Preliminary Inventories

Number 67

Records of the Select Committee
Of the House of Representatives
To Investigate Air Accidents
1941-43

Compiled by George P. Perros

The National Archives
National Archives and Records Service
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To analyze and describe the permanently valuable records of the Federal Government preserved in the National Archives Building is one of the main tasks of the National Archives. Various kinds of finding aids are needed to facilitate the use of these records, and the first step in the records-description program is the compilation of preliminary inventories of the material in the 270-odd record groups to which the holdings of the National Archives are allocated.

These inventories are called "preliminary" because they are provisional in character. They are prepared as soon as possible after the records are received without waiting to screen out all disposable material or to perfect the arrangement of the records. They are compiled primarily for internal use, both as finding aids to help the staff render efficient reference service and as a means of establishing administrative control over the records.

Each preliminary inventory contains an introduction that briefly states the history and functions of the agency that accumulated the records. The records themselves are described series by series, that is, by units of records of the same form or that deal with the same subject or activity or that are arranged serially. Other significant information about the records may sometimes be given in appendices.

When the record group has been studied sufficiently and the records have been placed in final order, the preliminary inventories will be revised and the word "preliminary" dropped from the title of the revision. Meanwhile, as occasion demands and time permits, special reports, indexes, calendars, and other finding aids to the record group will be prepared.

Several finding aids that give an overall picture of materials in the National Archives have been published. A comprehensive Guide to the Records in the National Archives (1948) and a brief guide, Your Government's Records in the National Archives (revised 1950), have been issued. Forty-three Reference Information Papers, which analyze records in the National Archives on such subjects as transportation, small business, and India, have so far been published. Records of World War I have been described in the Handbook of Federal World War Agencies and Their Records, 1917-1921, and those of World War II in the two-volume guide, Federal Records of World War II (1950-51). Many bodies of records of high research value have been edited by the National Archives and reproduced on microfilm as a form of publication. Positive prints of some 4,700 rolls of this microfilm, described in the List of National Archives Microfilm Publications (1953), are now available for purchase.
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INTRODUCTION

The crash of a commercial airliner at Lovettsville, Va., on August 31, 1940, bringing death to 25 persons, ended a period of 17 months—the longest then on record—that had been free from fatal accidents involving commercial aircraft within the United States. This mishap was followed in quick succession by other fatal accidents involving commercial aircraft. As the toll of victims grew, public sentiment was aroused and demands were made for a thorough investigation. Accordingly, Representative Jack Nichols, of Oklahoma, submitted on March 3, 1941, House Resolution 125, 77th Congress, to create a select committee to investigate the causes of the accidents. Section 2 of the resolution provided in part as follows:

It shall be the duty of the committee to make a full and complete investigation of air crashes and other accidents in the United States in 1940 and 1941 occurring on commercial air lines with the view to ascertaining all pertinent facts relating to the construction of flying and ground equipment and facilities, the management and operation of such air lines, the laws and regulations and the administration of laws and regulations relating to operation and inspection of airplanes and safety equipment and devices, the liability of such air lines on account of loss of life or injury to persons or property, and any other matters which such committee may deem it necessary to investigate for the purpose of obtaining adequate information to enable it to recommend action.

On March 6, 1941, the House of Representatives agreed to the resolution. On March 12 the Speaker of the House, acting in compliance with the resolution, appointed Representatives Jack Nichols, of Oklahoma (Chairman), Richard L. Kleberg, of Texas, Herron Pearson, of Tennessee, Everett M. Dirksen, of Illinois, and Carl Hinshaw, of California, as members of the Select Committee to Investigate Air Accidents. Irving G. McCann became the committee's counsel and Charles S. Greaves its clerk. On January 12, 1942, the House of Representatives agreed to House Resolution 403, 77th Congress, authorizing the committee to investigate any air accidents which might occur in 1942. On January 22, 1943, the House agreed to House Resolution 33, 78th Congress, extending the existence of the committee until March 1, 1943, to enable it to complete its investigations and prepare its reports.

The committee investigated air accidents occurring in 1940, 1941, and 1942 that involved aircraft of commercial airlines, holding executive hearings at the scene of the accidents. The findings of the committee and its recommendations for specific action to be taken by the airlines, the Civil Aeronautics Administration, the Civil Aeronautics Board, other Federal agencies, and Congress were submitted to the House of Representatives in a series of reports. In addition, the committee took measures to promote commercial aviation in the interests of national defense as World War II was being fought. The committee described the most important of such measures in House Report 1, 78th Congress, 2d session, as follows:
We have submitted, and will resubmit, to the Seventy-eighth Congress a bill (H. R. 7764, 77th Cong., 2d sess.), granting to the Federal Government exclusive jurisdiction over the navigable air space of the United States for the protection and promotion of interstate and international commerce.

We have caused studies to be made by insurance and aviation experts which should lay the foundation for a Federal law covering the liability of air carriers for death or injuries to passengers.

We have effectually aided the manufacturers of aircraft in securing authority to continue with the manufacture of passenger- and cargo-carrying airplanes. We called a conference with the Secretaries of War, Navy, and Commerce, production officials, and others, and secured from them approval for the completion of certain large passenger-carrying planes upon which work had been discontinued. Since that time the military leaders have come to appreciate the necessity for building a five-ocean fleet of airships for the transportation of troops and military cargoes. Your committee claims some credit for anticipating this need and aiding in its accomplishment.

We believe that the work of our committee and our report on the safety and development of commercial aviation in Latin America was an important factor in the grounding of Axis air lines in South America.

When it appeared that the Army was about to take over the air lines bodily, both personnel and equipment, with the inevitable result of destroying our highly efficient system of air commerce, your committee called a meeting of air line executives in Washington. As the outgrowth of this meeting and subsequent efforts by your committee, it is our firm conviction that the integrity of the air carriers was maintained, and their personnel and equipment were made available as a unit to the armed forces to train pilots and technical personnel and to furnish mechanical and transportation services with far greater efficiency than the Army could have attained by merely absorbing the personnel and equipment of the air lines.

With the submission of its report to the House of Representatives on February 18, 1943, concerning the air accident occurring at Miles City, Mont., on May 12, 1942, the committee completed its activities.

The records described in this inventory, amounting to approximately 15 cubic feet, are part of Record Group 233, Records of the United States House of Representatives. Neither the records of the committee nor information contained therein may be made available to any person except upon the express authorization of the House of Representatives.
RECORDS OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TO INVESTIGATE AIR ACCIDENTS

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE. Mar. 1941-Feb. 1943. 3 ft.
Correspondence resulting principally from substantive activities of
the committee other than investigations of air accidents. It deals in
the main with the need for continued manufacture of passenger-and-cargo-
carrying aircraft as part of the national defense program, the role of
commercial airlines in the defense effort, Federal jurisdiction over the
navigable air space, liability of air carriers for death or injuries to
passengers, the legislative needs of Government and private agencies
interested in the development and safety of civil aeronautics, air-traffic
control, airport zoning, operations of commercial airlines, airway-radio
facilities, and weather information as it relates to safety in air travel.
Included also in this series are some administrative records of the com-
mittee. The records are arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent
or subject; for list of folder headings, see appendix A.

RECORDS RELATING TO INVESTIGATIONS OF AIR ACCIDENTS. Apr. 1941-Jan.
1943. 2 ft.
Correspondence with the Civil Aeronautics Administration, Civil Aer-
onautics Board, and commercial airlines respecting requests of the com-
mittee for specific information and for records in their files pertain-
ing to air accidents under investigation; air-accident reports, photo-
graphs of crashed aircraft, records containing flight and maintenance
data, and other documents submitted in reply to such requests; and inves-
tigative reports by staff members of the committee. See also series 4
and 5 for other records relating to investigations of air accidents.
The records are arranged alphabetically according to scene of accident;
for list of folder headings, see appendix B.

RECORDS RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S LATIN AMERICAN TOUR. Oct.-Dec. 1941.
1 ft.
Records resulting from a tour of Latin American countries made by
Representatives Nichols, Kleberg, Dirksen, and Hinshaw between October
12 and November 10, 1941, to study "one, the safety and the comparative
safety of air travel on the American owned and operated lines running
through the Latin-American countries; and, two, the possibilities of
South and Central America as an outlet for our air commerce," and to
determine incidentally, "what detrimental effect, if any, the operation
of foreign commercial air lines in Latin America was having on our hem-
ispheric and national defense." Arranged alphabetically by subject; for
list of folder headings, see appendix C.

EXHIBITS, REFERENCE MATERIALS, AND STENOTYPE NOTES AND PAGE PROOFS OF
TESTIMONY. 1941-43. 13 ft.
Exhibits received in evidence by the committee in the course of its
hearings, which were held without exception in executive session; refer-
ence materials collected for the record in connection with the hearings;
and stenotype notes and page proofs of the committee prints of testimony
received in the hearings. See also series 2 for other exhibits and reference materials. The records are arranged according to the hearings to which they relate; for a list of the hearings for which there are records of the type specified herein, see appendix D.

MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS. Mar. 1941-Feb. 1943. 3 ft.

Certain records of the Civil Aeronautics Board obtained by the committee for its information and use, including notifications of serious air accidents received by the Board's Safety Bureau between January 1, 1941, and February 25, 1943, and reports of investigations by the Board of air accidents occurring between August 31, 1940, and December 6, 1941; report of Representative Dirksen to the chairman on copilot training programs of certain airlines; and various publications dealing with aeronautical subjects. Arranged alphabetically, mainly by name of agency of origin and thereunder by type of record; for list of folder headings, see appendix E.

VOUCHERS AND RELATED PAPERS. Apr. 1941-Feb. 1943. 6 in.

Vouchers showing disbursements of the committee for salaries and traveling expenses of staff members, office supplies, and other expenses incurred by the committee, with related correspondence, memoranda, and other papers. Arranged alphabetically by name of person or firm or by subject; for list of folder headings, see appendix F.
APPENDIX A

Headings for the General Correspondence (Entry 1)

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
Airline Pilots Association
Airlines—general
Air traffic control
Air Transport Association of America
All American Aviation, Inc.
American Airlines
American Bar Association
Braniff Airways
Canadian Colonial Airways, Inc.
Catalina Air Transport
Chicago & Southern Air Lines, Inc.
Civil Aeronautics Administration
Civil Aeronautics Board
Committee proposal and hearings on airlines and military cooperation in war effort
Continental Air Lines
Continuation of committee
Defense officials' conference
Delta Air Corporation
Douglas Aircraft Company
Eastern Air Lines
Inland Airlines, Inc.
Interdepartmental Board
Inventions (airplane design)
Legislation (bills) on aviation—House and Senate
Liability insurance
Lockheed Aircraft Corporation
Mailing list
Mid-Continent Airlines, Inc.
National Airlines, Inc.
National Bureau of Standards
Navigable air space
Navy General Board
News Research Service, Inc.
Northeast Airlines, Inc.
Northwest Airlines, Inc.
Pan American Airways
Pennsylvania-Central Airlines
Press releases
Priorities for air transportation
Proposed legislation
Radio addresses by committee members
Radio ranges—ultra high
Reports of the committee
Resolutions of the House
Southwest Aviation Conference
Subpoenas duces tecum
Transcontinental and Western Air
Turner, Col., Roscoe
United Air Lines Transport Corp.
War Department
Weather Bureau
Western Air Lines
Wing lights
Young, Jane (contract)
Zoning
APPENDIX B

Headings for the Records Relating to Investigations of Air Accidents (Entry 2)

Arcadia, La. (Delta Air Corp.)
Atlanta, Ga. (Eastern Air Lines)
Charleston, W. Va. (Pennsylvania-Central Airlines)
Chicago, Ill. (United Air Lines)
Cincinnati, Ohio (American Airlines)
Dallas, Tex. (Delta Air Corp.)
El Paso, Tex. (Continental Air Lines)
Fargo, N. Dak. (Northwest Airlines)
Fort Worth, Tex. (American Airlines)
Greensboro, N. C. (Eastern Air Lines)
Joliet, Ill. (Chicago and Southern Air Lines)
Kansas City, Mo. (TWA and Army bomber)
Las Vegas, Nev. (Transcontinental and Western Air)
Los Angeles, Calif. (American Airlines and Army bomber)
Miami, Fla. (Eastern Air Lines and Army bomber)
Miami, Fla. (Pan American Airways)
Miles City, Mont. (Northwest Airlines)
Minneapolis, Minn. (Northwest Airlines)
Morgantown, W. Va. (Pennsylvania-Central Airlines)
Newark, N. J. (National Air Transport, Inc.)
New York, N. Y. (United Air Lines)
Oklahoma City, Okla. (Braniff Airways)
Palm Springs, Calif. (American Airlines and Army bomber)
Puerto Rico (Pan American Airways)
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Pan American Airways)
Salt Lake City, Utah (United Air Lines)
Salt Lake City, Utah (Western Air Lines)
Savannah, Ga. (Eastern Air Lines)
Sioux City, Iowa (Mid-Continental Airlines)
St. Louis, Mo. (American Airlines)
St. Thomas, Ontario (American Airlines)
Tampa, Fla. (Eastern Air Lines)
Vero Beach, Fla. (Eastern Air Lines)
Wichita, Kans. (TWA and Braniff Airways)
APPENDIX C

Headings for the Records Relating to the Committee's Latin American Tour (Entry 3)

- Accident reports
  - Argentina
  - Brazil
- British Honduras Division
- Civil aeronautics
- Clippings on conference in South America
- Confidential reports
- Colombia
- Correspondence relating to South America
- Correspondence relating to the report on South America
- Costa Rica Division
- Hitler's South American movement
- Honduras Division
- International service
- Japanese fifth column
- Maps
- Mexico
- Photographs
- Press clippings
- Press release on report of South American Tour
- Radio speech of Representative Nichols concerning South American tour
- Report of Representative Dirksen on the South American tour
- Requests for South American report
- South American data
- Miscellaneous
APPENDIX D

List of Hearings for Which There Are Exhibits, Reference Materials, or Stenotype Notes and Page Proofs of Testimony (Entry 4)

Hearings at Cincinnati, Ohio (Mar. 25-27, 1941), to investigate the accident at Lunken Airport on Mar. 10, 1941, involving American Airlines trip 20.

Hearings at Atlanta, Ga. (Apr. 1-3, 1941), to investigate the accident near Atlanta on Feb. 26, 1941, involving Eastern Air Lines trip 21.

Hearings at Vero Beach, Fla. (Apr. 4-8, 1941), Miami, Fla. (Apr. 9-14, 1941), and Washington, D. C. (Sept. 18, 1941), to investigate the accident near Vero Beach, Fla., on Apr. 3, 1941, involving Eastern Air Lines trip 14.

Hearings at Charleston, W. Va. (Apr. 17, 18, 1941), and Washington, D. C. (Apr. 30, 1941-May 1, 2, 1941), to investigate the accident at Charleston on Apr. 16, 1941, involving Pennsylvania-Central Airlines trip 143.

Hearings at St. Louis, Mo. (May 5-7, 1941), to investigate the accident near Robertson, Mo., on Jan. 23, 1941, involving Transcontinental and Western Air trip 6.

Hearings at St. Louis (May 8, 1941), to investigate the accident near Robertson, Mo., on Dec. 11, 1940, involving American Airlines trip 9.

Hearings at Chicago, Ill. (May 26-29, 1941), to investigate the accident near Chicago Airport on Dec. 4, 1940, involving United Air Lines trip 21.

Hearings (unreported) to investigate the accident at Joliet, Illinois, on June 3, 1941, involving Chicago and Southern Air Lines trip 10.

Hearings at Burbank, Calif. (June 11-16, 24, 1941), to ascertain facts concerning the production of commercial aircraft by the Lockheed Aircraft Corp.

Hearings at Salt Lake City, Utah (June 23-27, 1941), to investigate the accident at the Salt Lake City Airport on Nov. 4, 1940, involving United Air Lines trip 16.

Hearings at Fort Worth, Tex. (June 24-25, 1941), to investigate the accident near Fort Worth on June 21, 1941, involving American Airlines trip 2.
Hearings at Pasadena, Calif. (June 30, 1941), to receive testimony on the development of the science of weather forecasting in the United States as it relates to safety in aviation.

Hearings at Los Angeles, Calif. (July 2, 1941), to investigate the accident near San Diego, Calif., on July 2, 1941, involving the airplane identified as Consolidated LB 30, AI-503.

Hearings at Hollywood, Calif. (July 14, 1941), to confer with the presidents of all commercial airlines operating in the United States on how the airlines could make the maximum contribution to the defense effort.

Hearings at Santa Monica, Calif. (July 17-24, 1941), to ascertain facts concerning the production of commercial aircraft by the Douglas Aircraft Co.

Hearings at Seattle, Wash. (July 25-26, 1941), to ascertain facts concerning the production of commercial aircraft by the Boeing Aircraft Co.

Hearings at Washington, D. C. (Aug. 7, 1941), to confer with officials of the Federal Government concerning the impact of the national defense program upon the development of commercial aviation.

Hearings at Denver, Colo. (Sept. 8-9, 1941), to investigate the accident at El Paso, Tex., on Apr. 23, 1941, involving Continental Air Lines trip 3; and the accident at Colorado Springs, Colo., on Aug. 1, 1941, involving Continental Air Lines trip 7.

Hearings at Glendale, Calif. (Sept. 22, 1941), to investigate the accident at Glendale on August 25, 1941, involving Mexican Aviation Co. trip 550.

Hearings at Miami, Fla. (Oct. 10-11, 1941), and San Juan, P. R. (Oct. 6-7, 1941), to investigate the accident at San Juan on Oct. 3, 1941, involving Pan American Airways trip 203.

Hearings at Savannah, Ga. (Oct. 20, 1941), to investigate the accident at Savannah on Oct. 10, 1941, involving Eastern Airlines trip 5.

Hearings at Fargo, N. D., and Minneapolis, Minn. (Oct. 30, 1941-Nov. 1, 1941), to investigate the accident near Fargo on Oct. 30, 1941, involving Northwest Airlines trip 5.

Hearings at St. Thomas, Ontario (Nov. 2-4, 1941), Buffalo, N. Y. (Nov. 4, 1941), and New York City (Dec. 4-6, 1941), to investigate the accident near Shedden, Elgin County, Province of Ontario, on Oct. 30, 1941, involving American Airlines trip 1.
Hearings at Miami, Fla. (Dec. 16-17, 1941), to investigate the accident at Miami on Dec. 11, 1941, involving Pan American Airways Sikorsky flying boat NC 21V.

Hearings at Las Vegas, Nev. (Jan. 21, 22, 1942), and Los Angeles (Jan. 23-27, 1942), to investigate the accident near Las Vegas on Jan. 6, 1942, involving Transcontinental and Western Air trip 3.

Hearings at Washington, D. C. (Feb. 11, 17, 1942), to receive testimony on the development of the science of weather forecasting in the United States as it relates to safety in aviation.

Hearings at Washington, D. C. (Mar. 15, 1942), to confer with the presidents of commercial airlines on how the airlines could make the maximum contribution to the war effort.

Hearings at Washington, D. C. (Apr. 2, 1942) to confer with Government officials concerning the impact of the national defense program upon the development of commercial aviation.

Hearings at Washington, D. C. (Apr. 10, 1942), to inquire into certain aspects of the Sperry Gyro Auto Pilot in connection with the Ontario accident.

Hearings at New York, N. Y. (Apr. 16, 17, 1942), to investigate the crash in Flushing Bay on Apr. 11, 1942, involving United Air Lines trip 12.

Hearings at Salt Lake City, Utah (May 14-16, 1942), to investigate the accident near Salt Lake City on May 1, 1942, involving United Air Lines trip 4.

Hearings at Miles City, Mont. (May 20, 21, 1942), to investigate the accident at Miles City on May 12, 1942, involving Northwest Airlines trip 1.

Hearings at Miami, Fla. (Sept. 25-30, 1942), to investigate the accident at Miami on Sept. 22, 1942, involving an Army B-18 bomber and a DC-3 cargo airplane operated by Eastern Air Lines for the Army.

Hearings at Washington, D. C. (Oct. 9, 1942), dealing with airport lighting and the equipment necessary for that purpose.

Hearings at Washington, D. C. (Oct. 15, 1942), on Federal jurisdiction over the navigable air space.

Hearings at Los Angeles, Calif. (Nov. 2-3, 1942), to ascertain "facts relating to alleged violations of civil air regulations by Army pilots and to consider the advisability of modifying existing contact flight rules established by the Civil Aeronautics Board."

Hearings at Kansas City, Mo. (Nov. 16, 17, 1942), to investigate the accident near Linden, Mo., on Nov. 4, 1942, involving an Army Douglas C-53 aircraft and Transcontinental and Western Air No. 377, NC-18951 aircraft.
APPENDIX E

Headings for the Miscellaneous Records (Entry 5)

Civil Aeronautics Administration
"Civil Aeronautics Journal"
Communications
Correspondence
"Extracts from Records of Air Carrier Inspection," prepared for Mr. Charles Greaves
Sample questions for the interrogation of witnesses

Civil Aeronautics Authority
Publications

Civil Aeronautics Board
Accident notifications to the Safety Bureau
Annual report, 1941
Correspondence
Non-skid surfaces on runways
Press releases
Regulations, civil air
Reports of investigations of air accidents

Publications on aeronautical topics
Report of Representative Dirksen on the copilot training programs of certain airlines
APPENDIX F

Headings for the Vouchers and Related Papers (Entry 6)

Balance sheet
Curry, Daisy (asst. clerk)
Dictaphone Corporation
Dirksen, Hon. Everett L.
Greaves, Charles S. (clerk)
Hinshaw, Hon. Carl
Hotels
Imes, Margaret E. (asst. clerk)
Kleberg, Hon. Richard K.
McCann, Irving G. (counsel)
Miller, W. Perry (asst. clerk)
Nichols, Hon. Jack
Office supplies
Pearson, Hon. Herron
Postal and Western Union Telegraph Co.
Railroad tickets
Railway Express Agency
Scott, F. E. (Postmaster, House of Representatives)
Southworth, Emma (asst. reporter)
Telephone service
Young, Jane (reporter)
Miscellaneous vouchers
Preliminary inventories of the records of:

15. War Production Board. 1948. 59 p.
30. War Shipping Administration. 1951. 35 p.
34. Solid Fuels Administration for War. 1951. 39 p.

(Continued on next page)
Preliminary inventories of the records of:

43. War Refugee Board. 1952. 6 p.
47. Court of Claims Section of the Department of Justice. 1952. 29 p.
48. Special Committee of the Senate to Investigate the National Defense Program, 1941-46. 1952. 227 p.
49. President's Air Policy Commission. 1952. 7 p.
60. Selected Foreign Service Posts. 1953. 51 p.
63. Special Committee of the Senate to Investigate Air-Mail and Ocean-Mail Contracts. 1953. 31 p.