

# Seattle Chamber of Commerce Round-the-World Flight Collection, 1923-1925

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Creator</b>	Seattle Chamber of Commerce
<b>Title</b>	Seattle Chamber of Commerce Round-the-World Flight Collection
<b>Dates</b>	1923-1925 (inclusive) 1923 1925
<b>Quantity</b>	2 boxes
<b>Collection Number</b>	1956.1145 (accession)
<b>Summary</b>	Newspaper clippings, correspondence, and committee minutes related to the United States Army Air Service's "Round the World Flight" in 1924, including pre-flight planning, christening event, crash retrieval, return celebration and gifts, the creation of a monument, and the disposition of the aircrafts
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">Museum of History &amp; Industry, Sophie Frye Bass Library</a> Sophie Frye Bass Library Museum of History & Industry P.O. Box 80816 Seattle, WA 98108 Telephone: 206-324-1126 Fax: 206-780-1533 <a href="mailto:library@mohai.org">library@mohai.org</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	The collection is open to the public by appointment.
<b>Languages</b>	English.

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## Content Description

The Seattle Chamber of Commerce Round-the-World Flight Collection is comprised of committee meeting minutes, schedules, and lists, as well as correspondence regarding permission to fly over foreign countries, event planning documents, maps, and schedules. Correspondence, comprising both letters and telegrams, concerns the flight, all of the related events, the crash of the "Seattle," the return flight plan, the monument, the souvenirs, and the final resting places of each aircraft. Event invitations are included, as well as responses. Clippings cover the flight, crash, return celebration, monument, and souvenirs. One photograph shows Lt. Lowell Smith in Boston before the return flight to Seattle.

## Historical Background

In the 1920s many countries were vying to be the first to circumnavigate the world by air. The United States Army Air Service, precursor to the United States Air Force, decided to sponsor a mission to circumnavigate the world using military aircraft, planned by the War Department planning committee. Douglas Aircraft Company was commissioned to build the aircraft for the flight, producing the Douglas World Cruiser (DWC), which was equipped with both wheels and pontoons. In 1924 four planes,

"Seattle," "Chicago," "Boston" and "New Orleans" left from Sand Point in Seattle, Washington. After many celebratory events, including a christening and an aerial circus, the planes left on April 6, 1924, heading for Alaska. The "Seattle" crashed in Alaska; the crew members were fine and were rescued, however they were unable to continue the flight. The "Boston" made it to Europe, but was forced to land at sea when it suddenly lost all oil pressure. The crew was rescued by the United States Navy, but the plane was damaged beyond repair and was sunk. The prototype aircraft was brought, renamed the "Boston II," and the planes continued toward Seattle. After several stops throughout the States, the planes arrived back at Sand Point Field in Seattle on September 28, 1924. It was a 27,553 mile flight, completed in 175 days.

The Seattle Chamber of Commerce was in charge of welcoming events, both for the departure and the arrival back in Seattle. They were also in charge of souvenirs for the pilots and crew, and also for the construction of a suitable memorial. Creating souvenirs caused many conflicts. Wings were originally suggested, to be worn on dress occasions, but the Navy did not approve them. Bids were put in for watches and rings, and rings were ultimately selected. With this final selection came frantic checking with other cities to make sure they were not bestowing the same souvenir. In Seattle there were many bids, hurt feelings, and outstanding bills from local jewelers.

Sand Point became a Naval Air Station, largely due to the World flight. After the air field was decommissioned, it became Warren G. Magnuson Park, where the World Flight memorial statue can still be seen at the park entrance. The statue was designed and sculpted by Alonzo Victor Lewis, a famous Washington sculptor who taught at the University of Washington and whose sculptures can be seen on some of the buildings, such as Miller Hall. Creating the commemorative statue involved many issues, first with the Navy regarding location, as there was concern that the height of the statue would cause aerial interference. Many local brass foundries were insulted when they weren't chosen, as were other local sculptors.

The "Chicago" is at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C. and the "New Orleans" is part of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History's collections. A model is currently on display, while the original is at the Museum of Flying in Santa Monica, CA. The wreckage of the "Seattle" was retrieved and is on display at the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum in Anchorage, Alaska.

## Use of the Collection

### Restrictions on Use

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### Preferred Citation

Seattle Chamber of Commerce Round-the-World Flight Collection, Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

## Administrative Information

## Arrangement

Documents are arranged in folders by subject and then arranged chronologically within the folders.

## Location of Collection

13A.4.6 (Box 1)

## Location of Collection

12A.5.14 (Box 2)

## Acquisition Information

Gift of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce; received in 1956.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Folder		
1	Flight planning papers	1923-1924
2	Committees	1924-1925
3	General correspondence	1923-1924
4	Event correspondence	1924
5	Crew/family correspondence	1924
6	Post-event correspondence	1924-1925
7	Event invitations	1924
8	Christening event	1924
9	Arrival celebration and post-event Papers	1924-1925
10	Photograph of Lt. Lowell Smith in Boston	1924
11	Monument	1924-1925

Container(s)	Description	Dates
12	Gift correspondence	1924
13	Ring drawings	1924
14	Aircraft disposition	1924
15	Newspaper clippings	1924 January-May
16	Newspaper clippings	1924 July-November
<b>Box</b>		
2	Newspaper pages	1924 March-October

## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Aerial exploration

Flights around the world

Naval Station Puget Sound (Wash.)

United States. Army. Air Service

### Geographical Names :

Seattle (Wash.)

### Form or Genre Terms :

Clippings

Correspondence

Finding aid prepared by Alyssa Enders  
2013



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