



Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

Bendix Air Races Collection

Melissa A. N. Keiser

2020

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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<http://airandspace.si.edu/research/resources/archives/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Bendix Air Races Collection
Identifier:	NASM.1988.0115
Date:	1931-1985 (bulk 1931-1939) (bulk 1946-1962)
Extent:	7.28 Cubic feet (5 records center boxes, 1 16 x 20 x 3 inch flatbox, 1 12 x 16 x 3 inch flatbox) 7.66 Linear feet
Creator:	Bendix Corporation. Bendix Aviation Corp
Language:	English
Summary:	The Bendix Corporation (1924-1983), manufacturers of devices for the automotive and aviation industries, sponsored the Bendix Trophy Race—a transcontinental speed competition for aircraft—annually from 1931-1939, then sporadically from 1946-1962. This collection includes race-related materials from the Bendix Advertising and Publicity department, along with materials from other aviation events for which Bendix was a sponsor. Approximately a third of the collection relates to the corporation's activities from circa 1960 to 1983, including military and commercial avionics and communications systems, and support for the United States space program, particularly the construction of Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Launch Complex 39.
Digital Content:	Image(s): Bendix Air Races Collection

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Allied-Signal Aerospace Corp, gift, 1988, NASM.1988.0115

Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Melissa A. N. Keiser, 2020.

Preferred Citation

Bendix Air Races Collection, Acc. NASM.1988.0115, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

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Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

The Bendix Corporation, founded in 1924 by inventor Victor Bendix, began as a manufacturer of devices for use in the automotive industry, initially of engine-related items such as starting motors and carburetors, but soon expanding to brakes and hydraulic systems. In 1929, renamed as Bendix Aviation, the corporation branched out into the design and manufacture of equipment for the closely related aeronautics industry, including aircraft hydraulics for brake and flap systems, aircraft engine carburetors, and various electric and electronic instruments. In 1931, Bendix decided to sponsor the first Bendix Trophy Race—a transcontinental speed competition open to all comers, male or female—"to encourage experimental developments by airplane designers and to improve the skills of aviators in cross-country flying techniques such as weather plotting, high altitude and instrument flight." The Bendix Trophy Races were held in conjunction with the National Air Races, occurring with great fanfare annually from 1931-1939, but were suspended from 1940-1945 during World War II. In 1946, the races resumed, but now had to contend with the invention of the jet engine—accordingly, the Bendix Trophy Race was split into two categories: the "R" Division for reciprocating engine airplanes, and the "J" Division for U.S. military jet airplanes. Interest in air racing had declined in the post-war period, and no race was run in 1950. In 1951 the races resumed, and from this point on were limited to U.S. military jets only. Subsequent Bendix Trophy Races occurred in 1953-1957, and then (after a three-year gap) in 1961, with the last race held in 1962.

By this point in time, the Bendix Corporation—which had branched out to dominate the US market in aircraft radio and radar equipment during World War II—was producing missile and radar systems for the US military. In the 1960s Bendix was also building ground and airbourne telecommunications and telemetry systems for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The Bendix Field Engineering division worked on the construction of Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Launch Complex 39 at the Merritt Island Launch Area (MILA) adjacent to Cape Canaveral, Florida, including the Apollo Launch Control Center, Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB), and operational support equipment. In the 1970s, Bendix and its numerous Divisions were involved in a series of mergers, sales, and other changes involving the Raytheon and Allied (later Allied-Signal Aerospace) corporations, followed by a hostile takeover attempt in 1982 by Martin Marietta. In 1983, Bendix was acquired by Allied-Signal Aerospace (later Honeywell International) which retained the avionics part of the business.

The original Vincent Bendix Trophy was donated to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in 1985 [artifact number A19850368000]. On October 30, 1985, an event sponsored by Bendix/Allied-Signal was held at the museum in Washington, D.C., honoring aviators involved in the Bendix Trophy Races. Titled "The Golden Years," the program included interviews with several winners of the Bendix Trophy.

Scope and Contents

This collection centers on the activities of the Bendix Advertising and Publicity department (later Advertising and Public Relations), for many years directed by William A. Mara (later Eldon E. Fox)

and assisted by the New York public relations firm Carl Byoir and Associates, Inc. Materials include correspondence, telegrams, documents, brochures, press releases, photographs, and black and white and color negatives and transparencies. As the Bendix Trophy Races were closely associated with the National Air Races, the collection includes race programs, schedules, entry forms, and related air racing ephemera, as well as a number of photographs by Robert E. Burke and Associates, for many years the official photographer of the National Air Races in Cleveland, Ohio. Similar materials relate to the National Soaring Contest held in Elmira, New York (1935-1946), and the All Woman Transcontinental Air Race (1956-1962) for which Bendix was a sponsor, various National Aircraft Shows and National Aviation Shows, and Bendix's membership in the Aircraft Industries Association of America (AIAA). The collection also includes materials relating to the design and production of the Vincent Bendix Trophy and related replicas and engraved plaques by the Medallion Art Company (New York, NY) and plaster models and plaques by The Potter-Bentley Studios, Inc. (Cleveland, Ohio). Also included are photographs and two sets of 11 audio cassette tape recordings each of interviews made as part of the 1985 program "The Golden Years," and photographs taken at the related October 30, 1985, event at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. The later third of the collection relates to Bendix's activities circa 1960-1985, with documents and photographs relating to the construction of Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Launch Complex 39, followed by a small amount of assorted advertising ephemera for various Bendix electronic products and services.

Arrangement

The materials are arranged in the original physical order as received from the donor, and have been grouped into four series. Folders within a series generally run in chronological order, although the last series contains an assortment of materials many of which would be more logically placed in earlier series. Folders of correspondence are generally arranged in reverse chronological order within the folder. Many of the photographs appearing in Series 2 (Bendix Trophy Races, By Year) can be found duplicated elsewhere in the collection. Boxes 6 and 7 both contain oversized materials.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics -- Competitions
- Aeronautics -- Exhibitions
- Apollo Project
- Avionics
- Gemini Project
- Gliding and soaring
- McDonnell F-4 (F4H) Phantom II Family
- Mercury Project
- Periodicals
- Project Apollo (U.S.)
- Radar air traffic control systems
- Saturn 5 Launch Vehicle
- Trophies

Types of Materials:

Audiotapes
Correspondence
Ephemera
Financial records
Manuscripts
Photographs
Publications
Telegrams

Names:

All-Women Trans-Continental Air Race
Bendix Air Races
Cochran, Jacqueline
Doolittle, James Harold, 1896-1993
First Annual Aircraft Show (Cleveland, 1946)
Gordon Bennett Balloon Race
Intercollegiate Air Meet
Mantz, Paul
Medallic Art Company
National Aeronautics and Space Administration. John F. Kennedy Space Center
National Air Races
National Intercollegiate Flying Association
National Soaring Contest
Soaring Society of America
Stewart, James
Thaden, Iris Louise McPhetridge

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- Box 4, Folder 13 Program, Trans World Airlines (TWA) Visit to Kennedy Space Center, Reception and Dinner, March 17, 1965
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- Box 4, Folder 13 *Investor's Reader* (Merrill Lynch), No. 9, Vol. 44, May 5, 1965
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- Box 4, Folder 13 Booklet, "NASA At Cape Kennedy and the Spaceport", 1965
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- Box 4, Folder 13 Gemini Program Fact Sheet #291, NASA Manned Spacecraft Center (Houston, Texas), February 1965
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- Box 4, Folder 13 *Goddard News*, Vol. VIII, No. 10, March 8, 1965
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- Box 4, Folder 13 "Area Civic Officials and Chambers of Commerce," Air Force Eastern Test Range, Patrick AFB (Florida), March 1965
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Directory of civic officials and chambers of commerce in Brevard County, Florida.
- Box 4, Folder 13 "Industrial Directory," Air Force Eastern Test Range, Patrick AFB (Florida), February 1965
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Directory of industrial associations connected to the missile industry.
- Box 3, Folder 24 Gemini 4, 1965
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- Box 3, Folder 24 Bendix/NASA Press Kit, "Communicating with the Astronauts", 1965
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- Box 3, Folder 24 *Goddard News*, Vol. IX, No. 5, June 14, 1965
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- Box 3, Folder 23 Kennedy Space Center, October-November 1965
Materials relating to Bendix Field Engineering division support of the construction of Kennedy Space Center (KSC) Launch Complex 39 at the Merritt Island Launch Area (MILA) adjacent to Cape Canaveral, Florida, including the Apollo Launch Control Center, Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB), and operational support equipment; includes black and white and color photographs from several sources, newspaper clippings, correspondence, press releases, and

photocopies. Original press release captions for many of the photographs are present in the folder but physically separated from the images they describe.

- Box 3, Folder 23 Launch Complex 39, Construction, General
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- Box 3, Folder 23 Bendix Self-Contained Atmospheric Protective Ensemble (SCAPE) Suit
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- Box 3, Folder 23 Bendix Press Tour of Kennedy Space Center (KSC), October 12, 1965
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- Box 3, Folder 23 Resume, Paul Brian Fulmer, Jr. (KSC Public Affairs Office)
- Box 4, Folder 16 Merritt Island (Launch Facility), 1965
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- Box 4, Folder 14 Saturn Launch Vehicles, 1964
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- Box 4, Folder 17 Bendix Radio Division, Avionics Products, *Instruction Manual, Type NVA-21 () Navigation Unit*, I.B. 100 4, Revision 1, January 1963
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- Box 4, Folder 18 Bendix Trophy, Production and Delivery, 1932-1939
[Image\(s\)](#)
Materials relating to design and production of the Vincent Bendix Trophy and related replicas and engraved plaques by the Medallie Art Company (New York, NY) and plaster models and plaques by The Potter-Bentley Studios, Inc. (Cleveland, Ohio).
- Box 4, Folder 18 Presentation of Bendix Trophy at Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Dinner, August 31, 1933, August 1933
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- Box 4, Folder 19 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous (1 of 5), 1938-1957
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- Box 4, Folder 19 *Air Trails*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 6, September 1950
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- Box 4, Folder 20 [Scale Aircraft] Models of Bendix Race Winners (Vic Henry Collection), August 30, 1938
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- Box 4, Folder 21 Bendix Trophy, Production and Delivery, 1946-1948
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- Box 4, Folder 22 Bendix Trophy Race Statistics, 1931-1962
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- Box 4, Folder 23 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous Photos (1 of 7), circa 1930s
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- Box 4, Folder 24 Bendix Trophy Race, 1961, Press Clippings, 1961
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- Box 4, Folder 26 Bendix Trophy Race, 1961, Radio and News Coverage, May 25, 1961
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- Box 7, Folder 3 Bendix Trophy Race, 1961, Radio and Television Coverage Reports and Press Releases, May 20-25, 1961

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- Box 7, Folder 2 Bendix Trophy Race, 1961, Scrapbook Pages, May 19 to June 2, 1961
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Newspaper clippings (from clipping agencies) mounted on black paper album pages, with some loose clippings and 8 x 10 inch photos with original slugs attached interspersed.
- Box 4, Folder 27 Bendix Trophy Race, Miscellaneous (2 of 5), 1931-1962
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- Box 4, Folder 27 Brochure, "the history of the BENDIX TROPHY", 1962
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- Box 4, Folder 27 Booklet, "The Thompson Trophy Race", 1934
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- Box 4, Folder 28 Bendix Trophy Race, Miscellaneous (3 of 5), 1931-1962
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- Box 4, Folder 29 Booklet, "The Bendix Trophy Race", 1931
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- Box 4, Folder 30 *Naval Aviation News*, NavWeps No. 00-75R-3, July 1961
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- Box 4, Folder 31 Booklet, "The Bendix Trophy Race, 1932", 1932
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- Box 4, Folder 32 Press Kit, "The Bendix Trophy Race, 1939", 1939
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- Box 5, Folder 1 National Aircraft Show (Oklahoma City), September 1-3, 1956, Press Kit, 1956
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Bendix, Eclipse-Pioneer Division, Automatic Pilot Information Sheets, September 30, 1959
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Bendix Television Set, circa 1951-1952

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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix Radio Division, "ESAR" (Electronically Steerable Array Radar), 1960
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix Communications Division, "Printed Circuit Card Test Set For Receiver-Transmitter, Radio RT-859/APX-72", October 1968
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix Communications Division, "Bendix Announces the BPS-1000 Long Range Radar Surveillance Family", January 1976
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix Communications Division, "Automatic Drafting and Design Service", July 1977
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix Communications Division, "The Age of MLS" (Microwave Landing System), April 1981
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix Communications Division, "Scanning Beam Microwave Landing System", April 1975
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix Communications Division, "Bendix/Bell Tactical Microwave Landing System", February 1976
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix Communications Division, "Electronics Production Capabilities", August 1974
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix Communications Division, "Total Concept", January 1969
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Photograph, Bendix Radio Corp. Building, circa 1930s-1940s
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- Box 5, Folder 1 Brochure, Bendix/Baltimore Promotion Council, "Baltimore has more history [...]", circa late 1970s

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- Box 5, Folder 2 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous Photos (2 of 7), 1931-1962
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- Box 5, Folder 3 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous Photos (3 of 7), Negatives, Black and White
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- Box 5, Folder 3 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous Photos (3 of 7), Negatives, Color
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- Box 5, Folder 3 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous Photos (3 of 7), Individuals, Color Photos, circa 1985
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Individuals pictured: Marian Henderson, Ed Kenny, Frank Fuller, Tony LeVier, Dick Gordon, Pat Thaden Webb, Carlos Talbott, Leon Gray, Glenna Mae Davis, Mary Haizlip, Jim Marquette, Bill Turner.
- Box 5, Folder 3 Event, "The Golden Years," Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, Photos, October 30, 1985
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- Box 5, Folder 4 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous Photos (4 of 7)
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- Box 5, Folder 7 1948 National Air Races (Cleveland), Press and Radio Manual, September 4-6, 1948
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- Box 5, Folder 8 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous (4 of 5), 1937-1967
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- Box 5, Folder 8 Booklet, Frank E. Hedrick, "Pagentry of Flight: The Story of Beech Aircraft Corporation", 1967
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- Box 5, Folder 8 Transcript, Bendix Radio Program "Men of Vision", August 19, 1945
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- Box 5, Folder 9 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous (5 of 5), 1939-1974

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- Box 5, Folder 9 Bendix Trophy, Potential Donation to Smithsonian, 1967-1972
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- Box 5, Folder 10 Bendix, Miscellaneous (2 of 2), 1907-1982
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- Box 5, Folder 10 Brochure, "Bendix Headquarters Complex", circa mid 1970s
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- Box 5, Folder 10 *BENDIX 82* Magazine, February 1982
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- Box 5, Folder 11 Interviews from the 1985 Bendix Trophy Race Reunion, 1985
Two sets of 11 audio cassettes each housed in a vinyl binder.
- Box 6, Folder 1 Bendix Trophy Races, Mounted Photographs, 1931-1962
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Historic portraits; large-format print photographs retouched for publication, housed in the original retoucher's folders. August 1985. All but last two have no identification.
- Box 7, Folder 1 Bendix Trophy Races, Miscellaneous Photos (7 of 7), 1931-1956
[Image\(s\)](#)
Historic photography; originals (often with source and descriptive information) of many of the retouched images in Box 6. Many appear to be mounted on board with publication instructions.

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