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Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

Blanche Stuart Scott Collection - Newspaper Articles, 1911 - 1955

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Chicago Daily Tribune
Friday, August 5, 1955

EARLY WOMAN PILOT GATHERS AERIAL RELICS Makes Scouting Trips for Museums BY SUE CASSELL

Early Flyer Aids Air Museums (Story in adjoining column)

Mrs. Blanche Stuart Scott, one of the world's first woman flyers and now a consultant and scout for the air force museum section, Wright-Patterson air force base, Dayton, O., is in Chicago to gather historical aviation material for the [word obscured] air museums at Dayton and at Washington D.C.

What she is after, she said yesterday, might take the form of a resurrected early plane in toto, it might be a series of models, or it might be photographs or early copies of aviation publications that date to 1910 or earlier. She said she is hoping to find early Illinois and Chicago aviation magazines and photos showing early aviation activities in the area.

Takes Plane Here

Mrs. Scott is making her headquarters at the Congress hotel, having flown here from Dayton for a two week visit before going to St. Louis, Wichita, Kas., and San Diego, Cal. She said yesterday she hopes to be in touch with members of the long defunct Illinois Aero club, an organization which sponsored aviation meetings in Chicago in 1911 and 1912, and helped found the first scheduled air routes between Chicago and the Twin Cities..

There are few experts as familiar with early aviation history as this official government scout, because Mrs. Scott was flying herself in 1910. She went to Hammondsport, N.Y., the summer of that year and had several hours of dual instruction from Glen Curtiss.

Makes Solo Flight

On Sept. 6, 1910, she became a pilot by making her first solo flight in a light Curtiss plane with a 25 horse power engine. This "flight," she laughingly recalls, was for only three minutes - but in making it Mrs. Scott became the first American woman aviator and probably the second woman in the world to fly a plane alone. A German woman is recorded officially as having made the first flight only a few weeks before Mrs. Scott's hop.

Subsequently Mrs. Scott joined the Curtiss Flying Crew in giving aeronautical exhibitions thruout the United States. On one such exhibition in the summer of 1913, at Madison, Wis., the engine failed when she was only 300 feet off the ground. Unable to glide back to her fairgrounds take-off point, she put the machine down in a swamp - "but I broke 44 different bones," she recalled.

Successful in Finds

Mrs Scott has been unusually successful in obtaining historic aviation treasures for Wright field and the Smithsonian institution in Washington. The Wright-Patterson base turns most of its finds over to the Smithsonian, she explained, and there is no rivalry between them. Among collections made within recent years, Mrs. Scott said, were Charles A. Lindbergh's Lockheed Sirius float plane, the Tingmossartog, in which he and his wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, made trans-oceanic



and arctic flights in pioneering world air routes. Another was Igor Sikorsky's second V-300 helicopter rotary winged plane built in the United States.

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