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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Johnson, James M.

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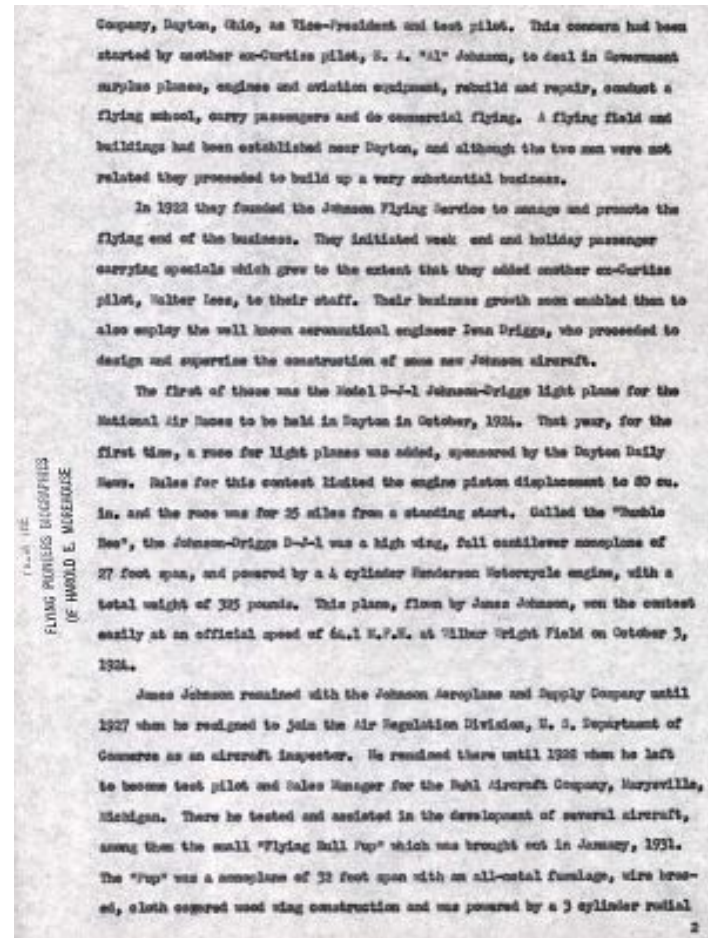
Company, Dayton, Ohio, as Vice-President and test pilot. This concern had been started by another ex-Curtiss pilot, K. A. "Al" Johnson, to deal in Government surplus planes, engines, and aviation equipment, rebuild and repair, conduct a flying school, carry passengers and do commercial flying. A flying field and buildings had been established near Dayton, and although the two men were not related they proceeded to build up a very substantial business.

In 1922 they founded the Johnson Flying Service to manage and promote the flying end of the business. They initiated week end and holiday passenger carrying specials which grew to the extent that they added another ex-Curtiss pilot, Walter Lees, to their staff. Their business growth soon enabled them to also employ the well known aeronautical engineer Ivan Driggs, who proceeded to design and supervise the construction of some new Johnson aircraft.

The first of those was the Model D-J-1 Johnson-Driggs light plane for the National Air Races to be held in Dayton in October, 1924. That year, for the first time, a race for light planes was added, sponsored by the Dayton Daily News. Rules for this contest limited the engine piston displacement to 80 cu. in. and the race was for 25 miles from a standing start. Called the "Bumble Bee", the Johnson-Driggs D-J-1 was a high wing, full cantilever monoplane of 27 foot span, and powered by a 4 cylinder Henderson Motorcycle engine, with a total weight of 325 pounds. This plane, flown by James Johnson, won the contest easily at an official speed of 64.1 M.P.H. at Wilbur Wright Field on October 3, 1924.

James Johnson remained with the Johnson Aeroplane and Supply Company until 1927 when he resigned to join the Air Regulation Division, U.S. Department of Commerce as an aircraft inspector. He remained there until 1928 when he left to become test pilot and Sales Manager for the Buhl Aircraft Company, Marysville, Michigan. There he tested and assisted in the development of several aircraft, among them the small "Flying Bull Pup" which was brought out in January, 1931. The "Pup" was a monoplane of 32 foot span with an all-metal fuselage, wire braced, cloth covered wood wing construction and was powered by a 3 cylinder radial

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