

Balloons to Bombers

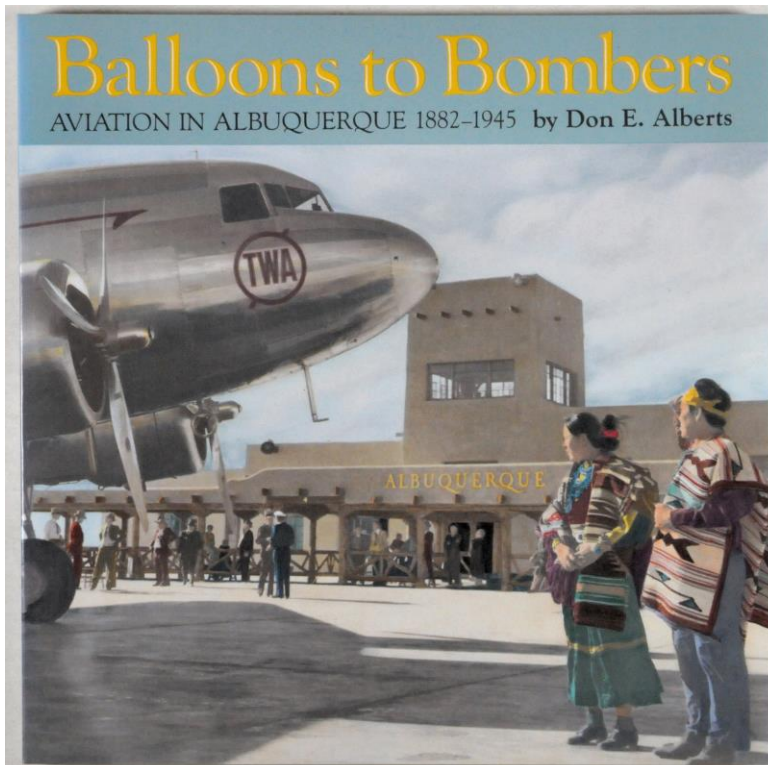
Aviation in Albuquerque 1882-1945

This is a colorful history of aviation in Albuquerque from the first balloon ascension through the end of World War II. It captures the excitement of aviation, which began when bartender Park Van Tassel, daringly piloted his hydrogen balloon *City Of Albuquerque* on a flight from Old Town in 1882. It reveals the audacious Charles Walsh who gave the first demonstration of heavier-than-air flight at the 1911 Territorial Fair in a Curtiss Model D biplane (similar to the one displayed in the main hall here at the airport).

It relates how Frank Speakman and William Franklin opened Albuquerque Airport on the East Mesa in 1928, ushering in commercial and private aviation. It provides a vivid description of how, by the 1930's, Albuquerque assumed importance as a hub of southwestern aviation for early trans-continental air service, and the important role it played in training bomber crews and nuclear weapons during World War II.

Don E. Alberts was a 1956 graduate of UNM with a BS in Mechanical Engineering. He flew helicopters in the Navy and spent a brief period with Sandia Corporation. He returned to UNM to receive a PhD in history and wrote two books on the Confederate invasion of New Mexico, one entitled *Rebels on the Rio Grande*.

Don, who ultimately became the historian for Kirtland AFB, passed away in December 2010 and is survived by his wife Rosemary, who was a teacher, two children and five grandchildren.



The book is currently out of print and no plans of being reprinted at this time.