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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Smith, Jay D.

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[[stamp]] FROM THE FLYING PIONEERS BIOGRAPHIES OF HAROLD E. MOREHOUSE[[/stamp]]

JAY D. SMITH
Early Benoist Pilot

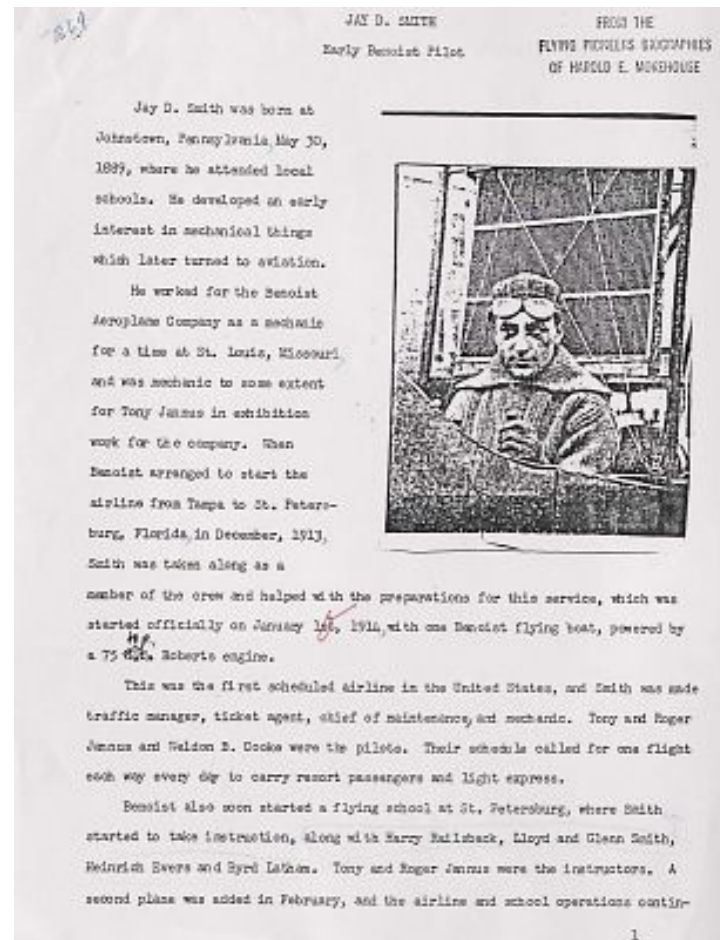
[[image]]

Jay D. Smith was born at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, May 30, 1889, where he attended local schools. He developed an early interest in mechanical things which later turned to aviation.

He worked for the Benoist Aeroplane Company as a mechanic for a time at St. Louis, Missouri, and was mechanic to some extent for Tony Jannus in exhibition work for the company. When Benoist arranged to start the airline from Tampa to St. Petersburg, Florida, in December, 1913, Smith was taken along as a member of the crew and helped with the preparations for this service, which was started officially on January 1 ~~st~~, 1914, with one Benoist flying boat, powered by a 75 ~~h.p.~~ H.P. ~~h.p.~~ Roberts engine.

This was the first scheduled airline in the United States, and Smith was made traffic manager, ticket agent, chief of maintenance, and mechanic. Tony and Roger Jannus and Weldon B. Cooke were the pilots. Their schedule called for one flight each way every day to carry resort passengers and light express.

Benoist also soon started a flying school at St. Petersburg, where Smith started to take instruction, along with Harry Railsback, Lloyd and Glenn Smith, Heinrich Evers and Byrd Latham. Tony and Roger Jannus were the instructors. A second plane was added in February, and the airline and school operations continued



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