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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Beachey, Hillery

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HILLERY BEACHEY

Early Aeronaut - Exhibition Aviator - Plane Builder

Hillery Beachey was born at Boise, Idaho, May 9, 1885. When a small boy his parents moved to San Francisco, California, where he attended public schools. An older brother of the famous Lincoln Beachey, he was in the United States Navy from 1898 to 1905, following which he joined his brother Lincoln in the ballooning business working for Thomas S. Baldwin at the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland, Oregon.

Because of his skill and knowledge of rope work, Beachey's services were of special interest to Baldwin. He rigged a captive balloon to take up sightseers. The balloon was attached to a cable, using a winch to allow it to rise about 1,000 feet, then haul it back down after a brief period aloft with the passengers. After the equipment was ready, Beachey was in charge of all operations and maintenance during the Exposition. Baldwin sold tickets at \$1.00 each and was the lecturer and salesman. Beachey's brother, Lincoln, was operating the Baldwin airship.

In 1906 Lincoln wanted to go into the business as an independent operator, so he designed and built an airship of his own at Toledo, Ohio, and Hillery was associated with him in this work until 1908. During that time a second airship was built which Hillery operated early in 1908, making a number of noteworthy night flights. That year Hillery split with Lincoln during an engagement at Mexico City and returned to Baltimore, Maryland, where he made several free balloon ascensions with Howard Gill, a wealthy local amateur aeronaut. Beachey then secured financial backing from Gill to start a captive balloon passenger-carrying venture of his own, but this was not successful.

In 1909, Beachey became very interested in aviation and induced Gill to build an ~~aeroplane~~ ~~airplane~~. Together they secured permission from Glenn Curtiss to



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