

Edwin C. Musick Collection
History of Aviation Collection

Biographical Sketch

Born: St. Louis, Missouri 1894
Died: Near Pago Pago, Samoa 1938
Survey flight to New Zealand
Education: Incomplete formal education in a Los Angeles high school

Aviation Background:

January, exposed to aviation at the Dominguez Field air races, Los Angeles, CA. 1910

With Arthur C. Burns, Harry Reynolds, and others built an airplane (note Burns photos) that flew nine feet off the ground and pancaked. 1912

Built another airplane that Reynolds crashed. Took a course at Schiller Flying School consisting of lectures, followed by taxiing and eventually flying in a single seat Curtiss Pusher. 1913

The trio purchased a used plane to build up time. 1914. Musick worked as mechanic for exhibition fliers in Venice, California, renting Schiller's airplane for practice. 1915

Became exhibition flier for several months; then became instructor at Venice in Summer of 1916. 1915-16

Served as civilian instructor in the Army Air Corps, North Island San Diego; transferred to Call Field, Wichita Falls, Texas. 1917

Commissioned as Lieutenant in the Marine Corps and assigned to Miami, Florida; remained in service after the Armistice. 1918

In the Fall released from Marine Corps to join Plane and Motor Corporation, Keyport, New Jersey. 1919-20

Flew F5-L's from Miami to Havana.

May 14, Inaugurated New New-Atlantic City airline in F5-L's. Because the airline attracted few passengers, Musick was sent on goodwill flights around the Great Lakes, down the Mississippi, and around the Gulf Coast. For the 1921-22 season, Musick returned to the Miami-Havana run. 1921

Flew Aeromarine F5-L from Detroit to Cleveland carrying Model T Ford roadster to publicize Aeromarine Air Freight. During the summers of 1922 and 1923, he flew this line, but returned to Miami-Havana run for the winter of 1922-23. Then became a test pilot for Aeromarine. 1922

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August 14, Married Cleo Livingston, Port Chester, NY. 1924

Bought HS2-L and barnstormed in Miami and Long Island. 1924-26

Became chief pilot of Philadelphia Rapid Transit Air Service and flew Fokker F-7's between Philadelphia and Washington, DC. 1926

October 19, Joined Pan American Airways as first pilot hired and made first official flight from Key West to Havana on October 24. 1927

Tested first Sikorsky S-38 amphibian at factory and flew it to Key West. Set up shuttle run to Nassau. In November, pioneered route to Puerto Rico via Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. 1928

Summer, Pioneered route to Tela, Eastern Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. In September made inaugural flight with Juan Trippe and Lindbergh from Puerto Rico 1929

to Dutch Guiana on F.A.M. 6 using Fokker Trimotor for Miami-San Juan leg of trip and using Sikorsky S-38 to Dutch Guiana.

Summer, Pioneered routes to Rio with Sikorsky S-38.

Winter, Pioneered Trans-Caribbean routes from Miami to Baranquilla. Developed first aerial radio navigation and established instrument flying courses for Pan American Airways. In the Fall, Musick and Winter, Pioneered Trans-Caribbean routes from Miami to Baranquilla. Developed first aerial radio navigation and established instrument flying courses for Pan American Airways. In the Fall, Musick and Basil Rowe tested first of Sikorsky S-40's and delivered it to Miami. At Anacostia, Mrs. Herbert Hoover christened the plane the "American Clipper."

Initiated long range celestial navigation training in anticipation of trans-Atlantic flight, and hired Fred Noonan as instructor. The long flights across the Caribbean were used as training and proving ground, resulting in the name "Caribbean College."

Informed that trans-Atlantic service would be delayed in favor of establishing a trans-Pacific route with Musick as the survey pilot. Musick supervised training of flight crews and participated in development and testing of a new radio direction finder.

April-August, with Lindberg and Captain Boris Sergievsky, tested in Stratford, CT, the new Sikorsky S-42, culminating in tests on August 1, 1934, that broke eight world speed records. In September piloted inaugural flight from Miami to Buenos Aries and return

Box 1 (Cont.)

in the S-42, and then established flight training for other pilots. In November, Musick took delivery of second S-42, equipped with long range tanks and special instrumentation that was christened the "Pan American Clipper" and used for Pacific survey flights.

Winter, Musick made training and long distance navigation flights in "Pan American Clipper" in preparation for Pacific survey program. 1934-35

March 27-28, Musick and crew flew non-stop 1600 miles from Miami to Acapulco. On March 29, flew to NAS San Diego (North Island). The next day flew to Alameda Airport in the San Francisco Bay where he was greeted by a crowd that overflowed the grounds. After several navigational training flights over the Pacific, Musick and crew of the "Pan American Clipper" departed about 4:00 PM on April 16 for Honolulu, arriving April 17 on schedule at 8:00 AM, after 18 hours, 39 minutes. Musick and crew returned from Hawaii to Alameda on April 21-22 in 23 hours, 41 minutes because of head winds. 1935

June 12, Musick flew from Alameda to Hawaii in 18 hours. After a day's rest he flew to Midway, starting his return to Hawaii and Alameda two days later.

July-October, Musick flight tested and trained crews in the Martin "China Clipper," and then he flew the plane via Miami and Acapulco to Alameda.

November 23-29 with crew of the "China Clipper" Musick flew inaugural trans-Pacific air mail flight from Alameda to Manila, Philippine Islands with stops at Honolulu, Midway, Wake, and Guam Islands. The return flight of the "China Clipper" occurred December 1-7. Later in December, Musick tested "Philippine Clipper" and took delivery of the "Hawaiian Clipper." 1935

Box 1 (Cont.)

January-March, After crew training flew another round trip to Manila. 1936

April 17, received International Harmon Trophy as world's outstanding aviator for 1935 (pioneering flights for PAA across Pacific.)

April-September, continued crew training and mediated pilot grievances arising from stress of Pacific flights.

October 21 – November 4, Piloted the first scheduled passenger flight across the Pacific and return in “Hawaiian Clipper.”

December, Musick tested a new Sikorsky S-42A at Miami, FL.

January 6-7, flew Sikorsky to Alameda where extra fuel tanks were installed. 1937

March 17-30, Musick flew the Sikorsky a distance of 11,000 miles to Honolulu, Kingman's Reef, Pago Pago, and Auckland and then returned to Honolulu. At Honolulu he checked out a new crew in the Sikorsky, and then returned on April 18 to Alameda as pilot of the “China Clipper.”

April 23-28, Flew “China Clipper” to Manila; transferred to the Sikorsky and flew on to Hong Kong, completing the first trans-Pacific commercial passenger flight.

May-September, upon return to Alameda, began training several new pilots to replace those transferred to the newly formed Atlantic Division.

October, after vacation returned to find Pan Am planning immediate service from Hawaii to New Zealand. The Sikorsky, now named “Samoa Clipper,” was en route from Manila to Honolulu for installation of long distance tanks.

December 13-14, Musick flew “China Clipper” to Hawaii. From December 23-25 flew “Samoa Clipper” to New Zealand via Kingman's Reef and Pago Pago.

Box 1 (Cont.)

January 3-5, made return trip from Auckland to Honolulu.

On January 9 left Honolulu again for Auckland, arriving in Pago Pago the following day after an overnight stop at Kingman's Reef. On January 11, Musick and crew left Pago Pago with 2300 gallons of fuel in the "Samoaan Clipper."

The following summarizes the destruction of the "Samoaan Clipper:"

About an hour away from Pago Pago the Clipper sent a radio message that engine number four was leaking oil and the crew was shutting it down. After a radio silence, during which presumably fuel was dumped, radio contact was re-established. The location of the Clipper was over Apia Harbor, seventy miles away. The radio operator reported he was stopping transmission while the crew dumped more fuel. Nothing further was heard from the Clipper. A native woman, who was fishing twelve miles from Pago Pago, reported that the airplane, spouting liquid from the wings passed over her canoe. Then came a flash of fire and a loud bang as the Clipper, trailing black smoke, plunged into the sea. Found at the scene was an oil slick along with bits of wreckage and plywood flooring as well as the navigator's books and papers—all bearing signs of an explosion.

Honors:

Chief Pilot of Pan American Airways.

Piloted world famous "China Clipper," pioneer four-engine seaplane passenger liner on trans-ocean flights.

Held 11 world records for flying and was recognized as "the world's outstanding aviator" prior to his death.

During his quarter century of flying was in the air more than 10,000 hours, traveling the equivalent of 40 times around the globe.

Awarded the International Harmon Trophy, Ligue 1936
Internationale Des Aviateurs, highest honor given an aviator, for 1935.

Awarded 25th year in aviation plaque (now at Smithsonian) by the Early Birds. 1938

The Captain Musick Memorial Flying Trophy, an international award for advancement of safety in aviation, was established in 1938 on behalf of the people of New Zealand in memory of Musick and his six companions who lost their lives pioneering a new air route to that country.

Auckland, New Zealand Musick Memorial Radio Station. 1942

February 11, launching of S.S. Edwin C. Musick. 1944

Member: Early Birds, National Aeronautic Association of USA (State of California).

Provenance

This collection was given to the History of Aviation Collection by George Haddaway in 1965. After joining Pan American Airways in 1927, Captain Edwin C. Musick later became the chief pilot in Pan American's Caribbean Division. He pioneered most of the commercial air routes over both the Atlantic and Pacific for the line and made the first trans-Pacific flight of a transport craft from Alameda to Honolulu on April 17, 1935. He received international recognition as the pilot of the "China Clipper," the world's first scheduled ocean air service, which linked America, Hawaii, the Philippines, and the Orient. This clipper carried the first trans-Pacific air mail. The holder of eleven world records for flying, recognized as "the world's outstanding aviator," Musick died with his crew on a survey flight of the "Samoan Clipper" in the South Pacific in 1938.

The collection consists of photographs, memorabilia, philatelic materials, an oil painting as well as a commemorative plaque, and a scrapbook generated by, for, and about Musick. Photocopies of articles, written by Musick and compiled from his scrapbook and Pan American Air Ways newsletters, are located in his biographical file. The biographical file also contains a copy of the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Air Commerce, official investigation (dated April 1, 1938) of the accident resulting in the destruction of the "Samoan Clipper" on January 11, 1938. Items in the scrapbook, collected and assembled by Mrs. Cleo Musick, document the pilot's survey and inaugural passenger flights. The newspaper clippings relate the purposes of these flights, ancillary functions or advantages that accrued from these flights such as the first aerial photographs taken of remote islands; and emphasize non-technical aspects of the flights, for example human interest stories bridging the gap between cultures. The

materials contain neither personal papers nor correspondence. Lists of philatelic items, photographs, and other memorabilia follow. The collection, contained in one manuscript box, includes 216 items, 23 of which are photographs. The materials in the collection, both printed and photographic, focus on the years 1935-38. Other photographs record memorials that took place between 1940-44.

A book in the UTD History of Aviation Collection devoted to Musick's aviation career is William Stephen Grooch's From Crate to Clipper: With Captain Musick, Pioneer Pilot (New York: Longman's 1939.) Another source of articles written by and about Musick is the Pan American Air Ways newsletters. The most complete run of the newsletters at the HAC is located in the George W. Reading Collection. For information about the Brazilian Clipper, consult Pacific Supplement Number 1 (4/1935); and for the first Trans-Pacific Air Mail Flight, consult Pacific Supplement Number 2 (11/1935).

Box 1

1	Provenance	
2	Biographical Information	
3	Philatelic material	
4	Photographs, Memorials	1938-42
5	Photographs, Liberty Ship Launching	1944
6	Photographs, Early years & Clipper Flights	1918, 35
7	Philatelic First Day Covers	
8	Album: "Inauguration of Trans-Pacific Air Mail Service	
9	Newspaper Clippings: "China Clipper"	
10	Newspaper Clippings: "China Clipper"	