



Pioneer Air Lines 1946-1955

Pioneer Air Lines was established in 1939 under the name Essair Airlines and based in Houston, Texas. The name was changed to Pioneer in 1946 and the carrier flew routes within the state of Texas. Service was expanded into New Mexico on May 1, 1948 with a route from Albuquerque to Dallas stopping at Santa Fe, Las Vegas, Tucumcari, and Clovis, New Mexico as well at Lubbock, Abilene, Mineral Wells, and Fort Worth, Texas. One month later a second route began from Amarillo to El Paso, Texas with stops at Clovis and Roswell, New Mexico. Las Cruces was added to the second route by October 1948 and a stop at Alamogordo was initially planned for this route but did not start. The two routes crisscrossed at Clovis which enabled passengers from Roswell to connect to Dallas by changing planes at Clovis. An extension from Roswell to Artesia and onto El Paso was applied for as well as new routes between Roswell and Lubbock and between Tucumcari and Amarillo however none of the routes were given authorization. The stop at Las Cruces ended by mid-1950 and the entire Amarillo to El Paso route was discontinued by early 1951 which ended all Pioneer service to Roswell. Pioneer had a U. S. air mail contract designated as mail route 64 and the carrier used 21-seat Douglas DC-3 aircraft. In 1952 Pioneer sold their entire fleet of DC-3's and switched to the 36-seat Martin 202. Unfortunately, Pioneer quickly incurred heavy losses from operating the larger planes and reverted back to all DC-3's in late 1953 however the carrier was able to bring back some of the 202's by late 1954. Service to Las Vegas, NM ended in 1952 due to runway conditions and flights ended at Tucumcari in late 1953. On April 1, 1955 Pioneer merged with Continental Airlines giving Continental the route authority from Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Clovis to Dallas. As Continental was already serving Roswell, Carlsbad, and Hobbs, New Mexico, they were now allowed to begin routes to Dallas from those cities as well.

A second Pioneer Airlines, a commuter airline, operated throughout New Mexico from 1981 through 1985. This carrier had no known affiliation to the original Pioneer Air Lines.



Pioneer Air Lines Douglas DC-3 at the Albuquerque Municipal Airport in the late 1940's.



Pioneer Air Lines Martin 2-0-2.



Pioneer Air Lines route map from 1948.