



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



August 2021 Her Story ENewsletter Women in Aviation

The U.S. Congress has spent much of 2021 working on a bill to fund improvements and repairs to our country's infrastructure – the underpinning of our standard of living and quality of life. The American Society of Civil Engineers' 2021 infrastructure report card graded 18 categories including aviation, bridges, broadband, dams, drinking water, energy, hazardous waste, inland waterways, levees, public parks, ports, rail, roads, schools, solid waste, stormwater, transit and wastewater to describe the many issues that need upgrades. In this month's newsletter, we profile two of the pioneers in the field of aviation.



Displaying business and financial acumen from a young age, Olive Ann Mellor joined the Travel Air Company in Wichita, Kansas as a secretary and the only woman out of the company's 12 employees in 1924. She and Walter H. Beech, the founder of Travel Air married in 1930 and moved to New York City. In 1932, the Beeches returned to Wichita and established Beech Aircraft Company. She served as secretary-treasurer of their new company. In 1940, Walter Beech became ill and **Olive Ann Beech** stepped into the leadership role of the company. After he died in 1950, Olive Ann was elected president and chairman, at age 47, the first woman to head a major aircraft company.

She guided the Beech Aircraft Company for more than 30 years. After it merged with the Raytheon Company in 1980, she served on Raytheon's board of directors. Beech has been deemed "The First Lady of Aviation." Her many honors include being the first person inducted into the Kansas Business Hall of Fame and induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame and the American National Business Hall of Fame.



Writer and aviator **Anne Morrow Lindbergh**, wife of Charles Lindbergh, was her husband's co-pilot, navigator and radio operator during the early years of their marriage while the pair flew all over the world to chart potential air routes for commercial airlines. Their work across the North American continent and the Caribbean laid the groundwork for Pan American's air mail service. Her first book, *North to the Orient*, resulted from the flights they took on uncharted routes from Canada and Alaska to China and Japan in 1931. Another of her books, *Listen! The Wind*, resulted from their chronicling of North and South American potential air routes.

She received the Hubbard Gold Medal from the National Geographic Society in 1934 for her contributions to 40,000 miles of exploratory flying with her husband over five continents. She was the first woman licensed glider pilot in the U.S. Lindbergh wrote 13 books in total including the 1955 *Gift from the Sea*, which spent many weeks on the bestseller list. Among her many honors, she has been inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame and the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Olive Ann Beech and Anne Morrow Lindbergh are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America* Women's accomplishments continue to inspire and encourage us all. Continue to help us tell women's stories!

Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen

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