

Collection #
P 0458

**RICHARD ARNETT PLANE CRASH COLLECTION
1935**

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Processed by

Barbara Quigley
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 1935

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NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A small plane carrying three Hoosiers crashed on 15 August 1935 in the Laramie Mountains of Wyoming, killing all three. The pilot was Richard "Dick" Arnett. His passengers were his new wife, Eleanor Clark Arnett, and prominent businessman (Lynn) Burnside Smith.

Richard A. Arnett was born in 1909 to Lafayette, Indiana, physician Arett Campbell Arnett and Adah Ethel McKinstry Arnett. He began flying at the age of sixteen, and was a flying instructor by age nineteen. He attended Purdue University and was an aviation mechanic as well as a pilot. At the time of his death he was associated with the Indianapolis Municipal Airport. His friends included fellow aviators Wiley Post and Jimmy Doolittle. Post also died in a plane crash, along with famed humorist Will Rogers, in Alaska, on the same day as Arnett's fatal crash.

Arnett married Eleanor Louise Clark on 15 July 1935 in Marion County, Indiana, one month before the fatal accident. Eleanor was born in December 1912 in Indianapolis. Her parents were Clarence E. Clark, a mail clerk, and Ada M. Brown Clark, a teacher. Eleanor attended Butler University.

Lynn Burnside Smith was born 18 November 1887 in Hartsville, Bartholomew County, Indiana, to John C. and Mary Burnside Smith. The family had moved to Indianapolis by 1900. Burnside married Marie Sloan in 1906; they had two children, John and Mary. The 1910 census lists Burnside as the president of a motor company. By 1917 he had his own grocery business. In 1928 he was named president of the Mayflower Transit Company, which specialized in residential moving vans. Due to his interest in flying, Burnside renamed the company Aero Mayflower Transit Company.

The Arnetts and Smith were flying from Helena, Montana, to Denver, Colorado, on 15 August 1935. The plane crashed into the 10,000-foot high Laramie Peak in Albany County, Wyoming, during a storm. A search party found the wreckage and the three bodies five days later.

The remains of the three were returned to Indiana. Richard and Eleanor Arnett were buried in Spring Vale Cemetery in Lafayette, Indiana. Lynn Burnside Smith was buried in Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis. A friend of Arnett, who had attended his wedding the month before, received a postcard that Arnett sent from Los Angeles just a few days before his death. He wrote, "We strayed a bit farther from home than we expected."

Sources:

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of two black-and-white photographs and a photocopy of two newspaper articles. One photograph shows portraits of Eleanor and Richard Arnett; the other shows Burnside Smith and Richard Arnett standing by the airplane just before their ill-fated flight. The newspaper articles are about the plane crash.

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Portraits of Eleanor and Richard Arnett. Two black-and-white photographic images on one sheet [1935]. Stamped on back: Associated Press Wirephoto. Caption attached to back.

Black-and-white photograph of Burnside Smith and Richard Arnett standing beside plane [Helena, Montana, 15 August 1935]. Stamped on back: Associated Press Wirephoto.

Photocopy of two newspaper articles from unidentified newspaper(s): "Plane Carrying Trio Believed Smashed" [19 August 1935]; "Bodies of Honeymooners, Air Crash Victims, Found" [20 August 1935].

CONTAINER

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