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Amelia Earhart 1897 - 1937

Amelia Earhart was born in [Atchison, Kansas](#), on July 24, 1897. As a young girl, she liked being outdoors. Unlike other girls of the time, Earhart and her sister often fished and hiked and even wore pants. Their mother, Amy Otis Earhart, was the first woman to climb to the top of Pikes Peak in Colorado. The Earhart's was from an important and wealthy family in Atchison. This allowed Amelia to go to private schools. When she was ten years old, Amelia Earhart saw her first airplane at the Iowa State Fair. (The [Wright brothers](#) had made their famous flight only five years before.) Still Earhart did not care much about flying.

[Atchison, Kansas](#)

During World War I, Earhart was a volunteer nurse in Toronto, Canada. She moved to New York City in 1919 to study medicine at Columbia University. A year later she moved to California to continue studying and to be close to her parents, who had moved there. In Los Angeles, Earhart had her first flight in an airplane. She loved it! Right after that she began taking flying lessons from Anita "Neta" Snook, one of the few female pilots in the 1920s. Earhart earned her pilot's license in December 1921. In her first plane she set a women's altitude, or height, record in October 1922. This was the first of many records she would set.

In 1928 George Putnam, a publisher, asked Earhart to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. She was the "commander" of the flight, but she did not fly the plane. Earhart was just a passenger. When the plane landed in England, she became known as the first

woman to fly across the Atlantic. She wrote a book about the trip called *20 Hours, 40 Minutes: Our Flight in the Friendship*.

Earhart started a women's flying club called the Ninety-Nines, for its 99 members. She also began working for one of the first airline companies. Her job was to let women know that flying was safe. She also continued to set records. In 1931 she set a new altitude record in an autogiro, a machine that was part helicopter and part airplane. In 1931 she became the first woman to fly an autogiro across the United States. That same year, Earhart married George Putnam. They agreed she should try to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean. On May 21, 1932, her [Lockheed Vega](#) plane landed in Ireland. It was the longest flight a woman had ever made, and Earhart was the first woman to make the trip alone. For this flight Congress awarded Earhart the Distinguished Flying Cross. In January 1935 she flew alone from Honolulu, Hawaii, to Oakland, California. This was something no man or woman had done before! Earhart was now famous all over the world.



Earhart began to think about flying farther than she ever had before. She wanted to be the first woman to fly around the world. [Fred Noonan](#), a navigator, would plan their trip and fly with her. On May 21, 1937, Earhart and Noonan began [their flight](#) from Oakland, California, heading east. They flew in a [Lockheed Electra](#) airplane called the *Flying Laboratory*. On June 29 the pair landed in Lae, New Guinea. They had flown 22,000 miles (35,405 km) and had only 7,000 miles (about 11,265 km) to go. Their next stop was [Howland Island](#) in the Pacific Ocean. A United States Coast Guard boat called the *Itasca* waited for Earhart's plane. Several times on July 2, 1937, she spoke to the boat crew over the radio, but she never made it to the island. Many historians believe that Earhart and Noonan flew off course and then crashed. Their plane has never been found.



