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

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Grounded again, with most of his tuition refunded, Day returned home. After a spirited discussion he agreed to enter the University of Illinois that fall if allowed to resume flying the next summer.

The following June he entered the Wright Flying School at Simms Station, Dayton, Ohio, with Howard Rinehart as his instructor. Day soloed on a Wright B and was awarded Pilot License No. 302 after flying his tests on July 22, 1914. He was employed at once as a test pilot by the Hensil Aero Stabilizer Company at Cicero Field, Chicago, Illinois. The company president, William Hensil, had invented an automatic stabilizer operated by compressed air. Installed in a Wright B it worked in principle but lacked sensitivity. When overcontrolling threatened stability Day would cut in the manual control and restore balance. He continued test flying for the company until fall, when he returned to school.

In April, 1915, he received an offer to fly in Mexico for Pancho Villa against Carranza. Learning that Villa was lax about paying his aviators Day wired an acceptance conditional on three months pay being deposited in advance in an El Paso [[Texas]] bank. Villa did not reply and Day returned to Cicero Field in June, backed by hometown businessmen who had organized the La Q Aeroplane Company. Tom Benoist, who had recently moved his factory to Chicago from St. Louis, had just completed a small, single-seat tractor biplane, powered by a 6-cylinder, 50 h.p. radial engine. Designed especially for exhibition work, it could be quickly disassembled and crated for shipment. Benoist installed Wright controls and after Day had flown it a few times his company bought it.

P.G.B. (bud) Morriss became Day's booking agent. He had Day pose for pictures in short pants and billed him as "Satan Day -- The Boy Aviator," with his name painted under the wings in five foot letters. Day did considerable flying at Cicero and in the Chicago vicinity that summer. He escaped injury when a faulty propeller caused him to crash into the racetrack fence at Anna, Illinois, while flying a Fourth of July exhibition. The highlight of the summer came in August when he put on a two-day exhibition at his hometown,

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