Hattie Meyers Junkin Papers - Writings: "What is This Thing Called Soaring", US Air Service , 1931-11

The specific purpose of the American Clipper was twofold. First, to provide Pan American with a ship capable of accommodating the increasing passenger and mail cargoes on the trans-caribbean route between North and South America. This route is the long-est over-water airline in operation, being 1,350 miles in length, all but 50 miles of which lie over open sea.
Second, the ship was designed to be capable of overseas operation, with a better flight range with 20 or more passengers than any equipment now avail-able, in order to assist in conducting in-creased research and experimentation looking toward further extensions of international air transport service important to the United States in the foreign field. It was to furnish a basic design for future development of great international airliners.

Powered with four Hornet (575 h.p. each) motors, this airplane, designed for a gross weight of 34,000 pounds, left the waters of Long Island Sound, at Stratford, during a test flight in 19 seconds. This, a natural takeoff, was especially satisfactory in view of the fact that there was little wind and a calm water surface to make takeoff conditions difficult. A cruising speed of 110 miles an hour was maintained with the engines turning up 1,650 r.p.m. The landing speed was under 60 miles an hour. Cruising speed on any three of the four engines is 95-100 miles an hour.
The American Clipper is a high wined monoplane. The motors are tractor type installed in nacelles supported from the wing. The wing span is 114 feet, while its width is 16 feet. The length overall is 72 feet, 11 inches. The plane is capable of a top speed in excess of 130 miles an hour. Further tests are being made to substantiate this figure. And with gasoline capacity of over 1,000 gallons, it has a cruising range of 1,000 miles.
A great deal of time and research has been put into this, America' largest seaplane. The first wind tunnel tests were run in October, 1928. About 300 hours were spent on testing the engine models with different cowls, alone. The date of the first water tests on the hull was April, 1929. About 2,000 runs were made at different speeds in the water and river basins, corresponding to about 200 hours of actual water testing. Competitive European development has reached the stage where America, to be successful in securing a place on world transport routes, has to produce a ship that will match the most advanced marine transport aircraft developed elsewhere. Pan American Airways, as the international air transport system of the United States, has provided the capital for production of two of these ships largely as an investment toward encouraging the development, in America, of this essential aircraft to keep pace with Europe's leadership in this type of plane.

Europe has until now been five years ahead of American aviation in the production of big commercial flying boats. This advancement was made possible by independent government subsidies which enabled manufacturers not only to meet the immediate needs of their international air line systems but to anticipate their future needs by building gradually toward the huge sea-going flying boats which can now undertake the important extensions of world transport routes. As a result, they have advanced gradually, proving each step as they went, from small marine craft to big marine planes which are now either completed or well under construction in France, Germany, and England. The American Clipper represents a jump from a standard airplane of about 8 tons gross weight to one of 17 tons. To accomplish this the manufacturers have had to hurdle all the intermediate steps - the valuable practical experience which usually comes from successive development of those intermediate-sized planes. Therefore, at critical

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There are five passenger cabins in the *American Clipper*, which provide luxurious accommodations for 48 persons, each cabin larger than a Pullman compartment. The seats are copies of a famous Queen Anne easy chair, down-upholstered over an aluminum frame. The capacity of the ship, as flying boat, is 48 passengers; as amphibian, 36 passengers; and crew of five. It carries 2,000 pounds of mail.

JUAN T. TRIPPE, president of Pan-American Airways, presided at the dedication. He has succeeded in organizing and operating one of the greatest aerial transportation systems in the world. His smile is as spontaneous now as at the beginning, when Mrs. Coolidge acted as the sponsor of the *Christopher Columbus*. We especially admire an organization that can put on a show in Washington where Lindbergh Commanders act as ushers. An organization that can do that can take you there—anywhere—and bring you back.

International Commercial Aviation on the American Continent

AT THE Fourth Pan American Commercial Conference, held in Washington, D. C., October 5-12, the peculiar adaptability of the airplane to the transportation situation on the American continent was revealed in the fact that in 1930 there were in existence in the American Republics a total of about 68,000 miles of air lines in regular operation. This total was nearly twice as great in the amount of mileage in regular operation on the European continent at the same time, and was composed of about 33,000 miles in the United States, and 18,000 miles in and between the countries of the Western Hemisphere south of the United States. When it is realized that the "Scadta" line of Colombia, known as "the first successful commercial air service in the world," began operations in 1920 on the Magdalena River, the tremendous growth in commercial aviation on the American Continent in the last decade is appreciated.

A phase of commercial aviation which is becoming of increasing importance is that of tourist travel by air. The possibilities of the development of this mode of transportation become increasingly apparent when it is realized that it makes possible extended trips for persons who have but a limited time at their disposal.

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