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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Martin, James V.

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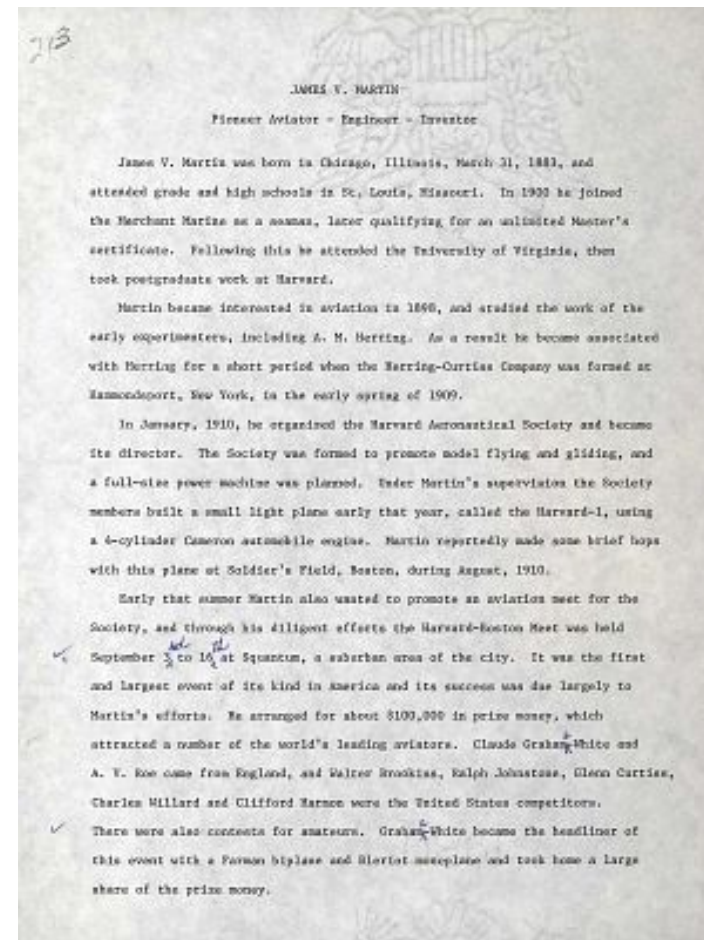
JAMES V. MARTIN
Pioneer Aviator - Engineer - Inventor

James V. Martin was born in Chicago, Illinois, March 31, 1883, and attended grade and high schools in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1900 he joined the Merchant Marine as a seaman, later qualifying for an unlimited Master's certificate. Following this he attended the University of Virginia, then took postgraduate work at Harvard.

Martin became interested in aviation in 1898, and studied the work of the early experimenters, including A. M. Herring. As a result he became associated with Herring for a short period when the Herring-Curtiss Company was formed at Hammondsport, New York, in the early spring of 1909.

In January, 1910, he organized the Harvard Aeronautical Society and became its director. The Society was formed to promote model flying and gliding, and a full-size power machine was planned. Under Martin's supervision the Society members built a small light plane early that year, called the Harvard-1, using a 4-cylinder Cameron automobile engine. Martin reportedly made some brief hops with this plane at Soldier's Field, Boston, during August, 1910.

Early that summer Martin also wanted to promote an aviation meet for the Society, and through his diligent efforts the Harvard-Boston Meet was held September 3rd to 16th at Squantum, a suburban area of the city. It was the first and largest event of its kind in America and its success was due largely to Martin's efforts. He arranged for about \$100,000 in prize money, which attracted a number of the world's leading aviators. Claude Grahame-White and A. V. Roe came from England, and Walter Brookins, Ralph Johnstone, Glenn Curtiss, Charles Willard and Clifford Harmon were the United States competitors. There were also contests for amateurs. Grahame-White became the headliner of this event with a Farman biplane and Bleriot monoplane and took home a large share of the prize money.



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