

[Lucyle Richards]
National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame Collection
Collection Date Range: 1919-1995
Finding Aid Created On: July 20, 2015

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Number: 1987.002.002
Title: Lucyle Richards
Creator: National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame
Collection
Dates:
Media: Newspapers, rodeo documents, images, letters,
collection material
Quantity:

Biography of Lucyle Richards

“From broncs to bombers” is a phrase used in talking about Lucyle Richards, who has been described as a cross between Annie Oakley and Amelia Earhart. The colorful rodeo star and aviatrix is also called “the prettiest and best dressed cowgirl in America,” according to a press release appearing in the New York Times in October of 1934. Lucyle Richards was born in Pushmataha County, Oklahoma and grew up on her family’s sprawling ranch. She is the daughter of a Choctaw Indian mother and an Irish father, thus her raven black hair and her mischievous sparkling smiles.

Lucyle began her performing career in Talihina, Oklahoma, at age 13 when she was offered the opportunity to prove that she could ride bucking steers as well as bucking horses. Throughout the 20s and 30s Lucyle toured the country with various troupes, now long forgotten: Adams Rodeo and Wild West Show, Cliff Gatewood, Jack King. She rode broncs and did trick riding, although she considered the trick riding to be “sissy stuff.” She hated trick riding but did it for most of the shows; it was part of the contract...and she did it.

In learning the tricks, Lucyle mastered the shoulder stands, slick stands, tall stands, cartwheels, crouper rollups and back drags. Her comment was, “If you have a good horse, you just throw your arms back and smile.” In the process of doing something she hated, Lucyle Richards became one of the best in the world.

Special notoriety came to Lucyle while she was touring with the 101 Ranch Wild West Show. She performed at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1932-33 and attracted much attention with her “half-bronc” horse, appearing in the bars of Chicago and riding on the cobblestone streets of the windy city. Lucyle had won the World Champion Saddle Bronc Riding Competition in Chicago two years earlier.

1934 was a banner year for Lucyle Richards when she won the World Champion Saddle Bronc Riding in Boston, Massachusetts; first place in trick riding at Henderson, Texas; and second place in saddle bronc riding in London, England. She was the 1951 Saddle Bronc Riding Champion in the Girls' Rodeo Association finals in Oklahoma City and won the Matched Saddle Bronc Riding Competition in Yoakum, Texas, also in 1951.

At home on the back of a bucking bronc or a trick horse, Lucyle Richards decided, literally, to expand her horizons and bought an airplane in 1939. After receiving instruction from some of the best in the business of air acrobatics, Lucyle mastered the "falling leaf," the "Inmelman," the "Lazy S," and a dozen other tricks. "It's just like trick riding," she says, "All you do is keep your head and dash into it -- careless like."

Lucyle declares that her one-time ambition was to become a world famed pilot like the late Amelia Earhart. Her determined ambition also led her to master many feats and skills including marksmanship, dancing, swimming and skating. This amazing woman even tried bulldogging and Brahma steer riding.

In addition to trick riding, Lucyle Richards professed to hate housework in any form...and cats! She was, however, a genius with a needle and thread, and the many beautiful riding costumes worn during her active years of showmanship and competition attest to her ability. The New York Times story about her Madison Square Garden appearance states, "beauty that really counted was exemplified by Miss Lucyle Roberts...when she slid from the back of a raging bucking bronco, flashed her charming smile, waved to the crowd and filled the huge stadium with her magnetic personality..."

As life slowed down for Lucyle Richards, she devoted nearly all of the 1960s to being a policewoman in Yoakum, Texas. Then, in Brownwood, Texas, it was breeding American Kennel Club (AKC) registered Doberman pinchers. A slower life, yes, but one filled with many friends ready to hear this interesting former rodeo star's stories and jokes.

With all the goals Lucyle Richards set out to accomplish in her lifetime, one can hardly doubt that her life was full and rewarding, even long years after her retirement from the world of rodeo championships, fancy trick riding and acrobatics high in the sky in her "sky cayuse."

Lucyle Robert Richards exemplified all her life the spirit and stamina that equals raw courage.

Lucyle Richards passed away March 3, 1995 in Houston, Texas.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

This collection is comprised of biographical information gained from newspapers and applications, as well as personal letters, interviews, correspondence between rodeo companies, and images. This collection is also comprised of primary documents and sources that are housed in the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame collections.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

Series I: Biographic Documentation

Series II: Supplemental Documentation

Series III: Correspondence

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame. [certain papers cannot be photocopied]

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to cite the collection name, collection number and the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame in all footnote and bibliographic references.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials please note both the location and folders numbers shown below.

Series I: Biographic Information contains the information submitted for Lucyle Richards to be nominated into the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame, as well as information from newspapers, personal interviews

Folder	File Title	Pages	Date
1	Hall of Fame Nomination Form	9	
	Newspaper clippings and photocopies	9	1919-40
	Houston Post copied excerpts concerning the death of Frank Dew	15	1940-41
	Transcript of the Houston Post concerning the death of Frank Dew	15	
	Newspaper copies about the killing of Frank Dew	2	1941
	Handwritten transcriptions of newspapers documenting the Dew case	23	

Copies of clippings concerning flying bombers	1	1942
Newspaper articles- includes real and copied articles	7	1947-79
Lucyle's application to the National Cowboy Hall of Fame	6	1970?
National Cowgirl Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony program and speech	9	1987
Newspaper articles-includes real and copied articles	10	1987
Lucyle Richards personal interview with Virginia Arthro	4	1991
Birth Certificate Application and Correspondence	7	1991
WASP article	1	1991
Biography intro written by Frederic Bean	6	1992
Richard's Illinois Competition Questionnaire	4	1992?
Newspaper Clipping and copy	2	1992
Notes concerning the death of Lucyle's daughter and Lucyle	2	1995
Assorted images	51	
Articles from unknown dates	3	

Series II: Supplemental Information

Folder	File Title	Pages	Dates
2	Unknown rodeo program		
	Newspaper clippings and copies owned by Lucyle Richards	4	1941-51
	Signed Program from Inductee Luncheon	4	1991
	Interview with Mitzi Riley	1	1994
	Way Out West	1	
	Newspaper: Early Day Women	3	
	Unknown Newspaper copy	1	
	Snippet from Doubleday's Cowgirls	1	
	Cowgirl Legends Information	1	
	Corinne Williams: Lady Steer Wrestler and Bronc Rider	1	
	Cowgirls of the Rodeo: specific pages with information on Lucyle Richards	7	
	Frontier Times	6	
	The history of... The Rodeo Clown	3	

Series III: Correspondence

Folder	File Title	Pages	Dates
4	Correspondence between Rodeo companies and Lucyle Richards concerning competitions, contracts, and employment.	26	1933-43
5	Correspondence between Rodeo companies	60	1945-1951

	concerning competitions and contracts		
6	Correspondence between National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame to Lucyle Richards and family members	97	1984-1995

Series IV: Collection Materials

Folder	File Title	Pages	Dates
7	File containing photocopies of primary resource materials available in National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame collections	61	1932-1956