OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS
TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER
John McCrory, Editor
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We believe that most of the Texas Wing received the September No. 70 Wing Newsletter - however we did receive 10 returns which could not be delivered by by the post office.

We are now offering a free gift. We will send a Forever Stamp to anyone who sends us change of address information. Our first winner is Roberta "Susie" Brouse of Arlington, Texas.

Also the Texas Wing greatly appreciates the postage contribution sent from Robert L.Taylor. He is the founder of the Antique Airplane Association in Ottumwa, Iowa.

Once again we wish to remind you that doing your best to interest new members in joining the OX5 Aviation Pioneers is probably the most important contribution.

We will continue to work on the membership list during 2017 to insure that all paid up dues members receive the Newsletters. And remember, although there are several around Texas still in existence, it is not necessary to fly a Jenny to be a member of the Texas Wing.

From the Wing President Colton Woodward

I hope that the holidays have found everyone well. As a nation it seems we have had an emotional year for 2016. We have endured quite a bit between passing 3rd class medical reform and electing a new president. Just as in aviation you could say there were many ups and downs. As we charge forward into the New Year I'd like to take a moment and reflect back on a special event. This last October many of George Vose's friends and family members gathered for a fly in at Taurus Mesa. The fly in served as a memorial and an opportunity to celebrate the life of a man who cared about and touched many through aviation. George's final flight was made in a Cessna 180 flown in formation alongside a Cub Crafters Carbon Cub. After a low pass down the runway and a break in formation, George's ashes were dispersed amongst the land the he loved. Looking down from the Carbon Cub a surreal moment touched me as I watched the ashes slowly drift towards the ground. I could still hear my old flight instructor telling me to keep it coordinated as I slowly banked the plane around.

Sincerely, Colton Woodward

Email: Woodwardcolton@yahoo.com

Farewell Flyover piloted by Colton (L) and Cade (R), over Taurus Mesa strip

Cade Woodward and Jerry Eoff beside Cade's C-180. Jerry and his Wife helped George for years, and handled the duties and arrangements during the last year of his life. Jerry wrote the wonderful obit that was so full of his life accomplishments. We were all stunned as George was not one to share many details about his past. Jerry has a plane of his own and certainly earned the right seat on the last flight. The release of George's ashes over Taurus Mesa was flawlessly and professionally executed. It commemorated his settlement of the area as well as his numerous contributions to aviation in the Big Bend of Texas. Members of the family were present in addition to Taurus Mesa neighbors, former students and friends in aviation. We shared memories of George over a great meal prepared by neighbors as was done during the previous fly-ins. It was an occasion the attendees will not forget.

We flew out to Prescott AZ to attend a very large AOPA fly-in last fall. More than 575 airplanes were on the field and a great number of discussions concerning general aviation were presented. The issue concerning Third Class Medicals was interesting. On a side trip we drove to Valle, AZ to the Planes of Fame Air Museum north of Williams, and looked at their collection. They had several of the early large single engine airplanes that were flown during the 1920-30's for record distances. One was the Stinson Detroiter, a big high wing radial engine powered plane that served as an early 'airliner'.

Large high horsepower radials were developed by Wright Aeronautical Co, Pratt and Whitney and European companies after the First World War. These engines, combined with 'leaving one wing at home', provided for record breaking flights over 16 -18 hrs. in duration. Unfortunately only a few of these famous aircraft are still in existence.

The Lockheed Airplane Co. built a series of high wing airplanes, starting with the Vega in 1927. The designers were John Northrop and Gerard Vultee. The aircraft was powered by the Wright J-5 Whirlwind radial engine of 225 hp. and was considered very fast. Amelia Earhart obtained a Vega and broke world records. During the 1929 Air Races in Cleveland every speed record was won by a Vega.

The Pratt and Whitney R-11340 Wasp developed 450 hp. and when added to the Vega model 5, a top speed of 165 mph. and 6 seats were now available. Primarily designed as executive transports, over 60 Vega's were built in 1928. The plane had a wooden fuselage built in a mold, allowing plywood layers to be built up under pressure. The plywood covered wing was attached to the fuselage without drag producing struts. The designers, John Northrop and Gerard Vultee produced a very modern looking airplane which turned out to be fast and durable.

Lockheed produced several other variants of the design which included the Orion, the Explorer, and the Sirius. All models were basically wooden construction and single pilot airplanes. However the CAA eliminated single-engine aircraft from airline use in 1934. In addition, the depression was not beneficial to Lockheed.

A North Texas Flying Story

Early aviation history in Texas includes Wiley Hardeman Post, born 1898 in Corinth, TX, now a part of northeast Dallas. His father Wm. Francis was a cotton farmer and his mother May Lane Post moved frequently to new farms in Tex and Okla. Son Wiley hated school, lacked a formal education beyond 6th grade, but was fascinated with mechanics. He left home as a teen to work on his own as a mechanic, and saved enough money to buy a bicycle. He and his brothers drove a buggy to the County Fair in Lawton, OK in the fall of 1913, where he saw an early barnstormer, Art Smith, fly an old Curtiss pusher. At first sight he was fascinated with the machine and vowed to learn how to operate one.

Wiley worked hard to save enough to enroll in a trade school in Kansas City. Subjects taught were automobiles and aviation, which Wiley was intensely interested in and he became an exceptional student, showing great interest in physics and math. He then found work in Oklahoma as a roughneck, becoming a tool dresser at $11.00 a day. He eventually decided to quit the oil field and devote his full time interest to aviation.

Burrell Tibb's Flying Circus was performing at Wewoka, Oklahoma and since Wiley was nearby, he went to see the boss about a job. A parachute jumper was needed and Wiley was hired at fifty dollars a jump. After he received some fast instruction, his first attempt was successful using an old exhibition type jump type jump chute packed in a bag which opened when the parachutist first jumped off the bottom wing of Tibb's old Jenny. He made over 100 jumps, improving his act as he learned. He barnstormed around Oklahoma for a couple of years by renting an old Canadian built Jenny which was called a Canuck. Then in an effort to make enough money to buy his own airplane, he went back to work in the oil field. An unfortunate accident took place on a drilling rig Oct. 1, 1926 when he lost his left eye due to a flying chip of steel. However Workman's Compensation covered his medical expenses and he went to the Davis Mtns, in the Big Bend region of Texas to recuperate, staying with an uncle. He had enough money left to buy and rebuild a Jenny with an OX-5 engine, costing him about $540.00.

Oil men were always looking for speed when getting around drilling sites. Two partners, F.C. Hall and Powell Brisco, of Chickasha, OK were looking for a pilot. Wiley was interested and applied for the job. The partners hired him and decided to buy a 1928 Travelair biplane which had 3 seats. This worked for a while until they got caught in a storm near Shamrock, TX, and Wiley had to make a hard landing in a rough field where they all got soaked. Hall had seen the new Lockheed cabin monoplane, the Vega 5, and told Wiley to fly the Travelair to Burbank and trade it in on the 1928 Vega, serial No. 24. The plane was painted white with purple trim and named "Winnie Mae" by Hall, which was his daughter's name. Wiley Post was now flying the state of the art executive transport. It cost the oil men $20,240.00.

In 1926 commercial pilots were called "industrial pilots" and the CAA required them to be licensed to fly airplanes. Wiley had overlooked this requirement. When it was mentioned, he took the written test but had no extensive logbook to show. He was required to log 700 hours, which he promptly managed to do, and was issued transport license No. 3259 at age 30.

After the stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression, Hall and Brisco had less need for the Winnie Mae, so the Vega was sold and Wiley Post was unemployed. He went to California and was able to fly and test production aircraft at the Lockheed plant in Burbank, where he gained more experience and lent his mechanical abilities to his work. Eventually the oil business cycle improved and he was asked to return to Oklahoma. Wiley agreed and was told to bring back another of the latest Lockheed Vegas.

Wiley Post had met Harold Gatty in Burbank, who was an Australian graduate of the Naval College and was teaching navigation to other crew members. At this time navigation was accompanied by weather knowledge, but not with electronic aids, so it was an important skill required for long range flights. Wiley was always planning long trips which would bring attention to the plane and enhance his fame. This arrangement was approved of by F.C. Hall. In addition Wiley and his wife stayed in Burbank until the second Vega was completed with additional upgrades, all paid for by Hall. Then Wiley and his wife flew the plane home.

1929 Lockheed Vega restored and painted in proper Winnie Mae colors NC-105-W

The planning for a round the world flight began in late 1930. The inspiration was a long 21 day, 7 hr flight circumnavigating of the globe by the German dirigible Graf Zeppelin. Wiley and Gatty figured they could complete the flight in 10 days in the Winnie Mae, and most of all Post realized that he needed the navigational skills of Gatty to be successful.

The airplane was flown to the Lockheed factory at Burbank in order to install additional capacity fuel tanks. At this time Wiley started discussions with Gatty while he concentrated on the airplane which was a standard 6 place Vega with a Pratt & Whitney Wasp radial engine. He had equipped it with a military type 10 to 1 ratio supercharger on the National Air Races flight from Los Angeles to Chicago flight, which had added almost 100 hp. He calculated that it produced 510 hp at 2200 RPM which equaled 150 mph cruise at 22 gallons fuel consumption per hour, and he needed 500 gallons in the tanks. The engine was also overhauled in the Pratt & Whitney shops.

The answer to this issue's Mystery Airplane is: B Fokker Super Universal

Because of the fuel increase, the plane registration was changed to NR (restricted) from NC and only the crew could fly in it. Gatty's seat had to be behind the fuel tanks, with a top hatch overhead in order to use the a sextant, and a bottom hatch for use of a drift meter that Gatty had designed.

Wiley Post and the WInnie Mae at NYC Floyd Bennet Field (date unknown)

This issue's "Mystery Airplane"

This large single engine was very successful, and carried cargo extensively in Canada; it was a new design by Robert B.C. Nooruyn that proved reliable and durable in the 20's.

A Fairchild C 12
B Fokker Super Universal
C Atlantic Aviation F-10
D General Aviation Model 4

TO BE CONTINUED