



Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

Thomas Towle Ford Tri-Motor Collection

2002

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:	Thomas Towle Ford Tri-Motor Collection
Identifier:	NASM.XXXX.0102
Date:	1921-1967 (bulk 1925-1926) (bulk 1953-1967)
Extent:	1.09 Cubic feet ((1 records center box))
Creator:	Towle, Thomas, 1887-
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Tom Towle, Gift, unknown, XXXX-0102, unknown

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Thomas Towle (1897-) was a mechanical engineer and main designer of the Ford Tri-Motor. Following graduation from Yale University (1920) Towle worked as an engineer for a number of aircraft companies, including Dayton-Wright (1921-22), Martin (1922-23), Aeromarine (1923-24), and Stout Metal Airplane Co (1924-25) before joining Ford Motor Company's Airplane Division (1925-27). While at Ford, Towle designed a three-motored aircraft to replace the Stout 'Air Pullman', the rights to which Ford purchased with Stout in 1925. Towle left Ford in 1927 to form his own company, Towle Marine Aircraft (1927) and Towle Aircraft Company (1928-32). In 1933 Towle joined Monocoupe and later moved to Lambert Aircraft (1933-35) before leaving the aircraft industry.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of material gathered by Towle to support his claim as the designer of the Ford Tri-Motor. The material consists of the following: newspaper and magazine articles; pamphlets; photographs pertaining to the history of the aircraft and its role in early air transportation; drawings; early flight test reports; technical notes relating to early Tri-Motor models; a short autobiography and resume of Towle; and assorted postcards, stamps, articles, and so forth relating to Island Airways, an airline still flying Ford Tri-Motors

General

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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
- Aeronautics, Commercial
- Aeronautics, Commercial -- United States
- Aircraft industry
- Aircraft industry -- United States
- Airlines
- Ford Tri-Motor Family

Types of Materials:

- Blueprints
- Clippings
- Drawings
- Pamphlets
- Photographs
- Reports

Names:

- Ford Motor Company. Airplane Division
- Island Airways
- Towle, Thomas, 1887-