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*Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives*

## **Hattie Meyers Junkin Papers - Writings: "What is This Thing Called Soaring", US Air Service , 1931-11**

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20  
U.S. Air Services  
November, 1931

[First column]

Fokker planes, inside and out, to take up his duties here together with three Fokker F-7s which were in daily operation between Washington and Philadelphia (fare \$25 the one way) until the spring of 1927 when some smart fellow figured no profit. So P. R. T. wrote off the loss as their contribution to the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial and broke camp.

Naturally we cannot forget when Johnson was turned over on his back, after landing in a strong wind. Of course this happens to the best of us.

SURELY with a nice hangar and an administration building vacated, somebody must come to our rescue, and here they come—F. F. F. (Four Fine Fellows), all trained and skilled practitioners, operating under the name Potomac Flying Service, incorporated under the laws of whatever state they happened to be in, with letter heads, envelopes, an official insignia, desks, safes, typewriters, secretaries, and none other than Henry Berliner, the president; Lowell S. Harding (now line superintendent of Eastern Air Transport) vice-president, general manager and pilot; Andrew H. Nash, secretary and John D. Smoot, treasurer, who leased the operating privileges from P. R. T. to conduct a flying service.

The Berliner intertests had constructed a big single-motored cabin job, known to everyone around here as Big Bertha, and with several Waco 9s began operations. Later several FC-2 Fairchildes were purchased, and a few flying boats which were operate off Arlington Beach, together with Berliner monoplanes. With this equipment this aggregation really did big things in aviation. Their pilots included Lowell Harding, Hereby Fahy, Stewart Reiss, Tommy Durfee (who always contended that any pilot who flew without leather boots should suffer the embarrassment of having the bottom button of his vest cut off); Ross Hoyt, Keeling, Kreider, Walter Lees, Doug Powell, and Hall McKenny.

These boys really furnished plenty of news. Harding and Durfee had their experiences with flying boats. Stew Reiss had a habit of losing wheels or landing ponies. Ross Hoyt clipped a wing on a tree. Keeling and Goodrich bumped off on stunting expedition. Fahy picks a concrete mixer for a

[[left margin]]  
1917-18

[[?]]  
Waco, [[?]]  
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[[first column]]

[Second column]

paved runway. Doug Powell takes his mother in for a buggy ride, lands, and rolls into a ditch. McKenny steps into the cockpit of a Waco, works himself down into the seat-and can't get out.

Plenty of passengers. Already this organization had boasted of carrying over 45,000 passengers and many students. One in particular deserves honorable mention—a young blonde boy about 17 or 18 years of age, who had the mind of a Russian philosopher and the particular characteristic of a Scotchman; none other than Roger (Scotty) Scott, outboard racing authority, speed boat enthusiast, admirer of red-headed females, and today our airport's passenger-hopping pilot.

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grand runway. Doug Powell takes his mother in for a buggy ride, lands, and rolls into a ditch. McKenny steps into the cockpit of a Waco, works himself down into the seat-and can't get out.

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BEFORE going too far, let me call to your attention a controversy between the management of Hoover Field and Herb Fahy about this and that and so on, which wound up with Fahy going across the road and developing the Capital Airport, using Ford's Ford Fly in the Street of St. Louis. There was one, dear readers, later competition between the Hoover Field boys and Fahy with his Capital Airport setup, which continued competitive until September 13, 1931 when both airports were merged under the present management.

March 27, 1928 is an important date. First, Fahy carried some passengers in one day, with one ship, a Ryan, then another pilot in the week. From early morning until late at night, riding his sandwiches on the fly. Second, Louis Pyle, Washington's big aviation correspondent and writer, began his first column devoted, which is today read by most, devoted group in Washington.

July 3, 1928, finds both organizations making time for the big day, July 4th when they anticipated a big crash. July 4th found only Capital Airport open for business, and the boys at Hoover Field looking at the magnificent remains of a hangar, seven ships, one and all down, sails and machinery. Their hangar was burned to the ground during the night or early morning and to this day the same questions are asked: "How did it start?" and "Who do you think did it?"

This shock was sufficient to head off strengthened interest, and the Potomac Flying Service, Inc., closed its

doors, with an excellent record, and good will which was worth money to some progressive flying service. About August 1st, Robertson of Hobbs Valley, who had several *Lightnings*, was told about a job at Hoover Field. Immediately he moved his equipment and moved business, but by September he had lost the direction to the gold pot and so he had a new prospect on the scene, this time a man who spent much of his time back of a new hangar, deck, with red plush carpet under his feet, one who always was a believer in the survival of the fittest, who contended that St. Elwood's was built for Valerius, and who had a name for speedboats and everything that—including horses.

SPACE will not permit me to mention everything and probably it's a good thing. But things did begin to move, and during this month of September a new line is seen, belonging to one John S. Wyman, the new general manager of the new Potomac Flying Service, under whose auspices a new hangar was erected and the following ships purchased: two new *Lightnings* from Colorado Springs; a new red *Lightning* with West engine from Farmington, La. L. 1; one outboard of *Zeppelin*, etc.

Another hangar was built and Hoover Field again starts the picture. This action on the part of Hoover Field involves the grave across the road, and we see a new office building being erected, a few more Ryan added, and a new name, Washington Airport, is added for the New York-Washington Air Line. Heretofore we had (These boys which today that it were had locally service a different way would be to relate.) Clarence Chamberlin comes in with a *Lightning* with plans for a New York-Washington run. *Big Boy* leads in a *Phantom* (flying with G.T. Chandler).

Lawrence Pyle, Joe Boudreau, and Howard French become busy at Washington Airport carrying passengers and training students. October 15, 1928, the first *Zeppelin* arrived and every ship was in the air.

Potomac Flying Service is absorbed by International Airways, Inc. Election Day, Hoover vs. Al Smith. Hoover Field has the first new *Fairchild*. Pilot Ray S. O'Neal led it, and all I remember is—that somebody got his head hurt.

BEFORE going too far, let me call to your attention a controversy between the management of Hoover Field and Herb Fahy about this and that and so and so, which wound up with Fahy going across the road and developing the Capitol Airport, using Ryan's Sister Ship to the Spirit of St. Louis. There was now, dear readers, keen competition between the Hoover Field boys and Fahy with his Capitol Airport set-up, which continued competitive until September 13, 1930, when both airports were merged under the present management.

March 27, 1928 is an important date. First, Fahy carried more passengers in one day, with one ship, a Ryan, than any other pilot in the world. From early morn until late at night, taking his sandwiches on the fly. Second, Ernie Pyle, Washington's big aviation correspondent and writer, began his first column Aviation, which is today read by every air-minded person in Washington.

July 3, 1928, finds both organizations marking time for the big day, July 4th, when they anticipated a big rush. July 4th found only Capitol Airport open for business, and the boys at Hoover Field looking at the smouldering remains of a hangar, seven ships, gas and oil drums, tools and machinery. Their hangar was burned to the ground during the night or early morning and to this day the same questions are asked: "How did it start?" and "Who do you think did it?"

This shock was sufficient to break any strong-hearted aviator, and the Potomac Flying Service, Inc., closed its

[/second column]

[third column]

doors with an excellent record and good will which was worth money to some progressive flying service. About August 1st, Robertson of Hybla Valley, who had several Eaglerocks, was told about a pot of gold on Hoover Field. Immediately he moved his equipment and started business, but by September 1st he had lost the directions to the gold pot and so we find a new prospector on the scene, this time a man who spent much of his time back of a mahogany desk, with red plush carpet under his feet, one who always was a believer in the survival of the fittest, who contended that St. Elizabeth's was built for Volstead, and who had a mania for speedboats and everything fast - including horses.

SPACE will not permit me to mention everything and probably it's a good thing. But things did begin to move, and during this month of September a new face is seen, belonging to one John S. Wynne, the new general manager of the new Potomac Flying Service, under whose supervision a new hangar was erected and the following ships purchased: two new Eaglesrocks from Colorado Springs; a new red Fairchild with Wasp engine from Farmingdale, L.I.; one carload of Travel Airs.

Another hangar was built and Hoover Field again steals the picture. This action on the part of Hoover Field freshens the grass across the road, and we see a new office building being erected, a few more Ryans added, and a new name, Washington Airport, terminal for the New York-Washington Air Line. Hurrah! an air line! (These boys admit today that if they had had hourly service a different story would be to relate.)

Clarence Chamberlin comes in with a Loening with plans for a New York-Washington run. Jim Ray lands in a Pitcairn Fleetwing with OX-5 engine.

Lawrence Pabst, Joe Boudwin, and Howard French became busy at Washington Airport carrying passengers and training students. October 15, 1928, the Graf Zeppelin arrived and every ship was in the air.

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