

Chapter VIII

The Last Pathfinder

The route of the 2003 National Air Tour will follow the planned 1932 route, upon which this last Pathfinder embarked. A map of the route can be found on page 214.

Early in May of 1932 the last Air Tour airplane took off on the last Pathfinder trip. It was a Stinson, was flown by Lee Gehibach and carried two committeemen and a newspaperman off to make the rounds of fourteen cities and rally support for the Eighth Annual National Air Tour. But the Stinson turned back to Detroit within a few days. There was simply no money for a 1932 tour; no welcome from the Booster Clubs or the Airport Committees or the local Ford dealers who had once so cheerfully raised the money to bring the great event to their city.

In 1929 the tour budget money pungled up by Detroiters and host cities along the way had run to more than forty thousand dollars, including such major items as hotel rooms and meals furnished the competing pilots and their mechanics; \$15,000.00 and more for prize awards; and a modest \$450.00, "Maps for Pilots." But in 1932 the maps alone seemed like a great deal of money.

And perhaps as they headed home in the Stinson the four men agreed that the tours had served their purpose anyway; that in seven years of swift progress a leisurely cruise based on something called "stick and unstick" had become as out of date as the old Glidden Auto Tours which had inspired it. But they must have agreed too that the Detroit Sky Tourists had accomplished the missionary work they'd planned, going forth like aerial circuit riders to spread the gospel that airplanes were indeed practical and safe and only needed proper ground facilities.

It was one thing to see a giant passenger plane in the newsreels; it was something else when it landed right there in your home town. Eddie Stinson might be a celebrity posed in the newspaper pictures with the Prince of Wales, but when he came to your town he turned out a plain ordinary guy; offered you a cigarette, seemed interested in the wife and kids, and said if you're ever up our way be sure to stop by and say hello and take a look around the factory.

Eddie let you handle the controls of his airplane and urged you to take up flying; your local man,

Eddie said, was honest and reliable and a safe and sane pilot.

The change the Sky Tourists helped bring about is expressed in these four poems, beginning with the pilot of "The Westbound Mail." This lonely man — to whom incidentally, a sensible girl gives a firm "No!" — may well be riding the night wind in a DH4 of the old Post Office fleet, still going strong when the first air tour went forth in 1925.

The second tribute was written in 1927, one of the many thousands of such compositions which praised Lindbergh in that glorious year.

Author and tune of the Collins tribute are unknown, but the occasion is a familiar one: a rousing welcome for a civic booster, bellowed forth with right good will by Port Huron, Michigan Lions Clubbers gathered to Kick Off the Airport Fund Drive.

And finally — the philosophy of a loyal wife, written surely a long time after the last air tour, when airplanes and aviators — "Sunday Cub Drivers" as well as professionals — had become commonplace.

The Westbound Mail

*A drizzlin rain was falling
A nearby clock tolled eight.
They watched the sky with an eager eye
For the Westbound mail was late.*

*The rain beat down on the old tin roof
The hangar chief stood by.
Then the drumming tone of a motor's drone
Came from the misty sky.*

*The beacon sent its welcome beam
To the rider of the night,
'N he brought her down to the soggy ground
Up to the landing light.*

*They swap the mail 'n shout "Okay"
Then she roars n' lifts her tail.
She's up again in the snow 'n rain
On with the Westbound mail.*

*The dim, blurred lights of a city
Loom in the space below.
Their work is done but the mail flies on
And on, through the blinding snow.*

*The rain is freezing on her wings.
She seems to feel the weight.
It'll soon be dawn but she staggers on
Hopin' she won't be late.*

*The crystals stick on the windshield
Formin' a silvery veil.
Icy struts 'n a man with guts
'N a sack o' Westbound mail.*

*Over the peak of a mountain now,
Clear o' the treacherous rim,
Away up there in the cold night air,
Just God 'n the mail 'n him.*

*His thoughts turn back to a summer night
'N a girl, not so long ago
Who shook her head 'n firmly said,
"As long as you're flying, no."*

*He tried to quit the bloomin' job
'N stick to the concrete trail,
But the wish came back for the canvas sack
'n the feel o' the Westbound mail.*

*The wind kept whisperin' secrets
It had heard the stars confide,
So back he went to the big blue tent
Back to the long, black ride.*

*The sleet 'n snow were far behind,
Before the night was gone.
Out of the rain the gray dawn came
'N found him flyin' on.*

*He tilted her stick 'n banked her in
She seemed to feel the gun,
'N voiced her wrath at the cinder path
At the end of a perfect run.*

*The three points touched 'n she taxied in
Up to the hangar rail.
He stretched a grin as they checked him in
"On time" with the Westbound mail.*

Phil Braniff

Wings Of The West

*Lindbergh the world salutes you,
You with your lonely soul
And the steadfast heart that bade you start,
Toward that solitary goal.*

*The earth acclaims you hero,
But proudest of all are we
To whom you came for the wings of flame
That conquered the Eastern sea.*

*The storm god hurled his challenge,
But you scoffed at his raging breast
And sped through the night on your glorious flight,
Borne aloft by the wings of the west.*

*Time will not dim the glory
Your feat so justly brings,
To the glorious pair that conquered the air,
You — and your Western Wings!*

Charles F. McReynolds

To Brother Collins

*We're for you Collins, yes, Brother Collins,
That's why we welcome you into our den today.*

*We know you're game, in an aeroplane,
And as a speaker we have confidence,
You're just the same.*

*We want from you, just what to do,
As an aeronautic man, we know your fame.*

*We want the world to know, that we're not so slow,
For a landing field in Port Huron is our aim!*

The Airport Widow's Prayer

*O Lord,
After you have safely delivered my birdman to
the field
please guide him
Past the Lounge
Past the Bar
Past Old Friends
Through traffic
Safely to our door
IN TIME FOR DINNER.
Amen.*

Joy Palmer

Chapter IX

A Note About the Rules and Results

The Air Tour rules were formulated by the Contest Committee of the National Aeronautic Association, the American branch of the *FAI*: "Federation Aeronautique Internationale." Both groups were voluntary organizations, recognized and supported as the governing bodies for competitions. Other sponsoring groups included the Society of Automotive Engineers, The Detroit Board of Commerce, The Detroit Flying Club and the Detroit Air Board.

The General Requirements laid down in 1925 included these:

"To stimulate interest among civilian constructors and pilots, Army and Navy owned planes will not compete.

"Competing manufacturers may enter from one to three airplanes each.

"The airplane Factor of Safety of wing cellule must be, 4 for low incidence conditions; 6 for high incidence.

"Airplanes must seat comfortably at least one passenger in addition to the pilot, or provide at least 8 cubic feet of cargo space. Pay load shall be at least ½ pound for each cubic inch engine displacement.

"Planes must be capable of 80 miles per hour. However, a Perfect Score will be earned if a plane averages at least 61.5 miles per hour for at least 70% of the route, and 53.3 miles per hour for the other 30% of the route. (This definition was changed in subsequent years to require the contestant to be on his schedule or ahead of it for every leg of the tour, with no allowances or exceptions. The Perfect Score was de-emphasized too, as the deciding factor in amassing points became the Figure of Merit.)

"A manufacturer will win permanent possession of the trophy if his plane wins it five times in succession. (Changed later, to three times.)

"Plane numbers are assigned in order of applications, with the first plane numbered 'zero' to indicate takeoff on the hour. Planes following are assigned even numbers, for takeoff at two-minute intervals. (Changed later, to a straight, one,

two,three, number progression.)

"Planes will depart overnight control stops in reverse order of arrival, to keep fast and slow planes more nearly even.

"Pilots must possess an *FAI* license and be physically fit. This is interpreted to mean they will not partake of alcoholics in any form."

The Figure of Merit Formula

The scoring method adopted for the second tour in 1926 emphasized the performance of each contestant in landing and takeoff trials, called "stick," and "unstick," and measured in seconds to be added in a Figure of Merit Formula on which points were awarded. This preoccupation with short-field capability stemmed from two simple facts: most airfields were small; most engines quit often enough that emergency landings were frequent occurrences.

Stick and unstick trials at Ford Airport were sometimes last minute affairs, with the timers hurrying to get everyone run through in time for the start of the tour, often in a pouring rain. They tried to give a second chance to contestants who wanted to try again and start over at the end of the line, but there were no allowances for differing winds or temperatures, muddy or dry field. And there was no paved runway at Ford Airport until 1929.

Flyers suggested that stick and unstick times should be taken at various points along the tour route, but the judges protested this was impossible. They worked far into the night as it was, adding up scores at enroute stops.

The formula for 1926 awarded maximum points for speed made good on each leg along the route, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Contest Load Carried X Average Speed}}{\text{Stick + Unstick Time (Seconds)}} \times \frac{50}{\text{Cubic Inches Engine Displacement}} = \text{Figure of Merit Score}$$

Substituting the figures for the winning Travel Air:

$$\frac{600 \text{ Lbs.} \times 124.1 \text{ MPH}}{8.0 + 8.4 \text{ Seconds}} \times \frac{50}{787 \text{ cu. in.}} = 288.3$$

And for the second-place Buhl:

$$\frac{800 \text{ Lbs.} \times 115.3 \text{ MPH}}{8.4 + 12.6 \text{ Seconds}} \times \frac{50}{787 \text{ cu. in.}} = 278.9$$

The formula was changed for the next three tours, 1927 through 1929, to award points on a percentage of top speed. The 1927 rule book outlined it as follows:

“To discourage racing and its attendant dangers, the maximum speed (established in pre-tour trials) will be used in the formula, unless the average speed for an individual lap shall fall below 85% of the maximum credited speed. In such an event the actual miles per hour will be used in the formula to determine the figure of merit. For example, a plane shows maximum speed of 120 MPH. 85% of 120 is 102 MPH. Thus, if the lap speed is 102 or better, the formula will read:

$$\frac{\text{Constant Load} \times 120}{\text{Stick} + \text{Unstick}} \times \frac{50}{\text{Displ.}} = \text{Points}$$

If however, the actual speed for a lap shall fall below 85% of the maximum, the formula would read thus:

$$\frac{\text{Constant Load} \times \text{Actual Speed}}{\text{Stick} + \text{Unstick}} \times \frac{50}{\text{Displ.}} = \text{Points}”$$

Contestants complained this cruising speed rule meant that the tour winner was decided before the planes ever left Dearborn. A pilot need have only a relatively fast airplane, and be lucky in setting low stick and unstick times in his trials, then cruise around the course at a leisurely 85%.

The Rules Committee did reduce the emphasis on stick and unstick in 1929, when only one-half the stick time was counted. But the agile Wacos still ran far ahead of the field, and in 1930 they made new records, with two fast and efficient new models mounted on long-legged “stilt” landing gear, for faster nose-high and tail-low takeoffs, and full stall, quick stop landings. Indeed the two bi-planes might well have won in 1930, except for the multi-engine cabin plane scoring advantage given the big Fords.

Top speed counted again in 1930, when the formula was changed to recognize this important performance factor, and to compute actual rated horse-power rather than engine displacement.

$$\frac{\text{Load}}{\text{Horse Power}} + \frac{160}{\text{Stick} + \text{Unstick} + 10} \times \text{Leg Speed} = \text{Leg Score}$$

In the unlikely event of a tie (in any year) the speed made good was the deciding factor, in a simple formula:

$$\frac{\text{Constant Load} \times \text{Speed}}{\text{Engine Displacement}} = \text{Points}$$

Certification Rules, and Reliability

Following Department of Commerce certification rules in 1927 those figures were used for load and

horse-power. And in 1929 only Approved Type Certificated airplanes were allowed to compete. This eliminated several contestants at the last minute: an Acme Monoplane, a Consolidated Fleetster, a Corman Tri-Motor and three Alexander Bullets.

Another 1929 rule prohibited enroute maintenance work until two hours before departure time. If you were caught working on your ship before then, you could be disqualified. Small plane pilots complained this rule favored the big planes, since they could carry more mechanics, who could accomplish more work in the time allowed. But the rule makers insisted that “reliability” was the reason for the tour competition.

Cabin Planes and Amphibians

To encourage entry of cabin planes, the 1930 rules provided that a bona fide cabin ship was favored in the formula with a 5% “credit of empty weight” added to its load figure. Thus the winning Ford, with an actual rated load of 5,630 pounds was credited with a theoretical total of 5,994 pounds. The cabin plane must have floor covering and honest to goodness windows, heating and ventilation and certain seat spacing; but strangely enough there was no mention of safety belts.

An amphibian airplane received an additional 5% of empty weight credit.

The Multi-Engine Rule

Most hotly debated and bitterly criticized by single engine pilots, was the rule which provided that a plane with more than one engine should be “charged” in the formula with only the minimum horse-power required to keep it in the air; obviously a lower figure than its total. Thus the 1928 Ford placed second with a mathematical 1,576 cubic inches engine displacement versus its actual total of 2,364. The 1931 Ford winner, with a big 575 Hornet in the nose, was charged with only the 600 horse-power of its two wing engines: just over 51% of its total.

The rule stipulated only that the plane demonstrate it could maintain a slow climb with one motor out. The tri-motor must climb from 1,000 to 1,400 feet with the center motor idling, then up another 300 feet with the right wing motor idling, then on up to 2,000 with the left motor idling. For the twin-motor plane the climb was in two stages; from 1,000 to 2,000 feet, and this was changed later to require the climb to only 1,600 feet.

There was at first, no maximum time limit set and no minimum load specified, but in 1930 the rule was changed to require that the plane maintain cruising

flight for 15 minutes at 6,200 feet altitude, carrying its full contest load and with one motor actually stopped dead.

Rules Committee Meetings

The Technical and Rules Committee met with contestants after every tour and listened to protests, including that of the cynic who speculated that if a man took advantage of the 5% cabin plane credit, plus the 50% multi-engine credit, and could mount a tri-motor on amphibious floats for another 5%, he might win the tour without ever departing Ford Airport.

Differences of big and little airplanes were often debated; for example, the 1931 Aeronca scored the highest Figure of Merit of any plane in that tour — yet nobody would have compared its utility with that of the Ford Tri-Motor.

Had the tours been continued, the committee would undoubtedly have established many different classifications: for large and small planes, experimental ships, autogiros; sportsmen pilots versus professionals.

The Results

The Official Results detailed for each tour list 142 competing airplanes, built by 41 companies and flown by 112 different pilots. There were 80 biplanes and 62 monoplanes. The Waco biplanes led them all with 17 entries, winning two firsts and two second places and a grand total of just over 326,977 points and \$21,725.00 in prize money. And had Waco placed first in 1930, the company would have had three wins, not counting Lloyd Yost's perfect score in 1925, and would have claimed permanent possession of the Ford Trophy. Waco was allowed four entries in 1927, rather than the usual maximum of three for one company, possibly because there were so few contestants that year.

Second in awards were the Ford Tri-Motors and single engine Ford Stouts, with nine official entries, two firsts, two second places, 321,000 points and \$13,750.00 in prizes.

Behind Waco and Ford came ten Travel Airs, with one first place, and seven Stinsons, with one first. There were nine Curtiss airplanes, seven Buhls. Nineteen engine companies were represented, with Wright in the lead.

Pilots Livingston and Davis were the big money winners for Waco, Russell and Zeller for Ford. Most consistent contender was Harvey Mummert, on hand in five tours with his own airplane. Eddie Stinson and Charlie Meyers each competed four times. Pilots who made perfect scores, aside from the eleven in 1925, included Livingston and Russell, Deed Levy and Red Jackson, and possibly others

whose names were not as well publicized.

The seven tours travelled 29,432 route miles. There were 172 official lunch and overnight stops at 113 "control points" along the way, and at several other airfields listed for enroute fueling stops. Cities visited most often were Chicago, Kalamazoo and Wichita: five times each.

Conclusions

Only one of the monoplanes flown in the tours was the familiar low-wing design so universally accepted today, and that one was the German Junkers. None of the competing planes had retractable landing gear or modern wing flaps, although at least one, the 1926 Fairchild, had ailerons which could be drooped like flaps in landing. Engine superchargers and variable pitch propellers were not yet in commercial use, however a news item about the 1931 tour indicated there was talk of one plane in that tour being equipped with a controllable pitch prop. But we were unable to definitely prove or disprove this.

Some tour planes had Earth Inductor Compasses and many had turn and bank, and airspeed indicators so that "blind flight" was possible. Two-way radios were carried in some of the Fords and in the *Detroit News* Vega, but this equipment was unusual for the time.

Weather forecasts for the route ahead were telephoned back by crewmen in the advance referee plane which went an hour or two ahead of the contestants. (Not to be confused with the advance pathfinder plane, which surveyed the route two to three weeks in advance.)

A weather forecaster from the U.S. Weather Bureau at Hadley Field, New Jersey was listed for the 1928 and 1929 tours. His name was Charles G. Andrus, but he received little publicity; probably like weather prophets before and since, he was more often damned than praised.

Many of the 41 builders who competed in the tours stayed in business in other ways, but only eight of the old names are seen on new commercial airplanes now: Bellanca, Boeing, Cessna, de Havilland, Fairchild, Fokker, Lockheed and Sikorsky. The Aeronca continues as a Bellanca; Beech traces its line almost directly to the 1925 Travel Air. Restored and rebuilt examples of about 30 of the 41 can be seen in museums or at antique gatherings around the country.

Of the nineteen engine builders, three still manufacture airplane engines in America under their same names: Continental, Lycoming, and the Pratt and Whitney division of United Aircraft Corporation.

Chapter X

Brief Biographical Notes – (or) “Whatever Happened To....”

Publisher’s note for the 2003 reprint: The biographical notes reprinted here are, with a few minor corrections, just as they appeared in the original 1972 printing of this book. Most regrettably, in the thirty-some years since this book was first published, virtually all of these wonderful people — these pioneers from Golden Age of Aviation — have left us. What we have now are these words, recorded for us by Lesley Forden. We are indebted to him for yet another perspective on Aviation’s Golden Age, on the National Air Tours and on a very, very special group of people whom we will never have the opportunity to meet.

Melvin Aavang was a Wisconsin farm boy with a trace of gypsy blood, handed down by one of his Norwegian forebears who was said to have listened to a gypsy violin, ’way back....

Aavang left the farm, worked at Ashburn Field, Chicago, picked up flying time and finally soloed with an official three hours dual from the Ralph C. Diggins School. He went out with his own Jenny, flew later for a very big and busy organization at Chicago called “The Aviation Service & Transport School.” He also flew briefly for the Post Office Air Mail and was selling Swallows for Charles Helm of Elgin, Illinois when he flew in the 1928 tour. The tour Swallow was flown as far as Tulsa by factory pilot Jay Sadowsky and picked up there by Aavang and Helm.

Aavang worked in a factory during the depression years then with the approach of World War II he checked out in a Navy Stearman, ready to go back instructing. But the Navy thought a man coming up on forty was too old to fly, so Aavang stayed with his technician’s job. He went back to carpentry work when he retired in Delavan, Wisconsin, a trade his father had followed back in the old country when Oslo was still called Christiana. Mel is still interested in flying, helps younger members of the family clan, passing on the ancient skills he learned from his elders back at Ashburn Field: Pop Keller, Tony Yackey, Eddie Stinson and other great teachers.

Talbert Abrams took his box camera along when he enlisted in Marine Corps Aviation in 1917 and when he returned to Michigan he began a lifetime of flying and picture taking. Abrams Aerial Surveys was a going concern when Ted Abrams went along in the 1925 tour, and his company is still going nearly a half-century later, having taken part in several wars and in exploration of both Arctic and Antarctic.

Now, the 1917 box camera has grown up to be mounted in space vehicles photographing the moon.

Ted Abrams and his fellow scientists talk of laser beams and infrared scanners, of photogrammetric plotting, and remote sensing devices that will help man travel to the planets.

Walter J. Addems was 26 when he and Tony Yackey prepared the special Yackey Sport, converted from a Thomas Morse Scout, which Addems flew in the 1925 tour.

Addems was a competent and professional workman who built and flew his first glider while still in high school, thus becoming a member of that select group called *Early Birds*, pilots who flew solo prior to December 17, 1916. Addems was an artilleryman in the Great War, earned a degree from the University of Illinois, finally gave up freelance flying to join National Air Transport.

He stayed on with the United Air Lines organization; senior pilot, operations executive, one of the very first pilots to become instrument rated, in 1931. Addems is retired, lives in Atherton, California and has built his own personal airplane, a faithful replica of the rotary-engined French Nieuport Eleven of the First World War. It is complete and authentic, characteristic of a competent workman who has never lost his skill, nor his youthful enthusiasm for an airplane.

C. B. Allen flew in the Great War, began his newspaper career as a cub reporter on the *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, and was with the *New York World* when he flew in the first air tour. He was aviation editor for the *Herald Tribune*, served on the Civil Aeronautics Board, and on President Roosevelt’s Air Safety Board. He served in the Second World War, worked as executive and consultant to the Martin Company in Baltimore, passed away August 12, 1971.

Allen was often praised for a distinguished career in journalism and government service. But he was very proud of one quite modest award, for a victory at the 1930 National Air Races in Chicago. Allen

flew a Ken-Royce biplane in the Sportsman Pilots Race, competing with such notables as movie star Hoot Gibson, and came roaring across the finish line in first place, to win a silver trophy.

Peter Altman came to Detroit from Montreal. He was a veteran of the Royal Flying Corps, became Dean of Aeronautics at the University of Detroit, worked also for Stinson, Verville, Szekeley, Continental Motors and other companies. He headed the Air Tour Technical and Rules Committee and it was a tribute to his patient good humor that he could serve all those years and survive the continuing wrangle among pilots, manufacturers and sponsors as to what new idiocy the rule makers were up to this time. Forty years after the last tour, Professor Altman is still busy in Detroit in consulting work.

L.H. "Jack" Atkinson was a Monocoupe dealer in Gary, Indiana. Production of this popular monoplane began in 1926 in a Davenport, Iowa shop headed by Don Luscombe and Clayton Folkerts. In 1928, when Atkinson and Phoebe Omlie flew in the tour the plane was called the "Velie Monocoupe," due to its engine and financial ties with the Velie automobile organization. The company management and location changed many times over the years but the plane had the next to longest "production life" of its time, being surpassed only by the Beech Model 18.

Jack Atkinson moved south, flew for Universal Airlines, operated a Ryan at Tulsa. He flew for Century Airlines when the pilots went on strike early in 1932, and he became one of the victims of that bitter struggle. On March 8, 1932 Atkinson was training with four other Century pilots in a Tri-Motor Stinson, practicing night landings at Curtiss Steinberg Airport near East St. Louis, when the ship hit an unlighted windmill on a farm near the airport. Atkinson was killed in the crash. He was thirty-five.

Verne C. Babcock was an *Early Bird* inventor and experimenter who made his first flight in 1905 and was still active in airplane building through World War II. His Teal biplane was built at Stow Field, a pleasant country place near Akron, Ohio and later part of the Kent State University campus. The Teal was flown in the 1926 tour by a Stow Field pilot named Al Everett who finished the ship off in a crash landing on the first day when he ran out of gasoline just short of Chicago. (We have no further information about Everett.)

Babcock moved on later to Deland, Florida, where he built more airplanes and where he retired.

He died February 15, 1972.

Babcock was always in demand as an airplane rigger, a craftsman with the fine eye and the patience for tedious adjustments of wires and struts and turnbuckles that in the wire braced biplanes of the time, meant the difference between a good fast flying airplane and a lumbering clunk. Old timers said that for all he worked with plumb bobs and protractors the good rigger was "born," with some kind of intuition akin to witchcraft.

Lowell Bayles grew up in Illinois, learned to fly at Chester. He made his way to Springfield, Massachusetts where he was a partner in a flying service and where he joined with the Granville clan and their ill-fated Gee Bee racers. Bayles flew the little two-place Sportster model in the 1931 air tour then in November of 1931, following his victory in the Thompson Trophy Race, he took the big Wasp powered NR77V to Detroit, determined to set a new world's speed record. And in one unofficial dash at Wayne County Airport he boosted the ship up around 300 miles an hour. But on December 5, the ship suffered a structural failure as Bayles began his speed run and he was killed. He was thirty-one. Other pilots remembered him as a tough and merciless racing opponent and a quiet and easy-going friend to be with.

M. G. Beard was called "Dan" for a distant cousin who founded the Boy Scouts of America. The aviator Beard learned to fly at Kelly Field, then followed industrial engineering; went back to full time flying in time for the 1928 tour. He stayed on with the Fairchild organization until it was taken over by E. L. Cord's Aviation Corporation, and he still remembers the black October day in 1932 when Cord sent Louis B. Manning in person, to close up the Farmingdale plant.

Beard was lucky enough to get on with American Airways as a copilot and this led quite unexpectedly to a new career: that of engineering test pilot. For the next thirty years, Beard took part in design and test flying of all the airline's new transports, from Stinsons and Vultees to Boeing jetliners. When he finally retired in Manhasset, New York — where he lives now — Dan Beard had flown them all, including a supersonic Air Force fighter. And the privilege of traveling something over a thousand miles an hour seems little enough for the patient young man who struggled coast to coast and back again in the 1928 Cam Waco.

Walter H. Beech was known from the first 1925 tour for his crafty disappearing act. As all the planes cruised along Walter's would lag behind, move off

to one side and climb very slowly to drift along unnoticed and slightly higher than the others. Then, the destination airfield in sight, Walter would pounce down through the flock, diving straight for the finish line, if not first in elapsed time then surely first in newspaper headlines.

Beech did have a driving will to be first, whatever the contest. He was a Tennessee farm boy who served in the Great War, earned the Signal Corps rating of "Master Signalman," then went out barnstorming. He sold and raced Laird Swallows, helped organize his own Travel Air Company, and finally Beech Aircraft, in 1932. He passed away in 1950.

Walter had the good sense and good fortune to marry his secretary, an attractive and capable girl named Olive Ann Mellor, who came to work for him in the early days at Travel Air. She stayed on to devote a lifetime to him and to minding the family store, and this may well account for the success of the Beech enterprises.

R. R. Blythe was an aviator turned public relations man, a Canadian pilot who joined with Harry Bruno in that line of work and who went along in many of the tours. Dick Blythe was a tall and imposing man, universally respected and welcomed by the tour pilots. He and Harry Bruno were organizers of the *Quiet Birdmen*, an organization that grew to be one of the largest of flyers' fraternal groups.

Bruno and Blythe clients included the Wright Aeronautical Company and a story is told of Blythe's good advice to the most famous Wright Whirlwind pilot of all time: Charles Lindbergh. Blythe was with Lindy on his triumphal return from Paris, on the Navy cruiser *Memphis*. The ship went direct to Washington for a hero's welcome by Calvin Coolidge, President, Commander in Chief, and the man who promoted Lindbergh from Reserve Captain to full Colonel. Obviously it seemed a time to wear his Air Corps uniform, and Lindbergh planned to do so.

But Dick Blythe knew that a uniform of any rank would be just one more in the swarm of high-ranking brass elbowing one another for a place center stage. And more important the Aviation cause would be best served if the man in the street could readily identify with the handsome young hero. And so The Lone Eagle came home to his people wearing a plain everyday business suit, just an ordinary, unassuming kind of fellow.

"...just a whole hell of a lot like the kid next door, yah know what I mean? Just a plain regular guy..."

When the Second World War began, Dick Blythe went back to full time flying, an instructor for

cadets in Canada. He was killed there in a student training accident, in 1941.

Kenneth J. Boedecker began his engine career in 1914, working in the Long Island shops of a General Electric subsidiary called General Vehicle Company. He helped build the two-cylinder Lawrance engines, which preceded the nine-cylinder Whirlwind, with time out for school at Brooklyn Polytechnic and Navy service in the World War. He was with Wright to build the first sixteen Whirlwinds sold to Huff Daland crop dusters, and he flew in the first 1925 air tour to watch over the three Whirlwinds installed in the Fokker. He serviced engines for the transoceanic record seekers of 1927, and his later airline assignments took him all around the world. Boedecker stayed with Wright and Curtiss-Wright through 1958, when the company had built the last of the big piston engines, the eighteen-cylinder Turbo Compound. Boedy is an avid camera fan, took pictures of all the aviation clan over those many years, and his photo scrapbook became a cherished collector's item, published as "Boedy's Album."

Boedecker is retired, lives in Jamesburg, New Jersey. His career was summed up by another gray haired pioneer who said, "So many of those famous people have come and gone and been forgotten. But whenever we think of engines — Wrights or any other kind — we think of Ken Boedecker."

Francis Bowhan had an income from Oklahoma oil wells. He was active in barnstorming and racing; owned several airplanes; flew for "Air Express Corporation," an enterprise that operated Lockheed Vegas and Orions in express-only coast-to-coast service and made remarkable records for the time. Bowhan is deceased.

Charlotte Bowhan flew with her husband in the 1925 tour. She was an attractive lady, called "Indian Princess" by the tour flyers. And Bowhan's named is engraved on the trophy not as Francis, but as "Chief," a more familiar name, and reminder that this likeable man who competed with the best flyers of his day was indeed, an Osage Indian.

Hart H. Bowman was listed in tour records as a passenger in the 1925 Swallow entered by John Stauffer, but actually Stauffer was a banker by trade, and Bowman did most of the flying. Hart was a Nebraskan who learned to fly while selling Wills St. Claire automobiles. He sold his auto customers on airplanes, worked for Laird Swallow, for American Eagle, Rearwin, and many others. He managed Bill Long's Dallas School of Aviation, had

his own school there, and served as manager of Love Field. He was still active in aviation and business affairs in Dallas when he passed away, in 1972.

One of his fellow pilots called Hart Bowman “a real live wire,” a man who taught people to fly and to be air minded. Bowman said that whatever his contributions in those early years, he did perhaps deserve great credit for helping the industry with one good marriage: he introduced Walter Beech to Olive Ann Mellor.

Leslie H. Bowman worked for Bert Kinner at a little airfield in the midst of peach orchards at Glendale, California, later called Grand Central Air Terminal. Les soloed himself in a Kinner biplane powered with the very first Kinner K-5 motor. In 1931 he became West Coast Sales representative for Waco, based at the new United Air Lines terminal in Burbank, now called Burbank Airport. His wife Martie worked with him, she having soloed even before he had, at the Dycer Airport in Los Angeles.

In 1936, Bowman joined Booth Henning at Dallas, a concern that grew to be Southwest Airmotive. He was in other organizations of his own in Dallas and Fort Worth and in 1951 he took over the airport at Cody, Wyoming, not far off the route where he'd flown in the 1930 tour. Then he gave up airplanes for full time work outfitting and guiding hunting parties, with his base at Cody. He became an expert in this field as he had been in aviation; consultant and advisor for rifle and equipment manufacturers, outdoor writer for various publications. He finally slowed up in active outdoors work but continues as a consultant and writer, lives in Olathe, Colorado.

Paul R. Braniff might be pictured as the early day airline pilot, traditional in Hollywood movies as the Fun Loving Daredevil who, when the Chips Were Down pushed on through The Great Storm in his Second-Hand Crate to Save The Mail Contract and Win The Girl.

In real life, the hero was more often the company treasurer, who stalled the creditors and spirited the rolling stock out of town when the Sheriff came with padlock and chain. And for Braniff Airways the man was Tom Braniff, Paul's older brother. Tom came to Oklahoma in the early days, made a fortune in real estate and farm loans, and could pay the bills when happy go lucky young Paul came home from the war and got mixed up with airplanes. Paul was still a very young solo student when he went out to Colorado and came home with the new Eaglerock he flew in the 1927 tour.

The first Braniff air line was started in June of 1928, partly because the Stinson people up there in Michigan were getting nasty about the payments due on the Stinson Paul was flying around down there in Oklahoma. This early venture was sold after a year; a second Braniff line started in November of 1930, survived to become Braniff International.

Both brothers died in 1954: Tom, in a plane crash; Paul of illness. Tom was seventy, Paul was fifty-six.

Bruce E. Braun earned an engineering degree at Michigan State, learned to fly at Ellington Field in 1917 and was factory superintendent at Stinson when he flew in the 1928 tour. He managed the Stinson California Division at Burbank, worked for the Department of Commerce, joined Chicago and Southern Air Lines at St. Louis in 1937. A fellow worker there recalled that Braun was a good executive, “developed the airline from Stinson Tri-Motors, to DC-4s.”

C & S was merged with Delta Airlines in 1953. Braun was by then devoting much of his time to a farm in Michigan, and he passed away in Sebawaing, the town where he was born, on October 3, 1965.

Robert Gale Breene was a career officer, stationed at Wright Field in 1927 and in charge of the Power Plant Section there when he flew in the 1927 and 1928 tours.

Breene served in the South Pacific during the Second World War, retired a Major General, lives in Dayton, Ohio, not far from the site of two fields where he served. McCook is long since swallowed up by city streets; Wright Field is a part of Wright-Patterson, a huge administrative complex where no young Lieutenant, even a capable man like Gale Breene, would have sufficient rank to head up the Power Plant Section or be assigned such a pleasant task as leading a fleet of civilian airplanes on a cross country tour.

The timers who clocked **Vance Breese** in his 1926 stick and unstick tests agreed that had his Ryan been equipped with wheel brakes Breese might have finished the tour very near the top. But this was small comfort to the hard driving young man of 22 who wanted only to be the best.

Breese started as a wing walker, taught himself engineering, built airplanes in San Francisco with another technician whose name was Arthur F. “Pop” Wilde. A Breese-Wilde monoplane was sold to Walter Varney for his mail line and two similar ships were entered in the Dole Race. But Jimmie Irving crashed his Breese on takeoff and Martin Jensen,

while he placed second in the Breese *Aloha*, was also last. And people wanted to forget the Dole tragedy anyway.

The San Francisco factory closed, a second Breese plant in Portland, Oregon was hit by the depression and by the crash of a promising air mail prototype, wiped out when the pilot ferrying the ship east for a demonstration tour dozed off over Montana. Breese joined Detroit Aircraft Corporation; headed up a short-lived trans-continental Air Express line; returned to California to take up the dangerous and specialized game of engineering test pilot. And in the Second World War a new generation of young Americans flew combat airplanes that were wrung out and tamed by these older men: airplanes like the P-38 Lightning, which Vance Breese helped cure of its wild death dives, and which another graying veteran, Charles Lindbergh, helped develop into an effective long range fighter bomber.

Vance Breese kept going in design and research work for another 25 years after that war; is finally retired in Palm Springs, California.

Billy Brock quit school at sixteen to make his way to the Thomas Brothers School at Ithaca, New York and learn to fly. He was a civilian instructor in the Great War, flew in barnstorming and circus troupes and for Charley Dickinson's short lived Chicago-Twin Cities air mail line. He joined with Ed Schlee in "Wayco Air Service" of Detroit and the two men began making headlines in late August of 1927.

They started around the world in the Stinson *Pride of Detroit*; across the Atlantic, on through Munich, Istanbul, Rangoon, Hanoi and Hong Kong, to Tokyo. But there, they were persuaded to give up. The public had turned against ocean flyers and more important, the U.S. Navy refused to post ships along the Pacific route or to make gasoline available at Midway Island: the Wayco Oil Company's Shell brand or any other kind. The Stinson and her crew arrived in San Francisco aboard the Japanese liner *Korea Maru*, just a month after leaving Detroit and too late to better the record for round the world travel: 28 days, 14¹/₂ hours, made by two other men from Detroit who had used ships, planes, trains and any other available transportation. Brock and Schlee flew a company Bellanca in the 1928 tour, continued to make more headlines later. Then came the stock market crash of 1929 and the end of Ed Schlee's fortune. Billy Brock was grounded too, down with cancer. He died on November 13, 1932, remembered by a host of old friends as a "jolly, chubby, all around great pilot and very great guy."

Wendell H. Brookley was Regular Army, veteran of the Great War, still a First Lieutenant when he flew in the 1929 tour. Brookley served with the test group at McCook Field, instructed at Brooks and Kelly.

On February 28, 1934, now a Captain and assigned to Bolling Field, at Washington, Brookley was en route from Middletown, Pennsylvania to Bolting, flying a Douglas BT2-B biplane. This 1931 Basic Trainer was much like the Observation ship he'd flown in 1929 except that in place of the old Liberty it was updated with a radial engine and a new kind of propeller.

The prop came apart, the airplane went out of control, and while Brookley's companion got out in time Brookley jumped too late: a good man gone to his reward, done in by the newfangled engine and prop.

Harry Brooks was a handsome and engaging young man whose father played in the Ford Motor Company band and was friendly with Henry Ford. Mr. Ford treated young Brooks like a son, encouraged him in development of the little Ford flivver plane, a possible Model T Ford of the Air. Brooks was also entrusted with the highly publicized Ford Tri-Motor trip in NC-1077 (serial #10), from Detroit to Mexico City in December of 1927 when he flew Mrs. Evangeline Lindbergh there to spend Christmas with her famous son Charles. And he accompanied Dean Burford in the Ford on the first leg of the 1927 tour; probably returned to Dearborn in the Navy Ford, which broke its tailskid landing at Geneva and had to go back to the factory to be repaired and then catch up at Baltimore.

Early in 1928 Brooks tried twice to make a nonstop Detroit to Miami flight in the flivver plane, which would also include a visit with Henry Ford at his winter home in Fort Myers. On the second try Brooks came down at Titusville, Florida, not far from the lonely strip of sand called Cape Canaveral. Then next day, going on south he made a low turn off Melbourne Beach and the ship went into the surf. One story had it that his engine quit, Brooks having plugged the gas tank vent with a match to keep out moisture the night before, and forgotten to remove the match.

Whatever the cause, Brooks drowned and Henry Ford had lost a promising young man. The flivver project was abandoned.

Clayton J. Brukner ferried Eddie Knapp's brand new Waco to Dearborn for the 1925 tour; landing at Ford Airport just in the nick of time for Knapp to take off and catch up with the others. And on that

first day of the first tour, Brukner could only have guessed of the spectacular records Waco airplanes would make in the tours, which followed.

He was 28 years old, had worked for Curtiss at Buffalo; started the Waco enterprise with Elwood Junkin and help from a man named George Weaver, said to be the source for the trade name "Waco" — Weaver Aircraft Company.

Brukner devoted a lifetime to the company, which built its last airplane in the years immediately following the Second World War. The name was farmed out in 1967 for an Italian airplane imported to this country, but Clayton Brukner was long since out of it, busy with his own retirement project, an educational nature center for his own city of Troy, Ohio. He still lives in Troy.

Harry A. Bruno rode in the 1925 Fokker to publicize the airplane and its engines. Bruno was an *Early Bird* aviator, flew with the Canadians in the Great War, he was sales and passenger traffic man for a 1921 airline called "Aeromarine Airways" which operated flying boats in a luxurious passenger service between various cities in this country and in the Caribbean. Bruno started his own public relations firm in New York in 1923 and is still doing well nearly fifty years later; having grown from one typewriter and one room on Times Square, to many typewriters and a suite in Rockefeller Plaza.

An early Bruno triumph occurred when a fellow Britisher, Major Jack Savage, came to New York and sought help in selling a new advertising medium called "sky-writing." Bruno persuaded Lucky Strike executives to watch a demonstration, but they were doubtful that busy New Yorkers would ever slow up long enough to watch some hair brained aviator spewing smoke high in the sky over Manhattan.

Bruno tried again, had Savage go aloft and spell out just one telephone number: "V A N 7 1 0 0." Then he took his prospects to the lobby of the Vanderbilt Hotel, at Park Avenue and 34th Street. And his contract was assured: the hotel switchboard was completely jammed with incoming calls as hundreds of New Yorkers rushed to pick up their telephones and cry, "Central, hurry! Get me Vanderbilt seven one oh oh!"

Dean Burford was one of the youngsters on the Ford Stout team when the first Stout Air Mail deliveries began, February 15, 1926. While Larry Fritz flew the first run, Detroit to Cleveland, Burford and Ross Kilpatrick followed, Detroit to Chicago and return. Burford left the Ford group some time after he'd flown in the 1927 tour, joined

Fritz and other old friends in the *TAT-Maddux* air line venture. He stayed on with the same organization until his death, in 1936.

Burford was one of those who worked at dispatching and traffic control, weather research and high altitude flying, so that in those early days *TWA* was often called "a pilot's airline."

Cyril C. Caldwell was thirty-three when he flew in the 1925 tour. He was a Nova Scotian, veteran of the Royal Flying Corps, actor, director, writer and commentator.

Caldwell wrote with warmth and humor of people he liked, and with caustic ridicule for people he did not like: a long list which included politicians, public relations men, Battleship Admirals and ground-bound Generals, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and almost everyone who disagreed with Cy Caldwell.

Caldwell achieved a certain fame on October 19, 1927 when he carried the first air mail from Key West to Havana for Pan American Airways. Pan Am was a new company, not quite ready to fly on the scheduled day, and Caldwell happened to be passing through, delivering a Fairchild down the line to Santo Domingo. An old friend and Pan Am staffer with the fine name of Jack E. "Pink Whiskers" Whitbeck, prevailed on him to take the mail along and drop it off at Havana. He was never properly honored or paid for this historic inaugural, Caldwell said later, and in fact Pink Whiskers and Pan Am Public Relations appeared glad to forget the whole thing. And it turned out no first-air-mail-flight after all; as Vincent Burnelli of Aeromarine Airways pointed out, his company had carried mail to Cuba way back in 1920.

Caldwell was a genuine hero later, in August of 1929 when flying on a Detroit-Cleveland airline run. He came down on Lake Erie in an emergency landing that wrecked his Loening amphibian and with three others, he clung to the wreckage until it became apparent they were too far from the path of lake steamers to be seen and rescued. Caldwell took a lady passenger in tow, swam for four miles to hail a passing ship. As a fellow pilot named Ole Oleson tells the story now, long after Caldwell has retired to Island Park, Long Island, New York,

"There was old Cy, hanging on to this half-drowned lady, swimming right into the path of this big ship, like he was Johnny Weismuller himself. He was literally jumping up and down right there in the water; noisy, obstreperous as ever; making a hell of a commotion even as he seemed about to go under for the third time."

Earl K. Campbell was first to take off in the first

tour and thus of the 17 names engraved on the Edsel Ford trophy — eleven for 1925 and one for each year thereafter — his name leads all the rest.

Rusty Campbell flew in the Great War, came home to his native Iowa and started a flying service at Waterloo with Gus DeSchepper. Rusty later managed the airport at Moline, Illinois and it was named after him. He worked for National Air Transport and for Curtiss and Curtiss-Wright. He was only forty when he died, in 1938, but people all over the midwest remembered him as an old friend and veteran flight instructor; “Dean” of pilots in that part of the country.

It was said of **Harvey Campbell** that he had a love affair with the city of Detroit, a devotion that began when he was a very young businessman selling papers and shining shoes. Campbell took up the advertising business, moved on to become secretary of the Greater Detroit Board of Commerce. He was the man most often credited with having inspired the first Commercial Airplane Reliability Tour in 1925.

Campbell was an organizer of Stinson Aircraft, promoter of civic causes, once served two weeks in jail for contempt of court when he challenged corrupt city officials. He loved to make speeches, often introduced himself as a “Yale Man,” a reference to the small town in Michigan where he was born. Actually there was some doubt Campbell had finished the eighth grade.

A few days before his death in June of 1965, Campbell sat up in his sickbed, mustered something of his old grin and began to make a list of pallbearers. “These guys have carried me all my life,” he told a friend, “so they might as well finish the job.”

Robert W. Cantwell served with the Infantry in the Great War, learned to fly in the Air Service Reserve, and was personal pilot for Oklahoma oilman Erie P. Halliburton. It was Halliburton’s first Vega that Cantwell and Lee Schoenhair flew in the 1928 tour.

Later model Vegas served Halliburton’s air line, “Southwest Air Fast Express.” SAFEway was an aggressive organization, with Fords and Lockheeds fanning out in all directions from the airport at Tulsa; in 1929, called the world’s busiest air terminal. But Halliburton was unable to get a mail contract and sold out to American Airways. SAFEway vice president Larry Fritz tried to hold the gang together for another airline venture on a Canada, USA, Mexico route but the depression ended those dreams.

Bob Cantwell worked for Century Pacific, then later he was back with his old boss, selling Halliburton Luggage, a trade name publicized by

Erle’s globe-trotting writer cousin, Richard Halliburton. Cantwell worked for Douglas during the Second World War, died in Houston in 1967.

Walter J. Carr was an *Early Bird* who soloed in a Curtiss Pusher, instructed cadets in the Great War, and organized Paramount Aircraft of Saginaw, Michigan in 1928. The first Paramount Cabinaire was powered by a Warner Scarab and looked much like Carr’s Travel Air, in which he had tested the first Warner engine for the factory. NC-17M was tour #11 in 1930. The Paramount enterprise went under some time following the 1930 tour and Carr flew Stinsons in China, tested for Barkley Grow and other companies, built an unusual OX-5 job, a monoplane which made racing records of 156 miles per hour. Carr was active in the Michigan State Aeronautical Commission, served again in World War II, passed away June 14, 1970.

Clarence E. Clark was a quiet, capable Kansas boy who disproved a popular notion of the ’twenties; that to be a topnotch pilot you must have gone through the sound and fury and glory of Pensacola or Kelly Field.

Clark earned his own way as a mechanic and he was just twenty-two when Walter Beech sent him out in the 1926 tour with a Travel Air. Clark was a Travel Air factory pilot until 1930 along with Pete Hill, the Wadlow Twins and many others. Then he joined Billy Parker at Phillips Petroleum in Bartlesville, Oklahoma and he is still there, having succeeded Parker as head of the aviation division. Clark’s old friends call him “Skipper,” an appropriate title for a veteran whose license numbers total only 612: Transport Pilot #334, A&E Mechanic #278.

E. W. Cleveland was a big, friendly man with a slow patient manner and a fine homely face. Whatever his age, he’d have been called “Pop.”

Pop soloed at the Curtiss school in Hammondsport in 1912, taught students at Wright Field, took up barnstorming, and selling life insurance, then took up selling “Aerol Struts” for the Cleveland Pneumatic Tool Company. Aerol Struts were air-oil hydraulic cylinders patterned after the Gruss automotive shock absorbers then in use on trucks and buses and they were rapidly accepted for airplane landing gears. Pop Cleveland was a regular at aviation gatherings, usually busy with checkered flag and stop watch, sometimes hamming up the act with a ten-gallon cowboy hat that appeared to rest on his very large ears. He competed in the 1927 tour, worked as an Official in the years following.

Old friends joshed Pop about his being the “Cleveland” of the tool company, which he was not, and about his real name being “Ephraim,” which it

was. Pop was a most beloved man and pioneer airman, and when he crashed to his death near Seattle in August of 1952, there could never be anyone to take his place.

Cloyd P. Clevenger began flying gliders as a high school boy in Oakland, California. He was an instructor at March Field in the World War, then for the next forty years he had every kind of flying job imaginable: teacher and text writer, stunt man, skywriter, transport pilot in World War II. He flew in the 1927 and 1928 tours, retired a long time later in Mexico, died in 1964, when he was sixty-six.

Clev was a gay and charming fellow, beloved by women, liked by men; a great trial to loyal friends who were often called upon to bail him out of “one damfool scrape after another.” Veteran air mail pilot Leon Cuddeback recalled a ride with Clev during an air show in the early days at the Varney Field, near San Francisco. The ride ended with a very low pass across the field, with Clevenger holding the ship in a very difficult “knife-edge vertical” bank, followed by a slow-roll. Leon had no safety belt and back on the ground, still frightened and mad he offered to give Clev the thrashing he deserved.

“Well gee, I thought you’d bear with me just this once,” Clev replied, smiling. “What would all those spectators have thought if I’d just come in and made a plain ordinary landing, like everyone else? How’d they know who it was flying the ship?”

Thomas B. Colby was a member of the firm of Berry Brothers, a Detroit firm that made paint and varnish and dope and all kinds of finishing materials. Colby sold these *Berryloid* products, always flew a company plane called *The Wings of Progress*. He accompanied his first tour in 1928, flew and worked on the committee in others.

In those years before mass production of metal airplanes, pilots and their helpers had time to work on individual paint jobs. And as materials were improved, the old olive drabs and dull silvers were replaced by brilliant pastel colors; shining from hours of hand rubbing by patient workmen, and not so patient small boys who came around after school and waited a chance to help.

Lockheed Vegas might be snowy white, with sharp red trim; the big Travel Air monoplanes a vast expanse of flaming orange and jet-black. Eaglerocks were bright silver and deep blue, while the custom built Laird had wings of sheer gold, waxed and polished to such a hard brilliance that a cleaning rag laid down on the wing panel would slide off on the ground.

Berry Brothers was sold to another firm later on,

Tom moved to Pauma Valley, California, where he has a ranch called “The Lazy H,” and where he has worked harder than he ever did around an airport. *Berryloid* became only another honored name, like Aerol Struts and Flightex Fabric, Scully Helmets and Luxor Goggles, Airwheel Tires and MotoMeters — gone with the wind like the old time professional dope and fabric man.

Ray Collins flew Spads in the Great War, came home to Detroit and worked for banker Frank Blair of the Union Trust Company. Blair was a civic booster who sent Collins out as fund raiser, dinner speaker and organizer to advance the cause of Aviation. Collins flew as referee or manager in all seven air tours, was called “Papa Ray” by pilots; when they weren’t calling him other names for some alleged bum decision.

Collins’ job was a difficult one in the final 1931 tour as money, and enthusiasm, disappeared. And his last trip around; the Pathfinder flight of 1932, turned out to be for a lost cause. Collins found airport and administrative jobs, and in the Second World War he was in Federal ordnance work. He is retired in Plymouth, Michigan.

John Carroll Cone served with the Third Pursuit Group, went on his first patrol over the Western Front in October of 1918. And quite obviously he had never heard the classic Hollywood line, “But Captain, you cannot send a mere boy up there to die in an old crate like that....” Because young Lieutenant Cone shot down the first German airplane he ever saw.

Back home in Arkansas Cone served as Secretary of State, ran for governor. His qualifications were excellent: he came of good rural Baptist parents, he was born on the Fourth of July, and he had once been granted an audience with President Coolidge. But Cone was defeated: possibly the voters thought this tall handsome Major who came campaigning in a Jenny was too good to be true.

Cone became Sales Manager for the Command-Aire, built in Little Rock by the Arkansas Aircraft Company. He flew a Command-Aire in the 1929 tour. The company went under following the stock market crash and Cone moved on to American eagle at Kansas City, then the Department of Commerce in Washington, and finally Pan American Airways. He was with Pan Am through the Second World War, is retired in Washington, D.C.

When Carroll Cone talks of that First World War of 1917, he recalls an exciting time of often chivalrous air duels, when pilots spoke of “victories” rather than the “kills,” of later wars. But

he remembers too, the personal kind of death in close-in maneuvering of single-seater airplanes: watching a friend, helpless with jammed machine guns who threw his arms across his face as though to ward off an opponent's bullets; and a young German who stood up in his cockpit and saluted, as his ship burst into flames. For all the honor and glory, Carroll Cone still seems quite the devout and earnest young Baptist from the little town of Snyder, in Ashley County, Arkansas.

Edwin O. Cooper began his apprentice training at Farnborough, England in 1917. He came to America, worked for the Post Office Air Mail in San Francisco, joined Pacific Air Transport later, then Pacific Airmotive and finally Bendix.

Cooper was a top engine man, much in demand for special assignments like that of servicing the Lockheed Vega in the 1928 tour. Cooper had worked on another Vega in 1927, *The Golden Eagle*, lost in the Dole Race. Contrary to the popular notion that all the Dole entrants were hastily improvised crates, the Lockheed entry was a good airplane, and its disappearance in the Pacific was always a tragic mystery to Cooper and the others who worked on it.

Another special project of 1927 involved Cooper in five days of frantic activity cooped up in a San Francisco warehouse trying to put together a Travel Air monoplane for Ernie Smith to be first to fly to Hawaii. Smith's plane was a Pacific Air Transport mail ship, and its conversion for a long range, over-water flight was a rush, patchwork job, accomplished amid much squabbling among all concerned, including meddlesome city officials eager to get in the act and the Army, which refused Smith permission to take off from Crissey Field, despite his being an Air Mail Pilot, War Veteran, Reserve Pilot, and Old Friend of Air Corps Chief, General Patrick.

Smith's backers included a San Francisco bootlegger, and another man very big in the Bank of Italy, who insisted that when the Travel Air should be in sight of Waikiki Beach, Smith transmit a radio message, "Feel safe as the Bank of Italy." But when Smith and Emory Bronte finally made their getaway from Oakland Airport in July of 1927 they were lucky to reach the islands at all and their radio was silent: the trailing wire antenna having been carried away in the ocean during the final hours when Ernie Smith held the limping Travel Air just clear of the waves, with little to go on except sheer will power.

Eddie Cooper had fled the scene long since, but he had much to do tuning engines for other record setters later on. And when he did finally stow away his toolbox and move up to an executive job with

Bendix Corporation there were still pilots all around the country who were glad for the days when Eddie Cooper was a plain ordinary mechanic, ready to climb up on a stand and make their engine run just a little better than it ever had before.

Cooper is retired; lives in Burbank, California.

N.R. "Ray" Cooper was an auto racer who went into the business of managing shows and exhibitions. He helped stage the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, then served with the Tank Corps in the Great War, and joined the Detroit Board of Commerce in 1925. He helped with the air tours through 1931, was a Major in the Air Corps Reserve. He is thought to be deceased.

Cooper undoubtedly compared the air tour work with a show he had staged some years before: Robert G. Fowler's try for a fifty-thousand dollar prize offered by William Randolph Hearst to the first man to fly across the continent in thirty days. Cooper launched Bob Fowler from Los Angeles in a 32 horse-power Wright pusher on October 11, 1911. Three weeks later Fowler had reached Tucson, where he joined in the cheers for another contender named Calbraith Rogers, coming westbound in another Wright. Rogers sailed on to the Pacific, but his total time was 49 days; no prize money.

Bob Fowler went on east, made one record nonstop: Yuma to Maricopa, Arizona; 226 miles in 4 hours, 26 minutes. And on one occasion, down in rough country, he coaxed his airplane aloft from a railroad flat-car pushed along the tracks by his loyal manager and ground crew. The Wright climbed just fast enough that time to clear the belching smokestack of an oncoming locomotive, which happened to be passing by.

Fowler reached Jacksonville, Florida, February 17, 1912; like Rogers, too slow for the Hearst prize. But then just for fun he did make a new record from one ocean to another; he flew nonstop from Atlantic to Pacific — along the Panama Canal.

Ralph W. Cram was 57 when he went along on his first air tour, in 1926. And pilots in all the tours never forgot the enthusiasm of "that wonderful old guy from Iowa."

Cram started working on the Davenport, Iowa, *Democrat* when he finished high school in 1883; a time when "veteran" meant the Civil War, which had ended just eighteen years before. Homesteaders heading for the Oregon Country took their families on special "Emigrant Rates" on the new transcontinental railroad, but they went armed against the Indians: Custer and his cavalymen had been slaughtered only seven years before. Electric streetcars were newfangled inventions, and nobody

had yet heard of a roadster, or sedan. And people devoutly believed that if man were meant to fly like a bird God would have equipped him with wings.

Small wonder then that Ralph Cram should never tire of the magic of flight, this miracle actually happening in his lifetime. He was an aviation enthusiast from the moment he saw his first airplane; and when he flew by himself, his first solo at age sixty-two, he was sure it was the most wonderful thing he had ever done.

Cram retired after fifty-six years on the same newspaper. He passed away in 1952.

William Jefferson Crosswell celebrated his 25th birthday on October 3, 1929 as he tried to push the Curtiss Condor through the storm that blocked the way from New York to Dearborn and the start of the 1929 tour.

Crosswell was a capable, easygoing Southerner, graduate of Georgia Tech and of March Field. He worked for Curtiss-Wright through the nineteen-thirties and the Second World War, a time when Curtiss airplanes were seen on every airfield in the country, and when their bird names were familiar to every airplane watcher.

Some were peace loving: the *Oriole* and *Thrush*, *Lark*, *Tanager* and *Carrier Pigeon*, *Robin*, *Teal* and *Fledgling*; even the giant *Eagle*. Others were quarrelsome: the *Shrike* and *Helidiver*, *Osprey* and *Owl* and all the *Hawks*: *Sparrowhawk* and *Seahawk*, *Goshawk*, *Warhawk* and *Kitty Hawk*. Still others were either way: the *Condor*, *Seagull*, *Kingbird* and *Falcon*.

When Bill Crosswell died of cancer a few years after the Second World War, an old friend recalled a report written by a company observer during the 1929 tour. The report suggested that pilots be given more time to prepare for such events — a pointed recommendation with which all pilots might agree — and then it went on to say, “The present high rating of the Curtiss Condor is due to work by Bill Crosswell.”

Robert E. Dake flew for the Kendall Oil Company, refiners of “The Two Thousand Mile Oil” for autos and “The Thirty Hour Oil” for airplanes. The Kendall people were always “right on the field” at aviation competitions, ready with free oil and any other help they could offer to pilots.

Bob Dake was a racing pilot himself, and in 1931 his home address was listed as Pittsburgh. He operated a Bellanca Pacemaker and this may have been the Kendall Oil ship in the 1931 tour. Dake worked later for the Department of Commerce, was an inspector at Inglewood, California. He passed

away in 1958.

Arthur J. Davis learned to fly in the World War, came home to Michigan and started his own Michigan Airways Company at East Lansing. For the next forty years Davis was known as tough competition in any race, and he set unusual records of his own: nearly 200 miles an hour in a Taper Wing Waco, and a climb from a standing start to 5,500 feet altitude and return, in three minutes, four seconds. He was deadly accurate in spot landing contests, and in a “Kiss of Death” air show act: a stunt where Davis used a hook on the wingtip of his Waco to pluck a flag from the wingtip of another plane as the two made a low pass in front of the grandstand.

Davis just missed a perfect score in the 1929 air tour; lost in a near zero fog near Portland he flew right down a railroad track in the Maine woods, wingtips brushing trees and telegraph poles as he went by a depot, and tried to read the name of the town — and missed it — and never did know what town it was — a great humiliation for such a proud perfectionist.

Major Davis flew Army transports in the Second World War, kept on flying another fifteen years. But now his office door at Michigan Airways is posted, “Gone Fishing to Florida” — a long way from air shows, and unknown railroad depots hidden in the rain and fog of the Maine woods.

Richard Henry DePew, Jr., learned to fly in 1911 at the Farman School in France. He returned to America, flew for Curtiss, served at McCook Field, and in 1923 became number one pilot for Sherman Fairchild’s aerial mapping and photographic company. DePew helped design the first Fairchild monoplane and flew it in the 1926 tour.

Fairchild pilots remembered Dick DePew as a very fussy kind of flyer, who often paused before takeoff to pluck a handful of grass and toss it in the air to test the wind, as he’d learned on the 1911 Farmans. The fellows joshed him too, about his habit of leaning into his turns, another hangover from the days when a shoulder yoke was part of the control mechanism to make an airplane turn. And DePew joined in the laughter; he was a fine straight man and life of the party, although known as a teetotaler.

DePew moved on to other organizations after Fairchild, flew in World War II. He passed away on January 28, 1948.

George E. Dickson was a patient man who set a new tour record in 1931 for sustained low speed: 64.1 miles an hour. Dickson’s potbellied little ship was called names like “Pregnant Kite,” and “Flying

Bathtub” and even the proper name Aeronca, an abbreviation for Aeronautical Corporation of America, was corrupted to “Aeronika,” or “Air Knocker,” or just plain “Knocker.”

But for all the laughs about “the day old George sat there in that powered glider from dawn to dusk just to get across one cattle ranch in Texas” the little Aeronca did finish the tour. And even the diehards allowed as how there might be a few kids would come out on a Sunday and rent the ship an hour or so.

George Dickson retired in St. Simon’s Island, Georgia; passed away in the early nineteen-sixties. And whether or not George was a confirmed Sunday Cub Driver pilot, he may have appreciated Wolfgang Langewiesche’s comment, pointing out the resentment of old time pilots for these new light airplanes.

The light planes, Langewiesche wrote, “were undermining the most precious thing around the airports; the secretness of the art; the insiderdom of the insiders. Pilots are nothing if not conservative... in their hearts they were like armored knights; their inner worth was based entirely on their command of a dangerous and exclusive art, for which they had trained their nerves and their bodies in a long and tough apprenticeship. They were, of course, wholeheartedly for the progress of aviation and all that sort of thing. But at heart they still liked ships that were dangerous and hard to fly. Such comment as that she was a man-killer, or that she was too goddamned hot, or that she was awfully blind, were actually signs of affection and respect; of some airplanes it was said lovingly that they had to be flown every minute; and such airplanes — unstable, tricky, abrupt-stalling ones, nasty spinning ones — gave their pilots aristocratic status; while the stamp of ultimate vulgarity in aircraft was the judgment: ‘It flies itself.’ And when you stood around at the hangar gates and watched the flying and the new ships, you were sorry deep down in your heart every time that flying was made a degree more foolproof or more easy to afford.”

James H. Doolittle, tour referee in 1931, may have begrudged two weeks out of his busy schedule. For Doolittle was a man always going on a dead run: from a 21 hour transcontinental record back in 1922 to a celebration of his Golden Wedding in 1967; the latter a most remarkable record for any highflying aviator.

But Jimmie Doolittle always had time for ordinary everyday airplanes and pilots. One such occasion was recalled by F. M. Johnston, a time when he, Johnston, landed and taxied in at St. Louis with a brand new Nicholas Beazley monoplane. A spectator

approached, introduced himself and asked, “Do you know your motor is shaking and vibrating? Is it supposed to do that?”

Johnston said it was; the engine had a new kind of rubber shock mounting. The other man moved on around the ship, asked about a control rod in the cockpit, which appeared to be loose. Johnny explained that was okay; the rod was intended to be loose. Finally, the man asked if he might fly the airplane.

“He had said his name was ‘Doolittle’, Johnston recalled later. “But it took awhile to sink in; that such a famous guy would be asking questions of me. But whatever — I’d have let him take the ship. Of all the guys who’d looked it over, he was the only one who asked so many questions. He was obviously a man who knew what he was about.”

And that of course, is one good reason Jimmie Doolittle is still alive and well. He lives in Los Angeles.

Frank Dorbandt left the Woodson clan some time after the 1926 tour, made his way to Alaska. He flew for various companies there, had a Fairchild 71 and later a Ford Tri-Motor in a short lived venture called Ptarmigan Airways. Alaska veterans remembered him as a man not well thought of, and not successful as a flyer-businessman, who went to his reward in about 1936 following an injury from an airplane propeller. But it wasn’t the prop that did it; Frank got over that, walked out of the hospital to celebrate his recovery, celebrated for several days, and died of pneumonia.

Lieutenant **Phillip H. Downes** flew the only Woodson to finish the 1926 tour. And Downes did well to finish, with a Salmson motor. The Frenchbuilt radial was known for “mouse trap” valve springs which often let go, so that push rods came spewing out from the cylinders like arrows from a bow. Salmson pilots were advised to carry bundles of push rods and if they had room, an extra crankshaft as well.

Phil Downes was killed in a Woodson at Ford Airport on May 27, 1927. The accident report listed the ship as a monoplane and charged failure of a wing strut.

Downes’ accident was typical of the bad luck which beset Omer Lee Woodson in his effort to make the name “WECO” — for Woodson Engineering Company — as well known as “WACO.” He was an ex-Air Mail mechanic, and one of his partners was Air Mail pilot Arthur Roy Smith. Art Smith had acquired a number of the war surplus Salmsons which were used in the Woodson biplanes and when Smith was killed flying the mail

in February of 1926 the engines were taken over by Al Menasco, old friend and former mechanic for Smith in his exhibition flying tours. Menasco rebuilt the big water-cooled radial to make it air-cooled and give it the name Menasco Salmson.

One Woodson biplane was still flying in the late 'twenties, registered to New York musician and aviator Roger Wolfe Kahn and later to Vincent Burnelli, who fitted it with an Aeromarine radial engine. Woodson built other planes too, including a monoplane called the Simplex, convertible to a biplane by simply bolting on lower wing panels to extend out from the landing gear bracing. But it was not successful, nor was another unusual development, the Cycloplane trainer, a ground taxi plane designed to save beginning student and instructor valuable and expensive flight training time.

Omer Lee Woodson worked for other companies in World War II passed on some time after that war.

Harold A. Elliott flew in France with the First Aero Detachment of the U.S. Navy, was retired in 1927 when he lost a leg in an accident. He joined the Pitcairn organization in time for the 1927 tour, was an operations executive and working pilot in the Pitcairn mail line and the Eastern Air Transport company that succeeded it. Elliott left Eastern in the upheaval that followed the 1934 air mail cancellations, when U.S. Senate investigators charged fraud in the original contract awards of 1926.

Elliott was formally cleared later of any wrongdoing but he had long since gone out to Arizona, bought a dude ranch near Tucson and forgotten all about airplanes. Then in 1941, game leg or no the Navy called him back to help organize a worldwide airline, the Naval Air Transport Service. That accomplished and the war over, Elliott returned to San Diego, where he's retired.

Lieutenant **L. C. "Elsie" Elliott** was stationed at Selfridge Field with the First Pursuit Group when he flew the Army transport in the 1926 tour. Later that year Elliott was a member of the Army team at the Philadelphia Air Races. He joined the Civil Aeronautics Authority, was listed in the Fort Worth office in 1940, and in World War II he may have been back on active duty in the Army Air Force. We have no further information about him.

Henry C. "Hy" Etten was a partner in a Chicago printing firm. He flew at Ashburn Field, moved up from a Jenny to a Curtiss Oriole, then the Laird he flew in the 1925 tour. Department of Commerce lists indicate Etten owned at least one other Laird, a Wasp powered ship registered as number 7216, in 1930.

Etten is said to be retired in Constantine, Michigan. We wrote him there, without success.

Leonard S. Flo served at Selfridge Field, joined an early day New York to Washington airline called "Mitten Airlines," flew for Florida Airways, flew a Stinson in the 1927 tour. He had his own flying services at Ann Arbor and Dearborn, and in 1928 he tried for a three country nonstop record: Canada, USA, Cuba, in a Walter engined Spartan. He came down at Key West but set a new distance record nonetheless.

Old timers at Haggerty Field on Ford Road in Dearborn remembered Flo for his landing and takeoff competitions in a Bird biplane, against the *Detroit News'* Pitcairn Autogiro. The nimble Bird could almost outdo the big Pitcairn and delighted spectators eagerly cheered for Flo and his biplane.

The 1931 cabin model Bird was a last minute tour entry, which Flo brought out from New York just in time to complete Department of Commerce certification tests at Detroit. Bird lovers hoped such an airplane might revive the company's lagging fortunes, as the Waco cabin plane helped that company, but it was too late; the one and only Bird cabin ship went down to obscurity in the Pennsylvania mountains.

Leonard Flo returned to the Army Air Force for the Second World War and the Korean War, retired with the rank of Colonel, lives in El Paso.

When **Anthony H. G. Fokker** brought his Tri-Motor to America for the 1925 tour, he was just thirty-five, a wealthy and talented Dutchman who had built and flown spectacular airplanes since 1910. Humility was not one of Fokker's virtues; he had much to say of rival designers who copied his work, while he himself was accused of having depended heavily on his own man, Rheinhold Platz. Fokker was criticized as opinionated and stubborn; praised as an imaginative designer and businessman whose personality needed only a little understanding. The 1925 tour pilots grew quite weary of his tiresome speeches to every lunch and dinner audience along the way, but they found him interesting, helpful and friendly at the airfield. Most accepted him for the egotist he was, joked with him, and called him "Uncle Tony."

Tony Fokker died December 23, 1939, when he was forty-nine. And even his detractors admitted he would be sorely missed.

Edsel Ford was usually on hand for tour arrivals and departures, often accompanied by Fred Black, friend and Ford executive and qualified Ford pilot. And while Black tried to interest Edsel Ford in flying, the young heir to the motor empire had too

many other things on his mind and tour pilots who met him recalled that he was aloof and preoccupied.

On the other hand Black and other Ford veterans who knew him well remembered Edsel as a good friend and when he died of cancer in May, 1943 many of them left the company. Even though they might survive the executive power struggle sure to follow, the Ford Motor Company would never be quite the same.

Henry Ford was sixty-one when he acquired the Stout Metal Airplane Company and built an airport. Ford company pilots remembered “Mr. Ford” as an interested onlooker, seldom giving direct orders; never willing to go up in an airplane until persuaded to do so with Charles Lindbergh.

There were of course, certain strict orders at Ford Airport: No Flying on Sundays, and No Smoking on the flight line, within fifty feet of an airplane or anywhere else. And nobody was allowed to pass the closely guarded gates to the field without proper permission. Company rules applied in the airplane factory as in any Ford plant. Uniformed guards timed the workmen in and out of the restrooms, plain-clothes detectives were spotted throughout the ranks and employees were fired if caught “with liquor on their breath” — on the job or anywhere else. Mr. Ford’s hatred of bootleggers was equaled only by his aversion to New York bankers, military men and labor union agitators, and he directed his company security chief, Harry Bennett, to assist and support the local police in this anti-booze campaign throughout Dearborn and Detroit.

While some historians believe Henry Ford gave up on aviation because so many good young men were killed flying Ford Tri-Motors, the fact remains the airplane venture did consistently lose money and was indeed a very minute part of the company empire. Ford’s close advisors in the executive hierarchy, called “The Back Door Gang,” were said to be jealous of the airplane people, and the final fiasco of the forty-passenger Model 14 Tri-Motor which cost half a million dollars and crashed in taxi tests without ever leaving the ground — may have influenced the hard headed Mr. Ford to quit the flying business.

Ford did have one idealistic notion about the airplane: that it would advance the cause of peace. “The airplane is going to destroy the illusion of force,” Mr. Ford said, “and that will bring peace. (The airplane) will put power in the peoples’ hands just as the motor car has done. The motor car has mixed up people so thoroughly that you could not fool any American about any part of the country, but they still can be fooled about other parts of the

world. Well, the airplane will stop that. In an auto you can go wherever land exists; in an airplane you can go wherever man can breathe. The airplane will make short work of the big navies, I think.”

Frank Free was a prospector and homesteader around Phoenix, Arizona when he was young; was selling Cadillacs in Denver when he went along with Benny Howard in the 1928 tour. He returned to Arizona, flying for Scenic Airways and using his own Eaglerock and a Fairchild. Scenic was a wealthy and flourishing enterprise in 1929, with Fleet trainers carrying students over Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport and Ford Tri-Motors carrying tourists over the Grand Canyon. But the company went under with the stock market crash.

Frank Free ferried a Scenic Ford to a buyer in Nicaragua, stayed for a time as pilot and operator. Then he made his way to Spain, flew for the Loyalists in that bloody civil war and when their cause was lost he managed a forced landing safely across the border in France. He returned to America, and then was off again to Canada to teach flying cadets in training for the Second World War. But an accident left him with a crippled leg, and Free finished out World War II in a ground job at Thunderbird Field in Arizona.

He died in October of 1948, when he was 65, and an old friend from the Scenic Airways days scattered Frank’s ashes on a mountain slope overlooking Phoenix, as he had requested.

H. H. “Pat” Gallup was a freelance barnstormer who happened by the Woodson shop at Bryan, Ohio just when a third man was needed for the 1926 tour. Pat Gallup was a farm boy from Milford, Wisconsin who learned to fly at March and Kelly, took part in the Billy Mitchell bombing raid demonstration held off the Virginia Capes in 1921.

Gallup worked for Ford, flew Fords between the Twin Cities and Rochester for Jefferson Airways, an offshoot of a local bus company with the same name. He joined *TAT-Maddux*, progressed to be Director of Flight Test. And just before he retired in Pompano Beach, Florida, Pat Gallup checked out in a jet transport, thus becoming one of the few men who can honestly recite that hackneyed phrase, “Jennies to Jets.”

Lee Gehibach flew with the First Pursuit Group at Selfridge Field and was active in the Detroit area in racing and test flying. He won the All America Flying Derby staged in 1930 by the manufacturer of Cirrus engines, flying a Command-Aire monoplane built in Little Rock, Arkansas and christened *Little*

Rocket. Gehlbach flew a Bird in the 1931 tour, moved east, and flew Gee Bees and a Gee Bee stepchild called the QED. His luck with these airplanes was consistently bad.

He flew for Grumman on Long Island, completed tests of a Navy fighter plane, the XF3F-1. A well-known test pilot named Jimmy Collins was killed in an early model of the ship, and Gehlbach was almost killed too, during spin tests. But he bailed out, returned to fight another day, and the airplane was improved and accepted by the Navy.

Gehlbach may have returned to active duty with the Army Air Force in World War II. Old timers at Grumman believe he passed on some time during the mid nineteen-sixties.

Charles Glidden was an enthusiastic greeter of the 1927 air tourists when they landed at Boston. And the speechmakers had much to say of this seventy-year old man who had promoted the original Glidden Auto Tours, which had helped inspire the air tours. Glidden was from Lowell, Massachusetts. He was called a genius in telephone communications; had sent the first cablegram all the way around the world; was an early day worldwide auto tourist, as well as ardent sport balloonist. He passed away soon after the 1927 tour.

Edgar A. Goff, Jr., had generally bad luck in two air tours. His 1925 Swallow made a record for forced landings, and in 1927 Goff was riding in Frank Hawks' Ryan when Hawks all but spun in near Boston. After that Pete Goff rode with someone else, and when he went out to Spokane a few weeks later to referee the air races there, he took the train.

Goff soloed in a Curtiss pusher, flew in the Great War, returned to Michigan, worked for himself, for Eddie Stinson and Fred Verville, flew Fokker Tri-Motors for the airline that evolved from Thompson Aeronautical into American Airways. Goff joined the Department of Commerce in 1932; returned to Air Force duty in World War II; stayed on until 1957; is retired in Edgewater, Maryland.

Brice H. Goldsborough served in the Navy, worked for Sperry Gyroscope Company, and in 1919 organized the Pioneer Instrument Company, with Charles H. Colvin. They developed the Earth Inductor Compass, a gyro-stabilized device free from the wild oscillations and mysterious deceptions of the ordinary magnetic coma, and an instrument, which made possible the long distance flights of that time. The Pioneer Company owned the trophy winning Travel Air in which Goldsborough flew with Walter Beech in the 1926 tour.

Goldsborough was thirty-six in 1927; an older and wiser man than most. And thus it was surprising that he succumbed to the glory fever, like so many others. He set out across the Atlantic just before Christmas of 1927, navigator of a Sikorsky amphibian called *The Dawn*. It was flown by Oscar Omdahl, carried a lady adventuress named Grayson and Fred Koehler, the veteran mechanic who had accompanied Hy Etten in the 1925 tour. Somewhere off Harbor Grace, *The Dawn* went down, with all hands.

The following summer, as though to emphasize the tragedy of knowledgeable men who fail to follow their own rules, another Pioneer Company partner named Morris Titterington took off in a Travel Air, headed through the Pennsylvania Mountains and crashed to his death in instrument weather. And in 1931 Goldsborough's twenty-year old son Frank was another weather victim, killed in a fog on the last lap of a record transcontinental trip in a Fleet biplane.

Alger Graham flew with the Canadians in the Great War, returned to his home state of Michigan, took up barnstorming, went down south dusting cotton. Graham flew a Stinson biplane for the Wilkins Arctic Expedition of 1927. On one occasion, when Wilkins and Ben Eilson were down and lost on a flight over the Polar Ice Cap Graham went out looking for them in the Stinson, even though his contract specified he would not fly the ship over the ice cap or open water.

Graham's job in the 1928 air tour was somewhat easier: flying the Reid Murdock Grocery Company plane. Reid Murdock gave each pilot a thermos bottle kit, sent their salesman Bob Nesbitt along to keep it filled with Monarch brand coffee. Dealers at each stop dispensed coffee from a booth, with a sign, "Good Pilots Deserve Good Coffee." And it was good: the instant variety had not yet come into general use, and there were no dime-in-slot machines.

Alger Graham served again in the Second World War, passed away at his home in Mt. Clemens, October 2, 1953. He was fifty-five.

Zantford D. Granville flew one of his own Gee Bee monoplanes accompanying the 1931 tour as far as Wheeling, where he dropped out. Granville started an airplane maintenance service at East Boston in 1927, with tools and ladders carried on a motor truck; a one-man, free enterprise venture still carried on forty years later at some airports. Granville's four brothers joined him, they set up shop at Springfield, Massachusetts and "Gee Bee" — Granville Brothers — airplanes were flown to

one spectacular racing victory after another. The company lasted only a few years; one of the many Gee Bee accidents claimed Z. D. Granville himself, at Spartanburg, South Carolina in February of 1934.

Ernest Greenwood was “Special Representative” for Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover in the 1926 tour. Greenwood rode in the Ford Tri-Motor, and after the Ford crashed at Nova, Ohio he smiled gamely and said, “Major Schroeder made a fine gentle landing.” Like his boss, Ernest Greenwood was a soft spoken scholar and gentleman, and the aviation people who would complain of bureaucratic snoops in the years to come might well look back on this happier time when the Federal men were easy to get along with.

Ernest Greenwood has passed on, but his son Jim carries on the family tradition: pilot, parachute jumper, author, respected public relations man for Beech, for Lear Jet, and now for the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington.

D. Morgan Hackman was a graduate of West Point and of Air Corps Flying School, a promising candidate to make a high score for the Fairchild team in the 1929 tour. But he was out going across Missouri, in the gusty wind between St. Louis and Springfield. The accident report said, “Plane struck wall of canyon while flying at low altitude in bumpy weather.” Hackman was not hurt.

Hackman was later sent to Mexico by the Fairchild people; he stayed there to go into business for himself. We assume he is still there.

Mrs. James G. Haizlip was a star performer who said she owed it all to one man: her instructor, coach, and husband.

Jimmie Haizlip started in Signal Corps aviation in 1917; was a veteran of the French base at Issoudun, where he trained American cadets on a French Nieuport equipped with a throttle, which was mounted on the opposite side of the cockpit and worked backward from the one they’d only recently mastered on the American JN4. Fortunately the war ended and Haizlip returned to Oklahoma before some zealous student spun him in for good.

He was an organizer of the Spartan School, flew for the SAFEway Airline and for the Shell Oil Company. Both Jimmie and his wife starred at the National Air Races, following her good beginning in the 1929 air tour. Mrs. Haizlip won \$7500 at the 1931 National Air Races, and made a world’s speed record of 255 miles an hour.

Jimmie Haizlip was back in the Air Force for the Second World War, moved to California for work in

aerospace. The Haizlips live in Pacific Palisades, California.

George W. Haldeman was a World War flyer who set up his own operation at Lakeland, Florida. One of his most attractive and ambitious students was a girl named Ruth Elder, who determined to be the first woman across the Atlantic. She and George made their getaway on October 11, 1927 in the Stinson “*American Girl*”, and while George had to ditch the faltering monoplane alongside a ship some 2,600 miles out from New York, the flight made headlines nevertheless. Ruth appeared on stage and screen; George went on to other more useful record flights, often with his old friend Eddie Stinson.

George competed in three tours, starting in 1928, then after several years as a Bellanca test and sales pilot, he “went over to the other side” — joined the Department of Commerce. He served there and with the Civil Aeronautics Board, retired in Miami Beach, Florida, still good natured with his many old friends who never let him forget that “almost” Atlantic crossing.

“Imagine old George — nothing to do for a day and a night but sit there cruising along over a moonlit ocean with that gorgeous flapper.”

Edward G. Hamilton learned to fly with the Canadians in 1917, took up barnstorming in Michigan, flew the first Stout Air Sedan, flew the first Ford Stout entry in the air tours. He had another significant “first” — the Stout Air Service freight run, Dearborn to Chicago, April 11, 1925.

Hamilton went to South America later with *NYRBA*, the New York, Rio and Buenos Aires Airline, later absorbed by Pan American. He returned to the states, flew for a time as test pilot on a tri-motor built in Atlanta and financed by Asa Candler, of the Coca Cola Company. In 1931 Hamilton was a Senior Pilot for E. L. Cord’s Century Airlines, then with the pilot strike against Century, Hamilton was out of work with the others.

He took a job as Washington representative for the newly organized union, The Air Line Pilots Association, and for the next several years he often helped negotiate union contracts, bargaining with old friends now become airline executives. Hamilton served on the War Production Board in the Second World War, was with American Export Airlines and American Airlines later, and retired in Old Westbury, Long Island.

Owen G. Harried was a pilot-salesman, rather than mechanic. But he had been with Walter Beech long enough that he knew what to do next, and when the 1930 Curtiss Kingbird shed its top fuselage fabric

diving over the field at Great Falls, Harried pitched in to help fix it. He found a local plumbing shop, cut a piece of sheet metal to fit, and he and the mechanic Frenchy laced it to the airplane with baling wire.

Harned sold Travel Airs in New York State, helped develop a good airport at Albany, where he offered an airplane ride to Governor Roosevelt at the dedication ceremonies. The governor declined, but Eleanor Roosevelt was an enthusiastic and appreciative passenger.

When the depression hit the airplane industry, Harned did what many other unemployed pilots have so often resolved: he quit the business, and for good. He stowed away his pilot and mechanic licenses, took his wife and two children back to Stillwater, Oklahoma and got a job with the Post Office. He is still there.

Frances Harrell was twenty-three when she left Houston to seek her fortune in New York City. She learned to fly, became a Curtiss-Wright pilot and was assigned a Moth in the 1929 tour. Her ship was wrecked at Cincinnati, when she was cut out on final approach by an Army plane and ran out of gas going around again. The accident report charged pilot error: apparently it was too much even then, for an investigator to be charitable with something like, "Unexpected headwinds; tired young girl pilot, obnoxious male pilot hogged airspace."

Fran Harrell married Bill Marsalis, another Curtiss pilot, and she made endurance records with Louise Thaden and Helen Richey. She flew her last race at Dayton, Ohio in August of 1934. On the last lap of the last event of the day, she lost control of her Waco, crashed and was killed.

Frank M. Hawks flew in the Great War, made a living as a not very solvent gypsy pilot, finally stayed put long enough in Houston, to marry Edith Bowie. And "that girl was the making of him." She financed his 1927 Ryan and with that new start Frank started moving up.

Hawks had his share of slam-bang accidents: an erratic takeoff from West Palm Beach wiped out his 1929 Lockheed Air Express, and another takeoff accident in 1932 banged up the famed Travel Air *Texaco 13*, in which Hawks made so many speed records in this country and in Europe. And a hard landing crippled another racer, *Time Flies*, just a few months after it was built. Hawks gave up speed flying in the mid-thirties, then was killed ironically enough, in a slow flying light airplane, the Gwinn Aircar. He took off from a small field near Buffalo, New York, collided with a power line,

August 23, 1938.

Hawks was a good mixer and storyteller; liked to tell of a record he made back in 1921 in his Standard J-1. He carried wing-walker Wesley May aloft over Long Beach, California, to join up with Earl Daugherty, circling in his Jenny. May carried a five-gallon can of gasoline, and he stepped over to Earl's ship and poured the gas in the Jenny's tank. And thus Frank Hawks always claimed he was the first man to pilot an aerial tanker plane.

The 1931 tour publicity listed Buhl pilot **Walter Henderson** as a Canadian flyer who shot down eleven enemy aircraft in The World War. In response to our inquiry to the National Museum of Canada at Ottawa, we were advised that records of military flyers in that war indicate there were two Walter Hendersons.

Walter W. R. Henderson of Winnipeg flew reconnaissance airplanes and was not credited with any combat victories. Walter L. Henderson of St. Catharines, Ontario was credited with one enemy plane shot down. We assume Walter L. was the 1931 tour pilot, but have no further information about him.

Henderson dropped out of the 1931 tour immediately after the crash of his teammate, Charles Sugg, possibly because of engine trouble in his own Buhl, possibly to stand by Sugg in the hospital at Martins Ferry, Ohio.

Al Henley was a World War veteran who took up the barnstorming trail in his home country of Texas and Oklahoma. He was Benny Griffin's navigator for the Travel Air *Oklahoma* in the 1927 Dole Race. The *Oklahoma* drew number one, was off the ground at Oakland promptly at twelve noon, and back again by one, with both men making profane comments about the "damned motor."

Al Henley went back to Fort Worth and his own enterprises. The Ryan he flew in the 1928 tour was one he sold to The Texas and Pacific Coal and Oil Company.

On January 24, 1929 Henley flew from Fort Worth to San Angelo for an air show. He carried two passengers, a theatre owner named Shytles, and Don Frazee, star athlete at Texas Christian University. Spectators watched Henley's plane come over the field at San Angelo, apparently wobbling in for a down-wind landing. Then the ship plunged straight down, as though the pilot might have slumped forward over the controls. All three men were killed in the crash.

Stunt pilot **Charles W. Holman** put on his usual

air show at the Duluth, Minnesota airport dedication, as the 1930 air tour passed through....

Speed Holman was Chief Pilot for Northwest Airways, when he wasn't out on the racing circuit, and a veteran Northwest mechanic, Jake Pfender, recalled a story typical of the rugged young man's headstrong will. Speed came rushing out to the field one morning in May of 1928, shouting to the mechs to get his ship on the line, and put a man up on the hangar roof with a big bucket of yellow paint. Speed was boiling mad; he had just heard that some Frenchman had made a new world's record for looping the loop. Holman himself had made the previous record of 1,093 loops, in a local contest with two friends and neighbors: Gene Shank, 515 loops; Lyle Thro, 516 loops. And now this dam'd Frog, Alfred Fronval, had gone up and done an even 1,100.

There were anguished cries, "How we gonna spare a man sitting up there on the roof all day? And what about the mail run tonight, what ship we gonna use on that?"

But Holman was cranking up, roaring away in a steep climb to begin looping. And so they posted a man on the roof, and every time Speed completed a hundred loops the man painted a broad yellow stripe. And some time later, when Speed could look down through bleary eyes and count fourteen stripes, he came in and landed: oil all over him and the airplane; wires and fittings loose; parts missing; the mail run delayed far into the night. But the loop record was safe, back in Minnesota where it belonged.

Holman was thirty-two when he flew his last show, at Omaha, on May 17, 1931. It was said he went up just to help fill a blank spot on the program; that he'd promised his wife to give up the shows; settle down and be a proper airline man. All his old friends were there to watch: Johnny Livingston, and Art Davis, Jimmie Doolittle, and Jimmie Haizlip, who had raced against Holman so many times. Slonnie Sloniger was there, remembering the long ago times when he'd met Speed, broke and hungry, on the barnstorming circuit. And Frank Clarke, Hollywood stunt pilot, who did the same unbelievable things with a Travel Air that Holman did with his Laird.

Speed flew his show and went into the grand finale, a screaming dive and then a pull-out, upside down; the old master flying just a little faster, and a few feet closer to the ground – and to death than any other pilot before him. They watched as he flashed across in front of the stands, on his back, head down. And then – they could see his shoulders – and a hand – clutching at the windshield – as a corroded

buckle on his seat belt let go. If he'd been just a few feet higher – if there'd been another split second – but then the golden winged Laird hit the ground, cart wheeled, and exploded in a thousand pieces.

Nancy Hopkins came from a family of talented and enthusiastic "doers." Her father was a member of the physician clan at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, her mother a sister of artist Charles Dana Gibson, creator of the Gibson Girl. Nancy accomplished a part of her growing up on a Maryland farm, began flying in 1927, and was prepared for the field repairs she would encounter in the 1930 tour — beginning with a ring job on her Kinner motor when she arrived at Ford Airport, and for which she had to secure Henry Ford's express permission to work on a Sunday. There was more work along the way, including one valve replacement in a windy field in Kansas.

The wind bothered the Kitty Hawk biplane much of the time; the ship had no wheel brakes and would stubbornly weathercock into a strong crosswind while taxiing for takeoff in a long line of closely spaced airplanes. Then Nancy must climb out, waddling in her parachute, to lift and shove the tail around and stay in line. And near Enid, Oklahoma, flying right down between the trees to gain every possible second in a strong headwind, the Kitty Hawk was almost run down by George Haldeman's Bellanca, coming up fast from behind. Nancy saw the shadow, slammed her stick forward, hung on as the little biplane's wheels hit the ground in a shuddering, cruising-speed bounce, and miraculously kept going.

The Viking Kitty Hawk slogan, "Flies like a hawk; lands like a kitten," was not enough to save it from going under in the business depression. The factory had started at Hillsgrove, Rhode Island, headed by Allen P. Bourdon and called The Bourdon Kitty Hawk Aircraft Company. It was merged with The Viking Flying Boat Company of New Haven, a company whose President was Robert E. Gross. The factory closed in 1931; Bob Gross went out to California to help revive the almost dead Lockheed organization; Nancy Hopkins married Irving Tier and had a family. She was a charter member of the *Ninety-Nines*; is still an active pilot; active in the ecumenical movement of the church. The Tiers live in Lakeville, Connecticut.

Russell A. "Curly" Hosler flew a Woodson in the 1926 tour, was forced out with a familiar Salmson engine malady, a broken crankshaft. His mechanic was Don Stombaugh, now a senior maintenance supervisor in the United Air Lines base at San Francisco. Stombaugh recalls that

Hosler was a good pilot, and a good helper as the two men labored to rebuild the Salmson in the farm field where they came down on the fourth day of the tour.

Hosler competed in the 1930 transcontinental race sponsored by the Cirrus engine people, flying an unusual one-wheel landing gear monoplane called a G&G Special. The ship was hard to control on takeoffs and landings and Hosler cracked up in it and was seriously injured.

He was active in the Detroit area for many years, and we are sure his current address is in Toledo, Ohio, however a letter addressed to him there was not answered.

Ben O. Howard was twenty-four years old, he had worked on airplanes since he was old enough to fetch and carry, and he was a Texan. But when his 1928 Eaglerock was down in the awful July heat of Oklahoma, Howard was ready to give up; call the factory out in Colorado and tell them if they wanted their airplane it was sitting right here at Pawhuska, waiting for a truck or a span of mules to come and haul it away.

But somehow with his passenger and a local blacksmith helping, they got the big lifeless Salmson engine off the airplane and hauled into town to the blacksmith shop. They took it apart, and that made it seem more hopeless than ever; parts scattered all over the dirt floor, and no idea how they'd ever get them all back together.

Meanwhile, the brand new Eaglerock, baking in the sun out in the field, had become a shady haven for livestock. Chickens roosted in the wires and on the wings, hogs scratched their backs on the tail surfaces, contented cows leaned against the fuselage, switched their tails and stuck their horns through the fabric.

But Al Menasco did send the engine parts on a fast freight from Los Angeles, they did get the big radial back together, the airplane patched up, and limped home to Colorado.

Benny Howard left Eaglerock, went east again, worked for Ford and for Universal, finally lit and stayed with United Air Lines. United pilots remembered him with respect for his skill and knowledge as the company Research Test Pilot, and with amazement at the time off he arranged in order to build and fly racing airplanes. Much later, Howard had his own engineering firm in Los Angeles, a quiet place far removed from the roar of air races, or the heat and misery of an Oklahoma blacksmith shop. Benny Howard died December 4, 1970.

Clarence S. "Swede" Irvine was a Second Lieutenant at Selfridge Field when he flew the "J.A.N. Aircraft Service" Travel Air in the 1926 tour. JAN stood for James A. Nowicki, an M.D. who flew with the Michigan Air Guard and who was credited with the quotation, "There's money in the aviation game. I put a great deal of it there myself."

Irvine was a career officer, one of Billy Mitchell's warriors who went forth to other victories for air power, flying everything from Curtiss Hawks with two .30 caliber guns, to supersonic hydrogen bomb launching platforms that could destroy an entire city in one leisurely fly-over. Irvine retired after a very active career; lives in Palm Springs, California.

In October of 1946 General Irvine and a ten-man crew made an historic flight in a B-29 bomber: from Honolulu, 11,000 miles over the North Pole to Cairo. It was just twenty years since Doc Nowicki's Travel Air; a time when it was Irvine and one crewman. And as Irvine recalled later, "Charley Leffler used to work over that OX-5 almost every night so that we could keep going with the others."

Rutledge Irvine was one of the few Navy pilots ever assigned to a National Air Tour, flying the 1927 Pathfinder trip in the Navy's first Ford Tri-Motor. Irvine was a Naval aviator in the World War, flew with the Navy team in the 1923 Schneider Cup Races, placed second at 173.5 miles an hour. He was with the Curtiss Publishing Company in the nineteen-thirties, was active in organization of the pilot group called "Flying Tigers," Americans who volunteered to fight for the Chinese before America formally entered the Second War. He is thought to be deceased.

The endurance flights made by the St. Louis Robin team of **Dale G. Jackson** and Forest O'Brine — 420 hours in 1929 and 648 hours in 1930 — were remarkable records. And perhaps most remarkable was the fact two men could sit there all those weeks cooped up in a tiny airplane cabin, their only escape from one another to step outside on the catwalk that led forward a couple of feet to the incessantly hammering engine.

Red Jackson was twenty-three, the younger of the two, a laughing, happy go lucky youngster who sported a derby hat and smoked big cigars and liked fun and crowds and stunt flying. He publicized the Curtiss Robin with a record performance of 417 consecutive barrel rolls, flew a Curtiss Thrush in the 1929 tour. On January 6, 1932 Red Jackson was in Miami with the Curtiss-Wright clan, ready for the air races, which started next day. Walter Beech was there, exhibiting the company's latest products, and

when pilot Joe Young arrived from St. Louis with the new Curtiss-Wright Teal Amphibian, Walter agreed Red might fly the ship, if he'd be careful. Jackson strapped on a 'chute, took off, gained altitude and started with an old specialty, the barrel roll. The plane fell out of the first two, then on the third try one wing folded up, and Jackson fell to his death with the plane. And back in St. Louis when the word came through, one of Red's old friends — possibly Forest O'Brine — went out and hung a black ribbon on the nose of the old Curtiss Robin.

Vernon N. Johns was a carefree Oklahoman who was called "Crazy Johns." But with all the fun he had out of life, Johns may have been crazy like a fox.

He went overseas with the walking Army in 1917, returned to Tulsa and learned to fly. He hauled nitroglycerine in an old Standard J-1 to oil field fire fighters who used the explosive to extinguish oil well fires in a specialized process of blowing them out. Some time after he flew in the 1928 tour, Johns took over a Ford Tri-Motor, a "Flying Showcase" for the Reid Murdock Wholesale Grocery Company of Chicago. When the company had depreciated the airplane on their books and taken up another kind of advertising, they sold the plane to Johns — for one dollar. He operated it for several years, then took over the concession stand at Fort Worth's Meacham Field; moved on from there to become a hunting and fishing guide in Port Aransas, in the islands of the Gulf off Corpus Christi. He died October 15, 1962 when he was seventy.

Some said Vernon Johns was called "Crazy" because of the funny letters he wrote the home folks while he was in France. Others were sure he was slightly daft from a blow on the head: it seems Vernon was out whizzing around on his motorcycle one fine summer evening and saw two headlights approaching from 'way down the road. Sure they were those of two fellow cyclists, Vernon turned off his own light, headed down the road to zip between his two friends and "kind of give 'em a turn!" And too late, he discovered the lights were those mounted far apart on the front fenders of a Pierce Arrow automobile.

People wondered too, about a man who'd carry nitro in a Standard. But mostly the name came about because Johns laughed a lot and charmed the ladies and told wonderful crazy stories. He told of having flown over mountains so high that he'd seen crows, unable to maintain altitude, actually hiking along to get over the top. And Vernon reassured passengers in his Ford that they need not fear getting lost; he said any Ford given its head would

turn toward Dearborn, plodding for the barn like a faithful plow horse.

And Vernon had the greatest confidence in his co-pilot, a patient dog whose name was Cocoa. Cocoa had a winning smile, and displayed a gleaming gold tooth, which Johns had fashioned for him. And Cocoa was due to check out in the left seat most any day now; just a little more dual on cross-wind landings.

"Sit up here now and take a-hold of that wheel, Cocoa. And smile for the folks...."

When Lieutenant **Harry A. Johnson** looked back on the rain and fog and thunderstorms of the 1925 tour, he marveled at all the times he "ran out of ceilings and landed in cow pastures without cracking up."

Johnson began flying in the World War, was assigned later to bases all around the world. He headed the Air Force Training Command, a most important job in the World War II period when millions of civilians were taken in and trained as pilots and technicians in a short period of time. Johnson retired in 1953, lives in San Antonio, Texas, a Major General and Command Pilot who served his country thirty-six years, helped other youngsters along the way to beware of "low ceilings and cow pasture landings."

Robert E. Johnson was a Worcester Tech engineering graduate who joined the Curtiss clan at Garden City and was somewhat surprised to find himself, a non-pilot, assigned to study problems of airplanes and engines, fuels, payloads and distances. He went along in the Condor for part of the 1929 tour, then continued his study over the years, for Wright and Curtiss-Wright.

For example, gasoline versus payload on the first Los Angeles to New York DC-2 flight. And what combination of Throttle, Mixture and RPM for a Boeing 314 flying boat, outward bound for Lisbon? And how far into Germany to send a B-17 bomber and be sure it might return to base near London, and how many bombs can a B-29 carry from Saipan to Yokohama at low altitude versus high altitude? And how close to the Japanese coast must the carrier *Hornet* sail, for Doolittle to launch his B-25s, bomb Tokyo, and have fuel left to keep going for safe landings in China?

Johnson is retired in Green Valley, Arizona, having covered many miles since that first flight in the 1929 Condor.

Charles S. Jones was called "Casey," an appropriate name for an aviator, who like the

legendary locomotive engineer kept a strong hand on the throttle. The aviator Jones was a Vermonter who planned to be a lawyer, worked instead as a physical education instructor, and became a flyer in the World War. Then he joined the Curtiss organization, was an instructor, test pilot, salesman, inveterate racer, company executive. He competed in the first two air tours. Jones started his own School of Aeronautics in 1932 and it is still going at La Guardia Airport, New York, as the "Academy of Aeronautics."

Some time after Casey Jones had retired in St. Thomas, The Virgin Islands, we asked him to recall the most exciting and interesting times in fifty years of flying. "Well," he said, "I enjoyed every minute of it. Every day, every year. Never did seem like work."

J. Nelson Kelly said later that had he known what to expect, he'd never have started out in the 1928 tour with that damned Fairchild Caminez contraption. But Nels Kelly would have. He was a "show-me" Missourian, a professional pilot who had to know what might be over the next mountain range, and a happy Irishman who wouldn't have missed any kind of gathering.

Kelly learned to fly in the Air Service, made a living for awhile at Ashburn Field, near Chicago; joined Florida Airways in 1926. Kelly had great regard for Reed Chambers, who headed the struggling young company, and with mechanic Fred Koehler, he stayed on in Tampa until the airline had gone bust. He and Fred pooled their last few dollars to pay off the landlady and head north again.

Kelly moved on later to a management job at Roosevelt Field, and he was at Floyd Bennett Field in New York when the Navy took it over in World War II. He was there through the war, a kind of elder statesman, senior civilian pilot, Colonel in the Air Force Reserve in charge of a Navy base. Only a cheerful Irishman could have survived.

Kelly lives in Pauma Valley, California and when long past retirement age, went roaring around the sky in a Lear Jet, for all his years flying a desk, still the professional pilot eager to try out a new airplane.

Thomas H. Kinkade served his apprenticeship on engines with the Crane Simplex Motor Company, then moved on to Wright-Martin in the First World War. He was at Wright Aero in 1925, went along in the air tour in the Fokker. Kinkade was called "Doc," for Doctor of Motors, and was known to everyone who flew Whirlwinds or anything else in the glory years when so many

record planes were sent on their way by a Wright company "mechanician." Kinkade moved on to Lycoming in 1928, then to Kendall Oil, and finally, to Gulf. He passed away in 1960.

In his years as a technical advisor and customer's man, Doc Kinkade met more than his share of prima donna pilots. But it was said the 1931 Powder Puff Derby was almost too much, even for him. He accompanied the determined lady speedsters from Santa Monica to Cleveland acting as motor expert, dispenser of free Kendall Oil, umpire and father confessor. And when it was all over, Doc disappeared to have himself a nervous breakdown — a retreat readily understood by any long suffering line mechanic then or now.

Edward G. Knapp owned service stations in Southern Michigan, sold Waco airplanes at his flying service in Ypsilanti. His passenger in the 1925 tour, Ted Abrams, was a Waco prospect and any salesman could understand Knapp's chagrin when his brand new demonstrator airplane went down in a Missouri cow pasture and then, as the reporters said, "failed to rise."

Knapp sent his passenger on ahead with Lloyd Yost in the other Waco; and while Yost was loyal to the common cause, he did admit to having been quite satisfied with his previous passengers, two bags of sand ballast known as "The Sandbag Brothers." At any rate, the next airplane Abrams bought was a Swallow.

Knapp flew in the 1926 tour, then in April of 1928, he was caught in bad weather as he ferried a Ryan from San Diego to Detroit. He crashed on a hillside near Kent, in the mountains of West Texas and was killed, with his two passengers.

Fred W. Koehler, mechanic for Hy Etten in the 1925 tour, was an old timer at Ashburn Field. He worked for Eddie Stinson, and for Florida Airways, and then in November of 1927 Koehler joined the Wright Aeronautical staff. On December 23, he was aboard the Sikorsky amphibian *The Dawn*, when it took off from Roosevelt Field and headed for Harbor Grace, Newfoundland, on a transatlantic record try. Koehler planned to get off at Harbor Grace, give the two Whirlwinds a final tune-up, and return to New York. But the plane never reached Newfoundland, and Fred Koehler was lost with the others aboard it.

Alexander Peter Krapish was one of the refugees who followed his countryman Igor Sikorsky from Russia to America. He worked for Sikorsky, then in 1929 Krapish became chief test pilot for the American Moth factory at Lowell,

Massachusetts. He was remembered for one accurate spot-landing in the 1929 tour, at Greenville, South Carolina. The small, rough field there was marked at a certain point, "Land Here." Krapish did, exactly where it said — from about twenty feet in the air. He spent the night repairing his Gipsy Moth, caught up with the others a day later, to resume his customary grin and yell his customary salutation, "Now who knows vich vay ye go today?"

Krapish was one of the first to fly from the roof of an auto, taking off in a Moth from atop a Hudson sedan speeding along the beach at Old Orchard, Maine. When the Moth factory was moved to St. Louis, Krapish stayed on in New England, freelancing in test work and building a plane of his own design. He rejoined his old friend Igor Sikorsky in 1941 and was still associated with the United Aircraft organization when he passed away, March 27, 1951.

Jack Laass flew de Havillands at Kelly Field, and thus the Driggs Dart he flew in the 1926 tour must have seemed small and frail indeed. But Laass did finally catch up with the tour on the last lap, despite engine trouble, and later that year he flew the Driggs from Dayton, Ohio across the Alleghenies to the Philadelphia Air Races.

The tiny monoplane was designed by Ivan Driggs, who was better known later for a Driggs Dart biplane, and for engineering work with other companies and with the Navy. The two-cylinder engine in the 1926 plane was designed by Harold Morehouse and marketed by Wright Aero at Paterson, New Jersey. Morehouse was a born engine man who started with a correspondence course and was privileged, as he says, "to work with many great and gifted engine men." It was his engine, which powered the first Aeronca light airplane, and it was he who started the real revolution in horizontal opposed engines — when Continental hired him in 1931 to develop the four-cylinder, 37 horsepower A-40.

Jack Laass moved on out to California; sold Travel Airs, flew Ryans for Mutual Aircraft Company and Fokkers for Western Air Express. His fellow pilots there lost track of him and we have no further information about him. It was said he was let go from Western after a trip in which he departed Los Angeles for Las Vegas and landed in Death Valley. Or maybe the other way around. But if Laass was indeed lost, he had some excuse, for in those long ago days before the gamblers and Howard Hughes discovered Las Vegas it was another wide spot in the desert road, almost as desolate as Death Valley.

When Cessna General Manager Howard Wehrle hired **A. J. Lacey**, he undoubtedly gave the younger man a good talking-to about settling down. And Steve Lacey, a likeable, smiling youngster for all his foolishness, undoubtedly assured his new boss that with the help of his new bride, a fine girl from Chicago, he was going to settle down and make something of himself.

Lacey was said to have quit the Marine Corps without the usual formalities and there'd been some misunderstanding about his borrowing an airplane from a friend in Ohio. In Ottawa, Illinois they'd fished him from a canal after he crashed flying under a bridge, and in Aurora frightened spectators had fled the county fair as Lacey made low passes over the crowd.

Lacey worked for the organization that built a special Air King biplane, The *Miss Peoria*, for the 1927 Dole Race. But judges at the Oakland, California hop-off point said the ship was too slow to reach Hawaii before it should run out of gas, and it also had a tendency to fall forward on its nose when all tanks were filled. Lacey took the plane back to New York, and with Lon Yancey as navigator entered the nonstop New York to Spokane race. But he crashed soon after takeoff.

A Cessna factory pilot recalled one reckless and unauthorized Lacey test flight just before the 1929 air tour. Cessnas of the time were having trouble shedding their ailerons, and Lacey set out to prove you didn't need them anyway. He took a plane high above the factory, managed to rack it around and get rid of both ailerons, then came in and landed.

But on April 16, 1930 Lacey had his last adventure. Caught in a dense fog near Hayes, Kansas, he lost control of his ship, hit the ground in a graveyard spiral dive. Steve died in the crash, along with the fine girl from Chicago who had wanted to help him make something of himself.

Captain William N. Lancaster was a hell for leather, Charge Of The Light Brigade kind of Britisher, veteran of the Australian Light Horse, The Royal Engineers and the Royal Flying Corps. He came to America in 1928 after a flight from London to Sydney in an Avro Avian light plane, a flight that made a record for mishaps and for an elapsed time of six months. Lancaster's passenger on the flight was Mrs. Jessie Keith Miller, who was also called Jessie Miller. She came to America with him.

He promoted another Avian in New York, set out on another distance flight bound for South America, crashed on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies. His luck was only fair in the 1929 and 1931 air tours and in air racing. In Miami in 1932, Lancaster was accused of murdering a suitor of his old friend

Jessie Miller. After a long trial she was ordered deported along with Lancaster, and the two returned to England. A year later Bill Lancaster made his last try for a come-back, this time a London to Capetown flight in a light airplane christened *Southern Cross Minor*, and possibly the same one in which Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith had tried, unsuccessfully, for an Australia to England record.

Lancaster was off at dawn on April 11, 1933, heading south at 80 miles an hour: 1,100 miles across France and Spain and the Mediterranean to Oran, in Algeria. He gassed up and kept going: 700 miles more over mountains and deserts to a place called Reggan. And despite protests from French officers at this windswept outpost, and so tired now he could hardly stand, Lancaster went on: night, single-engine across an uncharted Sahara.

Somewhere in the night his engine quit and Bill Lancaster went down through the darkness to a crash landing: his last futile Charge Of The Light Brigade. He stayed with his airplane, lived on a gallon of water he'd taken aboard at Reggan, left a few notes in his logbook for the seven days he survived. The wreckage of his airplane was found quite by chance, twenty-nine years later, in February of 1962. Bill Lancaster's mortal remains were there, but his soul was safe at last: somewhere far away from the demons who had pursued him here on earth.

Walter E. Lees soloed in 1912, joined the Packard Motor Car Company in 1925. He tested the first Packard Diesel airplane engine, worked closely with the designer, Lionel M. Woolson, flew the Diesel powered Waco in the last two air tours.

The Packard Diesel was not a commercial success, and the proud company slogan, "Ask The Man Who Owns One," became something of a joke around airports where the "Flying Furnace" was seen banging and smoking and spraying fuel oil. A Ford Airport veteran named Richard Totten recalled the Waco flown in the 1930 and 1931 air tours:

"The Waco developed the unnerving habit of breaking flying and landing wires from the vibration, and most of the time sat on the hangar floor with its wings drooping like a sick pigeon. In flight, the open cockpit filled with exhaust smoke and unburned fuel and the pilot would land after an hour's flight looking like an Indianapolis 500 mile race driver."

Lionel Woolson was killed in a bad weather crash of a Diesel powered plane on April 23, 1930. Packard gave up the project and in 1934 Walter Lees had joined the Curtiss-Wright organization. He served in the Navy in the Second World War, passed

away in 1957.

David P. Levy made the only perfect score in the 1928 air tour; on time at every stop. But at twenty-one, young Deed Levy was a veteran cross-country pilot. He soloed at Clover Field, Santa Monica two days after he was sixteen; tested Stearmans built at Venice, California, ferried Wacos from the factory to Los Angeles buyers. The last Waco he brought out, in December of 1927, was a Whirlwind job for a young sportsman pilot named Howard Hughes.

Levy carried two passengers in the 1928 tour: Mac Short, Detroit to Wichita, and Walter Innes, Jr., from Wichita on around to Detroit and home again. Short was then thirty years old, a pilot, engineer, and designer of Travel Airs and Stearmans. He left Wichita in 1936 to join Lockheed at Burbank, served there as engineer and executive until his death in 1950.

Walter Innes was twenty-six, veteran of the Laird-Swallow group and of the Travel Air enterprise, for which he suggested the name. He was a businessman and administrator, also worked for Lockheed, is retired in Wichita.

Deed Levy moved on from Stearman to Bellanca, returned to Stearman, watched the Wichita factory grow and change its name to Boeing and employ hundreds of girls in World War II who became known as "Wilma The Welder" and "Rosie The Rib-Stitcher" and who had never heard of an old time Stearman C3B or Speed Mail. Deed Levy was by now an old man in his late thirties and he gave up flying for cattle ranching. He worked for McDonnell in St. Louis, finally settled in Tulsa, where he lives now.

John H. Livingston was like other professionals who flew Waco airplanes in the tours: serious, hard workingmen who operated successful businesses or held important jobs in the industry. John was one of seven children, and the family fighting spirit was apparent from grade school days. In a famous schoolyard donnybrook, one of John's brothers won the day by biting an opponent. And thus for the rest of his life this kindly man, a flyer like John, was known to all his old friends as "Bite" Livingston.

John learned to fly in Waterloo, Iowa, became a mechanic, pilot, salesman, and finally owner of Midwest Airways, with bases at Waterloo, and Aurora and Monmouth, Illinois. He raced Wacos and Monocoupes, was a familiar figure at the Cleveland Air Races; flew in three air tours: 1926, 1929 and 1930. He won in 1929, came very close to winning in 1930. He was in pilot training work in

World War II, is retired in Pompano Beach, Florida, and is still busy and active, in his seventies.

Livingston's single minded devotion to victory in the tours led to the nickname of "Silent John," early to bed and early to rise and get up at dawn and go out and beat everyone to the next stop. Actually, the name was not entirely suitable for a friendly man from Iowa, but if silence was "golden," Johnny Livingston proved it. For in one week of the 1928 air-racing season he earned a little over \$14,000.00 in prize money.

Egbert P. Lott's name was incorrectly engraved on the Edsel Ford Trophy as "P. Lott" But with Tony Fokker the center of attention for his 1925 Tri-Motor, Bert Lott was lucky to be mentioned at all.

Lott was twenty-nine, a New Yorker and long time pilot for Fairchild Aerial Surveys, available when Fokker needed a man to fly the tour. Lott got along well with Fokker once they had settled who would be pilot-in-command — the flamboyant Tony agreed to stay back in the cabin unless and until Bert invited him up front. And this was seldom, since the two Wright motor technicians, Boedecker and Kinkade, were needed in the right seat to watch over the three Whirlwinds. Nevertheless, when the tour was over Fokker gave Lott a substantial bonus payment for his week's work, over and above the agreed upon salary.

Bert Lott joined National Air Transport soon after the tour, fourth man on the payroll and Operations Manager for the Chicago - Dallas route, where air mail flights began on May 12, 1926. He retired after thirty-three years, lives in Treasure Island, Florida. NAT became part of United Air Lines, where scores of senior captains recall, "I was hired by Bert Lott. Good man."

George C. Lowers' home address in the 1928 tour publicity was listed as Ponca City, Oklahoma. The Stinson which he and factory pilot Bruce Braun flew in that tour was referred to as Lowers' airplane, and later news items indicate he operated a Stinson in Michigan. We think George Lowers is retired in Pocatello, Idaho, but received no reply to a letter mailed him there.

S. L. "Leroy" Manning won his wings at Kelly Field in 1923, served at Selfridge Field, joined the Ford organization in 1925 and flew in the 1926 tour. He set a world's speed record of 164.4 miles per hour in a Ford Tri-Motor in 1930; took another Ford on a grand sales tour of Europe in 1929. The plane was shipped to London, then flown on a four-month

trip through twenty-one countries. It was sold to the Czechs and operated on an airline between Prague and Bucharest. Manning's passengers on the European tour included his wife, along with factory sales and maintenance people, and this unusual trip marked a "first" in sales and demonstration of American airplanes in overseas markets.

Leroy Manning was one of the bright young men who might well have kept the Ford airplane division alive, and his death was a tragic loss. He was killed September 19, 1931, along with veteran mechanic L. H. Garriott when the plane they were testing failed to recover from a high-speed dive. The ship was the XB-906, a Ford extensively modified for an Air Corps bomber competition.

William A. Mara attended St. Louis University, served in the Great War, advanced through the ranks to become a Lieutenant of Infantry. He came home, worked for Harvey Campbell in the Detroit Board of Commerce, where he managed the office and edited the *Detroit Magazine*; "walked the streets and knocked on doors" to raise the money, organize and launch the first air tour. Mara was an organizer of the Stinson factory, an able administrator and pilot salesman who seldom took a day off.

He was with Stinson through the Second World War, headed the group which developed the L-5 Liaison Ship — a good project for an ex-Infantryman, since the hedge-hopping little Sentinel was more closely allied with the fighting Army, than with the high flying Air Force. Mara became an executive at Bendix in 1945, managed the Bendix Trophy air races as he had the air tours twenty years before. He is retired; lives in Clearwater, Florida.

Don Mathors was one of many pilots who worked for Ed Porterfield, the Kansas City businessman who financed the American eagle airplane factory and Porterfield Flying School. The Wallace Touroplane flown by Mathors in the 1929 tour was built by a company in Chicago, then the design was taken over by American eagle. An improved version was flown by Jack Story in the 1930 tour. One of the Touroplane designers was Noel Hockaday, who also built a monoplane of his own, called the Hockaday Comet, and who worked later for Porterfield. Don Mathors taught many students in his years in Kansas City, and one of these Porterfield School graduates has said he thinks Mathors long since retreated to a farm in Northern Missouri. We assume he is still there.

William B. Mayo was one of the few Ford ex-

ecutives who appears to have been aloof or immune from the bitter power struggles that went on among Ford executives. Bill Mayo was called “Pop,” and was remembered with respect and affection by all the tour pilots who knew him. His title was Chief Engineer, but he was much more: he headed the airplane division, took a personal interest in his people, was usually on hand for air tour arrivals and departures. He often rode along for a part of the tour, and he was a passenger with Larry Fritz on the first Tri-Motor Ford flown across the continent, in July of 1927.

Mayo was sixty-six when the airplane division was finally closed down, in 1932. He passed away January 31, 1944.

William P. McCracken, Jr., took office as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Aeronautics in 1926, as aviation people began grumbling about the forthcoming government regulations. Airplane builders questioned the red tape in something called “stress analysis,” while pilots solemnly assured one another that the new tests must surely ground everyone, except possibly a man with a college degree and the clear vision of an Indian Scout — a man strong enough to get up and walk away after a session in the whirling chair device used by the Air Service and called the “Ruggles Orienter.” The Orienter was used to test prospective pilots, and consisted of a box somewhat like a coffin, which was mounted on tracks and rollers within a stout iron framework. The student pilot was strapped inside, seated at controls that actuated electric motors, so that the box could be spun and looped and rolled like an airplane. A second set of controls was manipulated by a man outside, who might invent new maneuvers, keep the victim going should he give up, or bring him out right side up if he passed out completely.

And with all this scare talk, some aviators gave up and went back to motorcycle racing. But most accepted the inevitable, learned that McCracken was a reasonable man. He was a Chicago attorney, thirty-eight years old, a war veteran, and an organizer of National Air Transport. He took a salary cut to accept the government job, which paid \$625.00 a month. And as befitted his rank, he became “U.S. Licensed Pilot Number One, with Private Pilot Rating.”

McCracken went back to private law practice in 1929, and his Washington, D. C. firm was still going forty years later, when he had retired in Washington, where he lives now.

J. Leroy McGrady flew in the World War, came home to El Paso, learned to fly all over again in

1927. He flew for the Curtiss-Wright organization until 1932, then returned to El Paso, and is retired there.

McGrady flew the Curtiss Tanager in the Guggenheim Safe Aircraft Competition of 1929, the same year he flew in the air tour. The Tanager was specially built for the contest, having wing flaps, slots, “floating ailerons” and other expensive devices for low and slow flying, feather soft landings. After winning the competition, McGrady took the ship on a tour, cracked it up at Wichita, in an accident reported as the very thing the Tanager was not supposed to do: “Stall, too low to recover.” But Leroy is forthright about such mishaps; he cheerfully admits that old friends call him “The German Ace” for his record of five American planes destroyed during his career.

Justin A. “Jim” McInaney, passenger with Cloyd Clevenger in the 1927 and 1928 tours, was Sales Manager for Alexander Eaglerock airplanes. His brother, “M.J.,” was listed on the 1926 tour roster.

Jim McInaney was born in a Minnesota town with the picturesque name of Pelican Rapids. He sold industrial and advertising motion picture films for a Denver studio headed up by an imaginative and innovative merchandiser named J. Don Alexander. J. Don envisioned his sixty salesmen traveling the country by air, and in 1924 he sent McInaney on a fact-finding trip to the Nicholas Beazley school in Marshall, Missouri. Jim took dual instruction there from Benny Howard and returned to Denver flying a Swallow. Alexander decided to build his own airplanes, started a factory in the Denver suburb of Englewood, building a biplane called the “Eaglerock,” for the Colorado country of eagles and Rocky Mountains.

Early model Eaglerocks had long, thick wings for good performance at high altitudes, and thus the ship “floated” forever when landed at sea level airfields, leading to jokes about Eaglerock pilots who carried a box lunch to fend off starvation while waiting for the ship to quit flying and set down. There were other jokes about what to do in an Eaglerock flat-spin: let go of everything; get up and walk out on the wing; sit there and pray. And other jokes, not so funny, about “Eagle bricks” which shed their wings and came straight down.

But in 1928 the ungainly early models were replaced by an improved “center-section” machine of good appearance and performance, the factory was moved to Colorado Springs and sales were brisk. A low wing monoplane of advanced design, called the Bullet, was developed, but was not successful. Nor was a two-place light plane, the Flyabout, enough to save the company from

collapse in the depression. The factory did continue in manufacture of parts and components for other companies. Jim McInaney went back to the film division, served there another twenty years, retired in Boulder, Colorado. He died December 16, 1968, when he was seventy-one.

Joseph A. Meehan was one of three pilots who flew the Cessna #33 in the 1929 tour. Earl Rowland started out, but had to bow out at Augusta, Georgia. Harry Poindexter was hastily summoned from Raleigh, North Carolina, took the ship on to Jacksonville. Joe Meehan took over there, managed to keep going and finish in thirteenth place. He fared somewhat better against a smaller field in the 1931 tour, placing ninth, with a Great Lakes. Meehan came from Ironton, Ohio. He appears to have given up commercial flying in the mid-thirties, and to have returned to a law office in Ironton, where he lives now.

George Meissner was born in Nebra, Germany; flew in the German Naval Service in the World War. He came to America, joined the aviation clan on Long Island and became an American citizen. He worked for various companies in the New York area: Curtiss, Loening, Fairchild and Sikorsky. As the only pilot to fly an amphibian in the tour competition, in 1930, Meissner gained a certain distinction and perhaps in flying the winged boat he hoped to prove the faith of his employer, Igor Sikorsky.

When he developed his helicopter, later, Sikorsky said it was a machine that “did not require the permission of the ground that it might come and go.” He could have said this of his flying boats too — they were machines that did not require square miles of reinforced concrete to take off and land. This comment could be understood by older pilots who had known the joy of flying from tree lined fields of green grass, or had felt a fresh breeze boosting them up and away from the choppy waters of a mountain lake. These were the flyers who marveled at the single-engine Sikorsky in the 1930 tour, and who cheered as the majestic four-engine “Flying Clippers” cruised the seven seas to establish airline routes around the world.

And these same old timers, would see more and more precious land around the big cities become buried and paved over for modern airports, even to filling in the very waters where the stately old winged boats had once landed. And wonder how it might have been, had the engineers managed somehow to save the flying boat, which did not require the permission of the ground....

George Meissner died in 1947, Igor Sikorsky in

October of 1972. With Sikorsky’s death the aviation world lost a brilliant designer and a beloved gentleman.

Louis G. Meister learned to fly with the first American class of Air Service cadets, in 1917. He taught others to fly; was sent to engineering school at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, then put in many years of test flying at Wright Field, and McCook.

He joined the Buhl Verville company in 1925, flew his first air tour in 1926, then later followed designer Fred Verville in his own manufacturing enterprise at Belleville, Michigan. On Sunday morning, July 19, 1931, Louie Meister had a Verville biplane aloft over Detroit’s Wayne County Airport for spin tests. He was apparently unable to recover from a spin and bailed out, but with the airplane following him down he delayed opening his chute until too late. He fell to his death alongside the ship.

Meister was forty-five, and a man beloved by fellow pilots and countless Air Service cadets he had helped back in the early days at Love Field.

Frederick Melchior was a Swede; American representative for the German Junkers company, and newly arrived in America in time to fly in the 1925 tour. He was not related to another famed Scandinavian, Danish tenor Lauritz Melchior.

Fred Melchior was at Roosevelt Field for many years, and flyers there remembered his daring demonstrations with Junkers planes. The Junkers was never a commercial success in this country, despite the fact the all metal cantilever low-wing design was years ahead of its time and built long before other manufacturers accepted the concept. Eight Junkers planes very much like the F-13 — designated the Junkers Larsen JL-6 — were tried out briefly in U.S. Air Mail Service in 1920 and ’21; were retired after several suffered in-flight fires.

Fred Melchior returned to Europe later and was associated with the transatlantic airline, American Export Airlines in the early nineteen-forties. One of his fellow workers there believes Melchior may have stayed in Europe after that time.

Charles W. Meyers was born in 1896 in an Iowa town with the appropriate name of Columbus Junction. He grew up in New York, built his own gliders, soloed in June of 1913. He worked with many pioneer flyers and builders, served in Canada with the Royal Flying Corps, was in engineering and design and test flying at Waco and Great Lakes. Charlie flew in four air tours, the first one in 1927.

The business depression closed the Great Lakes

factory, and Meyers moved on to join his old friend Billy Brock at Akron, Ohio, flying the Goodrich Rubber Company Lockheed Vega in tests to perfect rubber-boot de-icing equipment for airplane wings. When Hollywood movie people heard of this, they made a film about it. Jimmy Cagney portrayed a test pilot who gave his life, going down in a great storm with more ice than he could handle, while he gallantly called back on the radio to good old Pat O'Brien and the other engineers, telling them what they must do to make the boots work right.

Meyers moved on to Eastern Air Transport, flying into more real ice every winter, one of that hard driving gang of pilots who were said to promote Eastern's cause with hurry-up economy maneuvers like calling the Control Tower — from as many miles out as they could get away with it — saying "I'm turning on final, I'm next to land, hold all other traffic."

But even a tough old veteran from Columbus Junction must finally retire, and Charlie did, after twenty-five years with Eastern. He lived in Indian Harbor Beach, Florida, active with family and aviation affairs until his death, October 1, 1972.

Lieutenant Commander **A. C. Miles** was the highest-ranking pilot aboard the Navy Ford, which accompanied the 1927 tour. But his work was in construction and engineering, and thus line pilot Dick Bowes, an "old boat pilot" from the Great War, was pilot in command of the Ford. (Bowes is thought to be deceased.)

"Milo" Miles was an Annapolis man who served in the Great War, went back to school at Massachusetts Institute of Technology to become a Naval "Constructor," then learned to fly at Pensacola. Many of his ground jobs were in support of flying. He retired after forty years in the Navy, worked in the aerospace industry in Southern California, lives in San Marino.

Jessie Keith Miller was short, pleasingly plump, called "Chubbie" by pilot friends. She came from New South Wales, Australia where, she said, she led a calm and uneventful life until she was twenty-six. Then she got a job selling automobiles, saved up her money and sailed for London Town, in the glorious summer of 1927. When she returned to Australia a year later, the enterprising Mrs. Miller arrived with pilot Bill Lancaster in the Avro Avian *Red Rose*; first woman to fly from London to Sydney. The 14,000 mile trip across Europe and Asia took six months and included one major crash; one in-flight killing of a snake, which had stowed away at Rangoon, and a final over-water hop

of 550 miles from the Island of Timor to Port Darwin.

Jessie Miller's life was no longer uneventful — or married. She sailed with Bill Lancaster for America, where the two reaped what publicity they could from the *Red Rose* flight and where Jessie became a pilot in her own right. She flew in the 1929 Powder Puff Derby, in the 1929 air tour, made coast to coast records in an Alexander Bullet, got lost on one flight returning from Havana to Florida, and was found on Andros Island, east of Key West and some 200 miles off course.

She was in worse trouble later, the central figure in a love triangle where her old friend Bill Lancaster was accused of murdering another suitor named Clark. Jessie and Bill were deported and returned to London. He made his last flight in 1933 and in January of 1935, she was off again too, from London to Capetown. She cracked up her Redwing biplane in French West Africa, later settled down in London and married a man named John Pugh.

And in 1962, a brief news item in a London paper indicated that Jessie Pugh, housewife, was leading the calm and uneventful life she had known so many years back, before she had taken up selling automobiles.

Jacob M. Moellendick was a workman in the Kansas oil fields who struck it rich with wells of his own, invested and lost, a fortune in aviation.

He financed the Wichita factory where the Laird-Swallow was built, and this Laird design of 1920 shared honors with the Curtiss Oriole for the "first successful commercial airplane built in America." But hard driving, hard living old Jake was a hard man to get along with, and by 1924 many of his partners had left him, including Walter Beech and Lloyd Stearman who joined with Clyde Cessna to organize the Travel Air Company, and Matty Laird, who went back to his own shop in Chicago. The design and production of the five Swallow airplanes flown in the air tours was credited to Matty's brother, Charles Laird, and to Lloyd and Waverly Stearman.

Jake held down the fort until 1927, then he caught the ocean flying fever and stubbornly gambled his company's future on an entry in the Dole Race. And when this plane, the Swallow *Dallas Spirit*, had gone down in the Pacific, the Moellendick fortunes went down with it. The factory was taken over by creditors and old Jake lived out the rest of his days in obscure poverty; died a pauper, in March of 1940.

Harvey C. Mummert was an engineer who worked for Curtiss. In 1924 he joined forces with

another ex-Curtiss man named Joseph Meade, and they took over the ailing Aerial Service Company, of Hammondsport, New York. Their 1925 projects included a big, fast Liberty powered biplane sold the Post Office Air Mail and flown later by *NAT*; five modified Standard biplanes sold the Argentine government; and the Mercury Junior flown in the first three air tours.

The company built a blimp for the Army, and another unusual lighter-than-air accessory: a canoe shaped "Sub Cloud Car," which carried a man, suspended by cable from the hull of a dirigible. It was also called a "Spy Car" since the dirigible could remain hidden in a cloud layer with the observer dangling in the clear a thousand feet below, using an inter-com telephone to direct the ship on course for bombing of a military target. Such a scene was depicted in the Howard Hughes movie of the World War, "Hells Angels" — the German zeppelin commander, bombing London, must flee full speed from at British fighter planes; and in frantic efforts to lighten ship, he cuts loose and lets fall the spy car — with the observer in it.

Another Aerial Service development was a two-cycle, four-cylinder engine, used for a time in the 1928 Mercury Kitten monoplane. The engine was a vertically opposed type, and had no conventional cylinder heads. Two pairs of pistons worked against each other, firing from a common combustion chamber in the middle of the cylinder block, and turning two crankshafts; one top and one bottom; with the two shafts geared back to a single propeller in the middle.

An accident grounded the Harvey Mummert — Shorty Schroeder design entered in the 1929 Guggenheim Safe Aircraft Contest, and the Mercury Chic flown in the last two air tours came along just in time for the depression. Harvey Mummert died in 1939, when he was forty-seven. Joseph Meade died in 1950, but their company kept going for many years after that, building parts and components for others.

Lieutenant **William A. Munn** flew in France with the 213th Squadron of the Third Pursuit Group, scored one aerial victory. Back home, Aubrey and Adrian Hess employed him as a test pilot in their airplane building enterprise at Wyandotte, Michigan, and it was an early model Hess Bluebird that Munn flew in the 1926 air tour. The two brothers, incidentally, were often confused with a Charles Hess, an *Early Bird* who flew airships with Roy Knabenshue in 1907.

Bill Munn moved on to work for the Ford Freight line, and on May 12, 1928, taking off from Dearborn for Buffalo, he pulled his Ford up into a

steep climb, apparently concerned about construction equipment on the field. The plane stalled and fell; Munn was killed in the crash, along with his copilot Earl Parker.

Another Hess company pilot made headlines in 1927, a man named Fred Giles, who planned to fly a Bluebird in the Dole Race from California to Hawaii. The ship was christened *Miss Wanda*, for a Hess family member, and while it was not ready for the Dole takeoff in August, Giles did get away from Oakland Airport on November 19, and head out over the Pacific. But he turned around hastily some four hours out, to return and land and tell a harrowing tale: of his ship falling out of control in dense fog and swirling winds, with maps and sextant flying from the cockpit, instruments spinning crazily in a wild dive toward the sea.

Giles' report caused new speculation about the three planes lost at sea in the Dole Race. Perhaps some eerie mystery spot existed out there; some fearsome part of the ocean deep where icy winds and currents sweeping down from Alaska must collide with warm trade winds moving up from the South Seas to form a "death spot," fatal to airplanes. But experienced pilots guessed the real reason for Giles' fall: the inability of any pilot untrained in blind flying to keep his airplane upright in fog and darkness.

Giles made his way home, was with the Hess company when they built another biplane called the Argo, in Alliance, Ohio. But the Argo did not survive the depression and while the factory was used later to build Taylorcrafts, the Hess trade name disappeared.

Robert A. Nagle grew up in Newtonville, Massachusetts, flew in the Great War and was active in the New England area. He worked for Bellanca, flew in the 1929 tour, worked for Fleet at Buffalo, flew in the Second World War. He was Commanding Officer of a Reserve Troop Carrier Wing in Cleveland, and when a third war began in Korea, General Bob Nagle took his outfit to Mitchel Field, New York, ready for active duty. But there he was stricken with a heart attack and passed away, in the fall of 1950. He was buried in Newtonville, where one of his old friends said, "everyone remembered Bob Nagle as a very great guy."

John T. Nevill was a young freelance newspaperman who wrote a great deal about the air tours, and the aviation history of the time. Many of his articles appeared in *Aviation* when it was edited by Edward P. Warner. Nevill was in public relations work, wrote books on outdoor life in Northern Michigan. He enjoyed some distinction as the last

newsman to fly on any air tour trip: he went along on the last, futile Pathfinder trip of 1932. Nevill perished in a fire, which destroyed his home at Spring Bay, Michigan in July of 1957. He was fifty-six.

Forest O'Brine was the older and quieter of the two St. Louis Robin endurance flyers; probably a good balance for the rambunctious young Red Jackson. O'Brine was thirty-three when they made the first flight, in July of 1929.

O'Brine dropped out of the 1929 air tour after two forced landings; the first one just short of St. Louis, where the home town gang all waited to welcome him, and the second in a field so small his Robin had to be hauled out on a truck.

O'Brine had his own flight operation at Lambert Field, and in the Second World War he flew for the Air Ferry Command. He was killed in a crash at El Paso, June 19, 1944.

Phoebe Fairgrave Omlie went on idolizing her flight instructor even after the beginning period, when most students tend toward such hero worship. The story goes, that Vernon C. Omlie taught Phoebe to fly after other pilots had told her to stick with what she was doing: wing walking and parachute jumping. "And so they were married," in February of 1922 when Phoebe was nineteen. They settled in Memphis, started a flying service and Mrs. Omlie became the first woman licensed by the Commerce Department as a pilot, and mechanic. The 1928 air tour marked the beginning of her headline career in racing and air shows.

Then in 1936 Vernon was killed in an airline crash and Phoebe lost interest in the headlines. She did come forth from time to time, worked in Washington on various government projects during the Roosevelt New Deal years, finally retired and remains in complete obscurity.

Randolph G. Page flew the Post Office Air Mail for seven years, beginning in July of 1919. He was one of the first on the night mail run, and he was remembered too for one unusual daytime delivery. It was said to be Randy Page, feeling especially good one day, who loaded the westbound mail at Chicago and said he might just take it right downtown in Moline to the Postmaster himself. And sure enough, on arrival at Moline Page roared full speed along the main street and dropped the mail sack out of the bottom half of a slow-roll. Then just to be sure they wouldn't miss it, he made a steep one-eighty degree turn....

"Goddlemighty folks get back inside; here he

comes again...."

Page was a supervisor of the Air Mail repair depot at Maywood Field, where the de Havillands were repaired and rebuilt. The good work of this maintenance organization was reflected in remarkable on-time records for the mail, despite all the talk of wooden crates and flaming coffins.

Randy Page left the mail service, flew for Eddie Stinson, flew the Hamilton in the 1927 tour. He was head of a Fort Worth company called Texhoma Air Service when he passed away February 21, 1930. He was thirty-six years old.

Richard W. Pears graduated in engineering from Purdue, learned to fly in France in the Great War. He flew DHs for the Post Office Air Mail; various kinds of flying boats for Aeromarine Airways, for Thompson Aeronautical, and for an early day Sherman Fairchild enterprise which operated from Miami to Key West, Key Largo and Havana. He was with Fairchild Aerial Surveys in New York, and Chicago, when he flew in the 1928 and 1929 air tours. He flew for Northwest Airways and for Braniff, was back in the Air Force for World War II. He holds Mechanic's License #1774; Transport Pilot #189.

Dick Pears is retired in Sun City, Arizona, an "old boat pilot" quite some distance from flying boats, but close enough to the desert to enjoy another hobby — hot sports cars — some with almost as much zip as the Moon, or the Straight Eight Gardner Roadsters he drove in his college days.

George Peck was a student at the University of Arizona when he was bitten by the flying bug. He attached himself to Charley Mayse at Tucson, learned to fly, and just before the 1928 tour he went home to Detroit and bought the Travel Air he flew in the 1928 tour. Peck traded the Travel Air on a new Ryan Brougham and on October 23, 1928, he was flying the Ryan in the mountains north of Tucson, having joined in a search for a man lost on a hunting trip. Charley Mayse was searching too and as he headed back for the airport to refuel his own ship, he could see Peck's Ryan some distance away, turning in a steep climb up a box canyon on the slope of 8,000 foot Santa Catalina Peak — "just the kind of dam fool trick" he'd lectured the kid about so many times. And moments later George ran out of canyon, turned in a steep one-eighty to escape, hit the hillside, crashed and burned. Peck died, with his three passengers.

James V. Piersol was a pilot and journalist, a happy combination at a time when newspaper

publishers made much of their "Aviation Page." The *Daily Oklahoman* financed airplanes for Paul Braniff, the *New York Daily News* bought Martin Jensen's *Breese Aloha*, the *Chicago Daily News* owned a Bellanca. The Hearst chain promoted many record flights; the *Des Moines Register and Tribune* christened their airplane *The Good News*. The *Detroit News* owned an autogiro, and also Lockheeds fitted out with desk and typewriter, wing-mounted camera and a dark room for developing pictures on the spot. Jimmie Piersol went along on his first air tour in 1927. He worked for the *Detroit News*, for the *New York Times* and in other journalistic endeavors on his own. He died in August of 1962, when he was sixty-two.

Harold F. Pitcairn was a substantial, God fearing Pennsylvanian who invested his fortune in aviation and in another cause of great importance to him: the New Jerusalem Swedenborgian Church. Pitcairn flew in the Great War, started his own company at Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, flew one of his own airplanes in the 1926 air tour. Pitcairn Aviation began carrying air mail between New York and Atlanta in May of 1928 and was sold later to become part of Eastern Air Transport, now Eastern Air Lines.

Harold Pitcairn financed autogiro development in America, and this work contributed directly to design of the helicopter. Patents held by the Autogiro Company of America were in fact, the subject of legal arguments with various helicopter builders for many years after autogiro manufacture had ceased.

Pitcairn gave up airplane building in the mid-nineteen-thirties, undoubtedly disappointed in his dreams for the autogiro and busy with his church. And it was said too that the political philosophy of President Roosevelt and his New Deal was completely repugnant to Pitcairn. Harold Pitcairn died April 23, 1960.

Charles E. Planck was a reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*, a balloonist, flying enthusiast and one of four newsmen who accompanied the first air tour in 1925. Planck was in aviation full time later, with Embry Riddle in Cincinnati and with the Civil Aeronautics Authority in Washington, D.C. and Alaska. Planck served as writer and public relations man, saw the placid old CAA survive business depression and political upheaval, then wild expansion and reorganization, to become the giant Federal Aviation Administration. Charley left Washington in 1962, retired in Fremont, California. Now, with time for travel he has turned from writing about aviation to offer practical advice to

other travelers, in books co-authored with his wife Carolyn.

Wiley Post's headline career began in August of 1930, when as the dark horse contender in the Los Angeles — Cleveland race; he came in ahead of veterans Art Goebel, Billy Brock, Lee Schoenhair and Roscoe Turner. And his last headline came five years later, when he crashed to his death in Alaska with his old friend and fellow Oklahoman, Will Rogers.

Other Post headlines told of two round-the-world flights in the Lockheed Vega *Winnie Mae*, one with Harold Gatty, one solo. And in 1935, Post flew the same plane in high altitude tests, working with TWA, Phillips Petroleum and Goodrich Rubber Company engineers who helped him fashion a pressurized "space suit." He reached altitudes of 55,000 feet and speeds of 340 miles per hour; most useful research when so much was still unknown of flight in those high regions.

The 1929 tour pilots remembered Wiley as "a good old country boy from Oklahoma," an ex-oil field roustabout with no college degree, no war medals and but one good eye. They called him "Fish Hook Post," for his trouble in over-shooting the destination airfield, then swinging around and back in a long turn to find it. And as Post went hurtling around the world in later flights these same old friends read the newspapers and felt good for old Wiley.

"I see by the paper where the *Winnie Mae* hit it right on the nose going into some place called Novosibirsk. And by grab, I can remember when old Wiley couldn't even hardly find his way going down the river to Kansas City."

James G. Ray was a Texan who flew in the war, taught school, joined Pitcairn Aviation in 1924, flew in the 1926 air tour, stayed on with Pitcairn for thirteen years. Jim Ray was quiet and serious, a big man able to fly the autogiro with the firm hand it required. For with its big, flapping, freewheeling rotor blades, the machine was top-heavy on the ground, easily capsized in a bad landing, and a thrashing, chopping monster if it got away from an inexperienced pilot.

Ray was one of the organizers, in 1946, of a company called Southwest Airways. Southwest was a Phoenix based cargo carrier for the military; became a commercial airline when the war ended. The company was noted for split-second schedules at small towns along its routes. Southwest DC3s were fitted with self-contained, swing-down "AirStair" doors, and the pilot left one engine running as a male cabin attendant bustled

passengers and baggage off and on. Pilots for older and more dignified airlines often complained to the Control Tower when a Southwest plane cut across the grass ahead of them or turned on a very short final to save precious seconds. And sure enough Southwest eventually slowed up, acquired stewardesses and other encumbrances of the older lines, and became part of Hughes Air West Airlines.

Jim Ray joined his son in Ray and Ray, a consulting firm in Washington, D.C. Even then, he never had time enough for his hobbies, which included finely crafted automobiles and an unusual grownup's toy, a kite, which flew with the help of an autogiro rotor. Jim Ray passed away in 1966.

Lawrence B. Richardson was an Annapolis graduate of 1917, was assigned convoy duty in the Atlantic. The Navy sent him to Massachusetts Institute of Technology and he became a Naval "Constructor," with engineering and technical duties in various airplane factories: Curtiss, L-W-F, Cox-Klemin. Lieutenant Richardson completed flight training in 1925 and was Naval Inspector at the Martin plant in Cleveland when he flew in the first air tour. He advanced to Rear Admiral, served in the Second War, left the Navy for work in civilian research and administration, finally retired in Hagerstown, Maryland. One of his great interests was oceanography and in this new field Lawrence Richardson could make some interesting comparisons, going back fifty years to the time he'd chased German U-boats with the primitive equipment of 1917. Admiral Richardson passed away in the spring of 1971, when he was sixty-eight.

John Paul Riddle and T. Higby Embry organized the Embry Riddle Company of Cincinnati in 1925. Riddle was Chief Pilot; Embry, whose first name was Talton, came from a substantial family, which invested in many enterprises. Embry's mother was the Susan Embry who bundled up in a big red leather coat and went along with John Riddle in the 1926 air tour.

Riddle was from Kentucky, an ex-Army pilot who supervised the company's operation from Jennies on through the period of Ford Tri-Motors and a Cincinnati built Flamingo monoplane, which carried air mail to and from Chicago. Riddle organized a school in Miami later, was in training activities in this country and in South America, and started an airline that became Airlift International. He is retired, lives in Coral Gables, Florida.

Dan R. Robertson was the youngest of eleven children. Three older brothers, John, Frank, and

Bill, were organizers of the Robertson Aircraft Corporation which began St. Louis — Chicago air mail service April 15, 1926. Young Dan flew on the airline, along with Slim Lindbergh, Slonnie Sloniger, Les Smith and Bud Gurney, Phil Love and Tom Nelson.

Dan flew on other Robertson school and airline ventures, and it was a Robertson factory in St. Louis, which took over manufacture of the Curtiss Robin, which he flew in the 1928 air tour. He was with Parks Air College and Pickwick Airways in Mexico and Central America, gave up active flying in 1947, went back to business interests in St. Louis. He died June 5, 1959 when he was fifty-two.

Bob Rolando and **Paul Vernier** were Army flyers who joined the Alexander Eaglerock organization in the early days at Englewood, Colorado. Both men were young; both were killed in student training accidents at the factory within a year or two after they'd flown in the 1926 air tour.

Earl Rowland flew at Kelly Field in the First World War, then followed the usual barnstorming trail. He was Jake Moellendick's pilot in a Swallow in the first 1925 air tour; started out in the 1929 tour with a Cessna, had to give up at Augusta when he was disabled by gas and oil fumes which reached the Cessna's cabin through a poorly built fire wall. Rowland competed in many races, and one of his greatest triumphs was in the 1928 New York to Los Angeles derby, a hard fought contest in which Rowland flew a Cessna, beat out twenty-two other contenders to win \$7,000.00 plus a wrist watch and a genuine Mexican serape. Earl was back in the Army for the Second World War, assigned a job he knew well: teaching beginners to fly. He moved on from the Training Command to the Ferry Command, returned to civilian flying, retired in Wagoner, Oklahoma.

When Earl Rowland talks of fifty years at a job he liked, he has small patience with other early day flyers who mourn for all the things that might have been; all the chances missed for fame and fortune.

"My life has been most pleasant and interesting," Earl says. "And my ship came in a long time ago; the day I started learning to fly."

Lawrence D. Ruch was a Kansas boy who enlisted in the Army in 1923 and was stationed in Hawaii, a place that must have seemed then, a very long way from Kansas. He qualified for flight training at Kelly Field, flew as a test pilot and instructor for American Eagle at Kansas City, then turned up later flying in a Naval Reserve unit at

Floyd Bennett Field. He flew in the Navy through the Second World War, returned to Kansas City, passed away in 1967.

A pilot who knew Ruch in the 1930 air tour, recalled, "Larry seemed like one of the older guys." Actually, Larry Ruch was then just twenty-seven. But he had been around a long time, and a quiet, capable midwesterner who seems to know what he's about, is indeed remembered as being older, and wiser.

Harry L. Russell was a mechanic who rode along on test and delivery flights of Ford Tri-Motors and learned to fly from the right seat. He qualified as a company pilot, was said to watch his engine instruments with the fine eye of an engineer, to trim the airplane nose-down for every possible mile of cruising speed and to navigate like a professional — although he was quite lost on one leg of the 1931 tour. Russell stayed on with the Ford Motor Company after the airplane division was closed, and in 1967 he was said to have retired on a farm in Southern Michigan. We were unable to trace him there.

When Harry Russell learned to fly, it was believed the beginner must start out in a simple, low-powered trainer. But Russell learned in what was then a very big and complex airplane, and thus when the student gang gathered to tell and retell the familiar "My First Solo" stories, his would be unique: he soloed in a giant transport plane.

Edward F. Schlee owned the Wayco Oil Company of Detroit. "Wayco" referred to Wayne County, part of the Michigan territory where the company sold Shell Products, and where Ed Schlee made his fortune and invested in Wayco Air Service. The company owned the Stinson flown in the 1926 tour, changed to Bellancas for the 1928 tour.

Schlee's associate in the aviation venture was veteran pilot Billy Brock, and the two men made many records; for distance and endurance flights, and for airplane sales. There was also an airline, for a while, called Canadian American Airways. Then came the stock market crash, financial trouble for the company and a serious injury for Ed Schlee when he stepped into a whirling propeller. The company failed; Billy Brock died in 1932; Schlee's name disappeared from the headlines, and he died in obscure poverty in 1969.

Arthur G. Schiosser served on the air tour Technical Committee and worked in the tours as Chief Timer. He was an engineer, typical of the bright young men who came to Detroit to work in the auto industry and in the many enterprises

which grew up around the auto factories or were financed by their owners. The tour committee list included men whose names were well known later, and who at the time helped in the tour office and at the field. These are five such Detroiters....

Alfred V. Verville was an engineer and designer who started with Curtiss in 1914, worked for many years on his own and for others in Detroit, retired after fifty years in the industry, died in 1970. Eddie Rickenbacker, "Ace of Aces" in the Great War, was a promoter and administrator who moved on from Detroit to head up Eastern Air Lines, retired in Florida. Carl B. Squier, a wartime flyer like Rickenbacker, was an organizer of the holding company known as Detroit Aircraft, worked nearly forty years for Lockheed in Burbank, died in 1968. Tom Towle was a designer and engineer in the early days of the Ford Stout enterprise, built his own amphibian later, is retired in Syracuse, New York. Herbert von Thaden was another young engineer who built airplanes under his own name and for others, married an aviatrix named Louise McPhetridge, passed away in High Point, North Carolina in February of 1969.

Art Schlosser worked for Ralph Upson at the Aircraft Development Company, a Detroit firm which built an unusual airship; an all metal blimp designated the ZMC-2. It was delivered to the Navy at Lakehurst, New Jersey in 1929 and served the Navy into the period of World War II. Schlosser was a sport balloonist too; made one record in 1926 with a flight of 854 miles from Chicago to Jennings, Florida, sailing with the wind for forty-one hours.

Schlosser's job with the air tours was a demanding one. At the conclusion of each day's run when the other tourists had gone to bed or were out making whoopee with the local sports, Art Schiosser and his helpers were holed up in a hotel room totaling the day's scores with a hand crank calculator.

We were unable to trace Art Schlosser and believe he is deceased.

Eddie A. Schneider "grew up" at Roosevelt Field, where he was a flunkey, mechanic and student flyer. He flew in the last two air tours, and in August of 1930, flew his Cessna to a round-trip transcontinental record for pilots under twenty-one. He made the trip in 57 hours, 14 minutes, carried greetings both ways between Los Angeles Mayor Porter, and Jersey City's Frank Hague. Eddie Schneider was publicized as a Jersey City boy with

a bare 300 hours flight time.

In the late nineteen-thirties, Schneider went to Spain to fly for the Loyalists in the Revolution. But whatever promises of salary and glory were made him; he was back in New York within a short time. And as though cursed by the tragedy of the Spanish Civil War, like so many other young men, Eddie Schneider was killed in a student training accident at Floyd Bennett Field just two days before Christmas, 1940. He was twenty-nine.

Leland F. Shoenhair was a World War pilot, active in free lance flying around Southern California in the early 'twenties. He was one of the original Florida Airways group who departed Detroit for Tampa in 1926, was laid off when he disabled three of the new company's four Stout monoplanes in one taxi accident, at Nashville. The airline President and General Manager Reed Chambers generously conceded the accident could have happened to anyone, but it did reduce the need for pilots.

The smiling young Shoenhair was often in some kind of jam. One news story told of his roaring away from an airport on a record flight just moments before an angry shopkeeper came running along the flight line, waving a Shoenhair check, "all pure rubber!" — one instance where the newspaper term for takeoff — "getaway" — was appropriate.

Lee Shoenhair was often in the news for record flights, most often with Lockheeds, and he was assigned the Vega in the 1928 tour when the ship reached Los Angeles. He replaced Bob Cantwell, who was still recovering from the Fourth of July celebration at Tulsa. Shoenhair flew for American Airways later, and some time following the Second World War, he was reported to have retired in Southern California, no longer active in aviation affairs or in touch with old friends.

Carl F. Schory was Contest Secretary for the National Aeronautic Association. One of his chores on a cold May morning in 1927 was to hustle out to Roosevelt Field, seal the recording barograph in Lindbergh's Ryan, so that Lindbergh might be prepared to claim the \$25,000.00 Raymond Orteig prize for the first New York to Paris flight.

Schory took a job with Hamilton Aero in 1929, went along in the 1929 tour to watch over Hamilton propellers. The company became "Hamilton Standard" in a merger with Standard Steel Propellers of Pittsburgh, and a division of United Aircraft and Transport Corporation. Carl Schory stayed on with United Aircraft, retired in 1958, lives in Vero Beach, Florida.

Rudolph W. Schroeder's most publicized exploits were high altitude flights made at McCook Field in 1920. But he did much more; in development of airports and flying schools and in research for safer airplanes. Shorty Schroeder was six feet, four inches tall, a serious sad looking man who played a fine accordion. He began flying in 1910, came to Ford Airport in 1925, flew the First Ford Tri-Motor to be entered in a tour, in 1926. He returned to Chicago, his hometown, two years later, worked for Curtiss-Wright, served briefly with the Department of Commerce, then joined United Air Lines.

He was felled by a paralytic stroke in 1941 and for the next eleven years did what work he could, propped up in bed to accomplish projects brought to him by aviation people, old friends and newcomers alike. He passed away in 1952.

William Gentry Shelton, Jr., of St. Louis was a dashing young man about town, a good looking gay blade veteran of the Great War, where he served as a balloon pilot.

Shelton flew a refueling ship for the St. Louis Robin endurance crew, and during the 1929 air tour his airplane often joined up with Jackson's or O'Brine's in a low pass for the spectators, to show how they'd done it for the record flight. Shelton was in the news later at Garden City, Long Island, accused by a Department of Commerce man of dangerously low flying and assessed a fine of one thousand dollars. Shelton started an airline in Missouri called Jefferson Airways, but it lasted only a short time. He passed away in St. Louis, December 13, 1948. He was fifty-three.

James Hudson Smart was only twenty-four when he flew in the 1931 tour; one of the youngsters who flew the big tri-motors single-handed. And 1931 incidentally, was the last time around for this kind of one-man crew in airline service: the Department of Commerce ruled that any transport airliner carrying eight or more passengers on a flight of five or more hours, must be manned by two pilots.

Hudson Smart was a Texan who grew up in Arkansas, was graduated from the University of Arizona and Kelly Field. He flew for United Air Lines, went back to school in 1934 for a law degree. He was flying again in World War II, delivering airplanes around the world and carrying cargo across the Himalayas between India and China on the famous Hump route. After the war, Smart returned to his law practice in Abilene, Texas, where he resides now.

There were two aviators named **Wes Smith**. Wesley L. Smith was an air mail pilot who studied and taught instrument flying when it was new and untried and desperately needed. **J. Wesley Smith** was an early day midwestern barnstormer who flew with the Canadians in the World War, developed one of the very first controllable pitch props, settled down with his own company at Norristown, Pennsylvania, flew in the 1930 air tour.

He was often called to lend a hand at the Bellanca factory. He had known Guisepe Bellanca in the early 'twenties when the gifted Italian designer built airplanes at Omaha and modified an Air Mail DH4 with the wide chord, high lift wing struts that became a Bellanca trade mark. Smith was called for the 1930 tour when a man was needed to replace a factory pilot who managed to nose over and break up a Bellanca as he practiced short landings for the stick tests.

Wes Smith developed improved film processing methods for aerial photography and he went into this specialized field full time, through the years of World War II and afterward. He is still doing business at the same old stand and with the same name, *PATCO*, for Philadelphia Air Transport Company.

Stanley T. Stanton was a skillful and loyal member of the 1929 Cessna team. In one of his landing trials, he touched down with both wheel brakes so firmly locked, that the airplane slid to a stop in something less than four seconds. But both tires blew out as he taxied away, and the timers protested this was not a practical way to land an airplane.

Stanton flew a Cessna racer in the Cirrus Engine Derby the following year but the 5,500 mile contest turned out for him, a series of forced landings. On one hot and windy afternoon Stan came down on a rough field in the Nevada desert, broke one wheel on a rock. He found help at a nearby crossroads, fashioned a wooden wheel from a discarded automobile hub and hand sawn boards reinforced by a good, hardwood toilet seat lid. And with this he got off again and caught up with the others.

Stanton became number 47 on the Transcontinental and Western Air seniority list when Larry Fritz hired him in July of 1933; and for the next twenty-eight years he flew transports all over the world. He retired, left two sons to carry on as *TWA* Captains. Stan settled down in Muskegon, Michigan where he has time for his hobby of building beautiful furniture — none of it having any resemblance to a rough wooden airplane wheel hand hewn in the Nevada desert.

Claude M. Sterling of LaPorte, Texas was often

confused with Marion Sterling of Waco. Both learned to fly in the early twenties, both became airline pilots. Claude was called "Skipper;" Marion was known as "Pop."

Skip Sterling was for many years Chief Instructor at the Nicholas Beazley School in Marshall, Missouri. He was there when he flew in the 1926 air tour, and the brief notation he made in his logbook for the tour may have been characteristic of a pilot who was a veteran at age thirty. It said merely "3450 minutes, 2600 miles, Ford Tour." Sterling flew later for Parks Air College, served some ten years with Chicago and Southern Air Lines. He was back instructing in the Second World War, this time checking out pilots on four-engine bombers at the Ford Plant at Willow Run. He was with the Civil Aeronautics Authority when he passed away in July of 1949.

Marion "Pop" Sterling was pilot of a Stinson biplane owned by Horace Dodge, of the Detroit Dodge clan. Mr. Dodge had so many possessions that none held his interest for very long, and thus Pop Sterling had time for other activities. One of these was the Bill Brock, Ed Schlee Wayco Air Service, which Pop managed while the owners were dashing off somewhere setting world records of one kind or another.

Sterling made one quite unplanned record of his own. He had gone to Miami Beach to see whether the Dodge mansion was still there after the 1926 hurricane; then with errands in New York he took all the fuel he could carry and went straight through: Jacksonville to Curtiss Field, in a 7½ hour nonstop that turned out to be a record.

Sterling was scheduled for the left seat in a Schlee-Brock Bellanca in the 1928 tour, but philosophically deferred to George Haldeman at Billy Brock's request. Two years later when pilots walked the streets in the depression and it was "root hog or die" Pop dusted off his toolbox and his mechanic's license — #35 — and was glad to find work in the Ford factory. This led him back to a flying job with Stout Air Service, and then United Air Lines, where he stayed until he retired. He passed away August 25, 1970, when he was seventy-nine.

R. Barton Stevenson once described a fellow Monocoupe pilot as "just a plain old country boy, but sure smooth on the controls." And the description might fit Bart Stevenson too, a sturdy midwesterner and smooth pilot. Stevenson learned in Navy boats at Key West, was active through the years in Kansas City aviation, flew a Monocoupe in the 1930 tour. He flew for Lockheed in the Second

World War, retired a few years later, passed away in 1968.

Old friends remembered Bart Stevenson as a fine man, a competent and careful professional pilot. But for all his racing triumphs, surely his finest hour must have been the day he brought his first Monocoupe home from the factory.

The story goes, that Bart left Kansas City one day, telling the gang at Richards Field he would return in about a week, that he was going out to buy a new straw hat to replace his helmet and goggles. And about a week later, as predicted, a fellow pilot at the field answered a frantically ringing telephone, a call from a policeman who was downtown near 12th and Baltimore, watching a strange new one-winger airplane doing steep turns around the second story windows of the Muehiebach Hotel.

“The man is crazy!” the officer cried. “He’s leaning out the window of that little airplane, waving a straw hat as he goes around the building. Keeps waving a straw hat! You guys got any idea who it could be?”

The lucky “seven-eleven” in **Eddie Stinson’s** birth date: 7/11/94, might well apply to Eddie himself. For he was a lucky man, blessed with a love for life and complete enthusiasm for his work: flying an airplane. He was lucky also, in games of chance. Pilots in the 1928 tour recalled a crap game that continued non-stop in a San Francisco hotel room during the tour stopover there a time when Eddie Stinson won so many silver dollars he complained his monoplane should never get off the ground with the load. And here again, the gallant volunteers who offered to help by taking a passenger off his hands — the attractive Mrs. Stinson — proved that Eddie was also lucky in love.

Stinson was a civilian flight instructor in World War I, settled in Detroit, where he became known for his old orange Junkers, for record flights, for steady drinking, and for an airplane factory. The first Stinson airplane was completed in January of 1926, built by a syndicate put together and managed by William A. Mara.

Fellow pilots said Eddie could do things with an OX-5 Jenny that others could not approach with a Curtiss Hawk. They marveled too, at how he could walk around an airplane he’d never seen before, climb in the cockpit and poke around for a while, then take off and fly it better than the factory test pilot. And so it seemed especially tragic when Stinson crashed, in Chicago, January 26, 1932. He was low on gasoline, ran into a flag pole making an emergency landing, and while it was a good enough landing to walk away from, it wasn’t good enough

to live through. Eddie died a few hours later.

The company that bore his name built airplanes for another twenty years, and for many more years after that pilots would be flying one of the last airplanes to carry the familiar bow and arrow Stinson insignia. This four-place monoplane was christened with a name appropriate for Eddie Stinson, and one he would have liked. It was called “The Voyager.”

Jack B. Story took lessons from the veteran Slonnie Sloniger in an open cockpit ship where the student could not talk back to his instructor, even if he wanted to. And this was just as well; for Jack Story was a natural talker who might have sold his genial instructor an interest in the Brooklyn Bridge while Slonnie was preoccupied with medium banked eights around a haystack.

Story was a professional announcer and he helped the tour committee in this capacity during the 1930 and 1931 air tours. He had flown for National Air Transport, once bailed out of an *NAT* Travel Air over Davenport, Iowa. This adventure was useful in his air show spiel when he described the exhibition jumps of professional performers. Story traveled the rodeo circuit as a goodwill man for Montgomery Ward during the depression years; proudly showed old pilot friends something called a “Turtle Pin” which signified his membership in a group of professional rodeo riders. And many of these old friends agreed as how the Turtle Pin might be a more valuable bit of jewelry than the silver wings of an unemployed pilot.

Jack Story passed away, in Dallas, in 1967.

William B. Stout was reported to have soloed in a Fleet trainer some time just before the 1930 tour, and to have “threatened” to fly the ship in the tour. That was undoubtedly a typical joke, from a man who loved to make jokes. Air tour pilots remembered Bill Stout as an entertaining speaker who told fine dialect stories, played the piano, drew sketches and caricatures for them. Ford Motor Company executives remembered Stout as a likeable man who played golf “for a dollar a hole, with ninety percent off for cash.”

Stout was a tinkerer, dreamer, ingenious inventor, imaginative promoter; a man who never claimed to have designed the final successful version of the Ford Tri-Motor. He did say his greatest contribution to aviation might well have been persuading Henry Ford to invest in it. Bill Stout had retired in Phoenix when he died, March 20, 1956, four days after his seventy-sixth birthday.

Bill Stout wrote a book, *So Away I Went*, in which he quoted a prophecy from Mother Shipton, an oracle who supposedly lived in London in the 15th century. Actually Mother Shipton was a fictitious character created several centuries later by a British writer. But Stout had the lively imagination to appreciate her ominous prediction about the world he had helped create, and of which she wrote:

“When pictures look alive with actions free
When ships, like fishes, swim beneath the sea
When man acquiring wings shall scan the sky
Then half the world, deep drench’d in blood,
shall die.”

Charles Frederick Sugg came from Orleans, Massachusetts. He was a Kelly Field graduate; company pilot for Buhl; the only pilot to lose his life in any of the seven air tours. His little Bull Pup monoplane crashed just after takeoff from Yorkville, Ohio in the 1931 tour, possibly because of engine failure, possibly in a spin from a stall out of too steep a climb. At any rate, the plane hit very hard and rescuers were a long time getting Sugg out of the wreckage. He died in the hospital at Martins Ferry, Ohio on July 12, four days after the accident.

News accounts said he would be buried in North Eastham, Massachusetts. His mother lived in Chatham; a sister, Mrs. Eldridge, in Orleans; a brother in Belleville, Ohio. Our efforts to trace these family members and learn more about Charles Sugg proved of no avail.

Sloan “Swanee” Taylor was a pilot, stand-up comic, news columnist and radio commentator. His brother, Cub Taylor, was a reporter for the *New York Daily News*. Swanee Taylor usually turned up at the big air race gatherings and was an announcer for the 1930 air tour. He worked at New York radio station *WOR*, along with announcer John Bradley Gambling and other radio personalities: The Town Crier, Uncle Don, and Earl’s *Early Birds*. Taylor had a ten-minute spot on Monday nights, “This Week In Aviation,” during which he often second-guessed his fellow pilots on their adventures and accidents. One veteran recalled later,

“He’d get smug and sarcastic and I’d snap off my radio and get ready to go punch old Swanee right in the nose. But he was a likeable guy; quite apt to be pretty well hung over, and just trying to make a buck the best way he knew how. And he was good at working the mike at the air meets; he’d wear some real snappy get-up and he’d have the crowd laughing their heads off, keeping ’em happy when

the whole program was bogged down because some bonehead forgot to gas his airplane, or the stunt man couldn’t remember what room in which hotel where he might have left his parachute.”

Swanee Taylor passed away in the early nineteen-fifties, following a long illness.

Charles W. Thomas operated the short-wave, key operated dot-dash radio equipment in the 1927 Ford Tri-Motor, one of the few air tour planes ever to be so equipped. Thomas was able to raise home base at Dearborn at most points along the tour route. Actual voice transmissions between airplane and ground stations were of course, still very uncertain at any distance, the general rule being “if you can see him, then maybe you can hear him.”

Thomas came to the Ford Motor Company from McCook Field. He had much to do with radio development at Ford Airport, where one of the very first radio range stations was put in operation, in February of 1927. Thomas is thought to be deceased.

Lieutenant **Frank B. Tyndall** was Operations Officer of the Second Bombardment Group at Langley Field when he flew the Army Fokker in the 1928 tour. Tyndall had served with the Second Pursuit Group in the Great War, where he scored four aerial victories. He served later in Hawaii and as Air Corps representative at the Boeing factory. Tyndall was killed July 15, 1930 when he crashed in a Curtiss Hawk near Mooresville, North Carolina. The Air Force base built near Panama City, Florida was named in his honor.

Karl E. Voelter was Curtiss-Wright Sales Promotion Manager, his office at company headquarters in New York City. He went along in the 1929 tour to promote sales for the new Condor transport, and for ten other company affiliated ships in the tour: three Cessnas, a Travel Air, and two each, Robin, Thrush and Gipsy Moth.

The Curtiss-Wright expansion program was an ambitious one: a national chain of about forty flight schools and sales outlets, well financed and nationally advertised. The corporation bought the Travel Air factory from Walter Beech and his stockholders, made sales agreements with Cessna and with the British de Havilland company, which had set up an American assembly plant in Lowell, Massachusetts. The Robin and Thrush were built in New York, then in greater numbers in St. Louis. Other new planes followed, designed to capture the entire market, from flivver to giant transport. But the stock market crash of 1929 marked the

beginning of the end for Curtiss airplanes in the commercial market.

Voelter had flown in the Great War, learned all over again in 1928 when he joined Curtiss-Wright. He had his own operation in Miami later, then was back in uniform for the Second World War, this time a Marine fighter pilot and administrative officer. He came home from the Pacific Theatre, joined the Civil Aeronautics Authority in Washington, retired in Florida, remains active as a consultant and elder statesman in aviation historical groups.

Newman and Truman Wadlow were twins, born on a farm in St. Francis County, Missouri. They grew up in Wichita, worked at Swallow Field, where Walter Beech took them under his wing. They became Travel Air factory pilots; Newman flew in the 1929 tour, Truman in the 1930 tour. In this latter year Travel Air had become part of Curtiss-Wright, and the twins had organized their own flying service in Wichita with help again, from Walter Beech.

Newman flew for the Beechcraft factory, tested the first Beech biplane then moved to Tulsa later. He joined the Spartan School, held other executive pilot jobs, still works in Tulsa as an airplane salesman.

Truman Wadlow flew for Beechcraft and for Transcontinental and Western Air, then joined Phillips Petroleum in Bartlesville in 1946, where he has stayed on with his old friend from Travel Air, Clarence Clark.

The Wadlow Twins were typical of the eager youngsters who hung around airports in the early days, the kind employers insist “you can’t find anymore,” and who fit the job description still seen occasionally in the Help Wanted columns:

“Chance for young man to earn and learn....get in on ground floor....long hours and hard work....salary commensurate with ability....”

Reuben L. Wagner was an extraordinarily polite and soft spoken man, for all his being called “Rube.” He won his wings at Ellington Field in 1919, stayed in the service a year as a mechanic, then went out barnstorming. In recalling the hazards of the trade Wagner spoke of high-tension lines, concealed ditches, and cows chewing the fabric from his airplane. But just as often he’d land at a likely looking town to scare up some cash customers, only to be met by small boys who would explain “All the folks been up.” And they’d go on to tell of other barnstormers: Walter Beech, or Sloniger and his Standard.

Wagner moved on to the Air Mail in 1923, checked out on the New York - Cleveland run by

following veteran Charley Ames across the Alleghenies, Rube’s DH hanging on close behind Ames’ in a near zero fog. Ames circled, climbed, dived, doubled back, finally got through — on the same run where he was killed two years later.

Wagner stayed on the mail with Boeing Air Transport, was assigned the Boeing 95 in the 1929 air tour. He retired in 1957 when the big jet transports were just around the corner. But Rube is philosophical. He agrees they’d be fun to fly, but on the other hand who could ever forget the smoke and flame and earth shattering roar of running up the engines on an old fashioned DC6 or Boeing and how could a modern jet pilot coasting along eight miles up in the sky ever know the excitement of trying to roll your wheels along the swaying boxcars of a Union Pacific freight train — you and your DH, the engineer and his locomotive, roaring and whistling and steaming in full cry across the plains.

Byron S. Warner came to the Ford Motor Company from the Army, flew a Ford in the 1929 tour. After the factory was closed and the airport at Dearborn had become an auto proving ground, Warner had become an airline Captain for American Airways. He served with American until retirement, lives now in Ojai, California, still flies light airplanes.

One of his fellow pilots at Ford recalled that Byron Warner was a precise and careful pilot who flew his airplane by the book and got the most out of it; an admirable quality for any pilot, any time, but most important at a time when the airlines struggled constantly to organize their operations and stay afloat financially.

James William Welborn was a Texas farm boy who picked up flight time in the Signal Corps as a “Master Signalman,” then went out barnstorming on his own and finished his flying education on the job. A newspaperman writing of the 1929 tour credited Bill Welborn with “the same spirit and courage for which his airplane is named — The Spartan.” Welborn was a loyal Spartan man, bitterly disappointed to fall behind in the tour with motor trouble at Montreal, and again, when he lost points in an unexpected landing in the low fog that trapped several airplanes near St. Paul. Welborn would have stayed low and kept going, but he happened to look back, saw Jessie Miller’s Fairchild charging up close behind threatening to chew off his tail feathers, so that he swerved violently to get out of her way. And only then did he see Tour Referee Frank Hawks standing in a field below, beckoning to everyone to land — which Welborn did. And to

make it worse, Mrs. Miller, serene and confident in her snow white Fairchild sailed right on through to Wausau with never a backward look.

The Spartan enterprise was well established at Tulsa in 1929, financed by oilman William G. Skelly. The first airplane was hand built in 1926 by a group headed by Willis C. Brown and Paul Meng. A. K. Longren was another pioneer in the company and Jimmy Haizlip was a flight instructor in the Spartan School. But the depression hit Spartan as it did other factories, and Bill Welborn left in 1931 to work at other flying jobs and eventually wind up in California with the Lockheed company's subsidiary called Vega. He finally gave up flying and became a full time electronics man for a firm in Burbank; his third career, he says, after farming, and flying.

Bernard L. Whelan flew the Pratt and Whitney service plane in the 1929 tour, carrying company mechanic Al Valiere and his tool kit. The tools took up the Vought Corsair's baggage compartment and Whelan strapped one suitcase on the lower wing against the fuselage. These open-air accommodations were in marked contrast to the Wright company's plane that year, a comparatively luxurious Ford Tri-Motor. The Ford was flown by George Chapline, a Navy pilot also active in civilian enterprises and now retired in La Jolla, California.

Bernie Whelan learned to fly in 1913 at the original Wright Brothers school at Simms Station, near Dayton, Ohio. Lessons in the Wright Model B cost a dollar a minute. Whelan instructed cadets during the Great War, tested de Havillands for the Dayton Wright Airplane Company and was a partner in a flourishing flying and maintenance company called Rinehart-Whelan Airplane Company. He joined Pratt and Whitney in 1928, served in various positions with United Aircraft and retired in 1958, following his sixty-eighth birthday. He lives in Fairfield, Connecticut.

James R. Williams and **Willis E. Kysor** operated Niles Airways at Niles, Michigan. Their airfield was described in 1925 as "Northeast of the city limits, a half mile due south of the Michigan Central Railroad Terminal." The field boasted a hangar, 30 by 90 feet, and two JN4 airplanes.

The Jennies were replaced by Eaglerocks, for which Bill Kysor was a live wire salesman and which he and Williams flew in the 1926 tour. Kysor Eaglerock Sales was still going strong in 1931, then with the depression Jimmie Williams was said to have moved on to work for Pratt and Whitney. This appears somewhat doubtful; we were unable to trace him through that company's excellent

historical records.

Willis Kysor must surely be deceased; his contemporaries believe he was killed in the crash of a Cessna in Michigan some time in the 'thirties.

Charles M. Wisely, pilot of the advance Army plane in the 1926 tour, was listed as a "Flying Cadet," a curious designation for a Kelly Field graduate, but one due to Army budget restrictions of the time. A man might have won his wings, but would wait a long time to be commissioned a Lieutenant.

Wisely flew with the Wilkins Arctic Expedition early in 1926, along with his Commanding Officer from Selfridge Field, Major Thomas G. Lanphier. Lanphier took part in tour activities also, and left the Army for a time later on to work in organization of Transcontinental Air Transport.

Charles Wisely departed Selfridge later in 1926, one of six Army pilots who went to Kelly Field to fly in the motion picture "Wings." "Wings" was an epic of the World War, and featured Buddy Rogers, Richard Arlen, Clara Bow and Gary Cooper. In the movie story, Cooper and Arlen portrayed pilots who were killed: Cooper in a mid-air collision; Arlen shot down by mistake over the Western Front by his best friend and high school classmate, Buddy Rogers.

And in real life, Charles Wisely was killed, on October 25, 1926. He was flying an MB3A pursuit ship, crashed into a hillside.

John P. Wood left Carnegie Tech in his senior year to join up in the Great War and learn to fly. He took up barnstorming after the war and one story of the time related how Wood saved a girl swimmer from drowning, off a St. Petersburg, Florida beach. The girl had gotten out too far and was "going down for the third time." While rescuers launched a boat through the surf, John Wood and another pilot took off in their airplane, and in a very low pass above the waves, Wood jumped from the wing and held up the exhausted girl until the boat arrived. It was not reported that the girl was beautiful and available; at any rate Wood was listed in 1928 tour publicity as a bachelor.

He came to Wausau, Wisconsin from Big Stone Gap, Virginia in 1927. Wausau adopted him, cheered his victory in the 1928 tour, and local investors backed him in purchase of a Lockheed Vega in 1929. Wood planned to bring the ship home from the factory, competing in that year's Los Angeles to Cleveland race. And on September second, after one false start, he was off and racing eastward, high above the California desert — and

head-on into a thunderstorm. The Vega was apparently hit by lightning and came apart, and while Wood's companion got out in a parachute, Wood was killed.

Pilots remembered him as a good flyer and good steady friend; Wausau townspeople remembered too that John Wood was a good sport who took part in community activities.

Lewis A. Yancey flew the only autogiro to accompany any of the seven air tours, in 1931. The big Pitcairn stole the show at every stop along the way, gathering publicity for its owner, the Champion Spark Plug Company. "Lon" Yancey was then thirty-five, an ex-mariner turned aerial navigator. He was a crewmember on two Atlantic flights, helped and advised other flyers on long distance flights, taught navigation and meteorology. One Yancey text book for pilots included study material for first aid, and lessons on recognition of maritime signal flags: the flags displayed at ocean ports to advise sailors of changes in the weather. This knowledge was required for the written examination for a Transport Pilot license — presumably the airplane pilot setting out cross-country would go by and check the Harbor Master's flag pole for storm warnings as he drove to the airport, or fly low and take a look as he turned on course.

Yancey took the autogiro on a Central American tour in January of 1932. The trip began with a long over-water hop, an hour and forty-two minutes from Key West, Florida to Havana, Cuba. In 1938 Yancey accompanied Richard Archbold of the New York Museum of Natural History on an exploration trip to New Guinea, flying in a civilian model of the Consolidated PB.Y.

Yancey died in Yonkers, New York, March 3, 1940.

Lloyd O. Yost was assigned instructor duty at Barron Field, Texas after he'd learned to fly in 1917. He taught formation flying, shared quarters with three other instructors who made headlines later on: Ormer Locklear, Milton Elliott, and Shirley Short. These dashing fellows were acrobatic experts and they had great fun joshing Lloyd Yost about his slow paced formation flying, calling him a "Pussyfoot Pilot."

The daring Locklear was the first man to change planes aloft, swinging from the wing of one airplane to another at 5,000 feet over Barron Field and a truly hair raising stunt in 1918 before anyone else had done it. Then, the war over, the three daredevils, Locklear, Elliott and Short, went forth to seek their fortunes with an air circus while Lloyd Yost went back to his native Pennsylvania and peacetime uses

of the Jenny.

The Locklear circus ended abruptly in August of 1920, when Ormer and Skeets Elliott spun in during a night air show over Hollywood; a true movie spectacular in the glare of searchlights. The flyers were undoubtedly blinded by the lights; indeed one story had it that the movie director, standing in the street below and hopeful of filming a genuine crash, deliberately kept the blinding glare trained dead center on the falling airplane long moments past the time he'd agreed to turn off the lights so the pilot might be able to pull out of the spin.

Shirley Short was killed later in the crash of a tandem-engine Bellanca he flew for the *Chicago Daily News*. Lloyd Yost meanwhile, operated his own flying service, worked as an executive pilot, flew transports in the Second World War. He is retired, lives in Dunedin, Florida, and still flies his own plane. Yost's Waco nine was the only self-starting ship in the 1925 air tour, Yost having fitted an impulse coupling to the magneto. He also fashioned rain-proof coverings for the ignition system so that he was confident enough to strike out direct across Lake Erie on the stormy last lap from Cleveland to Dearborn. He finished well toward the head of the pack and his old friends from Barron Field, had they been there to see it, must surely have agreed that for a formation flying Pussyfoot Pilot their old room mate was very brave and bold.

Clarence M. Young was a graduate of Yale Law School, veteran of aerial warfare on the Italian Front in 1917, grass roots Iowa Jenny pilot. He was quiet and capable and sensible, an excellent choice for the number two man when the Department of Commerce Aeronautics Branch was created in 1926. Young succeeded Bill McCracken in the top job three years later, then when the New Deal Democrats took over the Federal government in the Roosevelt landslide of 1932, Young was out.

He joined Pan American Airways, set up shop on San Francisco Bay and led the group which launched the Flying Clipper ships across the Pacific. Colonel Young married actress Lois Moran and the Youngs live now, in Sedona, Arizona.

In the years he managed Pan Am's Pacific headquarters at San Francisco Airport — through World War II and into the nineteen-sixties — Clarence Young could look just across the Bay at two air terminals he remembers well. One is Oakland Airport, where one of his first tasks as a government enforcement man was to bring some sanity to the Dole Race madness of 1927. The other: the seaplane moorage off the Alameda ferry slip —

now the site of Alameda Naval Air Station — where in April of 1935 he dispatched Ed Musick on the first of the survey flights to Manila and Hong Kong.

Russell A. Young flew for Detroit Aircraft Corporation in the 1929 air tour; was better known later as a pilot for the McAleer Company of Detroit, flying a Lockheed Vega, which was used to advertise polishes and featured a “Voice From The Sky” loudspeaker hook-up. The Vega was sold for service on a New York - Washington, D.C. airline that became a part of Pennsylvania Central, and Russell Young may have hired on with the airline too. In 1940 he was listed as an inspector for the Civil Aeronautics Authority, stationed in Charlotte, North Carolina. Later on he lived in Atlanta, and our inquiries there indicate he probably passed away in Atlanta, some time prior to 1947.

Myron E. “Dutch” Zeller was a big, husky, German-American from Cleveland. He attended the University of Michigan, was Captain of Cadets in his class at Kelly, and was only twenty-four when he became a Ford pilot in 1928.

Dutch Zeller startled older and more conservative pilots with his daring flight test maneuvers in the big tri-motors. He tested airplanes for Verville too;

once bailed out of a Verville Coach monoplane. Zeller made his last test on November 25, 1930 when he went aloft with Harry Wenzel to check out an experimental nose engine installation in a new ship. Wenzel was Chief Test Mechanic at the factory; had flown with Bernt Balchen and Floyd Bennett in the great rescue effort for the downed *Bremen* flyers in 1928; also accompanied Leroy Manning on the European sales tour of 1929.

It was a bleak, dreary day as Zeller and Wenzel roared along the Ford Airport runway and headed up over Dearborn. Snow flurries swept from sullen gray clouds and prophetic newspaper headlines said, “Winter Comes On A Cold Wind.” Some time later that morning the Tri-Motor was seen heading back toward the airport, trailing a long plume of black smoke — something was wrong with the new engine, or Dutch Zeller may have ruptured some part of the fuel system in violent test maneuvers.

The big silver giant came down in a long, shallow dive, the smoke trail ever greater, as it thundered over Henry Ford’s house — and then Michigan Avenue — and finally the airport boundary — almost home safe. It slammed down on the field, bounced once, went up on its nose. Then the flames swept back, engulfing the whole forward fuselage and the two men trapped inside.

