

'American Clipper,' Hotel on Wings, Takes Off on Flight to Antipodes

Special to The Star-Telegram.

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 24.—A 42-ton hotel on wings, Pan American Airways "American Clipper," roared out to sea Saturday afternoon on the first leg of an 8,000 mile flight to the Antipodes.

Fifteen notables adjusted their seat belts as the clipper's captain sent the four motors of the ship into action and the huge, silver hull left the waters off Terminal island

The takeoff was delayed slightly because Van Norman forgot to kiss his wife. He remembered on the motor launch, which turned back to let him complete his leave-taking.

churning behind on the final inspection run before Pan American begins regular passenger service to Auckland, New Zealand, the land "down under."

The passengers, who were given a sendoff banquet Friday night at the Huntington Hotel in Pasadena, were: Paul Patterson, publisher Baltimore Sun; Thomas H. Beck, president Crowell Publishing Co.; James G. Stahlman, publisher Nashville Banner; Malcolm Muir, editor News Week Magazine; Clem J. Randau, vice president of United Press; Fletcher Bowron, mayor of Los Angeles; J. L. Van Norman, president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce; Stephen Royce, chairman of Pasadena Preferred; Ernest L. Gruening, governor of Alaska; C. V. Whitney, Graham B. Grosvenor and E. O. MacDonnell, directors of Pan American Airways; Oswald Ryan, member of the Civil Aeronautics Board; Charles Page Sr., of Fireman's Fund Insurance Co., and Amon Carter, publisher of The Star-Telegram.

First stop is Honolulu, where the flying boat will set down at 6 a. m. Sunday for an overnight stop after a 2,570-mile trip.

Saves 15 Days.

The "American Clipper," pioneering a new passenger route across the South Pacific, completed an earlier run last July 18. A previous press flight was made last July 12 as company officials shaped plans for actual passenger and express service starting Sept. 7. Test runs were made in 54 hours, 11 minutes flying time as compared with 17 days by boat.

Magellan would have required weeks to negotiate the distance, but shortly after the sun rises the eastern sky and they have spent a night asleep in the clouds, the passengers will hear the cry: "There's Diamond Head—and Waikiki." Sunday, as the Clipper comes within sight of the Hawaiians, cross-roads of the Pacific.

The party will be given a reception Sunday night in Honolulu before beginning the next leg of the flight, to Canton Island Monday. The third leg is to Noumea, New Caledonia, a French possession, which will be made on Tuesday. The final flight is to Auckland Thursday. The Clipper is scheduled to land at 4:30 p. m.

Party to Divide.

After laying over two nights and a day the party will return to Noumea, where they will divide. Seven of the group will take the ship, "Southern Seas," to Sydney,

Australia, while the remainder will return on the Clipper, which will land them back in Los Angeles Sept. 4 after having completed 16,000 miles of flying in 10 days.

The men not returning by plane will spend two days in Sydney, fly across Australia, through the Dutch Indies over Indo-China to Hong Kong, making stops at Townsville, Darwin, Bali, Batavia and Singapore. They will have traveled over 24,000 miles and will be gone one month, arriving back in Los Angeles about Sept. 25.

It was in October of 1936 that a smaller Clipper, a 26-ton boat, inaugurated regular passenger service between the United States and the Hawaiian Islands, made famous by native music and unforgettable scenery. A list of six, including two women, were booked for the trip

on the Hawaiian Clipper after test flights had been made. A party of newspaper men had preceded them on a projected hop to Manila.

Round-the-World Service.

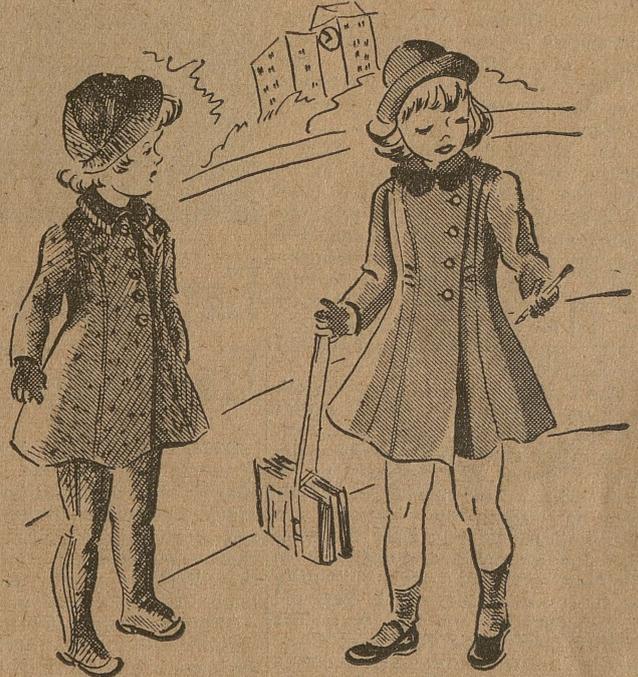
Nine months later, Pan America's silver wings cast their shadow over still more distant seas. A 30-year dream of round-the-world air service became true when a Clipper from Manila landed at the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. Subsequently, a large party of American newspaper executives made this trip.

This new route into the South Pacific, which received a serious setback in January of 1938 when the British Samoan Clipper burned near Pago Pago while dropping a load of gasoline before landing, killing its

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Clipper

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crew of seven, was a dream with aviation men as early as 1935. The New Zealand government authorized the service on a basis of British commercial planes enjoying the same privileges as Yankee Clippers on the westward journey.

But there remained much work to do. A base southwest of Hawaii had to be established and in 1939, the British and American governments agreed for a system of joint control on the Canton and Enderbury Islands, 1,915 miles distant from Hawaii. The United States was permitted to build an airport on Canton open to the British and American civil aviation on equal terms.

Canton, a mere dot on the map, is where the passengers on this flight will arrive at 5:30 p. m. Monday after a 24-hour stop in Hawaii. They'll spend the night at a hotel operated by the airline and board their ship at 6 a. m. Tuesday, headed for Noumea, on the French Island of New Caledonia.

It will be 5:30 p. m. Wednesday before the Clipper pilot sets his ship down in the flying spray, but lack of speed won't be responsible for this seemingly long hop. The travelers will cross the international date line and Tuesday will become Wednesday.

Noumea, far, far away from a tourist's ordinary travels, was discovered by Cook, the explorer who charted the Hawaiians. First chronicled by geographers in 1774, this 7,654 square-mile island is now a French penal colony. Its population of slightly more than 50,000 consists in the main of blacks.

The air travelers will spend the night in Noumea while their ship is provisioned and checked and at 8 a. m. Thursday the captain will send his motors roaring and off again will go the aerial voyagers to Auckland, situated on the north of the two main islands which constitute New Zealand, the self-governing British dominion 1,200 miles east of Australia.