



Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

Eastern Air Lines Collection

2001

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	Eastern Air Lines Collection
Identifier:	NASM.1991.0070
Date:	(bulk 1930-1976)
Extent:	19.76 Cubic feet (20 boxes)
Creator:	Eastern Airlines, Inc.
Language:	English .
Digital Content:	Image(s): One-half left front view of Eastern Air Lines Douglas DC-3 (r/n N18196, ship no. 384) in flight over dramatic cloud layer; circa late 1930s. Image(s): Eastern Air Lines Collection

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Eastern Airlines, Inc., transfer, 1987, NASM.1987.0038.

Preferred Citation

Eastern Air Lines Collection, Acc. NASM.1991.0070, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Eastern Air Lines was originally formed as Pitcairn Aviation, Inc. in 1927. In July 1929 it was acquired by the North American Aviation Corp. as the Eastern Air Lines Division and, in January 1930, was renamed Eastern Air Transport. By February 1933, Eastern had acquired Ludington Airlines, giving Eastern routes to most major eastern cities, including New York, Atlanta, Miami, Atlantic City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. In 1934 the airline was renamed Eastern Air Lines and introduced Douglas DC-2s

on its longer routes. In 1937 Eastern began Douglas DC-3 service and acquired Wedell-Williams Air Service Corp., thereby extending its routes westward to Houston. North American sold its holdings in Eastern to a group headed by Captain Eddie Rickenbacker. By 1960 Eastern had extended its coverage to Puerto Rico, Canada, and Mexico, as well as westward to Detroit and St. Louis. In January 1960 Eastern introduced jet service with Douglas DC-8s and, in April 1961, inaugurated "Air Shuttle" service between Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C. with its propeller-driven aircraft. By 1975 Eastern's network covered 100 cities in 30 states, as well as Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean. In 1986 Eastern was bought by Texas Air Corp., making Texas Air the largest airline in the United States. Following labor problems, including a strike by Eastern's machinists which was supported by the pilots and flight attendants, Eastern declared Chapter 11 Bankruptcy in 1989.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of newspaper articles, brochures, newsletters, magazines, photographs, negatives, and transparencies documenting Eastern Air Lines. The thrusts of the collection are the photographic images (concentrating on aircraft and personnel) and the publications of Eastern, including the newsletter "The Falcon" and "The Great Silver Fleet News" magazine.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Aeronautics, Commercial -- United States
- Airlines

Types of Materials:

- Publications
- Reports
- Video recordings

Names:

- Civil Aeronautics Board
- Eastern Airlines, Inc.
- Pitcairn Aviation