

The Robert G. Hufford Photographic Negative Collection

by Tim Williams



United Air Lines (UAL) Boeing 377 Stratocruiser, N31228, c/n 15968, on the ramp ready to load passengers at Los Angeles International Airport, Calif., on May 29, 1953. (Hufford collection, AAHS-39079)

When the American Aviation Historical Society was formed in 1956, many of the founding members were active aviation photographers. They were part of a widely dispersed fraternity of young men who ventured out to photograph friendly airfields with their 616 or Argus C-3 cameras to capture the unusual and interesting aircraft they found on film. Their inspirations were the professional photographers such as Howard Levy and Gordon Williams, whose work they had followed in aviation magazines. But they were mostly amateurs who processed their own negatives and prints to save money. They began to build collections of aircraft negatives. To expand their collections and gain images from other geographic areas they established trading agreements with other aviation photographers. They began shooting multiple negatives of the aircraft they photographed. A relatively large community of aircraft negative trading was formed. The American Aviation Historical Society was formed, partly, to help provide accurate information to allow members of the aviation photographer group to identify the photographs in their collections and to aid in group communications.

One of the members of the aviation photographers' fraternity was Robert G. Hufford. Bob Hufford was among the first 100 members of the AAHS. He began photographing aircraft in the 1930s. In the 1990s Bob donated his collection of 4x5 and 2.25x2.25 black and white aircraft negatives (there are a few color transparencies as well) to the Society. The collection consists of over 16,000 negatives taken by Bob. The aircraft Bob photographed were primarily commercial airline and corporate transports. They represent an extensive record of commercial aviation in America in the postwar period

through the introduction of first and second generation turbine transports. The collection has been completely cataloged and is being digitized as volunteer time allows. Negative numbers in the AAHS online image database that begin with 30000 and range to 46223 cover the Hufford collection.

Bob Hufford was an executive for Kodak dealing with the motion picture industry. His duties required regular meetings at their headquarters in Rochester, New York. Air transportation, at the time, allowed the passenger a great deal of latitude in choosing their route from point "A" to point "B." For Bob, the trip from Los Angeles to Rochester would stop in New Orleans, Miami, Vancouver, British Columbia or Montego Bay. Bob also drove to western airports on weekends and on holidays. The negatives in the Hufford Collection represent hundreds of airports. Bob was very organized regarding his negative collection. Each negative is identified with the exact aircraft type, operator, registration, construction number, aircraft name, location, date and any specific interesting information.

Bob's legacy has benefitted the Society frequently. Many *Journal* articles are enhanced with the inclusion of Robert Hufford images. These have often proven to be the only available image. This collection of images brings warm memories of a time when going to the airport was thrilling and welcoming. We could see, hear and smell the aircraft with nothing between our cameras and the planes. Observation decks were open. There was no TSA or the need. And, the mail on Monday morning might bring some exotic negatives from a trading partner in some distant location.

Thank you Bob!



An unidentified American Airlines Vultee V-1A at Indianapolis, Ind., in 1935. (Hufford collection, AAHS-30010)



Western Airlines Douglas DC-4 Skymaster, NC88816, c/n 27249, seen at Los Angeles International Airport, Calif., in 1948. (Hufford collection, AAHS-41074)



United Air Lines Boeing 247-D, NC13340, c/n 1722, at Midway airport, Chicago, Ill., in 1936. (Hufford collection, AAHS-30018)



20th Century Fox's Beechcraft D-18, N80243, at the now closed airport in Del Mar, Calif., on August 1, 1950. (Hufford collection, AAHS-30405)



United Air Lines Convair 340, N73141, c/n 98, at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, Wash., February 5, 1964. (Hufford collection, AAHS-39644)



American Airlines became the first airline to inaugurate coast-to-coast jet service between New York City and Los Angeles with this Boeing 707-123 "Flagship Oklahoma," N7502A, c/n 17629 on January 25, 1959. Bob Hufford captured a shot of it at O'Hare International Airport, Chicago, Ill., on May 24, 1959. (Hufford collection, AAHS-31463)



Delta Air Lines was the first airline to launch Convair 880 service in 1960. Hufford captured this image of N8801E, c/n 4, at Los Angeles International Airport, Calif., on December 10, 1961. (Hufford collection, AAHS-46545)



British Overseas Airways Corp.'s (BOAC) Vickers Super VC-10, G-ASGA, c/n 851, was the prototype Super VC-10. Hufford photographed it at Sangster International, Montego Bay, Jamaica, on May 9, 1966. (Hufford collection, AAHS-46409)



Trans World Airlines' Lockheed L-1649A Starliner, N7311C, c/n 1013, on a short final at Los Angeles International Airport, Calif., on December 27, 1959. (Hufford collection, AAHS-38932)



Bonanza Airlines' Douglas DC-9-15, N948L, c/n 47049, at Sky Harbor International Airport, Phoenix, Ariz., on May 22, 1968. (Hufford collection, AAHS-32674)



Braniff International Airways operated a number of British Aircraft Corp. (BAC) 1-11-203AE, including N1544, c/n 18, seen here at Love Field, Dallas, Tex., in the pre-"Easter-egg" color scheme on May 2, 1965. (Hufford collection, AAHS-32758)



American Airlines' Douglas DST-144, NC16007, c/n 1549, at National Airport, Washington, D.C., on January 1, 1941. (Hufford collection, AAHS-31980)