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National Air and Space Museum

William Aiken Sr., Papers

2001

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	William Aiken Sr., Papers
Date:	1907-1980 (bulk 1935-1974)
Identifier:	NASM.1997.0024
Creator:	Aiken, William Sr., 1907-
Extent:	0.45 Cubic feet ((1 legal document box))
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Kim Hamilton, gift, 1997, 1997-0024, Unknown

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

William Aiken, Sr. was a pioneer in African-American aviation in California from the 1930s through the 1960s. He was born in Plainsdealing, Louisiana in 1907, left home at the age of 13 and worked his way to California performing odd jobs. In the mid-1920s he started his own car washing business and began taking flying lessons. In 1928 he soloed for the first time and in 1936, Aiken earned his private pilot's license. He joined the California Civil Air Patrol, and was appointed a Second Lieutenant and Commanding Officer of the Los Angeles Squadron #7, California Wing in 1948. Aiken became a flight instructor, instructing not only his own children, but any African-American youth with the desire to learn to fly. He continued to fly until he suffered a stroke in 1969.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains Pilot Log Books, photographs, newspaper clippings, California Civil Air Patrol documents, financial and personal records, an autobiographical manuscript and negatives, all pertaining to William Aiken, his family and friends.

General

NASMrev

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics, Commercial -- United States
- African American air pilots
- Periodicals

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Financial records
- Logs (records)
- Manuscripts
- Photographs

Names:

- Aiken, William Sr., 1907-
- United States. Civil Air Patrol -- California.