OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS
TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER
John McCrory, Editor
PO Box 847, Marfa, Texas 79843
March, 2017 No. 72

As we strive for transparency, we find slightly fewer than one hundred names on the Texas Wing membership list, which we use to send this newsletter. We presume everyone received the April 2017 OX-5 News (National), which means everyone who is a regular member received an attractive new membership card.
The cards will be sent out each year if National OX-5 dues are paid prior to April. Remember your Texas Wing does not charge you anything for membership in this exclusive group. However it should be obvious that we need a few more TX Wing members. If you have the opportunity to encourage any of your aviation friends to join up, please do so.

Also if you have any suggestions concerning the Texas Wing Newsletter, please feel free to offer it - simply send a letter to the P.O. Box address above.

From the Wing President Colton Woodward

Its spring time in here in west Texas, though it has felt more like summer time with temperatures occasionally reaching into the 90's. The good news is along with the heat there has been quite a bit of early convection bringing in some much needed early spring showers. Some of these showers have made their way to the parts of the panhandle that had recently burned. I understand that the Clarks property was one such property that was affected and hope that it is recovering well.

At our last annual meeting potential locations for our next gathering were mentioned. Since the last several meetings have been in the western part of the state we have decided to move the location to more accommodate our eastern members. San Antonio seemed to be the more favorable choice. Being that San Antonio can be overwhelming hot in the summer this meeting will be moved back to a date later in the fall. I hope to have more details and scheduling to come in the next newsletter. Until next time fly safe.

Sincerely, Colton Woodward Email: Woodwardcolton@yahoo.com

The first half of the 20th Century witnessed a rapid growth in aviation technology and design, and it was accomplished in real time for everyone to see. This resulted in an important public 'airmindedness' that allowed flying to be the dominant means of our transportation today.

During the early 20th Century aviation events were held all over the country and publicized by newspapers. Also the publishers usually offered large financial incentives for long cross country flights, which were often the first of their kind. An example was the 1910 flight that Glenn Curtiss made down the Hudson River to New York City with a turn around the Statue of Liberty. This event generated tremendous excitement as it was witnessed from the west side of New York City.

Generally the early inventors of aeroplanes started flying schools to develop a group of pilots who would demonstrate their early machines allowing their designs to be financed Aeronautical engine development always lagged behind. However Glenn Curtiss was first and foremost an engine man, who with excellent mechanics developed the OX series of in-line liquid cooled engines. Curtiss OX engines dominated the field of both land and seaplanes. They were built in Hammondsport, New York, which is on one of the finger lakes. Curtiss also obtained large contracts from the British who were attempting to build up their training fleet prior WW I. The Jenny was then mass produced in Buffalo, New York and Toronto, Canada. Curtiss realized he needed a good designer and eventually met B. Douglas Thomas on a trip to England. He hired him away from the Sopwith Aviation Company and had him design the Curtiss J, a tractor biplane which evolved into the JN-4. Thomas went to Hammondsport , the Jenny eventually flew all over America and Canada with barnstormers at the controls. Clarance Day designed a competitor airplane, the Standard Mail Plane, with a Hispano Suizo engine which could carry more than one passenger.

Glenn Curtiss became more interested in seaplanes at this time and built some of his early models at Hammondsport. Early models of his seaplanes became popular and sold well. He was operating his first flying school at his factory on the lake and had several Naval officers enrolled. Some Japanese military officers also attended the school. Eventually Curtiss decided to concentrate on the U.S. Navy as a buyer of his equipment. He moved his flying training department to Coronado Island at San Diego, California which solved the problem of the very cold N.Y. winters.

The Wright Brothers were the main competitors to Curtiss and also developed a flyingschool near their home in Dayton, Ohio. They sent their experienced aviators to the big flying events, which usually were held at fair grounds or race tracks which provided flying space for the early aeroplanes. As mentioned, a great deal of excitement was generated by these events. Orville Wright flew before thousands of first time aeroplane viewers at Ft. Meyers, VA outside Washington, D.C. where he succeeded in successfully marketing their Wright Flyer biplane to the U.S. Army Signal Corps. It was sent it to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas with a partially trained Army officer, Benjamin Foulois, in the winter of 1909. That is when aviation history began in Texas.

Unfortunately the United States was unable to develop a suitable warplane for use in WW 1. The De Havilland DH-4 was a British design, and some were manufactured in the U.S. and sent to Europe during the American participation after 1917, however mostAmericans and Canadians were French trained, and flew in European manufactured single engine fighter planes which were powered with European air cooled radial engines.

The first big aviation depression was at the end of WW 1 when aviation manufacturing almost ceased and the U.S. Army Air Service almost completely demobilized. This was in contrast to France in which the government continued to accept new aircraft and also subsidized commercial aviation on European routes. This was practical as geographic distances were short, and aviation was acceptable to the public. This attitude allowed commercial airlines to grow and develop into the early 1920's. In America the development of airmail routes still had to play out, with airmail being the moneymaker and passengers were rare. Meantime the barnstormers demonstrated the surplus JN-4's and the Standard biplanes to the American public in the postwar period until everyone had at least seen an airplane.

Early passenger routes were the same as the air mail routes. These were called CAM Routes and were numbered. During this time no suitable transport aircraft were available. The word 'suitable' meant profitable. However such aircraft existed in Europe and other countries. English passengers were carried in hurriedly modified WW I bombers during the early years. Typical cross channel traffic went to Paris, a rather short flight compared to American distances.

By the late 1920's many CAM routes were lighted by carbide beacons provided by the Civil Aviation Authority, which allowed night flights to be made in good weather conditions. Another problem was that the CAA abolished the use of wood construction in aircraft meant for the commercial transport market. This eliminated many 'suitable' designs. Small companies could use the fast Lockheeds, but only 6 passengers could comfortably sit in those airplanes. However Swissair successfully used them on their European routes.

Soon multiengine airplanes appeared on the scene; Eastern Airlines purchased the large Curtis Condor biplanes which served the East Coast for years. Boeing built a two engine metal airliner, the B-247, and United Airlines bought that. Donald Douglas finally manufactured the DC-1 and 2 in California and foreign companies began to buy them. When the superior DC-3 was built, American Airlines developed their fleet with those fine machines.

The answer to this issue's Mystery Airplane is: C Bellanca C-27C

And after Charles Lindbergh successfully flew the Atlantic nonstop, the American public re-stimulated their airmindedness. Municipalities demanded airports and hundreds were established across the country in 1928.

In the last newsletter we mentioned the large radial engines that were developed in the U.S. during the Golden Age of aviation which allowed the excitement of early air races. The following photos show the rapid improvements in design of some of those planes.

Lockheed Sirius used by Paul Mantz for movie work. Lindbergh paid Lockheed $18,000 for a Sirius with a sliding cockpit canopy and a 450 hp P&W in the summer of 1930. He flew his wife cross-country to Roosevelt Field, breaking a transcontinental speed record.

Jimmy Doolittle climbs out of the Lockheed 'Shellightning' Orion 9C with a metal fuselage and retractable landing gear.

This issue's " Mystery Airplane"

A Atlantic Aviation F1
B Beech Airmaster
C Bellanca C-27C
D Northrop Delta