

CHAPTER I

DEARBORN, MICHIGAN, OCTOBER 4, 1925

The spectators began arriving at the flying field very early in the morning. They walked, they pedaled bicycles, they rode motorcycles and drove touring cars; they came on streetcars and buses and trains, from Dearborn and Detroit and Ann Arbor, from Grand Rapids and Saginaw and Kalamazoo, from Chicago and Buffalo and New York City.

By three o'clock on this rainy Sunday afternoon there were 35,000 people at the Ford Airport, waiting to see the aeroplanes come flying in from Cleveland.

The planes were long in coming, and the people moved impatiently along the rope barriers which lined the muddy flying field, or retreated from the rain to sit in their automobiles and talk. They talked of many things: of movie stars and sports heroes, Gloria Swanson, Harold Lloyd, Babe Ruth and Paavo Nurmi. And of crossword puzzles and a parlor game called Mah Jong, and a wild dance called The Charleston. And of how far away you could pick up a jazz band playing "Ain't Gonna Rain No More" on the new model radio sets.

But most of the talk was about aeroplanes. It was said this "Commercial Airplane Reliability Tour" they had come to see was just the beginning; that before long, people would jump in their own little aerial flivver and sail off into the sky the same way they were starting out across the country in their automobiles, with just a water can and some tire patches and a spare fan belt, all the way out West to California, and Oregon.

The Army Air Service had sent three big planes around the world just last year...But on the other hand, the Navy seaplane PN9 had gone down in the Pacific Ocean trying to cross to the Hawaiian Islands, and the Navy dirigible *Shenandoah* had crashed in a storm over in Ohio and killed fourteen men. And right now, the headlines told of searchers tramping through the Pennsylvania mountains looking for an Air Mail pilot named Ames, missing on his regular run from New York to Cleveland.

And so perhaps the aeroplanes would not be

finishing up their big tour and coming in today after all. It was going on four o'clock, and no sign of them yet. And in the lowering clouds, the big electric beacon light flashing its great beam round and round from the hangar roof made it seem even darker than it was. People began to move away from the field, toward the road....

And then, from very far away, came the drone of high powered motors, rising, falling, fading clear away again—an imagined sound, lost in the murmur of the crowd. But there it was again—closer—louder—and now everyone heard it; people were standing, peering up into the sky, pointing at a tiny speck, dimly seen through the rain and murk 'way down on the horizon.

It was an aeroplane! And coming like the wind, motors roaring as it rushed toward them like a great majestic bird. Now it was diving toward the field, and all the people were waving and cheering and yelling, honking the horns of their autos, as the graceful monoplane swept around in a wide circle for its landing, first of the great fleet to finish the air tour.

The idea for an Airplane Reliability Tour was credited to Harvey Campbell, of the Detroit Board of Commerce. Campbell called it a "Glidden Tour of the Air," having in mind the automobile tours started in 1904 by a man named Charles Glidden. Just as auto tours had publicized highway travel, so Campbell reasoned, would aerial tours promote air travel.

And in February of 1925, following Congressional approval of the Kelly Air Mail Act, a group of Detroit businessmen made plans for an Air Tour. The Kelly Act provided for commercial airline companies to take over the government Air Mail, and now, with the stage set for "commercial aviation," Detroiters talked of building airplanes just as they built automobiles.

Civic and business leaders formed a committee, and Edsel Ford donated a tour trophy, a beautiful

structure of gold and silver more than three feet high, and said to have cost seven thousand dollars. It was inscribed, "This trophy is offered to encourage the upbuilding of commercial aviation as a medium of transportation."

The air tour was scheduled to depart from Henry Ford's new airfield at Dearborn, visit twelve cities in the Midwest and return six days later. Its announced purpose, "to end the dominance of the military and the emphasis on thrills and stunt flying, demonstrate the reliability of travel by air on a predetermined schedule regardless of intermediate ground facilities."

And this last was most difficult, for in 1925 most "ground facilities" consisted of a farmer's pasture, or the County Fairgrounds, or a long sandbar down in the river bed. And so the committee made elaborate preparations. A "Pathfinder Flight" went out along the route two weeks ahead of time, to "get a birdseye view of each city and the approaches, the feel of the terrain in setting down on, and taking off from, each of the fields."

Detroit's own Eddie Stinson flew the Pathfinder trip in his Junkers monoplane, carrying officials and newspaper men and accompanied by an Army plane from the McCook Field Airways Mapping Division. The two planes flew the route and returned on schedule, "despite severe equinoctial storms," and meanwhile, volunteers at the twelve cities along the way rushed to make ready.

They marked their landing fields with a "wind sock," they laid out a 100-foot diameter circle in the center of the field, and marked a "dead line" at the side, where the touring planes would be lined up for inspection after they landed. These outlines were made of white lime, "with a little sugar added to prevent rain from washing it away." The Detroit committee suggested that gasoline for the planes might be provided free of charge, reminded everyone to provide chamois skin strainers and at least twenty-foot hoses for the larger planes.

Competing manufacturers certified their planes were structurally sound; pilots certified they were in good health and did not use alcohol in any form. There was no designated first prize; each flyer who kept up a certain percentage of the planned 80 miles-an-hour schedule — despite wind or weather or motor trouble — would make a "perfect score," and have his name engraved on the trophy.

Each contestant was given a hand-made, hand-lettered map of the route, along with explicit printed directions which began with takeoff from Dearborn... "steer South, by compass, to Romulus and the intersection of the Wabash and Pere Marquette Railroads... follow the Wabash tracks to Adrian Emergency Field... compass course to

Morenci, on the New York Central, pass over the Air Mail Field at Bryan, Ohio, follow the railroad again, to the St. Joseph River..."

The competing pilots were assembling at Dearborn by September 25 and the gates to Ford Airport, usually locked and guarded, were opened for spectators to come in and look, at the tour planes and the exhibits in the big Exposition tent.

There were Swallows and Travel Airs from Wichita, Kansas; two Martins from Cleveland; a Yackey and a Laird from Chicago. Two Wacos were coming from Troy, Ohio; a Mercury from Hammondsport, New York, and a Curtiss from Long Island. And two big all-metal cabin jobs; a Stout monoplane, with its wing on top, and a Junkers, with its wing on the bottom.

And the biggest plane of all, the three-motored Fokker; rushed all the way from Holland to New York City on a ship, just in time for the tour. The very name, Fokker, brought chilling memories of the Great War; veterans who'd been "over there" — not only flyers, but doughboys peering up from the mud of the trenches-talked knowingly of German Aces in Fokkers, looping and spinning in deadly combat with Allied planes high above the Western front.

This newest Fokker was a huge transport plane; you just couldn't imagine how big it was until you walked up and peered in the doorway of the great long cabin, with room for two pilots and six passengers. The Fokker's three Whirlwind motors made it a very safe airplane too, and as if to prove this, another Fokker with but one motor had departed Long Island for Dearborn on the same day as this one and crashed in the mountains when its motor conked out.

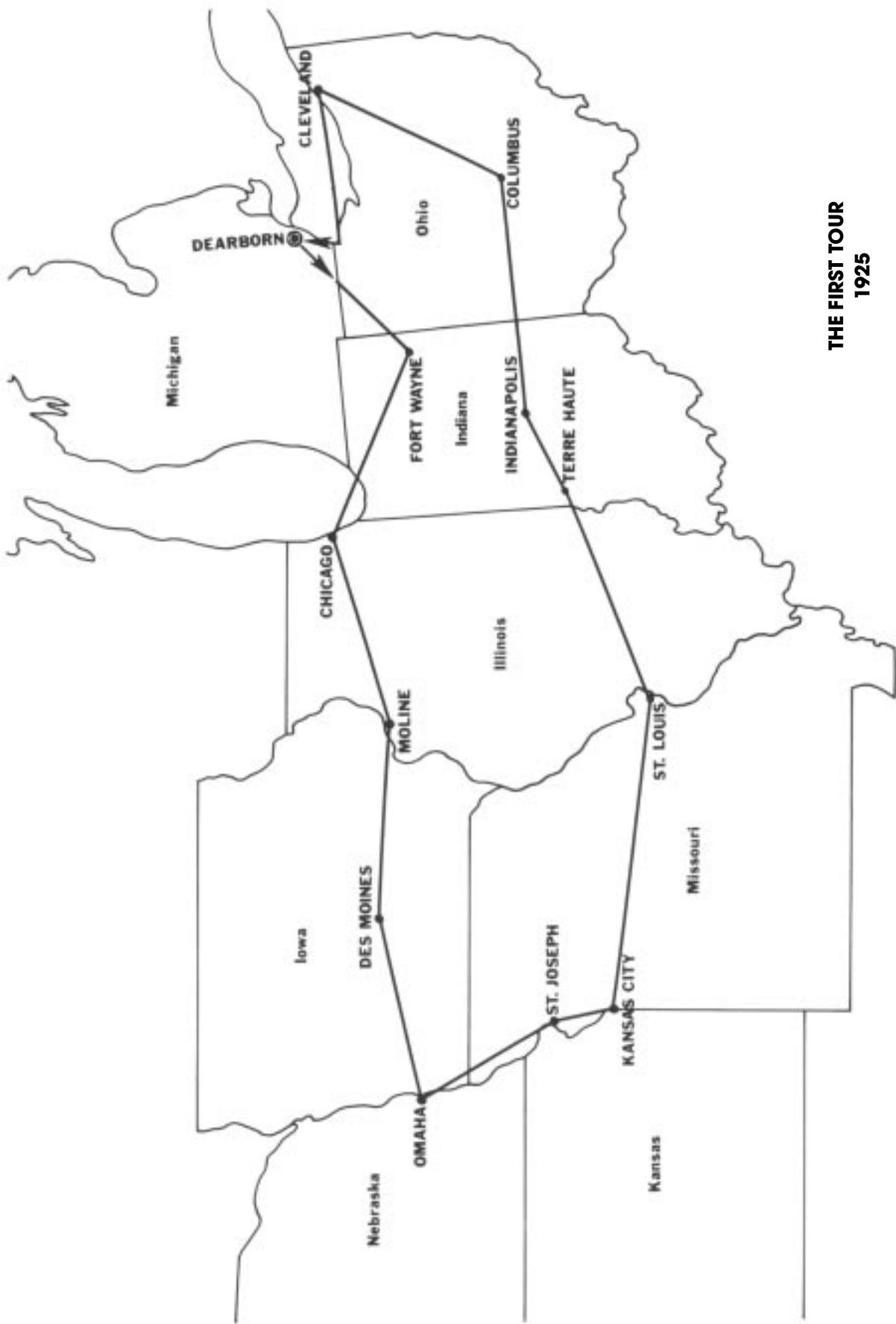
Monday, September 28, was a bright, fall day. The rain had let up, and promptly at eight o'clock Lieutenant Harry Johnson started up the Liberty motor in his Army DH4. The Tour Referee climbed in with him, then the DH splashed through the mud and was off to lead the way to Fort Wayne and make sure the field there was not flooded out. An hour later the official starters made ready: Edsel Ford, and a very tall man called Shorty Schroeder. Then the first plane was off, and the big tour was on its way.

The Fort Wayne field was all right, and from there they followed the Pennsy tracks to Gary, then veered south, to "avoid flying directly over the city of Chicago;" then north again, to Maywood Air Mail Field, "just West of Des Plaines Road and East of Speedway Hospital." Proper name for the hospital was Hines Veterans, but there was an auto race track nearby and the flyers all knew it as Speedway.



Ford Airport, October 4, 1925. Right to left, DH4, Fokker, Junkers, Curtiss, Laird, Waco #10, two Travel Airs, Yackey, Swallow #16, two Martins, Travel Air, Swallow. (Shoot #3 was not in tour) Blurred figures are people who moved during time exposure.
(Ford/Huddek)

THE FIRST TOUR
1925



**ITINERARY
1925**

Date	City and Airport Name	Miles
Monday, September 28	Dearborn, Ford Fort Wayne, Baer Chicago, Maywood	130 150
September 29	Moline, Campbell Des Moines, Fisher Omaha, Fort Crook	140 160 130
September 30	St. Joseph, Rosecrans Kansas City, Richards	110 60
October 1	St. Louis, Lambert	235
October 2	Terre Haute, Dresser Indianapolis, Schoen	165 70
October 3	Columbus, Norton	170
Sunday, October 4	Cleveland, Municipal Dearborn, Ford	120 135
		Total 1,775

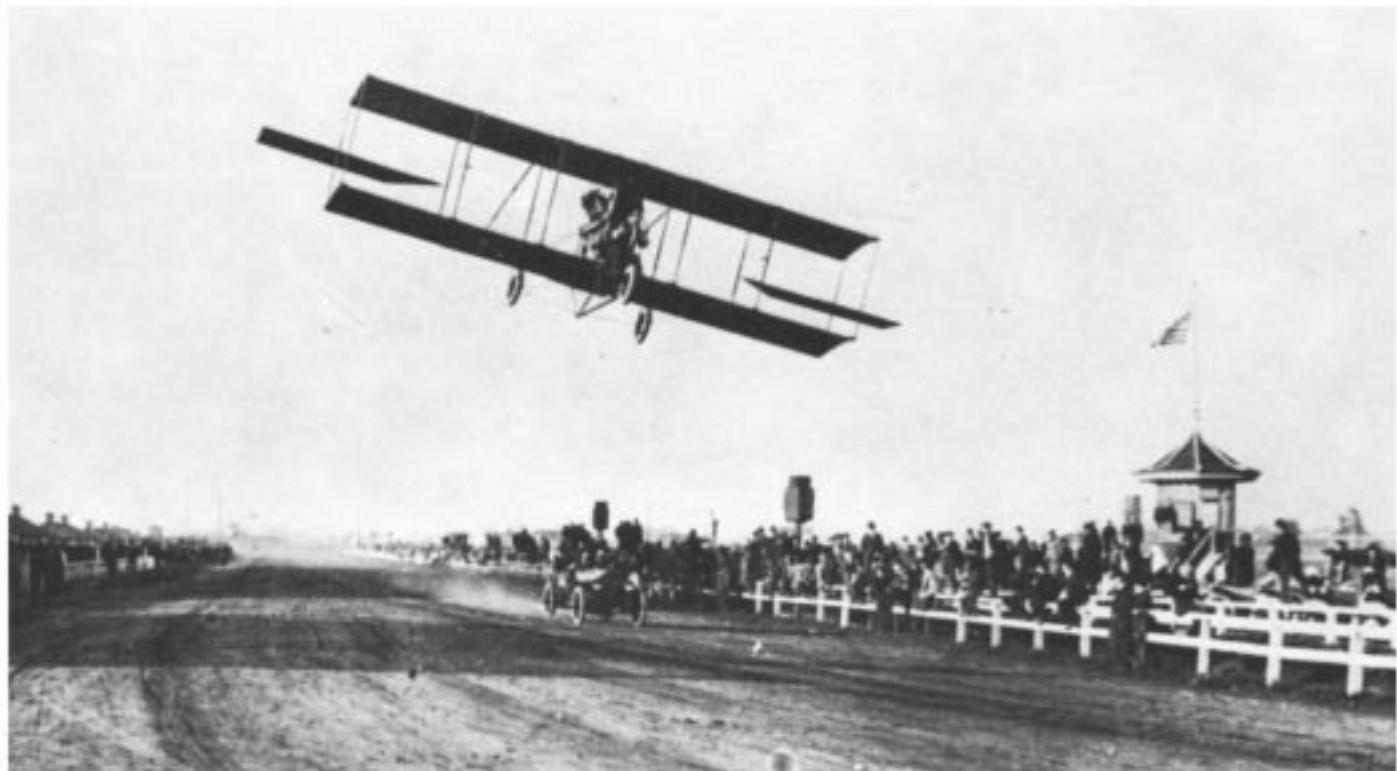
Moline had a fine landing field; Des Moines a poor one, only 1400 feet long, and the bigger airplanes zoomed low and went on without stopping, to the shame of the local committee. The tour had become a reckless, wide-open race anyway, with Tony Fokker the worst offender; determined that his tri-motor should be first to land at every stop. Fokker, in fact, was blamed for the traffic jam at Omaha where Casey Jones landed his big Curtiss squarely on top a motorcycle left in mid-field by Howard Wehrle, a local committeeman-man — a poor place, everyone agreed, to leave a 'cycle. But mechanics worked all night and Jones went on with the others next day.

Heading down the Missouri for Kansas City they ran into a wild storm; great jagged streaks of lightning; black thunderclouds towering up ahead like angry giants. The flyers dodged and zigzagged in the gusty wind and torrents of rain, flying ever lower to the angry river and wildly tossing treetops. Some were all but blinded when a great torch of lightning slammed across the sky and into a big red barn, just beneath their wings. The barn exploded in towering flame, and this was enough; these pilots sought shelter in the nearest pasture they could find. The next day, Ed Knapp wrecked his brand new Waco trying to take off from the tiny clearing where he went down, but the others went on east through more rain and fog to reach Cleveland on Sunday, a day behind schedule.

The Dearborn weather was very bad too, but the advance Army ship got through and so the others took off for the last lap. They were admonished by officials to play it safe; take the long way around Lake Erie; no corner cutting direct to Detroit across the open water. And to be sure nobody cheated, a watchman was stationed in a field northeast of Toledo to stand by a white canvas marker called "the bed sheet" and count the planes as they went by.

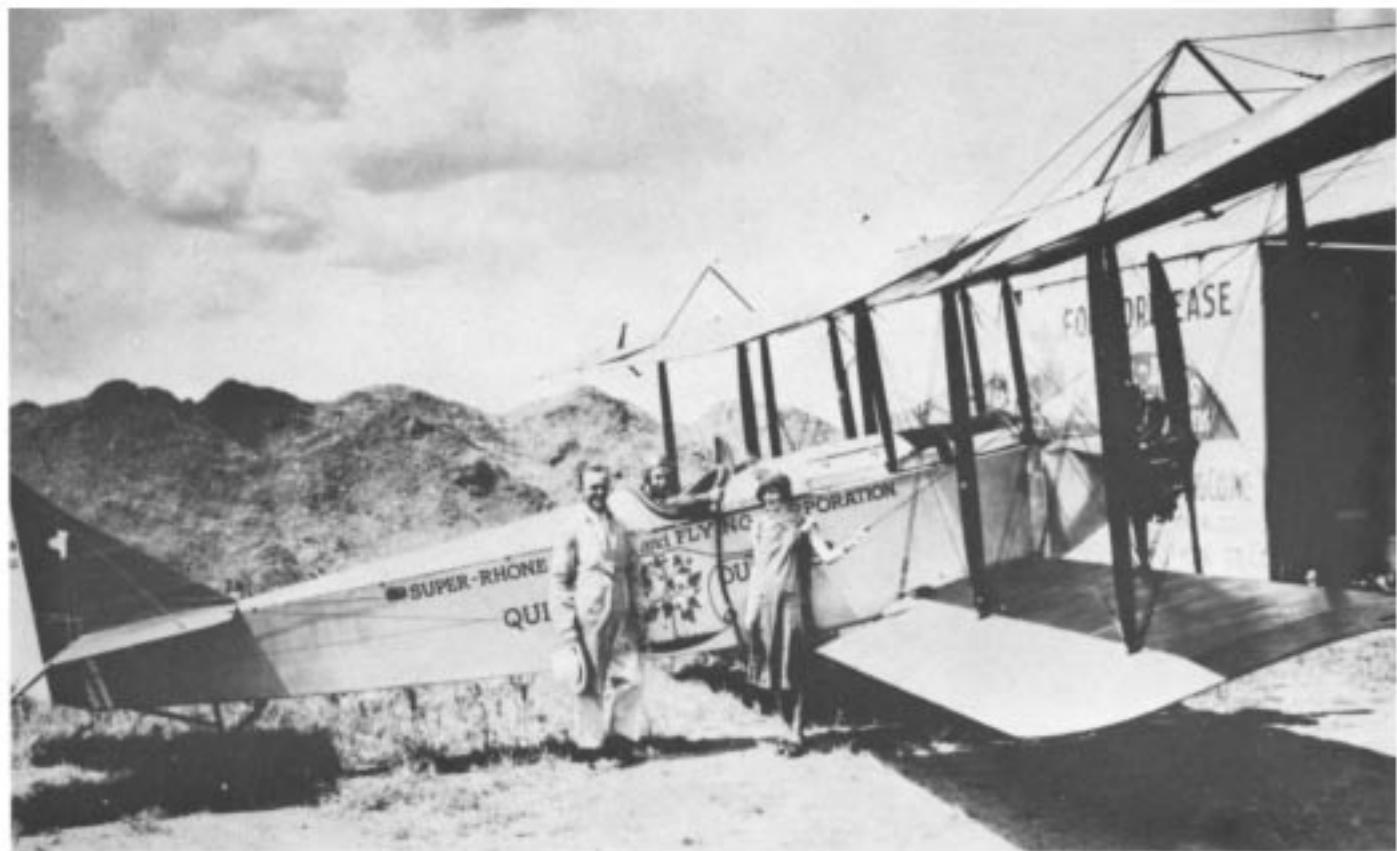
But nobody could see much in the fog, either spotter or flyers, and some of the fellows charged straight out across the lake, direct. Others got lost, or played it safe, including Mercury pilot Harvey Mummert who landed at Monroe, Michigan just forty miles short of the finish line. But most of them got through, including the flambouyant Tony Fokker, whose tri-motor dived across the finish line just before dark, first airplane home in the first great Air Tour.





Avowed purpose of Detroit air tour planners was "to end the dominance of the military; the emphasis on thrills and stunt flying." These two thrillers are Lincoln Beachey, flyer, and Barney Oldfield, driver, roaring around the Emeryville, California race track in 1914.

(M. L. Cohen/University of California)



Commercial uses of the airplane in line with hopes of Detroiters. This Standard J-1 was used by Quick Crop dusters of Houston Texas, its original water-cooled engine replaced by a Super-Rhone, or Quick Radial, converted from French LeRhone rotary. Curt Quick and his mother standing; unidentified girl in cockpit holds dust hopper control lever.

(Alice J. Quick)



Another cropduster, Keystone Puffer of Huff-Daland Dusters of Monroe, Louisiana. Similar ship was listed for 1925 tour as Entry No. 12, but did not compete. Huff-Daland was first commercial buyer of Wright Whirlwind engines, ordering sixteen in 1926. The company evolved into present Delta Airlines.

(George Van Vliet)



Other commercial uses. "Baby Ruth" candy bars were dropped in miniature parachutes from Waco Nines flown by Freddy Lund, Kid Kytte and Ole Oleson. Oleson is seen here.

(S. J. Hudek)



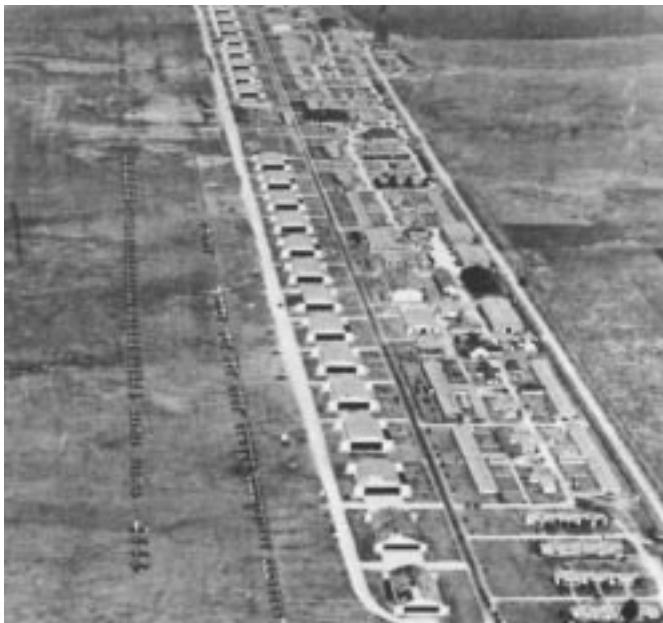
Detroit manufacturers sought development of good airports to encourage formation of scheduled airlines. Aeromarine Airways had provided service for a brief time in 1922 and 1923, using converted Navy F5L flying boats, featuring luxurious accommodations and services of a flight steward. This is the Santa Maria, "Detroit - Cleveland, Ninety Minutes," cruising along the Lake Erie shore.

(Greater Detroit Board of Commerce)



Another early day scheduled airline: Ford's private freight line. Present for the first flight, April 13, 1925 are William B. Mayo, Edsel Ford, Henry Ford and pilot Edward G. Hamilton.

(Charles E. Planck)



Detroit aviation boosters were sure the air tours would hasten development of commercial airports, few and far between in 1925. Military airfields like Kelly Field at San Antonio, Texas were much better.

(Leslie Newmark)



Training planes at Brooks Field. Vought VE-7, left, and Curtis JN6H.

(Leslie Newmark)



Military planes of 1925 included the de Havilland DH4. Note spare tire carried on belly.

(Leslie Newmark)



Air Service cadets learned to pack parachute, tested them aloft by
sliding off perch on top DH4 wing.

(Leslie Newmark)



The Navy's first carrier, *USS Langley* CV1, commissioned in 1922.
Vought biplanes are parked on deck, which was 64 feet wide,
534 feet long.

(Leon Cuddeback)



A carrier exercise in the British Navy in 1917, only eight years before the first air tour ventured forth. Sopwith Pup lands and is dragged to a stop by
ground crew on makeshift platform built across forward deck of *HMS Furious*.

(Imperial War Museum)



The Laird Swallow, often called America's "first commercial airplane." This one was flown to Los Angeles in 1921 by Matty Laird and Buck Weaver.

(Bob Byrne)



Matty Laird, right, and Billy Brock, in 1926, with Laird used on Charley Dickinson's short-lived Chicago, St. Paul airline. Fuselage lettering includes, "Celerity - Certainty - Security."

(NASM)

The Laird Special, Tour #32.

(Ford/Hudek)





Earl Rowland's Swallow

(Ford/Hudek)



John Stauffer's Swallow

(Ford/Hudek)



OX-5 Waco Nines, at the factory.

(S.J. Hudek)



The Junkers F-13L. Thick cantilever wing was first patented by Hugo Junkers in 1910, used on a German fighter plane in 1915, and on the first 4-place F13 in 1919.

(S. J. Hudek)



A Junkers moored on Lake Constance.

(The National Archives)



Eddie Stinson's Junkers, which flew the Pathfinder trip for the first tour, shown in Detroit - Chicago Air Line Service which he and Stanley Knauss operated in 1922.

(S. J. Hudek)



One of the two Martins flown by Cy Caldwell and Lawrence Richardson.

(Ford/Hudek)



Mr. & Mrs. Cy Caldwell

(NASM)



Eddie Stinson, left, and Fred Koehler, ready to go in the 1927 New York to Spokane race.

(UPI Photo)



A similar Martin Commercial tried out briefly to Post Office competition for a "Night Mail Plane."

(George Van Vliet)



Walter J. Addems

(University of California)



The Mercury Junior (in 1926), now called "Arrow."

(Ford/Hudek)



Charley Priest and Yackey Sport.

(Ford/Hudek)



Another Yackey, called The Mono, at Spokane, 1927. Fuselage lettering in "Quad City Messenger, Davenport, Rock Island, Moline, East Moline." Tony Yackey was killed in this ship.

(A.W. Walker)



Francis Bowhan, left with Mrs. Bowhan, unidentified friend, and 1928 Cessna BW.

(NASM)



Casy Jones' Carrier Pigeon.

(Ford/Hudek)



Travel Airs #0 and #2 in the tour were similar to this one, the first OX5 model built, later registered as a C-241.

(Beech Aircraft Corporation)



The Travel Air flown by Walter Beech was an unusual model without the well known Travel Air balanced ailerons and rudder.

(S. J. Hudek)



The Fokker at Ford Airport. Kinkade and McPhail checking engines, Lott, Fokker, standing under wing. This plane is now displayed in Ford Museum at Dearborn.
(William T. Larkins)



Interior of Fokker. Spare wheel at right, calendar and desk at left, advertising placards line walls below hatracks. Crank at left front may be cabin heat control. Ford Airport Rules note is propped up on simple instrument panel.
(Ford/Hudek)



A single-engine Fokker like that entered in the tour as #18, which went down with engine trouble enroute from Long Island to Dearborn. Pilot was Wilmer Stultz.
(S. J. Hudek)



The Fokker crew, at the finish. C. B. Allen and Tony Fokker in doorway; then, left to right: Lewis McSpadden, Doc Kinkade, Harold Wymer, Bert Loft, Ken Boedecker, Harry Bruno, John McPhail, Brice Goldsborough. (Goldsborough was not member of tour group.)
(E. P. Lot)



Stout #30. The Fordson tractor at left was developed from the Model T Ford, was remembered with somewhat mixed feelings by farmers who struggled to get it cranked up in the morning and keep it running through the day.
(Ford/Hudek)



Hart H. Bowman
(L. S. Smalley)



Carl B. Squier
(C. B. Squier)



Lloyd O. Yost
(L. O. Yost)



Harry A. Johnson
(The Air Force Museum)



Glen L. Martin
(Mrs. Carl Bigelow)



Rudolph W. Schroeder
(Russell Thaw)



Lunch at the Officers' Club, Fort Benjamin Harrison, October 2, 1925. From left, front row: Frank Bogart, unknown, Fred Melchior, Tony Fokker, Bert Lott, Charlotte Bowhan, Casey Jones, Earl Rowland, L. B. Richardson, Jake Moellendorf, C. B. Allen. Second row: unknown, Walter Beech, George Hopkins, Harry Bruno, Doc Kinkade, Rusty Campbell, Ken Boedecker, unknown. Third row: Ted Abrams, Lloyd Yost, Walt Addams, unknown, Chief Bowhan, unknown, Harold Wymer, (just behind Boedecker) unknown.
(NASM)

FIRST FORD RELIABILITY AIR TOUR

SEPT 28TH TO OCT 3RD 1925

DETROIT TO DETROIT VIA FORT WAYNE - CHICAGO - MOLINE - DES MOINES - OMAHA - ST JOSEPH - KANSAS CITY - ST LOUIS - INDIANAPOLIS - COLUMBUS AND CLEVELAND.

LOG OF PILOTS AND PASSENGERS.

Referee Name - D. H. Jones
Harry A. Johnson, 1st Lt., U.S.A.

A. H. S. Fokker.

No 20 5th Fokker Wright Motors

Cobalt Blue

Bowman U. S. Mail

H. H. Dryden

Kenneth J. Boeddeker

John W. Hall

J. J. Ladd

Davis Boeddeker

W. E. Merriam

1. Walter H. Beech, Travel Air

Wood Sport

#10 Waco 9

Chief Brewster Travel Air

E. Hardesty, Brewster

ff-16 Earl Renshaw

G. Muellerich
Satellite Model 1925

#14 Hart H. Bonner

Ohio & Taffy

Swallows model 1925

#6 Junkers

1916 Miss America

E. W. Hopkins

Tommy Steppen

P. W. Williams 6 "

#8 Otto Schenck - Wacker
G. K. Campbell - ravel air

Casey Jones

#22 Curtis Taylor Pidgeon

L. V. Gifford

F-30 Ford - 2nd Import

Walter Martin

E. Agapito

J. F. Phelps

R. B. Richardson

#26 Jean L. Martin Model 70

M. A. Tompkins

H. C. Hummer - Memphis

W. G. Chadwick - Memphis

D. F. Meade - Memphis

F-32 - 1916 Waco

Faird

Freel Kochan

#34 C. J. Long Jr.

Swallow

#36 Walter F. Edelme

Jockey Sport

Quast Guest

#10 1st Plans

Waco

OFFICIAL RESULTS: FIRST ANNUAL COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE RELIABILITY TOUR FOR THE FORD TOURING TROPHY
September 28 - October 4, 1925

(Airplanes listed in order of tour number, and award received.)

PILOT	Tour No.	AIRPLANE TYPE	ENGINE TYPE		WEIGHTS ¹			AVG. ² SPEED	AWARD ³	PASSENGERS
			DISPL.	H.P.	EMTY WT.	MAX. LOAD	GROSS WT.			
Earl K. Campbell	0	Travel Air A	Curtiss OXX6 567 100	1,335	335	287	2,100	74	\$350	S.A. McGinnis, W.B. Mueller
Francis Bowhan	2	Travel Air B-6	Curtiss OX5 502 90	1,335	316	251	2,100	77	350	Mrs. Charlotte Bowhan, Thomas Day
Walter H. Beech	4	Travel Air B-6	Curtiss C6 573 160	1,659	287	287	2,600	89	350	Charles E. Planck
Lloyd O. Yost	10	Advance Waco 9	Curtiss OX5 502 90	1,320	255	251	2,100	76	350	Talbert Abrams, (Kansas City . Dearborn)
Earl W. Rolland	16	Swallow 1926	Curtiss OX5 502 90	1,400	255	251	2,200	78	350	Jacob M. Moellendorf, Pres. Swallow Airplane Co.
Egbert P. Lott	20	Fokker F, VIIA-3M	(3) Wright J4 787 (ea.) 200	5,060	1,301	1,181	8,800	99	350	A.H.G. Fokker, Kenneth Boedecker, Thos. Kinkade, John McPhail, Lewis, McSpadden, Harry Bruno, Harold J.Wymer, C.B.Allen
Charles S. Jones	22	Curtiss Carrier Pigeon 1	Liberty V12 1649 400	3,000	831	825	5,000	98	350	H.G. Gifford, Frank Bogart
Cyril C. Caldwell	24	Martin Commercial Model 70	Wright Hispano E-4 720 200	2,100	383	360	3,500	84	350	A. Tomkins
Lawrence B. Richardson	26	Martin Commercial Model 70	Wright Hispano E-4 720 200	2,100	373	360	3,500	87	350	WA Chapman
Edward G. Hamilton	30	Stout Air Transport 2AT	Liberty V12 1649 400	3,790	826	825	5,790	102	350	James Phelps
Walter J. Addems	36	Yakey Sport	Curtiss OX5 502 90	1,300	254	251	2,000	84	350	Charles Priest
Frederick Melchior	6	Junkers F13L	BMW 1165 185	2,800	881	583	5,000	65	125	Ernst Koeppen, P.W. Williams, George W. Hopkins, J.M. Connolly, J. Otto Scherer
John W. Stauffer	14	Swallow 1925	Curtiss OX5 502 90	1,400	257	251	2,200	60	125	Hart H. Bowman
Henry C. Etten	32	Laird C-6	Curtiss C6 573 160	1,500	290	286	2,600	46	125	Fred W. Koehler
Edgar A. Goff, Jr.	34	Swallow	Curtiss OX5 502 90	1,400	258	251	2,200	49	125	Dale T. Hoskins
Harvey C. Mumment	28	Aerial Service Mercury Junior	Curtiss C6 573 160	1,020	453	450	2,450	85	100	W. C. Chadeayne - Out on last leg, Monroe, Michigan
Edward G. Knapp	8	Advance Waco 9	Curtiss OX5 502 90	1,320	261	251	2,100	75	75	Talbert Abrams (Dearborn - St. Joseph) - Out at St. Joseph

NOTES: 1 Published records for the 1925 Tour listed only two weights: Maximum, and "Minimum" load, as shown. Empty and Gross weights listed above are quoted from other sources.

(Notes: Continued Next Page)

OFFICIAL RESULTS: FIRST ANNUAL COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE RELIABILITY TOUR FOR THE FORD TOURING TROPHY (Cont.)

NOTES: (Cont.)

2 All speeds, all tours, are in miles per hour.

3 All who finished with "Perfect Scores," received \$350.00. Those who finished "by sundown" of the final day received \$125.00. Mumford and Knapp received lesser consolation prizes as shown.

OTHER ACCOMPANYING AIRPLANES

PILOT	AIRPLANE TYPE	PURPOSE	PASSENGERS
Edward A. Stinson	Junkers Larsen JL-6 BMW	Advance Pathfinder airplane	Ben Jacobsen, Wm. A. Mara, E. Leroy Pelletier, and newspaper men.
Lt. Harry A. Johnson	De Havilland DH4 Liberty 12	Official Advance Airplane, U.S. Air Service, Wright Field	Tour Referee, Ray Collins.
Lt. James Hutchinson	De Havilland DH4 Liberty 12	Accompanied Pathfinder to prepare maps, U.S. Air Service, Mc Cook Field	(unknown)



Silver medals given eleven pilots who made perfect scores.

(L.B. Richardson/Theron K. Rinehart)



The 1926 Pathfinder party, left to right, J. W. Beckman, H. G. McCarroll, Frank Bogart, Harold Wymer, Lt. L. C. Elliott, Sergeant Fred Branch, Ray Collins.

(Charles E. Planck)



Rickenbacker flags off Walter Beech in Travel Air. Pete Goff at Eddie's left, with clipboard.

(NASM)



Hollywood stunt flyers, 1922. Gladys Ingle, poised for plane change from Bon MacDougall's Jenny to Art Goebel's.

(Arthur C. Goebel, Jr.)