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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Christmas, William W.

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William Whitney Christmas

Eastern Pioneer Aviator - Plane Builder - Inventor

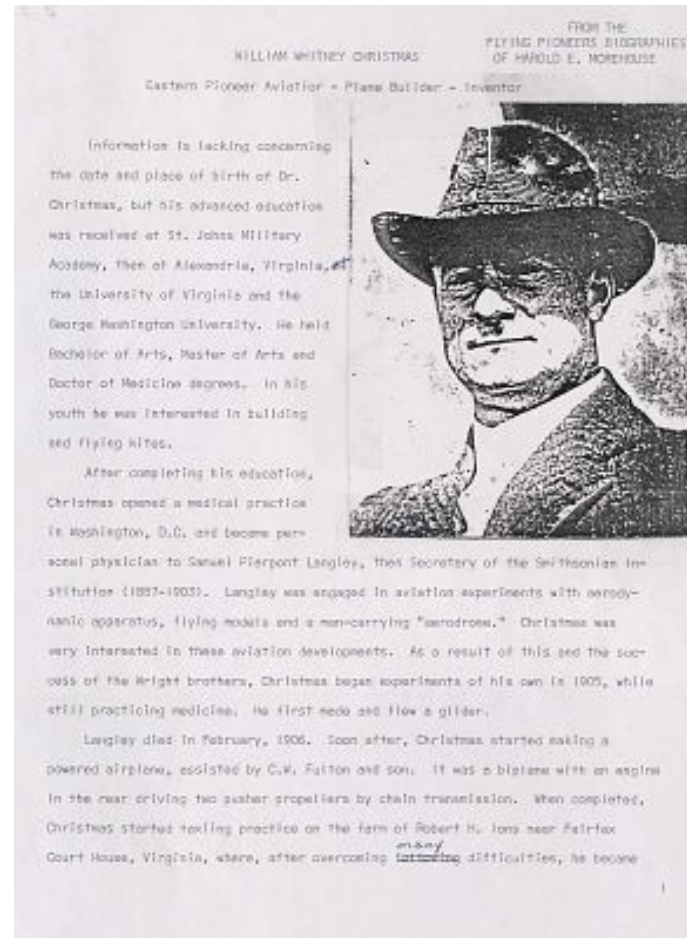
FROM THE FLYING PIONEERS BIOGRAPHIES OF HAROLD E. MOREHOUSE

[[image]]

Information is lacking concerning the date and place of birth of Dr. Christmas, but his advanced education was received at St. Johns Military Academy, then at Alexandria, Virginia, at the University of Virginia and the George Washington University. He held the Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts and Doctor of Medicine degrees. In his youth he was interested in building and flying kites.

After completing his education, Christmas opened a medical practice in Washington, D.C. and became personal physician to Samuel Pierpont Langley, then Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution (1887-1903). Langley was engaged in aviation experiments with aerodynamic apparatus, flying models and a man-carrying "aerodrome." Christmas was very interested in these aviation developments. As a result of this and the success of the Wright brothers, Christmas began experiments of his own in 1905, while still practicing medicine. He first made and flew a glide.

Langley died in February, 1906. Soon after, Christmas started making a powered airplane, assisted by C.W. Fulton and son. It was a biplane with an engine in the rear driving two pusher propellers by chain transmission. When completed, Christmas started taxiing practice on the farm of Robert H. Iona near Fairfax Court House, Virginia, where, after overcoming ~~many~~ following ~~many~~ difficulties, he became



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