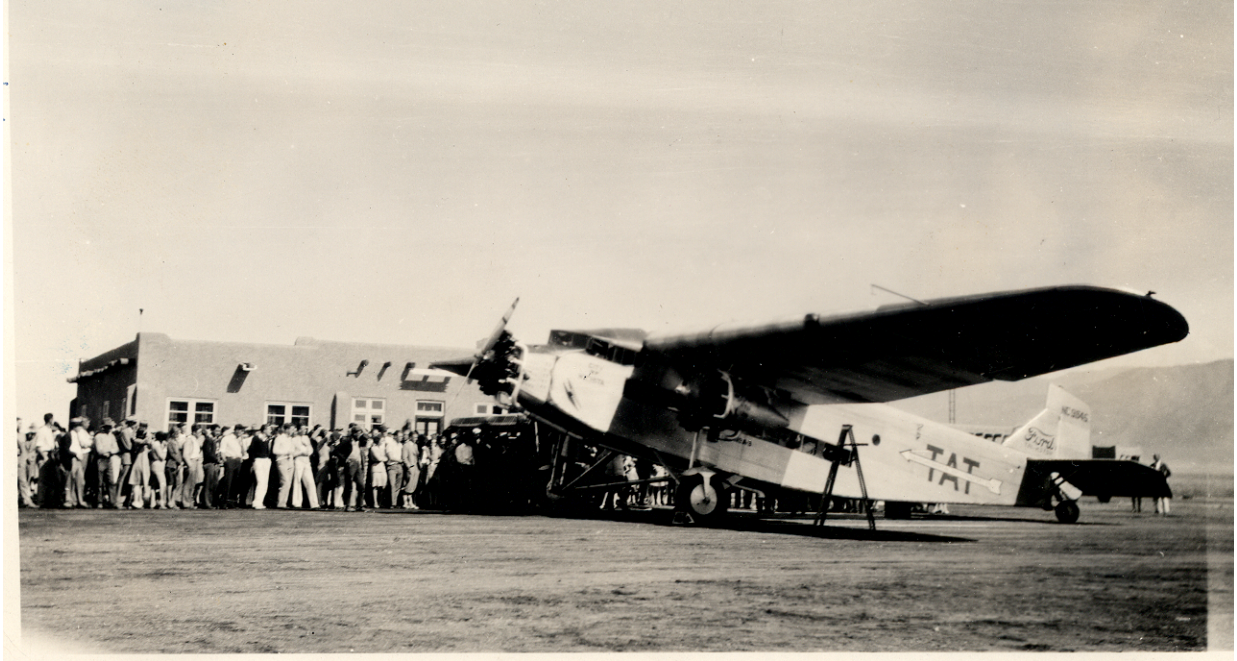




## Transcontinental Air Transport “TAT”

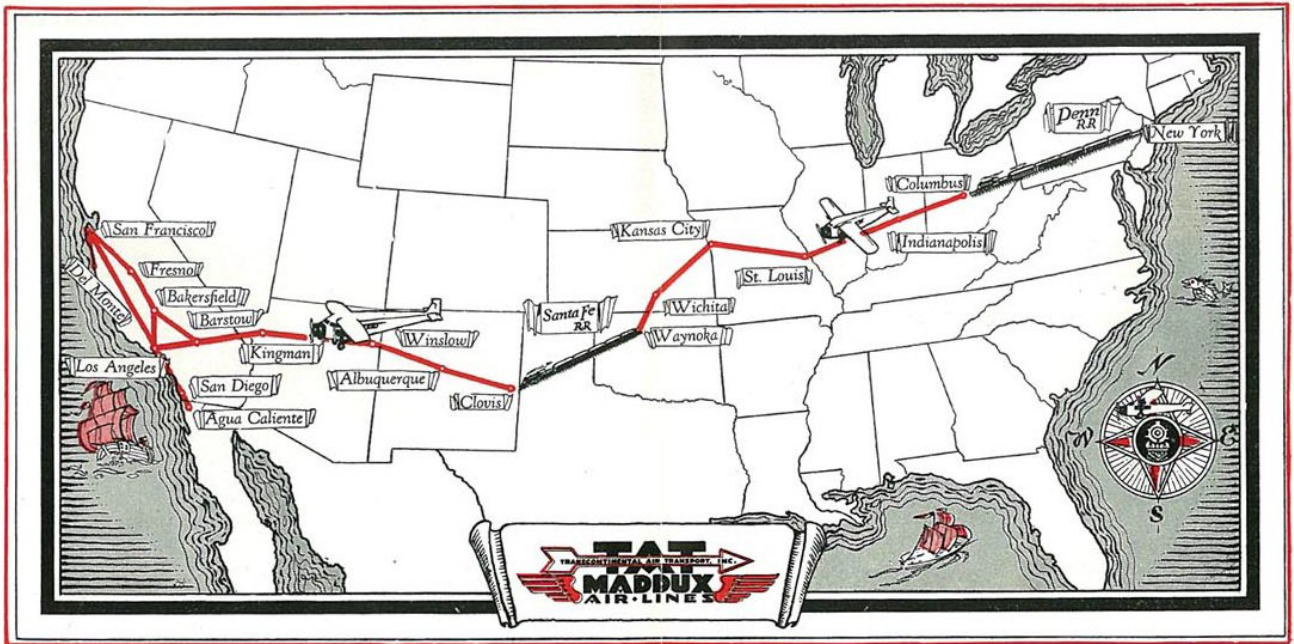
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Transcontinental Air Transport, “TAT”, began operations on July, 7, 1929 with the first scheduled airline route across the United States. Based in New York City, the carrier used a fleet of Ford F-5AT tri-motor aircraft and worked with two railroad companies to provide a service from New York to Los Angeles in roughly 48 hours, half the time it took to travel completely by train. The first westbound service began on the night of July 7, 1929 using the Pennsylvania Railroad from New York to Columbus, Ohio then switching to an aircraft on the morning of July 8. The aircraft flew from Columbus to Waynoka, Oklahoma with stops in Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Wichita. At Waynoka passengers then boarded the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad for a second overnight trip to Clovis, New Mexico. The first westbound trip was then completed by air from Clovis to the Glendale airport in Los Angeles on July 9 making stops in Albuquerque as well as at Winslow and Kingman, Arizona. Travel by train at night was necessary due to navigational aids for air travel had not yet been established at that time. The first eastbound trip began from Glendale on the morning of July 8 and was scheduled to follow the same route but had to overfly Albuquerque on its maiden flight due to local weather conditions. Therefore the first eastbound and first westbound flights through Albuquerque both occurred on July 9, 1929. This new air/rail service was made possible with the assistance of Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh who made the first historic solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean two years prior. TAT hired Lindbergh as their technical advisor and Lindbergh determined the route that the airline would follow. On November 16, 1929, TAT merged with Maddux Air Lines of California which extended flights northward from Los Angeles to San Francisco with stops in Bakersfield and Fresno, California. Service was also extended southward to San Diego and Agua Caliente Mexico. The carrier then became known as TAT-Maddux Air Lines. Maddux had begun operating on July 21, 1927 with the Los Angeles to San Diego route.



TAT Ford F-5 Tri-motor at the first Albuquerque Airport in 1929.

TAT was competing with Western Air Express (WAE) on the western half of the journey from Los Angeles to Kansas City. As the great depression of 1929 settled in only months after TAT's and WAE's New Mexico service began, both carriers faced severe hardships. The government then offered an air mail contract for which only one carrier could be awarded so TAT and the Los Angeles to Kansas City route of WAE were forced to merge in order for either carrier to survive. The merger was completed on July 24, 1930 however both carriers continued to operate separately until October 25, 1930. The combined operation was renamed "Transcontinental and Western Air", or "TWA" and sufficient navigational aids had then been established for air travel at night. On October 25, 1930, the new carrier began airmail service and its aircraft then operated the entire coast to coast journey with an overnight stop at Kansas City. The original segments on WAE from Albuquerque to Amarillo and Wichita were retained while the stops on TAT at Clovis and Waynoka as well as the train segment between the two cities were discontinued. The train segment between Columbus and New York was also discontinued and the aircraft made new stops at Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Further evaluation on the history of TWA and its service to New Mexico is written under the link for "Trans World Airlines".



TAT route map from late 1929 showing the segments flown by aircraft in red and the segments by overnight trains in black.



Volunteers have restored an original TAT Ford Tri-motor to flying condition and the aircraft has visited Albuquerque's Double Eagle II Airport on several occasions. The photo above was taken on April 7, 2017.