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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Hodgdon, Melvin W.

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Boston. Hodgdon's father obtained one of these as payment in lieu of lessons not received. Hodgdon and his brother completed this plane, with a 60 ~~horsepower~~ h.r. Fox deluxe engine, and Paragon propeller, equipping it as a 2-seater with dual controls. By July the plane was ready for tests and Hodgdon's father hired Ripley Bowman to fly it, with instructions to first make sure it was safe, then teach both boys to operate it. Bowman crashed on his initial hop, then disappeared.

Several prominent flyers came to the flying field the summer of 1912, including Ruth Law, who made her first solo flight there. Farnum Fish brought his Wright biplane there for repairs. When he started flying Hodgdon paid for and obtained several flying lessons from him before he left in August.

Hodgdon then started taking lessons from Roy Waite on his Burgess-Wright biplane. These lessons continued on occasion until the spring of 1913 when Waite told him he needed no more instruction. He did not solo at that time, however, because he could not put up the heavy bond necessary to cover possible damage to the plane in case of accident, but he learned to fly.

At that time Waite was also teaching Sr. Pedro Z. Coronel of Argentina and Sr. C. F. Gomez of Honduras. In partnership with Coronel, Hodgdon rebuilt the Curtiss-type plane Bowman had wrecked during the summer of 1912 and started flying it, first making a number of short flights, then they decided to attempt a longer one. While over a marsh away from the field their engine quit, causing a forced landing. The nose wheel sank into the soft marsh, the plane turned turtle and was wrecked again.

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