

MS-555: Victor Rickard General Aviation Collection

Collection Number: MS-555

Title: Victor Rickard General Aviation Collection

Dates: 1925-2014 (bulk 1925-1940)

Creator: Rickard, Victor Arthur, 1902-2005

Summary/Abstract:

Victor Rickard was an early pilot in Schenectady, New York, and manager of the city's airport from 1927-1931. He was also involved in U.S. Naval aviation during World War I and Army Air Services during World War II. The collection contains photographs, pilot's licenses and identification cards, newspaper clippings, and video footage.

Quantity/Physical Description: 0.25 linear feet and 1.5 gigabytes

Language(s): English

Repository:

Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-0001, (937) 775-2092

Restrictions on Access:

There are no donor-imposed restrictions on access to this collection; however, necessary preservation restrictions are described below.

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Preferred Citation:

[Description of item, Date, Box #, Folder #], MS-555, Victor Rickard General Aviation Collection, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

Acquisition:

The collection was donated to Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University Libraries, by Clifford V. Sagendorf, great-nephew of Victor Rickard, in January 2014. Additional materials were in 2016.

Custodial History:

The donor, Clifford Sagendorf, is the great-nephew of Victor Rickard. Clifford's father Victor Sagendorf was the son of John Sagendorf and Mabel (Rickard) Sagendorf. When John Sagendorf died in 1930, Victor Rickard helped his sister Mabel raise her four children (including Clifford's father Victor Sagendorf, who died in 2012). Victor Rickard and his wife Myra had no children.

Existence and Location of Copies:

Copies of the videos are believed to be available at the Empire State Aerosciences Museum, located at Schenectady County Airport, New York.

Existence and Location of Originals:

The original home movie films, from which the VHS and DVD video were created, are not included in this collection. These are believed to still be in possession of the family.

Separated Material:

One oversize photograph has been separated to Oversize storage. Original electronic media has been removed to the E-Archive.

Other Finding Aid:

The finding aid is available on the Special Collections & Archives, Wright State University Libraries web site at <https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms555.pdf>. It is also available in the OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository at <http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/>.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

A computer with software capable of reading *.PDF, *.PPT, and *.MP4 file format will be needed to view the preservation-formatted electronic records in this collection. Original file formats have also been retained (in addition to a preservation-format-converted version).

Related Material:

Additional information may be found at Janz Vander Veer Research Center/Library, Empire State Aerosciences Museum (at Schenectady County Airport in Glensville, NY).

Processed by:

Finding aid written according to DACS standards by Lisa Rickey, December 2019.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged by format.

Biographical/Historical Note:

Victor Arthur Rickard was born January 3, 1902, in East Cobleskill, Schoharie County, New York (about 30-40 miles west of Schenectady and Albany), to Madison A. and Maude (King) Rickard. He served in the U.S. Navy at the Great Lakes training camp near Chicago and the naval flying camp at Pensacola. He began his flying career in Chicago, receiving instruction at the Bud Morriss Aviation School there, and serving in the U.S. Naval Air Service.

After his discharge from the Navy in 1921, Rickard worked briefly for Curtiss-Wright at Mineola (on Long Island). In 1922, he purchased his own airplane, a Standard J-1 biplane, at government surplus auction in Texas. He soon began barnstorming and selling passenger rides.

When pilot's licenses became required, Rickard received his first one from the National Aeronautic Association of the U.S. in 1925, signed by Orville Wright, Chairman.

Also in 1925, Rickard became the first person to fly an airplane over Schenectady, New York, at night. He was the first pilot to land at the brand-new Schenectady Airport when it opened in 1927, and he served as the airport's manager from 1927 to 1931. Afterwards, he was a pilot for General Electric (also in Schenectady), performing experimental and demonstration flights, as well as transporting G.E. executives. In these positions he met Charles Lindberg and Amelia Earhart. Rickard later worked for Link Aviation Devices (Binghamton, NY); Bell Telephone Laboratories (Hadley Field, NY); and All American Aviation Corp. He flew mail pick-up routes in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During World War II, he served again as an aviator with the U.S. Army Air Forces, supervising ground operations and flying air cargo in Europe.

Victor Rickard did not fly much after the 1940s and retired to Florida. He died in West Palm Beach on October 5, 2005, at the age of 103. He is buried at Bramanville Rural Cemetery, Howes Cave, New York.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains a variety of materials documenting Victor Rickard's aviation activities, including photographs, pilot's licenses and identification cards, newspaper clippings, and video footage.

The collection includes several photographs, some original and some reproductions, and most dating from the 1920s through 1940s. The original photographs include one photo each of Victor Rickard during his World War I and World War II service, as well as several aircraft photographs. Of particular note is an oversize photo depicting a pilot (perhaps Rickard) in a biplane, surrounded by a crowd. The biplane has an advertisement for Hotpoint appliances on the side, and it appears to be carrying a 1930s era Hotpoint oven in the passenger seat of the plane. (Hotpoint was owned by General Electric at that time period.)

Pilot's licenses and other identification cards (dated 1925-1956, 2003) provide additional photographs, as well as physical descriptions, fingerprints, and other identifying information about Victor Rickard. His original pilot's license from 1925 is signed by Orville Wright.

Newspaper clippings dating from the mid-1920s until Rickard's death in 2005 cover his various activities as a pilot, both in a contemporary reporting of events at the time, as well as in recollections via interviews with Rickard and in his obituary. Extensive biographical information can be found in these articles.

Articles and documents related to specific events or activities have in some cases been separated to their own folders, including Schenectady Rotary, the Aviation Pioneer Award (1991), and the dedication of a new kiosk about Rickard at the Empire State Aerosciences Museum at the Schenectady Airport (2007). The kiosk dedication file also includes a PowerPoint file of 50 slides presented at the event (see ms555_e0003).

The collection also contains video, with explanatory documentation from Clifford Sagendorf. One VHS labeled "Victor Rickard (Forstell Video Productions)" contains video from original home movie films captured by Victor Rickard, including construction of Schenectady Airport; footage of vacations (some by airplane) including Miami, Florida (beach and aerial footage); and stunt flying of various aircraft. This VHS was digitized by the family and is available in the collection as ms555_e0001. A second VHS tape is a mass-produced history of Vermont, which includes some footage of serious flooding in 1927, with which Victor Rickard assisted. And finally, a second DVD (ms555_e0002) contains a video history project created by Rickard's great-niece Erika.

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Rickard, Victor Arthur, 1902-2005
Sagendorf, Clifford V.

Organizations/Corporate Names

Schenectady County Airport (New York)

Places

Schenectady (New York)

Subjects (General)

Aeronautics -- New York (State)
Aeronautics -- New York -- Schenectady
Airports -- New York -- Schenectady

Material Types

Newspaper clippings
Photographs

Video recordings

Occupations

Air pilots – United States

Collection Inventory

Box	File	Item	Description	Date
1	1		Photographs (original)	1918-1944
OS		1	Photograph (original): Biplane with Hotpoint appliance	Circa 1932?
1	2		Photographs (reproduction)	Circa 1925-1935
1	3	1	Aviator's Certificate, issued by Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, National Aeronautic Association of U.S.A., Inc. (signed by Orville Wright, Chairman) (includes photograph)	1925 Nov. 30
1	3	2	Pilot's Identification Card, issued by Aeronautics Branch, U.S. Department of Commerce (includes photograph and personalized leather wallet)	1927 Oct. 1
1	3	3	Mechanic's Identification Card (photocopy only), issued by Aeronautics Branch, U.S. Department of Commerce (includes photograph)	1927 Oct. 1
1	3	4	Annual Sporting License, issued by Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, National Aeronautic Association (includes photograph)	1932
1	3	5	Airman Identification Card, issued by Civil Aeronautics Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce (includes photograph and fingerprints)	Circa 1941-1947
1	3	6	Airman Rating Record and Certificate to perform duties as mechanic, issued by Civil Aeronautics Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce	1941 Oct. 4
1	3	7	Airline Employee's Identification Card, All American Aviation, Inc., issued by War Department, Army Air Force (includes fingerprints)	1942 July 16
1	3	8	Medical Certificate for Airline Pilots, issued by Civil Aeronautics Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce	1947 Jan. 29
1	3	9	Airline Transport Pilot's License, issued by Civil Aeronautics Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce	1956 Sept. 12
1	3	10	Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permit, issued by	1956 Sept. 13

Box	File	Item	Description	Date
			the Federal Communications Commission, U.S.A.	
1	3	11	Driver's License, issued by the State of Florida (includes photograph)	2003 Nov. 3
1	3	12	Membership Card, issued by ye Anciente and Secret Order of Quiet Birdmen	Undated
1	3	13	Membership Card, issued Soaring Eagles, the Retired Pilots Association of USAir	Undated
1	4		Letterhead (copy) for Inter-Cities Airways Service, Inc., at Schenectady Airport (V. A. Rickard, President), Distributors for WACO Airplanes	undated
1	5		Clippings	1927-2005
1	6		Schenectady Rotary Club	1929, 1934
1	7		Aviation Pioneer Award	1991
1	8		Empire State Aerosciences Museum Kiosk Dedication	2007 Nov.
ms555_e0003			Empire State Aerosciences Museum Kiosk Dedication: PowerPoint Presentation (50 slides of photos and documents)	2007 Nov.
1	9	1	VHS: Transferred Film footage of Rickard home movies, including aviation and vacations (see description in Scope and Contents)	Undated
ms555_e0001			DVD: Rickard home movie footage transferred (same as VHS, digitized from the VHS by the family)	Undated
1	9	2	VHS:	
ms555_e0002			DVD: Video history project created by Erika (slideshow of photos and news articles)	Undated
1	10		Background information from Clifford Sagendorf	2013-2014