Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

Margery Durant Air Popularization Tour Collection

2011

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 Contents..... 2
Biographical / Historical..... 1
Biographical / Historical..... 1
Names and Subjects 2
Container Listing .....

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Margery Durant Air Popularization Tour Collection
Date:	(bulk 1931-1932)
Identifier:	NASM.2011.0023
Creator:	Durant, Margery.
Extent:	0.69 Cubic feet ((5 boxes))
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Alexander Sanger, Gift, 2011

Preferred Citation

Margery Durant Air Popularization Tour Collection, Accession 2011-0023, 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 / Historical

Margery Durant was born in Flint, Michigan on May 24, 1887, the daughter of Clara Pitt Durant and William C. Durant, founder of General Motors. She attended schools in Flint; in Tarrytown, New York; and at the Mt. Vernon Seminary, Washington, D.C., from 1903 to 1905. Durant settled in Flint, later moving to Detroit and New York City and maintaining residences on Long Island, in Palm Beach, Florida, and in New Zealand. With her husband, Robert W. Daniel, she restored Brandon, an 18th century plantation on the James River, Virginia, now a National Historic Landmark. In 1929, she wrote (with Fitzhugh Green, later her fourth husband) My Father, a biography of William C. Durant. Margery Durant died in Palm Beach on February 3, 1969, at the age of 82.

Biographical / Historical

Though not a pilot, in 1930 Margery Durant conceived of a plan to popularize private air travel by touring Europe, the Middle East and Africa by air. With Charles A. LaJotte (1895-1973) serving as pilot and Everett

M. Smith as mechanic and with her Lockheed Vega 5C (named Ariel) stowed on board, Durant sailed to Europe on board the SS Hamburg in April, 1931. Over a three month period, Durant traveled over 12,000 miles, visiting England, France, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Greece, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Palestine and the Balkans. On her second tour, from December 1931 through May 1932, Durant visited England, France, Italy, Greece, Egypt, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda in a Sikorsky S-38 Amphibian, the Silver Wings.

Scope and Contents

The collection includes 188 glass lantern slides that Durant shot during the tours; the slides were hand-colored by the photographer Edward Van Altena. There are thirteen reels of motion picture film, including "A Safari of Twenty Five Thousand Miles through Ten Countries in Silver Wings", a film on Durant's African flights. The collections includes four DVDs: a digitized copy of "A Safari of Twenty Five Thousand Miles ..."; "The Romance of Flight", a short film by Durant's husband Fitzhugh Green; digitized film footage of Paris; and scans of the lantern slides in jpeg format. Also included is a copy of the book "Margery Durant Goes to Africa 1931-2" by Alexander Sanger, Durant's grandson; a short biography of Durant by Mr. Sanger, and photocopied New York Times articles on the tours.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Aeronautics
Air travel
Lockheed Model 5 Vega
Travel

Types of Materials:

Lantern slides
Manuscripts
Motion pictures (visual works)

Names:

LaJotte, Charles.
Van Altena, Edward

Places:

Europe
Middle East