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## **Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Curtis, Greely S.**

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During 1912 Messrs. Curtis and Burgess designed and built several new aeroplanes in addition to their regular business activities. A special high powered, high speed race plane was built for a Chicago syndicate as a Gordon Bennett entry, but was not flown in the event due to a last minute dispute over who was going to fly it. A special twin engine hydro biplane was produced as an entry in the Edwin Gould Competition, which also did not compete due to the event being withdrawn by the sponsor. This plane, which was successfully test flown by Howard Gill, was the first twin-motored plane produced in the United States. They also began to build planes with enclosed fuselages to add to the protection and security of the operators. Later in 1912 they produced a new single engine tractor hydro biplane for military use, a number of which were produced. During the late Summer Curtis decided to really learn to fly. Although he had some limited experience in flying the earlier planes, Curtis started taking instruction on a Burgess-Wright Hydro from company pilot Clifford Webster, in August. As a result he soloed on September 4th after only two and one-half hours of actual instruction. For the remainder of the season he continued to do considerable flying for pleasure, but did not apply for flying license. On October 5th he flew a hydro over the Essex Country Club at Manchester, Mass. where, from the air, he watched his sister, Miss Margaret Curtis, complete the final hole to win a local golf championship.

In 1913 three new planes were developed: a twin float, Coast Defense Hydro with fuselage and 2 chain-driven pusher propellers; their first flying boat for the U.S. Navy, using a French built Renault engine, and later a special flying boat for the wealthy sportsman Robert Collier. In September the Company acquired the exclusive American manufacturing rights for the novel inherently stable, tailless English Dunne Aeroplane. Curtis and Burgess went on to further develop this remarkable aeroplane and manufactured it for some time. Also that year the company designed and built a special floating hangar for sportsmen. It was fitted with all necessary conveniences for handling, housing and repairing seaplanes, and included living quarters for aviator and mechanic, and could be towed to any desired location ready for duty at any time.

In January, 1914 the company name was changed to The Burgess Co. dropping the name Curtis to avoid confusion with their competitor, Glenn Curtiss. The Burgess Co. organization remained unchanged and Curtis' expert engineering skill continued to be a major company asset. In 1914

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#### FLYING PIONEERS BIOGRAPHIES

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