First Dean".

¹² Douglas Colligan, "The Ornithopter," *Technology Illustrated*, Endpage Section, August/September 1982, 96; and William Robbins, "These Two Men Think They Can Fly Like Birds," *Esquire*, March, 1968, 154-159, and Wittek, A25.

¹³ Wittek, A25; and Colligan, 96.

¹⁴ James L. G. Fitz Patrick, "Natural Flight and Aeronautics Project 1934-1984," College of Staten Island Archives, Fitz Patrick Papers, College of Staten Island Archives, Department of Special Collections & Archives, College of Staten Island, CUNY; p. 2; and Wittek, A25; and Danza, "Obituary".

¹⁵ Harold J. Smith, phone conversation with author of the finding aid, May 7, 2003.

¹⁶ "On the Retirement of Jim Fitz Patrick"; and P.H. Spenser in Robbins, 154.

¹⁷ Ralph J. Lamberti, "Office of the President of the Borough of Staten Island City of New York Proclamation" April 13, 1989, Fitz Patrick Papers, College of Staten Island Archives Department of Special Collections & Archives, College of Staten Island, CUNY; and Joseph C. Towle, "Knights of Mount Manresa" Award, October 11, 1974, Fitz Patrick Papers, College of Staten Island Archives Department of Special Collections & Archives, College of Staten Island, CUNY.

the Father Drumgoole Award and a shrine dedicated in the names of he and his late wife Helen Fitz Patrick in 1989.¹⁸ He was on the Board of Trustees at St. Vincent's Medical Center, where he helped to plan the St. Elizabeth Seton Wing and to oversee construction of the Cardinal Cooke Pavilion. The medical center honored Fitz Patrick by presenting him with the St. Elizabeth Seton award and by naming a wing of the hospital after him in 1979.¹⁹ Fitz Patrick served as president of the Staten Island Rotary Club and was named a "Rotary Giant" in 1996.²⁰ Fitz Patrick was a trustee at the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, and he was also a member of the Board of Directors of the Staten Island Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Board of Mangers of the Executive Committee of the Boy Scouts of America, Community Planning Board Number 3 and the Hospital Advisory Committee of USPHS Hospital.²¹

James L.G. Fitz Patrick married Helen M. Kenny on August 19, 1930.²² Helen Kenny Fitz Patrick died in 1985, and James L. G. Fitz Patrick married Mary Murray Smith in 1992. The Smith and Fitz Patrick families had known each other since the 1940's. Mary Murray Smith Fitz Patrick predeceased James L.G. Fitz Patrick in 1998. Fitz Patrick had four stepchildren from his second marriage - Harold Smith, Robert Smith, Stephen Smith, and Mary Ellen Smith.

James L.G. Fitz Patrick died on March 22, 1998, at the age of 91.

¹⁸ Adam Friend, "Mt. Loretto Board President is Honored," *Staten Island Advance*, June 28, 1989, A11; and "Mount Loretto will Honor 3 with Drumgoole Award"; and Wittek, A17, A25.

¹⁹ Wittek, A25; and "Proclamation," 1989.

²⁰ Danza, "Obituary"; and Wittek, A25.

²¹ "On the Retirement of Jim Fitz Patrick"

²²Fitz Patrick. Notebook 1926-1982.

Scope and Content Note

The James L. G. Fitz Patrick Papers include news clippings, articles, research papers, correspondence, notebooks, awards, programs, photographs and video materials. The papers contain materials from the early 20th century through 1998, but the majority of the materials cover the time period from 1952-1987. The records are described at the subseries level, however, the finding aid does contain notes on folder contents and literary productions are listed by title at the item level. Harold J. Smith, Fitz Patrick's stepson, donated the majority of the materials contained in the Fitz Patrick papers in 2000. James L. G. Fitz Patrick also provided copies of many of his research works and the 1973-1974 film on ornithopters to the college archives prior to his retirement in 1976. A small number of magazine articles on James L. G. Fitz Patrick were donated by Peter Spiridon and additional news clippings on Fitz Patrick have been added by Archives & Special Collections staff.

For better physical control, books relevant to the collection that were donated by Harold J. Smith were removed from the James L. G. Fitz Patrick Papers and cataloged and shelved with the Archives & Special Collections book collection. These books are listed at the end of the finding aid.

The Fitz Patrick papers are divided into eight series and several subseries:

Biographical Materials

Awards

Correspondence

Notebooks

Literary Productions

Productions on Natural Flight and Aeronautics

Other Productions

Research Materials

Photographs

Ornithopter and Related Photographs

Family and Personal Photographs

Videos

The main focus of the papers is Fitz Patrick's research on ornithopters, natural flight and aeronautics. The two articles in Box 1 Folder 2 deal with Fitz Patrick's

research activities and provide a good overview of his work in the field. There is one research notebook (1926-1982) with a subject index. There are research-related writings covering the time period of 1934-1974 with the majority covering 1952-1974. There are also more than 500 photographs documenting Fitz Patrick's ornithopter research projects. Most photographs document Fitz Patrick's full-scale ornithopter models but there are also several photographs of glider models. The majority of the photographs were taken 1970-1987 and many have labels and notations by Fitz Patrick. There is also video material related to Fitz Patrick's research activities (1973-1974, 1990s). The correspondence in the collection, with the exception of the 1991 letter from Mr. Freedburg, generally served as cover pages for mailed items and does not go into detail regarding Fitz Patrick's research activities. The collection also includes copies of articles, research reports and patents collected by Fitz Patrick for research purposes.

There is a limited amount of biographical material and Fitz Patrick's activities in the civic and church communities are not well documented within the papers. There are also several photographs of James L. G. Fitz Patrick and his family in the collection but many are unidentified and undated. The materials in **Series 1: Biographical Materials** include various news clippings and articles, of these, the 1995 Profile from the *Staten Island Advance* in Box 1 Folder 4 is the best single source of biographical information on Fitz Patrick within the papers. There is some information regarding Fitz Patrick's activities on the Advisory Committee of the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital (1964-1966 only) contained in Box 1 Folder 11. Otherwise, most information regarding his civic and church community involvement is contained within the news clippings, retirement program and awards in **Series 1: Biographical Materials** and **Series 2: Awards**. There are no personal files documenting civic or church community activities in the papers.

There are limited materials related to Fitz Patrick's career as a teacher and administrator contained within the papers. There is a 1937 course paper written on curriculum adjustment in secondary schools titled "Can this be the Future of Saint Peter's High School?" outlining the situation at the high school where Fitz Patrick was teaching at the time. The papers also contain a copy of an undated lesson plan book (ca. 1956). There is a videocassette containing a 1975 interview with Fitz Patrick made around the time of his retirement from Staten Island Community College. Additional information regarding Fitz Patrick's career at Staten Island Community College is contained with the college archives in the Archives & Special Collections Department at the College of Staten Island.

Series Descriptions

[The following box/folder inventory is in the form of a table. If you are visually impaired and using a pdf reader you may need assistance and should contact the Archives at 718-982-4128.]

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1938-1998. 5 Folders.

This series contains biographical material relating to James L. G. Fitz Patrick including news clippings, articles, an extensive profile and Fitz Patrick's obituary (1938, 1968, 1982, 1989, 1995, and 1998). There are also copies of Fitz Patrick's retirement dinner program (1975).

Series 2: Awards, 1974-1989. 3 Folders.

This series contains copies of awards presented to Fitz Patrick by the Knights of Columbus (1974) and the Institute of Industrial Engineers (1986) and a Proclamation from the Borough President of Staten Island upon Fitz Patrick's receipt of the Drumgoole Award (1989). There are news clippings regarding Fitz Patrick's receipt of the Drumgoole Award in **Series 1: Biographical Materials** Box 1 Folder 3 "Fitz Patrick, Mount Loretto."

Series 3: Correspondence 1926-1991. 4 Folders.

This series contains a letter to the *New York Times* regarding speed records for continental crossings by trains (1926) and correspondence regarding patents (1962), the USPHS Hospital (1964-1966) and ornithopters and aeronautics (1954-1980, 1991). Items enclosed with the correspondence are filed with the corresponding correspondence.

Series 4: Notebooks, 1926-1982. .0825 Cubic Feet.

This series includes personal notebooks. The first (1926-1982) consists mostly of research notes but also includes some thoughts on philosophy. Fitz Patrick indexed this notebook by subject. The series also includes a notebook with class notes and various other notes and drawings (ca. 1928-1940) and an undated, unidentified lesson plan book (ca. 1956).

Series 5: Literary Productions, 1934-1991. .5 Cubic Feet.

This series contains research publications and papers written, translated or presented by James L. G. Fitz Patrick. The majority of the papers and publications in the series deal with aeronautics, natural flight and the ornithopter.

Subseries 1: Productions on Natural Flight and Aeronautics, 1934-1974, 1984.

This subseries includes productions on natural flight, aeronautics and the ornithopter. The majority of the productions in the subseries are part of Fitz Patrick's

series of articles on “Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics.” The first article in this series was written in 1951 and supplements and status reports are available through 1974. The series also includes an overview of the Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics Project (1934-1984), a translation of a 1925 article on bird flight (1948) and a paper on the design and construction of a full-scale ornithopter (1960). Extra copies of graphs used in these publications are included at the end of the subseries.

Subseries 2: Other Productions, 1937, 1952-1954, 1991.

This subseries includes productions that are unrelated to Fitz Patrick’s research in the fields of natural flight and aeronautics. The subseries includes a research paper on secondary school curriculum created for a course at New York University (1937), a paper on classification and coding of scientific information on a long-term research project written for the Special Libraries Association (1952), a review of *United States Air Force Machinability Report* (1954). The subseries also includes a short article on the Mount Manresa Water Tower with color photographs (ca. 1991).

Series 6: Research Materials, 1954-1977. .0825 Cubic Feet.

This series contains publications used by Fitz Patrick for research interests and purposes. The materials include copies of patents (1954-1960), news clippings on bat flight (1969-1977) and papers on man-powered flight (1963) and the propulsion characteristics of flapping wings (1976).

Series 7: Photographs, Early 1900s – 1987. .33 Cubic Feet.

This series contains over 500 photographs. The series includes both color and black and white photographs.

Subseries 1: Ornithopter and Related Photographs - The majority of the photographs in the subseries are related to the ornithopter project and document Fitz Patrick’s full-scale ornithopter models (1970-1987). There are also several photographs of glider models (1981-1983). Many of these photographs include labels and notations made by Fitz Patrick.

Subseries 2: Family and Personal Photographs – The subseries includes several photographs and one scrapbook of James L. G. Fitz Patrick, Fitz Patrick’s family, railroads and cityscapes. Most of the personal photographs of this type are unlabeled and undated.

Series 8: Videos, 1973-1975, 1991-1995.

This series contains two videos and a film. The film is on movie film and has footage of the ornithopter (1973-1974). The first video is a December 1975 interview with James L. G. Fitz Patrick. The second video is related to a research presentation given by Dr. James D. DeLaurier at MIT’s Lincoln Lab in November 1995 and contains

footage of ornithopter flights (1991), an exoptopter hanging in the lab (1992) and the presentation given at Lincoln Lab (1995).

Box and Folder List

Box 1

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1938-1998

- Folder 1: James Fitz Patrick, miscellaneous – poem (1976), newsclipping (1959).
Folder 2: Articles on James Fitz Patrick, 1968, 1982, and another copy of "Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics Project 1934-1984."
Folder 3: Newsclippings on Fitz Patrick being honored with the Mt. Loretto, Drumgoole Award (April 1989) and being honored at the dedication at the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, Mt. Loretto where a shrine was dedicated in the name of he & his late wife, June 1989.
Folder 4: Newsclippings on Fitz Patrick including Profile & Obituary. 1938, 1995, 1998.
Folder 5: Retirement Dinner Program Dec. 19, 1975.
*Plaque of Staten Island *Advance* Profile of James L. G. Fitz Patrick, 1995. Item is in Box 5.

Series 2: Awards

- Folder 6: Knights of Columbus "Grand Knight Commander of Manresa" Award, Oct. 11, 1974.
Folder 7: Award from Institute of Industrial Engineers, April 16, 1986.
Folder 8: Proclamation of Dean Fitz Patrick Day in the Borough of Staten Island (related to Father Drumgoole Award) April 13, 1989.

Series 3: Correspondence 1926-1991

- Folder 9: Letter to the New York Times, 1926.
Folder 10: Correspondence Regarding Patents, 1962.
Folder 11: Information on US Public Health Service Hospital and 1 Letter to Dean Fitz Patrick on Medical Technology-Affiliation with Hospitals, 1964-1966.
*Letter on Ornithophthers from Mr. Freedburg, 1991, and a placemat from The Claim Jumper Restaurant (The Miner's Ten Commandments). Item is oversized see Box 3 Folder 13.
Folder 12: Personal Correspondence, 1916, 1932-1933

Series 4: Literary Productions (1934-1991)

- Folder 13: Religious Material, 1860, 1920, 1931
Folder 14: Family Papers and Realia, 1872, 1892, 1916
Folder 15: World's Columbian Exposition postcards, 1893
Folder 16: Personal Miscellany and Realia, 1917, 1932
Folder 17: Life Insurance policy, 1933
Folder 18: St. Peter's High School Material, [1930's]

Folder 19: Notes

Series 5: Notebooks

Folder 20: Notebook 1926-1982

Folder 21: Miscellaneous Reports, Notes, Drawings, Receipts 1928-1940

Box 2

Series 6 Subseries A:

Folder 1: Lesson Book, 1956

Folder 2: Fitzpatrick – The Dynamic Sailing-Flight of Birds, 1948

Folder 3: Natural Flight and Related Aeromatics Project, 1934-1984

Folder 4: Some Thoughts on Natural Flight, 1951

Folder 5: Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics, 1952 (Copy 1)

Folder 6: Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics, 1952 (Copy 2)

Folder 7: Supplement to “Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics” Jan 1954

Folder 8: Master Copy of Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics, 1952

Folder 9: Design and Construction of a Fall Scale Ornithopter 1960 (Copy 1)

Folder 10: Design and Construction of a Fall Scale Ornithopter 1960 (Copy 2)

Folder 11: Page 1 of draft of “Avian Flight Engineering”

Folder 12: Status Report: Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics, 1963 (Copy 1)

Folder 13: Status Report: Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics, 1963 (Copy 2)

Folder 14: Master Copy – Some thoughts on Natural Flight, 1963 Status Report: Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics, and Various other Reports on Flight and Aeronautics

Box 3

Series 6 Subseries A:

Folder 1: Interim Report: Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics – July 1967

Folder 2: Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics: Report on Beating Wings and Fins, 1969 (Copy 1)

Folder 3: Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics: Report on Beating Wings and Fins, 1969 (Copy 2)

Folder 4: Master Review Copy of Natural Height and Related Aeronautics 1969 Report on Wings and Fins

Folder 5: Natural Flight and Related Aeronautics: Some notes on the Swimming and Flying Symposium, 1974

Folder 6: (Extra Pages) Nomograph, 1951

Folder 7: (Extra Pages) Graph H Revised, 1961

Folder 8: (Extra Pages) Ornithopters (graph), n.d.

Series 6 Subseries B

Folder 9: A curriculum Adjustment Study 1937

Folder 10: Classification and Coding of Scientific Information on a Long-term Research Project 1952

Folder 11: Review of "U.S. Air Force Machinability Report" and book copy

Folder 12: Mount Manresa Water Tower, 1991

Series 7

Folder 13: Copies of several patents for electrical – arc torches, 1954-1960

Folder 14: "Propulsion Characteristics of Flapping Wings." 1979 Correspondence with University of New Wales, 1980

Folder 15: Project Ocelot: a study of Man-powered flight, 1962-1963

Folder 16: Articles about Bat flight and wings, 1969-1977

Box 4

Series 8: Receipts

Folder 1: Receipts – Hammacher, Schlemmer and Co. 1932-1934

Folder 2: Receipts from other companies, 1932-1934

Folder 3: Blank forms and Correspondence, 1933, n.d.

Folder 4: Letter about ornithopter, 1991 (Oversize)

Box 5

Series 9

Folder 1: MKV Ornithopter, 1970-1972

Folder 2: MKV Ornithopter, Jan-July 1973

Folder 3: MKV Ornithopter, Aug-Dec, 1973

Folder 4: MKV Ornithopter, Jan-Nov 1974

Folder 5: MKV Ornithopter, Oct 1974 – July 1976

Folder 6: MKV Ornithopter Model, Nov 1976 – Nov 1977

Folder 7: Full-Scale Ornithopter Model, Jan-Aug 1978

Folder 8: Ornithopter and Glider Models, 1981-1983

Folder 9: Ornithopter and Glider Model, 1983

Folder 10: Full-Scale Ornithopter Model, 1984-1987

Folder 11: Various Photos, n.d.

Folder 12: Family photos, 1963, n.d.

Folder 13: Group photograph (possibly Knights of Columbus), 1976

Box 6

Old Microscope and Wooden Ship

Box 7

Wingspan template for model aircraft

Books Cataloged for Archives and Special Collections

Reay, D. A. The history of Man-Powered Flight. New York: Pergamon Press, 1977.

(TL 769.R4 1977)

Sweeney, T. E.; W. B. Nixon; S. A. Weissenburger. The Princeton-Fairchild
Ornithopter Model Research Program, vol. 1 Wind Tunnel Test Results.

Princeton: Princeton University, 1971.

(TL 717 .S84 1971)