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Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Willard, Charles F.

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the "Pegasus."

In 1929 Willard became Vice President and Chief Engineer of the California Aviation Company, a finance group to start an air freight package service across the United States. The construction of an all-metal plane was started and a 9-cylinder, 400 ~~hp.~~ ^{hp.} diesel engine was to power it. Just as this ambitious project was nicely under way the company folded up due to the depression of the early Thirties. Willard then turned his interest to the metal salvage business and founded a salvage and chemical plant to conduct such an enterprise, which he carried on until World War II.

Charles Willard was one of the found~~er~~ing members of the Early Bird organization and has served in various capacities in that group. He became a member of the early Aero Club of America in January, 1916. On October 20, 1956, a plaque was dedicated in the Decatur, Illinois, airport administration building, to commemorate the first flight ever made there, flown by Willard in 1910. He was present and the honored guest for that occasion. On December 10, 1960, Willard again made a flight across Los Angeles, this time as a passenger, commemorating the 50th year of his first crossing of that city in 1910.

~~Early Bird~~ Flying Pioneer extraordinary, Charles F. Willard was undoubtedly one of the most noteworthy early aviators in the United States. Self-taught on the first ~~airplane~~ ^{aeroplane} ever sold commercially, he originated the early exhibition business to demonstrate man's ability to fly to people everywhere. He flew with, and was one of, the greatest early "Birdmen" in all the ~~first~~ famed air meets where immense crowds gathered to see the amazing spectacle of the flying machine. He entered the flying game with seasoned mechanical judgement and a good knowledge of engines, and became a methodical, conservative aviator who had few accidents even though he flew the ~~very~~ first types of planes.

As an engineer, designer, builder, and manufacturer of both planes and engines, he served aviation in all its phases and richly deserves great

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