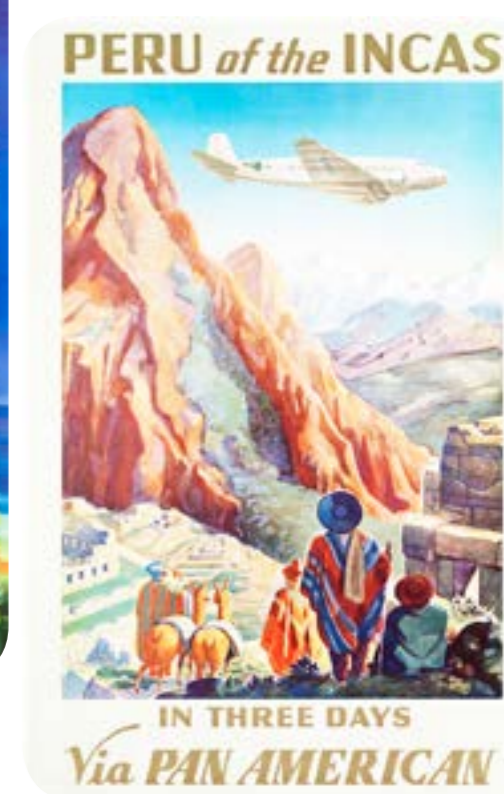
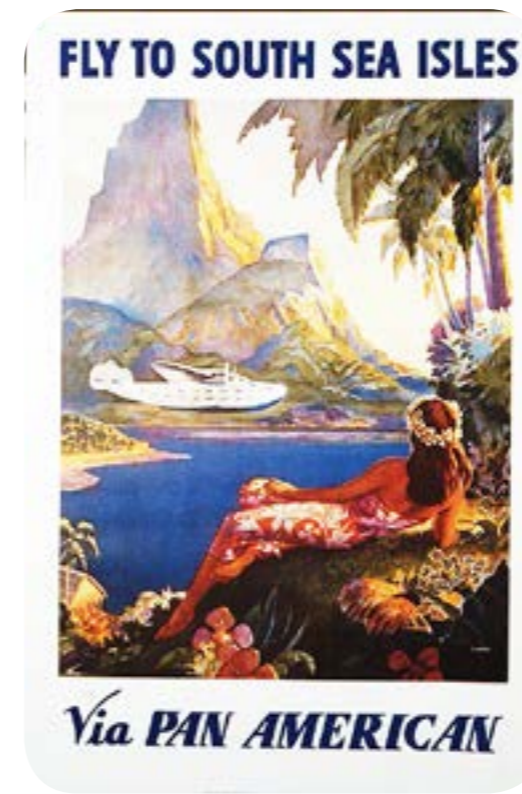


WESTERN WOMEN

SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS

With the invention of jet aircraft during World War II, commercial air travel became more advanced and widespread. The 1950s and 60s became the golden age of flying. The world was more accessible than ever before. Flying was a luxurious experience. We wouldn't recognize it compared to what we experience today. The Boeing Stratocruiser was a two story place with a cocktail bar downstairs with seating and sleeping room upstairs. The galley was well equipped to serve meals and even brew coffee.

The De Havilland comet was a jet airplane that was able to travel almost 500 miles per hour. It was able to make the trip from Johannesburg to London in only 23 hours instead of 40. In 1947, Boeing invented the Boeing 707. This aircraft was able to travel 700 miles per hour. The 707 quickly became the dominate aircraft of the time. It was able to carry 180 passengers and could make the trip across the Atlantic with ease. American air passengers increased from 32 million



to 52 million over 5 years in 1954.

The new jets and amount of flights definitely made the world more accessible, but the prices were actually quite expensive. A one way flight on Trans World Airlines from Los Angeles to Kansas City would cost \$68 in 1955, which is \$575 adjusted for inflation to 2013 dollars. There were many different airlines that flew at this time, some that are still flying today such as Delta and United. Pan American World Airlines is an iconic example of the golden age of flight. Pan Am was known for its especially lovely stewardesses. Pan Am was the first airline to purchase a Boeing 707, and were often the first for other new planes as well. Pan Am continued flying until they went bankrupt in 1991.

CUTTING EDGE FASHION



During the second World War fashion was put on a backburner while the country experienced fabric rations. The 1950s were a time of a booming economy, meaning bigger dresses, more accessories, higher heels, and increased consumerism. While many husbands were away at war, the women replaced them in the workforce requiring they wear a more practical shoe for manual labor. Upon the end of World War II wives were returning to their traditional gender roles as house keeper and home maker. Provocative images of pinup girls were popular with servicemen considering the lack of women on the front lines. The high-heeled sexual figures kept the men going and

had them dreaming of their stateside women. Once the war ended, American women could begin to wear the stiletto heels and embrace style and fashion, pleasing them and their husbands.

The word stiletto referenced the 'dagger stiletto' which has a long and thin blade, like the shape of the heel. Designers began to use small metal rods to support the weight of the heel; furthermore, the sturdiness of the metal allowed for a thinner heel as opposed to a wooden chunk heel needed to support the same amount of weight. The advancement of technology led to this iconic



fashion statement that is still worn today. The elevated heel draws one's attention to the heel and calf of a woman's figure creating the illusion of proper posture and height. Due to the small diameter of the heel and heel tip, women would leave small dents in wooden floors causing managers of public facilities to find ways of protecting the precious wood.



The shoes featured in this article are kept by the Idaho State Historical Society, but they allowed for us to photograph and document them. These shoes are from Singapore circa 1950s. At the time, people from Singapore had a fascination with Western style and clothing, embracing it as a characteristic of their

society. The intricate beading is a westernized style of Kasut Manek. Kasut Manek is the art of hand threading glass beads, often found on shoes, and is usually more colorful and detailed. The shoes we are discussing are a combination Western style and Singapore tradition. The stiletto heel was the popular fashion trend for America in the 1950s, designers from Singapore adopted the heel and created a beautifully beaded shoe with immaculate embroidery.



AN IDAHO ICON



Betty Penson-Ward was a respected, third-generation Idahoan who dedicated much of her life to writing about her fellow Western women. Her most famous book, *Idaho Women in History*, directly challenged the male-centric, white-washed history of Idaho by exposing the stories of strong, smart, and triumphant Idahoan women. She began her journalism career at Boise Capital News, as a proofreader, before climbing to the *Idaho Statesman* where she stayed for over 50 years. As a woman, Penson-Ward experienced blatant gender discrimination and disrespect from her male associates. Early on, she struggled through years of professional discourtesy; however, with hard work and determination Penson-Ward worked her way to becoming the Editor for the Arts and Living Features department for the better part of 25 years.

Beginning in 1955 the *Idaho Statesman*, took on Penson-Ward as a travel editor. While in this position she covered, topics ranging from international political leaders to local Boise news. She was fortunate enough to travel around the world pursuing people and events to bring stories to the readers of Idaho. Her lavish and extravagant journalist lifestyle made her a celebrity figure to her audience. Betty Penson-Ward had correspondence with some of the first ladies of the world. One experience with Argentinian First Lady, Eva Perón, was especially unique as the two women

traded their shoes for the other's. Eva Perón arose in the political sphere when her husband was elected as President of Argentina in 1946. Her respect does not come from her association to her husband's position, but how she chose to combat gender inequality using her political platform and social power. Betty Penson-Ward was on the forefront of the Idaho Women's Movement; she used her writing expertise to discuss the eclectic collection of women that were essential to the development and betterment of Idaho.

In the first chapter of *Idaho Women in History*, Penson-Ward begins her book by illuminating a forgotten and dismissed minority group of women, "the native foremothers". Firstly, the author acknowledges the reality of forced marriages and unwilling participation in those relationships; although many native women were in situations of slavery, they still served an important role in the discovery of Idaho and deserve to be remembered for their achievements as women in the West. Penson-Ward was an inclusive author and she publicly denounced Idaho's failure to include the history of women in Idaho history textbooks. The state proposed a 500-word update to Idaho history textbooks, to which Betty Penson-Ward was aghast and disappointed. Large portions of history were not being taught and a mere 500-word summary was insulting to the women who "fought for the rights we have now".

She became the first female president of the Idaho Press Club and helped pave the way for modern women in business by gaining respect from excelling at her profession. Most importantly she was involved in the Boise community and used her writing to influence local plans for the prosperity of the city. She promoted local women's organizations, encouraged the construction of the Morrison Center, and supported the public library; in short she has had an impact on the City of Boise that will last forever. Her writings resonate with women across the West and fuel feminist inspiration and thought through the introduction of the sisters that came before them.

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Delta Flight Museum

Harpers Bazaar

