



JASON ONERHEIM/MNHS

## Charles Lindbergh Goggles, circa 1930s

**M**INNESOTA HISTORICAL Society curators regularly scan the contents of auction catalogs for material pertinent to Minnesota history. On May 4, 2019, Heritage Auctions offered a pair of 1930s aviator goggles worn by Minnesota-born aviator Charles A. Lindbergh. The goggles came through a collector who had purchased them from the estate of New York doctor John Lattimer, who treated Lindbergh's widow, Anne Morrow Lindbergh. The doctor reportedly had numerous celebrity patients and kept a "trophy case" in his office to display gifts he had acquired from them.

Before the auction, MNHS curators reviewed the provenance of the goggles, researched the existing MNHS collection, and consulted with the site manager of the Charles Lindbergh House and Museum in Little Falls. The MNHS Acquisitions Committee and leadership team then approved bidding based on their understanding of the curators' rec-

ommendation. MNHS secured the \$8,500 winning bid for the goggles and received them in late June 2019.

While the Charles Lindbergh House and Museum's primary focus is Lindbergh's childhood in Little Falls, the site tells the full story of Lindbergh's life and complex legacy. After his 1927 transatlantic flight, Lindbergh pursued a career as an aviation consultant for Transcontinental & Western Air, (later Trans World Airlines [TWA]), and Pan American Airways in addition to being a technical adviser to the Aeronautics Branch of the US Department of Commerce. Lindbergh and his wife, Anne, flew to Japan by way of Canada in 1931 and around the Atlantic in 1933 in their Lockheed Sirius airplane.

Between 1935 and 1939, in the aftermath of the kidnapping and murder of their son, Charles Jr., the Lindberghs lived abroad, in England and France. Charles continued to maintain a personal aircraft. During this period, he was a spokesman

for the isolationist America First Committee, which opposed US aid or military involvement in the war, and was criticized by some for being a traitor who supported Hitler. Later, Lindbergh served as a civilian advisor to the US Navy in the Pacific theater.

This style of goggles remained popular with US Navy pilots throughout World War II; Lindbergh joined such pilots on more than 50 missions. The Lindbergh House has few artifacts representing this period of Lindbergh's life. While we don't know which flights these particular goggles were used on, they will help the historic site tell the broader story of Lindbergh's contribution to aviation. The goggles will be fully cataloged and digitized to the Collections Online database and stored at the Minnesota History Center until arrangements can be made to display them in the Little Falls museum.

—Sondra Reiersen and Melissa Peterson



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