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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Heath, Edward B.

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EDWARD B. HEATH
Pioneer Light Plane Builder - Pilot

Edward B. Heath was born in Brooklyn, New York, November 17, 1899. He attended schools there and graduated from Lincoln High in 1907. He developed an early interest in anything mechanical and this led to motorcycling. He became quite a motorcycle expert and did some racing.

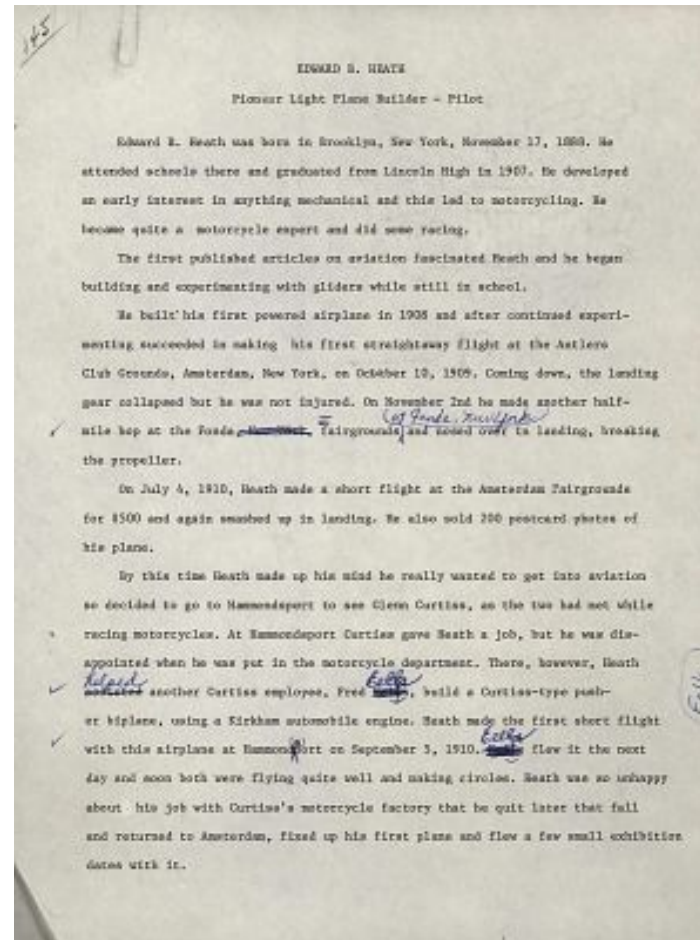
The first published articles on aviation fascinated Heath and he began building and experimenting with gliders while still in school.

He built his first powered airplane in 1908 and after continued experimenting succeeded in making his first straightaway flight at the Antlers Club Grounds, Amsterdam, New York, on October 10, 1909. Coming down, the landing gear collapsed but he was not injured. On November 2nd he made another half-mile hop at the Fonda Fairgrounds and nosed over in landing, breaking the propeller.

On July 4, 1910, Heath made a short flight at the Amsterdam Fairgrounds for \$500 and again smashed up in landing. He also sold 200 postcard photos of his plane.

By this time Heath made up his mind he really wanted to get into aviation so decided to go to Hammondsport to see Glenn Curtiss, as the two had met while racing motorcycles. At Hammondsport Curtiss gave Heath a job, but he was disappointed when he was put in the motorcycle department. There, however, Heath ~~assisted~~ helped another Curtiss employee, Fred Eells, build a Curtiss-type pusher biplane, using a Kirkham automobile engine. Heath made the first short flight with this airplane at Hammondsport on September 3, 1910. Eells flew it the next day and soon both were flying quite well and making circles. Heath was so unhappy about his job with Curtiss's motorcycle factory that he quit later that fall and returned to Amsterdam, fixed up his first plane and flew a few small exhibition dates with it.

Eells



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