Descriptive Finding Guide for the Helen Richey Personal Papers
SDASM.SC.10118

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San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
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Descriptive Finding Guide for the  
Helen Richey Personal Papers  
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Language of Material: English  
Contributing Institution: San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives  
Title: Helen Richey Personal Papers  
Identifier/Call Number: SDASM.SC.10118  
Physical Description: 1 Cubic Feet 3 Archival Boxes  
Date (inclusive): 1909-1947  
Abstract: Helen Richey was the first female pilot to be hired to fly by a commercial scheduled passenger carrier on December 13, 1934 with Central Airlines.

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  
[Item], [Filing Unit], [Series Title], [Subgroups], [Record Group Title and Number], [Repository “San Diego Air & Space Museum Library & Archives”]

Immediate Source of Acquisition  
The materials in this Collection were donated to the San Diego Air and Space Museum.

Scope and Contents  
This collection contains approximately one cubic foot of material in three boxes including correspondences, flight lesson diary, photos, newspaper clippings, flight charts, and ATA publications. The collection primarily covers the periods of 1934-1945.

Biographical / Historical  
Helen Richey, born on November 12, 1909 in McKeesport, PA, began her flying career as a teenager out of high school. In 1929 she became the first licensed female pilot in Allegheny County. In August 1932, Richey and Frances Marsalis set a new women’s endurance when the pair stayed aloft for almost ten days. In May 1934, Richey won the main race at the first National Air Meet for Women in Dayton.

Richey was the first female pilot to be hired to fly by a commercial scheduled passenger carrier on December 13, 1934 with Central Airlines. Although she won the job after competing with eight men, the Airline Pilots Association and the Department of Commerce, in a case of gross sex discrimination, forced her out. She resigned in November 1935. Her resignation triggered a noisy battle over women’s rights. Women were not to become airline pilots again until 1973.

In 1936, Richey, with Amelia Earhart came in fifth place in the Bendix Trophy Race from New York City to Los Angeles, and, by doing so bested several male pilots. She was an air-marking pilot for the Bureau of Air Transport and set two world records for light planes. Later, she became the first woman to be licensed as a flight instructor by the CAA. Richey was a member of both the WASPs and the Ninety• Nines. She died at age 37 on January 7, 1947.

Related Materials  
Women of Flight Special Collection.  
https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/albums/72157624472069033

Subjects and Indexing Terms  
Women Airforce Service Pilots  
All-Woman Transcontinental Air Race (ATWAR)  
Powder Puff Derby  
Women in aeronautics  
Royal Air Force  
Earhart, Amelia  
Richey, Helen

Box 01
Documents


Photographs: Folders 02-07

Physical Description: 1. 8 x 10 black and white photo of Helen and her parents. 2. Three black and white photo of Helen in ATA uniform (one photo taken of her left side and one photo taken of her right side). 3. Four 2 x 2 ~black and white photo of Helen in her ATA uniform, Artist and photographer: Mindel & Faraday, London, 1942. 4. 8 x 10 frontal view of Helen in airline uniform without garrison cap, by Parry Studio. 5. 8 x 10 frontal view of Helen with garrison cap, Central Airlines, by Parry Studio, 3 copies. 6. 8 x 10 left side view of Helen in uniform, by Parry Studio, 3 copies. 7. 8 x 10 photo of Helen with scarf, two copies. 8. 8 x 10 Helen with Brooklyn mayor, Jan 1934, by Triboro Photos, Inc. 9. 8 x 10 Helen in flight pants, fully body shot, by Johnston and Johnston, Pittsburgh, 2 copies. 10. 8 x 10 Helen with unidentified women, holding flowers 11. 8 x 10 Helen with Amelia Earhart and unidentified man (Brooklyn major?) 12. 8 x 10 Helen and Dick Powell, 20 April 1938, by Schuller Crail, Photographer 13. 8 x 10 Blanch Noyes, Helen Richey, Helen McCloskey, and Louise Thaden 14. 8 x 10 Helen climbing into aircraft (ATA uniform), copyright by Planet News Ltd. 15. 6 x 8 Helen Richey, Eleanor Roosevelt, and ATA pilots 16. Image of Jackie Cochran and a group of photo of ATA pilots 17. 8 x 10 Helen in gown - three different views by Parry Studios 18. Possible loan items: forty photos, one postcard of A-20, postcard written on with Flight directions, three little girl photos 19. Negatives - Perfection Photo Co., Flyer of Photo Company, 6 images of child and dog 20. Family photo album 21. Helen Richey portrait, pencil drawing, Daily News Publishing Co.
Newspaper Articles


Box 02
Maps

Box 03
Charts (ATA 1942-45)