

Port Washington Public Library Oral History Collection

AVIATION

Anholzer, Hank (1922 - 2007). Model airplane maker.

Early interest in airplanes: Lindbergh flight, newspaper accounts; family background; first model plane; education and employment: inspector at Brewster Aeronautical, sorting rivets for Pan American, 1941, sheet metal worker on flying boats, relationship to model making; gas model planes; skills; tools; scratch models vs. kits; favorite model; flying clubs, contests; chasing models at Idlewild; different models made; types of flyers; demise of aviation on Long Island.

34 pages. Open. Interviewer - Elly Shodell. 1996.

Anholzer, Hank (1922 - 2007). Model airplane maker.

Family background; mechanical skills; impact of Charles Lindbergh; joining Junior Birdmen; early schooling; working for Brewster, then Pan Am for 42 years: Bermuda Clipper, sheet metal work, inspector job, planning dept.; airplane model building experiences: rubber band models, radio controlled; airplane restoration work with George Dade in 1973; membership in Long Island Early Fliers.

78 pages. Open. Interviewer - John Eilertsen. 1996.

Axinn, Donald Everett (1929 - 2009). Businessman, poet, private pilot.

Growing up amidst excitement of aviation pioneers, 1930s; flying club at Middlebury College, 1951; thrill of flying; influence of flying on personal poetry writings; role of women in aviation; Port Washington's seaplane services; membership in aviation club; changes in Long Island aviation scene.

39 pages. Open. Interviewer - Heather Adler. 1996.

Belkin, Howard (1949 -).

Tape only - c. 120 minutes. Open. Interviewer - Dianne Creagh. 1996.

AVIATION (contd.)

Bergman, George (1897 - 1999). Retired machine shop owner.

Work done by Blair Tool and Machine Corp. for airline and other industries, 1895-1991; early Sikorsky planes; precision required for machine work, tolerances; excursions to Roosevelt Field; American Aeronautical Corp., Savoia-Marchetti plane, difficulties caused by metric system; early engines; demise of amphibious planes; mystique of pilots; Pan American; changes in flying; Grumman Aircraft Co.; aviation personalities; Jennies; atmosphere of machine shop; disappearance of machine shops; changes in technology.

Reminiscences of: Igor Sikorsky, Alex Seversky.

42 pages. Open. Interviewer - Elly Shodell. 1994.

Cassanello, Emil (1922 -). Model airplane maker, private pilot.

Family background; early flight training, late 1940s; first airplane, 1947; early model airplane kits; balsa models; work for Eastern Airlines; World War II experiences; early radio-controlled models, reed models; digital models, comparison with actual planes; pilots as modelers/modelers as pilots; ready-made planes, kits, building from scratch; preference for older planes; World War I planes; different engines; advantages of scratch building, scavenging for materials; dope, treating fabric; Tuesday night modeling sessions; drawing plans; model club categories, instructors; cost; fuels; flying anecdotes, model combat; authenticity; Steerman plane.

100 pages. Open. Interviewer - Nancy Solomon. 1994.

Cassanello, Emil (1922 -). Model airplane maker, private pilot.

Tape only - c. 60 minutes. Open. Interviewer - John Eilertsen. 1995.

Coiro, Bob (1955 -). Commercial artist, aviation enthusiast.

Influence of father (airplane machinist) on later career; early interest in aviation influenced by World War II movies, romantic heroes; airplane modeling as a child: plastic kits, u-control models, radio-control models; importance of box art. Flying lessons, pilot's license;

AVIATION (contd.)

Grumman Tigers; ownership and restoration of 1947 Navion; flying stories, Long Island; fascination with P-47 Thunderbolt; gender roles in aviation; comparison and contrast of model airplanes with full-scale airplanes; attending air shows; President, P-47 Alumni Association.

Reminiscences of: Ray Stutsman, Republic Airport.

98 pages. Open. Interviewer - Dianne Creagh. 1996.

Darress, Dorothy (1921 - 2010). Retired T.W.A. stewardess.

Career with T.W.A.: teletype operator, passenger agent during World War II, stewardess, 1945; job requirements; transfer to international division; comparison of employment conditions, benefits then and now; nurse's training requirement; relationship with pilots; characteristics of a good stewardess; first international flight to Cape Town, South Africa, 1946; camaraderie among stewardesses; training; treatment of passengers; differences in duties; Constellation/Royal Ambassador; celebrity passengers; inspections; change in clientele; Clipped Wings Club.

38 pages. Open. Interviewer - Elly Shodell. 1993.

Davidson, Larry (1935 -).

Tape only - c. 60 minutes. Open. Interviewer - John Eilertsen. 1995.

Dildilian, Armen (1923 -2009). Retired Pan American mechanic, ground instructor.

Early interest in aviation in San Francisco; work experience with Pan American: mechanic's helper to lead man, 1942-C.1956, U.S. Naval Reserve, Naval Transport Service during World War II, ground instructor, curriculum planning and program development; Boeing (Yankee) Clipper: construction, maintenance; Martin (China) Clipper; near-disasters; characteristics of a good pilot; commercial vs. private pilots; role of women in aviation; feelings about airplanes; cessation of Pan Am operations in Port Washington; changes in technology, aesthetics of airplanes; effect of aviation, personally; future of aviation; demise of Pan Am.

AVIATION (contd.)

50 pages. Open. Interviewer - Elly Shodell. 1993.

DiLena, Alex Jr. (1946 -). Aviation artist.

Origins of interest in aviation: influence of "Sky King" and World War II movies; recollections of making airplane models as a youngster; progression from balsa and tissue to u-control planes; aviation bomber art; aesthetic impulse behind aviation art; hobby shops; modern techniques of modeling: vacu-form vs. styrene models; memories of Grumman airplanes overhead; personnel; present-day airplane-part-collecting activities; membership in Experimental Aircraft Association; volunteering at Cradle of Aviation Museum with Joshua Stoff.

94 pages. Open. Interviewer - Dianne Creagh. 1996.

Feroldi, Ace (1922 -). Retired Pan American mechanic.

Tape only - c. 60 minutes. Open. Interviewer - John Eilertsen. 1995.

Gaeta, Cynthia (1915 - 1999). Wife of pilot.

Born in Port Washington; early recollections of library, Wilhelmina Mitchell; resident authors: John Gruel, Burgess Johnson; the Depression; career of father, Jack Floherty: newspaperman, public relations, photographer, writer; mother, Bess (Lyon Hunt), a writer; anecdotes about father's back condition; husband, Joseph Gaeta's career as a pilot; World War II: German submarine off Miami; her career as fashion artist.

50 pages. Open. Interviewer - Dick Whittemore. 1991.

Gaeta, Joseph J. (Part 1) (1904 - 1987). Private pilot, Grumman test pilot.

Family background, youth and education; emigration from Italy, 1909; aviation career: car and aviation mechanic, barnstorming, 1920s; private pilot to Gold Coast residents, 1930s; Grumman test pilot, 1942; chief test pilot, 1960s; aviation activity, Manhasset Bay, 1930s;

AVIATION (contd.)

impact of Depression on aviation industry; early years of Pan Am, American Aeronautical, Sikorsky, Grumman.

Reminiscences of: Tommy Hitchcock, Juan Trippe.

23 pages. Open. Interviewer - Joan Keyes. 1981.

Gaeta, Joseph J. (Part 2) (1904 - 1987). Private pilot, Grumman test pilot.

Early flying experiences, 1920s; work as a pilot for Tommy Hitchcock, 1930s and 1940s; friendships with other 'Gold Coast' pilots; description of flights.

7 pages. Open. Interviewer - Elly Shodell. 1981.

Funded by the New York Council for the Humanities and the Friends for Long Islands's Heritage.

Harrington, Edward (1915 - 2002). Retired commercial pilot.

Transcript of Harrington Talk to Long Island Early Fliers. Early flying experiences at Jamaica Sea Airport, 1920s and 1930s; governmental regulations; building and flying airplanes: OX-5 Curtiss models, Robbins, Fledglings, DC-series; close calls; professional career: Eastern Airlines, American Airlines; European experiences, 1940s and 1950s.

Reminiscences of: Scotty Nelson, Elwood Kleim, Charlie Benjamin, Lenny Klasmeier, George Pomeroy, Ed Rickenbacker.

51 pages. Open. Talk before the Long Island Early Fliers Club. 1989.

Kotze, Paul Jr. (1923 -). Retired Grumman employee.

Airplane-watching at Mitchel Field, 1920s; father's employment with the Curtiss Company; purchase of plane from Heinrich Aircraft Corp.; memories of Curtiss Airfield, Roosevelt Field, Mitchel Field, Merrick Creek; Sikorsky workers; fly-in in a Curtiss Jenny; barnstorming adventures; close calls; working years at Gray Cadillac, Grumman, 1938-

AVIATION (contd.)

1968: lead man on Grumman Duck; inventing tools to make work easier; restoration work on Curtiss Jenny and Sperry Messenger at Cradle of Aviation Museum.

Reminiscences of: Gray [Cadillac], Harry Rieser, Madame Shumatoff, Igor Sikorsky, Albert Heinrich, George Bennett Smith, George Dade, John Golden.

81 pages. Open. Interviewer - Dianne Creagh. 1996.

Kovacsik, James S. (1920 -). Retired TWA Employee, Bayport Aerodrome manager.

First memories of flight, early 1920s; growing up in Canonsburg, PA in coal miner's family; 1935 flight in Brunner-Winkle Bird; formation of aviation club in Cumberland Township H.S.; impact of radio and books on aviation interests; model building; trips to local airports; work at TWA, 1939-1983: from apprentice mechanic to maintenance training dept.; from piston to jet airplanes; planes worked on, licenses needed; Naval Aviation School, World War II; aviation clubs on LI, Bayport Aerodrome Society: fly-ins, social events, historic remembrances.

Reminiscences of: Bennett Rich, Bill Steeneck, John Talmage, George Edwards, John Rae, Joe Hydrusko, Tom Hutchins, Peter Brescia, Joe Erale.

81 pages. Open. Interviewer - Dianne Creagh. 1996.

Kovel, Joe (1913 -). Cradle of Aviation Museum volunteer.

Growing up in Brooklyn; early interest in airplanes, impact of Charles Lindbergh: building models, 1920s, influences; skills; contests at Roosevelt Field; aviation work: sheet metal, 1930s at Sikorsky, Seversky, Brewster Aeronautical; association with development of multiple segment wing flap; World War II service; work on power plants, 1950s-retirement; projects at Cradle of Aviation Museum.

Reminiscences of: Charlie Grant, Nat and Irwin Polk, Bill Brown.

45 pages. Open. Interviewer - Dianne Creagh. 1995.

AVIATION (contd.)

Litty, Allan J. (1927 -). Seaplane base operator, aerial photographer.

Early interest in flying: washing planes, reading; laxity of training, early difficulties; formal training at Stormville Airport; casualties; early airplanes; aerobatics; forced landings; first airplane; aviation career in Port Washington: Tom's Point Skyport, attracting customers, mishaps with boats; characteristics of student pilots; early flying manuals; first student solos; flying out of Manhasset Bay; instructing anecdote; barnstorming; air shows; demise of flying school; aerial photography.

Reminiscences of: Walter Shepard.

74 pages. Open. Interviewer - Elly Shodell. 1993.

Malesardi, Harold (1919 -). Retired float plane mechanic, model airplane maker.

Building model airplanes: transition from solid model to rubber band to u-controlled to radio controlled; use of kits, 1920s-30s; Long Island Drones Club: membership, contests, purposes, model airplane fields on LI; World War II anti-aircraft experiences; G.I. Bill for aviation training, A & P license, Cal Aero; Grand Central Aircraft Co.; United mechanic, 1952-1983; work as mechanic on seaplanes, Ventura Air Service, 1970s-90s; son's interest in models; similarities between building real planes and models.

Reminiscences of: R. Sperber, John O'Neill.

106 pages. Open. Interviewer - Dianne Creagh. 1996.

Masland, William M. (Part 1) (1907 -1987). Pan American pilot.

Early flying experiences in Port Washington; barnstorming; joined Pan Am, 1935; establishment of seaplane base in Port Washington; early survey flights for trans-Atlantic routes; first commercial trans-Atlantic flight from Port Washington, 1939; Boeing Clipper ships; launching techniques: catapult, piggy-back; flight crews; responsibilities as captain; childhood fascination with flying, first flight, 1928; flight training; personalities; World War II service; three highlights; retirement, 1967.

36 pages. Open. Interviewer - Frank Breese. 1981.

AVIATION (contd.)

Masland, William M. (Part 2) (1907 -1987). Pan American pilot.

Description of seaplane base in Port Washington: hangars, launch, passengers' waiting room; pre-flight procedure: flight plans, fueling, passenger capacity; attitude of early passengers; ground crew; numerous moves ending in Plandome, 1941; value of airplane captain; hours logged; war-time experiences; favorite routes; seniority system; tenure in the Pacific; daytime navigation; anecdotes; routes of foreign carriers.

24 pages. Open. Interviewer - Frank Breese (with Nancy Ulrich and Roy Berthold). 1981.

O'Neill, John (1920 -1997). Retired Manager, Ventura Seaplane Base.
With Ryder, Stretch.

Arrival at Ventura, 1952 as mechanic and manager; commuter business; Airmen's Club; comparison of Ventura with Roosevelt Field, fueling problems at Ventura; characteristics of a good pilot; attractiveness of Manhasset Bay as a seaplane base; landing lane; Rintoul & Martin (flying school); American Export Company; various planes that flew out of Manhasset Bay; demise of the seaplane base; identifying aircraft; numbering of planes; personal history; Lindbergh anecdote.

Reminiscences of: Charles Blair.

69 pages. Open. Interviewer - Elly Shodell. 1995.

Rachiele, Josephine (1923 -). Retired Republic Aviation riveter. *With Geyer, Charlotte.*

End of Republic era; work as riveter during World War II; 40-year career; picture in Cockpit magazine; days off in New York City during War; switch from riveter to assembler; war-time vs. peace-time work; hazards; importance of work being done; A-10 account; description of Republic plant, noise; patriotism; working with men after the War; reunions.

21 pages. Open. Interviewer - Elly Shodell. 1994.

AVIATION (contd.)

Rachiele, Josephine (1923 -). Retired Republic Aviation riveter.

Childhood pastimes; family life, sisters Theresa and Sabrina; move to North Babylon, L.I., 1936; schooling; first job at Staple Coat Factory; National Defense Training School; Republic Aviation, 1943-1986: riveter-skills involved, working conditions, tools, clothing; work on P-84s, P-47s, F-105, F-84, A-10; V[ictory]-mail; job displacement after World War II; working for Fairchild-Republic, 1960s: contrast with Republic Aviation; influence of union; lay-offs, strikes; hard times in the 1970s; retirement activities: P-47 Alumni; Jug Lovers News; Cradle of Aviation restoration work, P-84; Republic Historical Society; aviation pen pals around the world; aviation collectibles.

Reminiscences of: Tommy Dorsey Band, Danny Pflug, Anna Sweetman, Bob Coiro.

164 pages. Open. Interviewer - Dianne Creagh. 1996.

Schmidt, Bob (1922 -). Retired Grumman mechanic; member, LI Early Fliers.

Childhood fascination with airplanes; model-building; Roosevelt, 1930s; aviation book collection; riveting work at Grumman, 1941-1943: working conditions, bosses, accidents, products; flying boats in Manhasset Bay, 1940s; flying missions during World War II; obtaining aircraft and engine license under G.I. Bill; description of amphibian aircraft; impact of technology on aircraft industry; role of Port Washington in seaplane history.

Reminiscences of: Cliff Kernochan, Ray Profit.

51 pages. Open. Intereviewer - Elly Shodell. 1995.

Walther, Harry (1917 -) Retired Republic Aviation and Grumman employee, Cradle of Aviation Volunteer.

Childhood fascination with flight: watching airplanes and searchlights from home in Freeport, building and flying kites; early family life; descriptions of having met Charles Lindbergh twice; working conditions at Republic Aviation during World War II; work on P-47s; founding and activities of the P-47 Alumni Association; founding editor of Jug Lovers News; Cradle of Aviation volunteer restoration work, P-84; comparison of working conditions at Republic Aviation and Grumman; influence of unions at Republic Aviation.

AVIATION (contd.)

Reminiscences of: Charles Lindbergh.

92 pages. Open. Interviewer - Dianne Creagh. 1996.

Roundtable Interview

Conducted at the Port Washington Public Library by Bill Bleyer, Newsday. with Willard Baker, Armen Dildilian, John Gaeta, Ed Harrington, John O'Neill, Paul Rizzo and Frank Strnad.

Tape only - 35 minutes. Open. Interviewer - Bill Bleyer. 1995.

"Flight of Memory" Exhibit Opening

Tape only - 45 minutes. Open. 1995.