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Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

William John Eck: First Pan American Airlines Transatlantic Flight Scrapbook

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From Port Washington the time flew by as quickly as the Clipper flew on its way. There were many stories told of former flying experiences as there are some famous first fliers on board. Some played bridge and others preferred to look out the windows. We flew over a carpet of cotton wool clouds, and as the holes closed up they appeared more and more like the snow fields of the arctic. It was hard to believe that below it was the Atlantic Ocean, probably covered with a leaden sky. The sunset was lovely, and dinner delicious and everyone was in good spirits and enjoyed themselves immensely. The beds are very comfortable, and the Clipper so steady and the hum of the motors so reassuring that it would have been easy to be lulled to sleep but the full moon on the clouds was so indescribably beautiful that it was impossible not to watch the ever changing glory of it. The moon seemed to stand still, and the clouds rushed by giving a sensation of great speed.

This morning, we were enthusiastically greeted at Horta, and it was a lovely circling over the island in the brilliant sunshine. It looked entirely under cultivation and each field was surrounded by a hedge. The extinct volcano of Pico rises 7,000 ft. out of the sea, and it was circled by a ring of clouds just below the cone. We made a perfect landing directly in front of the town. The sea wall was crowded with people, and when we landed they were so cordial in their welcome that we felt at home immediately and hated to leave after our visit of an hour and a half. We were driven in motors through the lovely little town and up into the hills to get a view of the other islands from the mountains. It seemed funny to be looking at them from the underside of the clouds instead of from above. The curving roads were lined with masses of blue rhododendron which grow wild here in great profusion. We all met on a hilltop where the American Vice Consul delivered a speech of welcome. Then on to a club of palatial proportions where we had cakes and the delicious white wine of the country. After good byes and many promises to return again soon, we boarded the Clipper ready for a very good lunch which had been prepared in Baltimore. Now the bridge games have started again and there were many speculations as to what time we would arrive in Portugal. We are again flying above the clouds, and it is hard to tell where the horizon and the sea meet. We hear that we are to have a royal welcome in Lisbon, and that there is to be a reception for us.

This is Mrs. Sherman Haight speaking.

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