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Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

A. Roy Knabenshue biographical information

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Subjects of Lecture
by
Roy Knabenshue

First directional controlled flight in America, on October 25, 1904 at the St. Louis Exposition.

First flight over Los Angeles on Christmas, December 25, 1904. This was also the first successful flight to be made over California. Motion pictures made of this demonstration is credited with being the first taken in California.

Started ballooning in 1899, continued through to close of the St. Louis Exposition with many hair breathed escapes, operating free balloons as well as captive.

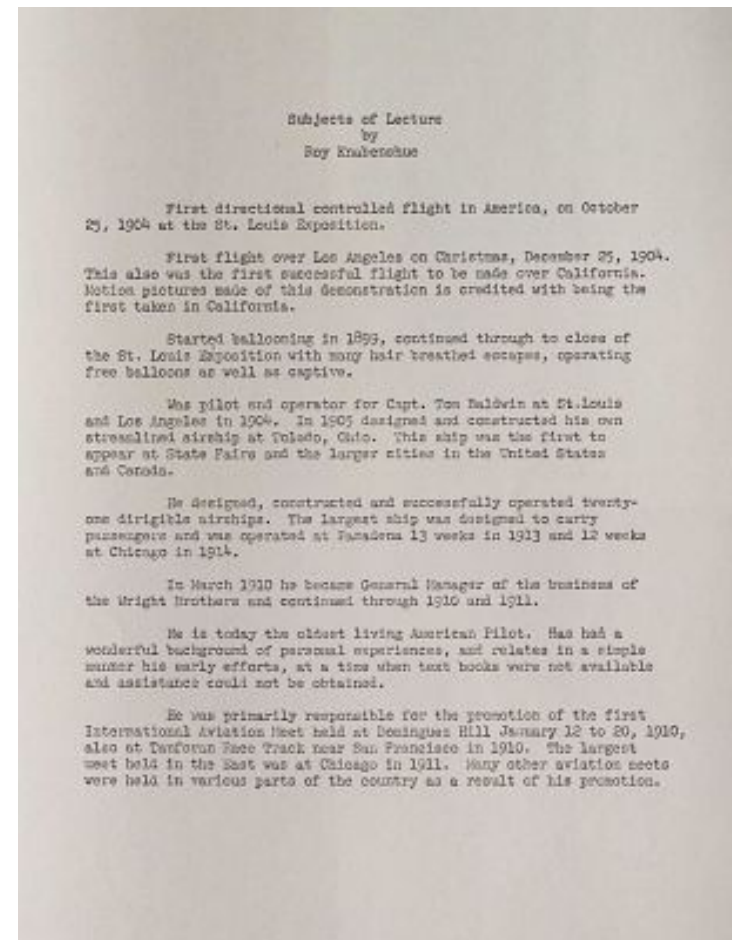
Was pilot and operator for Capt. Tom Baldwin at St. Louis and Los Angeles in 1904. In 1905 designed and constructed his own streamlined airship at Toledo, Ohio. This ship was the first to appear at State Fairs and the larger cities in the United States and Canada.

He designed, constructed and successfully operated twenty-one dirigible airships. The largest ship was designed to carry passengers and was operated at Pasadena 13 weeks in 1913 and 12 weeks at Chicago in 1914.

In March 1910 he became General Manager of the business of the Wright Brothers and continued through 1910 and 1911.

He is today the oldest living American Pilot. Has had a wonderful background of personal experiences, and relates in a simple manner his early efforts, at a time when text books were not available and assistance could not be obtained.

He was primarily responsible for the promotion of the first International Aviation Meet held at Dominguez Hill January 12 to 20, 1910, also at Tanforan Race Track near San Francisco in 1910. The largest meet held in the East was at Chicago in 1911. Many other aviation meets were held in various parts of the country as a result of his promotion.



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