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FINDING AID TO THE ZELDA GOULD COLLECTION OF AMY OTIS EARHART CORRESPONDENCE, 1939-1950

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Processed by: Mary A. Sego, February 1, 2017

Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Gould, Zelda, 1903-1997
Title	Zelda Gould collection of Amy Otis Earhart correspondence
Collection Identifier	MSP 79
Date Span	1939-1950, predominant 1940s
Abstract	Correspondence from Amy Otis Earhart (mother of Amelia Earhart) to Zelda Gould (75 letters), photographs (5), and 3 issues of <i>The Centerville Crusader</i> . There are some newspaper clippings among the letters.
Extent	0.8 cubic feet (1 mss box, 1 flat box)
Finding Aid Author	Mary A. Sego
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.
Acquisition Information:	Donated by Zelda Gould, July 9, 1992
Accession Number:	19920709
Preferred Citation:	MSP 79, Zelda Gould collection of Amy Otis Earhart correspondence, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
Copyright Notice:	Purdue University per deed of gift
Related	George Palmer Putnam collection of Amelia Earhart papers

**Materials
Information:**

<https://apps.lib.purdue.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=27&q=earhart>

Amelia Earhart at Purdue papers

<https://apps.lib.purdue.edu/archon/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=1457&q=earhart>

Subjects and Genres

Persons

Gould, Zelda, 1930-
Earhart, Amy Otis, 1869-1962
Earhart, Amelia Mary, 1897-1937

Organizations

Flight Archives at Purdue University

Topics

Amelia Earhart
Pen pals--United States

Form and Genre Types

Community Newspapers
Correspondence
Photographs

Occupations

Aviatrices
Mother, 1872-1950

Biography of Amy Otis Earhart and Zelda Gould

Amy Otis was born in 1869, the second of six surviving children of Alfred Gideon and Amelia J. (Harres) Otis. Alfred Otis was a Kansas state judge and politician; he later became a U.S. District Court judge, and was chief warden of the Trinity Episcopal Church in Atchison, where the Otis family lived. Amelia Otis was the granddaughter of Gebhard Harres, a German settler well known for his work in the Lutheran Church. In 1895, after several years of courtship, Amy Otis married Edwin Stanton Earhart, a poor, young lawyer who had yet to prove himself truly worthy to the Otises' satisfaction. The Earharts moved to Kansas City, where they lived for the next ten years, during which they had two daughters: Amelia Mary (1897) and Grace Muriel (1899). Amelia, nicknamed "Millie," and Muriel, called "Pidge," spent most of each year with their Otis grandparents in Atchison. Their parents moved to Des Moines in 1907, when Edwin Stanton Earhart found legal work with the Rock Island Railroad; the girls remained in Atchison until September 1909. The following ten years were marked by a series of moves as poverty, brought on by financial mismanagement and Edwin Stanton Earhart's developing alcoholism, made life increasingly difficult. In 1915 the Earharts separated and Amy Otis Earhart moved to Chicago with her daughters. Reuniting in Kansas City in 1916, the Earharts moved to Los Angeles; they were finally divorced in 1924.

Muriel was by then a teacher in Medford, Massachusetts; Amy Otis Earhart joined her there, while Amelia was a social worker at Denison House, a Boston settlement. In 1929, Muriel married Albert Morrissey; they had two children, David and Amy. In 1937, Amy Otis Earhart moved to North Hollywood to live with Amelia and her husband of six years, George Palmer Putnam; she remained in California for nine years, clinging to the hope that Amelia Earhart would return after her disappearance in July 1937. In 1946, Amy Otis Earhart rejoined Muriel's family in Medford, but returned to Berkeley in July 1949 to await Amelia Earhart's reappearance. One year later, she moved back to Medford, where she died on October 29, 1962.

Zelda Gould was a friend (through letters) of Amy Otis Earhart. There are 75 letters that Gould received from Earhart, with the first one posted with a 3-cent stamp from 127 Traincroft, in Medford, Massachusetts, written in longhand and dated January 14, 1930. It was delivered to Gould who was living in Kokomo, Indiana at the time, teaching at a Business College.

The first two letters were from Massachusetts, and the rest were from California, where Earhart moved to be closer to the west coast, for possible news of her missing daughter, Amelia. The last letter Gould received from Mrs. Earhart is dated January 10, 1959 from Berkeley, California. The full collection of letters and accompanying photographs received by Gould from Mrs. Earhart over the years were donated to Purdue in 1992.

Sources:

Amy Otis Earhart Papers, 1884-1987; Biography, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

<http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~sch00227>

"From the Earhart Letters," *The Centerville Crusader*, Vol. 26, No. 20, pp. 1-2, July 15, 1992

Collection Description

Scope

The Zelda Gould collection of Amy Otis Earhart correspondence (1939-1950; 0.8 cubic feet) documents the thoughts and feelings Amelia Earhart's mother, Amy Otis Earhart, was experiencing after the disappearance of her daughter, and then coming to terms with her fate. Topics also include World War II and events following, politics and elections, current events of the era, hobbies, personal concerns, thank-you notes, among other topics. There are some newspaper clippings about Amelia Earhart among the letters. The letters begin on January 14, 1939 and run through January 10, 1950. Gould and Amy Otis Earhart were pen pals during this time, and the collection of 75 letters received by Gould were given to Purdue in 1992.

There are a few issues of *The Centerville Crusader*, the community newspaper from the town where Gould resided. The papers contain a column about Amelia Earhart, Zelda Gould's connection to Earhart's mother, Amy Otis Earhart, and a photograph of the letters being delivered to Purdue. Also included with the collection are 5 framed photographs of Amelia Earhart that were given to Gould by Mrs. Earhart.

Types of materials include: correspondence, photographs, and community newspapers and clippings.

Descriptive Rules

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Processing Information

All materials have been housed in acid-free folders and acid-free boxes. The letters are arranged in chronological order. The envelopes and postage stamps have been retained.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Box 1 *Letters to Zelda Gould from Amy Otis Earhart, January 14, 1939 – January 10, 1950*

Folder

1. January 14, 1939
2. February 11, 1939
3. June 9, 1939
4. July 1, 1939
5. August 7, 1939
6. October 9, 1939
7. November 29, 1939
8. December 17, 1939
9. January 28, 1940
10. May 7, 1940
11. October 9, 1940
12. December 5, 1940
13. January 6, 1941
14. January 22, 1941
15. February 11, 1941
16. March 7, 1941
17. April 16, 1941
18. May 8, 1941
19. June 4, 1941
20. July 13, 1941
21. September 6, 1941
22. September 22, 1941
23. March 10, 1942
24. April 1, 1942
25. May 29, 1942
26. July 19, 1942
27. August 14, 1942
28. September 20, 1942
29. October 20, 1942
30. October 28, 1942
31. November 24, 1942
32. December 19, 1942
33. January 15, 1943
34. April 11, 1943
35. April 26, 1943
36. May 30, 1943
37. July 26, 1943 (includes a Beeman's Pepsin Gum wrapper)
38. October 12, 1943
39. December 19, 1943 (includes a clipping of a poem)

40. February 20, 1944
41. February 27, 1944
42. April 5, 1944 (includes clippings; newspaper photo of Mrs. Earhart and article, "Amelia Earhart Taken to Japan, Report," by Eugene Burns)
43. June 11, 1944
44. June 19, 1944
45. August 13, 1944
46. September 26, 1944
47. October 22, 1944 (includes clipping, "New York Writer Seeks Earhart Facts")
48. December 20, 1944 (includes a Christmas card)
49. February 4, 1945
50. March 19, 1945
51. May 30, 1945
52. July 1, 1945
53. July 17, 1945
54. August 20, 1945
55. August 27, 1945
56. November 12, 1945
57. November 28, 1945 (includes clipping, "Japanese Official Denies Amelia Earhart Is Alive," 1945)
58. December 12, 1945
59. February 16, 1946
60. April 16, 1946
61. September 3, 1946
62. September 28, 1946
63. October 25, 1946
64. December 7, 1946
65. December 22, 1946
66. January 18, 1947
67. February 2, 1947 (includes 4 clippings and a program from the American Legion – Amelia Earhart Post No. 678, banquet honoring Mrs. Amy Otis Earhart on the occasion of the unveiling of the Amelia Earhart portrait, presented by the *Valley Times*, October 24, 1946)
68. March 16, 1947
69. June 26 – July 5, 1947
70. September 6, 1947
71. November 16, 1947
72. October 6, 1948
73. March 24, 1949
74. October 16, 1949 (no letter for this date, just an envelope)
75. January 10, 1950 (last letter)
76. *The Centerville Crusader*, July 1, 1992
77. *The Centerville Crusader*, July 8, 1992
78. *The Centerville Crusader*, July 15, 1992

Box 2 *Framed Photographs, circa 1930s*

Item

1. Framed photograph, 12" x 15", Amelia Earhart standing in front of her Lockheed Electra, undated
2. Framed photograph, 12" x 15", Amelia Earhart doing some creative writing in front of a fireplace, undated
3. Framed photograph, 11" x 14", Amelia Earhart with Lockheed Electra 10E taken at the airport in Carpito, Venezuela, taken before her departure for Dakar, 1937
4. Framed photograph, 9 ½" x 11", Amelia Earhart in leather jacket, blouse and slacks reclining in a chair, undated
5. Framed photograph, 9 ½" x 7 ½", Amelia Earhart in an outfit selected from her women's fashion line, undated