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William John Eck: First Pan American Airlines Transatlantic Flight Scrapbook

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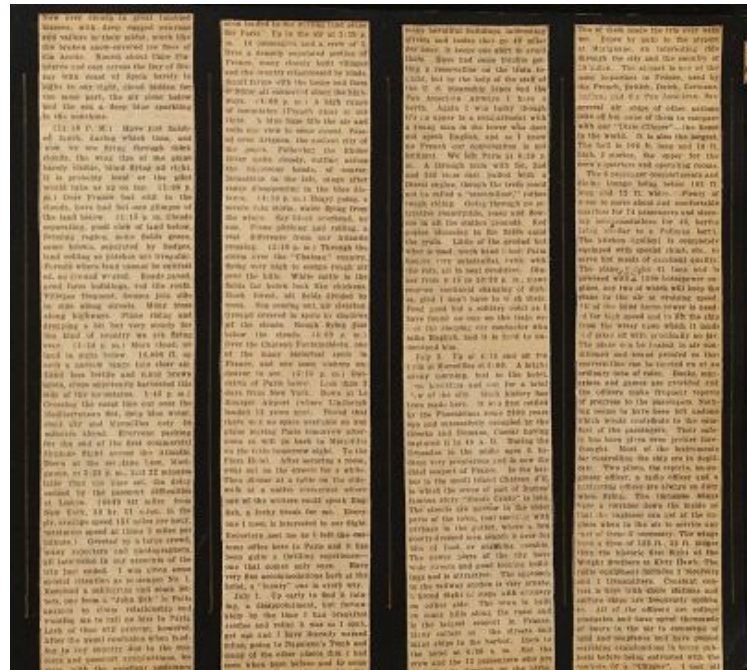
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Now over clouds in great tumbled masses, with deep rugged canyons and valleys in their midst, much like the broken snow-covered ice floes of the Arctic. Round about Cape Finisterre and east across the Bay of Biscay with coast of Spain barely in sight to our right, cloud hidden for the most part, the air clear below and the sea a deep blue sparkling in the sunshine.

(12:30 P. M.) Have just finished lunch, during which time, and now we are flying through thick clouds, the wing tips of the plane barely visible, blind flying all right. It is probably local or the pilot would take us up on top. (1:00 P. M.) Over France but still in the clouds, have had but one glimpse of the land below. (1:15 p. m.) Clouds separating, good view of land below, farming region, some fields green, some brown, separated by hedges, land rolling so patches are irregular. Forests where land cannot be cultivated, no ground wasted. Roads paved, good farm buildings, red tile roofs. Villages frequent, houses join side to side along streets. Many trees along highways. Plane rising and dropping a bit but very steady for the kind of country we are flying over. (1:30 p. m.) More cloud, no land in sight below. 10,000 ft. up over a narrow range into clear air. Land less fertile and many brown spots, crops apparently harvested this side of the mountains. 1:45 p. m.) Crossing the coast line out over the Mediterranean Sea, deep blue water, clear sky and Marseilles only 30 minutes ahead. Everyone packing for the end of the first commercial airplane flight across the Atlantic. Down at the set plane base, Marignane, at 2:22 p. m., just 22 minutes later than the time set, the delay caused by the passport difficulties at Lisbon. (4640 air miles from New York, 30 hr. 11 min. in the air, average speed 154 miles per hour, maximum speed at times 3 miles per minute.) Greeted by a large crowd, many reporters and photographers, all interested in our accounts of the trip just ended. I was given some special attention as passenger No. 1. Received a cablegram and some letters, one from a "John Eck" in Paris anxious to claim relationship and wanting me to call on him in Paris. Lack of time will prevent, however. After the usual confusion when landing in any country due to the customs and passport examinations, we were, with the excellent assistance soon loaded in the waiting land plane for Paris. Up in the air at 3:35 p. m. 16 passengers and a crew of 3. Over a densely populated section of France, many closely built villages and the country crisscrossed by roads. Small farms with the home and farm building all connected along the highways. (4:00 p. m.) A high range of mountains (French Alps) to our right. A blue haze fills the air and veils our view to some extent. Passed over Avignon, the ancient city of the popes. Following the Rhone River quite closely, cutting across the numerous bends, of course. Mountains to the left, range after range disappearing in the blue distance. (4:10 p. m.) Heavy going, a severe rain storm, water flying from the wings. Sky black overhead, no sun. Plane pitching and rolling, a vast difference from our Atlantic crossing. (5:10 p. m.) Through the storm over the "Chateau" country, flying very high to escape rough air over the hills. White cattle in the fields far below look like chickens. Much forest, all fields divided by trees. Sun coming out, air clearing. Ground covered in spots by shadows of the clouds. Rough flying just below the clouds. (6:00 p. m.) Over the Chateau Fontainebleau, one of the many historical spots in France, and one most visitors endeavor to see. (6:10 p. m.) Outskirts of Paris below. Less than 2 days from New York. Down at Le Bourget Airport (where Lindbergh landed 12 years ago). Found that there was no space available on any plane leaving Paris tomorrow afternoon so will go back to Marseilles on the train tomorrow night. To the Plaza Hotel. After securing a room, went out on the streets for a while. Then dinner at a table on the sidewalk at a native restaurant where one of the waiters could speak English, a lucky break for me. Everyone I meet is interested in our flight. Reporters met me as I left the customs office here in Paris and it has been quite a



thrilling experience- one that comes only once. Have very fine accommodations here at the hotel, a "luxury" one in every way.

July 1. Up early to find it raining, a disappointment, but fortunately by the time I had breakfast (coffee and rolls) it was so I could get out and I have literally walked miles, going to Napoleon's Tomb and many of the other places that I had seen when here before and to some [[sentence cut off by the end of the page]]

many beautiful buildings, interesting streets and taxies that do 40 miles per hour. It keeps one alert to avoid them. Have had some trouble getting a reservation on the train tonight, but by the help of the staff of the U. S. Steamship Lines and the Pan American Airways I have a berth. Again I was lucky though it's an upper in a compartment with a young man in the lower who does not speak English, and as I know no French our conversation is not brilliant. We left Paris at 6:30 p. m. A through train with 1st, 2nd and 3rd class cars pulled with a Diesel engine, though the train could not be called a "streamliner," rather rough riding. Going through an attractive countryside, roses and flowers in all the station grounds. Red poppies blooming in the fields amid the grain. Little of the ground but what is used, much hand labor. Farm houses very substantial, brick with tile roofs, all in neat condition. Dinner from 8:15 to 10:00 p. m., many course continual changing of dishes, glad I don't have to wash them. Food good but a solitary meal as I have found no one on the train except the sleeping car conductor who talks English, and it is hard to understand him.

July 2. Up at 4:15 and off the train at Marseilles at 5:00. A bright sunny morning, taxi to the hotel, then breakfast and out for a brief [[view?]] of the city. Much history has been made here. It was first settled by the Phoenicians some 2600 years ago and successively occupied by the Greeks and Romans, Caesar having captured it in 49 A. D. During the Crusades in the middle ages it became very prosperous and is now the chief seaport of France. In the harbor is the small island Chateau d'If, in which the scene of part of Dumas' famous story "Monte Cristo" is laid. The streets are narrow in the older parts of the town, foul smelling with garbage in the gutter, where a few poorly-dressed men search it over for bits of food or anything useable. The newer parts of the city have wide streets and good looking buildings and is attractive. The approach to the railway station is very ornate, a broad flight of steps with statuary on either side. The town is built on many hills along the coast and is the largest seaport in France. Many sailors on the streets and many ships in the harbor. Back to the hotel at 6:30 a. m. Met the crew and the 12 passengers who are returning to America on the plane. Ten of them made the trip over with me. Drove by auto to the airport at Marignane, an interesting ride through the city and the country of 20 miles. The airport is one of the most important in France, used by the French, British, Dutch, Germans, Italians and the Pan American. Saw several air ships of other nations take off but none of them to compare with our "Dixie Clipper"-the finest in the world. It is also the largest. The hull is 106 ft. long and 19 ft. high, 2 stories, the upper for the crew's quarters and operating rooms.

The 6 passenger compartments and dining lounge being below (85 ft. long and 12 ft. wide). Plenty of room to move about and comfortable quarters for 74 passengers and sleeping accommodations for 40, berths being similar to a Pullman berth. The kitchen (galley) is completely equipped with special china, etc., to serve hot meals of excellent quality. The plane weighs 41 tons and is powered with ^{four} ~~four~~ a

~~1500-horsepower engines, any two of which will keep the plane in the air at cruising speed. All of the 6000 horse-power is needed for high speed and to lift the ship from the water upon which it lands and takes off with practically no jar. The plane can be heated, is air conditioned and sound proofed so that conversation can be carried on at an ordinary tone of voice. Books, magazines and games are provided and the officers make frequent reports of progress to the passengers. Nothing seems to have been left undone which would contribute to the comfort of the passengers. Their safety has been given even greater forethought. Most of the instruments for controlling the ship are in duplicate. Two pilots, the captain, an engineer officer, a radio officer and a navigating officer are always on duty when flying. The immense wings have a corridor down the inside so that the engineer can get at the engines when in the air to service any part of them if necessary. The wings have a span of 152 ft., 32 ft. longer than the historic first flight of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk. The radio equipment includes 3 receivers and 3 transmitters. Constant contact is kept with shore stations and surface ships are frequently spoken to. All of the officers are college graduates and have spent thousands of hours in the air in command of land and seaplanes and have passed searching examinations in many subjects before being entrusted with the controls of a "Clipper". I met all~~

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