



FAM 14

Prepared by THE SAN FRANCISCO AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY

President's Message Spring 2000 READY FOR THE 21st CENTURY

In this, the third edition of FAM 14, I am pleased to inform our readers of the many activities taking place as we approach the final months of preparation for the opening of the San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and the Louis A. Turpen Aviation Archive and Museum.

Construction of the Library and Museum is on schedule for turnover to the San Francisco Airport Museums to open September 26, 2000. The 11,500-square foot facility is located on the third and fourth levels of the new International Terminal. Designed by Fong and Chan Architects (FCA), the space is designed in the spirit of the historic passenger waiting room in the former San Francisco Airport Administration Building, c. 1937. The fact that the scale of the Library and Museum is very close to the dimensions of the original waiting room demonstrates the phenomenal growth of the aviation industry over the past sixty years. Upon entering the facility, visitors will gain an historical perspective on the development of San Francisco's role in air transportation.

The collection to be held in the Aviation Library and Museum continues to develop under the San Francisco Airport Museums. In addition to ongoing donations from private individuals, are two significant institutional gifts. The first, from United Airlines, has already been received and is described in this newsletter. The second, from the Pan Am Association, is underway and will be reported in future editions. This spirit of partnership is vital to the mission of enriching public awareness of the historic achievements in aviation during the 20th century and its future promise for the new millennium. The Founding Board of Directors of The San Francisco Aeronautical Society applauds these donors for their generous gifts.

On behalf of the Founding Board, I would like to again invite you to join in this exciting endeavor to preserve aviation history. Your support and participation are welcome.

Sincerely,

Louis A. Turpen
President

Founding Board Members

Louis A. Turpen, Patrick A. Murphy, Angela Gittens, Zuretti L. Goosby, Jerry O'Donnell, Zoe Dell Lantis Nutter, Athena Tsougarakis, William L. Coblentz

Aeronautical Society *Mission and Goals*

Founded August 6, 1997, The San Francisco Aeronautical Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the creation of an active West Coast center for aviation. The Aeronautical Society is a support group of aviation professionals that provides expertise to the San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and the Louis A. Turpen Aviation Archive and Museum. This unique facility will open to the public in the fall of 2000 in the new International Terminal at San Francisco International Airport. Its mission is to collect, preserve, and interpret books, photographs, ephemera, and artifacts associated with the history of commercial aviation in North America and the Pacific Region as it relates to San Francisco International Airport; and to provide a center for research and exhibition programming to increase and enrich public awareness of the historic achievements in air transport.

The Aeronautical Society is promoting visibility for this exciting new facility, and is actively seeking donations of aviation literature, historical artifacts, and memorabilia. Charter Memberships are being offered to support the mission of this facility, including collection development and educational programs.

THANKS TO OUR CHARTER MEMBERS

The San Francisco Aeronautical Society Founding Board of Directors thanks and acknowledges the following Charter Members for their help in achieving the Society's goal of preserving aviation history for the San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and the Louis A. Turpen Aviation Archive and Museum:

ARNIC • DFS Group Limited • Fong & Chan Architects (FCA)
• Holmes & Narver • Host Marriott Services Corp. • Morrison & Foerster LLP • Parsons • Salomon Smith Barney • Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

FAM 14 is the abbreviation for the world's first transoceanic Foreign Air Mail route. It originated in San Francisco and linked the East and West by air.

The FAM 14 masthead photograph was taken by Clyde Sunderland. It shows the China Clipper over San Francisco on November 22, 1935, departing on the first transpacific commercial flight to Manila. Courtesy of Pacific Aerial Surveys.

Oral History

Air Hostess Margaret Clark Thrush Remembers

"In the newspaper, the airlines, American and TWA, were looking for nurses to be flight attendants or stewardess or hostess, whichever was the main word then. Ours was hostess on TWA. To pick up an application you would go to their city ticket office, which three of us did who were rooming together at the time as general duty nurses. Then the ticket office person who was working there was supposed to look at you and see if you had a nice smile or an attitude that might appeal to people to give you the application. We all filled it out, and then we were called for an interview a few weeks later. We had to go to the station manager at the airport, and we'd never even been to the airport before in Columbus, Ohio. He gave us tickets then to go to Kansas City for an interview. And we'd never been on an airplane before. We tooted off to Kansas City with our fur coats...

"You had to be five feet, two and the right weight and a nurse. A lot of the girls who were interviewed at that time, in 1936, were from the Mid-Atlantic States. We had a first flight, a familiarization flight, and mine was Glendale, California. That was exciting for me because I'd never been west of Columbus until I got to Kansas City. And that was pretty far west, but you stopped at Winslow, Arizona and the Grand Canyon. It was a sight for me. So we did have to take a familiarization flight as an observer, to see what they do and how they do it...

"We considered our work a service; like a nurse, we were taking care of people. And I'll tell you it was necessary because we didn't fly very high on DC-2s. Maybe 5,000 to 7,000 feet. With all those stops we had to make, it was rough and turbulent. Sometimes we had to get off that airplane and put our passengers on a train and go with them to the next stop so that they could pick up an airplane again, if there was weather or something where we were canceled...

"We had to learn ticketing and all the names of the top people in the company. We had to know them and recognize them because they flew sometimes. We had to know connections, our routes and what towns we were flying over, and the names of all the passengers. We had to see that their bags got off the airplane. We counted how many bags were there and put it on a piece of paper that we handed to the agent when we landed some place. Even on the DC-2 we had to watch the heating system and add water to it if it ran out...

"We had to pick up, to go out on a flight, a package of silverware. There were 14 people so we got 14 sets; a knife, a fork and a spoon – silverware with TWA marked on it. That was to serve these box lunches that we had put on board. Then when we got to the hotel we had to wash whatever we used for the flight back home...

"The sleeping berth on the DC-3, wasn't that difficult. They would lock into the ends when you pulled the upper one down, and the lower one was made then with the two seats



Supervisory Air Hostess Margaret Clark, at right, confers with fellow employees alongside a TWA Boeing 307 Stratoliner 1939

Gelatin silver print

San Francisco Airport Museums Aviation Collection
Gift of Margaret Clark Thrush

that were there. You just had to unfold them, make a lower berth, and then they had curtains across. And those flights would start in Los Angeles and then we would have to give them their breakfast and put them back up out of Kansas City. It took that long — eight hours...

"When I became Assistant System Chief Hostess, I had to hold instructional meetings. Wherever I was based, like in La Guardia, I had to have meetings every month and check on the whole group who were based there. If anything was wrong we had to take care of it. When I was in Kansas City I also had Chicago for awhile under my care...

"The highlight of my working experience, I think, was probably just the airplane and what it did; that was a new thing for most of us. Like a frontier, and it was a job that was better than any other job I could have had at the time. It was great. I wouldn't part with any of that for anything. And many, many friends I made over the years are still friends...

Margaret Clark Thrush went to work as an Air Hostess for Transcontinental and Western Air (TWA, later Trans World Airlines) in 1937 — a job she held until 1944. She also served as Chief Hostess and Assistant System Chief Hostess. Ms. Thrush was interviewed on April 9, 1999 by oral historian Mauree Jane Perry.

The San Francisco Airport Museums Oral History Program was initiated in 1997 to document first-person accounts from people in the aviation field. The San Francisco Aeronautical Society supports the Oral History Program by helping to identify interview subjects. Interview transcripts are held in the San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and the Louis A. Turpen Aviation Archive and Museum.

Copyright © 2000 City and County of San Francisco. All rights reserved.

