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Blanche Stuart Scott Collection - Newspaper Articles, 1956 - 1969

Extracted on Apr-19-2024 09:12:30

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[[image]]

[[caption]] Mrs. Blanche Stuart Scott Signals Thumbs Up From Cockpit ... and who would ever know she was the first American woman to solo [[/caption]]

'Earlybird' Grannies [[?ocred]] Before Flying Went 'Soft' By DAVE BEHRENS Herald Staff Writer

She was such a nice little old lady, sitting there with that dreamy smile, the safety belt secure across her skirt, the purr of power from the Boeing-727 all around her.

That little smile — was it for the six grandchildren or the 11 greatgrandchildren sprinkled about the nation, a smile for the years that added up to a happy 78, a smile that little old ladies smile when they are lost in though a mile above the earth?

Probably not.

Not for Georgia "Tiny" Broadwick, who was not always a nice little old lady and who in fact was a nice young lady of 15 when she became the first women to drop out of the sky with a parachute in 1908.

It was a cotton candy sky out there for "Tiny" Broadwick and the others Friday and it was pure nostalgia.

"Tiny" is an "Early Bird of Aviation," and so were the others, the 40 or so aboard the big Eastern Airlines jet, here in Miami to meet again and celebrate another year.

So select are these Early Birds that even Eddie Rickenbacker or Charlie Lindbergh and many other johnnys-come-lately don't meet the test. There is only one simple requirement — to have made a solo flight before Dec. 16, 1916.

Time has thinned their number of 200 now, and age and distance kept all but 40 Early Birds from the Miami Beach meeting this year. Friday afternoon, they were guests of Eastern for lunch and then a lazy, 90minute look at the Florida Keys, up the coast to Vero Beach, at Bimini hugged by clouds.

[[image]] [[caption]] 'Tiny' Broadwick Waves ... before Early Bird reunion [[/caption]]

"Tiny looked down at the trees near Homestead and talked a little of her parachute jumps, about some of the thousand, the ones first from hot air balloons and then later from the fragile planes of the barnstorming and air carnival days. They ended in 1922, she said. She married a man who worked for a bus line.

"I never flew a plane," "Tiny" admitted, "but I qualified as an Early Bird. I soloed with my parachute."



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There were quite a few accidents in those mad days, and the old aviators around her also talked about that with the same remote, incredible delight.

"Oh yes," she said., "there were quite a few broken bones and strained ligaments. But you looked for a tree or a telephone line to break that fall." She smiled again.

"We always thought a tree was a little cushion," said this tiny lady who was not even five feet tall in leather helmet and goggles.

BLANCHE STUART SCOTT sat a few seats away, a girl who went to a good school then became the first American woman to solo. It was in a Curtiss "Pusher," the [[?]] with an open "undertaker's chair" for its pilot, a few feet in front of the exposed engine.

Friday's Boeing Whisperjet was cruising at a low 1,500 feet, holding itself in at a mere 250 miles an hour to give the old fliers a look at the landscape. "We flew at 50 miles an hour," Banche recalled, "but you could get up 50 feet or so for at least a quarter of an hour."

That, she said, was here 1910 solo.

There was the lure of big money in those pre-World War I days when the exhibition fliers could gross \$5,000 a week, Blanche said.

"After expenses, and paying the mechanics, and a crash or two, what did you have left?" she asked, "Applesauce!" It still sounded marvelous, the way she told it.

Broken bones? Blanche counted 41 of them but they didn't matter. Those were days, she said, when a broken neck wasn't that serious — "and a promoter always had enough idiots to take your place."

Blanche Stuart Scott is now the kind of lady who's about to reassure a nervous passenger. There are only two kinds who aren't a a little scared of flying, she advised, "fools and madmen."

* * *

NEARBY WAS Max Holten who is 75 years old but still has clear blue eyes that once focused behind a machine gun in a German

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