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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Campbell, Mark M.

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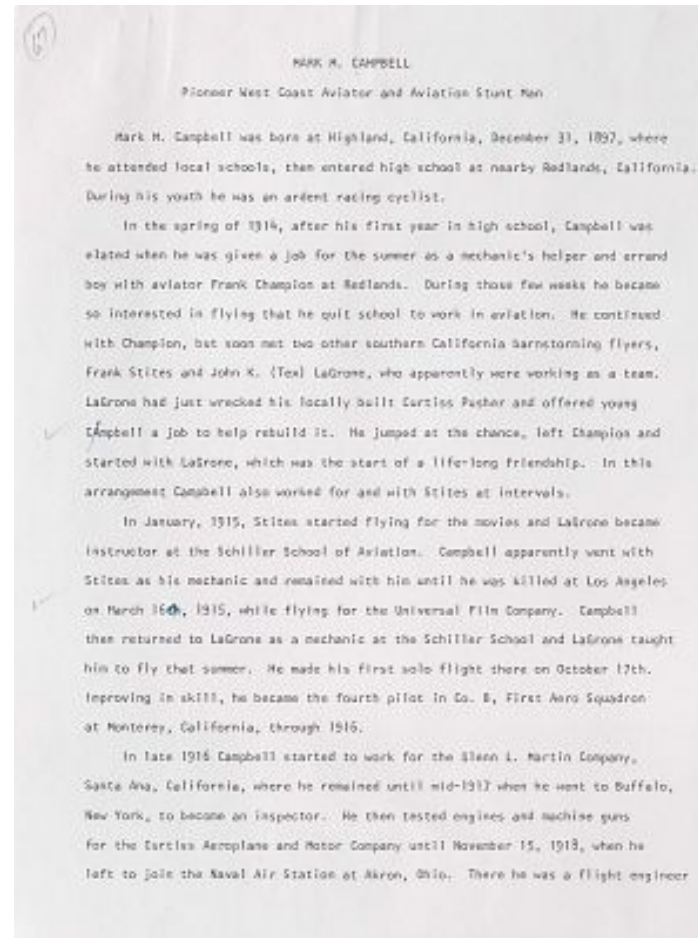
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MARK M. CAMPBELL
Pioneer West Coast Aviator and Aviation Stunt Man

Mark M. Campbell was born at Highland, California, December 31, 1897, where he attended local schools, then entered high school at nearby Redlands, California. During his youth he was an ardent racing cyclist.

In the spring of 1914, after his first year in high school, Campbell was elated when he was given a job for the summer as a mechanic's helper and errand boy with aviator Frank Champion at Redlands. During those few weeks he became so interested in flying that he quit school to work in aviation. He continued with Champion, but soon met two other southern California barnstorming flyers, Frank Stites and John K. (Tex) LaGrone, who apparently were working as a team. LaGrone had just wrecked his locally built Curtiss Pusher and offered young Campbell a job to help rebuild it. He jumped at the chance, left Champion and started with LaGrone, which was the start of a life-long friendship. In this arrangement Campbell also worked for and with Stites at intervals. In January, 1915, Stites started flying for the movies and LaGrone became instructor at the Schiller School of Aviation. Campbell apparently went with Stites as his mechanic and remained with him until he was killed at Los Angeles on March 16th, 1915, while flying for the Universal Film Company. Campbell then returned to LaGrone as a mechanic at the Schiller School and LaGrone taught him to fly that summer. He made his first solo flight there on October 17th. Improving in skill, he became the fourth pilot in Co. B, First Aero Squadron at Monterey, California, through 1916.

In late 1916 Campbell started to work for the Glenn L. Martin Company, Santa Ana, California, where he remained until mid-1917 when he went to Buffalo, New York, to become an inspector. He then tested engines and machine guns for the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company until November 15, 1918, when he left to join the Naval Air Station at Akron, Ohio. There he was a flight engineer



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