

MS-210

**ROBERT S. BALL AVIATION
COLLECTION**

Paul Laurence Dunbar Library
Special Collections and Archives
Wright State University
Dayton, Ohio

Processed by:
Dawne Dewey
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INTRODUCTION

The Robert S. Ball Aviation Collection consists of magazine articles, books, correspondence, and miscellaneous items from the news reporting career of Robert S. Ball, aviation editor for the Detroit News from 1954 to his death in 1961. The collection was accessioned into Special Collections and Archives on January 30, 1991. It was donated by James E. Lacey, nephew of Robert Ball, on behalf of his aunt, Marion S. Rau (Marion Ball). The collection covers the years 1911 to 1982 and includes Ball's draft of an article on Charles Taylor, mechanic for the Wright Brothers, as well as an autographed copy of a photograph of Amelia Earhart.

The collection is arranged into the following series:

Series I	Articles
Series II	Miscellaneous

There are no restrictions on the use of this collection

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert S. Ball was a prize winning writer, news reporter, and editor who specialized in space, aviation, and labor reporting. He was born in Washington, D.C., on October 5, 1911, to Dr. Carleton Ball, government agronomist, and Bertha Ball. He graduated from Central High School and attended George Washington University. He became a reporter for the Washington Daily News in 1931 and later succeeded Ernie Pyle, famous WWII war correspondent, as Aviation Editor. In 1935, Ball joined the Detroit News, serving as assistant aviation editor and general contractor, later becoming aviation editor.

He served in the 95th Infantry Division in Europe during WWII and was twice awarded the Bronze Star. From 1951 to 1953, he served as administrative assistant to U.S. Senator Blair Moody. He married Marion Lacey, another Moody staff member, on December 6, 1952.

In 1953, Ball returned to the Detroit News. From 1954 to 1961, he served as Aviation Editor of the Detroit News Washington Bureau.

He covered the teamsters' career of James R. Hoffa. He was a close acquaintance of William B. Stout, aviation pioneer, Charles Taylor, Wright Brothers mechanic, and aviators Amelia Earhart and Jacqueline Cochrane. He was a member of the National Press Club and the Aviation Writers Association.

Ball was the author of numerous articles and a book entitled *A Chronology of Michigan Aviation, 1834-1953*.

Diagnosed with cancer in May 1959, Ball fought the disease with courage and determination, while still continuing to report the news. His last story was the coverage of the first American in space, may 1961.

Robert S. Ball died July 8, 1961 in Washington, D.C.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Series I, Articles, consists of four items, three of which are articles written by Robert Ball about aviation subjects. The fourth article was written by Lauren D. Lyman about Charles Lindbergh.

Series II, Miscellaneous, consists of a variety of items. The series contains a signed photograph of Amelia Earhart and a piece of fabric from the aeroplane that made the first transcontinental flight in 1911. The series also contains a letter from the Smithsonian Institution to Mrs. Marion Rau (Marion Ball) returning the materials in this collection to Mrs. Rau and recommending they be donated to Wright State University's Special Collections and Archives. Finally, the last file contains newspaper clippings reporting the death of Robert Ball.

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Series I: ARTICLES

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Charles E. Taylor as told to Robert Ball, "My Story of the Wright Brothers," <u>Colliers</u> . Pp. 27, 68-70	December 28, 1948
	2	Typed draft of the Charles Taylor story, Robert S. Ball	n.d.
	3	Ball, Robert S., "Transatlantic Service, Set for Spring, to Enable Flying, Detroit to Europe in 24 Hours!" <u>The Detroit News Pictorial</u> . Original copy of article filed in Location 10, File 5	December 4, 1938
	4	Lyman, Lauren D., "The Lindbergh I Know." <u>The Saturday Evening Post</u> . Original copy of article filed in Location 10, File 5	April 4, 1953

Series II: MISCELLANEOUS

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
	5	Correspondence: Smithsonian Institution to Mrs. Henry Rau (Marion Ball) concerning disposition of collection.	August 13, 1982
	6	Photograph of Amelia Earhart, autographed to Robert Ball. Pan-Pacific Press Bureau Photo. Taken at airport, Burbank, California, while making final preparations for her flight over the Pacific	
	7	Fabric from wing of aeroplane which made the first transcontinental flight. To Bob Ball, from C. E. Taylor.	1911 June 18, 1948
	8	Newspaper clippings about Robert S. Ball at the time of his death.	July 8, 1961