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Hattie Meyers Junkin Papers - WACO History: The Human Investment in Waco Aircraft

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[[Handwritten 44]]

Waco

I remember two incidents very clearly while at Omaha in 1921. I had never seen anyone fly at night, so I finigled parking Buddie, while I piled in/to [[with a few pilots and George,]] go out to the field, where Jack Knight was due from the west with the air mail. The mail ships were open planes, the landing fields, mostly farms, the landing lights, bonfires built by the relay pilot, or friends. It was a cold windynight, the darkest night possible. The boys built a fire for the landing light, as the weather reports were so bad for the route on to Chicago, the relief pilot had gone back to town. Soon there was the sound of a motor, little jets of light from the motor, and into the firelight, taxied the mail plane. It seemed to come out of nowhere. Jack Knight climbed out, looking thinner than his usual thin self, his complexion looking almost Mongolian in the wind and firelight. When he was told what the weather reports were and that his relief pilot had gone into town, he said that he would take themail through. Air Mail was in it's embryonic stages, just as ships were, and the test of practicability was saving time. This meant night flying. The boys [[mail pilots]] had flares to throw over, in case of a forced landing. Determined to go through, suicidal as it seemed, Jack climbed into his ship. We covered our faces and turned to avoid the backwash of the propellor, and Jack Knight and the mail, were, ^{from the motor} just a sound, accompanied with little jets of light and the prayers of the little group on the ground. I felt as if I had turned to ice, and whimpered for the sheer loneliness of that young tired boy, alone up there in that cold windy darkness. It is one of the times I recall the most vividly in all my aviation background. The other incident was this. Eddie Stinson was flying a Junkers. He was taking several women up as it was a cabin ship

44

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