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Hattie Meyers Junkin Papers - Contest bulletins and programs

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The Soaring Society of America

FOUNDED in 1932 by a group of men unselfishly interested in the promotion of motorless flight, the Soaring Society of America has carried on and extended the work begun by the National Glider Association and others a few years previously. By laying stress on the practical advantages as well as the sporting angle of gliding and soaring, the Society has greatly widened the scope of this comparatively new art and has enlisted the aid of scientific men as well as enthusiastic boys.

Under the leadership of Warren E. Eaton, who was President from its inception until his untimely death in December, 1934, the SSA has sponsored the Annual National Soaring Contests. These contests have crystalized the interest in motorless flying and brought forth some notable performances establishing national and world records. Most outstanding of these were the 290 mile flight of John Robinson and the 213 mile flight with passenger by Robert M. Stanley, both American records, made during the 11th Annual National Soaring Contest at Elmira.

During its first season, efforts were successfully made to publicize the contest more widely, to add greatly to such inducements as prize money and trophies, and to develop convenient, safe soaring sites for use of pilots. These efforts were all so successful that the registration of pilots in the 1933 contest increased from 45 to 72.

Air mail was first carried by glider during the 1933 contest. A meteorological department under Dr. Karl O. Lange was set up in 1932 with the assistance of a group from M.I.T. A triple glider tow was successfully achieved for the first time in 1933 at the Big Flats airport.

Warren E. Eaton continued as president of SSA during 1934 and participated in a quadruple glider tow during the contest that year. For the third time Earl Southee was selected to conduct the meet. The Warren E. Eaton Soaring Facility on Harris Hill was first used as a soaring headquarters in 1934, the total attendance increasing from 2,900 to 14,000.

A point award system was developed to determine the soaring champion and winner of the Evans trophy which is emblematic of the soaring championship.

Lieut. Com. Ralph Barnaby succeeded Eaton during 1935 to 1936 as SSA president with Richard C. duPont as vice president. Barnaby made a very helpful contribution to soaring by editing monthly the Gliding and Soaring Bulletin for all members.

During these years, a new high of nearly 100 pilot registrations was reached for the soaring competition and new altitude and duration records were made. A flight of 158 miles by Richard C. duPont brought even the international distance record to America for a time. Many trophies were offered during this period of two years, the Evans championship trophy, the three Bendix distance flight trophies, the Harris Memorial New England Championship Trophy, the Wightman Utility distance trophy and the A. Felix duPont awards totaling \$3,000 in addition to many other awards. Earl Southee and Dr. Lange served as contest director and meteorologist, respectively, during 1935, both being

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One of the most beneficial and lasting features of the 1937 contest was the late Mrs. Wirtz's victory of Warren E. Eaton's 1936 Schleicher Design Competition, the first award since 1932 to the APC members for 1936, the second award to the 193-1 airplane for 1936, and the third award going to the Schleicher 193-1.

Under contest director Dr. Lange in 1933, Department of Commerce licensees were required of entering pilots and operators because of numerous fatal motor-control collisions of the flying field was essential to National records were also encouraged in Texas, Michigan, and California.

With Lewis Harringer's resignation at the end of the year 1935 from the management of SSA, Harry Wightman took up the reins of editing *Soaring* and managing the association. Under Richard C. duPont who succeeded as president through 1936, efforts were unceasingly made to bring the International Soaring Contest to Elmira and financial support was lacking. Notable record-breaking altitude flights and storm cloud soaring marked the National Contest of 1936 when Charles Doolittle was the second champion. At the annual meeting in January of 1936, duPont and Wightman resigned their positions, and a new order was adopted under the new president, Earl Southee. The SSA abandoned all recordkeeping and ownership of flying equipment at this time, also seeking to carry on the work without some 25% in September. Due to pressure of business, Southee was obliged to resign after a few months in office and Robert Stanley was elected to the vacancy. Without a paid manager in 1936 and 1941, SSA necessarily discontinued many of its former activities but retained the publication of *Soaring* under the editing of the secretary, Floyd Z. Sweet.

The sport of soaring is without equal. To be able to fly silently without effort for hours at a time, to climb thousands of feet steep and to sail from cloud to cloud across the countryside is the fulfillment of the age-old desire of mankind to be able to fly as do the soaring birds. Those who have done much soaring are all agreed that this flying without power or noise is one of the most thrilling, most satisfying and most satisfying sports in which one can be engaged.

Gliding and soaring carries tremendous appeal to the youth of the country and supplies for many the strong desire to fly when the expansion of power flying is beyond their means. Many local clubs have been established and others are springing up, their members sharing the ownership of one or more gliders. The Soaring Society plays an important part in assisting these groups, coordinating their activities, and furnishing a medium for exchange of ideas between them. As they grow in membership and flying skill they enter the regional and national contests sponsored by the SSA and compete for the records and prizes for the class to which their airplane belongs.

There are many who become interested when they hear of the extraordinary flights it is possible to make without power, and ask if there are any practical advantages aside from the sporting angle. The answer is a most emphatic "yes". The three most important categories, other than military, are: "Flight Training, Technical Development, and Meteorology". To these uses have been added the transport of troops and night carrying roles. Unfortunately these uses are not being carried out and expanding these practical functions of the movement.

The Soaring Society of America is doing all in its power to promote gliding and soaring and keep it on the level of high and useful ideas on which it was founded, and it must have help to accomplish its purpose. With proper organization and backing there is no question we can keep America in the forefront of soaring. What we have learned from the soaring in this country does make us realize we have barely scratched the possibilities of soaring in this country, and that it should experience a tremendous growth in the post-war world.

vice presidents of SSA. Experiments were continued in glider-to-ground radio communication by installation of apparatus in a two-place craft during the annual contest. In 1936 Lange was contest director.

On election to the presidency in 1937, Richard C. duPont immediately established our present official SSA publication *Soaring* and financed in a large measure the conduct of the magazine and the SSA office under paid general manager Lewin Barringer. Under Barringer's wise management SSA gained a strong and increasingly helpful position in the national soaring movement. The year 1937 marked the first entrance of foreign pilots into the national contest, Germany represented by Riedel and Lithuania by Oskinis and Pyragius. A total of 147 pilots registered with 54 craft and were industrious in piling up the largest total of 2,224 miles of cross country flying. Another new high of 65,000 people attended during the 16 days of the contest.

One of the most beneficial and lasting features of the 1937 contest was the late Mrs. Warren's (widow of Warren E. Eaton) \$1500 Sailplane Design Competition, the first award going to the ABC sailplane for \$1000, the second award to the RS-I sailplane for \$500, and the third award going to the Schweizer Utility.

Under contest director Dr. Lange in 1938, Department of Commerce license were required of entering pilots, and spectators became so numerous that more extensive policing of the flying field was resorted to. Regional meets were also encouraged in Texas, Michigan and California.

With Lewin Barringer's resignation at the end of the year 1938 from the management of SSA, Henry Wightman took up the duties of editing *Soaring* and managing the association under Richard C. duPont who continued as president through 1939. Efforts were unsuccessfully made to bring the International Soaring Contest to Elmira but financial support was lacking. Notable record-breaking altitude flights and storm cloud soaring marked the National Contest of 1939 when Chester Decker won his second championship. At the annual meeting in January of 1940, DuPont and Wightman resigned their positions, and a new policy was adopted under the new president, Earl Southee. The SSA abandoned all merchandising and ownership of flying equipment at this time, also seeking to carry on the work without large gifts as heretofore. Due to pressure of business, Southee was obliged to resign after a few months in office and Robert Stanley was elected to the vacancy. Without a paid manager in 1940 and 1941, SSA necessarily discontinued many of its former activities but retained the publication of *Soaring* under the editorship of the secretary, Floyd J. Sweet.

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