

Robert N. Buck Select Bibliography

Monographs by Robert Buck:

- Weather Flying (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1970). This study began as a brochure for an aviation insurance company and grew into a major study of weather flying. A good companion study is found in John R. M. Wilson, Turbulence Aloft (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office for the FAA, 1979). Captain Buck's monograph is not so much how weather is made but how weather is flown. It is a study that is most informative for both the novice and experienced pilot.
- The Art of Flying (Charlottesville, Virginia: Thomasson-Grant, 1992). This is a fascinating and informative book on various subjects relating to flying in 26 chapters. Even an experienced pilot will learn something from this master of aircraft operations.
- The Pilot's Burden: Flight Safety and the Roots of Pilot Error (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1994). A well written view by Buck of the aviation industry and was highly critical of the FAA whom he considered added to the pilot's burden with bureaucratic rules and regulations written on many occasions by non aviators. He was also critical of the air traffic control system and its confusing instructions and by check pilots who added to the pressure felt by airline pilots in the cockpits. See in particular chapter 11 "Pilot Autonomy Erodes," pages 107-119 as well as chapter 12, "Air Traffic Control: The Big Squeeze," pages 120-132 and Chapter 13, "The FAA: A Paradox," pages 133- Buck learned to fly in an age where there was no automation, computers, GPS systems in the cockpit and other advances in aviation that have occurred in the past 100 years and throughout his career, although he benefited from the advances in technology like CRM (Cockpit Resource Management), FMS (Flight Management System) and TCAS (Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System) and others too numerous to mention here. Burk remained skeptical and wary of technology diminishing the ability of pilots to truly be in charge of the airplane. He expressed his views clearly in chapter 16, "Computers Fly the New Airplanes—Or Do They?," 180-203. Another priceless chapter was found in Chapter 18 entitled; " Are Pilots Overpaid Prima Donnas?," 216-228 and worth the reader's time in one of his most interesting chapters focusing on the non glamorous realities of being an airline pilot.

Other studies relating to commercial aviation, TWA and flying conditions

- Walter Boyne, The Smithsonian Book of Flight (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, and in New York by Orion Press, 1987).
- David C. Edwards, Pilot (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990).
- Joe A. Brown, Thunderstorm Characteristics and Flight Procedures (Kansas City, Missouri, Trans World Airlines, 1945) and also by Brown, Wind Shear Effects on Air Speed (Kansas City, Missouri: TWA, 1966) and Wind Factor: Effect on Descent Rate (Kansas City, Missouri, TWA, 1966).

- Ralph S. Damon, “TWA Nearly Three Decades in the Air (New York: Princeton University Press, 1952). Written by one of the airline’s most beloved presidents who died far too early.
- Ronald Edward George Davies, Airlines of the United States Since 1914 (Washington, D. C. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972 and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1972). See also, A History of the World Airlines (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964 and updated, New York: AMS Press, 1983.) See also Airlines of the Jet Age: A History (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2011). On several occasions while researching at the National Air Space Museum Library in downtown Washington, D. C. I had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Davies and what an encyclopedic mind he had when discussing commercial and transport aviation history. I was so honored that he took time from his busy schedule to speak with me before his death in 2011 at the age of 90.
- Noah Dietrich and Bob Thomas, Howard: The Amazing Mr. Hughes (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1972).
- James G. Edinger, Watching for the Wind (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967).
- Flight Operations Department, Trans World Airlines Legacy of Leadership: A Pictorial History of Trans World Airlines (Marcella, Missouri, 1971) . Robert Buck appears on several pages including pages 136 and 143. The publication has no index.
- Najeeb E. Halaby, Cross Winds (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1978).
- John Keats, Howard Hughes (New York: Random House, 1966).
- Charles J. Kelly, Jr., The Sky’s The Limit (New York: Coward-McCane, 1963).
- Nick A. Komons, From Bonfires to Beacons (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office,, 1978).
- Bruce Nichols, Climb Out (Columbus, Ohio: Grow Ahead Press, 1062) which is a short publication focusing o the size and sophistication of the Boeing 747 and its utilization by TWA.
- James Phelan, Howard Hughes, The Hidden Years (New York: Random House, 1976).s
- Robert A. Rummel, Howard Hughes and TWA (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991). A most insightful overview of Hughes from an insider.
- Robert Serling, Howard Hughes’ Airline: An Informal History of TWA (New York: St. Martin’s/Marek, 1983).
- Welman A. Shrader, Fifty Years of Flight: A Chronicle of the Aviation Industry in America, 1909-1953 (Cleveland: Eaton Manufacturing, 1953).
- Henry Ladd Smith, Airways (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942). Dated but still informative.
- Carl Solberg, Conquest of the Skies (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979).
- David B. Tinnin, Just About Everybody vs. Howard Hughes (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1973).
- John R. M. Wilson, Turbulence Aloft (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1979).

Periodicals:

- “War Baby Airline: TWA’s Intercontinental Division, Flying, XXXVI (May. 1945), 65-68, passim. Buck was involved in that division.

- Buck was the focus of two essays in Collier's including, Frederick R. Neely, editor, "Wing Talk: Superintendent of Flying for TWA," CXV (June.23, 1945), 8 and Frederick R. Neely, "Fight Against Thunder," Colliers, CXVIII (Dec. 28, 1946), 72-73.
- "Pilots' Pilot," Newsweek, XXVIII (Feb. 18, 1946), 69.
- There was a portrait of David Behncke in Business Week (Oct. 26, 1946), 106 as well as U. S. News and World Report, XXIII (Oct. 10, 1947), 29. His obituary can be found in Time, LXI (Apr. 27, 1953), 67.
- After the crash of the TWA airliner in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1946, L. Spruill wrote, "TWA Improves Maintenance Through Better Tooling," Aviation, XXXX (Jan. 20, 1947), 86, passim.
- "Airline Puzzle: Rumor has TWA and Pan American Merging," Business Week (Mar. 1, 1947), 18-19. Buck opposed this possibility.
- W. Price, "Labor's Biggest Wind," Saturday Evening Post, CCXX (Aug. 2, 1947), 25, passim. This story relates to David Behncke and the ALPA. Behncke advocated for an independent safety board and for an essay on this topic see "Behncke Offers Safety Formula," Aviation Week, XXXXVII (Dec. 15, 1947), 60 followed by his views pertaining to "Should Congress Re-establish an Independent Air Safety Board?," Congressional Digest, XXVIII (Jan. 1949), 22.
- A good essay relating to TWA can be found in "TWA's Past and is Future," Business Week (July 16, 1949), 72-74, passim.
- For an essay related to TWA's search for new aircraft see "TWA's 20 Connies Will Replace DC-3s," Aviation Week, L (June 13, 1949), 12 plus the following: "TWA Interest in Viscount Reported," Aviation World, LVII (Nov. 3, 1952), 86 as well as a search for a twin-engine passenger plane can be found in "TWA Shopping for Twin-engine Planes," Aviation Week, LI (Nov. 21, 1949), 50. The company eventually purchased the Martin 202 aircraft and later updated to the Martin 404. Also related to the purchase of aircraft see, "TWA Dilemma: Turboprops or Jets?," Aviation Week, LXI (Dec. 27, 1954), 17.
- The official name change of the carrier from T&WA can be found in "TWA Name Change," Aviation Week, LII (May 8, 1950), 45. Company records reveal that the official name change came one week later on May 15. 1950.
- "From a Noted Pilot," Aviation, LIII (July. 31, 1950), 33.
- For David Behncke's non-reappointment to the ALPA presidency see "Behncke Bounced," Newsweek, XXXXVIII (July 23, 1951), 54, passim as well as "Behncke Bumped But Battles On," Aviation Week LXI (Dec. 27, 1951), 16..
- "A Pilot Talks About Air Safety: Interview," U. S. News and World Report, LIV (Mar. 18, 1963), 59. Buck's view of how to improve the safety in flying especially during landing in minimum conditions.
- Buck wrote a number of articles for Reader's Digest and I have included a select few:
- "Don't Worry About Flying the Oceans," LXVIII (Apr. 1956), 33-36.
- "Why An Airline Pilot Quit Smoking," LXIX (July. 1956), 66-68.
- "The Most Unforgettable Character I've Met," LVX (Feb. 1957), 114-118.
- "A New Way to Prevent Air-Crash- Fires," LXXII (Feb. 1958), 129-130, passim.
- "What About the Weather Captain?" LLIX (Jan. 1959), 177-178, passim.

- “Why Can’t All Airports Have Those Lifesaving Lights?,” LXXIV (Apr. 1959), 79-83.
- “Close Call in the Sky,” LXXVIII (Jan. 1960), 94-98.
- “Memo to the New Air Boss,” LXXIX (Jan. 1961), 163-164, passim.
- “Man Who Makes Me Think Young,” LXXXVI (Apr. 1965), 259-260, passim.
- “The Sky Is Their Limit,” LXXX (Apr. 1967), 68-72.
- Review of Buck’s book, Weather Flying can be found in Airfacts, the Magazine for Pilots, (Feb. 1970),
- An interesting essay by Buck is entitled, “You May Think Things Are Tough Now, Bu I Can Remember When,” TWA Skyliner, XXXVII (Apr. 8, 1974), 8.
- “Concorde,” Flying, LXXXV (Oct. 1974), 46-49, passim.
- Two studies not authored by Buck but of interest include: Frederick R. Neely, “Fight Against Thunder,” Colliers, CXVIII (Dec. 28, 1946), 72 as well as Charles J. V. Murphy and T. A. Wise, “The Problem of Howard Hughes,” Fortune, LIX (Jan. 1959), 79, passim.

Obituaries:

- The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, April 18, 2007.
- Margalit Fox, “Robert N. Buck Dies at 93; Was Record Setting Aviator,” The New York Times, May 2, 2007, A28