



Amelia Earhart Special Edition

by John Anderson

I'm really happy to introduce this special edition of the newsletter! On July



24th, we celebrated Amelia Earhart's 127th birthday and the replacement of her commemorative plaque at 76 Brooks Street. AE (as she

liked to be known) lived here in 1928 when she became famous as the first woman to cross the Atlantic by air.

As you can see from the picture on page 2, the new plaque has an improved image in bas relief. The inscription provides information not only about her exploits but also the important work she did to mentor and inspire the young women of her day. Over 20 Earhart family descendants enthusiastically participated in the event. AE would have been pleased by the lineup of speakers which included 4 strong women - Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, Mayor Brianna Lungo-Koehn, Dr. Margie Arnold Ph.D., and retired US Coast Guard Commander Beth Young. Commander Young represented the Ninety-Nines. AE was a founding member of the Ninety-Nines, an organization supporting women aviators since 1929.

Margie Arnold, long time AE admirer and donor of the new plaque, was the driving force behind this project. In this edition, she explains her lifelong

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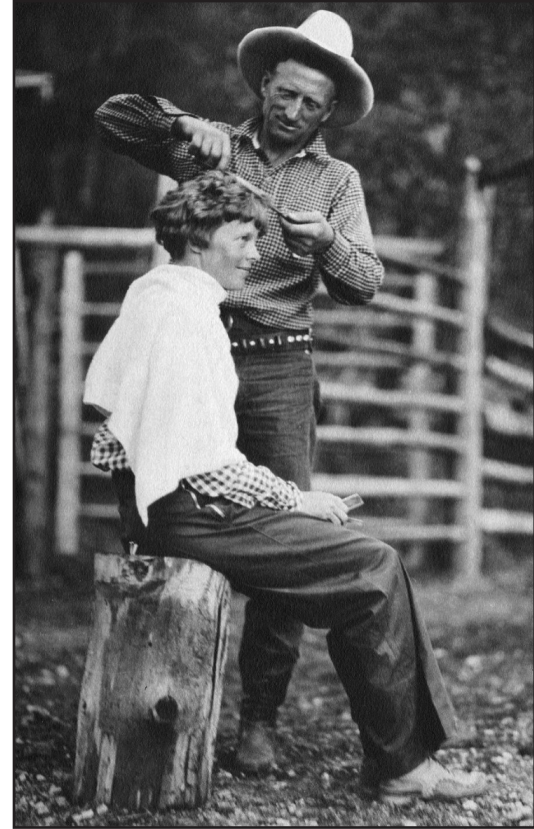
Why I Like Amelia Earhart

by Margie Arnold, Ph.D.

I like Amelia Earhart very much. She encompasses all the women in my family. My mother had a staunch dedication to those in need, particularly underprivileged youth. My sister is credentialed in medical social work and has spent her life's work in the healthcare profession. Me? I have a zeal for life, including all the adventures and misadventures, and I do not stand by quietly when there is injustice. And did I mention that, like Amelia, all three of us loved to play basketball too? That's right, Amelia loved to play basketball with her sister, Muriel, and she taught girls the game when she was a social worker at Boston's Denison House. Imagine Amelia's delight if she knew that 19 million viewers would tune in this year to watch the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship Game!

I find it interesting that someone born in 1897, some 127 years ago, can be so easily interwoven into the fabric of my family. Maybe it is because Amelia Earhart, "AE" as she liked to be called, was a woman so ahead of her time that she continues to transcend time. Just ask the staff at the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum located in AE's hometown of Atchison, Kansas. They routinely receive letters addressed specifically to Amelia from children inquiring about her current adventure and what made her want to become a pilot. Whatever the reason AE still resonates today, I like her very much.

There are two camps that reside within the present-day AE community - those like me who are interested in her life and



Amelia gets haircut at Double D Ranch in Wyoming, Purdue University

legacy, and those who are focused on the theories surrounding her disappearance over the Pacific Ocean on July 2, 1937. As of this writing, AE and her navigator, Fred Noonan, have not been found some 88 years later despite the many explorers determined to find that Holy Grail of Aviation. Personally, I prefer to lean into celebrating BIRTH days rather than mourning DEATH-days. So, allow me to draw your attention back to what we do know about AE's life and legacy.

Simply put, Amelia Earhart is interesting because she was interested. She held many passions and positions in her short-lived

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Thanks to the Volunteer Organizers and Workers!

We owe a huge debt to the Amelia Earhart Committee and all the volunteers:

Margie Arnold, the driving force behind the new plaque and the celebratory event.

The Earhart family descendants of Muriel Morrissey who set the tone for the event including Caroline's delicious fruit salad, James' reading of AE's poem "Courage" and Bram Kleppner's sharing of the family perspective.

Amanda Schuler who designed the plaque, the program, and the Happy Birthday banner.

Tom & Anita Nackel and **Josh & Amanda Schuler** who opened their homes to family members.

Meg Bowen, MHSM Programs Director, whose experience with event planning kept us on target.

Heather Champigny for chasing down all the details

Jay Stott for fact checking.

Will Tenney for researching the house at 76 Brooks.

Michael Bradford and **John Harrison** for photos and video recording.

Kyna Hamill for launching the all-Medford plaque project several years ago.

Sue Gerould, **Heather Champigny**, and **Marisa Kelly**, lunch for 24 guests.

Margie Arnold, **Lt Governor Kim Driscoll**, **Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn**, **Commander Young**, and **Bram Kleppner**, Speakers.

James Morrissey and **Cora Schuler** for unveiling the plaque.

Victor Baptista, **Josh**, **Amanda**, **Meg** and everyone else who pitched in with the tents, chairs, and provisions.

Frostin' in Boston and **Three Little Figs** (both Medford owned) who provided the special decorated cupcakes.

Brookline Bank for their generous donation to sponsor the event.

Lisa Colaianni from the Mayor's Office for her assistance and the **Medford Police** for keeping us safe.

All the contributors to this AE Special Edition of the MHSM Newsletter.

Amelia Earhart Special Edition *continued*

interest. Margie lives in the Boston area and has visited AE sites around the country. It wasn't until the pandemic that she drove to Medford to see the plaque on Brooks Street. She was not pleased with what she saw. Information was sparse and the image of AE looked too much like Charles Lindbergh! She tried to get the attention of MHSM but we were very busy shifting our lecture series to Zoom and managing a major rehabilitation of the building. Still, she persisted! She came to the AE presentation done by Melanie McLaughlin in 2023, buttonholed several of us and before long converted us to enthusiastic supporters of the project!

The AE plaque at 76 Brooks Street is adjacent to the sidewalk but on private property. My wife, Heather (who is also MHSM Director of Collections), and I live just a few doors down on Brooks Street and we asked the homeowners Josh and Amanda Schuler to support the project. They soon became enthusiastic supporters and, as luck would have it, Amanda is a graphic artist and volunteered to do the design and coordinate with the plaque manufacturer. And what a job she did!

With the design process underway, the next question was how to celebrate the installation of the new plaque. We formed a committee, brainstormed, and in a wave of enthusiasm came up with an ambitious plan, more complicated than anything MHSM has done in a number of years.

To set up this outdoor event in front of the plaque, we needed a portable PA system and podium, tents, refreshments, a cargo van to bring chairs and tables from 10 Governors Avenue, and volunteers to set everything up and break it down afterwards. We arranged a street closure and a police detail.

Margie reached out to the Earhart family descendants, sought their input during the design process and invited them to attend the dedication on AE's birthday. Amelia had no children but her sister Muriel Earhart Morrissey lived most of her life across the street. Amelia's great nieces and nephews had many memories of visiting their grandmother on Vernon Street. Twenty four family members accepted an invitation to lunch at the Andersons prior to the 1:30PM start on July 24th. The plan was to then move outdoors under two tents to accommodate 50 guests for a presentation done by our five speakers and the ceremonial unveiling. It had been rainy for several days and even on the morning of event, but the weather cleared just in time and everything went off smoothly, thanks to the brains, brawn, and resourcefulness of all the volunteers who are listed in the newsletter. We're so grateful to them all. The program ended with a moment of silence for AE followed by a loud shout out "Happy Birthday." Afterwards, the Schulers gave the family members a tour of Amelia's former home and Tom and Anita Nackel who now own Muriel's former home let the descendants visit their house as well.

Thanks to our volunteer videographer and photographers, everyone can enjoy the event. **There are many more pictures and videos on the MHSM website under the Events tab.**

I'm so grateful to Margie, the MHSM organization, the Earhart descendants, and the speakers for making this such a memorable and pleasurable experience.

Who Are the Ninety-Nines?

by Beth Young, Chair, Eastern New England 99s

Founded in 1929 at Curtiss Field in Long Island, New York, The Ninety-Nines was the first organization dedicated to women pilots. All 117 women pilots at the time were invited to assemble “for mutual support, the advancement of aviation and a central office to keep files on women in aviation.” Tea was served from a mechanics’ rolling cart. Louise Thaden was elected secretary and worked to keep the group together as they struggled to establish themselves and grow. Those early purposes continue to guide the organization today.

In 1931, Amelia Earhart was elected the first president, and the group selected the name “The Ninety-Nines” to represent the 99 charter members. Membership was immediately opened to other women as they became licensed pilots. In recent years, membership has been opened to include women with student pilot certificates. Currently, there are over 7,700 women pilot members from over 40 countries around the world.

Membership characteristics today are similar to what they were when Amelia and the other members formed the organization. We are a diverse group of pilots, ranging from age 13 to 101. We fly all sorts of aircraft, from seaplanes and banner towers to helicopters and gyroplanes, even hot air balloons. We fly military aircraft and airliners. We are air racers, bush pilots, aerial photographers, and certified flight instructors. We are adventurers and skilled aviatrix.

Air racing is a prestigious achievement, and 99s have been participating in the glory since our inception. The Women’s Air Derby in 1929 was the precipice for creating the Ninety-Nines. Throughout the decades, racing continued with the All Women’s Transcontinental Air Race, better known as the Powder Puff Derby. When this race was discontinued, the

Air Race Classic continued the tradition of women’s air racing, and it continues today. Check out the 2024 Air Race Classic on their website -<https://www.air-raceclassic.org/event-details.htm>

Each year thousands of dollars in scholarships are funded through the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund (AEMSF). Our members receive fully funded scholarships for advanced flight training and aviation type ratings. Since 1941, the AEMSF has funded over \$12 Million in scholarships. In addition, research grants and new pilot awards are also awarded to assist in the advancement of aviation. We actively participate in community outreach, introducing women and girls to the wonder of flight through STEM programs and airport community events.

If you find yourself looking to the sky every time an aircraft appears, you might have the flying bug. Head over to your local airport and talk to pilots. Find a local discovery flight and experience the wonder of flight yourself. You are never too old to start flying. One of our members received her pilot license at age 70. Family and career come first, and pursuing flight might take decades to achieve. It’s never too late, so don’t miss your opportunity. We are here to support you in that journey.

Opportunities in aviation are abundant today, although costly. A private pilot license will cost \$10,000-\$15,000 to earn. As with anything, if you want it badly enough, you can find creative solutions to finance it. Many organizations offer scholarships. Flight schools will often have work opportunities to earn flight time. The Civil Air Patrol provides a wealth of training, as does any branch of the military, if you are so inclined - for free. Student loans can be used to

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First 99s President, Amelia Earhart, pictured with Betty Gillies, Frances H. Marsalis & Elvery Kalep in 1933 rehearsing for a skating party to be held in a 99s hangar. Bettmann/Getty Images

Amelia Earhart: Medford Heroine

by Will Tenney

Amelia Mary Earhart was born on July 24, 1897, in Atchison, Kansas, the daughter of Amy Otis and Edwin Stanton Earhart. She spent much of her childhood at her grandparents' home in Atchison overlooking the Missouri River, living the life of a "tomboy." Her life along the banks of the Missouri was interrupted when her father began a series of job moves, taking the family to Iowa and then to Minnesota. Her father's drinking caused her parents to separate, and Amelia, her younger sister, Muriel, and their mother moved to the Chicago area where Amelia graduated high school in 1916.

Following high school, Amelia attended a college prep school in Philadelphia, the Orgontz School for Young Ladies, where she studied literature. In late 1917, she went to Toronto to visit her sister, Muriel, a student at St. Margaret's School College, and she was introduced to the effects of war on Canada's soldiers, many of them seriously wounded flyers. She decided to leave school and train to become a nurse's aide in Toronto. She spent the duration of the War working at Spadina Military Hospital in Toronto. She wrote of her time there in her 1932 book *The Fun of It*:

I believe it was during the winter of 1918 that I became interested in airplanes. Though I had seen one or two at county fairs before, I now saw many of them, as the officers were trained at the various fields around the city. Of course, no civilian had opportunity of going up. But I hung around in spare time and absorbed all I could.

The great influenza epidemic of 1918 did not spare Amelia, and she spent about a year recovering from the flu, leaving her with a sinus condition. After her recuperation, she enrolled at Columbia University in New York to study pre-med but soon decided that life as a doctor was not for her. In 1919 her parents had gotten back together, and Amelia moved with them to Southern California in the spring of 1920.

It was in Southern California that Amelia really began her flying career. Her father took her to an air show in Long Beach, and the next day she took a 10-minute flight (cost \$10). In her book *The Fun of It*, she wrote: "As soon as we left the ground, I knew I myself had to fly."

But her parents did not take seriously her intention to learn to fly. She had to do her own research and, being a staunch feminist, she found a woman flight instructor, Neta Snook. After six months of instruction, on July 24, 1922 (her 25th birthday), Amelia bought her own plane for \$2,000, a bright yellow Kinner Airster biplane, and named it "The Canary." That fall, she flew this plane to 14,000 feet, setting a women's altitude record. At this point, there were only about 100 female pilots in America, and she was gaining recognition as an up-and-coming aviatrix.

She loved that little plane, but when her father lost yet another job, throwing the family finances into a



A section of the Medford Square mural at the corner of Governors Avenue and High Street. The artist, Adam LoRusso, is the owner of Last Light Tattoo in West Medford Square.

tailspin, she was forced to sell her beloved "Canary" to a WWI vet who promptly crashed it, killing himself and his passenger.

Amelia's parents divorced in the spring of 1924, leaving Amy, Amelia, and Muriel with few financial resources and little income. At this time, Muriel was headed east to attend a summer course in education at Radcliffe in Cambridge. Amy and Amelia decided to head east as well. Muriel went ahead by train to find lodging for the three of them. Using the money from the sale of her plane, Amelia bought a bright yellow 1922 Kissel Speedster Gold Bug automobile. Leaving Los Angeles in June 1924, Amelia and her mother then spent about six weeks driving across the country in the Speedster, creating a great deal of attention as they went, meandering back and forth across the northern U.S. border with Canada. They arrived in Boston in July 1924 just about in time for Amelia's 27th birthday.

That fall she underwent surgery for her sinus condition and recuperated over the winter. In the spring of 1925, the three women moved from Boston to Medford, and Amelia returned to Columbia University. She was forced to give up her studies, however, because she just didn't have the money to pay for tuition and living costs. She returned to Medford and soon got a job as a teacher at Denison House, a women-run settlement house in Boston that cared for refugees. Amelia was soon a full-time social worker, teaching English to both children and adults and coaching girls' basketball.

By late 1925, they were renting the house at 76 Brooks Street. Amelia commuted between Medford and her job at Denison House in Boston in her yellow Gold Bug which always caused a stir. On weekends she drove down to a new airfield in Quincy where she continued to practice her flying skills. And here, too, she started making a name for herself, writing articles about flying for local newspapers and working as

a sales representative for the company that had made her beloved “Canary.” She wrote much of her poetry while living at 76 Brooks, including her most famous poem, “Courage.” Muriel later said, “Amelia was happiest during this time in Medford.”

In 1928 her life completely changed. The publisher George P. Putnam saw in Amelia a courageous, independent, and attractive woman who could rival the popularity of Charles Lindbergh. He proposed that Earhart be part of a crew of three to fly across the Atlantic. Although she was merely a passenger, she was to be the first woman to fly across the ocean in any capacity. On June 17, 1928, the trio of Amelia, Wilmer Stultz, and Louis Gordon flew out of Newfoundland in the “Friendship.” Twenty hours and forty minutes later, they landed in Wales. After a tremendous welcome in the UK, the trio sailed back to the States aboard the *S.S. President Roosevelt*, departing Southampton on June 28, 1928 and arriving in New York on July 6. They were hailed with a ticker-tape parade through the streets of Manhattan. Then on July 10, a huge celebration was held in Medford when she returned home to a hero’s welcome -- over 15,000 attended the parade in Medford.

Much has been written of her accomplishments and adventures after her successful crossing of the Atlantic in 1928, far too much to cover here. Amelia left Medford in 1928; Muriel and Amy moved from 76 Brooks Street to Princeton Street in South Medford for a while as it was a much more convenient location for Muriel who was teaching at the Lincoln Junior High School on Harvard Street, just a couple of blocks away. Muriel married Henry Morrissey in 1929, and they lived with Henry’s mother on Vine Street for several years. Amy moved into an apartment up the street on Vine to be close to Muriel. While Amelia was having such great triumphs in the flying world, Amy moved to California to be closer to Amelia. But after the tragedy of Amelia’s attempted flight around the world in 1937, Amy moved back to Medford and lived with Muriel and Henry at 1 Vernon Street, right across from 76 Brooks Street.

Needless to say, Medford is extremely proud to have hosted Amelia Earhart for the few years she was here. She is truly a Medford Heroine.

Museums to Visit Dedicated to Amelia

The Ninety-Nines Museum of Women Pilots Walk through the history of women in aviation from the earliest flights to present day and enjoy permanent exhibits on famous women pilots. Explore our large collection of artifacts and information on women pilots. Located in Oklahoma City, OK

www.museumofwomenpilots.org/

The Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum honors Earhart’s aviation legacy and inspires all generations in the pursuit of flight. Located at

www.ameliaearharthangarmuseum.org/

The centerpiece is *Muriel* — the world’s last remaining Lockheed Electra 10-E — an aircraft identical to the plane Earhart flew on her final flight. *Muriel* is named after Amelia’s younger sister, Grace Muriel Earhart Morrissey.

Fourteen, interactive, immersive STEM exhibits take visitors through Earhart’s

adventurous life — from growing up in Atchison, Kansas, to the height of her worldwide fame — as the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Located at the *Amelia Earhart Memorial Airport (K59)* in Atchison, Kansas.

Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum Step back in time to the turn of the twentieth century and explore the home Amelia Earhart grew up in!

www.ameliaearhartmuseum.org/

This museum is also located in Atchison, KS. If you make the trip to Atchison be sure also to check out the *International Forest of Friendship*, a living, growing memorial to the world history of aviation and aerospace.

<https://ifof.org/about-us>

The Hangar Museum houses the world’s last remaining Lockheed Electra 10-E, Muriel, an aircraft identical to the plane Earhart flew on her final flight.



Watch for Our Fall Programs:

African American, Native American, and Afro-Native Histories of Medford. A Conversation with the Initiative on Slavery, Colonialism, and Their Legacies at Tufts



A Roundtable Conversation featuring:

- Dr. Kerri Greenidge, Associate Professor, Tufts University
- Dr. Kendra Field, Associate Professor, Tufts University
- Dr. Heather Curtis, Professor, Tufts University
- Kyera Singleton, Postdoctoral fellow, Tufts University
- John Hannigan, Archivist and Project Manager, Tufts University

Thursday, September 26, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Library

This roundtable will feature several of the historians and scholars behind the newly founded university initiative at Tufts to explore the history of slavery and colonialism within and beyond Medford.

The Salem Witchcraft Trials: What Really Happened?

Speaker: Hon. Dennis J. Curran, Justice, Massachusetts Superior Court (retired)

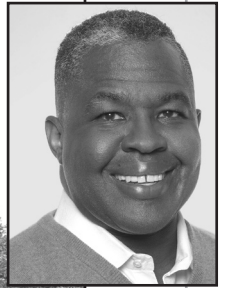
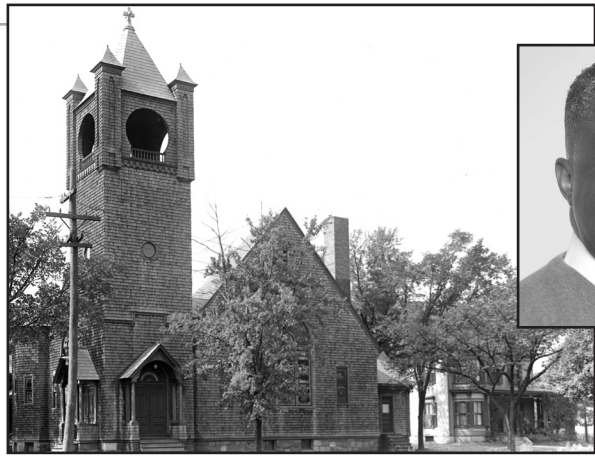
Thursday, October 17, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Library Co-Sponsored by Friends of the Library



The Salem Witchcraft trials constitute one of the most mysterious and fascinating events in American history. Discover the “perfect storm” of conditions that culminated in tragic circumstances that have haunted us for centuries. Judge Curran will explode five myths behind the outbreak of allegations of witchcraft in colonial America, examine the villains and heroes involved, and try to determine the reasons behind a raging mass hysteria.

We are grateful to Brookline Bank for their generous support of this project. They are excellent neighbors!

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What's Faith Got to Do With It? “Let Go of Your Story... Connect to God's Glory!”, A Look at Some of the Remarkable History of Shiloh Baptist Church of West Medford

Speaker: Pastor Gerald E. Bell, Shiloh Baptist Church
Thursday, November 7, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Library

This presentation will focus on the rich 127-year history of Shiloh Baptist Church as a cornerstone institution in the African American community in West Medford and on the future of this important house of worship in Medford. It will also include a chronological look at my journey as a 7-year-old Indiana boy survivor of senseless gun violence to a 65-year-old dreamer and pastor who is not finished yet. To describe myself as having a courageous heart is both arrogant and legitimate because fear has been my constant companion.

Deep Time: The Early Archaeology of Medford and Greater Boston

Speaker: Suanna Selby Crowley, Archeologist

Thursday, December 5, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Library

Walk through deep time and learn more about the archaeology of Medford and Greater Boston. Suanna Crowley, also known as “Dr. Dirt,” is a geoarchaeologist and researcher who has worked across the globe – but lives right here in Medford! Her work is focused on the dynamic environmental and climatic processes that preserve the archaeological record. This landscape legacy shapes and informs our understanding of the complex history of the Indigenous peoples who have lived here for millennia. This illustrated talk will highlight multiple topics of archaeological interest and describe new research.



And, during Women's History Month join us for:

Amelia Earhart: Legendary Life

Living On as a Symbol of Courage

Speaker: Margaret L. Arnold, Ph.D., Suffolk University

Thursday, March 6, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.,

Program information available at www.medfordhistorical.org/events

Why I Like Amelia Earhart *continued*

life well beyond being the famous record-breaking aviator. She was a clothing designer, nurse's aide, advocate, poet, basketball instructor, mentor, social worker, wife and stepmother, and career counselor for women at Purdue University. She loved listening to New York's Metropolitan Opera while flying at night under the radiant moon and shining stars. Regardless of her many interests, at the very core of AE was her unwavering commitment to promote women and aviation and to fight for women's equality.

AE was never totally comfortable in the spotlight unless she could use her voice to advocate for women's rights. Actually, she wanted equal rights for everyone regardless of sex. Truthfully, I think that while she was on her grueling lecture circuit flying here, there, and everywhere, she was doing it more for her gender than her accomplishments in aviation. She was described as charismatic, soft spoken, and somewhat shy, yet she had zero tolerance for discrimination against women and loathed any form of injustice. You knew when she was angry. She unabashedly fought for women's rights and equality in education, work, and marriage and lobbied tirelessly for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

I like AE's sharp sense of humor, feistiness, politics, and her adventurous spirit. I love the uncon-

ventional photos of her that challenge our everyday balance of current gender roles. On page 1 is a photo of her in 1934 getting her haircut on a dude ranch in Wyoming, by a barber, while she sits on a tree stump. I have never thought about getting my hair cut by a barber. Why not? It's probably a lot cheaper. In another unconventional move, AE penned an interesting letter to her husband just hours before they wed. She expressed again her reluctance to marry and that she would not hold him to any medieval code of faithfulness. She did not want to interfere with his work and play, nor did she want him to interfere with hers. She asked him to let her go in a year if they found no happiness together. To his credit, George Putnam married her anyway and their marriage was still intact at the time of her disappearance six years later.

Amelia Earhart was what teenagers refer to today as a "badass" and that is the ultimate compliment for someone who is fearless, has formidable strength, fights for equality, lifts others while rising herself, and stays true to her authentic self despite societal expectations. AE liked to say, "Never interrupt someone doing something you said couldn't be done." I think Amelia Earhart liked "good trouble" and I do, too. I'm with her.

Who Are the Ninety-Nines? *continued*

finance degrees at aviation colleges and/or licensing through commercial aviation programs.

Join the Fun - Become a 99 If you are a licensed woman pilot or student pilot (current or not), you are invited to become a part of our legacy as the first international organization of women pilots. The Ninety-Nines are a positive force in the aviation community, and you are invited to partake in all we offer.

To learn more about joining the sisterhood of the 99s and flying, you are welcome to connect with us at one of our meetings or one of our community outreach booths. We will be at the Beverly Air Show at Beverly Airport, September 14-15, 2024. We hope to see you there!

For more information check out these websites: Eastern New England 99s, <http://www.womenpilotsene.org> and the Ninety-Nines International Organization of Women Pilots: <https://www.ninety-nines.org/interested-in-joining.htm>

Happy Flying!

Amelia Earhart was the first woman to fly an autogiro, which featured rotating blades to increase lift and allow short field landings. Purdue University Libraries, Kames Archives and Special Collections





Portrait of Amelia which she signed as a member of the Ninety-Nines, the first organization dedicated to women pilots. Ninty-Nines

Your Medford Historical Society Newsletter

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