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*Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives*

### Manila Davis Talley Scrapbook

Extracted on Apr-18-2024 10:08:55

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[[newspaper clipping]]  
THE BRAXTON DEMOCRAT: SUTTON, WEST VIRGINIA

DECEMBER 14, 1933-

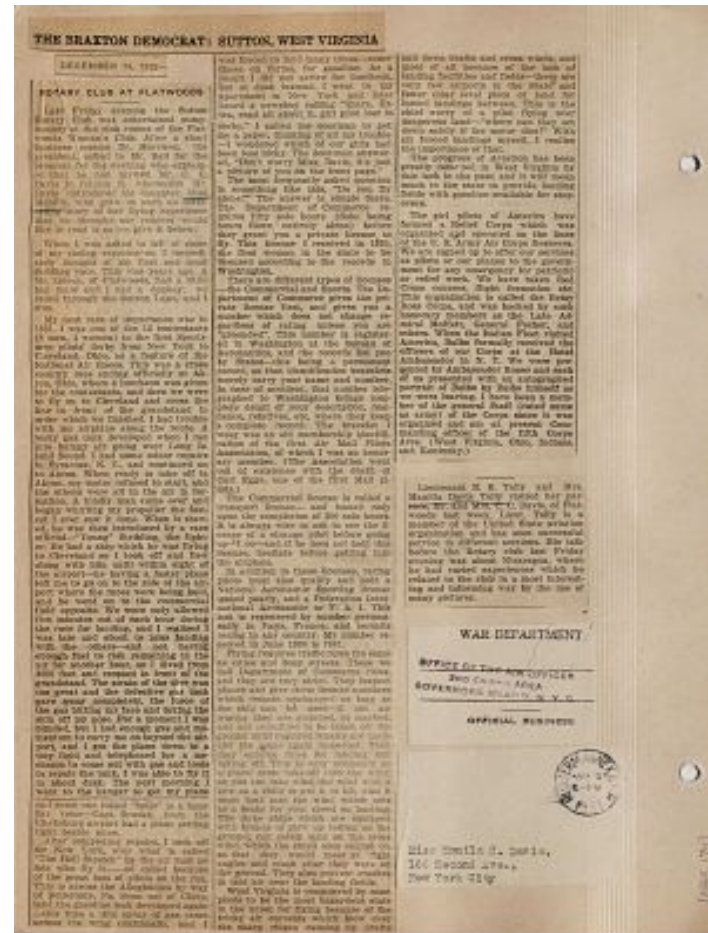
### ROTARY CLUB AT FLATWOODS

Last Friday evening the Sutton Rotary Club was entertained sumptuously at the club rooms of the Flatwoods Woman's Club. After a short business session Dr. Morrison, the president, called to Mr. Bail for the program for the evening who explained that he had invited Mr. C. C. Davis to furnish it, whereupon Mr. Davis introduced his daughter [[Miss Manilla]], who gave us such an interesting story of her flying experience that we thought our readers would like to read it so we give it below:

When I was asked to tell of some of my racing experiences, I immediately thought of my first and most thrilling race. This was years ago. A Mr. Queen, of Flatwoods, had a little bay mare and I had a donkey; we raced through the Sutton Lane, and I won.

My next race of importance was in 1931. I was one of the 12 contestants (8 men, 4 women) in the first Sportsmen pilots' derby from New York to Cleveland, Ohio, as a feature of the National Air Races. This was a cross country race ending officially at Akron, Ohio, where a luncheon was given for the contestants, and then we were to fly on to Cleveland cross the line in front of the grandstand in order which we finished. I had trouble with my airplane along the route. A leaky gas tank developed when I ran into bumpy air going over Long Island Sound. I had some minor repairs in Syracuse, N.Y., and continued on to Akron. When ready to take off in Akron, my motor refused to start, and the others were all in the air in formation. A kindly man came over and began whirling my propeller the fastest I ever saw it done. When it started, he was then introduced a race official – "Young" Stribling, the fighter. He had a ship which he was flying to Cleveland so I took off and flew with him until within sight of the airport-he having a faster plane left me to go on to the side of the airport where the races were being held, and he went on to the commercial field opposite. We were only allowed five minutes out of each hour during the race for landing, and I realized I was late and about to miss landing the the others – and not having enough fuel to risk remaining in the air for another hour, so I dived from 2000 feet and crossed in front of the grandstand. The strain of the dive was too great and the defective gas tank gave away completely, the force of the gas hitting my face and taking the skin off my nose. For a moment I was blinded, but I had enough gas and momentum to carry me on beyond the airport, and I got the plane down in a tiny field and telephoned for a mechanic to come out with gas and tools to repair the tank. I was able to fly it in about dusk. The next morning I went to the hangar to get my plane and some one called "hello" in a familiar voice – Capt. Brooks, from the Clarksburg airport had a plane setting right beside mine.

After completing repairs, I took off for New York, over what is called "The Hell Stretch" by the air mail pilots who fly it – so called because of the great loss of pilots on the run. This is across the Alleghenies by way of Bellefonte, Pa. Soon out of Cleveland the gasoline leak developed again – this time a thin spray of gas came across the wing continually, and I was forced to land many times – sometimes on farms, for gasoline. As a result I did not arrive for luncheon, but at dusk instead. I



went to my apartment in New York and later heard a newsboy calling "Extra, Extra, read all about it, girl pilot lost in derby," I called the doorman to get me a paper, thinking of all my trouble – I wondered which of our girls had been less lucky. The door-man answered, "Don't worry Miss, Davis, it's just a picture of you on the front page."

The most frequently asked question is something like this, "Do you fly alone?" The answer is simple there. The Department of Commerce requires fifty solo hours (Solo being hours flown entirely alone) before they grant you a private license to fly. This license I received in 1930, the first woman in the state to be licensed according to the records in Washington.

There are different types of licenses – the Commercial and Sports. The Department of Commerce gives the private license first, and gives you a number which does not change regardless of rating unless you are "grounded". This number is registered in Washington at the bureau of Aeronautics, and the records list you by States – this being a permanent record, so that identification bracelets merely carry your name and number. In case of accident, that number telegraphed to Washington brings complete detail of your description, residence, relatives, etc, where they keep a complete record. The bracelet I wear was an old membership identification of the first Air Mail Pilots Association, of which I was an honorary member. (The Association went out of existence with the death of Carl Egge, one of the first Mail pilots.)

The Commercial license is called a transport license – and issued only upon the completion of 200 solo hours. It is always wise to ask to see the license of a strange pilot before going up – I do – and if he does not hold this license, hesitate before getting into the airplane.

In addition to these licenses, racing pilots must also qualify and hold a National Aeronautic Sporting license issued yearly, and a Federation International Aeronautic or F.A.I. This last is registered by number permanently in Paris, France, and permits racing in any country. My number received in June 1930 is 7881.

Flying requires traffic rules the same as cities and busy streets. These we call Department of Commerce rules, and they are very strict. They inspect planes and give them license numbers which remain unchanged as long as the ship can be used – if not air worthy they are grounded, so marked, and not permitted to be taken off the ground until required repairs are made and the plane again inspected. Then they enforce rules for landing and taking off. This is very necessary as a plane must take-off into the wind, as you run into wind the wind with a kite as a child to get it to lift, also it must land into the wind which acts as a brake for your speed on landing. The large ships which are equipped with brakes to slow up rolling on the ground, can safely land on the cross wind, which the small ones cannot do, so that they would meet at right angles and crash after they were on the ground. They also prevent crashes in mid air near the landing fields.

West Virginia is considered by most pilots to be the most hazardous state in the union for flying because of the tricky air currents which blow over the sharp ridges causing up drafts and down drafts and cross winds, and most of all because of the lack of landing facilities and fields –there are very few airports in the State and fewer clear level plots of land for forced landings between. This is the chief worry of a pilot flying

over dangerous land – "where can they set down safely if the motor dies?" With six forced landings myself, I realize the importance of that.

The progress of Aviation has been greatly retarded in West Virginia by this lack in the past, and it will mean much to the state to provide landing fields with gasoline available for stopovers.

The girl pilots of America have formed a Relief Corps which was organized and operated on the lines of the U.S. Army Air Corps Reserves. We are signed up to offer our services as pilots or our planes to the government for any emergency for patriotic of relief work. We have taken Red Cross courses, flight formation etc. This organization is called the Betsy Ross Corps, and was backed by such honorary members as the Late Admiral Moffett, General Fechet, and others. When the Italian Fleet visited America, Balbo formally received the officers of our Corps at the Hotel Ambassador in N.Y. We were presented by Ambassador Rosso and each of us presented with an autographed portrait of Balbo by Balbo himself as we were leaving. I have been a member of the general Staff (rated same as army) of the Corps since it was organized and am at present Commanding officer of the fifth Corps Area. (West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky.)  
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Lieutenant B.B. Tally and Mrs. Manilla Davis Tally visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. C.C. Davis, of Flatwoods last week. Lieut. Tally is a member of the United States aviation organization and has seen successful service in different sections. His talk before the Rotary club last Friday evening was about Nicaragua, where he had varied experiences which he related to the club in a most interesting and informing way by the use of many pictures.  
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[[card]] WAR DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE AIR OFFICER  
2ND C-R-B AREA  
GOVERNORS ISLAND, N.Y.C  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS[[/card]]

[[card]]  
[[stamp - HUD TERM ANNEX N  
1931  
May 5  
6-PM]]  
Miss Manilla C. Davis,  
166 Second Ave.,  
New York City  
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## Smithsonian Institution

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