

HERMELINDA URVINA BRIONES

1905 – 2008



Hermelinda Urvina Briones in 1932.
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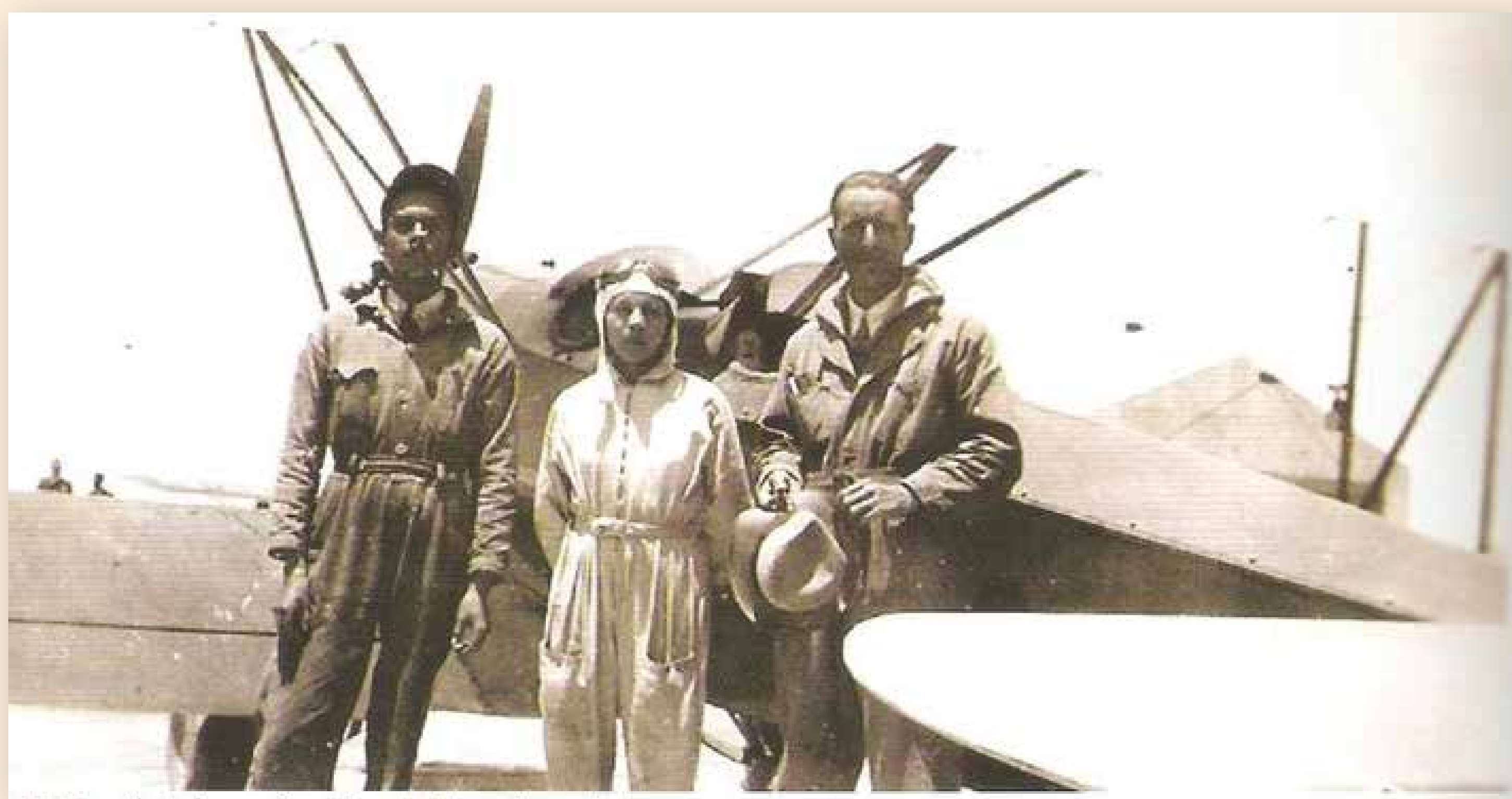
An adventurous pilot in the early years of aviation, Hermelinda Urvina Briones was the first female South American to earn a pilot's license in the United States.

Born Hermilinda Urvina Mayorga in the city of Ambato, Ecuador, she married Rosendo Briones in 1926 and moved to New York City. Briones learned to fly at the former Glenn H. Curtiss Airport in the North Beach section of Queens and earned her wings in 1932. She later studied overland flight at the Hayden Planetarium in New York City.

In 1939, Briones told the *New York Times* that she flew every day when she could, taking off from Floyd Bennett Field and Roosevelt Field airports on Long Island.

Briones was an early member of the Ninety-Nines, an international organization for women pilots founded by Amelia Earhart at Curtiss Field in Valley Stream.

In January 1939, Briones, in her open cockpit two-seater, participated in a 38-pilot aerocade over 127 miles of open water from Miami to Cuba, at the invitation of the Cuban government. On her return flight, Briones made a force landing at sea, after encountering an intense head wind and motor troubles, before she was picked up by a steamship.



Newspaper accounts of the aviation feats of Hermelinda Urvina Briones termed her the “girl flier” or “the flying senorita from Ecuador.”