



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

Gladys Roy Collection

Patricia Williams

2006

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

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Gladys Roy Collection
Date:	1911-1927
Identifier:	NASM.2005.0011
Creator:	Roy, Gladys.
Extent:	0.54 Cubic feet (1 small box and 5 folders)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Gladys Roy was a barnstormer, parachute jumper, and wing-walker during the 1920s, performing mostly in the Minneapolis, Minnesota and the Los Angeles and Hollywood, California area. This collection consists of correspondence, receipts, contracts, and photographic material documenting Roy's aviation career.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Deborah Martin, Gift, 2004, NASM.2005.0011

Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Patricia Williams, 2005. Digital assets attached by Jessamyn Lloyd, 2021.

Preferred Citation

Gladys Roy Collection, NASM.2005.0011, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Gladys Roy (1902?-1927) was a barnstormer during the 1920s, performing mostly in the Minneapolis, Minnesota and the Los Angeles and Hollywood, California area. Roy became a parachute jumper in 1921 and later a wing-walker, most famous for dancing the Charleston and for playing tennis on the upper wing of an airplane in flight. According to her letterhead, she was the holder of the world's low record parachute jump and she also completed a parachute jump from 17,000 feet. The Western Vaudeville Managers' Association

was Roy's booking agent, and they booked her into fairs across the West. Roy was also did stunt work for Lord Motor Car Company as well as exhibition work for John P. Mills Real estate and for various other real estate exhibitions and auctions. She was in the movie business, appearing in "The Fighting Ranger" (1925), but was thrown from a horse during the production and seriously injured. She was the sister of Robert "Lee," Charles "Les," and Chadwick "Chad" Smith, all prominent pilots from Minnesota who flew for Northwest Airlines and were inducted in the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame. Roy and Lt. Delmar Synder were planning a flight from New York to Rome, but unfortunately Roy died in Ohio on August 15, 1927 when she walked into the spinning propeller of an aircraft that was sitting on the ground.

Scope and Contents

The following items are included in this collection: panoramic image of an air field; 1926 Christmas card from Marion Nixon; correspondence between Roy and her family (1924-1926); correspondence from Charles Smith (Roy's father) to her mother; correspondence from Western Vaudeville Managers' Association; one photograph of Roy posed with group of women and three of Charles Smith; receipts for purchases by Roy; a Liberty Loan Bond Certificate for Charles Smith; a piece of film showing Roy doing a sit-up on top of a building; and a few newspaper articles.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged by type of material and then by date within folders.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Stunt flying
- Women air pilots
- Women in aeronautics

Types of Materials:

- Articles
- Correspondence
- Photographic prints

Container Listing

Box 80 (Shared), Folder 1	Correspondence with Family and Friends, 1914-1927
Box 80 (Shared), Folder 2	Western Vaudeville Managers' Association and Minnesota State Fair [Correspondence], 1926-1927
Box 80 (Shared), Folder 3	Letters from C. B. Smith to Mrs. C. B. Smith, 1927
Box 80 (Shared), Folder 4	Contracts, 1926
Box 80 (Shared), Folder 5	C. B. Smith Liberty Loan Bond Certificate
Box 80 (Shared), Folder 6	Newspaper Articles, 1923-1924
Box 80 (Shared), Folder 7	Receipts and Bills, 1912-1926 and undated
Box 80 (Shared), Folder 8	Photographs