

99 Charter Biography File

Maiden Name: Viola Estelle Gentry, “The Flying Cashier”

Married Name(s): N/A

Date of birth: June 13, 1894

Birthplace: Rockingham County, North Carolina

Date of death: June 23, 1988

Death place: Leemont Cemetery, Virginia

Occupation(s): pilot

License(s): 1822

Known stats:

1. 1928: sets first women’s solo endurance flight record of 8 hours, 6 minutes, and 37 seconds.
2. 1929: teamed up with John W. “Jack” Ashcraft; they crashed; Jack died; Viola broke nearly every body in her body. She was hospitalized for two years.
3. 1960-1961: All-Woman’s Transcontinental Air Race
4. 1967: first job in aviation field as a historian of Aviation Archives at the University of Texas.

Award(s):

1. 1954: receives Lady Drummond Hay Air Trophy

Miscellaneous information:

1. Viola was a “problem child.” In 1910, she ran away to join the circus in Greensboro. She married George Gee that was later dissolved due to Viola’s age (16). In the same year, she also took her first plane ride without parental permission. When she landed, she was spanked and sent home. Finally, her parents sent her to live with family friends in Connecticut in 1912.
2. Was a cashier at a local store for 50 years

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Publications:

1. Gentry, Viola. "Women in Aviation." The Airport Beacon. March 1933. Page 8.
2. Larson, George C. "Reflections: The Ninety-Nines." Business and Commercial Aviation. Jan. 1985.
3. Buffington, Glenn. "Flair for Flight." Ninety-Nine News. Mar-Apr. 1974
4. Bohrer, Walt and Ann. *Tales Up!* Fallbrook: Aero Publishers. 1971.
5. Chipman, Renee. "Life began with No. 1822 for daring woman pilot." Tucson Daily Citizen. June 26, 1961.
6. Bartel, Mandy. "Contact! Girl flyers taking off." Brooklyn Eagle-Union. Oct. 16, 1933.
7. "Richey to try for air record." Unknown publisher. Dec. 17, 1933.
8. "Flight relics sought here for 'Early Bird' library." San Jose Mercury. Nov. 2, 1967
9. "Women pilots in aerial NRA demonstration." New York Evening Post. Sept. 8, 1933
10. "Refueling endurance plane." New York Daily News. Dec. 9, 1933
11. "Flying Boudoir refueled in new endurance test." Unknown publisher. Dec. 21, 1933.
12. "Girl flyers land endurance plane with new record." Brooklyn Times. Dec. 31, 1933
13. "Woman pilot is sweating physical." Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Oct. 24, 1969.
14. "Christen "Outdoor Girl." Unknown publisher. Oct. 16, 1933.
15. "Plane christened with champagne." Daily Mirror. Oct. 16, 1933.
16. "Endurance flyers are ready to go up." Brooklyn Times Union. Oct. 16, 1933.
17. Porter, Amy. "Dear Boss." Unknown publisher/date.
18. "Viola Gentry stricken ill at takeoff on new flight." New York Evening Journal. Dec. 16, 1933.
19. "City pays tribute to flyers." Newark Star-Eagle. Oct. 18, 1935.
20. "Tablet is unveiled at Floyd Bennett Airport to honor Wiley Post." Unknown publisher. Sept. 20, 1935.
21. "Wiley Post Memorial Plaque Unveiled at Bennett Field." Unknown publisher/date.
22. "Wins Up-Hill Fight for Life." The Martinsville. Unknown date.
23. "Nationally known women fliers here for today's meet." Sunday Union and Republican. Sept. 10, 1933.
24. "Girl flyers brave in face of success, failure." Unknown publisher/date.
25. Miss Gentry to seek 24-hour flight record." Unknown publisher/date.
26. "Flight that failed." Unknown publisher/date.
27. "Ninety-Niners." The Clearwater Sun. Feb. 19, 1961. (photo only)
28. "Ticker tape to fly today for Earhart." Daily News. June 20, 1932.
29. "Army enlists noted aviatrix." Unknown publisher/date.
30. "An Attempt at the Endurance Record." New York Herald. Dec. 17, 1933.
31. "Viola Gentry, hurt in crash, back in plane." New Jersey Courier. Jan. 1, 1930.
32. "Jack Ashcraft killed, Viola Gentry hurt in endurance test crash." The Evening World (NY). June 28, 1929.
33. "Disabled in crash, aviatrix flies again." The Georgian. Jan. 2, 1930.
34. "Endurance aviators are forced to land." Miami Herald. Unknown date.
35. "18 women to soar today at Amelia Earhart's 'Go!'" New York City News. May 30, 1933.
36. "Woman flier makes 397 loops at Bowles Airport circus event." Massachusetts Daily News. Sept. 11, 1933.
37. Slobigin, Kathy. "A woman's place is in the cockpit." The New York Times. Sept. 18, 1977.
38. Rimer, Sara. "Fate calls on airplane before frail flier does." The Miami Herald. Oct. 18, 1978.
39. "Name Dropping." Cross Country News. Mar. 3, 1977. Page 6.
40. "She's been up in the air- in planes - for 47 years." The Miami Herald. June 16, 1972.
41. "Women flyers aiding the N.R.A. Campaign here." New York Herald Tribune. Sept. 12, 1933.
42. Photo. Medford Mail Tribune. (Oregon) Oct. 1, 1971.
43. Morill, John. "They can't keep Viola Gentry out of the sky." Redwood City (CA) Tribune. July 4, 1972.
44. Kilgallen, James L. "Champion aviatrix pawn gems to study flying." Unknown publisher/date.

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Photos in file:

1. 4.5 x 4.5 color photo of Viola
2. 4.5 x 4.5 color photo of Viola at the Zonta banquet 1972
3. Polaroid color of Viola wearing pink sweater 1972
4. 4.5 x 4.5 black and white of Viola
5. 4.5 x 6 color of Aero Club – Cliff Ball, Felicity Buranelli, Johnny Evans, Viola Gentry, Teresa James, and D. Barr Peat
6. 4.5 x 6 black and white of Viola in flight gear
7. 4.5 x 6 black and white of Viola and Charles Parkhurst
8. 4.5 x 6 black and white of Viola in flight gear
9. 4 x 6.5 black and white of Viola wearing coat 1931
10. 4 x 7 black and white of Viola and Walter Carr 1939
11. 4.5 x 7 black and white of five people – writing on back is unreadable
12. 4.5 x 6.5 black and white of Jack Warren, Mrs. Floyd Bennett, and Viola
13. 4.5 x 6 black and white of OX5 Convention 1970
14. 4.5 x 6 black and white of Viola, Charlie Parkhurst, Paul Clough(?)
15. 5 x 7 black and white of two women and a man
16. 5 x 7 black and white of Viola in flight gear
17. 5 x 6.5 black and white of Viola, Bill Ulbrick, and Carl Schneider 1928
18. 5 x 7 black and white of Viola
19. 5 x 7 black and white pilot's licenses of Betty Huyler Gillies and Viola Gentry – both signed by Orville Wright
20. 5 x 7 black and white of Viola's pilot's license
21. 6 x 8 black and white of Viola – writing on the front “to the smitties memories of the 7:49! With sincere admiration, Viola Gentry.”
22. 6 x 8 black and white of Viola in flight gear
23. 6 x 8 black and white of Viola, Clyde Pongborn, and Louise Thaden
24. 6 x 8 black and white of Viola posing next to plane
25. 6 x 8 black and white of Viola in front of OX5 Aviation Pioneers 1972
26. 6 x 8 black and white of a group of people posing in front of OX5 Aviation Hall of Fame
27. 7 x 9 black and white of Viola in flight gear
28. 7.5 x 9.5 black and white of Viola and two men
29. 7.5 x 9.5 black and white of Viola sitting in front of instrument panel
30. 8 x 10 black and white of Viola and Mary Samson 1933
31. 8 x 10 black and white of Viola in flight gear
32. Torn 8 x 10 black and white of Lester Erickson, Viola, and John Remmert. 1935
33. 8 x 10 black and white of Viola stepping out of plane “Eastern Air Lines Silverliner”
34. 8 x 10 black and white of Viola and Louise Thaden
35. 8 x 10 black and white of Viola wearing flight gear under plane wing