



# South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Avenue  
South Milwaukee, WI 53172

NEWSLETTER April, 2008

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Secretary	Jan Tangen	483-1621
Treasurer	Theresa Aghbashian	762-5623
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Barb Mueller is Sunshine Chairperson		762-2712

# Special Lawson Edition

### From the President's desk!

Happy Spring! With our record snowfall this year it is certainly good to see spring coming. Our Annual Dinner on February 9, 2008 was held at Salvatore's. The dinner was delicious. Linda Daly and her Irish Straw Weaving was informative. The Janet Wood and the Irish Dancers, Lindsey Wood, Natalie Burton, and Maggie English were entertaining and educational. Congratulations to our three honored members, Jewell Heise, Dolores Kowalski and Betty Chovanec for their many years of diligent service.

Pot Luck Dinner is coming May 12, 2008 at the First Congregational Church Hall, 1111 N. Chicago Ave. Bring a dish to pass. Serving at 5:30 PM.

Keep in mind our Garden Tour/ Lawson Building Fund Raiser on Saturday, June 28 from 10 AM to 3 PM. We have 10 home gardens and 2 special gardens. We will need volunteers to work each site. Rain or shine. To sign up call 762 5214. \$10.00 for tickets in advance or \$15.00 on the day of the tour. That's less than \$1.00 a garden, a great price. Tickets will go on sale at the Pot Luck or call Lois at 762-5214 or Sue Ziarek, 520-1959. Bring your friends. Go out for lunch, too.

July 27, 2008 will be our Open House and Lawson/Heritage Day Mini Classes .

We hope to have something about Model Railroads. Details later.

1:00 PM What is Midwest Pottery? Steve Schreiter

1:30 PM Model Railroading Experiences by Bill Bedell

2:00 PM Alfred Lawson and Aviation - Lois and Steve Schreiter

2:30 Walking tour of the seven bridges in Grant Park--

Come and see the changes in the Museum. The month of March has been spent working on the museum. We have redone the kitchen and Lincoln Room floors and painted ceilings and walls.

Our Lincoln / Research room has been redone without losing the Lincoln Books. What a marvel!

FOUNDED MARCH 1972 BY MR. AND MRS. DENNIS RANKIN

INITIAL DIRECTORS — DENNIS RANKIN • PENNY RANKIN • GEORGE HOOK • MARY McCARRIER • BRUCE RAYESKE  
DORA LEE SZEWCZUGA • WILLIAM DOMOE • LILLIAN DISHONG • CHESTER GROBSCHMIDT

Judy Balestreieri, Nancy Wucherer, Richard Thinnes, and Lois Schreiter moved out 500-600 books to redo the Lincoln/ Research Room and then moved them back. Steve Schreiter helped move bookshelves back to their original positions and reattach them to the wall studs. All the moving had to be done to get the new floors put in. New curtains are in the office and research room. The ceilings are not falling down any more either. Thanks to the expert work of Richard Rice, all the ceilings look like new. The living room, dining room and middle room still need primer and paint. As I write the kitchen cabinets need to be done, but Judy Balestreieri has volunteered to renovate the cabinets. Judy has donated a desk for the research room also. Nancy Wucherer and Theresa Aghbashian have scrapped 3 layers of wallpaper off the cabinet area. And yours truly, has painted the ceilings, walls and doors in the kitchen and Lincoln/Research rooms. We hope you like the fresh look. Check it out when you come for the garden tour.

I am learning Power Point and hope I can put together a community history for the 175 third graders in South Milwaukee. Any experts out there? My grandchildren tell me it's easy.... Really, I am learning patience, and Steve is making more progress than I have.

Our copy machine has died and our service provider cannot get parts for it anymore. Any ideas?

Preserving the Proud Past,  
Lois Schreiter, president

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**Geneology by Steve Schreiter: One hour of genealogy for anyone with the new \$10.00 membership. Basic information forms must be filled out and returned to Addie Becker with dues. Seemembership form or the Internet at [www.ci.south-milwaukee.wi.us](http://www.ci.south-milwaukee.wi.us)**

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*Images of America, South Milwaukee*, a picture history book is for sale at the SM Historical Society. Authors are Nels Monson and Dean S. Marlow, Jr. \$20.00. *Then to Now* by Gert Endthof is \$10.00

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The South Milwaukee Historical Society would like to extend our wishes, condolences or congratulations to its members. Please contact Sunshine Chairperson Barbara Mueller, 762-2712. If you leave a message, please indicate if the card should be sent to their home, hospital or nursing home. The name of the hospital or nursing home would also be appreciated.

In 1964 a Hershey chocolate bar cost \$.05, a Mc Donald's hamburger cost \$.15, first class postage was \$.06 and a gallon of gasoline cost \$.27. Did you appreciate enough for what you had then? Life is not what you spend, but what you give of yourself that makes life memorable. Good friends are hard to find and due to ever increasing printing and postage cost, we need your support of \$10.00 a year. Won't you please help to preserve South Milwaukee's history?

Acquisitions: Thank you to: Eleanor Clark who donated a South Milwaukee City Directory, 1953. The China Chef Restaurant for the sign that was on Dick's Finer Foods and Richard Thinnes for the book *Lawson, Aircraft Industry Builder*, Humanity Publishing Co.

Piggly Wiggly Grocery is changing their program of sharing with the community. They are offering a 4% return on scrip. Jewell Heise will continue making her great strawberry rhubarb jam. She needs your clean jelly jars with covers. Call Jewell at 762-4650.

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# Mayor's Office.

MILWAUKEE

DANIEL W. HOAN, MAYOR



June 20th, 1919.

To the Mayor,  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Sir:-

The Lawson Airline Company is a Wisconsin Corporation, organized for the purpose of operating a passenger carrying service between New York and San Francisco.

The stock-holders of the Lawson Airline Company are made up of some of the leading business men of Milwaukee and vicinity.

Alfred W. Lawson the President and General Manager of the Lawson Airline Company was for several years the General Manager of the Lawson Aircraft Corporation of Green Bay, Wisconsin, which concern was principally engaged in building types of military machines during the war. I am reliably informed that this company secured an order for one hundred machines from the United States government shortly before the armistice was signed. I understand Mr. Lawson has had 12 years continuous practical experience in aircraft work.

Over a year ago the Manufacturers Association of Milwaukee sent a special committee to Green Bay to see Lawson's work, for the purpose of getting him to come to Milwaukee and upon this committee's favorable report the Manufacturers Association of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee County Council of National Defense, the War Industries Board, the Milwaukee Woodcraft Corporation, the Millwork Bureau and several other organizations O.K.'d Mr. Lawson as being a competent aircraft man.

As soon as the armistice was declared, Mr. Lawson began building a twenty-six passenger carrying aircraft here in Milwaukee as the first of a number of these machines which he is now preparing to build in this city.

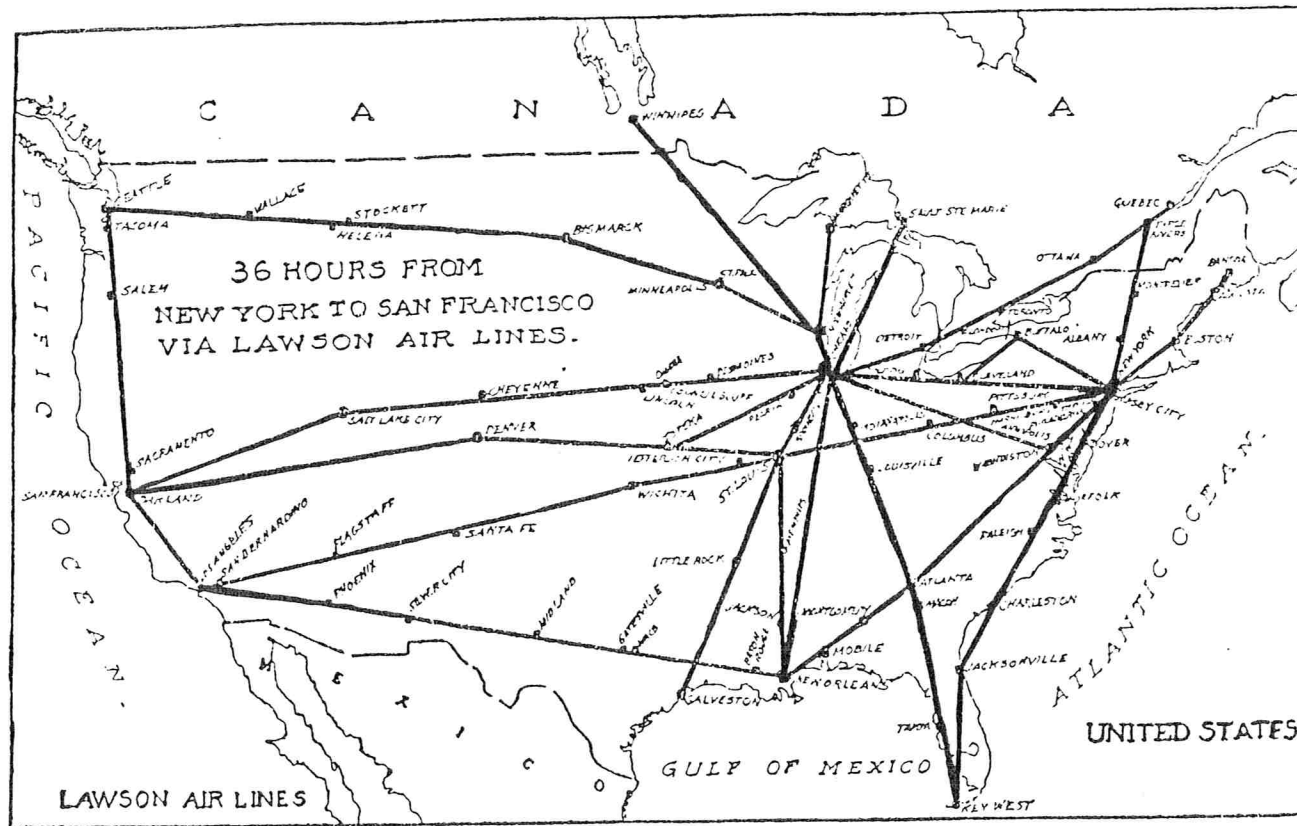
The first machine is almost complete and I understand from Mr. Lawson that it is the intention of his Company (The Lawson Airline Company) to fly this first machine from Milwaukee to Chicago and New York and then from New York to San Francisco in order to make trial tests preparatory to furnishing regular daily trans-continental air service between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Anything you can do to help Mr. Lawson in his laudible work will not only be appreciated by myself and the people here in Wisconsin who are backing him but by, I feel sure, of the whole people of the United States and posterity as well. The results of his work will no doubt be of incalculable benefit to the whole of the people of the United States of America.

Yours very truly,

*Daniel W. Hoan*

# TOPEKA TO BE A PORT OF CALL ON TRANSCONTINENTAL AIRPLANE ROUTE



If Topeka wants to become a "port of call" for transcontinental airships that will ply regularly between New York and San Francisco in a short time it is essential that a first class landing field be established at once. That is the purport of a letter received by Mayor Corwine from the Lawson Airline Transportation company, of Milwaukee, which is preparing to establish a regular passenger air service from coast to coast.

The Lawson company has laid out an air map showing the ports of call along the way and Topeka is made the next direct stop west of St. Louis, Kansas City not even being on the map. But, in the letter received by Mayor Corwine from Alfred W. Lawson, president of the company, it is stated that Topeka must be prepared to handle large planes if this city is to receive service.

Lawson writes:

"We are just completing our first ship to carry 26 passengers and we hope by spring to have 100 of these big ships ready to take the air in this service. The first ship will be ready within the next few weeks and will be sent from Milwaukee to New York and thence from New York to San Francisco on a pathfinding tour for the best route to be obtained for the airline.

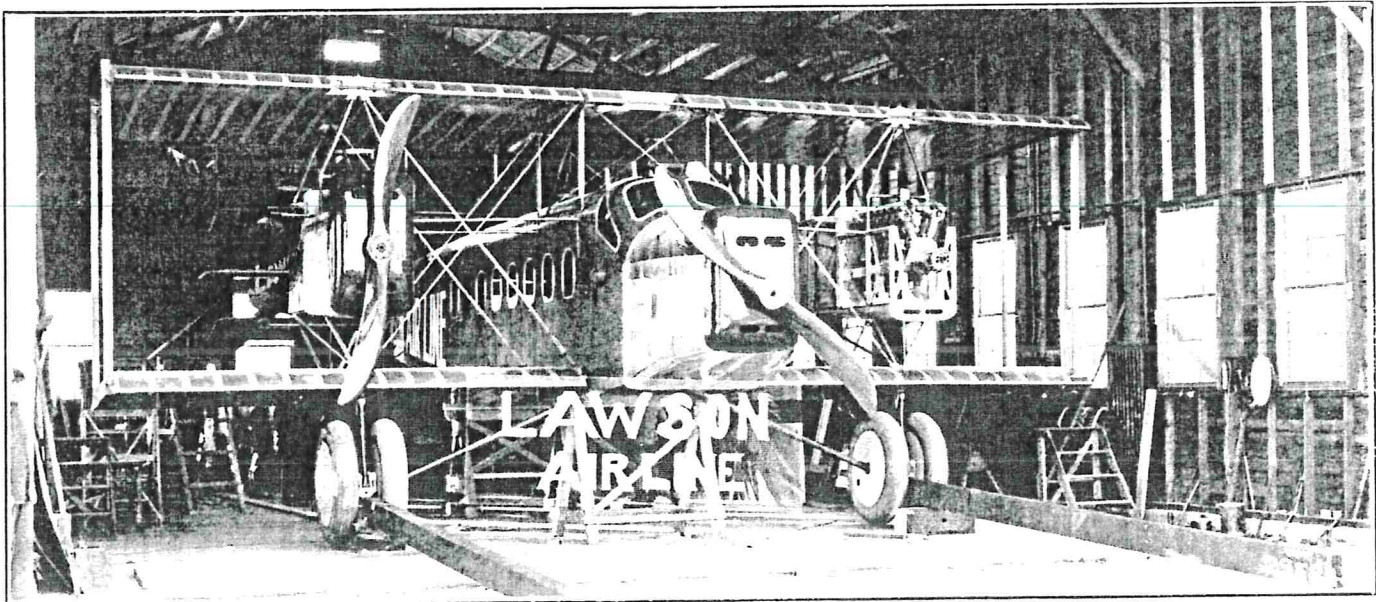
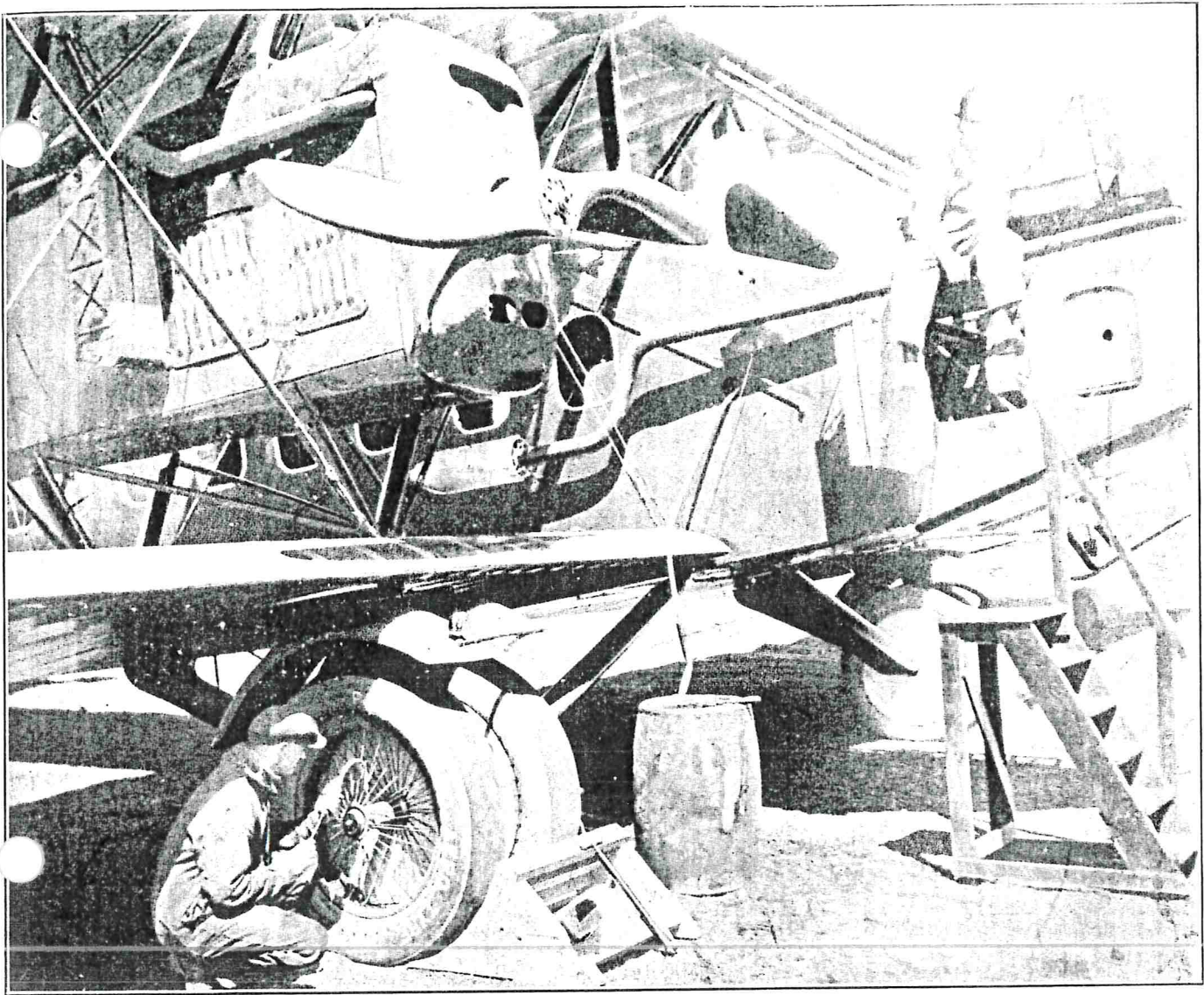
"It will be necessary to find cities on this first trip which are sufficiently wide awake to the opportunities offered for the establishment of this new rapid transit service within their reach, and the first thing absolutely essential is for the cities to offer us a landing station of sufficient length and breadth for our big ships to land and depart without the danger of injury."

Topeka air service boosters hope to be able to inform Mr. Lawson within a very short time that this city will have a first class field, approved by

the government, ready by the time his pathfinder ship sails over Kansas. Robert Fullerton, Topeka's most enthusiastic air booster, who is working as a member of the Chamber of Commerce committee in connection with city commissioners in taking steps to have a field established, stated today that a number of available fields have been located and that it is expected the United States air service inspector will be brought here in the next week or two to look over these fields and to determine which are the most suitable and most likely to receive government approval.

Lieut. Thomas Webber, now flying here, is assisting Fullerton in finding available fields and undoubtedly will be asked to assist the government inspector when the latter comes here. Present plans are to have the Topeka field and the Longren airplane factory located close together, as this will be a great benefit to both.

**IF ANYBODY DOUBTS THAT ALFRED W. LAWSON WAS THE FOUNDER OF AIRLINES ALL ONE HAS TO DO IS TO NOTE THE DATE AT THE TOP OF THIS PAGE — JULY 12, 1919 — AND THEN READ THE ARTICLE WRITTEN BELOW BY THE EDITOR OF THE TOPEKA, KANSAS, DAILY STATE JOURNAL AND IF THAT DOES NOT CONVINCE HIM OR HER THEN NOTHING ELSE WILL.**



The Three-Engine Night Airliner was built at the South Milwaukee Lawson Factory.

# Know Your Man

The father of Alfred Lawson was 42 and his mother 32 years of age when he was born; so he came to life from mature and practical parents who taught him to make himself useful every wakeful hour.

He began to study the cause of moving matter when about four years of age by blowing at the dust floating about the room. He learned that he could attract these particles of matter by drawing in his breath and push them away by blowing against them.

Later in life he discovered the law of PENTRABILITY whereby all matter throughout SPACE is moved about continuously by the power of SUCTION and PRESSURE.

He has written several books on that subject which the most intelligent people are now reading and accepting as an advancement toward a newer and greater human race.

Alfred Lawson devoted his whole time from 1908 to 1931 advocating and building the foundation of the Aircraft Industry and Airlines.

During that time he was generally recognized as the father of the AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY and Airline Service and was in a position to reap great monetary rewards for the sacrifice that he had made in those 24 years to produce an entire new transportation system.

But in the year of 1931 the people of the world were in the most wretched economic condition ever experienced by mankind. So with 8,000,000 American men out of employment and whole families hungry for food; with babies dying by the millions for the want of proper nourishment; Lawson decided he would renounce all further accumulation of wealth and become a moneyless and propertyless man for the remainder of his human life while working to improve GOD's human machines instead of man's mechanical ones.

Up to that time Alfred Lawson had gotten practical experience as an itinerant newsboy, bootblack, farmer, painter, foundryman, carpet weaver, coat maker, sailor, professional baseball player, manager and organizer which afforded him an opportunity to travel extensively throughout America, Europe, Africa and Australia.

He had also turned his attention to "Big Business" and became identified with a number of corporations, leagues and associations in the capacity of Organizer, Manager, President and Chairman of the Board.

He also had become an inventor, a planner, a manufacturer, an industry builder and founder of airlines and for more than a quarter of a century he was thrown together with all kinds of financiers and thus had an opportunity to gain the practical experience necessary to understand finance in all of its slippery manipulations.

Lawson was schooled in Labor; he was schooled in Industry and he was schooled in Finance. He was trained in natural and man-made Economics and his mind was developed to understand practical management for the greatest good of the greatest number of people. He learned how to judge things as they are and not as book theorists try to make the world believe they ought to be.

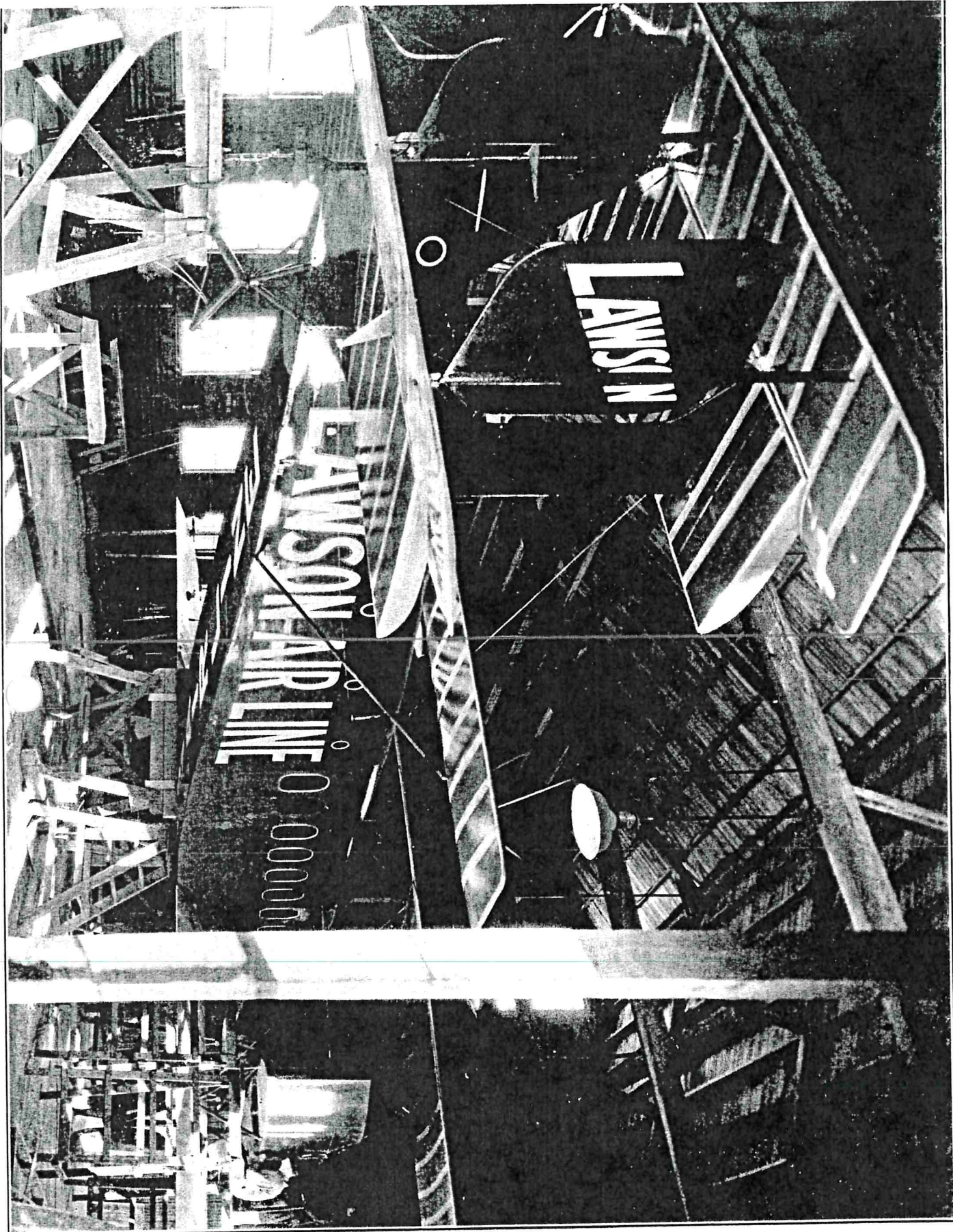
So, in the year of 1931 he wrote the book, "DIRECT CREDITS FOR EVERYBODY" and organized the "DIRECT CREDITS SOCIETY" for the purpose of coaching the people at large in their GOD given rights as free human beings for which he has received no pay from that time on and never wants any as long as he lives.

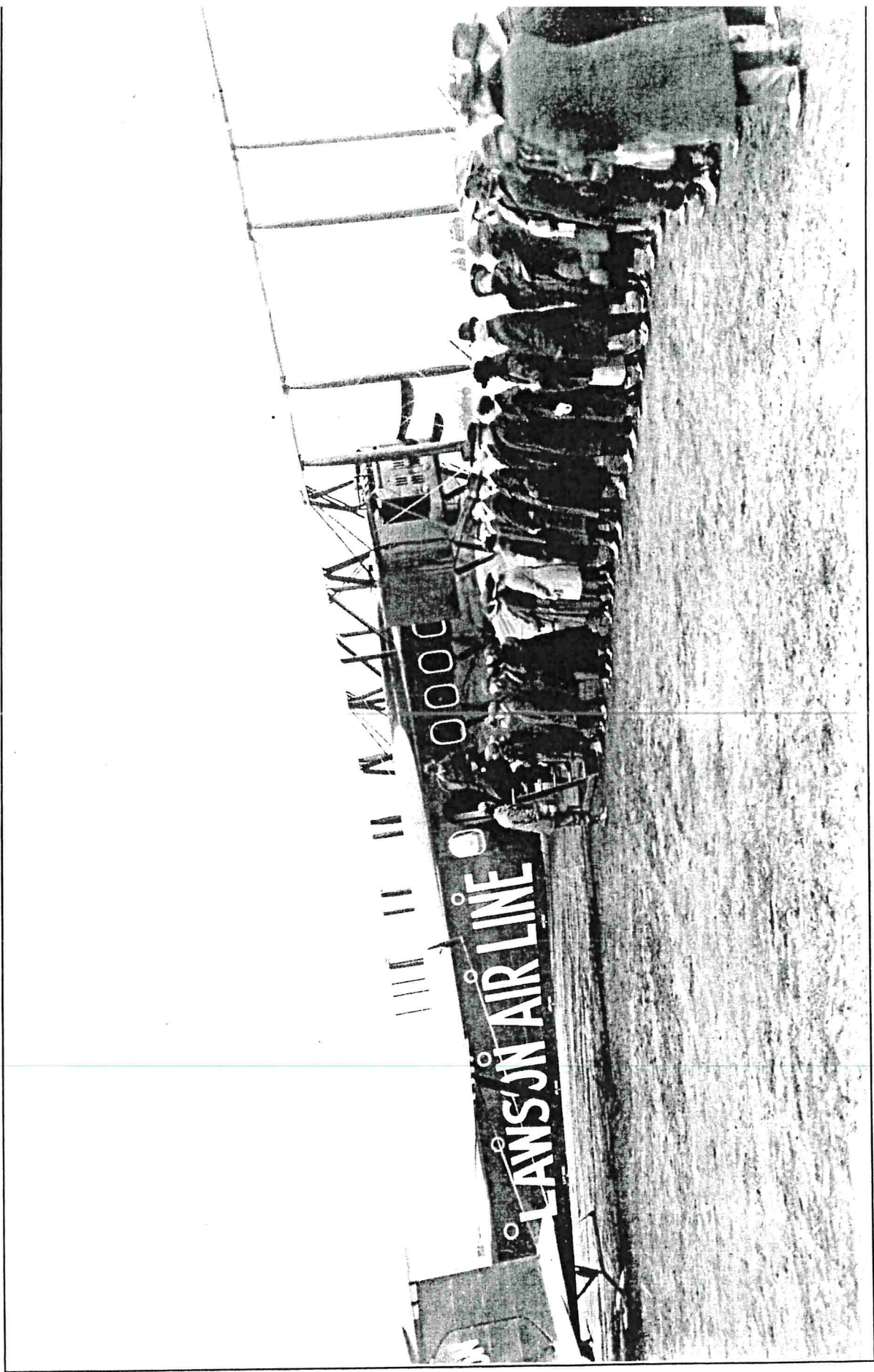
Lawson says that the people's love is all of the pay that he will accept for the remainder of his natural life for the work he is now doing in their behalf.



PHOTO BY JOHN E. PLATZ

ALFRED LAWSON  
1869 — 1954





A side view of the 31 passenger carrying airliner. Powered by three 400 H. P. motors. This picture shows the passengers about to enter the cabin.



## THE LAWSON MIDNIGHT AIRLINER

**T**HE new Lawson Midnight Airliner which has just been completed at the Lawson Airplane Company's plant in Milwaukee, Wis., contains a large number of new features in aeroplane design and construction.

This ship, like all of its predecessors built by the Lawson Airplane Company, was designed by Alfred W. Lawson, who has already brought out eight distinct types of aeroplanes during the past five years.

This mammoth ship, which is designated in the series of airliners already built or now in course of construction by the Lawson Airplane Company, is technically known as the "L-4."

In designing the Midnight Airliner, Mr. Lawson brought out a ship which can be either used for passenger carrying or mail carrying purposes and can also be changed from a night ship with sleeping berths to a day ship with chairs within half an hour.

Some of the special features which the new ship contains and which might be particularly interesting to call attention to at this time are as follows: the captain and pilot's house, which is walled off separately from the general cabin, contains a collapsible seat for the pilot whereby he can either thrust his head out through an opening in the roof of the cabin and thereby have a clear and unobstructed view from the outside, or he can lower his seat a foot and a half and, by closing the aperture in the roof with a slide provided for the occasion, he can then be enclosed entirely within and see to steer the ship through windows all about this pilot's cabin. There is a dual control in this cabin which is operated by both the captain, who will act as navigator, and the mate, who will act as pilot or steersman, as it were.

Besides having sleeping berths for the passengers in the regular cabin, there is

also a toilet room which has all of the ordinary accessories of a Pullman railway car plus a shower bath, which Mr. Lawson has installed for the use of fastidious passengers who may want to pay an extra price for such a luxury.

Just back of the cabin is located the United States Mail Department in which Mr. Lawson has designed a mail chute whereby mail can be either put on or taken off while the ship is in flight.

A more or less technical description of the Lawson Midnight Airliner is as follows:

### Body

The pilot's cabin is separated from the main cabin by a double hinge door in which is placed a beveled glass window so that either pilot or navigator may see into the passenger cabin or vice versa, and also talking tubes are placed through this door so that the captain or pilot may talk directly to the engine man and mechanic, who sits in the first seats of the regular cabin.

In front of the controls is a mahogany dashboard equipped with a complete set of instruments, such as three sets of Delco Boosters, tachometers, oil pressure gauges, and water and oil thermometers. There is also a clock, barometer, air-speed indicator, vertimeter, lateral and longitudinal inclinometers. A word might be said of the tachometers. Due to these being installed on the dashboard in the pilot cabin, the shafts that run to the engines are attached to right angle reduction gears, which drive the long shaft one-fourth crank shaft speed, a large factor in preventing shaft whipping or breakage where directions of drive take place. These shafts, as well as the air, oil and water thermometer lines, run through streamline cases between the body and the nacelles.

Between the pilots, and mounted on top

of an aluminum pedestal, are the throttle levers so arranged that any one or all motors can be controlled at the same time. On the face of this pedestal and about four inches below the top is a hand-wheel for operating the trimming plane. The throttle controls are positive throughout the entire system, being composed of steel tubing, which rotate or push and pull, as the case may be.

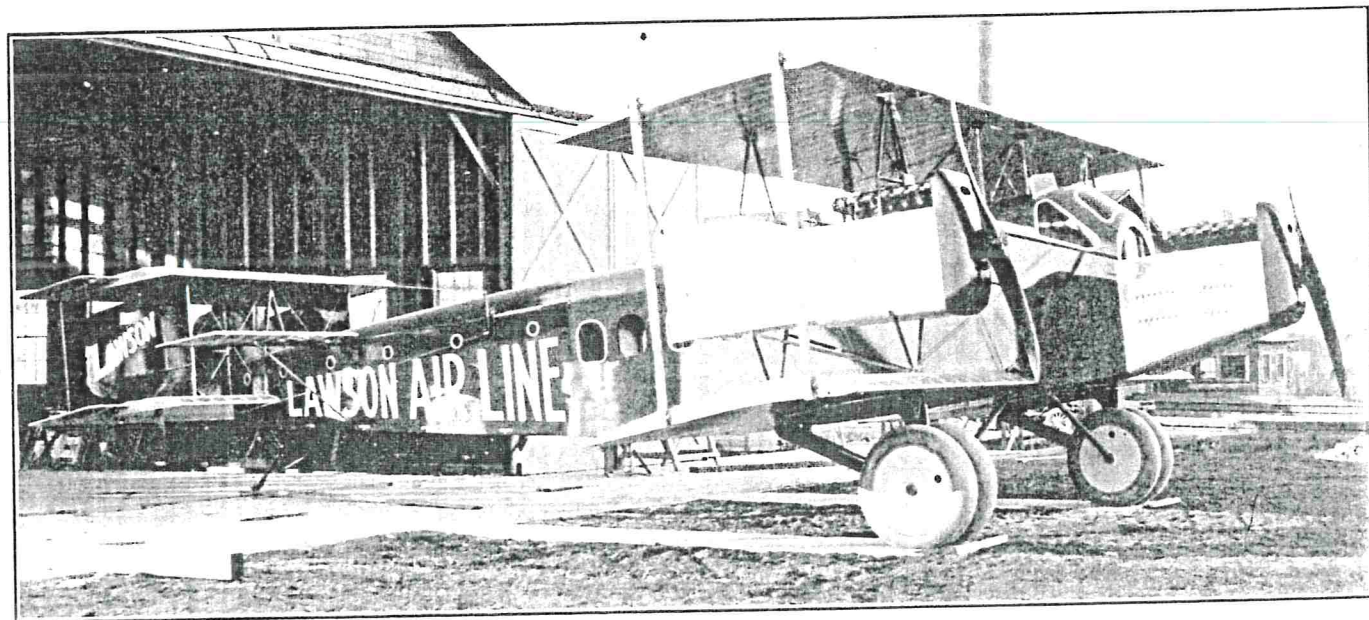
Dep control is used. Instead of the usual chain-drive, bevel gears rotate a vertical shaft running through the main column, which has a pinion at the base driving a rack. On the outer ends of each rack the aileron control cables are attached, these running directly out to the wings after passing over large directional pulleys.

The elevators are operated by doubled cables running under the floors on the left side of the body to a rocker shaft placed on the top longeron in back of the cabin. Several inspection doors are placed on the floor of the cabin for these as well as the rudder cables, which also are arranged similarly to the elevator control cables.

On a separate dashboard overhead and between the pilots are placed the switches. Near the seats are placed fire extinguishers.

A mechanic dashboard is placed in the front end of the main cabin on the right side. This is equipped with air pressure gauges and an air distributor tank into which the air is pumped from the engines for the air pressure gas system and properly distributed to the respective gas tanks. This tank is always primed, so it is an easy matter to start all three engines. Alongside of the dashboard are the ignition control handles for advance and retard, these being push and pull rods to all motors.

The cabin itself is of the convertible type, having attachments for twenty-six seats, berths and mail compartments.



Center Section of the Lawson Midnight Airliner

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**South Milwaukee Historical Society Membership form: 2008**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of membership: \_\_\_\_\_ amount: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dues: Single, \$10.00; Family, \$15.00; Life, \$100.00; Business, \$25.00; Make checks payable to South Milwaukee Historical Society. Send membership dues and dinner reservations to Membership Chairperson, Addie Becker, 526 Sycamore Ave., South Milwaukee, WI 53172 (414) 764-2118.**

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News Editor and printing: Lois L. Schreiter, Addresses: Stephen F. Schreiter

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South Milwaukee Historical Society  
717 Milwaukee Avenue  
South Milwaukee, WI 53172

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**10 Home and 2 Special Gardens**

**Fund Raiser**

**Lawson Building**

**Garden Tour**

**June 28, 2008**

**10 AM to 3 PM**

**Tickets \$10 advance**

**\$15. on day**

**414-762-5214**

**414-520-1959**