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Kaiser-Fleetwings Collection GA.BH.5

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grundy Archive

680 Radcliffe Street

Bristol, PA 19007

archive@grundylibrary.org

URL: <http://grundylibrary.org/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grundy Archive
Title:	Kaiser-Fleetwings Collection
ID:	GA.BH.5
Date [inclusive]:	1911-1998
Physical Description:	4 Linear Feet 5 boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Established in 1926, Fleetwings, Inc. was an aircraft components factory that moved from Long Island, New York to Bristol, Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1934. Due to the company's success during World War II, Henry J. Kaiser's Kaiser Industries invested in the company and renamed it Kaiser-Fleetwings Corp.; the company closed in 1962. James M. (Jim) Shimer, Jr. (1914-2007) worked there as a technical illustrator. Henry A. Liese worked there as an engineer.

Preferred Citation

[Item]: Kaiser-Fleetwings Collection, Grundy Archive.

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Biographical / Historical

Established in 1926 as a business based on a patented mechanical timing device, Fleetwings reorganized in 1929 as Fleetwings, Inc. and began to manufacture airplanes and aircraft components. Based in Long Island, New York, the company moved to a factory along the Delaware River (previously Keystone Aircraft Corp.) that was located in Bristol, Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1934. The location of the Bristol factory was desirable as Fleetwings intended to develop a line of amphibious planes. Since few airstrips existed at the time, many in the industry predicted that the future of flight was in planes that could touch down on water.

Business for Fleetwings ramped up in the early 1940s, especially as Fleetwings began receiving military contracts during World War II. Henry J. Kaiser's Kaiser Industries acquired Fleetwings in 1943, renaming the company Kaiser-Fleetwings Corporation. The Kaiser-Fleetwings XBTK, a dive and torpedo bomber developed for the United States Navy starting in 1944, is its best-known product.

Employment at the Kaiser-Fleetwings plant reached its peak in 1944 with over 6,300 employees, but business dropped precipitously after the end of World War II, and again after the Korean War. The company was forced to close its doors in 1962.

James M. (Jim) Shimer, Jr. (1914-2007) was born in Philadelphia and attended Frankford High School. He earned a degree in Industrial Design from the Philadelphia Museum School of Art (now the University of the Arts) in 1937. Soon after, he married Dolly E. Lashley, with whom he had three children. During World War II, Shimer was employed as Assistant Supervisor in the Graphic Art Department at Fleetwings, Inc. After the war, he worked as a technical illustrator in the Aviation Armament Laboratory at the Naval Air Development Center (Johnsville, Pa.) before returning to Kaiser-Fleetwings during the Korean War. In his position as Supervisor of the Graphic Art Group, Shimer prepared technical illustrations to assist in the production of Republic-F-84F fuselages and Martin B-57 wings, among other projects. He retired from Kaiser-Fleetwings in 1955 and moved on to positions preparing technical materials for various other companies. He was a long-time member of the Naval Institute, USAF Museum, American Aviation Historical Society, and the Reading Railroad Technical and Historical Society, among other associations.

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Scope and Contents

The Kaiser-Fleetwings Collection consists of materials relating to James M. Shimer's work as a technical illustrator for Kaiser-Fleetwings and general Fleetwings manuscript and photographic records. There are a large number of Shimer's drawings of aircrafts, blueprints, technical specifications, photographs of aircraft and of models, and promotional brochures for the aircraft, as well as some of Shimer's employment records and various employee newsletters and publications. There are also miscellaneous files and photographs that were part of Henry A. Liese's personal collection that he donated to the library and were added to the existing materials.

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Arrangement

Items arranged in original received order by the creators. Most files are labeled as they were by their creator unless no title was given; in which case the title was supplied by the archivist for accessibility based on the content of the file and labeled in brackets to identify these given titles.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Grundy Archive

680 Radcliffe Street

Bristol, PA 19007

archive@grundylibrary.org

URL: <http://grundylibrary.org/>

Conditions Governing Access

Contact Margaret R. Grundy Memorial Library (archive@grundylibrary.org) for information about accessing this collection.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright interests for this collection belong to The Grundy Foundation. For more information, contact the Grundy Archivist (archive@grundylibrary.org).

Processing Information

Original description prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Faith Charlton through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.

Finding aid and description updated, physical processing, and file list created by Archivist Eric Walerko 2017-2018.

Custodial History

Gift of James F. Shimer in 2010. Accruals gifted by John J. Scheppe, Ray Wagner, Henry A. Liese, and Arthur Liese.

Accruals

No further accruals expected.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

GA.BH.7 Bristol History Photograph Collection: Binders 4a. - 4b. Fleetwings Kaiser Keystone Photographs

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Controlled Access Headings

- Bristol (Pa.)
- Bristol (Pa. : Borough)
- Bucks County (Pa.)
- Harriman (Pa.)
- Fleetwings, Inc.
- Keystone Aircraft Corp.
- Kaiser Industries Corporation
- Kaiser-Fleetwings Corp.
- Shimer, Jim (James M.), 1914-2007
- Liese, Henry, A., 1914-2003
- Aircraft drafting
- Aircraft industry
- Airplanes
- Korean War, 1950-1953
- Technical illustration
- World War, 1939-1945
- World War II

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Some photographs were originally framed. Frames had to be removed from the collections for conservation purposes. Photographs that were framed have been digitized along with any writing that was on the back of the frames.

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
James Shimer, 1914-2007	box 5.1	folder 1
US Army XA-39 Fleetwings Model 39, circa 1939-1945	box 5.1	folder 2
Other Kaiser Products and Shimer Graphic Illustrations and Articles, circa 1940-1960	box 5.1	folder 3
Contours XA-39, circa 1940s	box 5.1	folder 4
Fleetwings Model 51 "Flying Chesterfield", 1944	box 5.1	folder 5
Fleetwings Model 46 US Navy Dive Bomber Proposal, circa 1944	box 5.1	folder 6
US Navy XBTK-1 Fleetwings Model 44 Dive Bomber, 1944-1956	box 5.1	folder 7
Miscellaneous Photographs Taken at Fleetwings Field, circa 1940-1945	box 5.1	folder 8
Miscellaneous Proposals, 1944	box 5.1	folder 9
Helicopter Proposals, 1940-1945	box 5.1	folder 10
Martin B-57 (Wings by Kaiser-Fleetwings), circa 1945-1955	box 5.1	folder 11
Republic F-84F, 1951	box 5.1	folder 12
Hall Aluminum Aircraft Corp., 1928-1939	box 5.1	folder 13
Kaiser-Hammond Y-Z Fleetwing Model 53, 1945-1946	box 5.1	folder 14
Huff-Daland/Keystone Aircraft Corp., 1928-1944	box 5.1	folder 15
Press Manual -- Stories & Pictures of 1947 Kaiser and Frazer Automobiles, 1947	box 5.1	folder 16
Twirly Bird Helicopter Fleetwings Model 41, 1945	box 5.1	folder 17
US Army XBQ-1-2A Model 37, 1943-1946	box 5.1	folder 18
Fleetwings Model XA-39, circa 1940	box 5.1	folder 19
US Army YPQ -- 12A Fleetwings Model 36, 1942-1946	box 5.1	folder 20
Fleetwings Model 33, 1941	box 5.1	folder 21
Fleetwings Field and Aircraft Photographs (Digital copies), 1936-1945	box 5.1	folder 22
Hughes XF-11 (Wings and Tail by Fleetwings), 1947	box 5.1	folder 23
Blueprints, 1929-1930	box 5.1	folder 24
Shimer Scrapbook, 1942-1946	box 5.1	folder 25
Correspondence, 1942	box 5.1	folder 26

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[Work Schedule], 1943-1947	box 5.1	folder 27
Fleetwings News, 1944-1946	box 5.2	folder 1
Fleetwings News, 1945 November - 1946 January	box 5.2	folder 2
Research and Development Kaiser Metal Products, 1947	box 5.2	folder 3
An Outline of the Training Program, 1953 March	box 5.2	folder 4
Fleetwings Model F-4, 1936	box 5.2	folder 5
US Army XBT-12 Fleetwings Model 23, circa 1942	box 5.2	folder 6
Fleetwings Model F-5, 1945	box 5.2	folder 7
The Fleetwings Arrow, 1942-1943	box 5.2	folder 8
Fleetwings -- Historical Data, 1940-1944	box 5.2	folder 9
Newspaper Clippings, 1936-1987	box 5.2	folder 10
Fleetwings Model F-101, circa 1938	box 5.2	folder 11
Engineering Division, undated	box 5.2	folder 12
Work Records & WWII, 1945-1955	box 5.2	folder 13
[Plane Design Sketches], circa 1938-1945	box 5.2	folder 14
US Army BT-12 Fleetwings Model 23A, 1942-1943	box 5.2	folder 15
[Newspapers], 1985-2003	box 5.2	folder 16
US Army A-1 Fleetwings Model 27 (First Radio Controlled Drone), 1940	box 5.2	folder 17
Report No. M-253 Detail Specification PK-1 Airplanes, 1930 January 15	box 5.2	folder 18
Change Notice [Form] Engineering Department, undated	box 5.2	folder 19
AAHS Journal Volume 26, Number 1, 1981	box 5.2	folder 20
Skyways -- The Journal of the Airplane, 1998	box 5.2	folder 21
Sport Flying [Magazine], 1968	box 5.2	folder 22
Air Progress [Magazine Featuring Fleetwings F401], 1968-1972	box 5.2	folder 23
Fleetwings Seabird F401 & F5's by: John J. Scheppe, 1938	box 5.2	folder 24
Fleetwings' Pictures Recreation, Celebration and Assembly, 1941-1945	box 5.2	folder 25
Fleetwings' Pictures Events, undated	box 5.3	folder 1
Fleetwings' Pictures Aerial [Photos 3M Airport off Route 13 near Turnpike Entrance], circa 1944	box 5.3	folder 2
Fleetwings' Pictures [Flags & Awards], undated	box 5.3	folder 3

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Fleetwings' Pictures Personnel [Includes Corporate Fire Department], undated	box 5.3	folder 4
Fleetwings' Pictures Personnel and Families, undated	box 5.3	folder 5
Fleetwings Aircraft #1, 1938-1971	box 5.3	folder 6
[Huff-Daland/Keystone Aircraft Research Correspondence], 1998 June 25	box 5.3	folder 7
The Story of the Loening Biplane , 1973	box 5.3	folder 8
Original Employment Applications Keystone, circa 1928	box 5.3	folder 9
Aircraft + Industries -- Scheppe, 1983	box 5.3	folder 10
[Photograph to Tommy L.?], 1962	box 5.3	folder 11
Accent! [Photocopies], 1976-1977	box 5.3	folder 12
Fleetwing Newspapers Donated by Ray Wagner, 1943	box 5.3	folder 13
Aircraft Industry Photos [copies], 1940-1986	box 5.3	folder 14
Airport/Aircraft Industries [Notes & Articles], 1936-1986	box 5.3	folder 15
LB-75 Bombers [Slides], 1930	box 5.3	folder 16
Fleetwings News , 1945-1954	box 5.3	folder 17
Can Do! [BK Dive Bombers], circa 1943	box 5.3	folder 18
XA-39 Fleetwings Fury [Booklet], 1943 June 1	box 5.3	folder 19
Airport Facilities Fleetwings Confidential [Fleetwings' Need for Airfield], 1943 June 10	box 5.3	folder 20
Engineering Aircraft Division Kaiser, circa 1950s	box 5.3	folder 21
You and Fleetwings, 1941	box 5.3	folder 22
3/4 Right Rear View XBTK, 1945 March 14	box 5.4	folder 1
SNJ -- XBTK 1, 1943	box 5.4	folder 2
Graphic Illustration Books [2 folders], 1952-1954	box 5.4	folder 3
Liese Collections [photocopies/articles including Detail Specification for Model XOK-1 Airplane], circa 1945-1978	box 5.5	folder 1
Bristol -- History -- WWI to WWII, undated	box 5.5	folder 2
US Navy/N. American SNJ-5. Fleetwings Field, 1944 July 25	box 5.5	folder 3
Model F-5 "Seabird", circa 1938	box 5.5	folder 4
Unknown Plane Model Technical Illustration and Flight Photograph, undated	box 5.5	folder 5
733 Trainer, undated	box 5.5	folder 6
Seabird 75, undated	box 5.5	folder 7

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Radio Controlled R.A.T. Airplane [6 photos], circa 1930s	box 5.5	folder 8
BT 12, Bill Engle Pilot, undated	box 5.5	folder 9
BT 12 US Aircorp., circa 1938	box 5.5	folder 10
BT 12 Production Line, circa 1938	box 5.5	folder 11
BT 12 US Aircorps Basic Trainer, circa 1938	box 5.5	folder 12
Fleetwings Helicopter (B.G.) with Carl de Ganahl and Frank Gregory, undated	box 5.5	folder 13
Fleetwings Helicopter, undated	box 5.5	folder 14