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Hattie Meyers Junkin Papers - Newspaper articles, 1930

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TWO THE ELMIRA ADVERTISER, MONDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 22, 1930.

Pilot Wolf Hirth Gives Spectators Great Thrill At Opening of National Glider

German Monoplane Is "Lost" Above Elmira In Darkness; Walker Opens Big Contest

Wolf Hirth, German Glider Expert, Enjoys Night Flight Above City While Crowds at Starting Field and Airport Fear He Has Crashed Upon Hill - Makes Safe and Spectacular Landing After Hour in Air - O'Meara and Allen Jump From Hill to Landing Flag at Airport in Five Minutes.

With the eyes of international leaders in the aviation turned toward Elmira, Sunday, at the opening of the National Glider Association's first national contest, Wolf Hirth of Germany, Pilot, extraordinary, provided a thrill for hundreds of local residents which they will not soon forget. As darkness came in his glider vanished in midair for nearly an hour he flew above the city in absolute silence while men and women crowding the starting field and the airport declared he must have crashed to his death upon some nearby hill.

To guide him to a safe landing airport employees lighted a huge bonfire and several flares while motorists turned their headlights upon the field to provide all possible illumination. Unexpectedly, with a peculiar singing sound, Hirth's glider came down over the hangar, into the range of light, and as quickly was swallowed up in the darkness. The gasp of astonishment had scarcely died away when again the singing of the glider was heard and Hirth brought his ship to rest, stepping out with a smile of satisfaction upon his face. He was promptly tendered an ovation.

Sunday morning at glider headquarters in the Mark Twain there was a scene of feverish animation as Donald F. Walker, manager of the National Glider Association, and Sherman P. Voorhees, chairman of the executive committee, with their aids, registered incoming pilots and prepared the details of the initial flights. As Dr. Wolfgang Klemperer, research engineer of the Goodyear-Zeppelin Company, arrived at the hotel he took to the field with Manager Walker. Dr. Klemperer is a recognized international authority on gliding, whose work in Germany is pioneer glider activities, has had marked bearing upon the present and future of aviation generally.

Due to shifting winds, which seemed to lack proper force, two field sections were made before the officials of the meet were satisfied the best location was on the Miller farm, between Jerusalem Hill and Walter Cure Hill, high above the city. Shortly after 2 o'clock the gliders commenced to assemble on the farm, with several hundred spectators, and preparations were made to formally open the national event.

Introduces Walker

While gliders were being removed from trucks and bolted together Mr. Voorhees introduced Manager Walker who explained that inasmuch as this was a series of contests, for the purpose of making records, and not an entertainment feature, gliders would not be taken off until the wind was of desired intensity and moving in the proper direction. He briefly discussed the relation of gliding to aviation, the meaning of such contests, and expressed appreciation for the reception Elmira has given the visitors.

Manager Walker then introduced Lieutenant Edward Allen of Seattle, Albert Hastings of California, and the members of the B. F. Goodrich



Gliding Club team. Edward P. Warner, formerly assistant secretary of the Department of Commerce for "Aviation," now editor of Aviation, smilingly refused to be formerly introduced, declaring he was a spectator and not a pilot and all honors should go to the pilots. Just as the sun was sinking behind the hills the operator of the radio car reported a strong breeze headed toward Elmira and within a few minutes its presence was felt and the contest was on. Mr. Hirth, operating a full cantilever high wing monoplane, with silk inset wings and body resembling birds-eye maple, one of the most beautiful gliders in the world according to authorities, took off to make a spot landing at the airport, the initial contest.

Shoots Into Air

Twenty-four men operated the shock cord and at 6:06 o'clock the sparking ship was shot into the air, seemed to hesitate for an instant, then to gain altitude as it was lifted by its natural element. Hirth flew along the ridge of the hill until almost lost to view, then returned and unexpectedly announced his intention of remaining aloft. Again he disappeared, then returned in the sun's final glow, creating a picture of startling appeal, the glider seemingly a giant bird with golden plumage. Darkness gathered quickly and Hirth was lost to view while at the airport the anxious crowd became increasingly nervous as the minutes sped and the pilot was unreported. Rumors flew thick and fast that he had crashed but the contest officials felt assured the skill of the aviator would stand the test. [[?]] flight cast by fires, flares and [[?]] the glider finally arrived [[?]] amid expressions of joy on

Members of National Glider Association's Elmira Committees
[[12 photo images of men]]

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