

## **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

12/22/2014

2001 Pan American Plaza, Balboa Park

San Diego 92101

URL: <http://www.sandiegoairandspace.org/>

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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 Feet3 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

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**Box 01**

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## Documents

**Physical Description:** 1. Air Woman, Vol 2, No 5, April 1935 (Photo of Helen Richey on front, "Central Airlines co-pilot and first woman to fly the mail") - two copies. 2. Personal diary of first 13 flights - flying lessons. 3. Invitation from the Mexican Consul General, dinner honoring Amelia Earhart, 28 May 1935. 4. Invitation from Florida Year-Round Clubs concerning the All American Air Races, 11-13 Jan 1934. 5. National Registration Identity Card, 26 Mar 1942. (Newspaper article inside - "This is how Gremlins came into Being", London 3 Nov 1942 - removed). 6. Thank you letter from Commandant Women Air Transport Auxiliary (AT A). 31 Oct 1942. (Newspaper clipping removed, "Noted U.S. Woman Flyer on the Job" by Ernie Pyle). 7. The American Club, annual membership card, 1 Aug 1943. 8. Dinner place card, Officers' Dining Room "R" Deck Aft. 9. Apollo Theatre Ticket, 1942. 10. The Gay 90s Club membership card and rules, No 2565, c. 1940s. 11. Post office telegram from Jacqueline Cochran concerning Eleanor Roosevelt's visit, Oct 1942. 12. Letter from the Foreign Service of USA regarding passport application. Issued on 27 Apr 1942. 13. Birth certificate, 21 Nov 1909. 14. Articles Detained by Travelers Censorship Office, Form 1PD4, Pilots Handbook confiscated with remarks by Helen "Civilian Air Pilot-AT A returning home for good", 19 Mar 1943. 15. ATA Letter from Commandant Women, Pauline Gower (Christmas and New Year wishes), 12 Dec 1942. 16. Letter from Gertrude Brown inquiring into aircraft plant jobs, 14 Jun 1943. 17. Letter from United Air Service LTD, 5 Sept 1935. 18. The American STORK Club membership card, 19 Oct 1942. 19. Flight notebook, May 9 - Oct 24 (date unknown). 20. Fair Facts 33'd Ferrying Group, Vol 2, 13 Nov, 21 Apr 1944. 21. Anny Air Forces School of Applied Tactics, Orlando, FL, 11 Aug 1944. 22. Flight Report P-38H, 1944. 23. AAF Regulation No 40-8, WASP, 3 Apr 1944. 24. Notice to Passengers - Control of Exports, Jan 1943. 25. ATA Priority Aircraft Collection Chit, 1 Feb 1943. 26. Article - Officer's Messes in the Royal Navy, Army and Air Force. 27. Care of Parachutes, Air Transport Auxiliary. 28. Directional Gyroscope, Instructional Notice to Pilots No 1, ATA Instructional Unit, 6 Apr 1941. 29. White Waltham Aerodrome Regulations, 5 Apr 1941. 30. Romeo and Juliet program guide, starring Katherine Cornell, 13 Dec. Maps

## 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.

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### Newspaper Articles

**Physical Description:** 1. "Helen Richey Soars to 18,000", Pittsburgh Press, Volume 52, No 319, 10 May 1936. 2. "Girl Flyer sets Altitude Record," The Sunday Star, Washington DC, 10 May 1936. 3. "Helen Richey Sets Mark", Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, Vol 18, No 99, 10 May 1936. 4. "Helen Richey In Air to Get Two World Altitude Records", The Daily News, 9 May 1936. 5. "Pittsburgh Girl Sets New World's Altitude Record", Pittsburgh Press, 11 May 1936. 6. "First Woman to Fly Mails", The Evening Bulletin, Philadelphia, 22 July 1935. 7. "Helen Richey Grounded by Sex", 7 Nov 1935. 8. "First Woman Flier is Named Co-Pilot of Mail Transport", Washington Herald, 30 Dec 1934. 9. "Feminists Join Amelia Earhart In Championing Girl Pilot [Helen Richey], but Women Flyers Admit Transports to Hard", San Antonio Express, No 312, 8 Nov 1935. 10. "Children Visit Airport as Post-Gazette Guests", c. 1935. 11. "She Flies Mail", The Houston-Post, 6 Jan 1935. 12. "Barns-California Barns-Are Now Her Weaknesses, Helen Richey Tells Reporter in Golden State", William Barr, 21 Nov 1936. 13. "Signs of the Skyways: It's a Modern Job These Girls Have Undertaken, but Their Success Is Adding to the Facilities of Aerial Navigation and to the Civic Pride of Many a Town", by Evelyn Roe, Weekly Magazine Section, 5 Aug 1936. 14. "Noted US Woman Flyer on the Job", by Ernie Pyle, London, 20 Oct. (c. 1942). 15. "On Visit" (unknown source and date). 16. "Roving Reporter", by Ernie Pyle, The Pittsburgh Press, 21 Oct 1942. 17. "Roving Reporter", by Ernie Pyle, The Pittsburgh Press, 20 Oct 1942. 18. "Friend of Amelia Earhart Now Ferrying Planes All Over England for RAF", by Ernie Pyle, 20 Oct 1942. 19. "British Ferry Service Girls Go Thru 4 Periods of Intensive Training", by Ernie Pyle, 21 Oct 1942. 20. "Helen Richey Loves Job of Ferrying U.S. Planes", Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, 20 Feb 1944. 21. "Flies Plane Here, Visits Lake Camp: Aviatix Likes Field, Now Seen As Vacation Air Terminal", The Conneaut News-Herald, 20 Jul 1932. 22. "Miss Helen Richey Taken to Hospital", Akron Beacon Journal, 6 Jul 1936. 23. "Miss Richey, Flier, Has Operation Here", Akron Beacon Journal, 7 Jul 1936. 24. "Famed Aviatix Visits City", Jamestown Evening Journal, 21 Aug 1939. 25. "Fledgling's Wings Spread" (unknown source and date). 26. Newspaper clipping photo of Helen and Amelia Earhart, Akron Beacon Journal (date unknown). 27. "Skill, Courage of Famous Fliers" 19 August (source and date unknown). 28. "Famed Woman Pilot Will Fly By Radio For Junior Aviators", (Akron Beacon Journal?) 1 August. 29. Photo clipping of Blanche Noyes, Helen Richey, Helen McCloskey, Louise Thaden, 13 Aug 1936. [note: source in photo folder]. 30. "Looking Up to Helen: Aviatix Goes Aloft at Luncheon", c. 1935. 31. "Aviator Heroes Honored at Banquet", The Pittsburgh Press, 29 Sep 1939. 32. "Helen Richey of Central Airlines", (source and date unknown), c. 1935. 33. "Sweeping the Skies on a Cross country Hunt for Treasure," Boston Evening Transcript, 14 Oct 1933. 34. "This is how Gremlins came into Being", London 3 Nov 1942. Box TL540 2

### Box 02

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## Maps

**Physical Description:** 1. Albany, NY, Airway Map no 122, Jan 1931. 2. Detroit, Sectional Aeronautical chart, Mar 1936. 3. Pennsylvania, Rand McNally Standard Map, Air Trails (2) 4. United States, Rand McNally Standard Map, 5. Alabama, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 6. Florida, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 7. Georgia, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (autographed) 8. Indiana, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (autographed) 9. Illinois, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (autographed) 10. Louisiana, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (trip from Vicksburg to Shreveport). 11. Maryland, Delaware and District of Columbia, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 12. Michigan, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 13. Mississippi, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (autographed) 14. Missouri, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 15. New Jersey, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 16. New York, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (autographed) 17. North Carolina, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (notes: Pittsburgh to Raleigh via Washington 430) - autographed. 18. Oklahoma, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 19. Pennsylvania, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (autographed) 20. Pennsylvania, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 21. South Carolina, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (autographed) 22. Texas, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 23. Virginia, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails (autographed) 24. West Virginia, Rand McNally Standard Map with Air Trails 25. Los Angeles, California, Flight Service Map No 3 by H.P. Noordwal

## Box 03

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### Charts (ATA 1942-45)

**Physical Description:** 1. Norfolk (RS-9) Sectional Aeronautical Chart, Restricted, 11 May 1944. 2. Huntington (T-8) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 4 May 1944 (3 copies) 3. Washington (T-9) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 18 Nov 1943 4. Birmingham (Q-7) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 30 Mar 1944 5. Chattanooga (R-7) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 16 Mar 1944 (2 copies) 6. Nashville (S-7) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 7 Sep 1944 (2 copies) 7. Shreveport (Q-6) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 16 Mar 1944 (2 copies, one tom) 8. Albuquerque (R-4) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 17 Feb 1944 9. Kansas City (T-6) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 30 Mar 1944 10. Wichita (S-5) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 24 Feb (1943 marked out) 1944. 11. Little Rock (R-6) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 16 Mar 1944. 12. Corpus Christi (N-5) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 30 Dec 1943. 13. Dallas (Q-5) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 16 Mar 1944. 14. Oklahoma (R-5) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 17 Sep 1942. 15. El Paso (P-4) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 12 Jul 1945. 16. Tulsa (S-6) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 16 Mar 1944. 17. Lincoln (U-5) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 2 Mar 1944. 18. Pocatello (V-3) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 13 Jan 1944. 19. Boise (V-2) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 20 Apr 1944. 20. Roswell (Q-4) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 1 Mar 1945. 21. Phoenix (Q-3) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 1 Mar 1945. 22. Prescott (R-3) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 10 Feb 1944. 23. Grand Canyon (S-3) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 10 Feb 1944. 24. Mt Whitney (S-2) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 3 Feb 1944 25. Spokane (X-2) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 13 Apr 1944. 26. Regional Restricted Aeronautical Chart, 6 Jan 1944. 27. Regional Restricted Aeronautical Chart, 16 Dec 1943. 28. Regional Restricted Aeronautical Chart, 9 Mar 1944. 29. United States Aeronautical Planning Chart, Restricted, 16Apr1942. 30. Norfolk (RS-9) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 11 May 1944. 31. Wichita (S-5) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 24 Feb (1943 marked out) 1944. 32. New York (U-9) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 11 May 1944. 33. Chicago (U-7) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 27 Apr 1944. 34. Albuquerque (R-4) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 17 Feb 1944. 35. San Diego (Q-2) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 2 Mar 1944. 36. Chicago (U-7) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 27 Apr 1944 (2 copies). 37. Detroit (V-8) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 29 Oct 1942. 38. Detroit (V-8) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 18 May 1944. 39. Cincinnati (T-7) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 4 May 1944 (2 copies). 40. Milwaukee (V-7) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 20 Apr 1944. 41. New York (U-9) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 11May1944 (2 copies). 42. New York (U-9) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 11 Nov 1943. 43. Orlando (O-8) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 6 Jul 1944. 44. Jacksonville (P-8) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 6 Jan 1944. 45. Savannah (Q-8) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 23 Mar 1944 (2 copies). 46. Winston-Salem (S-8) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 6 Apr 1944. 47. Charlotte (R-8) Restricted Sectional Aeronautical Chart, 6 Apr 1944 (2 copies).