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Hattie Meyers Junkin Papers - Newspaper articles, 1932 - 1936

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Battle Plane Lost

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First Woman to Win Glider C License Revisits Soaring Contest Here for First Time in 7 Years

By MARION STOCKER
Star-Gazette Staff Writer

[[Image of two women sitting]]

FIRST women in the United States to receive a C-license for gliding was Mrs. Hattie Junkin, [[?]], who won the honor at an Elmira meet in 1931. With her, left, is her daughter, Janet. Mrs. Junkin, son, George, and Janet are spending a few days in a cabin on Harris Hill. This is her first return in seven years to the scene of her former exploits.

IT IS seven years since Mrs. Hattie Junkin flew a glider, and seven years since she last attended a National Soaring Contest here. Yet Mrs. Junkin has the distinction of being the first woman in the United States to earn a C-license.

That was back in '31 in the primitive days before "thermals," when a handful of daredevil enthusiasts "dodged cabbages" on South Mountain, the German lads persisted in mispronouncing it," she chuckled.

"gliders are expensive" mourned the attractive little woman as she sat in the shade outside her cabin on Harris Hill, "and I have a son and daughter to educate"

But the fact that her license has lapsed through disuse doesn't "get her down." She has weathered much greater vicissitudes than that. Her life has been filled with glorious "ups" and tragic "downs" - enough to fill a book, and that is exactly what it will do on of these days. Even now her story is being prepared for a newspaper syndicate.

Mrs. Junkin's interest in aviation dates from her childhood when she and her brother, Charles, built model planes in imitation of their hero. Percy Pierce. Years later she met the famous Percy - now head of the Model Builders Association of America.

She helped her teen age brother fashion the huge wings on which he actually took one flight - hanging suspended by his arms! - before the crash which left him slightly dazed but undaunted.

THEN DURING the World War, when barely 19, she married George "Buck" Weaver, civilian flying instructor at the Waco, Tex., War School. She worked and starved and fought with him for five years after the war when he founded the Weaver Aircraft Company and struggled to put aircraft production and distribution on a sound financial basis.

She saw the birth of the first "Waco" and participated in its christening.

"Buck" and his pal, "Sam" Junkin, discovered that joy - like the present-day "Whoopie!" - used among the flying school's students, also initiated Weaver Aircraft Co. The name for their new craft fitted like a glove!

"Buck's" death in 1924 came as a bitter blow. After a year she married her first husband's best friend and partner, Mr. Junkin. Scarcely a year later, he, too, died, leaving her with a small son by her first husband and a tiny, new born baby girl.

The years that followed were "like a nightmare." The Weaver Company, prospering now, slipped into other hands. In 1929, she married Lieut. Ralph Stanton Barnaby. Divorce 1934

Through him she met many a famous figure in the world of aviation and

found herself, in 1930 on Cape Cod with a group of young R. E. Franklin, urging her to join him at Elmira and try a lighter ship. "It was a great crowd that gathered here," she recalled, "and a motley assortment of ships compared with those of today - heavy things with almost no controls. They couldn't dail very high, with their weight and rubber winch hand launching. But we had fun - and gliding answered my fondest dreams of freedom, serenity and release. "Some of the old crowd are on the hill again this year - Earl Southee, Bill Sullivan, Mr. Franking, Woolf Hirth, Gus Haller, Jack O'Meara-." Mrs. Junkin returned to Elmira in 1931 when she won her coveted C-license - Number 37 - and again in 1932. Thereafter she confined her soaring activities to the fields new her home in Washington, D.C. Subsequently she studies law for three years at the University of Washington - but fell ill before taking her bar exams. This summer, she and her son, George, and daughter, Janet, are touring New York State.

"REALLY," she confided, "I'm looking for a job and a place to settle where Janet can have a college education. I've written many articles for Aviation Magazine, have done considerable broadcasting and possess my degree in law. I'll find something," she smiled confidently. "And then I sall fly again!"

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