

**Frank J. Malina Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2013**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm84061793>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms013102>

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Revised by John R. Monagle

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2013

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Frank J. Malina Papers

**Span Dates:** 1912-1986

**ID No.:** MSS61793

**Creator:** Frank J. Malina, 1912-1981

**Extent:** 15,175 items

**Extent:** 54 containers

**Extent:** 21.6 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English, with some Czech and French

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm84061793>

**Summary:** Aerospace engineer, rocketry pioneer, and kinetic artist. Correspondence, reports, research and subject files, writings, biographical material, and other papers chiefly documenting Frank J. Malina's career as an aerospace engineer at the California Institute of Technology and later as director of the U.S. Jet Propulsion Laboratory. His subsequent career in kinetic art in Paris and as founder of the periodical *Leonardo* is also documented.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Haley, Andrew G. (Andrew Gallagher)--Correspondence.

Malina family--Correspondence.

Malina, Caroline--Correspondence.

Malina, Frank J.

Marek, Jerry William--Correspondence.

Mercer, Carolyn Malina--Correspondence.

Von Kármán, Theodore, 1881-1963--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Aerojet-General Corporation.

California Institute of Technology.

Daniel Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory.

Jet Propulsion Laboratory (U.S.)

Unesco. Division of Scientific Research and Higher Education.

### Subjects

Aeronautics--History.

Aeronautics--Periodicals.

Aeronautics--Societies, etc.

Aerospace engineering.

Art--Periodicals.

Artists--France--Paris.

Kinetic art.

Rocketry.

### Places

Brenham (Tex.)--Social life and customs.

Czechoslovakia--Social life and customs.

Texas--Social life and customs.

### Titles

*Astronautica acta.*

*Leonardo.*

## Occupations

Aerospace engineers.  
Artists.

## Provenance

The papers of Frank J. Malina, aerospace engineer, rocketry pioneer, and kinetic artist, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Marjorie Malina, 1984 and 1986, by Daniel J. Boorstin, 1985, and by Carolyn Malina Mercer, Malina's sister, in 1987.

## Processing History

Part I of the Frank J. Malina Papers was arranged, described, and microfiched by the California Institute of Technology, which also published a finding aid, *The Frank J. Malina Collection at the California Institute of Technology: Guide to a Microfiche Edition* (Pasadena, Calif: Jet Propulsion Laboratory of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, California Institute of Technology, 1986) before forwarding the papers to the Library of Congress. The finding aid to Part I is available at <http://authors.library.caltech.edu/25015/1/MalinaCollection.pdf>. Part II was processed and described in 1996. The Library's finding aid was revised in 2000 and again in 2013.

## Other Repositories

The microfiche edition of Part I of the Malina Papers was retained by the California Institute of Technology.

## Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Frank J. Malina in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for further information.

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Frank J. Malina are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Roman numeral designating the Part followed by a colon and container number, Frank J. Malina Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Frank J. Malina Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1912, Oct. 2	Born, Brenham, Tex.
1934	Graduated, Texas A & M University, College Station, Tex.
1934-1936	Teaching fellow, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif.
1935	M.A., mechanical engineering, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif.

1936	M.A., aeronautical engineering, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif. Cofounder, Daniel Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory, California Institute of Technology (GALCIT) Rocket Research Project First rocket motor test
1937	With W. Bollay, J. Parsons, A. M. O. Smith, and H. S. Tsien wrote report no. 1 of GALCIT Rocket Research
1938	Wrote "Report on Jet Propulsion for the National Academy of Science Committee on Air Corps Research"
1939	Married Lilian Darcourt (divorced 1947)
1940	Ph.D. in aeronautics, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif.
1940-1942	Research fellow, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif.
1941	Successfully tested solid-propellant jet engines on a light, low-wing monoplane, known as the Ercoupe
1942	Joined five colleagues in forming the Aerojet Engineering Corp. Assistant professor of aeronautics, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif.
1943	With Von Theodore Kármán, and H. S. Tsien proposed a long-range rocket missile research program in report identified as JPL-1, the first usage of the name Jet Propulsion Laboratory
1944	Guided missile work, supported by Army Ordnance Department
1945	Acting director, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif.
1945-1947	Appointed to Sub-Committee on Propulsion Systems, National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics
1946	Coauthor with M. Summerfield "The Problem of Escape from the Earth by Rocket"
1947	Joined Division of Scientific Research and Higher Education, Unesco, Paris, France
1949	Married Majorie Duckworth
1951	Head, Division of Scientific Research and Higher Education, Unesco, Paris, France
1953	Became full-time artist
1955	Exhibited kinetic paintings at the Galerie Colette Allendy, Paris, France
1960	Founding member, International Academy of Astronautics
1961-1965	Coeditor, <i>Acta Astronautica</i>
1962	Received Order of Merit, French Society for Encouragement of Research and Invention
1963	President, International Academy of Astronautics
1963	Fellow, American Rocket Society Fellow, American Astronomical Society
1966	Installed kinetic mural "The Cosmos," Pergamon Press Building, Oxford, England
1968	<i>Founded Leonardo</i>
1973	One-man show, Teheran Trade Fair, Iran
1981, Nov 9	Died, Paris, France

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Frank J. Malina (1912-1981) span the years 1912-1986 and are organized into two parts.

### Part I

Part I of the Frank J. Malina Papers was arranged, described, and microfiched by the California Institute of Technology prior to transferring the collection to the Library of Congress. The institute published a finding aid, *The Frank J. Malina Collection at the California Institute of Technology: Guide to a Microfiche Edition* (Pasadena, Cal. Jet Propulsion Laboratory of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, California Institute of Technology, 1986), which also serves as a guide to Part I of the papers in the Library of Congress and is available at <http://authors.library.caltech.edu/25015/1/MalinaCollection.pdf>.

Part I consists of correspondence, reports, research and subject files, writings, biographical material, and other papers documenting Malina's career as an aerospace engineer at the California Institute of Technology where he was cofounder of the Daniel Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory rocket research project and later director of the U.S. Jet Propulsion Laboratory there. Included is material on the history of aeronautics, international aeronautical societies and meetings, the periodical *Acta Astronautica* (of which Malina was editor), Aerojet-General Corporation, and his tenure as director of Unesco's Division of Scientific Research and Higher Education in Paris. His subsequent career in kinetic art in Paris and as founder of the periodical *Leonardo* is also documented. Correspondents include Andrew G. Haley and Theodore Von Kármán.

Part I spans the years 1912-1982 and is organized into seventeen sections: Personal Correspondence, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Professional Organizations and Meetings, Aerojet Corporation, Theodore von Kármán, Manuscripts, Publication Correspondence, Technical Files Regarding History of Aeronautics, Biographical and Personal, *Leonardo*, Activities in Art, International Academy of Astronautics, Lunar International Laboratory Committee, *Acta Astronautica*, International Astronautical Activities, and Personal Correspondence.

## Part II

Part II of the Malina Papers, spanning the years 1927-1986, was arranged by the Library of Congress. Principally a continuation of the [Personal Correspondence](#) and [Biographical and Personal](#) sections, or series, in Part I, these papers consist mostly of letters to Malina from friends and family. Correspondents include his mother, Carolyn Malina; his sister, Carolyn Malina Mercer; his friend, Jerry William Marek; and family members and friends in Czechoslovakia. Letters from Czechoslovakia are written in Czech and French. Although much of the correspondence concerns the activities of the extended Malina family, friends, and neighbors in Brenham, Texas, there is also much commentary on Frank Malina's personal, scholarly, and professional activities from the time he entered college until his death five decades later. Three memoirs by Malina record his experiences in rocketry research in California, circa 1936-1946, as published in astronomical proceedings. Part II has not been microfiched and does not appear on the microfiche retained by the California Institute of Technology.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in two parts comprised of nineteen series:

### Part I:

- Section I: Personal Correspondence
- Section II: Jet Propulsion Laboratory
- Section III: California Institute of Technology
- Section IV: Professional Organizations and Meeting
- Section V: Aerojet General Corporation
- Section VI: Theodore von Kármán
- Section VIII: Publication Correspondence
- Section IX: Technical Files Regarding History of Aeronautics
- Section X: Biographical and Personal
- Section XI: *Leonardo*
- Section XII: Activities in Art
- Section XIII: International Academy of Astronautics
- Section XIV: Lunar International Laboratory Committee
- Section XV: *Acta Astronautica*
- Section XVI: International Astronautical Activities
- Section XVII: Personal Correspondence

### Part II:

- [Biographical and Personal, 1936-1946](#)
- [Personal Correspondence, 1927-1986](#)

## Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX I:1-3	<u>Section I: Personal Correspondence</u>
BOX I:4-13	<u>Section II: Jet Propulsion Laboratory</u>
BOX I:14-15	<u>Section III: California Institute of Technology</u>
BOX I:16	<u>Section IV: Professional Organizations and Meeting</u>
BOX I:17-18	<u>Section V: Aerojet General Corporation</u>
BOX I:18	<u>Section VI: Theodore von Kármán</u>
BOX I:18	<u>Section VI: Theodore von Kármán</u>
BOX I:19	<u>Section VIII: Publication Correspondence</u>
BOX I:20	<u>Section IX: Technical Files Regarding History of Aeronautics</u>
BOX I:21-22	<u>Section X: Biographical and Personal</u>
BOX I:23-38	<u>Section XI: <i>Leonardo</i></u>
BOX I:39-42	<u>Section XII: Activities in Art</u>
BOX I:43	<u>Section XIII: International Academy of Astronautics</u>
BOX I:44-45	<u>Section XIV: Lunar International Laboratory Committee</u>
BOX I:47	<u>Section XV: <i>Acta Astronautica</i></u>
BOX I:48-50	<u>Section XVII: Personal Correspondence</u>
BOX II:1	<u>Part II: Biographical and Personal, 1936-1946</u> Memoirs. Arranged by type of material.
BOX II:1	<u>Part II: Personal Correspondence, 1927-1986</u>
BOX II:1-3	<u>Family, 1930-1986, undated</u> Correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and thereunder chronologically.
BOX II:3-4	<u>Miscellaneous, 1927-1971</u> Correspondence to Malina. Arranged in two groups, that from Czechoslovakia (may include some family) arranged chronologically and general correspondence arranged chronologically.

# Container List

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## Part II: Biographical and Personal, 1936-1946

Container	Contents
BOX II:1	Memoirs, 1936-1946
BOX II:1	<b>Part II: Personal Correspondence, 1927-1986</b>
BOX II:1-3	<b>Family, 1930-1986, undated</b> Correspondence. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and thereunder chronologically.
BOX II:1	Malina, Carolyn (mother)
BOX II:1	Sept. 1930-Aug. 1955 (5 folders)
BOX II:2	Sept. 1955-Dec. 1980 (5 folders)
BOX II:2	Mercer, Carolyn Malina (sister)
BOX II:2	circa Sept. 1931-Aug. 1938
BOX II:3	Feb. 1939-June 1974, Feb. 1986, undated
BOX II:3-4	<b>Miscellaneous, 1927-1971</b> Correspondence to Malina. Arranged in two groups, that from Czechoslovakia (may include some family) arranged chronologically and general correspondence arranged chronologically.
BOX II:3	Czechoslovakia, Nov. 1927-May 1977 (4 folders)
BOX II:4	General correspondence
BOX II:4	Sept. 1930-Nov. 1937, Jan. 1971, undated (3 folders)