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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - DeKor, Fred

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FRED DeKOR

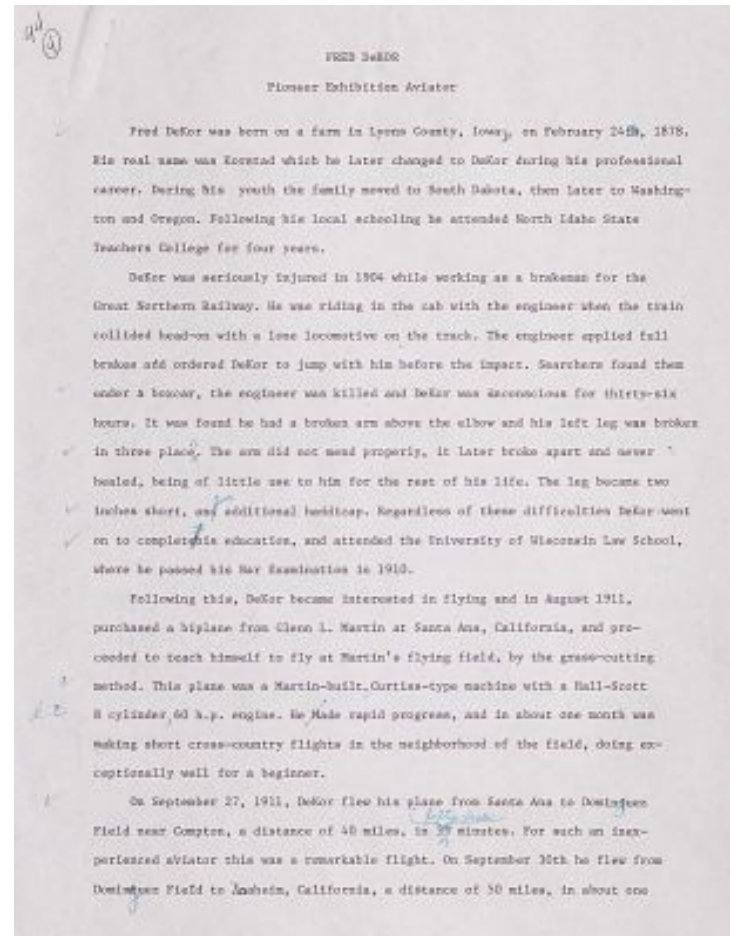
Pioneer Exhibition Aviator

Fred DeKor was born on a farm in Lyons County, Iowa, on February 24 ~~th~~, 1878. His real name was Korstad which he later changed to DeKor during his professional career. During his youth the family moved to South Dakota, then later to Washington and Oregon. Following his local schooling he attended North Idaho State Teachers College for four years.

DeKor was seriously injured in 1904 while working as a brakeman for the Great Northern Railway. He was riding in the cab with the engineer when the train collided head-on with a lone locomotive on the track. The engineer applied full brakes and ordered DeKor to jump with him before the impact. Searchers found them under a boxcar, the engineer was killed and DeKor was unconscious for thirty-six hours. It was found he had a broken arm above the elbow and his left leg was broken in three places. The arm did not mend properly, it later broke apart and never healed, being of little use to him for the rest of his life. The leg became two inches short, an additional handicap. Regardless of these difficulties DeKor went on to complete his education, and attended the University of Wisconsin Law School, where he passed his Bar Examination in 1910.

Following this, DeKor became interested in flying and in August 1911, purchase a biplane from Glenn L. Martin at Santa Ana, California, and proceeded to teach himself to fly at Martin's flying field, by the grass-cutting method. This plane was a Martin-built, Curtiss-type machine with a Hall-Scott 8 cylinder, 60 h.p. engine. He made rapid progress, and in about one month was making short cross-country flights in the neighborhood of the field, doing exceptionally well for a beginner.

On September 27, 1911, DeKor flew his plane from Santa Ana to Dominguez Field near Compton, a distance of 40 miles, in fifty-five minutes. For such an inexperienced aviator this was a remarkable flight. On September 30th he flew from Dominguez Field to Anaheim, California, a distance of 50 miles, in about one



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