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Life in an Archive: A Visit to the Pan Am Collection

Posted on February 16, 2015 by [pvillanueva](#)by [Jason Sylvestre](#) and [Steve Hersh](#), Special Collections

Guy Noffsinger explores the Pan Am collection on his latest visit to Special Collections.

Washington DC resident Guy Noffsinger has made several trips to Miami to conduct research on Special Collections' [Pan American World Airways, Inc. Records](#). He made sure to time his most recent visit with the "[Cleared to Land](#)" event on January 29, in which Special Collections celebrated the completion of a two-year effort in reprocessing the collection. The visit was an all-around success for Guy, who not only got to take home a print of a Pan Am Clipper that he won during the event, but also made an exciting discovery in the archives. He was kind enough to answer some questions for us to share with our Special Collections community about his latest experience in using the collection.

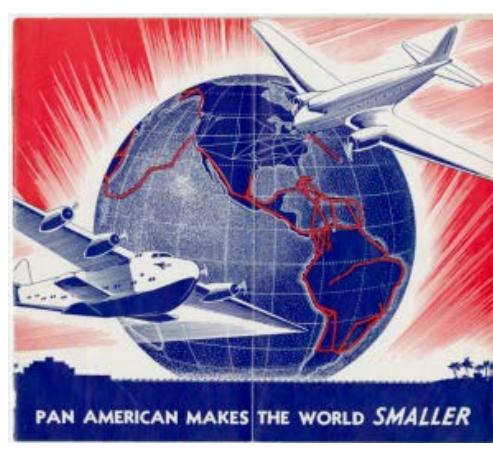
- How has the Pan Am collection helped your research?

The collection has been a source of wonder and reflection. For nearly fifteen years, I have been endeavored in researching the story of the world's first aerial hijacking for both a book and documentary production. Before the recent update to the archive research tools, finding specific photos and other information was challenging at best. Now, with the updated method and two year effort into re-cataloging all the archived materials, my search results have been ten-fold in the successful discovery of previously misplaced information.

I had an "A-ha!" moment on Friday, first time ever, that when I found two documents labeled "Pan Am – Secret" that proved a long held theory about attempts at sabotage of aircraft prior to World War II. Feel free to visit www.lostclipper.com to see how some of your materials are being shared with the world.

- Do you have a memorable real life Pan Am experience?

The very first time I stepped aboard a commercial airliner was an international flight between France and the US and it was on a



Woodcut print of planes and globe from a 1938 Pan American World Airways timetable, 1938.

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Pan Am 747. I still have my wings and have loved that blue beach ball of a logo for a long, long time. Now, that I have been to the archive four times (no easy task as I live in Metro Washington DC), I feel that I will soon be able to use my personal experience, along with the hundreds of images within the archive, to tell the story of the Pan Am flying boat Hawaii Clipper and how it may have been one of the first unknown victims of World War II.

- What is your favorite place to travel?

My favorite place is absolutely New Zealand!

- If you could be any animal, which animal would you be?

I would say a bird...probably an Osprey.

Life in an Archive is produced by archivists and staff at UM Libraries. Stay tuned for more stories about how UM students, researchers, donors, and community members are breathing life into UM Libraries' unique and distinctive collections.

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Pan American World Airways Boeing 747, interior image of spiral staircase and bar, c. 1970-1980.

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