The Descriptive Finding Guide for the Women of Flight Special Collection
SDASM.SC.10160

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San Diego Air and Space Museum Library and Archives
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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: Women of Flight Special Collection
source: Elder, Ruth
Identifier/Call Number: SDASM.SC.10160
Physical Description: 1 Cubic Feet
This is a 6 box collection. In addition, it also is composed of a file cabinet. It is comprised of Artifacts, Documents, Magazines, Newspapers, and Photographs.
Date (bulk): bulk
Abstract: This collection consists of several donations made in 1981 for the Women of Aviation Exhibit at the San Diego Aerospace Museum. It has been added to over the past few decades. It documents the history of women in aviation and includes much information in the Ninety Nines.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
This collection consists of several donations made in 1981 for the Women of Aviation Exhibit at the San Diego Aerospace Museum. All items have been removed from exhibit, while the new exhibition, Women of Flight, is being developed (opening in 2007). Donations have also been made by the women in this collection that belonged to the Ninety-Nines or from miscellaneous collections.
Biographical / Historical
The female pioneers of flight all began with aviatrixes, such as Amelia Earhart, Betty Wharton, and Blanche Noyes, in 1929. Their fame started with the creation of the “Ninety-Nines,” an international organization of licensed women pilots established to educate and support their fellow women who have passion for flight. Named for the original 99 members, the “Ninety-Nines” were established at Curtiss Field, Long Island, New York. Of course each woman began her flying career in her own time and reached success for her own achievements, but all thanks to the support of her fellow aviatrixes and their organizations gave these female pilots the strength to fulfill their passion for flying. Along with the “Ninety-Nines,” the Women’s Air Derby was born in 1929 as an official air race for women to compete in flight in the United States, modeled after the men’s transcontinental races. As part of the National Air Races, the Women’s Derby, also known as the “Powder Puff Derby,” was a cross-country race where only women pilots participated, the first of which included Amelia Earhart, Ruth Elder, Betty Gillies, Blanche Noyes, Thea Rasche, Bobbi Trout, Gladys O’Donnell, along with many more. Unfortunately with the stock market crash, flying planes became too expensive and only a few women could continue to race. During World War II, under the direction of the United States Army Air Forces, the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) was established for civilian female pilots to fly military aircraft. Two famous aviatrixes, known as Jacqueline “Jackie” Cochran and Nancy Harkness Love, proposed to free male pilots from their duties by employing female pilots for non-combat missions. Although both proposals were denied in 1940, once the U.S. was involved in the war they began to realize there weren’t enough male pilots, therefore establishing two programs that later merged together to become WASP under the direction of Cochran in 1943. After the war was won, WASP was disbanded since the female pilots weren’t needed anymore. In 1947, the “Ninety-Nines” (also written as 99’s in this collection) resurrected the Powder Puff Derby for those women who still wanted to pursue their dreams of flying. For 30 years, women raced for AWTAR, the All Women’s Transcontinental Air Race, which had its own office and board members preparing for the annual races. In 1947, the final race was held due to high costs and a lawsuit for not allowing male pilots to race. The Whirly-Girls was established in 1955 as an organization for international women helicopter pilots. The goals of this organization are to promote women in the helicopter industry through scholarship awards and mentoring for training women pilots, exchange information among other female helicopter pilots, and promote community acceptance of rotorcraft. As of 2011, there are over 1700 registered members representing 44 countries. The women featured in this collection, and their involvement in history as aviatrixes, are listed below and their individual info can be found in boxes #5 and #6.
Scope and Contents
This is a 6 box collection. In addition, it also is composed of a file cabinet. It is comprised of Artifacts, Documents, Magazines, Newspapers, and Photographs.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Powder Puff Derby
Trans World Airlines
United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration.
Space Shuttle Program
Ninety-Nines (Organization)
All-Woman Transcontinental Air Race (ATWAR)
Earhart, Amelia
Coleman, Bessie
Noyes, Blanche
Trout, Bobbi Evelyn
Quimby, Harriet
Cochran, Jacqueline
Barnes, Florence "Pancho"
Elder, Ruth
Ride, Sally

Box 1 of 6

Series I: Oversized Materials

Box 2 of 6

Series II: Artifacts, Documents, Magazines, Newspapers, and Photographs

Box 3 of 6
Series II: Artifacts, Documents, Magazines, Newspapers, and Photographs

Physical Description:
1. Aerobatics: newspaper clippings and photocopies
2. Ballooning: photocopies of articles on Ann Meuer and Mary H. Myers, “Carlotta the lady Aeronaut” (known as the first woman in the US to pilot her own aircraft—hot air balloon)
3. Convair painting: (3) pictures of Convair’s montage with information written by Glenn Buffington, along with photocopies
4. Donation letters: includes all of the donation papers and letters for the women of flight collection
5. Female Shuttle Astronauts-Women in Space: newspaper clippings from the San Diego Union, photocopies and original biographical data from NASA in Margaret Rhea Seddon, Judith Resnik, Shannon Lucid, Anna Fisher, Bonnie Dunbar, Kathryn Sullivan, and Sally Ride
6. Flight Attendants: United Airlines information and (11) original uniform pictures
7. ISA exhibit opening, 1994: (24) loose photos, Women in Aviation guestbook, and (14) photos in small album
8. NASA, 1 of 3: (39) total 8x10 color and black & white photos from the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center- (6) Mary Cleave; (4) Bonnie Dunbar; (18) Anna Fisher; (7) Shannon Lucid; and (4) of multiple women
9. NASA, 2 of 3: (29) total 8x10 color and black & white photos from the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center- (10) Judith Resnik; (12) Rhea Seddon; and (7) Kathryn Sullivan
10. NASA, 3 of 3: 47 total 8x10 color and black & white photos from the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center of Sally Ride
11. Naval Aviation Women: photocopies of Joellen Drag appearing in two Japanese magazine articles; “Women in the Navy;” military/aviation magazines from the Navy in the 70s; photocopies of articles on Rosemary Merims Conaster and Joellen Drag
12. Negatives w/o Provenance

Box 4 of 6

Series II: Artifacts, Documents, Magazines, Newspapers, and Photographs

Physical Description:
1. Reunion Party: Ninety-Nine’s reunion party proofs and negatives of [names of women]; and also negatives of 99’s painting the Lindbergh Field runway
2. Smithsonian Institution Women Aviation: (9) black & white photos of Tiny, Bessie Coleman, Anne Lindbergh, etc from the Smithsonian Institute of D.C.
3. Soaring: contains article from 1978 “The San Diego Union” about the “Anne Lindbergh Gliders;” a photocopy of missing Lindbergh glider story written by Richard Benbough member of the San Diego Aerospace museum; Information about Helen R. Dick and the soaring hall of fame; photocopy of Hanna Reitsch (Whirly-Girl #1) German aviator in World War II article on her many flight records
4. Swain Artwork: black & white ink drawings from book “We Were WASPs” by Winifred wood, drawings by Dot Swain
5. Various Women: lots of articles and photocopies on many women of flight, 3 foam photos, and (1) 8x10 black & white photo
6. WASP: copies of 30th Memorial Reunion of WASP, ground school WASP report, WASP roster from Marana Army Air Field, sign-in sheet for WASP reunion meeting in 1978; photocopies of Meredith Campbell; original 1984 “The San Diego Union” article about the WASPs; written address by Betty Gillies for a 99’s international convention about the WAFS-Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron; (2) negatives on WASPs; photocopies of women pilots and articles about WASP history; photocopy of Life magazine from 1943; negative and (1) 8x10 photo of WASP logo designed by Walt Disney; photocopies of graduation ceremony of Mary Lou Colbert and Jacqueline Cochran
7. Women In Aviation: exhibition development and info; proofs and negatives of women in aviation exhibit; proofs and negatives of Laura Ingalls; 2 programs; bibliography of women in aeronautics for WIA exhibit by Camilla Hutson; articles on “Girl Pilots”; cover of Life magazine; (1) photo from exhibit B. Women’s National Aeronautical Association: an original 1940 newspaper clipping from “The San Diego Union” on the WNAA members
8. Whirly-Girls: photocopies of Whirly-Girls articles; Whirly-Girls logo illustration; Hanna Reitsch articles; Dora Jean Doughtery Strother; photocopy of picture of Whirly-Girls with Prince Philip; Lauretta Foy-Bell helicopter news photocopy; actual Whirly-Girls logo patch; Judy Short Memorial Heliport Hospital certificates; Peanuts and Whirly-Girls comic and correspondence photocopy; April 1956 Pegasus
Series II: Artifacts, Documents, Magazines, Newspapers, and Photographs (cont)

Physical Description: 1. Baumann, Joanruth: original resumes; copy of photograph; letters from JB 2. Bera, Fran: (real name: Frances Bera) many photographs of copies of Fran Bera and aircraft/other people; original articles on Fran Bera 3. Bledsoe, Anna: black & white photocopies of pictures of Anna Bledsoe 4. Brown, Janice: article from National Geographic; negative of Solar Challenger ; (17) black and white photos from Solar Challenger, pilots, and project people, including Janice Brown, photos by Randa Bishop; packet information and biographical information 5. Cadman, Vivian (Eddy): photocopies of Cadman, a WWII WASP female pilot (class 43-W-5) 6. Cobb, Jerrie: (6) photos of Cobb and many articles and photocopies of articles on Jerrie Cobb’s achievements; Jerrie Cobb Foundation brochure 7. Dick, Helen: list of Helen Dick’s soaring achievements and photocopy of Helen Dick and Cirrus sailplane 8. Earhart, Amelia, 1 of 5: 2 first day covers of Amelia Earhart; (1) black & white photo of Amelia Earhart with Blanche Noyes; (2) black & white pictures of Amelia Earhart’s mom at her memorial exhibit; (2) photos on foam, one signed by Amelia Earhart; (1) 8x10 color photo reproduction of Amelia Earhart painting; (1) photo of the 99’s for the 50th anniversary of Earhart’s solo flight across the Atlantic donated by Betty Gillies 9. Earhart, 2 of 5: photocopies of pictures; Amelia Earhart fellowship awards 1978-79; 1949 program for Smithsonian Amelia Earhart Memorial; Liberty magazine with article on page 30; maps regarding the search for Amelia Earhart 10. Earhart, 3 of 5: Hall of Fame gift consisting of (6) photos of aviatrices 11. Earhart, 4 of 5: Amelia Earhart handwritten letters to Lloyd Royer and a Kinner Airplane and Motor Corp passenger ticket 12. Earhart, 5 of 5: folder with many articles and cutouts from Air Classics and National Geographic about Amelia Earhart 13. Funk, Wally: (real name: Mary Wallace Funk II) copy of article about Wally Funk; business card; copy of picture; letter from Wally; FAA background from National Transportation Safety Board; biography from AIAA student journal 14. Gillies, Betty: (1) picture of Betty Gillies from 1930, (24) pictures from Betty’s scrapbook (including a picture of Betty Gillies skating for charity along with Amelia Earhart, Frances Marsales, and Elvy Kalep), photocopy of letter informing Betty Gillies of winning the Paul Tissandier diploma of honor along with (1) photo of the diploma, photocopies of pictures of Betty Gillies with other women 15. Hopkins-Tier, Nancy: 8x10 black & white picture of Nancy in cockpit of airplane; (1) 5x7 black & white picture next to tail of Cessna 170A with Bicentennial seal; page with biographical summary of activities and wards; 7-page typed bio of Nancy Hopkins-Tier; copy of pilot’s log for the 6th Annual Air Tour, September 11-27, 1930; copy of pilot’s license with signature of Orville Wright, August 9, 1930; photocopies of article and pictures 16. Kendeigh, Jane: first Navy flight nurse-brochure of the Admiral Nimitz Foundation museum; newsletter of the Admiral Nimitz from summer 1985; “The San Diego Union” article of her death; (2) Admiral Nimitz Foundation story booklets of Jane Kendeigh titled: “The First Navy Flight Nurse on a Pacific Battlefield” about her flight to Iwo Jima 17. Knapp, Brooke: (2) 8x10 black & white photos; copies of biographies on Brooke Knapp; copies of articles from magazines 18. McDermott, Elysa: “The San Diego Union” article on Elysa McDermott and her Navy husband 19. Noyes, Blanche: articles of Blanche Noyes; proofs and negatives of Blanche Noyes; photocopy of Blanche Noyes and Amelia Earhart picture 20. Scott, Blanche Stuart: (AKA: Betty Scott) possibly the first woman aviator, First Day Cover of 28cent Airmail stamp commemorating Scott’s achievements in aviation 21. Schmidt, Maxine Crookston: pictures of Maxine Crookston Schimdt and her autobiography 22. Thaden, Louise: articles, photocopies of pictures; personal and professional biography; letter written by Louise Thaden; (27) color and black & white photographs varying in size; National Aeronautic magazine from August 1936 with article of Louise Thaden; photocopies of National Air Races and Bendix Aviation checks written to Louise Thaden 23. Warner, Emily: proof of picture of first female airline pilot 24. Willhite, Nellie: ticket #1044 for plane ride with Nellie Willhite in her plane “Pard” 25. Waterford Bragg, Janet Harmon: African American with commercial pilot’s license article 26. Yeager, Jeana: Lindbergh dinner autographed program where Yeager presented an award; (3) 8x10 photographs of Jeana Yeager and the Voyager; (1) large photograph of the world map tracing its flight, and articles on the Voyager’s flight around the world, (1) black & white photo of Yeager with her autograph
Series II: Artifacts, Documents, Magazines, Newspapers, and Photographs (cont)

Cabinet in Basement

**Drawer 1**


**Drawer 2**

Physical Description: 1. Folders with Women’s Air Races and Powder Puff Derby newspapers and programs 2. Folders filled with photocopies of pictures, newspaper clippings and programs on the 99’s, Air Races, military female pilots, airline pilots, WWII-WASPs 3. Binder from Betty Wharton with All Women’s Transcontinental Air Races (AWTAR) pictures: (65) photocopies and (2) photos of the 50th Annual Powder Puff Derby in Palm Springs, 1997

**Drawer 3**