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## **Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Cooper, John D.**

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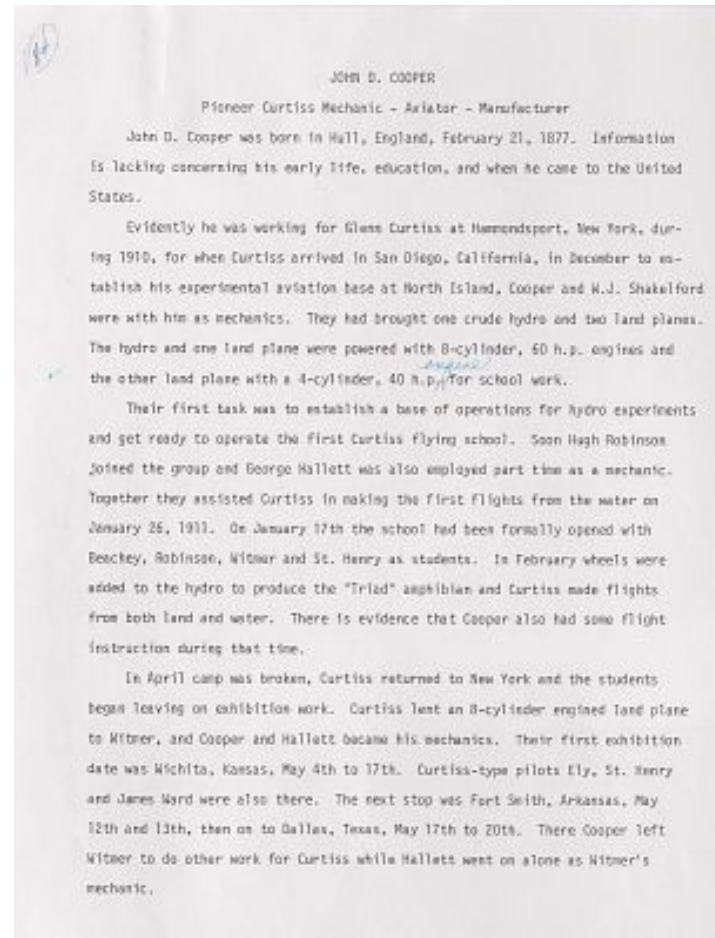
JOHN D. COOPER  
Pioneer Curtiss Mechanic - Aviator - Manufacturer

John D. Cooper was born in Hull, England, February 21, 1877. Information is lacking concerning his early life, education, and when he came to the United States.

Evidently he was working for Glenn Curtiss at Hammondsport, New York, during 1910, for when Curtiss arrived in San Diego, California, in December to establish his experimental aviation base at North Island, Cooper and W.J. Shakelford were with him as mechanics. They had brought one crude hydro and two land planes. The hydro and one land plane were powered with 8-cylinder, 60 h.p. engines and the other land plane with a 4-cylinder, 40 h.p. engine for school work.

Their first task was to establish a base of operations for hydro experiments and get ready to operate the first Curtiss flying school. Soon Hugh Robinson joined the group and George Hallett was also employed part time as a mechanic. Together they assisted Curtiss in making the first flights from the water on January 26, 1911. On January 17th the school had been formally opened with Beachey, Robinson, Witmer and St. Henry as students. In February wheels were added to the hydro to produce the "Triad" amphibian and Curtiss made flights from both land and water. There is evidence that Cooper also had some flight instruction during that time.

In April camp was broken, Curtiss returned to New York and the students began leaving on exhibition work. Curtiss lent an 8-cylinder engined land plane to Witmer, and Cooper and Hallett became his mechanics. Their first exhibition date was Wichita, Kansas, May 4th to 17th. Curtiss-type pilots Ely, St. Henry and James Ward were also there. The next stop was Fort Smith, Arkansas, May 12th and 13th, then on to Dallas, Texas, May 17th to 20th. There Cooper left Witmer to do other work for Curtiss while Hallett went on alone as Witmer's mechanic.



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