



Guide to the David Rea Collection of Howard Hughes Publicity Photographs

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Summary Information | 3 |
| Biographical Note for Howard Hughes | 3 |
| Scope and Contents Note | 4 |
| Arrangement | 4 |
| Administrative Information | 5 |
| Related Materials | 5 |
| Names and Subjects | 6 |
| Collection Inventory | 6 |

Summary Information

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Repository: | University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives. |
| Title: | David Rea Collection of Howard Hughes Publicity Photographs |
| ID: | PH-00400 |
| Date [inclusive]: | approximately 1940 to 1980 |
| Date [bulk]: | 1940 to 1949 |
| Physical Description: | 0.20 Linear Feet |
| Language of the Material: | English |
| Abstract: | This collection is comprised of publicity photographs of Howard Hughes and his aircrafts, from approximately the 1940s to the 1950s, that were compiled by David Rea, former pilot for Hughes Aircraft Company. This collection also includes clippings and technical drawings of Hughes aircrafts. |

Preferred Citation

David Rea Collection of Howard Hughes Publicity Photographs, 1940s-1980. PH-00400. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical Note for Howard Hughes

American businessman Howard Hughes was born in 1905 in Houston, Texas. Hughes's business career began when he gained control of Hughes Tool Company in 1924, at the age of 19, after his father's death. In 1932, he formed Hughes Aircraft as a division of Hughes Tool Company. His company won defense contracts during the Second World War to develop high-speed pursuit and reconnaissance aircraft and communication systems.

Perhaps the most famous of these experimental prototypes was the HK-1 Hercules, better known as the "Spruce Goose" or "Flying Boat," a gargantuan wooden cargo plane that Hughes himself piloted on its brief and only flight of one mile, 70 feet above Long Beach Harbor in 1947. As a result of the failures of the HK-1 program and other prototypes developed by Hughes, he was called to testify before the U.S. Senate's Truman Committee in 1947 to justify use of government money on wasteful defense contracts. In 1953, Hughes turned over ownership of the Hughes Aircraft Company to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

Hughes also had a career in the movie business as a director and producer. He directed *Two Arabian Nights* (1928), *Hell's Angels* (1930), and *The Outlaw* (1943). Hughes bought the Hollywood movie studio RKO in 1948.

Howard Hughes moved to Las Vegas, Nevada November 27, 1966, and took up residence on the top two floors of the Desert Inn. When asked to vacate his room, he purchased the hotel. At this point in his life, Hughes became increasingly reclusive, and he used his suite in the Desert Inn as the hub of his business ventures for four years. Hughes purchased real estate in Las Vegas and started the Summa Corporation in 1972, a holding company that managed Hughes's remaining investments and primarily developed and managed the Hughes real estate holdings on the west side of the Las Vegas Valley. By 1970, Hughes had purchased \$65 million of Las Vegas hotels, casinos, and property, making him the largest single property owner in Nevada at the time. By this point, he controlled approximately 20% of all the hotel rooms on the Las Vegas Strip. His holdings also included approximately 25,000 acres that became the master-planned community of Summerlin, an affluent suburb of Las Vegas.

In November 1970, Hughes secretly left Las Vegas and moved to the Bahamas. Hughes died on April 5, 1976, on a flight from Mexico to Houston, Texas.

Source:

Burbank, Jeff. "Howard Hughes." *Online Nevada Encyclopedia*, July 11, 2011. <http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/howard-hughes>

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents Note

This collection is comprised of publicity photographs of Howard Hughes and his aircrafts from approximately the 1940s to the 1950s that were compiled by David Rea, former pilot for Hughes Aircraft Company. This collection also includes some clippings and technical drawings of Hughes aircrafts.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Materials remain in original order.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 2016 by David Rea; accession number 2016-045.

Processing Note

The collection was minimally processed by Tammi Kim in 2016 at the time of accessioning. The materials were quickly reviewed to provide a general description of the contents of each box and an estimate of dates represented in the material.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Collections

The following resources may provide additional information related to the materials in this collection:

Howard Hughes Public Relations Photograph Collection, 1930-1950. PH-00373. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Howard Hughes Public Relations Records, 1930-1990. MS-00380. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Hughes Electronics Records, 1940-2003. MS-00485. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Bob McCaffrey Collection on the Save the Spruce Goose Campaign, 1980. MS-00693. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Sands Hotel Collection, 1952-1979. MS-00417. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Hughes, Howard. Interview, April 08, 1976. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- photographs
- Hughes Aircraft Company
- Hughes, Howard, 1905-1976

Collection Inventory

| Title/Description | Containers |
|---|---------------------|
| Photo album with publicity photographs of Howard Hughes and Hughes aircraft and clippings about technical drawings of Hughes aircraft, 1940s-1980 | oversized box 01 |