The Descriptive Finding Guide for the Birdie Draper Personal Papers
SDASM.SC.10039.O/S

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San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
2015
2001 Pan American Plaza, Balboa Park
San Diego 92101
URL: http://www.sandiegoairandspace.org/
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
Title: Birdie Draper Personal Papers
Identifier/Call Number: SDASM.SC.10039.O/S
Physical Description: 1.25 Cubic Feet
This is a two box collection. The first box – containing folders with documents and photographs – measures 12 ¼” x 10 ½” x 5. The second box – containing two posters and a scrap book – measures 24 ½” x 20 ¾” x 3”.
Date (inclusive): 1936-2005
Abstract: Birdie Draper was an early female daredevil, pilot and parachute rigger.
Conditions Governing Access
The collection is open to researchers by appointment.
Conditions Governing Use
Some copyright may be reserved. Consult with the library director for more information.
Preferred Citation
Please credit the San Diego Air and Space Museum's Library and Archives
Biographical / Historical
Birdie Viola Draper was born in 1916 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 1937 at the age of 20, Birdie began her training as a parachutist with Stub Chrissinger, an instructor for Hincks flying service. Mr. Chrissinger was one of two licensed parachute riggers in Minnesota at the time. After her training, Birdie joined a stunt group of Thrill Day Performers traveling to State Fairs. She was paired up with Captain F. F. (Bowser) Frakes who was best known for his daring plane crashing stunts. Birdie was recognized for crashing through sixteen sticks of dynamite with her car, as well as solid masonry walls. Her vast array of death defying stunts earned her the name, “The Queen of Daredevils.” By 1940, Birdie completed thirty-five parachute jumps. She retired in 1941 as a daredevil once she received her license as a parachute rigger from the Department of Commerce. Shortly afterwards she took a position as a rigger for Ryan Aeronautical Company. Birdie married George Griffin, a local attorney, and retired from Ryan Aeronautical Company in 1945. Birdie died on November 1, 2005.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
The collection was donated to the San Diego Air and Space Museum.
Scope and Contents
This is a two box collection. The first box – containing folders with documents and photographs – measures 12 ¼” x 10 ½” x 5. The second box – containing two posters and a scrap book – measures 24 ½” x 20 ¾” x 3”. This collection was organized by material and subject type. The collection covers the life of Birdie Draper as a daredevil stunt performer and parachute rigger from 1936 to 1945. This collection contains posters, a scrapbook album, newspapers, correspondence, logbooks, manuals, and photographs.
Related Materials
SDASM Women of Flight Collection
https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/albums/72157650330477326
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Women Airforce Service Pilots
Women in aeronautics
Women air pilots
Draper, Birdie, 1936-2005

Box 1 of 2

Folder 1 - Minn Aviation History, 1993
Folder 2 - “My First Jump” by Birdie Draper
Folder 3 - Correspondence
Folder 4 - Newspaper Article on Frakes
Folder 5 - Aviation Related Newspaper Clips
Folder 6 - Newspaper Articles on Women
Folder 7 - Pioneer Parachute Club, Parts Catalog
Folder 8 - (Scanned) Jump Loop, 1937-1940
Folder 9 - “The Interesting Story of Parachutes”
Folder 10 - “Parachutes,” by J. Floyd Smith
Folder 11 - Irvin Manuals & Brochures
Folder 12 - Manual for all Models
Folder 13 - Study Outline for Primary Ground Instruction
Folder 14 - Primary Ground Study Manual, 1939
Folder 15 - Parachute Tech Regulation Booklet
Folder 16 - Miscellaneous
Folder 17 - The Rip Cord Club
Folder 18 - Photographs


Folder 19 - Parachute Log (1)
Folder 20 - Parachute Log (2)
Folder 21 - Parachute Log (3), 1939

Box 2 of 2

Poster of the First Annual Parachute Circus at Camp Kearny Mesa, San Diego, CA, featuring Miss Birdie Draper. Sunday, October 19, 1941.
Painted rally poster - do not open.
Scraper Board scrapbook (unbound). It consists of twenty double sided pages (24 inches long), and contains newspaper articles and clips, a map, a logo, and magazines.