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

Extracted on Mar-29-2024 10:03:05

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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 airplane. Together they secured permission from Glenn Curtiss to take measurements of a Curtiss biplane on display in a New York department store, then proceeded to build a modified copy of the machine at Baltimore, using a re-worked and lightened American-British 26 H.P. automobile engine secured from Harry Dosh. It is recorded the Beachey and Gill continued to make free balloon ascensions in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C., area that summer with Gill's balloon. About the time the plane was finished Beachey and Gill learned that an aviation meet was to be held at Los Angeles, California, in January, 1910. ~~announcing~~ ~~Large cash prizes were advertised so they decided to enter their new plane.~~ This early aviation event at Dominguez Field, Los Angeles, was held January 10th to 20th, with Curtiss, Hamilton, Willard and Paulhan flying. Lincoln Beachey and Roy Knabenshue ~~were flying~~ <sup>were advertised</sup> their airships and contests were scheduled for several amateur aviators. Beachey made several short straight-away hops prior to the event but had bad luck on the opening day when his engine backfired during warm-up and set the lower wing afire. Repairing the damage kept him busy until the fourth day when he was ready to make another try. This time he got off, flew down the field and rounded the first pylon when the engine overtaxed, ~~and~~ <sup>lost</sup> altitude, he pancaked in, wiping out the landing gear. He got going again on the fifth day, ~~and repeated the last performance.~~ On January 19th he did much better and after flying almost two miles, just when it looked as though he was on his way to win the event, he was forced to suddenly dive downward to avoid colliding with Paulhan who appeared directly in front of him. In doing so Beachey had a bad smashup, but fortunately was

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