

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

ARCHIVES

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Finding Aid for the

J. Gerald Vinkemulder Aviation Collection

Collection # 063

September 2009 version

Abstract

The Vinkemulder Collection documents the life of aviator J. Gerald Vinkemulder (1900-1975), from Grand Rapids, Michigan. During the 1920's & 1930's Vinkemulder was a test pilot and a stunt pilot, with some experience also as a dirigible pilot. He founded the Grand Rapids Civil Air Patrol during the 1940, and was active in other organizations related to aeronautics. The papers contain reproduction copies of documents from Vinkemulder, including his pilot's license and log book. Also included is a dedication program for Daniel Waters Cassard Field in Grand Rapids, later called the Grand Rapids Airport, and the Kent County Airport. Dedication of the field marked the beginning of scheduled air service between Detroit and Grand Rapids in 1926. The copy photographs document a variety of aerial views of the city, as well as airplanes at Cassard Field during the early 1930's.

Collection #: 063

Accession #: 1985.036 ; 1986.394

Donor: Earl Spielmacher

Span dates: 1926-1934. n.d.

Original archival processing date: February 1988 ; Revisions, R. Mayne 1998-2005.

Size: .21 linear ft. (2.5 inches)

Related Collections and Additional Information

Coll. 075 Thomas Walsh Papers.

For further information on aviation history in Grand Rapids see:

On Wings of Progress : the Story of Kent County International Airport / by James Van Vulpen. G.R. : Grand Rapids Historical Commission, Kent County Aeronautics Board, c. 1989.

This source contains a biography of Vankemulder, as well as his image, and at least one image from this collection.

Box Summary

Box No.	Description of Contents	Box Description
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Box Inventory 9/2009		
1	Papers & Photos	slim legal

History

J. Gerald Vinkemulder (1900-1975) was an early aviator in West Michigan. Although he worked first for Ackerman Electric and later built up a profitable business, Vinkemulder Termite Control, his early passion was for flying. He worked as a test pilot and stunt pilot of airplanes during the 1920s and 1930s, even working as a dirigible pilot at times. He founded the Grand Rapids Civil Air Patrol during the 1940s, as well as the Michigan Air Tours, Dawn Patrol, and the American Legion Committee on Aeronautics.

Scope and Content

The Vinkemulder Collection contains duplicates of various photographs, papers, licenses, and programs documenting aviation ca. 1930 (ie. air shows, air circuses and air races). The dedication brochure of Cassard Field presents a brief history of transportation emphasizing the importance of air travel. The photographs depict aerial views of Grand Rapids and its environs as well as various airplanes that visited Cassard Field.

Series Description

Series I. PAPERS, 1926-1934, n.d. (5 folders)

Programs from various aviation events (air shows, air circuses and air races); pilot's license and log; and newspaper clippings.

Series II. PHOTOGRAPHS, ca. 1930 (9 folders)

Views depict aerial views of Grand Rapids and its environs as well as various aircraft that visited Cassard Field.

Series III. APPENDED MATERIALS

A additional item was found during the preparations for the 2000 move that is associated with this collection. It is a 1940 graphic for flight instruction. Due to its size & graphic nature, it is physically housed with Coll. 224, the GRPL Art & Graphics Collection.

Description

No item level descriptions of the photos is available at this time.

Contents

Box Folder Description

Series I. PAPERS, 1926-1934, n.d.

1	1	Air Circuses, Air Races, Air Shows, 1931-1934.
1	2	"Dedication of Daniel Waters Cassard Field," 1926.
1	3	Michigan Air Tours, 1931.
1	4	Newspaper Clippings, 1928-1931, n.d.
1	5	Pilot's License, Pilot's Log Book, 1928-1931.

Series II. PHOTOGRAPHS, ca. 1930

1	6	Airplanes (55 photos)
1	7	Dirigibles (2)
1	8	Chesapeake & Ohio RR Shops (1)
1	9	Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music (Calvin – 1 photo)
1	10	Grand Rapids Views (8)
1	11	Haskelite Manufacturing Company (1)
1	12	Kent County Airport (9)
1	13	People. Vinkemulder, J. Gerald (2)
1	14	Reeds Lake. Abrams Aerial Survey photo. (1)
224	12	Oversized laser photocopy of the aerial view of Reeds Lake from 063-1-14) Image shows the roller coaster at Ramona Park, and a baseball diamond near by, along with housing and other structures.

Series III. APPENDED MATERIALS

224 Box 20		Learn to Fly. Grand Rapids Herald , June 2, 1940
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