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

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U.S. AIR SERVICES

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 figure no profit. So P.R.T. wrote off the loss as their contribution to the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial and broke campe. 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 the 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 interests 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 Fairchilds were purchased, and a dew flying boats which were operated off Arlington Beach, together with Berliner monoplanes. With this equipment this aggregation really did big things in aviation. Their pilots included Lowell Harding, Hervy 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 on ponies. Ross Hoyt clipped a wing on a tree. Keeling and Goodrich bumped off on a stunting expedition. Fahy picks a concrete mixer for a 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.

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 At. Louis. There was no, 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, 1929 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 organization 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

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This shock was sufficient to break the recombination of the Potomac Flying Service, Inc., closed its

doors with an excellent record and good will which was nearly empty to some progressive flying service. About August 1st, Robertson of Hilda Valley, who had several Fairchilds, was told about a pot of gold on Hoover Field. Immediately he loaded his equipment and started business, but by September 1st he had lost the directions to the gold pot and so he had a new prospect on the score, this time a man who spent much of his time back of a typewriter desk, with red glass, except under his feet, one who always was a believer in the survival of the fittest, who contended that St. Elizabeth's was built for Veterans, and who had a match for speedsters and everything fast—including horses.

SPACE will not permit me to write about 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. Wynn, the new general manager of the new Potomac Flying Service, under whose supervision a new hangar was moved and the following ships purchased: two new *Knights* from Colorado Springs; a new red Fairchild with Waco engine from Farmingdale, L. I.; one outboard of *Patrol* dies.

Another hangar, now built, and Hoover Field again stands the pioneer. 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 *Wacos* added, and a new name, Washington Airport, territorial for the New York-Washington Air Line. Hurrah! an air line! (These boys admit today that if they had had better service a different story would be to relate.) Clarence Chamberlin comes in with a *Loening* with plans for a New York-Washington route. Jim Ray lands in a *Pratt* *Flivver* with O.E.S. engine.

Lawrence Pyle, Joe Bonadio, and Howard French become busy at Washington Airport carrying passengers and making students. October 15, 1928, the *Cliff Zepher* arrived and every day was in the air.

Potomac Flying Service is absorbed by International Airways, Inc. Election Day, Hoover vs. Al Smith, Hoover Field boys to nice new Fairchild. Pyle Ray S. O'Neil bid it, and all I mention but is—that somebody got his head hurt.

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This shock was sufficient to break any strong-hearted aviator, 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 Hybla Valley, who had several Eagle rocks, 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.

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