



Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Sommerville, William E.

Extracted on Apr-18-2024 07:56:22

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives or transcribe@si.edu

For more information on this project and related material, contact the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

267
273

FROM THE FLYING PIONEERS BIOGRAPHIES OF HAROLD E.
MOREHOUSE

WILLIAM E. SOMERVILLE

Early Illinois Aviator - Engineer - Plane Builder

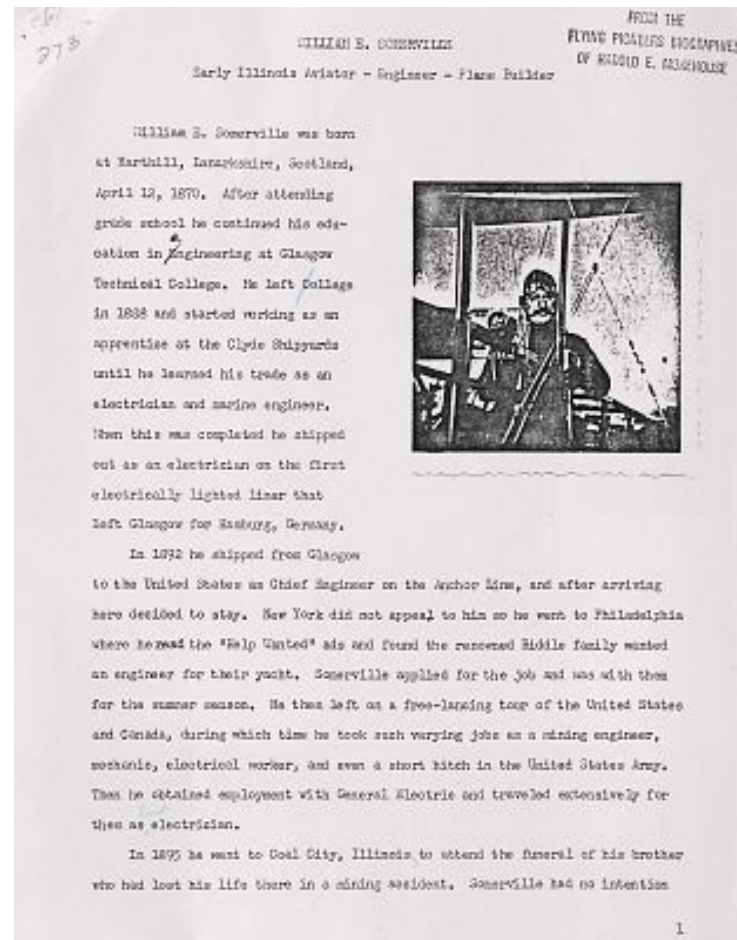
[image]

William E. Somerville was born at Harthill, Lanarkshire, Scotland, April 12, 1870. After attending grade school he continued his education in engineering at Glasgow Technical College. He left college in 1888 and started working as an apprentice at the Clyde Shipyards until he learned his trade as an electrician and marine engineer. When this was completed he shipped out as an electrician on the first electrically lighted liner that left Glasgow for Hamburg, Germany.

In 1892 he shipped from Glasgow to the United States as Chief Engineer on the Anchor Line, and after arriving here decided to stay. New York did not appeal to him so he went to Philadelphia where he read the "Help Wanted" ads and found the renowned Biddle family wanted an engineer for their yacht. Somerville applied for the job and was with them for the summer season. He then left on a free-lancing tour of the United States and Canada, during which time he took such varying jobs as a mining engineer, mechanic, electrical worker, and even a short hitch in the United States Army. Then he obtained employment with General Electric and traveled extensively for them as an electrician.

In 1895 he went to Coal City, Illinois, to attend the funeral of his brother who had lost his life there in a mining accident. Somerville had no intention

1



Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Somerville, William E.
Transcribed and Reviewed by Digital Volunteers
Extracted Apr-18-2024 07:56:22



Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)