



Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Dixon, Cromwell, Jr.

Extracted on Apr-19-2024 08:05:37

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives or transcribe@si.edu

For more information on this project and related material, contact the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

rudder was hinged to the rear of the frame. Near the center a bicycle frame was attached, without fork or wheels, but with a seat, handle bars ((handlebars)), main sprocket and pedals. The tibar ((tubular)) propeller shaft running forward was driven by a chain from the main sprocket. Dixon rode the seat and pedaled. Knabenshue conducted the inflation of the airship with hydrogen. Mrs. Dixon insisted that ropes be attached at either end of the bag which would limit altitude to 200 feet and that assistants holding these lines would walk or run with him to avoid an accident. Dixon pedaled furiously but the air-ship did not rise. At the first opportunity, and unknown to his mother, Cromwell removed the restraining lines and rose from the Columbus Driving Park on a free flight and actually pedaled himself over the city at 2,000 feet. He was 15 years old. Naturally, he and ((made)) headlines. Other local flights followed and these soon gained him. international publicity. The astounding story of a most remarkable boy and his no less remarkable mother brought warm letters of congratulations and encouragement from aeronauts and aviation celebrities everywhere. Requests for him to appear at fairs and resorts came in thick and fast. He invented and built a quickly collapsible tent to house the airships. His mother at all times acted as his business manager. This first "Skycycle" apparently was not quite large enough to give the performance he desired so an 8-foot wide band was inserted, lengthening it to 40 feet. A larger propeller and rudder were substituted. With this ship Dixon made several exhibition appearances in 1907, the most noteworthy being at the St. Louis International Balloon Races in October where he won several prizes. There ((.)) on October 22nd, Dixon left the Balloon Park, pedaled over the city, crossed the Mississippi River and landed at Venice, Illinois, a distance of several miles. Mrs. Dixon advertised in the aviation magazines: "Exhibition dates being accepted for Cromwell Dixon, Jr., the world's youngest inventor and aeronaut." These activities continued ((.))

rudder was hinged to the rear of the frame. Near the center a bicycle frame was attached, without fork or wheels, but with a seat, handle bars, main sprocket and pedals. The ~~main~~ ^{tubular} propeller shaft running forward was driven by a chain from the main sprocket. Dixon rode the seat and pedaled. Knabenshue conducted the inflation of the airship with hydrogen.

Mrs. Dixon insisted that ropes be attached at either end of the bag which would limit altitude to 200 feet and that assistants holding these lines would walk or run with him to avoid an accident. Dixon pedaled furiously but the air-ship did not rise. At the first opportunity, and unknown to his mother, Cromwell removed the restraining lines and rose from the Columbus Driving Park on a free flight and actually pedaled himself over the city at 2,000 feet. He was 15 years old. Naturally, he ~~and~~ ^{made} headlines. Other local flights followed and these soon gained him international publicity. The astounding story of a most remarkable boy and his no less remarkable mother brought warm letters of congratulations and encouragement from aeronauts and aviation celebrities everywhere. Requests for him to appear at fairs and resorts came in thick and fast. He invented and built a quickly collapsible tent to house the airships. His mother at all times acted as his business manager.

This first "Skycycle" apparently was not quite large enough to give the performance he desired so an 8-foot wide band was inserted, lengthening it to 40 feet. A larger propeller and rudder were substituted. ~~With this ship~~ ^{With this ship} Dixon made several exhibition appearances in 1907, the most noteworthy being at the St. Louis International Balloon Races in October where he won several prizes. There, on October 22nd, Dixon left the Balloon Park, pedaled over the city, crossed the Mississippi River and landed at Venice, Illinois, a distance of several miles. Mrs. Dixon advertised in the aviation magazines: "Exhibition dates being accepted for Cromwell Dixon, Jr., the world's youngest inventor and aeronaut." These activities continued,



Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)