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Note
Finding aid prepared by Catherine Mills.
**Title:** H. W. Zurilgen Collection on Roy N. Francis

**Identifier/Call Number:** 2009.12

**Contributing Institution:** History San Jose Research Library

**Language of Material:** English

**Physical Description:** 0.25 Linear feet (1/2 manuscript box)

**Date (inclusive):** 1910-1952

**Abstract:** News clippings, photographs, publications and other materials regarding early Santa Clara County aviator Roy Francis.

**Language of Materials note:** The materials are in English.

**creator:** Zurilgen, H. W., Lt. Col.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition note**
Materials were donated by Nancy Labahn of Price, Utah, who inherited them from her father, Lt. Colonel H. W. Zurilgen.

**Conditions Governing Access note**
Materials are open to the public for research by appointment.

**Conditions Governing Use note**
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**Preferred Citation note**
H. W. Zurilgen Collection on Roy N. Francis 2009-12, History San Jose Research Library, San Jose, California 95112-2599.

**Scope and Contents note**
Materials about Roy N. Francis, early Santa Clara County aviator, including newsclippings, photographs, publications, and a few personal papers. The photographs, postcards, and some publications appear to have been part of the "Francis Aero Collection," managed by Francis's grandson Bruce Francis Svihus. They are stamped "Property of Bruce Francis Svihus, R.N. Francis Associates of California and Francis Aero Collection."

Personal papers include an original Lincoln Beachey contract, Francis's U.S. Army honorable discharge certificate, a handwritten letter from Francis to his daughter Eva in 1931, and his Pilot's Book from his time in the U.S. Army Air Service during World War I.

Many of the black and white photographs appear to have been available for reproduction through the Frances Aero Collection. Of note is a postcard sent from the Tanforan Air Meet in December 1913, where a temporary air mail sub-station was set up for the event.

Most of the news clippings are original and cover the full breadth of Francis's career. The publications are mostly reproductions of Aero and Aeronautics magazine articles about how to build model planes, but also include an original copy of the Aeronautics May-June 1912 issue and the publication, "Encyclopedia of U.S. Military Aircraft 1908 to April 6, 1917 Part I, Volume 3" by Robert B. Casari. Two items of ephemera are in this folder: an insert for the "Lindy" League Miniature Aircraft event held at the Auspices San Francisco Playground Commission on August 9, 1929; and the program for the Forty-fifth Anniversary of the Wright Flight Aero Club of Washington Banquet, 17 December 1948.

**Biographical/Historical note**
Captain Roy N. Francis, born 1886 in Santa Clara County to Octave Francis, is considered one of the "early birds" of American aviation. In 1911, he took off from Cow Flat near the Presidio of San Francisco, and made a successful flight in a biplane of his own design. On November 18, 1912, his twin-tractor plane made the first passenger flight over the San Francisco Bay carrying local theatre member Vivian O'Brian, taking off from Alameda and landing near Cliff House. Later he partnered with Charles Patterson in Patterson-Francis Aviation Company, San Francisco. They produced a two-engine tractor flying boat, which Francis flew in the 1913 Great Lakes Reliability Tour, and a Twin-Tractor plane designed by Francis.

During World War I Francis was a flying instructor for the U.S. Army Air Corps and served as executive officer at Kelly Field in San Antonio, Texas. He was honorably discharged at Kelly Field on September 30, 1920, after earning three silver war service chevrons. After World War I, Francis returned to San Francisco from Washington and ran an electrical supplies shop on the corner of Polk and Pine Streets.

In 1931, he was appointed superintendent of San Francisco Airport, then called Mills Field, and held the post for two and a half years.
Francis was active in the American Legion, serving as commander of the Floyd Bennett Aviation Post 333 from 1943-44. He passed away in 1952.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Francis, Roy N., 1886-1952
Aeronautics--California--San Francisco Bay Area
Airplane Pilot (air trans.)
San Francisco (Calif.)
Santa Clara County (Calif.)

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**Personal Papers 2009-12-1 1914-1931**

Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet (1 folder)

**Memorandum of Agreement between Lincoln Beachey, Inc. and Hillsboro (Ohio) Fair Association 1 August 1914**

Language of Material: English
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Beachey, Lincoln, d. 1915
contracts
Fairs
Hillsboro (Ohio)

**Pilot's Book (U.S. Army Signal Corps, Aviation Division) 1917-1920**

Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet
Scope and Contents note
Photocopy of Francis's Pilot's Book, 21 July 1917-28 September 1920, during which time he was at Kelly Field (Texas) and Bolling Field (Washington, D.C.). Front is stamped "Francis Aero Collection."
Subjects and Indexing Terms
logs (records)

**Menu from the Aero Club of America's 13th Annual Banquet 19 February 1919**

Language of Material: English
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Aero Club of America.
Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (New York, N.Y.).
Dinners and dining
menus

**U.S. Army honorable discharge certificate 30 September 1920**

Language of Material: English
Subjects and Indexing Terms
discharges
American Legion Distinguished Service Certificate 22 February 1931
Language of Material: English
Subjects and Indexing Terms
American Legion of California.
certificates

Letter from Francis to daughter Eva 19 June 1931
Language of Material: English
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Svihus, Eva H. -- Correspondence
correspondence

Photographs and Postcards 2009-12-2 1910-1970
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 folder)
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Beachey, Lincoln, d. 1915
Curtiss, Glenn Hammond, 1878-1930
Early Birds of Aviation (Organization). -- Pictorial works
Masson, Didier
Miscarol, Charles
Paulhan, Louis
Willard, Charles F.
Aeronautics--Competitions--California--Los Angeles
Dominguez Hills (Calif.)
Martin airplanes
photographic postcards
photographs
Tanforan Racetrack (San Bruno, Calif.)

Roy Francis outside his electric shop on Polk and Pine, San Francisco (Calif.)
2009-12-5 circa 1930
Language of Material: English
Dimensions note: 5" x 6.75"
General Physical Description note: Black and white photograph with white border

Roy Francis outside his electric shop on Polk and Pine, San Francisco (Calif.), circa 1930

Glenn Curtiss Flying School postcard 2009-12-6 circa 1909-1915
Language of Material: English
General Physical Description note: Black and white reproduction photo postcard

Glenn Curtiss Flying School postcard, circa 1909-1915

Lincoln Beachey at "Calamity Gulch" postcard 2009-12-7 circa 1912
Language of Material: English

Lincoln Beachey at "Calamity Gulch" postcard, circa 1912
Aviators at 1910 Los Angeles International Air Meet 2009-12-8 1910
Language of Material: English
Dimensions note: 5" x 7"
Scope and Contents note
Seven men walking across a field in front of a large crowd. Notes on back indicate that they are Glenn Curtiss, Charles Willard, Lincoln Beachey, Louis Paulhan, Didier Masson and Charles Miscarol. Image is stamped "Fleet Agency" on reverse.

Aviators at 1910 Los Angeles International Air Meet, 1910 ⚫
Group of men in hangar in front of Martin airplane 2009-12-9 circa 1918
Language of Material: English
Dimensions note: 7.75" x 9.75"
Scope and Contents note
Black and white portrait of 17 men inside an airplane hangar, in front of an airplane. One of the men in front appears to be Francis. A note on the back reads "Martin Bomb" suggesting that this is the Martin bomber aircraft that Francis flew circa 1919.

Group of men in hangar in front of Martin airplane, circa 1918 ⚫
Roy Francis flying his first aeroplane, a Francis/Gage (reproduction postcard) 2009-12-10 circa 1910
Language of Material: English

Roy Francis flying his first aeroplane, a Francis/Gage (reproduction postcard), circa 1910 ⚫
Roy Francis in suit, in front of Buick automobile for Howard Automobile Co. 2009-12-11 May 1930
Language of Material: English
Dimensions note: 10" x 7.25"
Scope and Contents note
Black and white photo, back is stamped "Advertising Dept-Howard Automobile Co.-San Francisco, May 6 1930". Howard Automobile Co. was owned by Charles S. Howard, famous as the owner of Seabiscuit, and owner of Buick dealerships in San Francisco and Berkeley, California.

Roy Francis in suit, in front of Buick automobile for Howard Automobile Co., May 1930 ⚫
Artist in front of his painting of Roy Francis 2009-12-12 1975-1990
Language of Material: English
Dimensions note: 8" x 10"
Scope and Contents note
Black and white photograph of two men standing in front of a painting of Roy Francis piloting one of his early planes. The man on the left is wearing a turtleneck and crewneck sweater and holds a photograph of two men. The artist, long hair in ponytail and bandanna, is smiling as he holds his paintbrush.

Artist in front of his painting of Roy Francis, 1975-1990 ⚫
Early Birds of Aviation group portrait, in front of airplane 2009-12-13 1951
Language of Material: English
Dimensions note: 8" x 10"
Scope and Contents note
Back is stamped "Released USN Photograph. If published credit line must read 'Official U.S. Navy Photograph.'" A date has been handwritten and appears to be "2/8/51". This would appear to be a gathering of Early Birds of Aviation, based on the checkered caps.
Early Birds of Aviation group portrait, in front of airplane, 1951

Early Birds of Aviation group, standing in front of a palm tree and laying a wreath
2009-12-14 1951

Language of Material: English
Dimensions note: 8" x 10"
Scope and Contents note
Black and white photograph, stamped on the reverse, "Released USN Photograph. If published credit line must read 'Official U.S. Navy Photograph.'" Handwritten date reads "2/8/51". Appears to be a gathering of Early Birds of Aviation, based on checkered caps.

Early Birds of Aviation group, standing in front of a palm tree and laying a wreath, 1951

"World's Greatest Aviators Beachy & Francis Playing Leap Frog Tanforan" postcard
2009-12-16 December 1912

Language of Material: English
Scope and Contents note
Postcard shows two airplanes with the faces of Lincoln Beachey and Roy Francis superimposed. "Tanforan" refers to the historic Tanforan Racetrack in San Bruno, California. The postcard may have been mailed from the Aviation Post Office No. 1 sub-station in San Francisco, set up for the Tanforan Park Aviation Meet, on December 28, from a "Doris & Clive" to Mrs. P. F. Grainger of Half Moon Bay.

(Front)
(Back)

News clippings 2009-12-3 1911-1952

Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 folder)

Aeronautics Publications 2009-12-4 1897-1972

Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 folder)
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Aeronautics--Periodicals