



Finding Aid for

**COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE RELIABILITY TOUR COLLECTION,
1925-1927
Accession 677**

Finding Aid Published: November 2011



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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
www.thehenryford.org
research.center@thehenryford.org

ACCESSION NUMBER: 677

CREATOR: Ford Motor Company. Archives.

TITLE: Commercial Airplane Reliability Tour collection

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1925-1927

QUANTITY: 0.8 cubic ft.

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English

ABSTRACT: Henry and Edsel Ford organized the Commercial Airplane Reliability Tour to promote air travel and encourage construction of airfields. The collection primarily includes material documenting the first occurrence of the event in 1925.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The collection is open for research
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** Ford Motor Company donation, 1964
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 677, Commercial Airplane Reliability collection, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Ford Motor Company Archives staff, May 1963.
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Original collection inventory list prepared and published by Ford Motor Company Archives staff in May 1963.
- Finding aid prepared by Elyssa Bisoski, November 2011, and published in November 2011.
- Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACs) and local guidelines.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The notion for the first air tour in 1925 was inspired by the public reaction and results of the Glidden Auto Tours, which began in 1904 to promote highway development and travel in the United States. The Detroit Board of Commerce and the Detroit Aviation Society, of which Edsel Ford was a director, believed an air tour emphasizing and demonstrating the reliability and safety of commercial air transportation would be an effective vehicle for attracting public attention to the serious side of aviation and stimulate the construction of local airfields. Henry and Edsel Ford helped organize the tour by donating \$50,000 and offering the use of Ford Airport. In addition, Edsel Ford donated the sterling silver trophy which would be permanently awarded to the first manufacturer to win the tour five times (later changed to three). Initially the tour was promoted as the Commercial Airplane Reliability Tour, but was, due to the Ford's involvement, commonly referred to as the Ford Reliability Tour or Ford Air Tour. A silver medallion awarded to all National Air Tour participants who finished the 1925 tour with a perfect score read: Edsel B. Ford Reliability Tour for the Development of Commercial Aviation. The route covered 1,900 miles, left from Detroit, visited eleven cities (Omaha, Nebraska the furthest west), and finished at the Ford Airport in Dearborn. Other events that took place at Ford Airport included a balloon race, demonstrations of night flying, and an exposition of aircraft and aircraft accessories. By 1927, the tour would be officially known as the National Air Tour and conducted annually through 1931.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is comprised primarily of material documenting the first Commercial Airplane Reliability Tour, which was held in 1925. Included are lists of contestants, rules and regulations, miscellaneous tour forms, aerial strip maps locating routes and landing fields, aeronautical bulletins, and blueprints mapping towns and airfields comprising the tour. Also included are pathfinder notes that were created as guidance for local officials in providing accommodations for participants. In addition, the collection contains a list of exhibitors in the Aircraft and Accessories Manufacturers Exposition that was held at Ford Airport during the tour and a photograph album holding fifty-six 10" x 14" black and white photographs of personnel, participating aircraft, and activities held at Ford Airport during the time of the tour. Also in the collection is one bound volume entitled "National Air Tour of 1927; Publicity Campaign Conducted by the Aviation Division Aircraft Club of Detroit." The volume contains material documenting the National Air Tour of 1927 for the Edsel B. Ford Reliability Trophy, including correspondence, financial statements, committee reports, maps, publicity, and an official rule book. There is also a copy of the victory banquet program, a radio script entitled "Getting There," and photographs of window displays.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate

Ford, Edsel, 1893-1943--Contributions in aeronautics
Ford, Henry, 1863-1947--Contributions in aeronautics

Subjects

Aeronautics--Competitions
Aeronautics--United States
Airports--Michigan--Dearborn
Airplanes--United States
Air pilots--United States
Air Shows--United States
Balloons
Ford Reliability Tour

Geographic

Ford Airport (Dearborn, Mich.)

Genre and Form

Photographs
Photograph albums
Blueprints
Maps

CONTAINER LIST

Box no. **Description**

Box 1

Official flight kit
 Aeronautical bulletins
 Air Navigation maps
 Instructions
 For handling reliability tour
 For starters, timers, checkers
 Official chairmen
 Official Checkers Report
 Official Entries
 Official entry blank
 Official exposition notices
 Official field notes
 Official timers report
 Route
 Schedules
 Special race bulletins
 Canvas kit to house items
"Edsel Ford Airplane Reliability Tour, 1927" (photograph album)

Box 2

"National Air Tour of 1927 Publicity Campaign" (bound volume)
1927 Air Tour materials
 Pamphlet
 "Getting There" (radio script)