



The Origin of Eagle Coaches (Part 1 of 2)



By Larry Plachno



Trailways had been around for 45 years and Eagles had been around for 25 years when this photo was taken in April of 1981. The occasion was a Robert Redden photo shoot commemorating the 45th anniversary of Trailways. We are looking east from the hills west of San Francisco overlooking the city. NTB/Robert Redden

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With the 85th anniversary of the Trailways organization being celebrated, it was not unusual to have industry people talking about Eagle coaches that were identified with Trailways for many years. We found it interesting that many younger members of the bus industry were unaware of the story behind the origin of Eagle coaches.

Admittedly this now goes back 60 years to a different era of the motorcoach industry when scheduled service dominated, when Greyhound dominated scheduled service, and when General Motors dominated bus manufacturing. Moreover, it is interesting that the production of Eagle coaches both starts and ends with Greyhound. While many of us old-timers in the bus business remember this, it is worth repeating for the younger bus people to give them a window into the bus industry's past.

The best place to start is probably with World War II. Bus riding was up significantly while bus production was down because of the war effort. In late 1943 the old Yellow Coach company became a division of General Motors. The main bus production line at Pontiac, Michigan was given over

to production of amphibious ducks for military applications.

This explains why some of their parts were simi-

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