

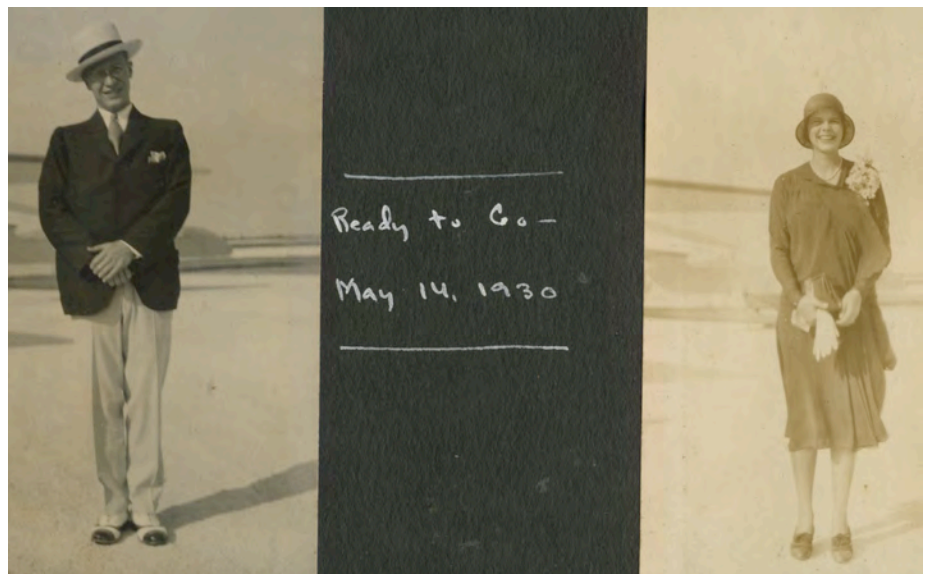
CHAPTER 4- MIAMI AND THE FLYING HONEYMOON

At the end of 1929 Leslie was transferred to Miami where he was given added responsibilities. His job title was Assistant Division Engineer. Leslie's initial duties involved maintaining the Consolidated Commodores acquired from The New York, Rio and Buenos Aires Airways - NYRBA, and testing new aircraft.



In mid 1930 Leslie was awarded two round trip passes to Trinidad on the Fokker F-10's and the Sikorsky S-38's. He and his wife Jean stopped at all the Pan American bases along the way. The trip was Mr. Priestester's way of making up for having asked them earlier to cancel their honeymoon due to urgent airline business.

Their photograph album of this trip with pilots who later went on to Pacific crossing fame is a witness to early aviation, its equipment, its people, and primitive operating environment. These pictures speak for themselves.



Famous Pan American pilots Ed Musick and Leo Terletzky would perish a few years later in the crash of the Samoan Clipper and the mysterious disappearance of the Hawaii Clipper



Fokker F-10 at Havana, Cuba.



Sikorsky S-38 Amphibian





Jean and John Leslie amid the struts of the S-38



Stuck in the mud at Santo Domingo



Captain Tilton signs the ships papers and clears customs, St Thomas, Virgin Islands

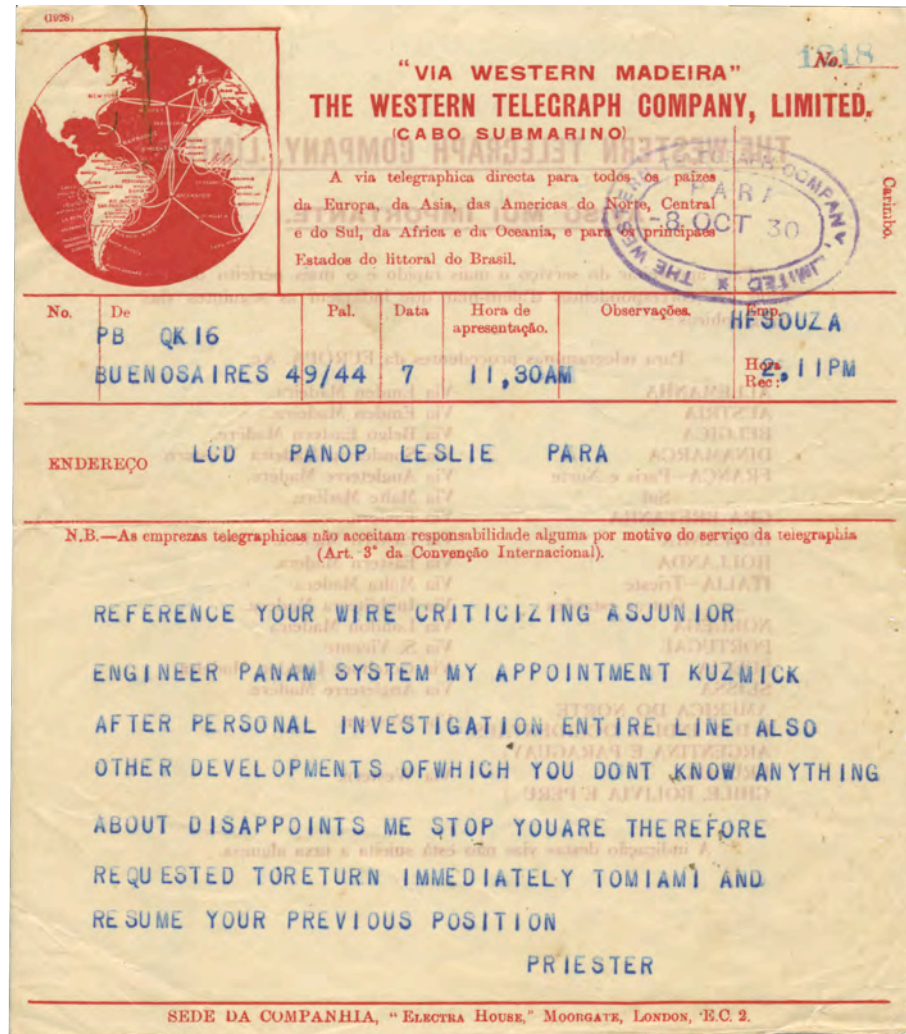


S-38 beached for the night would make a water take off at dawn.

Leslie's career had one dramatic hiccup, but when he told the story years later he made it sound like a lucky break. In 1930 he was sent to Belem do Pará, Brazil, with the expectation that he would be named Division Engineer.

One day he learned that another person would be given the job. "In a fit of Irish temper and Scotch independence, I marched down to the cable station and sent Priester a hot wire inquiring 'how come De Kuzmick and not me?'"

He got this blistering reply and returned to the USA and resumed his "previous position."



In his 1978 memoirs Leslie said:

In due course, I was returned to active duty in Miami, and in a spirit of mutual forbearance the company gave me another chance and I gave them one. As so often in life, it was the best thing that could have happened, because I was in the States when the time came to select the Division Engineer for the great job of helping pioneer the TransPacific Service.

His job was to maintain and prepare for flight the aircraft acquired from NYRBA, mostly Commodores and a couple of dozen S-38's. In 1931 the Sikorsky S-40's, three of them, were added to the fleet. These planes were four engined and could carry 38 passengers, but were primitive compared to the S-42's that Pan Am would use to pioneer long range over ocean flight