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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Johnstone, Ralph

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by Al Welsh. A rush training program was carried on during the first ten days of June, with over 160 instruction flights being made, as the first exhibition engagement of this new Wright student group was to be held at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on June 13th through the 18th, and every one was having to hustle to be as ready as possible for this event. During this school period Johnstone and Hoxsey became close friends, but a flying rivalry started between them that later developed into quite a problem for the Wrights.

The Wright Company had five planes at the Indianapolis Speedway Meet and, with very little flying experience, Brookins, Welsh, Johnstone, Coffyn and LaChapelle all made flights and put on quite a successful showing. Over sixty flights were made without accidents and reportedly Coffyn even made his first solo flight there. Orville Wright also made several flights carrying distinguished passengers. Johnstone made several short flights for a total flying time of almost two hours, and on one flight was up to 920 feet.

Johnstone was next a contestant at a meet in Montreal, Canada June 28th to July 5th. Flying there also were Brookins, Coffyn, LaChapelle, McCurdy and DeLesseps. Cromwell Dixon was also there with his airship. At this meet Johnstone began to get his stride and went out for duration and altitude most of the time. On the first day he established a Canadian altitude record of 2,000 feet. Following this event the same group exhibited at Toronto, Canada July 9th to 15th. Here again Johnstone made a remarkable showing for a beginner.

He was then a contestant in a meet at Asbury Park, New Jersey, held on August 10th to 20th, flying with Brookins, Hoxsey, Coffyn, LaChapelle and Drexel. Wilbur Wright was at this event to see how the group was progressing but did not fly. Here Johnstone was beginning to enjoy the upper air and was up to 3,900 feet. As the friendly aerial feud between Johnstone and Hoxsey began to really develop they drew criticism from Wilbur Wright.

Next Johnstone flew at the Harvard-Boston Meet, sponsored by the Harvard Aeronautical Society, on September 3rd to 16th. This was a large event with

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