



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

## Eastern Air Lines Collection [Sigmon]

Patti Williams

2021

National Air and Space Museum Archives  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Eastern Air Lines Collection [Sigmon]
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.2021.0012
<b>Date:</b>	1980s-1990s
<b>Creator:</b>	Sigmon, Paul
<b>Extent:</b>	0.39 Cubic feet (One letter document case)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection documents both Paul Sigmon's career with Eastern Air Lines (EAL) as a customer service agent and the effect the airline's bankruptcy had on its workforce.  This collection is in English.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Paul Sigmon, Gift, 2020, NASM.2021.0012

### Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Patti Williams, 2021.

### Preferred Citation

Eastern Air Lines Collection [Sigmon], NASM.2021.0012, 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 North American Aviation 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, DC. 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 Corporation, 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 DC-8s and, in April 1961, inaugurated "Air Shuttle" service between Boston, New York, and Washington, DC 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, 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.

Paul Sigmon was a 33-year customer service agent for Eastern Air Lines who worked through the bankruptcy and shutdown of Eastern Airlines in 1989.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection includes the following types of archival material documenting both Paul Sigmon's career with Eastern Air Lines (EAL) as a customer service agent and the effect the airline's bankruptcy had on its workforce: black and white snapshots of EAL aircraft; documentation on various EAL employee benefits, such as health insurance, life insurance, stock options, pension and retirement; bankruptcy hearings notices and disclosure statements; and correspondence sent to employees, including notifications regarding EAL's bankruptcy.

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## Arrangement

This collection is arranged by material type.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Airlines
- Bankruptcy -- United States
- Business and labor

Names:

- Eastern Airlines, Inc.