



OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER

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Many thanks to Penni & Robert Clark for their efforts in arranging our accommodations in Amarillo. The Holiday Inn West Medical Center is a new hotel, yet reasonably priced thanks to their diligence. The excellent air conditioning was vital because there was no shortage of upper 90 degree temperatures in the afternoons. It was also really appreciated by everyone that folks came such long distances, especially Jack Nelson who came clear across Texas! Colton has full time ranch responsibilities and got a late flying start Friday which caused him to encounter the typical Panhandle TRW's that passed by AMA late in the day. The Saturday luncheon and tour of the Texas Air and Space Museum was attended by all. The recently acquired historic DC-3 is a special item to see up close in the hangar. Many thanks to Ron Furnick and staff for the the personal tour of a great museum. The Palo Duro Canyon production of 'Texas' was a real high-lite for those who attended Monday evening. We have to declare the reunion a success, thanks mainly to the attendance of loyal OX5 members of the Texas Wing.

From the Wing President Colton Woodward



It's hard to believe that it is already September. It seems like it was just last week that I was diverted to Lubbock while in route for our annual meeting held in Amarillo. Although I was flying under blue skies without a cloud in sight, the Foreflight on my iPad was telling a different story around the AMA area. After an airborne phone call to the McCrorys confirmed the line of storms I decided a diversion would be the safest option. It took only a couple of hours after shutting down the 182's engine at KLBB to realize that this was the right decision. I couldn't have asked for better flying weather the following morning. A nice southern breeze pushed the rest of the way to Tradewind Airport

without a hitch.

I hope that everyone enjoyed the meeting as much as I did. The Clark's did an excellent job in getting everything set up and organized for us. I especially enjoyed our trip to the Texas Air and Space Museum and learning some history about their aircraft at the Rick Husband Airport. It was nice to see some new faces expressing interest in aviation and the OX5 organization. It is my understanding that we were able to obtain a few more members after the weekend.

Even though George Vose was not physically there with us, his presence was still felt by those of us that knew him dearly. He will be missed greatly as his service to the aviation community was invaluable. At the meeting John McCrory volunteered to help continue George's legacy by continuing the Texas Wing's newsletter. This is the inaugural letter since the author changes and I greatly appreciate John's willingness to accept the task. I look forward to seeing everyone at next year's meeting. The exact date and location has not yet been determined, but I believe the San Antonio area was discussed as a possibility. Until next time I wish everyone well and fair weather for flying.

Sincerely, Colton Woodward Email Woodwardcolton@yahoo.com

Early aviation in the Texas Panhandle

The long straight XIT Ranch fence separated New Mexico from the Texas Panhandle. A stretch of flat terrain on the Texas side was waiting for airplanes. Only a few roads and the railroads were available for transporting the settlers that arrived after the end of the first World War. Ranches were subdividing, cotton was being planted and oil wells were being drilled.

One of the first landing fields for airplanes was in Amarillo, Texas. It was owned by Lee Bevins and was located three miles NW of the city. In 1918 several military aircraft visited the area, but there were hardly any civilian aircraft in the Panhandle. Postwar civil aviation began to develop in 1919 when surplus Jennys were made available to the public, mostly powered by OX5 engines. Gasoline was cheap.



Early hangar at Bevins Field

One enthusiastic airman was Harold English who learned to fly in San Diego, soloing in 1923 before coming to live with his father in Amarillo. He hung around Bevins airport in the early twenties and flew around the Texas Panhandle in one of the Jennys that was based at the airport.

Harold English met Selma Olson the same year Lindbergh flew the Atlantic, and they were married in Hereford, TX - not far from Amarillo. Like all significant early aviators Harold was a barnstormer. He also became an early advocate for passenger service on

the South Plains, and Selma became adept at running the fixed base operations at Bevin's airport which was now considered the first commercial flying field in Amarillo.

English is best remembered as an accomplished promoter, and he was able to gain business partners such as James and Thornton Oxnard who were well educated men. They had attended ivy league universities and had learned to fly at Curtiss Field on Long Island, NY. Then they came west to the Panhandle. James decided on settling in Albuquerque, NM.

Thornton Oxnard met Harold in Amarillo and after talking to him began to recognize the potential of the area as a national air transport hub, particularly the routes from Oklahoma to Albuquerque, where James Oxnard was developing an airport. Together they formed Amarillo Airport Corporation.

Army pilots were refueling on transcontinental flights. Large hangar space was available for maintenance work, and a popular



Harold English with Jenny at English-Bevins Field



Early English Field

restaurant made it a commercial success. Miles of parking space, and frequent air shows drew customers in from every small town in the area.

The city administration was slow in developing aviation facilities at this time; in contrast airports were rapidly sprouting all over the country due to the Lindbergh crossing of the Atlantic. New municipal airports were built from Oakland to Newark in 1928. Art deco was the architectural style of the era.

That same year, Harold rode the Santa Fe RR to San Diego and returned in a new Ryan Brougham, an aircraft with a single radial engine. It was technically a sister ship to the Spirit of St. Louis. It became very popular for charter flights out of Amarillo and Paul Braniff backed Harold English for regular round trips to Oklahoma City.

In 1929 Harold English found a better landing field seven miles north of Amarillo and opened the "New English Field". Rt 66 passed by the location. The old Bevins Field was closed and the hangars removed. The new 740 acre site had better drainage and since individual runways were not in vogue yet, a large white circle marker was constructed on the center field and planes landed into the wind accordingly. This successful commercial terminal became the destination of a large number of commercial airlines: Western Air Express, TWA, BNF, AAL, Trans Texas, Continental, Frontier and others.

Selma Olson English became the first woman to hold a pilots license in the South Plains. Later in 1939 with her extensive aviation experience she became the first woman to become a major airport manager. WW II was on the horizon and a lot of trained personnel were entering military service, mostly in the US Army Air Force. Thornton Oxnard was one of them; he flew the Hump in the China Burma theater and survived. His brother James had continued to develop his Oxnard Airport in Albuquerque and it became part of Kirtland AFB through the courtesy of the government.

Texas Air and Space Museum for many years had a home at what was once English Field. It is now at Rick Husband International Airport, (turn left at the blue horse!). The museum is destined to move to a private location near the Interstate Highway in the future. Meantime it remains open at the Amarillo airport location. Be sure to see the extensive collection.



Airshow parking at Amarillo - 1920s

This issue's "Mystery Airplane"

The large radial engine powered high wing was one of a long line of record breaking planes. It flew the first non-stop flight across the Pacific, east bound, from Japan to Washington State with Clyde Pangborn and his copilot in 41 hours.

- A STINSON DETROITER
- B WACO CRUISER
- C BELLANCA PACEMAKER
- D BOEING MAILWING



Ford Trimotor at English Field



Harold English with the Ryan Brougham after arrival from factory 1928



Aerial view of English Field Terminal late 1930's

The answer to this issue's Mystery Airplane is: C BELLANCA PACEMAKER