

EAA's Attic



A.



B.



C.

The Ford Reliability Air Tour

Although Oshkosh was not a 2003 National Air Tour stop in September, EAA welcomed about half of the 25 participants during EAA AirVenture 2003. Some of those vintage birds flew in the original tours, which ran annually from 1925 to 1931. Organizers at the time, including Edsel and Henry Ford, established the event (also called the Ford Reliability Air Tour) to promote reliable commercial air travel.

Taken at Ford Airport in Dearborn, Michigan, where the golden age event began and ended each year, these original photographs, tucked away in EAA's Attic, are of three birds that flew in the original tours.

A. This 1925 Swallow was one of three in

the 1925 tour. Records note that John W. Stauffer piloted the aircraft. However, his passenger, Hart H. Bowman, did most of the flying.

B. Jack Laass flew this Driggs Dart solo in 1926. The aircraft received a special \$500 light-plane award because of its empty weight of 320 pounds, roughly one-fifth the weight of the other aircraft.

C. Clarence E. Clark, a test pilot for Travel Air, flew this 1926 Travel Air 3000 the same year. Although the aircraft was assigned tour ID number 32, it was accidentally listed in the records as number 3.

—Kathleen L. Witman