

Albany in the Sixties



ALL PHOTOS: JIM SHAUGHNESSY

Early in the piston-to-jet transition era, a regional airport like Albany, New York (IATA: ALB/ICAO: KALB), was not somewhere you would have gone to see shiny new jets. Indeed, such airplanes were still in the minority in terms of total operations even at many larger airports in the USA with the arrival of the Sixties. Before the advent of Boeing 727 service in 1964, jets such as the Boeing 707, Douglas DC-8, and Convair 880/990 were scheduled primarily on longer hauls and high-density routes, and the Sud Aviation Caravelle was operated only by United.

However, introduction of the new turbojets did relegate older large 'propliners' to secondary routes, so that the once-vaunted 'four-engine' equipment was now distributed more widely throughout the domestic route system. And at least one example of new turbine equipment, the Lockheed Model 188 Electra ('Air Transport Anniversaries', *Airways*, October 2007), was well-suited for points such as ALB.

Veteran transport photographer Jim Shaughnessy captured the accompanying scenes during 1961 and 1962. Accomplishing this was not a problem; operations were conducted on an open ramp—there were no enclosed

Photographed in January 1961, Flagship Algonquin (N94209) would pass to Mohawk Airlines five months later as Air Chief Tuscarora (N1024C).

loading bridges yet—and the chain link fence separating passengers and viewers from the aircraft didn't pose much of a problem for photography, unless the subject airplane was parked too close.

While no pure-jets were present, shiny or otherwise, American's Convair 240 *Flagship Algonquin* provides visual evidence that an airliner didn't have to be new at American to sparkle. Local service carrier Mohawk, headquartered in upstate New York, was relatively prominent at ALB, and also operated Convair-Liners, both the 240 and, later, the 440. In addition, Mohawk also flew the competing Martin 404, as shown here. Judging by the forward-leaning/hand-on-hat posture of the passengers, the advent of loading bridges would have been most welcome!

In addition to its postwar equipment, Mohawk, like most of the local service carriers, still operated the venerable Douglas DC-3. In one of the more noteworthy attempts to market this aging competitor, the airline branded some of its flights as 'Gas Light Service',



Mohawk 'Cosmopolitans':
Martin 404 N461M Air
Chief Manhattan shares
the ramp with Convair 240
N1024C, formerly American's
Flagship Algonquin.

In an effort to compete with airlines with more modern equipment, Mohawk offered 'Gas Light Service' from 1960 until the end of 1961 using three DC-3s (N409D pictured) with cabins redecorated in Victorian parlor style. The men-only service featured free beer, cheese and pretzels, and 'good' five-cent cigars were available.



This Eastern Super G Constellation (N6231G) ended its days, along with many other propliners, at Fox Field, Lancaster, California, whereas Electra N5539 subsequently flew in Paraguay and Africa.



featuring a 'Gay 90s' theme (the 19th century connotation, not the modern one), including stewardesses in appropriate attire.

Two other trunk carriers, Eastern and TWA, were also present at ALB during that era, both scheduling Lockheed Constellations. EAL also used the contemporary Lockheed Electra, as well as the Martin 404. 'Simplified' liveries were still in the future at Eastern; all three types still displayed the elegant (and probably costly to apply and maintain) 'Golden Falcon' scheme. ➔

Fleet No 806 was Lockheed 749A N6006C
Star of Pennsylvania that flew for TWA
from 1950 until 1966.