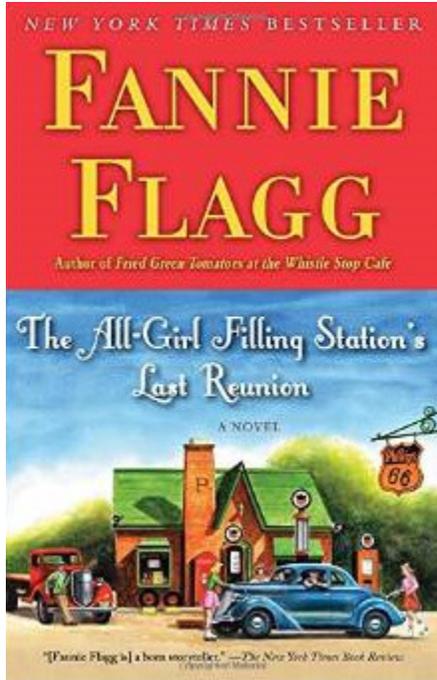


## **Book Review – The All Girl Filling Station’s Last Reunion** **by Fannie Flagg**

Review by Chris Hope, Master CFI



Flying friends who read this column regularly will know that this is not my usual type of book. Generally, my books are non-fiction, and generally they deal primarily with people or events involved with aviation. Not today.

Fannie Flagg is a novelist, probably best-known for “Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café”. She writes of women in the South, their personalities, their foibles, and their relationships with the men and women in their lives. So why did I find myself reading it through in about three sittings? First because my wife suggested it, and second because Sookie pulled me in.

Now I am not a woman and I did not grow up in the South. So I do not know how much truth there is about the stereotypical Southern woman. But Sookie is definitely that woman. She is pushing 60 with a domineering mother and grown children with various marital issues. And she learns one day that she is not a belle of the aristocratic south as she has always believed, but that she is the really the daughter of a Polish-American barnstorming woman who, with a small band of fellow women pilots, made aviation history. And then were forgotten.

As the World War II Pacific and European fronts began to draw every able-bodied male pilot from the states, the military began looking for additional pilots who could ferry aircraft from the assembly lines to the bases where they were needed. Aircraft needed to be delivered to the training bases, and replacement fighters and bombers were needed in Europe and the Pacific. Probably the most respected woman aviator at that time was Jaqueline Cochran, and she convinced General Hap Arnold that there was a huge contingent of women pilots capable of filling that need. And thus the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots (WASPS) were born.

Under Fannie Flagg’s hand, we learn the true story of the WASPs. How they trained, lived and died. And we also learn of the shabby treatment they received from the military and from this nation when their work was over. And woven around this story of the WASPS, is another story. There is a story of how each of us can look at our own parents, and our own children, through new eyes as we

move through life. And a reminder that we each need to look at ourselves as well and acknowledge our own self-worth.

A good read.

Learn more about the WASP's at <http://wingsacrossamerica.us/wasp/> There are several good books about the WASPs One that I like is include "Wasps: Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II" by Vera S. Williams.

*Chris loves to read, write, and fly, but not necessarily in that order*

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