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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Badger, William

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William Badger

Early Baldwin "Red Devil" Pilot

[[Picture of William Badger, as a young man, set right of opening text. He is wearing a suit]]

William Badger was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 19, 1884, the son of wealthy parents.

He attended local schools, Lawrenceville, Academy, and graduated from Princeton University.

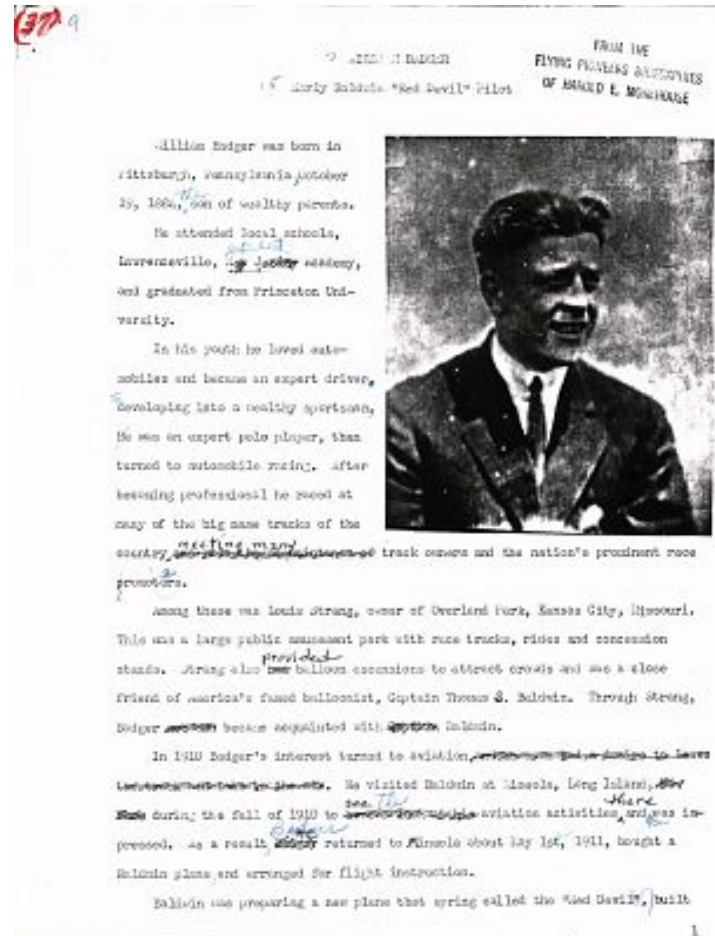
In his youth he loved automobiles and became an expert driver.

Developing into a wealthy sportsman, he was an expert polo player, then turned to automobile racing. After becoming professional he raced at many of the big name tracks of the country, meeting many track owners and the nation's prominent race promoters.

Among these was Louis Strang, owner of Overland Park, Kansas City, Missouri. This was a large public amusement park with race tracks, rides, and concession stands. Strang also provided balloon ascensions to attract crowds and was a close friend of America's famed balloonist, Captain Thomas S. Baldwin. Through Strang, Badger became acquainted with Baldwin.

In 1910 Badger's interest turned to aviation. He visited Baldwin at Mineola, Long Island during the fall of 1910 to see the aviation activities there and was impressed. As a result, Baldwin returned to Mineola about May 1, 1911, bought a Baldwin plane, and arranged for flight instruction.

Baldwin was preparing a new plane that spring called the "Red Devil," built



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