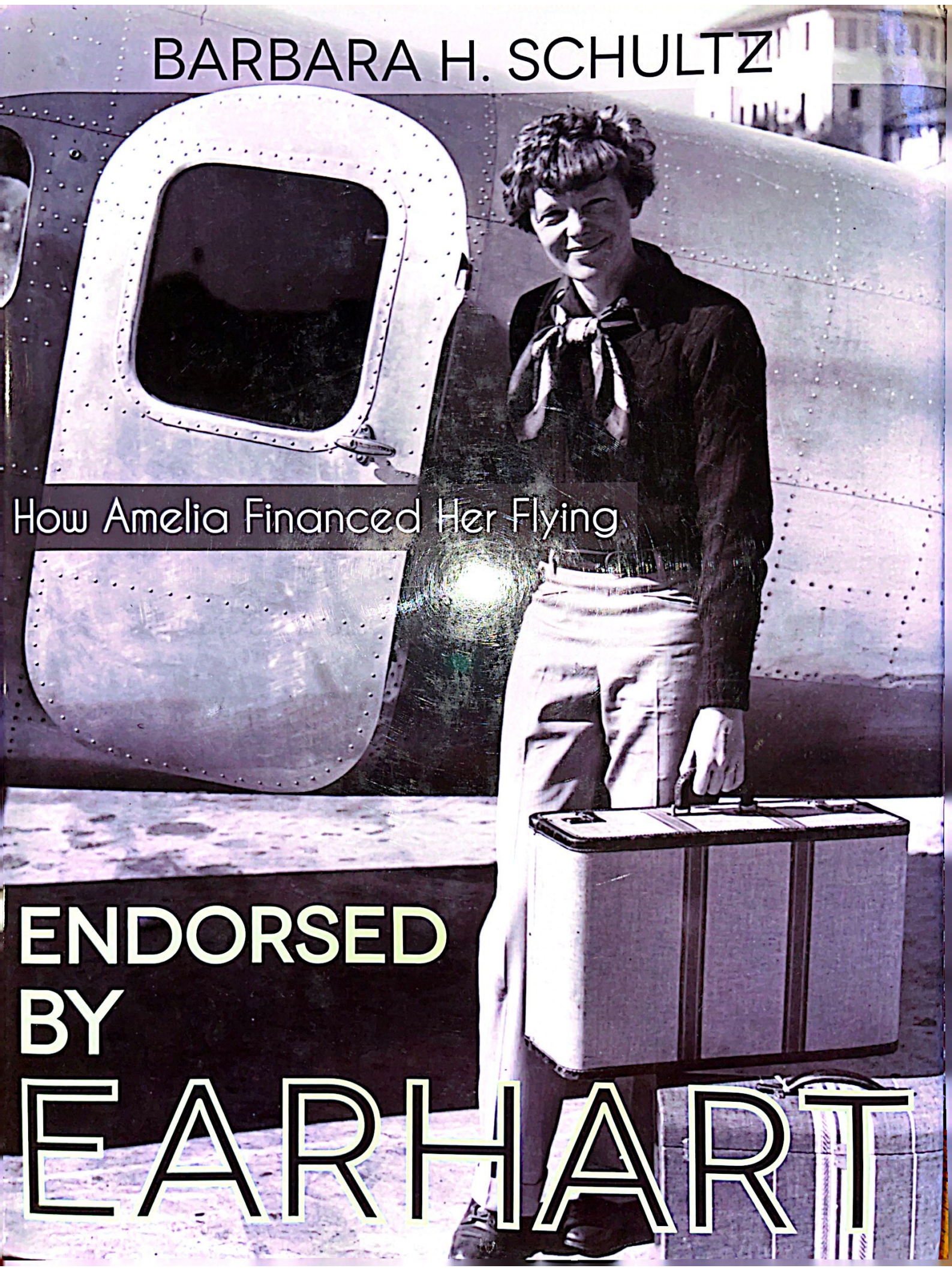
BARBARA H. SCHULTZ



How Amelia Financed Her Flying

ENDORSED BY EARHART

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HUDSON

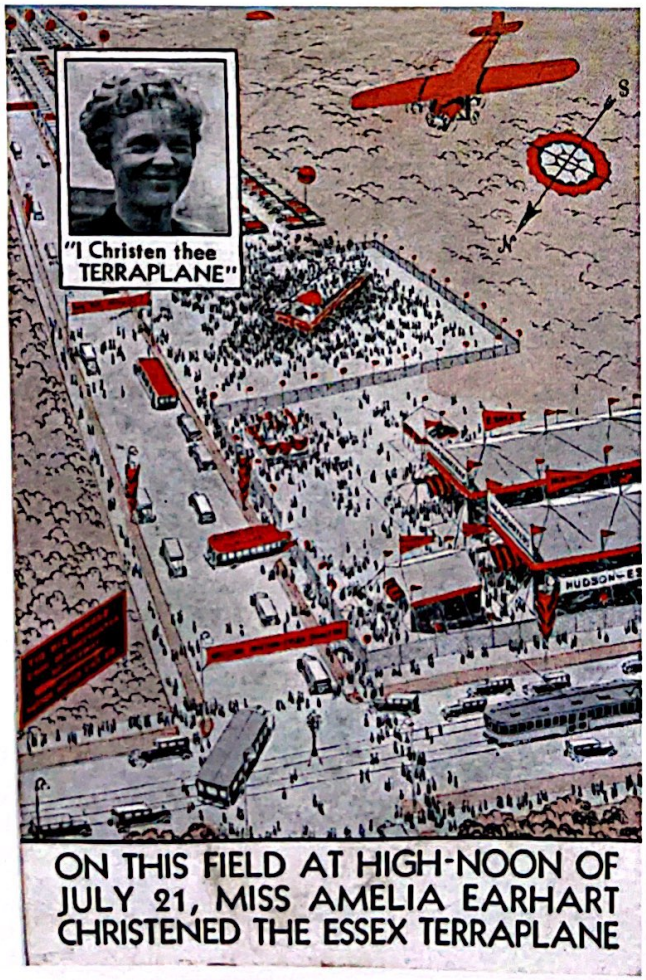
The automobile manufacturer that Amelia lent her name to more than any other was the Hudson Motor Company. Its president and one of four founders, Roy D. Chapin, was the most dominant and integral force behind the success of Hudson. He encouraged engineering innovation and made daring executive decisions. The introduction of the Hudson *Essex* in 1919, the first low-priced enclosed car on the market, was an outstanding example. The company became one of the "few major auto makers along with Packard, Studebaker, and Nash to successfully compete with the "Big 3" during the first half of the twentieth century." [64]

When Federal government revenues fell alarmingly in 1932 and Congress raised taxes on an already declining automotive industry, Chapin responded boldly by introducing the *Essex Terraplane*. He selected the name to reflect the fact that aviation 'fever was sweeping the nation'. The small but powerful car, built to exacting standards, would certainly appeal to the pilot and an air-minded public. "The choice of Amelia Earhart as the sponsor for the new car was a stroke of genius in publicizing. Miss Earhart was the world's leading aviatrix, daring, of high character, with warm popular appeal, and was photogenic." [65]

July 21, 1932, on the corner of East Jefferson and Connor avenues in Detroit, nearly 2,000 Hudson dealers, auto industry officials, jammed around a specially-built, outdoor stage. Everyone was filled with anticipation and excitement for the launch of a new car." [66]

Amelia spoke to a crowd of political dignitaries and members of the media. Her words were well chosen that hot muggy day as she announced, "Those of us who fly owe much to those who have pioneered and developed the automobile. Perhaps our largest debt to the motor car is for its part in making the general public conscious of the advantages of high speed and mobile methods of transportation." [67]

A parade of hundreds of bronze-colored *Terraplane* demonstrators, destined for Hudson showrooms across the country, took place following the speeches. The first off the assembly line and christened with automobile gas by Amelia, belonged to Orville Wright. After a private celebration at the Chapin estate in Grosse Pointe Farms, Amelia departed in a Ludington Airline Stinson. She continued to endorse Hudson models until 1936. [68]





An advertising postcard given out by the Hudson Automobile Company to enhance sales of its new Terraplane.

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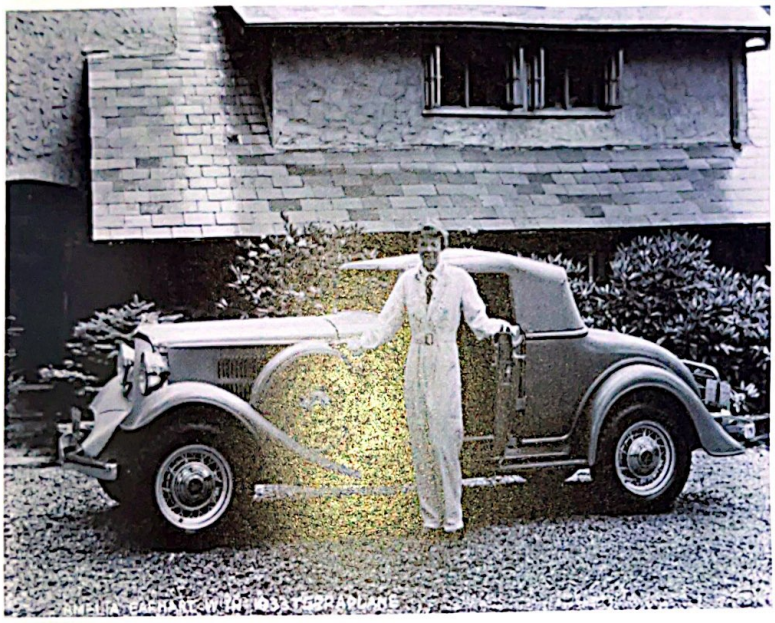
Amelia speaks to a crowd of thousands before she christens Orville Wright's 1932 Hudson Essex Terraplane. The ceremony was followed by a parade of Terraplanes down main street. Photos courtesy of the National Automotive History Collection, Detroit Public Library.



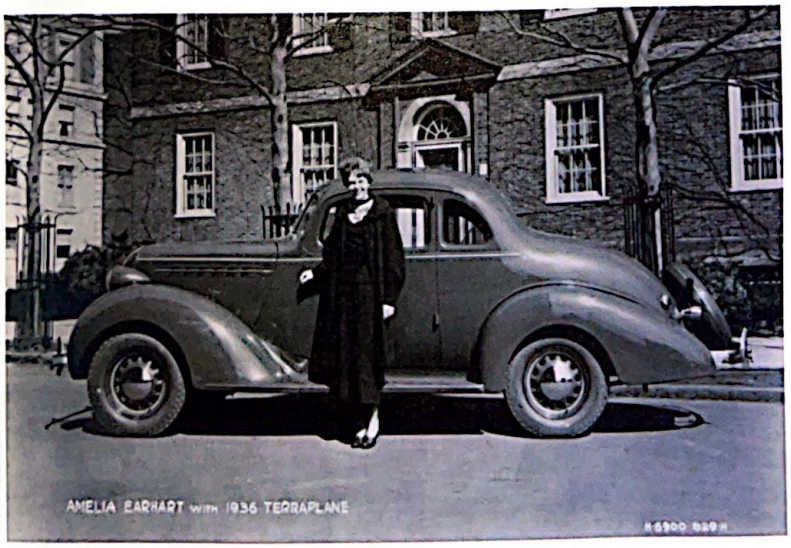
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1932 Essex Terraplane.
Author's collection.



1933 Essex Terraplane



1936 Essex Terraplane
Bottom two photos courtesy of the National Automotive History Collection, Detroit Public Library.

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