



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

Betty Skelton Photograph and Letter [Allen]

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Betty Skelton Photograph and Letter [Allen]
Date:	1946 2004
Identifier:	NASM.2024.0017
Extent:	.1 Cubic feet (1 folder)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Letter and photograph related to Betty Skelton.
Digital Content:	Image(s): Betty Skelton Photograph and Letter [Allen]

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Charles "Chuck" Allen, Gift, 2024, NASM.2024.0017

Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Amara Pugens, 2024.

Processing Information

Personal Identifiable Information (PII) has been redacted.

Preferred Citation

Betty Skelton Photograph and Letter [Allen], NASM.2024.0017, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Betty Skelton (1926--2011) was an American aerobatic pilot and auto racer who gained prominence in the 1950s and 1960s. Born in Pensacola, Florida, Skelton developed a passion for aviation at an early age and purchased her

first aircraft in 1946, a Great Lakes (1929) Model 2T-1A. She went on to become a three-time Female Aerobatic Champion and set 17 aviation and race car records earning the nickname the "First Lady of Firsts."

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of one typed letter to Betty Skelton from Chuck Allen and one 8 by 10 inch brown toned photograph. In the letter, Allen recounts the last time he saw Skelton. At that time in 1946, a group of people had a day excursion from her father's flying school to Longboat Key just off Sarasota, Florida; on the return trip, Allen flew with Skelton in the back performing aerial rolls not knowing she didn't buckle her seat belt until mid-flight. The photograph is an oblique, low-altitude aerial view of a small group of people in swimwear near seven monoplanes and one biplane all on the ground along coast line between sand and long grass. It is likely that the photograph depicts the story in the letter.

Arrangement

Arranged by item.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Aeronautics
Women air pilots

Types of Materials:

Correspondence
Photographs

Names:

Skelton, Betty (19260628-20110831)