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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Day, Curtiss LaQ.

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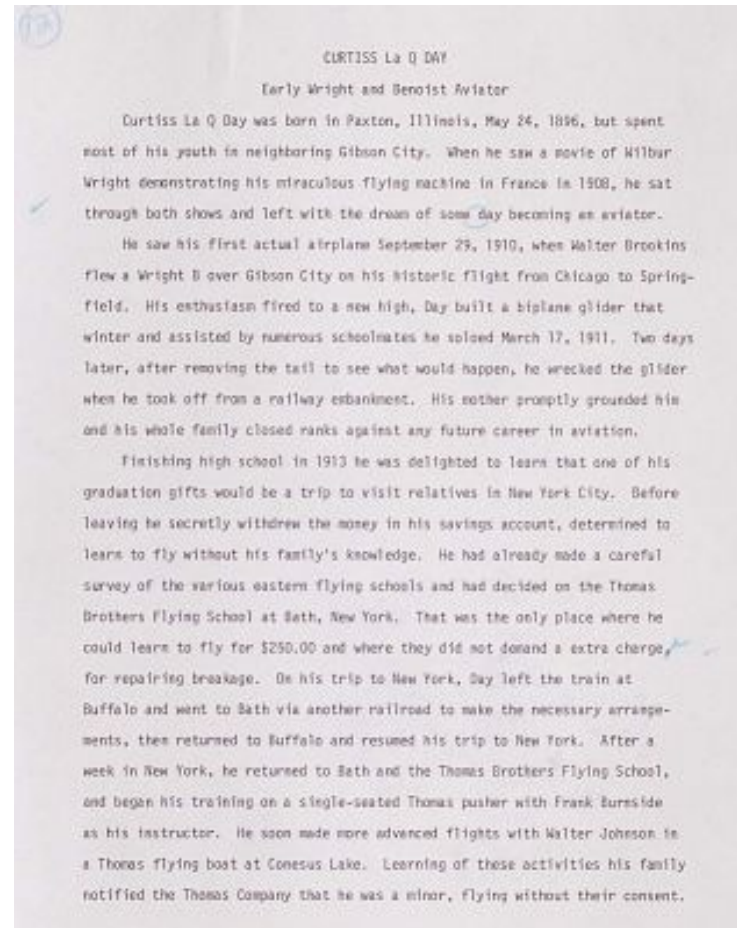
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Curtiss La Q Day

Early Wright and Benoist Aviator

Curtiss La Q Day was born in Paxton, Illinois, May 24, 1896, but spent most of his youth in neighboring Gibson City. When he saw a movie of Wilbur Wright demonstrating his miraculous flying machine in France in 1908, he sat through both shows and left with the dream of some day becoming an aviator.

He saw his first actual airplane September 29, 1910, when Walter Brookins flew a Wright B over Gibson City on his historic flight from Chicago to Springfield. His enthusiasm fired to a new high, Day built a biplane glider that winter and assisted by numerous schoolmates he soloed March 17, 1911. Two days later, after removing the tail to see what would happen, he wrecked the glider when he took off from a railway embankment. His mother promptly grounded him and his whole family closed ranks against any future career in aviation. Finishing high school in 1913 he was delighted to learn that one of his graduation gifts would be a trip to visit relatives in New York City. Before leaving he secretly withdrew the money in his savings account, determined to learn to fly without his family's knowledge. He had already made a careful survey of the various eastern flying school and had decided on the Thomas Brothers Flying School at Bath, New York. That was the only place where he could learn to fly for \$250.00 and where they did not demand a extra charge, for repairing breakage. On his trip to New York, Day left the train at Buffalo and went to Bath via another railroad to make the necessary arrangements, then returned to Buffalo and resumed his trip to New York. After a week in New York, he returned to Bath and the Thomas Brothers Flying School, and began his training on a single-seated Thomas pusher with Frank Burnside as his instructor. He soon made more advanced flights with Walter Johnson in a Thomas flying boat at Conesus Lake. Learning of these activities his family notified the Thomas Company that he was a minor, flying without their consent.



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