



Smithsonian  
*National Air and Space Museum*

Helen Richey Pilot Log and Collection [Suskalo]

Richey, Helen, Pilot Log and Collection [Suskalo]

Kate Igoe

2018

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	2

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Helen Richey Pilot Log and Collection [Suskalo]
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.1999.0006
<b>Date:</b>	1933-1944
<b>Extent:</b>	0.1 Cubic feet (2 folders)
<b>Creator:</b>	Richey, Helen, 1909-1947
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection consists of Helen Richey's pilot log for 1944-1945, newspaper clippings covering the period from 1933 to 1944 and seven photographs of Ms. Richey.
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): Helen Richey Pilot Log and Collection [Suskalo]</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Gene Suskalo, Gift, 1998, NASM.1999.0006

### Processing Information

Arranged and described by Kate Igoe in 1998, encoded by Jessamyn Lloyd in 2018.

### Preferred Citation

Helen Richey Pilot Log and Collection [Suskalo], NASM.1999.0006, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Helen Richey (1909 - 1947) was an aviation pioneer who made headlines as a stunt pilot, a racing champion, a holder of speed and altitude records, a flight instructor, an Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) and Womens Air Service Pilot (WASP) during WWII, the first woman to pilot a commercial airliner on a regular scheduled run, and as the first woman to ever fly the United States mail. In April of 1930, Richey enrolled as a student pilot at Bettis Field's Curtiss-Wright flying school and on June 28, 1930, she earned her pilot's license. In December 1930, Richey was granted a limited commercial pilot's license by the Department of Commerce. During the 1930s, Richey set a number of records and placed in several races, including as a co-pilot to Amelia Earhart in the 1936 Bendix Race. In 1934 Richey applied for a pilot's job with Central Airlines. She was hired and flew Central's route between Washington and Detroit. However, the Bureau of Air Commerce warned Central management to keep her on the ground in bad weather and the pilot's union rejected her application for membership. Due to these restrictions, Richey resigned from Central in October 1935. The Bureau of Air Commerce then offered Helen a new job as an air marking pilot for the government. She stayed with the air marking service until 1937 when the job was completed. In 1940 Richey was the first woman to earn an instructor's license and she was appointed an instructor for air cadets at Pittsburgh - Butler Airport. In 1942, she joined the American wing of the British Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), where she ferried aircraft and needed materials throughout the British Isles. Richey headed the ATA's American Group from 1942 until April 1943, when she returned to the States and joined the WASPs. Unable to find aviation employment after the WASPs disbanded in 1944, she committed suicide in 1947.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of Helen Richey's pilot log for 1944-1945, newspaper clippings covering the period from 1933 to 1944 and seven photographs of Ms. Richey.

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## Arrangement

This collection is in original order.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics -- Competitions
- Aeronautics -- Records
- Aeronautics, Commercial
- Aeronautics, Commercial -- United States
- Aeronautics, Military
- Airports
- Airports -- Location
- Flight training
- Women air pilots

Women in aeronautics  
World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

Clippings  
Logs (records)  
Photographs

Names:

Bendix Air Races  
Central Airlines  
Great Britain. Air Transport Authority  
Richey, Helen, 1909-1947  
United States. Bureau of Air Commerce  
United States. Bureau of Air Commerce. National Air Marking Program  
Women Airforce Service Pilots (U.S.)