



# Smithsonian

*National Air and Space Museum*

## La Ligne Aérienne France-Afrique-Amérique du Sud [Victor Cambon] Publication

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Air and Space Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	La Ligne Aérienne France-Afrique-Amérique du Sud [Victor Cambon] Publication
<b>Date:</b>	1920s; publication circa 1926
<b>Identifier:</b>	NASM.XXXX.0938
<b>Extent:</b>	0.05 Cubic feet (1 folder; 1 booklet, 1 photograph)
<b>Language:</b>	French .
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection consists of a circa 1926 French-language booklet written by French author Victor Cambon entitled <i>La Ligne Aérienne France-Afrique-Amérique du Sud (The France-Africa-South America Airline)</i> and possibly intended to be an investment prospectus for the early French airline Lignes Aériennes Latécoère. The publication, heavily illustrated with aerial photographs, discusses postal (air mail) routes operated by Lignes Aériennes Latécoère linking France via Spain to North Africa, details of Pierre-Georges Latécoère's proposed idea of a France-Africa-South America air route, and reference to test flights made in 1925 over the South American portion of the proposed route.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Unknown (found in collection), 2010, NASM.XXXX.0938

### Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Melissa A. N. Keiser, 2022.

### Preferred Citation

La Ligne Aérienne France-Afrique-Amérique du Sud [Victor Cambon] Publication, Acc. NASM.XXXX.0938, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

No restrictions on access

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Following the end of World War I, French aircraft designer and builder Pierre-Georges Latécoère (1883--1943) became interested in creating an air network linking France with cities in Africa and South America. In September 1919, Lignes Aériennes Latécoère (often referred to at the time simply as "La Ligne" or "The Line") initiated service between the Latécoère base at Toulouse, France, with Casablanca, Morocco (then a French protectorate) via several intermediate stops along Spain's Mediterranean coast. In June 1925 service was extended across the Spanish colony of Rio de Oro to Dakar, Senegal (then French West Africa). Although Latécoère did not yet have an aircraft capable of making the South Atlantic crossing between Africa and South America, he went ahead with test flights in 1925 from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to Buenos Aires, Argentina (with six stops enroute), and to Recife, on Brazil's northeast coast (with three stops). The proposed air route would encompass five legs: France, through Casablanca to Saint-Louis-du-Sénégal by airplane; Senegal to the Cape Verde islands off the coast of Africa by seaplane; Cape Verde to the islands of Fernando de Noronha off the coast of Brazil via a special fast surface ship; Fernando de Noronha to Recife by seaplane; and Recife to Rio and Buenos Aires by airplane. Latécoère obtained financial support in Brazil from wealthy French banker Marcel Bouilloux-Lafont (1871--1944), who increased his stake in the business until he took over Lignes Aériennes Latécoère in 1927, renaming it Compagnie Générale Aéropostale (better known simply as Aéropostale) to reflect its strong investment in air mail service. Latécoère returned to aircraft design and manufacturing, with the company becoming most famous in the 20th century for its numerous seaplane models. Still active in the 21st century as the aerospace subcontractor Groupe Latécoère, the company is now known for manufacturing aircraft equipment and substructures such as doors and fuselage sections.

French engineer and journalist Victor Cambon (1852-1927) graduated from and was later a professor at the École Centrale des Arts et Manufactures in Paris, France. Cambon was a prolific author who published articles and books predominantly on agricultural issues, French economic and colonial problems, and German industrial power, and at one time served as the editor of the scientific journal *La Nature*.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists of a circa 1926 French-language booklet (11 x 8.5 inches, 28 pages) written by Victor Cambon entitled *La Ligne Aérienne France-Afrique-Amérique du Sud (The France-Africa-South America Airline)* and possibly intended to be an investment prospectus for Lignes Aériennes Latécoère. The cover features a color illustration of a stylized Latécoère LAT 15 airliner in flight over a partial globe marked with a postal route linking several cities in France, Africa, and South America. The first part of the publication provides an introduction detailing the amount of time it took for mail delivery between France and South America via ship as of 1925 and how that time would be greatly reduced if Pierre-Georges Latécoère's ideas of a France-Africa-South America air route were to be put into action. A map detailing the route and distances between France and Buenos Aires, Argentina is included; a dotted line indicates a special ship route connecting the Cape Verde islands and the islands of Fernando de Noronha off the coast of Brazil. The author provides a history of Latécoère's successful France-Morocco air mail route (started September 1, 1919, between Toulouse and Casablanca via Spain) and France-Dakar route (started June 1, 1925, to continue service on to Dakar, Senegal) as proof of the commercial viability of the concept. A section on the technical organization of Lignes Aériennes Latécoère provides information on the routes, aircraft, engines, repair facilities and procedures then in use by the manufacturer and its airline, and features several photographs of Latécoère aircraft including the LAT 15, LAT 17, and LAT 21; views of the airfield at Toulouse, France; and photographs of noted passengers on the France to Morocco route (Ligne Aérienne France-Maroc) including King Albert I of Belgium, French politicians Laurent Eynac and Paul Painlevé, Marshal Philippe Pétain and Marshal Hubert Lyautey. The second part provides more detailed information on the proposed France-Africa-South America air route, with references to test flights made over the South American portion of the route. The publication includes numerous aerial photographs of locations along the air portion of the route: Toulouse and Carcassonne, France; Barcelona, Alicante, Granada, Peñíscola, and Málaga, Spain; Gibraltar; Tangier, Rabat, and Casablanca, Morocco; Dakar, Senegal; Recife (Pernambuco), Bahia, São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Pelotas, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Montevideo,

Uruguay; and Buenos Aires, Argentina. The publication also contains a heavily retouched black and white aerial print photograph of Carcassonne, France, circa early to mid-1920s.

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## Arrangement

No arrangement.

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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:

- Aerial photography
- Aeronautics
- Air mail service
- Airlines
- Airplanes

## Container Listing

NASM-9A19504: [Booklet, "La Ligne Aérienne France-Afrique-Amérique du Sud", circa 1926](#)  
Language: French.

NASM-9A19505: [Photograph, oblique aerial view of Carcassonne, France, circa early to mid-1920s](#)