

# Georgiana McConnell Papers

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Georgiana McConnell Papers

**Summary:** A collection of photographs, handwritten notes, printed materials, and writings on aviation and genealogy belonging to Georgiana McConnell, collected around the late-18<sup>th</sup>-century to the mid-2000s.

**Physical Description:** 11 boxes, 4.587 linear feet

**Language:** English

**Stack Location:** Metro Records Center

**Repository:** Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County, 615 Church St., Nashville, TN 37219

## Biographical Note:

Born in 1925, Georgiana Tippet McConnell was a lifelong resident of middle Tennessee, daughter of Claude W. and Georgiana T. McConnell. Hailing from an aviation family (Nashville's McConnell Field—now the McCabe Golf Course—was named for her uncle, Lt. Brower McConnell, who died in National Guard exercises in 1927), McConnell began flying on October 1, 1944, earning her pilot's license at age nineteen. While she trained at Gillespie Field (then Cumberland Field and now part of Metro Center) she worked at the Vultee Aircraft factory, located near Berry Field, to earn her fees. Her "first love" was an open cockpit PT-19. She was also a member of the Civil Air Patrol and held a commercial pilot's license which allowed her to fly people around the Nashville area.

Elected as governor of the southeastern section of The 99s, an international organization of female pilots, in 1955, she also served as their Mid-Tennessee Chapter chairperson after helping The 99s form that charter in 1976. With fellow Nashville pilot Helen Deason, McConnell took off from Cornelia Fort Air Park in 1951 for a stop in New York City. The two also raced in competitions including 1954's All-Woman Transcontinental Air Race (also known as the Powder Puff Derby), which took them from Long Beach, CA to Knoxville in an Ercoup aircraft. McConnell also raced in the Skylady and Petticoat Derbies and helped organize the last Powder Puff Derby in 1976. McConnell was selected as a "Woman of the Year" in 1960 during the Davidson County Professional Women's Clubs "Women at Work" month. In 1961 McConnell received an invitation from Dr. William Lovelace to come to his clinic in Albuquerque to be amongst the first class of women to test for NASA's "Women in Space" program. Describing it as "the most exciting thing that ever happened to me," McConnell underwent weeks of rigorous physical and mental assessments. Though she was ultimately not chosen to train as an astronaut, she remained a lifelong advocate of sending women to space, and particularly of Jerrie Cobb, leader of the Mercury 13 research program.

McConnell worked as a cashier for the Provident Life Insurance Company for much of her life and was also a baker and cake decorator. In retirement, she became an amateur historian of aviation and a genealogist, researching the many branches of the McConnell and Tippet families. She passed away on March 3, 2012 at the age of 86.

**Scope and Contents of the Collection:**

The Georgiana McConnell Papers contain hundreds of items collected by McConnell until the mid-2000s. The bulk of the collection is taken up with McConnell's genealogical research into branches of her family and comprises family trees from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, correspondence related to family connections, land grants, vital record information (births, deaths, marriages, and divorces), printed materials, news clippings, and McConnell's handwritten notes. A smaller portion of the collection is made up of information about aviation history, including women in aviation (which appears to be research McConnell was doing for a future book) and Tennessee aviation history.

**Index Terms:****Subjects:**

Aviation  
Aviators  
Women in aeronautics  
Civil aviation  
Endurance flights  
Airports  
Aeronautics—Tennessee—History  
Aeronautics—United States—History  
Aviation pioneers—Tennessee  
Genealogy  
McConnell family  
Tennessee—Genealogy

**Related Collections:**

Genevieve Baird Farris Collection  
Walter Heckman, Jr. Collection

**Arrangement:**

This collection is arranged into four series and includes correspondence, photographs, news clippings, printed materials, writings, vital records, and copies of book chapters and articles. Dates are difficult to pin down in some series because many of the items—particularly the handwritten notes—were produced by McConnell herself, and she didn't provide dates very often.

The *aviation* series documents the history of aviation, particularly related to the Nashville area and general aviation history in the United States. This series also includes information about women's role in aviation, both in general and related to specific women, and the history of The 99s.

The *personal information* series contains biographical details for McConnell, including letters and emails to and from her, photographs of her with various friends and family, and articles about her life.

The *McConnell genealogy* series contains records related to McConnell's research into branches of her own family. Along with her own handwritten notes and forms documenting familial relations, there are collections of birth and death records, information related to marriages and divorces, photos of the family, and connections to Scots Irish ancestors.

The *genealogical research* series encompasses materials McConnell collected related to other branches of her families. These materials include copies of articles and chapters, news clippings, photos, family tree forms, and handwritten notes. This series is organized primarily by the families' last names but also includes information collected about families in the South and documentation for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution.

### **Contents Listing:**

#### **Box 1:**

- Folder 1:** Aviation—Women in Aviation
- Folder 2:** Aviation—The 99s (Women in Aviation Organization)
- Folder 3:** Aviation—Tennessee Aviation History
- Folder 4:** Aviation—General Aviation History
- Folder 5:** Aviation—Published and Unpublished Works

#### **Box 2:**

- Folder 1:** Personal Information—Correspondence
- Folder 2:** Personal Information—Biographical Information
- Folder 3:** Personal Information—Recipes
- Folder 4:** Personal Information—Photos
- Folder 5:** McConnell Genealogy—Articles and Clippings

#### **Box 3:**

- Folder 1:** McConnell Genealogy—Handwritten Notes
- Folder 2:** McConnell Genealogy—James A. & William McConnell
- Folder 3:** McConnell Genealogy—General Genealogy Info.

#### **Box 4:**

- Folder 1:** McConnell Genealogy—General Genealogy Info, Cont'd.
- Folder 2:** McConnell Genealogy—Birth, Death, Marriage Records
- Folder 3:** McConnell Genealogy—Scots Irish Ancestors

#### **Box 5:**

- Folder 1:** McConnell Genealogy—McConnells in the South
- Folder 2:** Genealogical Research—Atkinson Family
- Folder 3:** Genealogical Research—Atkinson Family, Cont'd.
- Folder 4:** Genealogical Research—Ault Family
- Folder 5:** Genealogical Research—Bailey Family
- Folder 6:** Genealogical Research—Barnett Family

#### **Box 6:**

- Folder 1:** Genealogical Research—Bedford Family
- Folder 2:** Genealogical Research—Black Family
- Folder 3:** Genealogical Research—Cass Family
- Folder 4:** Genealogical Research—Couch Family Vital Records

**Box 7:**

- Folder 1:** Genealogical Research—Couch Family
- Folder 2:** Genealogical Research—Davidson Family
- Folder 3:** Genealogical Research—Eason Family
- Folder 4:** Genealogical Research—Eason Family, Cont'd.

**Box 8:**

- Folder 1:** Genealogical Research—Fly Family
- Folder 2:** Genealogical Research—Hamblen
- Folder 3:** Genealogical Research—Henry Family
- Folder 4:** Genealogical Research—Other “H” Families
- Folder 5:** Genealogical Research—Irwin Family
- Folder 6:** Genealogical Research—Jackson Family
- Folder 7:** Genealogical Research—Kirkpatrick Family
- Folder 8:** Genealogical Research—Locke Family

**Box 9:**

- Folder 1:** Genealogical Research—Montgomery Family
- Folder 2:** Genealogical Research—Montgomery Family, Cont'd.
- Folder 3:** Genealogical Research—Osborn Family
- Folder 4:** Genealogical Research—Smith Family
- Folder 5:** Genealogical Research—Smith Family, Cont'd.

**Box 10:**

- Folder 1:** Genealogical Research—Other “S” Families
- Folder 2:** Genealogical Research—Other “T” Families
- Folder 3:** Genealogical Research—Tippett Family
- Folder 4:** Genealogical Research—Tippett Family, Cont'd.

**Box 11:**

- Folder 1:** Genealogical Research—James S. Tippett
- Folder 2:** Genealogical Research—Tippett Family Photos
- Folder 3:** Genealogical Research—Walker Family
- Folder 4:** Genealogical Research—Watson Family
- Folder 5:** Genealogical Research—Location-specific Info
- Folder 6:** Genealogical Research—Tennessee Marriages
- Folder 7:** Genealogical Research—D.A.R. Info

**Restrictions:**

**Restrictions on Access:** In-library use only.

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**Administrative Information:**

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**Provenance:** Donated to Metro Archives by Georgiana McConnell, September 1999.

**Processing Information:** Processed by Jill E. Anderson, May 2025

**Accruals:** No further accruals expected.