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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Haupt, William E.

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WILLIAM E. HAUPT
Early Auto Race Driver - Bleriot Pilot

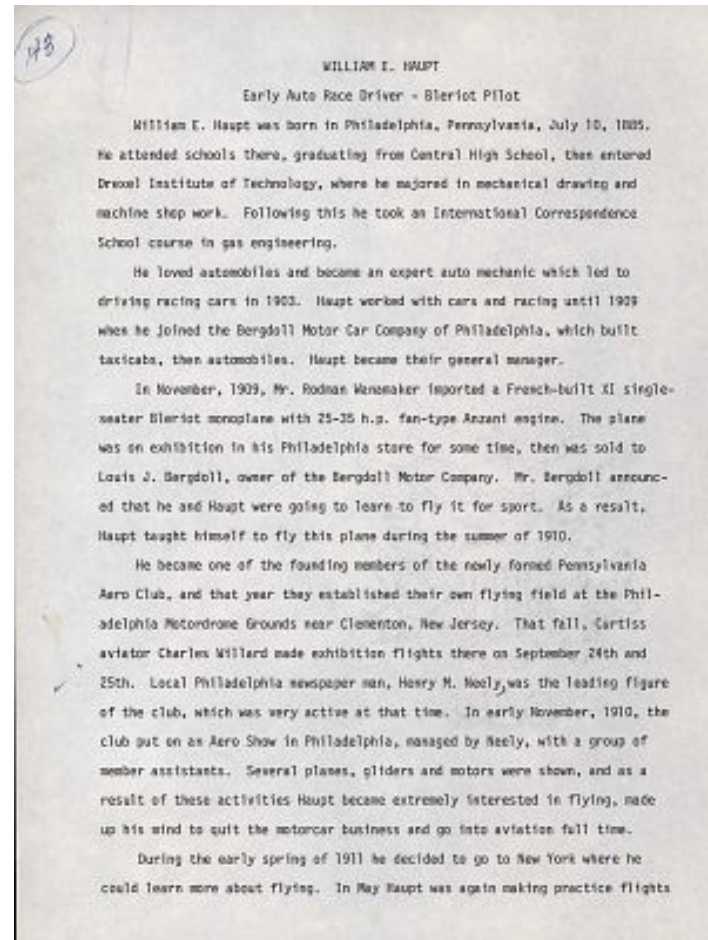
William E. Haupt was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 10, 1885. He attended schools there, graduating from Central High School then entered Drexel Institute of Technology, where he majored in mechanical drawing and machine shop work. Following this he took an International Correspondence School course in gas engineering.

He loved automobiles and became an expert auto mechanic which led to driving racing cars in 1903. Haupt worked with cars and racing until 1909 when he joined the Bergdoll Motor Car Company of Philadelphia, which built taxicabs, then automobiles. Haupt became their general manager.

In November, 1909, Mr. Rodman Wanamaker imported a French-built XI single-seater Bleriot monoplane with 25-35 h.p. fan-type Anzani engine. The plane was on exhibition in his Philadelphia store for some time, then was sold to Louis J. Bergdoll, owner of the Bergdoll Motor Company. Mr. Bergdoll announced that he and Haupt were going to learn to fly it for sport. As a result, Haupt taught himself to fly this plane during the summer of 1910.

He became one of the founding members of the newly formed Pennsylvania Aero Club, and that year they established their own flying field at the Philadelphia Motordrome Grounds near Clementon, New Jersey. That fall, Curtiss aviator Charles Willard made exhibition flights there on September 24th and 25th. Local Philadelphia newspaper man, Henry M. Neely, was the leading figure of the club, which was very active at that time. In early November, 1910, the club put on an Aero Show in Philadelphia, managed by Neely, with a group of member assistants. Several planes, gliders and motors were shown, and as a result of these activities Haupt became extremely interested in flying, made up his mind to quit the motorcar business and go into aviation full time.

During the early spring of 1911 he decided to go to New York where he could learn more about flying. In May Haupt was again making practice flights.



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