



State of Tennessee  
Department of State  
**Tennessee State Library and Archives**  
403 Seventh Avenue North  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

**FALCONNET, EUGENE FREDERIC (1832-1887)**  
**PAPERS, 1857-1888**

*Processed by:*  
Robert O. Depriest  
Archival Technical Services

Accession Number: THS 432  
Date Completed: November 20, 1984  
Location: THS III-B-5  
Microfilm Accession Number: 1116

**MICROFILMED**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Eugene Frederic Falconnet Papers concern the career of E.F. Falconnet (1832-1887), engineer, soldier metallurgist, and inventor. These papers were given by Stanley F. Horn through the courtesy of Mrs. W.H. Hayley, Memphis, Tennessee.

The materials in this collection measure 1.26 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials.

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Eugene Frederic Falconnet Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Eugene Frederic Falconnet Papers, containing approximately two hundred items, span the years 1857 to 1888. The collection is composed of correspondence, most of which deals with Falconnet's work on his invention of an airship; his works on a book entitled *Practical Aerostatics*; a Civil War diary; legal documents (patent applications); scientific journals; military records; music; notes; photographs and drawings; printed materials; and writings. This collection documents Falconnet's career as an engineer, soldier, metallurgist, student of aeronautics and inventor.

Falconnet was a Swiss railroad engineer who immigrated to Mexico in 1849 and then to the United States in 1850. He was involved in railroad construction in Mexico and in Tennessee and Alabama in the United States. Prior to 1880, he invented a process for the use of electricity in metallurgy, and began research on the invention of an airship. Falconnet was a major in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Alabama Regiments, Alabama Cavalry, Confederate States of America.

The historical value of this collection for the researcher interested in early aeronautical research and experimentation is to be found in letters written by D.W. Glassie to Falconnet regarding patent matters and correspondence with William H. Weightman who advised him on problems of propulsion.

The correspondence with William H. Weightman November 10, 1884, and with others, Falconnet advanced the idea of using aluminum and petroleum in an airship. In a letter to Charles Latimer, May 19, 1886, Falconnet postulated correctly the belief that aluminum must be used in an alloy with copper and zinc.

The Falconnet Papers include a Civil War diary (1862-ca. 1865) which contains eyewitness accounts of battles in Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi, as well as Falconnet's philosophical views on the North-South conflict. The diary makes reference to: European public opinion about the Civil War (pp. 3-6); Southern attitudes about the "War for Separation;" Federal and Confederate artillery; use of steamboats, flat boats, ferries and gun boats (pp. 11-15); effect of typhoid fever (p. 13); Battle of Shiloh (pp. 26-27); Confederate army uniforms, blankets, saddles and food (pp. 35-38); rural backwoods life in north Alabama-people, schools, churches, distilling, snuff-dipping, etc. (pp. 42-43); rebel yells (p. 16, 2<sup>nd</sup> sec.); drinking and fighting in the South (pp. 17-18, 2<sup>nd</sup> sec.); roads (p. 20, 2<sup>nd</sup> sec.); and General Sherman.

There is an interesting document in the military records (see attachment) which shows how Falconnet campaigned for election to first lieutenant early in his Confederate States of America Army career. The document is dated June 18, 1861, Camp Watkins (no state given), and has the original signatures of seventy-five corporals and privates of Company "A" 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Tennessee Artillery.

Legal documents include several applications for patents on aeronautical research and iron smelting processes. These papers show Falconnet's involvement in the early iron industry in Tennessee, the use of his engineering skills in railroad construction, and the use of his talents as an inventor in aeronautics and metallurgy.

The Falconnet Papers include music composition by Falconnet: *Annabel Lee*, *Rosebud*, and *Marguita*. There are rough notes on various subjects including; campaigns of Felix Zollicofer, a German article on slavery, the South, etc.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

### **Eugene Frederic Falconnet**

- 1832 Born July 15, Bern, Switzerland as Eugene Frederic de. Freudenreich Falconnet
- 1849 Moved to Mexico; involved in construction of a railroad
- 1850 Emigrated to the United States
- 1852 Came to Tennessee; changed name to Eugene Frederic Falconnet
- 1857 Composed music for 'Annabel Lee', 'Rosebud', 'Mariguita' (poems by Edgar Allen Poe)
- 1861 May, enlisted in Confederate States of American Army; ca. June 1861 became First lieutenant
- 1862 Promoted to rank of Major
- 1864 Married January 12 to Ann America Burtwell of Florence, Alabama
- 1865 Surrendered to Federal forces; paroled May 11
- 1866-ca.1886 Railroad construction, Tennessee
- ca. 1880-1887 Worked for iron works at Aetna Iron Manufacturing Company and Standard Charcoal Company, Nashville and Hickman County, Tennessee
- ca. 1879-1887 Engaged in aeronautical research and efforts to construct a dirigible
- 1887 Died October 14; buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Nashville, Tennessee

# CONTAINER LIST

## Microfilm Container List

### Microfilm Reel # 1

#### **Box 1**

1. Accounts – Bills, notes, receipts – E. F. Falconnet, 1884-1885
2. Cards – Miscellaneous, 1885
3. Clippings – News article re: C.F. Ritchel and William Maxwell, n.d.
4. Correspondence – Cabinet De M. ch. Thirion – Falconnet, E.F. 1885-1886
5. Correspondence – Falconnet, E.F. – Falconnet, E.F., 1886
6. Correspondence – Falconnet, E.F. – Falconnet, E.F., 1884-1885
7. Correspondence – Falconnet, E.F. – Falconnet, E.F., 1885-1886
8. Correspondence – Glassie, D.W. – Glassie, D.W., 1882-1883
9. Correspondence – Glassie, D.W. – Glassie, D.W., 1883
10. Correspondence – Glassie, D.W. – Glassie, D.W., 1883-1885
11. Correspondence – Glassie, D.W. – Glassie, D.W., 1884
12. Correspondence – Glassie, D.W. – Glassie, D.W., 1884-1885
13. Correspondence – M. Bauer and Company – United States Patent Office, 1883-1885
14. Correspondence – Weightman, William H. – Weightman, William H., 1884-1885
15. Correspondence – Weightman, William H. – Weightman, William H., 1885-[1886]

#### **Box 2**

1. Diaries, memoirs, etc. – Civil War diary – E.F. Falconnet, 1862-ca. 1865
2. Journals – *Scientific American*, 1883-1885; *Aeronautical Gazette*, 1884
3. Legal Documents – Agreement – A.L. Blackman and Theodore Puskas, 1880
4. Legal Documents – Patent application – Albert L. Blackman, *Aerial Steamship America* (New York: John Polhemus, n.d.)
5. Legal Documents – Patent application – William Robert Lake, “Improvements in Vessels and Apparatus for Aerial Navigation,” 1885
6. Legal Documents – Patent application – E.F. Falconnet, “Vessel for Aerial Navigation” United States Patent Office, 1885
7. Legal Documents – Patent application – E.F. Falconnet, “Vessel for Aerial Navigation” Germany, 1885
8. Legal Documents – Patent application – E.F. Falconnet, “Process of Manufacturing Steel” United States Patent Office, 1886
9. Legal Documents – Patent application – Levi A. Beardsley, “Ship for Aerial Navigation” United States Patent Office, 1886
10. Legal Documents – Civil suit – *The Standard Charcoal Iron and Chemical Company vs. The Aetna Iron Manufacturing and Mining Co.*, 1887
11. Legal Documents – Congressional bill – H.R. 5717 – House of Representatives, 1888
12. Military Records – Special Order No. 210 – Major E.F. Falconnette [sic], 9<sup>th</sup> Regiment Alabama Cavalry, 1864
13. Music – *Annabel Lee*, n.d., *Rosebud*, 1857, *Mariguita*, 1857 – E.F. Falconnet
14. Notes – Civil War – n.d. – E.F. Falconnet

15. Notes – “The Campaign of Felix Zollicoffer,” n.d. – E.F. Falconnet
16. Notes – “Notes about a German Article on Slavery,” n.d., E.F. Falconnet
17. Notes – Slavery in the South, n.d. – E.F. Falconnet
18. Notes – re: the South, partial, n.d., E.F. Falconnet
19. Notes – Miscellaneous, 1883-1885, E.F. Falconnet

**Box 3**

1. Photographs, drawings, etc. – Drawings – miscellaneous aeronautical – E.F. Falconnet, 1883
2. Photographs, drawings, etc. – Photograph – E.F. Falconnet, n.d.
3. Printed Materials – Brochure – Aerial Navigation Company of Chicago, 1886
4. Printed Materials – Engraving and engine design – H.C. Ahrbocker and Son, 1879
5. Writings – E.F. Falconnet – “Metal Refining Process”, 1885
6. Writings – E.F. Falconnet – Survey – Cumberland below Nashville, n.d.
7. Writings – E.F. Falconnet – Monograph on airships, n.d.
8. Writings – E.F. Falconnet – Monograph on airships, n.d.
9. Writings – E.F. Falconnet – “Propellers or Wind Wheels,” n.d.
10. Writings – E.F. Falconnet – “Practical Aerostatics”
11. Writings – E.F. Falconnet – “Practical Aerostatics”

## NAME INDEX

This is a name index of the correspondence only in the Eugene Frederic Falconnet Papers together with the dates of the letters and information regarding their contents. The figures in parentheses denote the number of letters, if more than one. The last numbers refer to the box and folder in which the material is to be found.

- Cabinet De M. Ch. Thirion (4) to E.F. Falconnet, 1885, re: airship invention, 1-4
- Falconnet, E.F. (11) to Charles Latimer, 1886, re: foreign patents; North American Aerial Navigation Company; large flying machines; costs; "...difficulties encountered by inventors who are ahead of the age;" James Gordon Bennett; "Practical Aerostatics," 1- 4
- Falconnet, E.F. (6) to Charles Latimer 1886, re: aluminum in an alloy with copper and zinc; use of aluminum in airship; patent protection, 1-5
- Falconnet, E.F. (2) to H.M. Pierce, 1885, re: use of electricity in metal refining; smelting and refining of iron.
- Falconnet, E.F. (12) to William H. Weightman, 1884-1885, re: airship design; patents; fuels; use of aluminum and petroleum in airships; design plans; manuscript; steel tubes and sheeting; calculations, 1-6
- Falconnet, E.F. (11) to William H. Weightman, 1885-1886, re: motors and propellers; financial problems; aerial navigations; span diagrams; Pole and Wellner pamphlet; deck space; motive power; cone uplift; load distribution, 1-7
- Glassie, D.W. (10) to E.F. Falconnet, 1882-1883, re: patent matters; Henri Gifford; foreign patents, 1-8
- Glassie, D.W. (9) to E.F. Falconnet, 1883, re: aerial drawings; article in *Cincinnati Gazette*; costs; patent laws; search for airship patents, 1-9
- Glassie, D.W. (6) to E.F. Falconnet, 1883-1885, re: patents granted to Falconnet by United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, Belgium and Germany, 1-10
- Glassie, D.W. (17) to E.F. Falconnet, 1884, re: patent matters; Belle Gold and Silver Mining Company; English patent; mining stock; offer of brick patent, 1-11
- Glassie, D.W. (16) to E.F. Falconnet, 1884-1885, re: foreign patents; Glassie's response to Falconnet's criticism; fees; patent cases; patent problems, 1-12
- M. Bauer and Company to [E.F. Falconnet], 1885, re: foreign patents, 1-13
- Marvel, William D. to E.F. Falconnet, 1884, re: use of aluminum in airships, 1-13
- Moore, Frank D. (3) to E.F. Falconnet, 1884, re: support (suspension) sketches; loadweights and counterbracing; truss calculations, 1-13
- Patent Office, London, England to D.W. Glassie, 1883, re: patent application, 1-13
- Pennington, J.J. to E.F. Falconnet, 1883, re: motive power patent, 1-13
- United States Engineer Office to E.F. Falconnet, 1884, re: aerial navigation, 1-13
- United States Patent Office (6) to E.F. Falconnet, 1883-1885, re: patent applications, 1-13
- Weightman, William H. (12) to E.F. Falconnet, 1884-1885, re: airship construction; dissolution of business partnerships; foreign patents; use of oil fuel; manuscript on airship invention; Peterson patents; design changes, 1-14
- Weightman, William H. to E.F. Falconnet, ca. 1886, re: airship construction matters, 1-15