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ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT

ROBERTA BOYD SANDOZ LEVEAUX
INTERVIEWED BY REBECCA WRIGHT
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WRIGHT: Today is March 25, 2000. This oral history is being conducted with Roberta Boyd Sandoz Leveaux. [Assisted by Carol Butler and Sandra Johnson.] Our topic today is her career in aviation that started many years ago. We would like for you to tell us, how did you get interested in aviation?

LEVEAUX: As a child, we up in the northeast corner of the state of Washington, we were on a migration flyway for geese. I had a fascination for geese flying in a wonderful formation in the sky. As a little kid, I remember hearing my mother say to my father, as I sat outside in my wagon waiting for the geese to come, "Do you think she's all right?" [Laughter]

I wasn't much for dolls, but I was fascinated with the sky, I guess. Do you know what a barnstormer is? Well, one came to the little town of Marcus, Washington, which is now under water because of the Grand Coulee Dam. Landed in a farmer's field, and we heard about it. I think I was a nag. Mother said, "No," and my father took me in secret. I was ten years old. The family story is, I asked the pilot so many questions, he gave me another ride. I saw the roof of my own house, saw my schoolhouse. Until the eighth grade, I rode a horse to school. The barn was larger than the schoolhouse. So it was a real country setting.

But I kept that flight in mind, and being an only child and kind of a tomboy, very closely restrained, so when I got out of college, took my farthest away job offer, which was in San Francisco [California] and nearly starved to death spending my social work salary on flying time.

Eventually the man who was teaching me—flying time then, if you can believe it, was five, six dollars an hour. Isn't that something? He recommended me to a civilian pilot training

program. It was a group of ten, and they allowed one woman per program, and I was that gal. It was wonderful training. It really saved my life a couple of times when I was in England. I took the second course, as well, which was aerobatics, which convinced me an airplane can be recovered from just about any old position.

I worked for a farmer in the San Joaquin Valley, as he had a lot of extended holdings. Elmer von Gom [phonetic]. Gosh, I haven't thought in sixty years. We landed on roadways in his fields.

Sometime in there, I think just after civilian pilot training, I invested in a Porterfield Tandem, small 65-horsepower, with a partner who was a mechanic. Our deal was, I was to teach him to fly, and he was to keep the airplane in shape. It was a good deal.

After von Gom, I worked for a construction company. Actually, we had quite a forewarning of the Second World War. It was called CT&WP Stover of Claremont, California. I was the pilot for their estimator. They were building airfields in California, military airfields. It must have been late 1940. Pearl Harbor wasn't until the seventh of December, so we were certainly preparing.

Meantime, having grown up on the Canadian border, I was very impressed with the English people in Canada. You know, starry-eyed teenager, I thought, "Oh, aren't they wonderful. Don't they sound terrific." So I wanted to go help England fight their war, win their war, which started—you won't remember, but it started in September '39. So I made myself ridiculous by writing to the British Air Ministry and the RAF [Royal Air Force], and really didn't get any response until one from Canada, who told me to get in touch with Jacqueline Cochran. That would have been about October or November '41.

Eventually, I got a telegram from her. Those were the days when you received a telegram, you sat down before you opened it. Telegrams were a couple of lines, usually bad news. Well, in Cochran style, this was a page and a half. [Laughter] The stuff that really

thrilled you, and there was the word "secret" in there. I wish I had a copy to show you. "Do not contact the press." Really undercover stuff.

We eventually got in touch. She came out to Fresno to interview me. I didn't like her very much in the beginning. I had thought this lady is from New York and she's rich. I never dressed up very much, but I made a big effort, never wore much makeup, but made a big effort, and I think I must have looked like a floozy. [Laughter] But she was very hard on me. Said, "This is not a glamorous job. You're going to be cold. You're going to be hungry." Kind of abrasive.

WRIGHT: What did she tell you that you would be doing? Did she explain it fully?

LEVEAUX: Ferrying aircraft for the Royal Air Force. In the Battle of Britain in 1940, they lost, oh, I think over half of their pilots and the aircraft. Jackie had heard, I think it was someone called Harris, from the British Air Ministry, talking to Congress, and he was trying to arrange training in this country for British pilots and asking for volunteers. The sentence that really turned Jackie on was, "We are so desperate for pilots, we are even trying an experimental group of ten women." Ten British women were flying trainers at that time.

So she got herself to England and made arrangements to bring, it was some grand number like fifty qualified pilots, and, of course, there weren't that many. But I was one of that group. The British sent a check pilot to Montreal [Quebec, Canada], and we went to Montreal. Some of the most qualified people, I think, didn't go to England, which is a shame. But those were openly chauvinist days, and if you argued with a check pilot, that was considered inability to fly, I guess. I shouldn't—that's off the record. [Laughter]

But some good people didn't go, certainly much more qualified than I, more hours than I had, which was kind of sad. Anyway, we went in small groups of two, three, four. Someone asked why. The answer was, so you won't all be lost at once.

The North Atlantic was very treacherous. This was early 1941, and I went with three other girls from St. John, New Brunswick, in a small Norwegian freighter. It went not in convoy, because it had a few knots faster than the known U-boat speed at that time.

Now, am I off the mark or is this—

WRIGHT: No, you're fine.

LEVEAUX: —the sort of thing you want to hear?

WRIGHT: Absolutely.

LEVEAUX: Our captain was a young man, Gunther Sunde, S-U-N-D-E, who had his picture on the cover of *Life* magazine at one point for making the most unescorted crossings, so that gave us confidence. I forget how many days, but it was not as quick as sea passage now. It seemed endless to us. The crew spoke mostly Norwegian.

At one point there obviously was something going on. We zigzagged and we were going slow, and then we'd feel a burst of speed, so we thought we probably were in danger. Emily [?] and I, a girl from New York, and Myrtle Allen, and Mary [?] something, sat under a lifeboat all night playing poker. I'll remember Mary's name in a minute. She had been Jacqueline Cochran's secretary.

But we still had the feeling we were going off seeking adventure and we were a pretty gallant crew. Came into Bristol Harbor, and our captain had had a very stressful time, and I think had had a drink or two, and we ran into a sandbar. Eventually we were pulled off that, and came into Bristol in the lane cleared between wrecked ships. Some were stern up and some were on their side, but it was a sobering moment for us, because we realized this wasn't an adventure,

it was the real thing. Everybody had been more or less seasick, not badly, but it was a nervous few days.

We got into Bristol and were served breakfast in a grand style at a hotel under a silver dome. The breakfast was kippers. Have you girls ever seen a kipper? It is an entire fish with its eyes looking very white. [Laughter] Our appetite suffered somewhat.

We were met by a senior member of the Air Transport Auxiliary, escorted to London, measured for uniforms, all that day. Went to headquarters, which is White Balsam in Barkshire, and had some ground school. Only three or four days. I know I was flying in about a week's time. We learned mostly about British engines, their differences from American's. We were given a marvelous little book called *Pilots Handling Notes*, which would clamp on your thigh, a page for each aircraft. It gave you the maximums and minimums of temperature, speed, pressure, everything you really needed to know to take off and land without killing yourself, if you kept within the guidelines. The British had a term, you were "seconded," coming from the word "second," I guess, to a pool.

I've missed something. In between, you had a flight check, of course. Our group at that time, the original group was twenty-five, twenty-two Americans, two Canadians, and one Dutch girl, Louise Sherman. One of the Canadians became a member of the All Canada Hall of Fame, a very distinguished pilot, got through the whole war. Her name was Helen Harrison.

After our flight check, we were seconded to a pool. I went to a pool called—it was No. 15 at Hamball [phonetic] near Southhampton. We were at a Spitfire factory, and as soon as the test pilot hopped out of a new machine, we got in and took it away, because it was just before radar became really operative and it was possible for a German sneak raider to come in at sea level and shoot up a line of new aircraft very easily with one torpedo. So we moved very quickly to get them. We took them to a squadron, and quite often picked up a damaged aircraft to take inland to a maintenance unit to be repaired. A few weeks later, brought the repaired aircraft back to the squadron.

It was fun with new airplanes, brand-new ones, and frequently hairy with the damaged ones. They had managed to get back to their field, but either they were short of magneto or they'd been shot up, but they usually flew well enough.

WRIGHT: Did you ever feel you were in danger?

LEVEAUX: I was scared to death all the time, mostly because I was flying over my head. I became very familiar with Spitfires, which were about, oh, I'd say two-thirds of my flights. But I flew heavier singles and light twin engines, also. Some of our girls flew heavy twins, some of the Americans.

Now, of our group, twenty actually stayed and did the job. One girl was visiting in Coventry at the time of their raid. It was one of the worst in England, really wiped out a lot of the town. She was just demoralized and came home. Another didn't pass the flight check. But of the remaining ones—I'm jumping around a lot.

WRIGHT: That's fine.

LEVEAUX: Let's forget about chronology.

WRIGHT: Absolutely.

LEVEAUX: We had been there eight months, and hadn't had any accidents, and Jackie came home with that information. Are you familiar with the story of how long she tried to get the Army Air Corps to consider it?

WRIGHT: Yes.

LEVEAUX: I think it was General [Henry H. "Hap"] Arnold who suggested she try England to prove that American women could indeed handle military aircraft. So she went home with our record and got things going, and there was controversy whether or not the group—you probably know about that. But those of us who stayed felt really important. It's hard to explain in the year 2000 how wonderful it was to be considered valuable and useful for things other than housewifery and motherhood.

Things just come back to me piecemeal. Anyone in uniform was treated with the greatest deference. At one time we had a rush order to get aircraft to Scotland and for, oh, it seemed forever, but probably only a couple of weeks, we'd taken aircraft up, come back on the night train, and we could usually sleep in the baggage car, but not always. People would move over and sit in the aisles so we could lie down. One time I slept in the aisle with my head on my parachute. When I woke up there was a blanket over me, which was very nice.

Now, before I went off on that tangent, where were we? [Laughter]

WRIGHT: Well, part of we were talking about was the planes that you were flying, and had asked you if you felt like you were in danger with those flights. How long were your flights when you would take—were you gone for days or weeks?

LEVEAUX: No. They were pretty short. We were sometimes gone for days because of the weather, but the flights themselves, I had a lot of twenty-minute flights. England is a fairly small island, England and Scotland. We had, I think, only two pools in Scotland, one at Prestwick and one at Lauseymouth [phonetic] on the very northern rim of Scotland. It was rare that they had good weather. We flew with a difficult ceiling. Can't remember, it was certainly under 1,500 feet, which isn't much in bad weather. But that was so we would not interfere with operations.

We also flew without radio contact of any sort for the same reasons, so we wouldn't interfere with combat operations.

WRIGHT: Were you solo when you flew, or were you flying with others?

LEVEAUX: No, always solo. In the larger aircraft, now, a lot of these were—think of the year, in the early forties, they were pretty antiquated early aircraft. When you needed more than one pair of hands to fly it, an air cadet, these were schoolboys about fifteen, who came to fly with us. If you were flying up here, the crank to do the landing gear down was in the back, you had a cadet with you. But usually it was alone.

WRIGHT: They were fifteen. What age were you?

LEVEAUX: I was twenty-four.

WRIGHT: In a new country, doing a new job, it's quite an adventure.

LEVEAUX: It was a great adventure. I was homesick at first. See, I'd learned to fly in the big broad open spaces of California. England was not only a repetitive-looking country, but there was nothing except the railroad tracks to identify, really, and, of course, mountains, but the midlands in southern England. You could usually tell where you were by the coastline. But many of us, maybe not, well, many won't admit to being lost, but I was lost several times.

WRIGHT: You mentioned your first stay there, they fitted you for uniforms. What other benefits did you get from this job, other than your uniforms? Were you paid much of a salary?

LEVEAUX: No. It seems to me it was three hundred a month. I can get you the exact figures, because I have them in my memento box at home.

WRIGHT: Where did you stay? Did you have quarters that were assigned for the twenty-five of you?

LEVEAUX: No, no. England was caught with its trousers down when the war started. We slept—all the civilians in England reported how many rooms they had in their house and how many people were living there. Anyone who had a spare room or two took a service person. I lived with a variety of families. The first one was very suspicious. They thought that the American girls were either gold-diggers or movie stars. [Laughter] We became very fond of each other, actually. But food was rationed and they did their best to feed us well.

I left out a part of our training and a very vital part. After leaving Headquarters White Balsam, I went to Luton in Bedfordshire, where they made Churchill tanks. So if ever the weather was not bad, they lit smudge pot-type things to make fog, so the Germans wouldn't know where to bomb a tank factory. So our weather was consistently bad. You could fly, but it seemed impossible if you'd flown in clear weather. But you'd be surprised how soon you get used to flying in mist and haze.

Each new person had to make twenty navigational flights in little open-cockpit aircraft. We were given a chit in the morning, which had four or five destinations. You were to find that and get a signature, go to the next one and come back. That was a real baptism of fire, I can tell you.

WRIGHT: Your home base, was it still Bristol?

LEVEAUX: No. We were based in Luton, in Bedfordshire, which was, I suppose a training place for new pilots, because at that time ATA [Air Transport Auxiliary] was not training pilots. Later on it was. But we were all people who had flown before.

WRIGHT: Your life was so busy at that time. Did they ever give you a day off?

LEVEAUX: Yes. Our days off were staggered. They were never the same. But they were two days in succession every so many days. Most of us gravitated to London, to the American Red Cross Club after it opened, because it was possible to get a Coca-Cola and a hamburger there. [Laughter]

WRIGHT: That helped to feel like home, I guess, to be there.

LEVEAUX: Yes, it did. And a hot bath. Fuel was rationed, and always wherever you were billeted, which was the phrase covering wherever you were boarded with a civilian family, baths were once a week, and hot water came out of a little gas thing which was lit at the bottom, heated the water. Indoor temperatures were in the fifties. It was always cold.

Emily and I, the gal from New York, both got chill blades, because you're eager to succeed, forget about wet feet and get cold. I'd never heard of chill blades, but your toes swell up. It's kind of a pre-frost bite. They split and it's hard to get over. But we learned to take care of our feet.

WRIGHT: How long were you in England?

LEVEAUX: Eight years.

WRIGHT: Goodness.

LEVEAUX: I married an Englishman and my first two children were born there.

WRIGHT: How did you meet your husband?

LEVEAUX: I'm a little ashamed to admit I was a pick-up. [Laughter] We were in Shepherds, which is a pub, but it's in Mayfair, a very high-class pub. I was with someone else who outranked my husband considerably. But I had "U.S.A." on my shoulder. Peter simply came over and introduced himself and said he knew America well. I said, "Fine." It turned out, I found out later, he had been a boy at camp in Upstate New York one season. [Laughter]

WRIGHT: Where was he from originally?

LEVEAUX: He was English. He lived in London. He was in the British calvary and, of course, I was horse-happy, having ridden several different horses to school. And I fell for his spurs and his uniform.

WRIGHT: Tell us, you were married then in England.

LEVEAUX: We were.

WRIGHT: You found time from your schedule and his schedule to have a ceremony. How did you do that and where was it?

LEVEAUX: It took a lot. It was in St. Barnabus Church in London, and it took a lot of arranging, but people from my pool and from his regiment were there. We had as much of a wedding as you could in those days. We were both in uniform, and I still have it. He's seventy-nine now and in foster care. He's in bad shape, having survived cancer. We talk every day. He's about ten minutes from me. I live in a retirement center in Portland [Oregon].

WRIGHT: You mentioned you were there for eight years, and were you flying the whole time that you were there?

LEVEAUX: Oh, no.

WRIGHT: At what point did you stop?

LEVEAUX: When I learned I was pregnant. It was not quite as possible to plan your family in those days. I didn't expect to be pregnant. Our first child is an M.D., and fifty-five. I think that's right.

WRIGHT: Did you miss flying the airplanes after?

LEVEAUX: Yes, missed terribly. I did some volunteering with ATA. I missed it a lot.

This marriage was complex, and we came back to America in 1949 and we eventually landed in a university town. I went back to graduate school to study psychology to find out whether my husband or I was the crazy one. [Laughter] Found out we both needed to be a little more tolerant.

After I retired from that second career, I was a clinical psychologist, I worked in hospitals, not on the television.

WRIGHT: I think that's good. [Laughter]

LEVEAUX: Yes. A WASP and I, actually four of us started, bought an Ultralight and built it ourself. You bought it in booster packs. I swear, you never saw so many nuts and bolts and cables in your life. I think the direction book said to allow a full weekend to put it together. About three months later, we had it together. A man came over from the factory. We thought that was only sensible to have him check it out. He said, "Well, girls, we need to start over here." [Laughter] He was exaggerating, but we made several little changes. He checked it out, and Alair [phonetic] and I, Alair Bennett, who is here today, flew it, I forget how many years. But we kept it in such wonderful shape, we sold it for only 50 dollars less than we paid for it, to a young man who treated it very badly. We called it the Golden Girl, after, I guess, the television program.

But we had a wonderful time. It's real Wright Brothers flying. You sit and you look at the jackrabbits and the coyotes. See, there's no cockpit. That is real seat-of-the-pants flying. It was 35-horsepower. I don't remember the wing loading, but it was so small. It wouldn't stall with me until about eighteen miles an hour. We landed much faster than that because of ground turbulence. We were very careful not to go up when it was windy, because you could literally look out and see your wing flapping a bit. Wonderful toy they were.

We joined an Ultralight Club. See, anyone could buy one in those days, and a lot of people killed themselves trying to drive their motorcycles through the sky. So Alair and I taught them a bit about aerodynamics. If there was anything that needed doing with our Ultralight, there were six people there to help us. It was a good arrangement. It was a club. We would fly over the mountains to San Pedro Valley. Do you know where that is?

WRIGHT: No.

LEVEAUX: Do you know Arizona at all?

WRIGHT: A little bit.

LEVEAUX: And camp. It was a wonderful interlude in my life. So I did fly again. Then at one point I realized I was very close to a power line that I knew was there, and Alair had an accident that she could have avoided. So we decided we'd quit, and my children gave me a bicycle. [Laughter]

We've kind of got off flying in England.

WRIGHT: Well, but it's your career in aviation. I didn't expect an Ultralight, so that was a good adventure for you to share with us.

LEVEAUX: It was called the Quicksilver MX, one of the earliest Ultralights. The four of us looked at several kinds and decided the Quicksilver was maybe the best. We have lots of wonderful snapshots of those days.

WRIGHT: Well, quite a difference from the time that you sat out in your fields and watched the geese fly by in formation. Here you were flying as close to a bird as you could.

LEVEAUX: Yes. Just at the time, a few months before we got the Ultralight, I was a member of the Tucson Sailplane Club. I had just reached the point of cutting loose from my tow plane, and had that wonderful feeling of the geese again. Apparently, one of the things I argued with this pilot I flew with when I was ten was how could it stay up there without flapping its wings. You can see a ten-year-old. I just felt sure there was some magic about this aircraft, that it didn't flap

its wings, but it didn't fall down, either. So there I was in a sailplane, not flapping my wings, and quiet, no engine noise. You would search for thermal and watch your altimeter. You're gaining altitude without an engine. If you ever are tempted, that's the kind of flying that you should try.

WRIGHT: Sounds like it. Sounds like it. Looking back over these years, as we've talked about how times have changed for women, you did something pretty extraordinary for a woman at that time. Did you find people had a strange reaction when you told them that you were leaving the United States to go to England at a time when England was in war, to fly their airplanes for them?

LEVEAUX: Yes. Yes, particularly from my mother. She feigned illness, she raved and ranted, but my father, who was my stepfather—mother was the disciplinarian, and Dad really recognized an individual. Mom kept trying to hammer out of solid granite a little lady, and it just wasn't my speed.

Yes, people called me a damned fool. However, have I mentioned the farmer I flew for, Elmer von Gom, the Dutchman? My passage to Montreal was delayed, and I was out of money, and he, dear man, loaned me several hundred dollars. Wasn't that great?

WRIGHT: Yes.

LEVEAUX: I paid him back the moment I got a salary. But not everybody called you an idiot. Some people understood.

The ATA—oh, I'm glad I remembered this—was made up from people from, I believe, the number is eighteen different nations. At my pool alone, which was an all-women's pool, there was an Australian, a girl from Chile, one from Argentina, a Dane, I think two Czechs, a Norwegian and, of course, English girls. But that in itself was—I was a little country bumpkin,

you see, from the corner of the state of Washington. And it was a wonderful experience, particularly the English women, couple of whom were titled, some whom already had children at home, and they had been wealthy and learned to fly as a sport.

There was no upstaging. My commanding officer, Margo Windengore [phonetic], was decorated, had a very distinguished brother. But we were just all gals together, all accents. One of our members, Gray Stevenson, from Oklahoma, had a drawl. It was a great group.

WRIGHT: At the time you were in England, and as you mentioned earlier, that Jackie Cochran came back, or came to America—

LEVEAUX: Back to the United States.

WRIGHT: —after about eight months to tell the United States of what the wonderful job that you were doing.

LEVEAUX: Yes.

WRIGHT: Were you able to keep up with that news? Did you know that this is what she was trying to do?

LEVEAUX: We knew about it, and we eventually, I forget how many months later, had an invitation from her, anyone who had gone with her to England, was, without question, a member of the WASP, if we wanted to come back, and five did. Everyone finished their contract, which was eighteen months, so all of us had a minimum of a year and a half of service in England. I can't remember all five, but do you want names?

WRIGHT: How long was your service? You said a minimum of eighteen months, but how long did you actually spend in the ATA?

LEVEAUX: I flew eighteen months. I started a second contract and became pregnant. I did volunteering after that without pay.

WRIGHT: Now, your stay there caused you to be in England during the war.

LEVEAUX: Oh, sure.

WRIGHT: So you and your family endured those times, and so that must have been a bit harrowing for you there as well.

LEVEAUX: Well, my husband had come back from abroad to Sandhurst, the Royal Military College, like our West Point. I forget how much time he had overseas, but this was a sort of rest period, and he was instructing cadets. We lived with another staff member from Sandhurst, oh, about ten miles away in a little town there.

It was hard to get enough food. Things were very rationed. I don't believe there were any eggs at all for adults. Once we had a child, we got two eggs a week for a child. Sugar was four ounces a week. Fat, which was usually margarine, was two ounces. Do you know how little that is? Lard was available, two ounces. Orange juice, concentrated orange juice, was issued for a child. You got a little bottle every so often for a child. People ate a lot of cabbage, lot of potatoes, lot of fish, surrounded by ocean. The story goes that general health improved. [Laughter] There weren't too many people overweight, I can tell you. People ate a lot of fish, which is good nutrition, and a lot of vegetables.

After our child was born, wherever Peter was assigned, we lived in the country and I kept chickens. At one time, at Hick Country Market, I thought I was so smart, I bought day-old chicks, and thought, boy, all the eggs we're going to have.

LEVEAUX: We lived in a country that had—we lived in the stable of a big manor house. They had a one full gardener who had—what do you call those things? Brooders, I think. little chicks. Well, my dozen chicks grew up to be one hen and eleven cockerels. They had been what is called "candled" before. Isn't that bad luck? But that little thing laid eggs, one every couple of days. [Laughter]

WRIGHT: I want to watch our time, because I don't want to take the rest of your day, because I know that we could talk for hours.

LEVEAUX: Is our time up?

BUTLER: It's close to being finished. I did want to ask you one question, though. When I was talking to Dawn Seymour and she suggested that I give you a call, her comment to me was, "Without those girls with the ATA, the WASP wouldn't have been able to do what we were able to do."

LEVEAUX: I think that's true.

BUTLER: I was wondering if you could share with us your feelings about the fact that you were such a pioneer in this and how it affected the rest of the women in aviation.

LEVEAUX: It just never occurred to me. The impetus was, and it's the reason pilots from all over the world were drawn to England, to help the Royal Air Force, who were such a gallant lot and took such a terrible beating. By the time I stopped flying, a lot of the pilots looked eighteen, really, so young. I don't know where they got their courage, but night after night they were up there.

Quite honestly, it never entered my head. I think most of us were so busy and we felt so useful. We were frightened to death by the war. I'm kind of ashamed of my hateful feelings about the Germans. I got over them. My maternal grandfather was German. I'm darned if I know how to respond to your question.

BUTLER: Well, I will tell you that so much of what we've read does point to the fact of the courage of the ATA made it easier for pilots, for female pilots, all the way down the line to those are now in the astronaut program that you serve as a role model for them. I'm also curious, do you have a chance to visit with any of the other ATAs?

LEVEAUX: Yes. To my knowledge, there are four of us left, one in California, one in Utah, I'm in Oregon, and one in Massachusetts. There are a couple of others, but they've had massive strokes and are out of communication. We get together.

It seems like we're talking about someone else now. In our wild and crazy days, we had one member, Ann Wood, who worked for Northeast Airlines. You know Ann?

BUTLER: No.

LEVEAUX: Continued to be associated with flying. The California gal came home, married a man, went to Alaska, and they started a helicopter service. Made a fortune when the pipeline—they wound up, I think they had a dozen, maybe only eleven choppers. Because of the weather,

the only way to get to northern Alaska would be by air. Of course, they hauled pipes and machinery. Nancy [?] is a member of the Whirly Girls, which is a helicopter association, still quite active in California. Mary [?] in Utah is not very active. Ann [?] in Massachusetts was flying still last year. I don't know about this year.

BUTLER: Wow, that's terrific. Well, you certainly are an inspiration to all of us that have a chance to hear your story. We certainly thank you this morning for taking time out of your busy schedule to take this time for us.

LEVEAUX: It's my pleasure. It's kind of an ego trip, you know.

BUTLER: We're glad that we could sponsor this one. [Laughter]

[End of interview]