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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Coffyn, Frank T.

Extracted on Jun-25-2022 10:50:32

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[stamp on left margin] FROM THE FLYING PIONEERS BIOGRAPHIES OF HAROLD E. MOREHOUSE

The Wrights had decided to go into the exhibition business and were adding to their group of student aviators to form a team for this work, and Coffyn became a member of the first class at the newly established Wright Flying School at Simms Station about June 1st, 1910. Orville Wright had just completed the training of Al Welsh and was teaching Duval LaChapelle. Walter Brookins and Arch Hoxsey had returned from the earlier school at Montgomery, Alabama a short time before, so Brookins took over as instructor and, assisted by Al Welsh, completed the training of Hoxsey and LaChapelle, then immediately started teaching Coffyn and Ralph Johnstone.

A very rush training program was carried on during the first ten days of June and over 160 instruction flights were made, as the first exhibition engagement of the new student group was to be held at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on June 13th to 18th, and every one was having to hustle to be as ready as possible for the event. The Wright Company had five planes at the Speedway meet, and Brookins, Hoxsey, Welsh, Johnstone, LaChapelle and Coffyn all made flights and put on a very successful showing. Oddly enough, Coffyn actually made his first flight alone during the meet. His training had not reached the stage where he had soloed but there, with continued assurances from the Wrights, he was coaxed to try it. Scared stiff in the presence of an immense crowd, with Wilbur Wright running along to steady a wing tip, he took off, made a short flight and a successful landing. Other short flights followed and he made his start as an aviator at that event. Over sixty flights were made during the meet without accidents. Orville Wright made several flights carrying distinguished passengers.

On June 28th to July 5th Coffyn was at an Air Meet at Montreal, Canada with Brookins, LaChapelle, McCurdy and DeLesseps. Here Coffyn first rode with Brookins as a passenger, then later again made a few short flights. At this time he was a combined mechanic and student aviator, still receiving instruction from Brookins at the first few exhibition engagements. From Montreal Coffyn and Brookins went immediately to Atlantic City, New Jersey where Brookins flew until July 12th. Coffyn helped assemble the plane, rode with Brookins and again made

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