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VIRGINIA OGDEN ANDREWS COLLECTION

MS-010

International Women's Air and Space Museum
Burke Lakefront Airport, Room 165
1501 North Marginal Way
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

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INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Ogden Andrews Collection was accessioned into IWASM in December 1991. Virginia's daughter, Juanita Andrews, donated the material along with the Ruth Alexander Collection (see MS-009). Juanita was the stepdaughter of Robert Elliott. Robert's first wife was Ruth Alexander who died in 1930. The papers in the collection date from 1929 to 1946. The material fills one Hollinger box.

There are no restrictions on the use of these materials.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Virginia Ogden was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1908. She saw her first plane at age 3 and took her first flight at age 12. Flying lessons were postponed because of money. She attended the College of Journalism at the University of Washington. While a student there she learned to fly at the Renton Airport. She soloed in 1929 at age 21 and then bought an Arrow Sport plane. The next year she earned her private pilots license and participated in the 1930 Northwest Air Tour. In 1932 she married Elbert Andrews.

Virginia was active in promoting women in aviation. She was a member of the Seattle Chapter of the Women's Aeronautic Association and a 1931 charter member of the Seattle Aviation Country Club. In 1933 she helped organize the Associated Women Pilots of Boeing Field (1933-1946). She and a few other members owned their own planes and some were married to pilots. The women adopted blue grease monkey overalls as their official uniform and a winged slipper as their logo.

Membership fluctuated as women pilots joined, dropped out or died. Some of the members in 1937 were Virginia Ogden Andrews, Gladys Crooks, Geraldine "Jerry" Fletcher, Kathleen Green, Opal "Red" Hiser, Lettie Johnson, Mildred Filz Merrill, Louise "Pat" Patterson, Marie Riddle, Hildegard Schmidt, Grace Shanahan, Lucille Stone, Mildred Trick and Rose Trick.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of a photograph, some loose clippings, two scrapbooks, and a pair of sunglasses.

Folder 1 – One black and white photograph shows thirteen members of the Associated Women Pilots of Boeing Field in their coverall uniforms. I've been able to identify most of them. A few loose clippings from the scrapbooks are copied and included.

Folder 2 – This folder contains a working copy of the scrapbook in Folder 3. This was done to protect the original and should be used first.

Folder 3 - The oldest scrapbook called "The Lady Bird Book" is a collection of newspaper clippings from 1929 to 1940. Many of them are not dated, but content and context allow approximation of date. They are roughly in chronological order but also grouped by subject matter. Many of the well-known women aviators and air derbies are mentioned: Marvel Crosson, Louise Thaden, Edith Foltz, Amelia Earhart and Ruth Nichols. This scrapbook is interesting because of the emphasis on the women and activities of Seattle, Washington State and the West Coast. These women may not have the national attention the others had but they were active in promoting aviation by participating in local air tours and air shows.

Folder 4 - The second scrapbook called "Women with Wings" continues the collection with clippings from 1940 to 1946. The book covers are missing so it is just a collection of scrapbook pages. There are fewer of them and fewer clippings on them. Women pilots from the time, such as Jackie Cochran and Betty Gillies, are included but there are no lengthy articles. Virginia and the Seattle pilots are not as prominently mentioned. Between two events covered by undated clippings on the last page it is apparent that Virginia Ogden Andrews married Robert Elliott. A water damaged copy of "The Buy-Plane" for April 1946 was included at the end of the scrapbook.

The only object included in the collection is a pair of sunglasses. The wire rims are rusty and corroded, and there is no manufacturer identification. The string may have been used to hold the glasses on.