

PURDUE

UNIVERSITY



INVENTORY TO THE AMELIA EARHART AT PURDUE COLLECTION, 1932-2000

**Purdue University Libraries
Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections
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Revised: November 3, 2010; March 31, 2015 Virginia Pleasant
Compiled By: Emma C. Meyer

Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Earhart, Amelia May, 1897-1937
Title	Amelia Earhart at Purdue collection
Collection Identifier	MSF 450
Date Span	1932-2000, predominant 1935-1937
Abstract	This collection includes correspondence, photographs, and other materials documenting Amelia Earhart's time at Purdue University and her attempted flight around the world. Subsequent additions from various donors are incorporated into the collection in an ongoing basis.
Extent	0.95 cubic feet (3 mss boxes)
Finding Aid Author	Emma C. Meyer, 2010
Languages	English
Repository	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Location Information:	ASC
Access Restrictions:	Collection is open for research.
Preferred Citation:	MSF 450, Amelia Earhart at Purdue Collection, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, University Libraries
Related Materials Information:	MSP 9, George Palmer Putnam Collection of Amelia Earhart papers UA 2.06, Edward C. Elliott papers MSP 79, Zelda Gould Collection of Amy Otis Earhart Correspondence

Subjects and Genres

Persons

Earhart, Amelia, 1897-1937

Elliott, Edward Charles, 1874-1960

Putnam, George Palmer, 1887-1950—Correspondence

Lilly, Josiah Kirby, 1861-1948—Correspondence

Organizations

Purdue University

Topics

Earhart, Amelia, 1897-1937—Journeys

Earhart, Amelia, 1897-1937--Death and burial

Earhart, Amelia, 1897-1937—Correspondence

Women's Archives at Purdue University

Flight Archives at Purdue University

Form and Genre Types

Administrative Reports

Correspondence

Ephemera

Photographs

Publicity

Speeches

Occupations

Women air pilots

Women college teachers

Purdue University--Faculty

History of Amelia Earhart at Purdue University

On September 26-27, 1934, Purdue President Edward C. Elliott heard Amelia Earhart speak at a luncheon in New York on women's careers and he was so impressed with her talk that he asked if she would visit Purdue and give a lecture for the women students. Earhart spoke at a banquet at Purdue on October 17, 1934, and discussed "Activities for Women after College." After several talks with President Elliott, a contract was negotiated in 1935, stating that Amelia Earhart would be employed by Purdue as a visiting faculty member. From the autumn of 1935 until her disappearance in July 1937, Earhart served as Consultant in the Department for the Study of Careers for Women and Technical Advisor in the Department of Aeronautics for Purdue.

Earhart was attracted to Purdue because at the time it was the only university in the United States with its own fully equipped airport. She was also impressed that practical mechanical and engineering training was available without discouragement to the women students on campus. At Purdue, Amelia lectured, conducted conferences with Purdue faculty and students, and initiated studies on new career opportunities for women. Perhaps most importantly, she served as an example of a successful modern woman for the female students.

While working at Purdue, Amelia stayed in South Hall (now called Duhme Hall) on campus. South Hall students vied with each other to sit at Amelia's table during meals. Buttermilk became an overnight favorite beverage on campus because it was Amelia's choice.

Amelia's husband, George Palmer Putnam, first planted the idea of a "flying laboratory" airplane for research into President Elliott's mind. In the autumn of 1935, at a dinner party at Elliott's home, Amelia outlined her dreams for women and aviation and spoke of her desire to conduct studies on how long-distance flying affected pilots. Before the evening was over, guest David Ross offered to donate \$50,000 as a gift toward the cost of providing a machine suitable for the flying laboratory. Further donations totaling \$30,000 in cash and equipment were received from J. K. Lilly, Vincent Bendix, and manufacturers Western Electric, Goodrich, and Goodyear. The \$80,000 formed the basis of "The Amelia Earhart Fund for Aeronautical Research." The fund's primary objective was to enable the development of scientific and engineering data of vital importance to the aviation industry. The Earhart Fund financed Amelia's "flying laboratory," providing funds for a new Lockheed Electra airplane specially outfitted for long-distance flights. It was in this plane that Amelia disappeared during her world flight attempt in 1937.

In 1940, George Palmer Putnam donated Amelia Earhart's papers, photographs, medals, flight jacket, and other belongings to Purdue University. In 2002, Putnam's granddaughter, Sally Putnam Chapman, donated an additional group of Earhart personal papers to Purdue. These include personal letters, poems, and Amelia's famous pre-marital agreement. Purdue University Libraries' Archives and Special Collections owns the largest, most comprehensive collection of materials in the world relating to Amelia Earhart.

Collection Description

Scope

The Amelia Earhart at Purdue Collection (1932-2000; 0.95 cubic feet) documents Amelia Earhart's arrival at Purdue University, her time there, her attempted world flight, and the efforts to memorialize Earhart after her disappearance. Types of materials include correspondence, ephemera, administrative reports, photographs, publicity materials, and speeches. The collection is organized into three series:

Arrangement

- 1. Correspondence, 1935-1941 (12 folders).** This series is predominately composed of correspondence among Edward C. Elliott, George Palmer Putnam and Amelia Earhart.
- 2. Miscellaneous Papers, 1935-1969 (7 folders).** Items include a questionnaire distributed to women students (circa 1935), a laundry receipt (circa 1935), a speech by Amelia Earhart on "What a Pilot Eats" for Heinz Radio Program (1936), information about the programs, events, and activities scheduled with Earhart at Purdue (1935-1937), President's Annual Reports and meeting minutes regarding Earhart at Purdue (1935-1937), tribute to Earhart given by President Edward C. Elliott (1937), and Purdue press releases related to Amelia Earhart (1935-1969).
- 8. Photographs, 1932-2000 (17 folders).** Series three contains photographs of or related to Amelia Earhart, including images of Earhart at the Purdue Airport, with Purdue students, with Purdue President Edward C. Elliott, and photographs of Earhart with other miscellaneous individuals. This series also includes photographs of various items held in other collections and of homes in which Earhart lived.

Descriptive Rules

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Processing Information

All materials have been housed in acid-free folders and acid-free boxes. Photographic materials have been housed in archival polyester sleeves. Subsequent additions from various donors are incorporated into the collection in an ongoing basis.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Series 1: Correspondence, 1935-1941

(12 Folders)

Box 1

Folder

1. Handwritten telegrams from Earhart, 1935-1936
2. General correspondence and notes/phone messages, 1935-1936
3. Correspondence between Earhart, Putnam, and Purdue, 1935-1936
4. President Elliott correspondence with Putnam and Earhart, 1935
5. President Elliott correspondence with Putnam and Earhart, January-April 1936
6. Elliott correspondence with Putnam and Earhart, May-December 1936
7. Elliott correspondence with Putnam and Earhart, February-July 1937
8. Elliott correspondence with Putnam and others Re: Earhart, her disappearance, and memorials to her, July 1937-February 1940
9. Elliott correspondence regarding Earhart and donation of her papers, September 1940-October 1941

Box 2

1. Elliott and Meikle/ Purdue Research Foundation internal correspondence regarding funding for Earhart's flight, January 1936-August 1936
2. Elliott correspondence with Josiah K. Lilly re: monetary contributions toward Earhart's flight, May 14-22, 1937
3. Elliott correspondence with various individuals re: Earhart, 1935-1936

Series 2: Miscellaneous Papers, 1935-1937, 1969

(9 Folders)

Box 2

Folder

4. Questionnaire with Earhart's typed comments on results, 1935
5. Earhart's laundry receipt, circa 1935
6. Earhart speech on "What a Pilot Eats" for Heinz Radio Program, circa 1936
7. Programs/ events/ activities scheduled with Earhart, 1935-1937
8. President's annual reports and meeting minutes (Purdue Research Foundation) regarding Earhart at Purdue, 1935-1937
9. Tribute to Earhart by President Edward C. Elliott, October 21, 1937
10. Purdue press releases, 1935-1936; 1969
11. Purdue representatives' responses to queries about Earhart and Purdue, 1968-1987
12. Newspaper clippings and press, 1935-1937, 1962-1971

Series 8: Photographs, 1932-2000

(17 Folders)

Box 3

Folder

1. Earhart at the Purdue Airport, 1936
2. Earhart and Purdue President Edward C. Elliott, 1935-1936
3. Earhart and Purdue students, 1935
4. Earhart on Purdue campus, 1935
5. Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Vega being shipped, circa 1936
6. Aerial photographs of Howland Island, taken from Lockheed 10A on flight replicating Earhart's flight, 1967
7. Earhart and bust of her, circa 1937
8. Earhart airmail stamp event at Purdue, 1963
9. Earhart and Putnam's former home site in Rye, New York, 1997
10. Earhart's birthplace home, 1973; 2000
11. Earhart items on exhibit at Smithsonian Institution, circa 1949
12. Photographs of items from the George Palmer Putnam Collection of Amelia Earhart papers, 1998-2001
13. Miscellaneous Earhart memorials, 1972-1997
14. Model Plane, Lockheed Electra, 1949, 1976
15. Photo postcards of bust of Amelia Earhart by Frederick W. Schweigardt, circa 1937
16. William T. Miller, Project Officer Air Base Howland Island and Flight Director of Earhart's World Flight, undated
17. Earhart after solo Atlantic flight of 1932, circa 1932
18. Edward Elliot transferring Earhart's records to the World Center for Women's Archives, 1937