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## **Hattie Meyers Junkin Papers - Writings: "Let's Go to the Elmira Soaring Meet", US Air Service, 1931-08**

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## Shrinking the Globe

BRADLEY JONES

[[COLUMN 1]]

ON Tuesday, June 23rd, Wiley Post and Harold Gatty left New York. On Wednesday, July 1st, they arrived at New York. In that brief interval they had gone around the world in faster time than it had ever before been accomplished.

They were not the first to go around the world by air. That honor is held by four men: Lowell Smith, Erik Nelson, Leslie Arnold, and John Harding, who flew two Army planes around the world in 1924.

The U.S. Army World Cruise was a pioneering flight; it succeeded where previous attempts had failed. It was a triumph for aviation, it called for the highest stamina and courage in its personnel, the equipment was sturdy and reliable for its day. There could be no better criterion of the progress of aviation than the comparison of the trip of Post and Gatty lasting a trifle over a week with the Army World Cruise which stretched over six months.

Starting in March, four Army Douglas planes left Seattle bound for Alaska. Blinded by a snowstorm the flight leader, Maj. Fred Martin, crashed into a mountain-side in Alaska, and only by skilful pilotage did he and his mechanic escape with their lives. The three remaining planes continued onward, skirting Asia and crossing Europe successfully. After leaving Iceland a second plane, containing Lieuts. Leigh X X Wade and Harvey Ogden, was forced down by motor trouble in the North Atlantic. Though the aviators were rescued, the plane sank. The

Because of weather conditions, motor troubles, and the route chosen, it was not till September that the Army flyers returned to Seattle, the starting point. They had experienced many hardships and thrilling adventures. Whenever the state of the weather permitted, they had not delayed. Due to the policy of having the flight at times united, if motor trouble delayed one airplane, the others remained with it. The Liberty engines used were the best available in 1924. The amount of engine trouble experienced by the Army flyers was remarkably small considering the gruelling test to which the motors were being subjected. The elapsed time of six months was not at all bad for 1924. It seems incredibly slow in 1931.

Besides the Army circumnavigation trip there have been two other flights around the world. On August 29, 1929, the dirigible Graf Zeppelin completed a world tour, her journey having been accomplished in twenty-one days. On July 4, 1930, Charles Kingsford-Smith completed a circle of the earth, his elapsed time being two years, one month, and four days.

Since Jules Verne wrote his famous novel Around the World in Eighty Days there have been made many trips shattering this fictional record. Of late years traveling by air has been resorted to in order to decrease the elapsed time. The most noteworthy of these trips, partly by airplane and partly by ocean steamer, was the journey of John Henry Mears and the late Capt. C. B. D. Collyer, who circled the world in twenty-three days in 1928.

THE total elapsed time for the trip of Gatty and Post was eight days, fifteen hours, and fifty-one minutes, of which four days, ten hours and eight minutes were actually spend in flight. Not only was the total time of Post's flight far below that of any previous globe-girdling but the actual flying time greatly bettered all previous records.

The Graf Zeppelin required twenty- one days, seven hours, and twelve minutes to complete its world tour. Its actual flying time was ten days, twenty-three hours, and forty-three

(August, 1931)

U. S. AIR SERVICES

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minutes of keeping on the course, leaving for landing fields, and keeping aloft on the fuel consumption. Post had only the chance of pilot to perform. That such men were able to stay awake and to remain mentally alert seems scarcely credible. No sleeping could be done in the air. At all times in flight, Wiley Post was kept at the controls. Harold Gatty was kept with the passengers. If their vigilance were relaxed for only a moment, disaster might result.

On the ground not all their time could be spent in repose. On landing, arrangements had to be made for refueling. At some halts repairs had to be made. Inevitably there were demonstrations that could not be avoided. While the flyers appreciated the applause of their well-wishers, they must at all times sleep.

LEAVING New York at the stroke of the morning of June twenty-third, the flyers reached Harbor Griet, Newfoundland, in quarter to twelve. A brief time was spent in the final checking before the dangerous transatlantic hop, and at last past there they had bid the New World good-bye. At a quarter to eight the next morning they landed at Chertsey, England. Only stopping long enough for gas, they left Chertsey at nine o'clock and flew to Hannover, Germany, where they arrived at quarter to one in the afternoon. Again there was only a brief respite for looking and at quarter past two they left for Berlin. They arrived at the Tempelhof Aerodrome at half-past three having thus been thirty-five hours without sleep.

Greetings with officials, together with schooling and inspection of the airplane took some time but they were able to snatch about nine hours' rest. Tired off the next morning at half past two they arrived at Moscow nine hours later. At Moscow they were again able to get about nine hours' sleep.

Leaving Moscow at eleven o'clock Thursday night, in two and a half hours they completed the two-year, hundred-mile flight to Novo-Sibirsk. Nine hours later they took-off for Irkutsk where they arrived at one o'clock Saturday morning. Two hours after landing at

minutes.

Probably the most impressive factor in the Post-Gatty flight was the briefness of the periods on the ground. Everyone is amazed at the marvelous stamina of the two aviators in being able to keep going for such long periods with little or no rest.

Post was the pilot, Gatty the navigator. Both men had to be on the job all the time the plane was in the air. They did not "spell" each other. They did not take turns piloting as is sometimes done on long hops. Because Gatty was navigating, Post was relieved of the worries of keeping on the course, hunting for landing fields, and keeping check on the fuel consumption. Post had only the duties of pilot to perform. That both men were able to stay awake and to remain mentally alert seems scarcely credible. No sleeping could be done in the air. At all times in flight, Wiley Post was busy at the controls, Harold Gatty was busy with his instruments. If their vigilance were relaxed for only a moment, disaster might result. On the ground not all their time could be spent in repose. On landing, arrangements had to be made for refueling. At some halts repairs had to be made. Inevitably there were demonstrations that could not be avoided. While the flyers appreciated the applause of their well-wishers, they most of all craved sleep.

LEAVING New York at five o'clock in the morning of June twenty-third, the flyers reached Harbor Grace, Newfoundland, at quarter to twelve. A brief time was spent in the final checking before the dangerous transatlantic hop and at half-past three they had bid the New World good-bye. At a quarter to eight the next morning they landed at Chester, England. Only stopping long enough for gas, they left Chester at nine o'clock and flew to Hanover, Germany, where they arrived at quarter to one in the afternoon. Again there was only a brief respite for fueling and at quarter past two they left for Berlin. They arrived at the Tempelhof Airdrome at half-past three having then been thirty-five hours without sleep.

Greetings with officials, together with refueling and inspection of the airplane took some time but they were able to snatch about nine hours' rest. Taking-off the next morning at half past two they arrived at Moscow nine hours later. At Moscow they were again able to get about nine hours' sleep.

Leaving Moscow at eleven o'clock Thursday night, in ten and a half hours they completed the seventeen-hundred-mile flight to Novo-Sibersk. Nine hours later they took-off for Irkutsk where they arrived at one o'clock Saturday morning. Two hours after landing at

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