



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

## Aline Rhonie Papers

2014

National Air and Space Museum Archives  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Aline Rhonie Papers
<b>Date:</b>	(bulk 1920s-1990s)
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.2014.0043
<b>Creator:</b>	Rhonie (Hofheimer), Aline
<b>Extent:</b>	2 Cubic feet ((4 boxes))
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): Aline Rhonie Papers</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Carol Roberts, Gift, 2014

### Preferred Citation

Aline Rhonie Papers, Accession 2014-0043, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Aline Rhonie Hofheimer Brooks (1909 -1963) was a pioneer aviator and artist. Born in 1909 in York, Pennsylvania, to Arthur and Helen Milius Hofheimer, she grew up in the family's luxurious country estate in Washington Valley, New Jersey. She was an accomplished horsewoman and attended the Dalton School in New York City. After her divorce from first husband L. Richard Bamberger, Aline changed her name to Aline Rhonie, taking her middle name as her surname. She earned her pilot's license in 1930 after flight training with Frank Cochran in Reno, Nevada and James H. Collins at Roosevelt Field in Long Island, New York, and obtained her transport license in late 1931. Rhonie helped found the Luscombe Airplane Co. in Kansas City, Missouri in 1933. Also in 1933, Rhonie married Reginald Langhorne "Peter" Brooks (they later divorced) and they took off on an aerial honeymoon, each piloting their own plane. As part of this trip, Rhonie flew solo from New York to Mexico City and back, the first woman to do so. As a pilot she flew over 4,000 solo hours. Rhonie earned her English pilot's license in 1936 and became the first American to obtain an Irish commercial pilot's license in 1938. Rhonie was active in the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) before going

to Europe from November 1938 to April 1940, where she flew for the British War Relief Society, drove an ambulance for the French Section Sanitaire Automobile behind the Maginot Line, and was also active in the Women's Voluntary Service in England. Upon her return to the United States, Rhonie flew her own plane on a tour as the American representative of the Aero Club of France to raise money to build canteens for Allied aviators in France as well as lecturing extensively on aviation-related issues, drawing from her experiences in Europe. Rhonie was also an accomplished artist who studied with John Sloan and Diego Rivera, from whom she learned mural painting. From 1934 to 1938, Rhonie created a very large fresco mural on a wall in Hangar F at Roosevelt Field. All the research and painting for the mural, entitled "The Pre-Lindbergh Era of Flying on Long Island," was done by Rhonie herself and the mural includes depictions of the many famous flyers including the Wright Brothers; Glenn Hammond Curtiss; Earle L. "Ovie" Ovington; Edward Anderson "Eddie" Stinson; Oakley G. Kelly; John A. MacReady; and Charles Augustus Lindbergh; as well as scenes relating to many aspects of aviation including aircraft production, World War I, barnstorming, and airmail. Aline Rhonie died in 1963.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 2 cubic feet of material relating to Aline Rhonie's aviation and art exploits, including her famous aviation mural, "The Pre-Lindbergh Era of Flying on Long Island", which was located in Hangar F at Roosevelt Field in Long Island, New York. There is also much material relating to Rhonie's war efforts, including material relating to her flight tour as the Aero Club of France's American representative to raise money for Allied aviators in France. The types of material included are photographs, correspondence, newspaper and magazine articles, certificates, and telegrams.

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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
- Air pilots
- Mural painting and decoration

Types of Materials:

- Certificates
- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Publications

Names:

- Aero Club of France
- Roosevelt Field (N.Y.)