



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

Elton Ross Silliman Papers, 1930-1982

Mark Kahn

2002



National Air and Space Museum Archives
14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway
Chantilly, VA 20151
NASMRefDesk@si.edu
<https://airandspace.si.edu/archives>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Content.....	2
Biographical/Historical note.....	1
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	4
Series 1: Correspondence - Professional, 1933-1973.....	4
Series 2: Correspondence - Personal, 1944-1958.....	5
Series 3: Financial Reports, 1934-1982.....	6
Series 4: Handbooks and Directories, 1930-1956.....	7
Series 5: Photographs, 1930-1941.....	8
Series 6: Newspaper Clippings, 1934-1951.....	9
Series 7: Miscellaneous Materials, 1935 and 1952.....	10

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Elton Ross Silliman Papers
Date:	1930-1982
Identifier:	NASM.1989.0050
Creator:	Silliman, Elton Ross, 1902-
Extent:	1.35 Cubic feet (3 boxes)
Language:	English and Spanish
Summary:	This collection consists of Elton Silliman's personal and business papers. The material consists of correspondence, photographs, and documents pertaining to airline operations during the period 1930-1960, as well as airport and hotel financial records. The material also includes club and society reports and membership lists.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Mrs. Elton R. Silliman, Gift, 1989, 1989-0050

Processing Information

Arranged and described by Mark Kahn, 2002.

Encoded by Rena Schergen, 2012.

Revised and digital assets attached by Allan Janus, 2020.

Preferred Citation

Elton Ross Silliman Papers, Acc. 1989-0050, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

Material is subject to Smithsonian Terms of Use. Should you wish to use NASM material in any medium, Please submit an Application for Permission to Reproduce NASM Material, available at [Permissions Requests](#) .

Biographical Note

Elton Ross Silliman was an airline executive and manager in Latin America for Aerovias Centrales, S.A., Pan American Airways (PAA), Inc. and PAA subsidiary, Compania Mexicana de Aviacion, S.A. (CMA). As an American citizen living and working in this field throughout Central America and Mexico for several

decades, he helped develop and expand U.S. commercial air service south of the Rio Grande. During 1931-32, he organized Aerovias Centrales, S.A. in Mexico. He joined PAA in 1933 as the company's special representative in Central America, Panama, Venezuela, and the Dutch West Indies. In 1943, Silliman became general manager for CMA. He retired from this position in the 1960s.

Scope and Content

[For brevity's sake, Pan American Airways, Inc. and Compania Mexicana de Aviacion, S.A. will be referred to in this finding aid as PAA and CMA respectively.]

This collection consists mainly of Elton Ross Silliman's business papers. These papers relate to his career with PAA and its subsidiary, CMA. Both companies had Silliman operating out of Mexico, Central America, northern South America, and the Caribbean and interacting with many Latin Americans prominent in the fields of aviation, government, and industry. Consequently, much of the correspondence, handbooks, and newspaper clippings are in the Spanish language. No attempt was made during processing to translate these materials. Included in these papers are PAA and CMA expense and financial reports, photographs and miscellaneous materials. This collection also includes a small amount of materials (personal correspondence) pertaining to Silliman's personal life – in particular, his interest in hunting rifles and the death of his father in 1950.

Arrangement

Silliman's papers are arranged both chronologically and alphabetically. Correspondence, financial reports, photographs, newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous materials are organized by the former method. Handbooks and directories are grouped alphabetically by title.

The following series are recognizable within the collection:

Series I: Correspondence - Professional

Series II: Correspondence - Personal

Series III: Financial Reports

Series IV: Handbooks and Directories

Series V: Photographs

Series VI: Newspaper Clippings

Series VII: Miscellaneous Materials

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics, Commercial
- Aeronautics, Commercial -- Mexico
- Airlines

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence

Financial records
Photographs
Reports

Names:

Aerovias Centrales, S.A.
CiA Mexicana de Aviacion, S.A.
Pan American World Airways, Inc.

Places:

Mexico
Panama
Venezuela

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence - Professional, 1933-1973

Arrangement: Chronological.

Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence, 1933-1934
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence, 1943
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1944
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence, 1945
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence, 1946
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence, 1947
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence, 1948
Box 1, Folder 8	Correspondence, 1949
Box 1, Folder 9	Correspondence, 1950
Box 1, Folder 10	Correspondence, 1951
Box 1, Folder 11	Correspondence, 1952
Box 1, Folder 12	Correspondence, 1953-1954
Box 2, Folder 1	Correspondence, 1955
Box 2, Folder 2	Correspondence, 1956
Box 2, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1957
Box 2, Folder 4	Correspondence, 1958-1959
Box 2, Folder 5	Correspondence, 1960-1973

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Correspondence - Personal, 1944-1958

Arrangement: Chronological.

Box 2, Folder 6 [Firearms purchases \(for personal use by Silliman\), 1944-1957](#)

Box 2, Folder 7 [Death of Silliman's father, 1950](#)

Box 2, Folder 8 Clubs and Associations, 1956-1958
Notes: Folder contents were not scanned.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Financial Reports, 1934-1982

Arrangement: Chronological.

Box 2, Folder 9	Expense account reports, Silliman and PAA, 1934-1935
Box 2, Folder 10	Expense account reports, Silliman and PAA, 1936-1937
Box 2, Folder 11	Expense account reports, Silliman and PAA, 1937-1939
Box 2, Folder 12	Miscellaneous financial reports, statements and correspondence, Silliman and CMA, 1944-1972
Box 2, Folder 13	PAA stockholders reports, 1944-1982
Box 3, Folder 1	Financial reports, Hotelera Mexicana, S.A., Mexico, 1954-1956
Box 3, Folder 2	Financial reports, Hotelera Mexicana, S.A., Mexico, 1956-1958
Box 3, Folder 3	Financial report, CMA, 1956 December

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Handbooks and Directories, 1930-1956

Arrangement. : Alphabetical.

Box 3, Folder 4	Handbook, American Club, Mexico City, Mexico, 1946 March 1 Notes: Folder contents were not scanned.
Box 3, Folder 5	Handbook, American Club of Guatemala, Guatemala, 1931
Box 3, Folder 6	Handbook, American Society of Mexico -- Constitution and By-Laws, Mexico City, Mexico, 1946
Box 3, Folder 7	Directories, Club de Banqueros de Mexico, June 1953, 1956 June
Box 3, Folder 8	Handbook, Reglamento del Guatemala Country Club, Guatemala, 1930

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Photographs, 1930-1941

Arrangement: Chronological.

Box 3, Folder 9	Inauguration of southbound Air Mail service, Guatemala City, Guatemala (with Ford Tri-Motor aircraft), 1930 March 19
Box 3, Folder 10	Aerial view near Santa Ana, Costa Rica, 1930 June 26
Box 3, Folder 11	San Salvador, El Salvador, 1930 October 1
Box 3, Folder 12	Honduras and aircraft, circa 1941 Notes: 35mm proofs
Box 3, Folder 13	Airport at Santa Ana, Costa Rica, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Newspaper Clippings, 1934-1951

Arrangement: Chronological.

Box 3, Folder 14	Articles and correspondence, Douglas DC-2 aircraft flight demonstration, San Salvador, El Salvador, 1934 October
------------------	--

Box 3, Folder 15	Silliman and CMA, 1949-1951
------------------	---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Miscellaneous Materials, 1935 and 1952

Arrangement: Chronological.

Box 3, Folder 16 [Building plan, PAA terminal, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 1935 June 15](#)

Box 3, Folder 17 [Report of the Executive Secretary of the Pan American Society of the United States, Incorporated, 40th annual meeting, The university Club, New York, New York, 1952 April 16](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)