

EAA's Attic



As Seen on *The Antiques Roadshow*

While rummaging through EAA's Attic recently, I mentioned to EAA's curator of collections Ron Twellman that I saw an unusual framed photograph of the *USS Akron* on *The Antiques Roadshow*. "I saw it, too," said Ron, smiling. Moments later he pulled one just like it off a shelf!

Between 1928 and 1931 the Goodyear Zeppelin Corp. built the *Akron*, or ZRS-4, in Akron, Ohio, for the U.S. Navy as a scout ship. At 785 feet long, almost 132 feet wide, and 6.5 million cubic feet in volume, the *Akron* was larger than the Graf Zeppelin and had its own internal hangar to store, launch, and service five aircraft.

Renowned photographer Margaret Bourke-White captured the image shortly before the

Akron's maiden voyage on September 23, 1931. Isn't that a great frame? It's made of the duralumin used to make the ship's girders. Goodyear distributed these signed prints to its top salespersons as part of its annual Goodyear Dealers Zeppelin Race. This one was awarded to C.W. Beers & Son.

Unfortunately, the *Akron's* glory was short-lived. During an unexpected storm, it crashed into the ocean near Atlantic City, New Jersey, on April 3, 1933. The *Akron's* sister ship, the *USS Macon*, met the same fate on February 12, 1935, off Point Sur, California, ending the Navy's operation of rigid airships, but it continued to operate non-rigid airships—blimps—until November 30, 1961.

—Kathleen L. Witman