Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
Title: Cliff Henderson Photo Collection
creator: Henderson, Cliff
Identifier/Call Number: SDASM.SC.10187
Physical Description: 2 Cubic Feet
The collection consists of two boxes measuring 12.5” x 10.75” x 5” and 15.5” x 10.75” x 7”. The bulk of the collection consists of b/w photographs, most measuring 8” x 10”. Materials include about 390 photographs, correspondence, ephemera, tickets, programs, and organizational records relating to the National Air Races (1928-1939).

Date (bulk): bulk
Abstract: The collection contains individual and group photographs, racing event photographs of planes, equipment, and exhibits of the National Air Races from 1928 to 1938. Documents include a scrapbook, an autograph book from the 1934 races, and a three-ring binder of committee personnel and meeting records of the Cleveland National Air Race and Show Corporation relating to the 1929 races.

Biographical / Historical
Clifford William Henderson (1895-1984) was managing director of the National Air Races from 1928 to 1939. As one of the major sporting events of the time, the races provided the aviation industry opportunities to test and exhibit new planes, equipment, and fuels. They also attracted noted aviators such as Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, Jimmie Doolittle, and Roscoe Turner; and awarded prestigious tournament prizes including the Thompson, Bendix, and Greve trophies. Special exhibits staged on the grounds promoted commercial air transportation, showcasing passenger aircraft safety, speed, and comfort. Born in Lenox, Iowa on July 11, 1895, Cliff Henderson moved to California in his early teens. He graduated from the University of Southern California in 1917 and enlisted as an ambulance driver in World War I, transferring to the Army Air Corps shortly before the Armistice. In 1924, he managed his first air show, commemorating the Santa Monica departure and return of the first U.S. Army Air Service aerial circumnavigation of the world. Henderson gained experience managing local air races in Santa Monica and Los Angeles throughout the later 1920s. In 1928, he was hired by the National Aeronautic Association (NAA) to promote the 1928 National Air Races at Los Angeles, and staged the annual event until the races were suspended after 1939 at the outbreak of World War II. Most of the races were held in Cleveland, Ohio with the exception of the 1930 race in Chicago, and the 1933 and 1936 races in Los Angeles. In addition to the National Air Races, Henderson organized other air shows including the 1929 Western Aircraft Show, the 1930 New York Aircraft Salon, and the 1934 Pan-American International Air Races. In 1935, he and his brother Phil, built the Pan Pacific Civic Auditorium in Los Angeles, promoting sporting and cultural events, expositions, and conventions there. In 1940, he built the Pasadena Winter Garden, an ice skating venue. During World War II, Henderson served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, becoming military commissioner at Dakar in North Africa; and for his war service, he received the Ordre de l’Etoile du Benin. With other family members and investors, Henderson founded the community of Palm Desert in 1946, developing the 1,600-acre site near Palm Springs. Married to the former actress Marian Marsh, Henderson died at Rancho Mirage on March 26, 1984. The NAA Clifford W. Henderson Trophy is awarded to honor individuals for outstanding contributions that further the development and advancement of aviation.

Scope and Contents
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Conditions Governing Access
The collection is open to research by appointment. Some restrictions may apply.

Related Materials
Air Racing Files Bio Photos
https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/albums/72157649474580500

Subjects and Indexing Terms
All-Woman Transcontinental Air Race (ATWAR)
Stunt flying
Henderson, Cliff
Doolittle, James
Curtiss, Glenn Hammond
Earhart, Amelia
Lindbergh, Charles A. (Charles Augustus)

Box 1 of 2

Series I: Documents

Folder 1 - Scrapbook, National Air Races, 1929
Physical Description: Folder contains one 13 ¾” x 10 ¼” softcover scrapbook with 1 b/w photograph of grandstand, 2 event tickets, and a VIP seating chart of grandstand. Many pages have captions of photographs that were removed for digitization by the SDASM (See Box 2, Folder 2).

Folder 2 - Organization records, Cleveland National Air Race and Corporation, 1929
Physical Description: Folder contains one 11 ¾” x 10 ½” three-ring binder with alpha-indexed sections pertaining to the Cleveland National Air Race and Corporation including a directory of the Advisory Committee; meeting minutes (April 30 – July 16, 1929); contest and entertainment committees listings; reports of the field engineer (June 10 – September 2, 1929); list of famous flyers' reception committee members; list of glider contest organizers; list of speaker’s bureau members; traffic and transportation committees members; directory list of courtesy ticket recipients; list of welcome committee members.

Folder 3 - Miscellaneous documents, 1931
Physical Description: Folder contains two 8 ½” x 11” pages of undated typescript outlining proposed aircraft show corporation and a 3” x 2” fragment of typescript page showing address and date (July 6, 1931). There is no indication that these two documents are related.

Folder 4 - Autograph album, 1934
Physical Description: Folder contains one 12” x 9 ¼” hardcover book of autographs and congratulations from attendees of the 1934 National Air Races in Cleveland, Ohio (August 31 – September 3, 1934) to event organizer Cliff Henderson. Cover reads “Commemorating / A Quarter Century / of / Aviation Progress / 1934 National Air Races / Aug. 31 to Sept. 3, 1934 / Cleveland.” Pages include handwritten notes and autographs from Dick Atcherley, Vincent Bendix, Milo Burcham, Harry L. Davis (mayor of Cleveland), Harvey S. Firestone, Jr., Mary ‘Mae/May’ Haizlip, Ernest J. King (Rear Adm.), Jimmie Mattern, Al Menasco, Roy Minor, Phoebe Fairgrave Omlie, Paul Ryan, Roscoe Turner, Gene (Eugene L.) Vidal, Errol H. “Zip” Zistel, and others.

Folder 5 - Book covers, 1936
Physical Description: Folder contains two 12” x 10 ½” hardcovers of a two-ring binder. Handwriting on the back cover endpaper identifies the binder as the master book of photograph of the 1936 National Air Races in Los Angeles, California (September 4 – 7, 1936); photographer: Dick Whittington.
Folder 6 - Mailing envelope, 1938

Physical Description: Folder contains one photo 13” x 10” mailing envelope from the office of Howard Strickling, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios to Cliff Henderson (postmark January 14, 1938). No contents. See item CF_02 009: January 14, 1938 letter from Kay Mulvey (Publicity Department, on MGM Pictures letterhead) to Cliff Henderson referring to enclosed print of photograph “that was taken the day you brought Major Doolittle out.”

Series II: Photos

Box 1, No Folder - Panoramic views 1937

Physical Description: Box 1 contains two rolled photographic prints of panoramic views of the 1937 National Air Races in Cleveland, Ohio (September 3 – 6, 1937). Both photographs labeled on front, “Photo by the John R. Murphy Co. for Gordon Connor, official photographer.” 1. One Panoramic photograph 45 ¾” x 10”; CF_06 052 1937 Caption: “1937 National Air Races / September 3-4-5-6, 1937 / Cleveland, Ohio.” 2. One Panoramic photograph 51 ½” x 10”; CF_06 053 1937 Caption: “Parking at National Air Races / September 3-4-5-6, 1937 / Cleveland, Ohio.”

Box 2 of 2

Series II: Photos (cont)

Folder 1 - Photographs and digitized documents, CF_02 001 thru CF_02 0035. 1912-1938 (Bulk, 1929-1933)

Physical Description: 32 Photographs (11 sized 8” x 10") of Air Races Show, c.1929-1938 including 1938 photograph of Clark Gable with James H. Doolittle and Cliff Henderson (CF_02 007), two undated photographs (9” x 7”) of Amelia Earhart (CF_02 029 and CF_02 030), and one 3 ¼” x 4 ¼” photograph (dated 1912) of Glenn H. Curtiss with Harry Park (CF_02 014). Includes one 5 ½” x 3 ½” postal card photograph (dated 1912) of Curtiss hydroaeroplane and Navy hanger at North Island, California (CF_02 015) and 13 photographs (most 4 ¼” x 6 ¼”, two 5 ½” x 4 ¼”) of aviation-related subjects (planes, aerial photography, airports, aviators, flight passengers) taken in Germany. This subgroup includes a group photo of Hermann Köhl, James Fitzmaurice, and Ehrenfried von Hünfeld (CF_02 023) and a photograph of Clarence Chamberlin’s arrival at Berlin airfield (CF_02 019). Photographs include 2 prints of CF_02 032; one 5” x 7” photograph of the “Polar Star” (CF_02 003); 2 photographs (3 ¼” x 4 ¼”) of the “Three Sea Hawks” autographed by Tommy Tomlinson. Documents include two advertising labels for 1933 (Los Angeles) and 1938 (Cleveland) National Air Races and two pieces of correspondence.

Folder 2 - Photographs and digitized documents, CF_03 003 thru CF_03-050. 1929-1930

Physical Description: 58 Photographs (8” x 10”) of attendees, participants, organizers of and exhibits at air race shows, c. 1929-1930, including one photograph of Charles Lindbergh (CF_03 011). Most of the photographs are stamped on the back “Wings Photo Service Official Photographer International Aircraft Exposition 1930.” Some of these photographs were removed from the scrapbook of the 1929 National Air Races (See Box 1, Folder 1). 2 1929 National Air Races brochures/advertising materials.
Folder 3 - Photographs, CF_03-051 thru CF_03-111. 1928-1938

Physical Description: 61 Photographs (8” x 10”) of exhibits, attendees, participants, and organizers at air race shows, c. 1929-1938 including one captioned “Exterior of the Arena (exhibition building), February 15-23, 1930 International Aircraft Show” (CF_03-109). 18 photographs are stamped on the back “Wings Photo Service Official Photographer International Aircraft Exposition 1930.”

Folder 4 - Photographs, CF_04-001 CF_04-080. 1928

Physical Description: 80 Photographs of exhibits, attendees, participants, and organizers of the 1928 National Air Races in Los Angeles. Some studio portraits; two on-site group photographs with Wallace Beery (CF_04-010 and CF_04-011).

Folder 5 - Photographs, CF_04-081 CF_04-165. 1928

Physical Description: 85 Photographs of 1928 Los Angeles National Air Races, including one photograph of Art Goebel (CF_04-165).

Folder 6 - Photographs, CF_06 02 thru CF_05 51. 1936

Physical Description: 51 Photographs (8” x 10”) of pilots, planes, and spectators at the 1936 National Air Races in Los Angeles. Includes photographs of Amelia Earhart (CF_06 06); Milo Burcham (CF_06 16 and CF_06 17); Lee Miles (CF_06 27); Michel Détroyat (CF_06 44 et al.); Louise Thaden, Vincent Bendix, and Blanche Noyes (CF_06 12); and Laura Ingalls, Vincent Bendix, Louise Thaden, and the Bendix Trophy (CF_06 03). All are printed on front edge “Photo by ‘Dick’ Whittington” and stamped on the back with Whittington’s Los Angeles address and phone number.