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If you're not a member, we invite you to join the Society in its efforts to preserve and celebrate Oregon Aviation History. Fill in the blanks and return to:
Oregon Aviation Historical Society, PO Box 553, Cottage Grove, OR 97424

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Name _____ Date _____

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I am Interested in Volunteering _____

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If you are already a member and you aren't sure whether or not you've paid your annual membership dues, email DJ at oregonaviation.org@gmail.com. We'll check the records and let you know *before* you send out a potential duplicate payment.

Oregon Aviation Historical Society
PO Box 553
Cottage Grove, OR 97424

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Our Mission

The Oregon Aviation Historical Society was incorporated in June 1983 through the efforts of a group of aviation enthusiasts who recognized the need to preserve Oregon's rich aviation heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Its purposes are to collect, preserve, restore and exhibit aviation artifacts; to develop facilities for the restoration and preservation of artifacts, public viewing and exhibition of the collection; to establish and maintain an Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame; establish a resource center for Oregon aviation historical research and to disseminate information about Oregon aviation history.

What's Inside

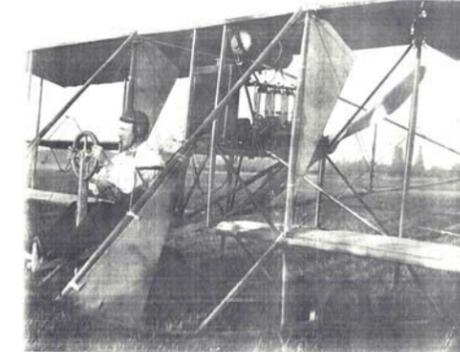
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OREGON AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 553, Cottage Grove, OR 97424

November 2013

Oregon's First Home Built Aircraft



When asked about the earliest days of flight in Oregon, you might think of Charlie Langmack soloing at the age of 12 in 1919, or of Silas Christoffer-son and his famous flight from the roof of the Multnomah Hotel during the 1912 Rose Festival. But the earliest days of flight go back a little farther, to 1909 in Albany, where William

C. Crawford and John Burkhart were building Oregon's first homebuilt airplane.

Growing up in Albany, Burkhart and Crawford, like many young men of their day, were fascinated by gliders and balloons. They read everything they could get their hands on about famous flights (both successful and not so successful), took photographs of birds with a Graflex camera with which to study the principles of flight, and essentially spent all of their spare time thinking about gliders, balloons, and how to design an air-worthy craft. In 1908 Crawford, while studying aeronautical engineering at Cornell University, built and crashed his first aircraft. Back in Oregon by 1909, the boys built a plane with a zig-zig wing design which did not fly successfully, but in the winter of 1909-1910, they built a plane designed by Burkhart that was much more successful. With straightened wings, the aircraft was exhibited at the Portland auto show in February of 1910 and was successfully flown from Albany's Goltra Park in April of that year.



(continued page 2)

Top: W. C. Crawford.; Bottom: John C. Burkhart



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Oregon's First Home Built Aircraft, continued

One month earlier, Charles Hamilton of the Glenn Curtiss team made the first exhibition flight in Oregon in a Curtiss factory ship brought to Oregon by E. Henry Wemme. Crawford, who earned the title "Albany Birdman," continued to put on flying exhibitions as a barnstormer for a time. In 1914, he reached an altitude of 2500 feet during a flight from Yamhill to McMinnville. That flight should have only been a distance of roughly 10 miles, but because Crawford mistook McMinnville for a different town, he ended up making a record flight of 25 miles! Later that same year he gave up flying for a steady job, and never again set foot in an aircraft. Burkhart took a very scientific approach to aviation and for the next several years he continued to design and fly aircraft in Oregon, including the first float plane in the state. He acted as editor of *Aeronautics* magazine in 1911, and served in the Navy as a flight instructor during WW I. By all accounts, he disliked the limelight and was always happy to share his expertise with anyone who was serious about airplanes. Because he wasn't a notoriety hog, his accomplishments were all but forgotten when he passed away in 1926. During the 1920s and '30s William Crawford wrote numerous letters to newspapers correcting mistakes regarding the timeline of early Oregon aviation history, particularly where he and John Burkhart were involved. Burkhart was finally awarded the recognition that he deserved in an article written by Evelyn Santee for *The Oregonian* on April 27, 1947.

Information for this article came from newspaper articles and obituaries in the Burkhart and Crawford files at the OAHS and from "The Coming of the Birdman: The Aviator's Image in Oregon 1905-1915," by Patrick John Harris, Portland State University 1981.



Stinson Update

As you know, in the last newsletter we reported that the Stinson was finished, had passed her inspection, and was up and flying. As the newsletter was being printed, however, there was a tarmac accident and the Stinson is temporarily grounded. No one was hurt, but there was damage to the aircraft. The repairs are being performed at an excellent pace, and the old gal should be ready for inspection again by the time the 2014 flying season arrives.

From the Archives By Davena Amick-Elder

While digging around in the archives, I stumbled upon this little gem entitled "The Airport ... Its Importance to Your Community," put out by the good people at Shell Oil and donated to the OAHS by Kathy Bond Williams via Mike Grant. If you look closely at the cover image below, you'll see the airport is identified as Cottage Grove. It's a great promo piece from 1944 produced and given a localized feel for municipalities interested in the "Coming Age of Flight."

Chock full of information and advice on why small towns need an airport and how to plan for and design one, it is a great window on the past. "After the war there will be millions of persons who will become customers for things they never bought before, as round-the-world air traffic will affect what they eat, wear, and do in every foreign land, as well as in our own United States. It will affect living conditions and the hours people work...No point on earth is more than 60 hours flying time away from your own home town!" Modern jet travel has obviously cut that time *waaayyy* down.

My favorite part of the booklet is where the airport is discussed in its role of public convenience. At the time of publication, the US had about 3,000 civil airports (according to the FAA, in 2011 that number was 19,782). The booklet goes on to say, "Airports should be provided as public conveniences for private planes and commercial airliners carrying passengers, mail, express and freight—just as highways and streets are now provided for motorists and commercial surface carriers... An airport's value can readily be determined when you recall how good roads have developed the commercial trade of your community. The airport, in a great many cases, can also become a community center with restaurant, refreshment and recreational facilities—in short, a modern public convenience."



Which is exactly what I think we'd all like to see here at the Cottage Grove airport. Someplace more than just a landing strip and a collection of hangars; a place with a real sense of community.

Odds and Ends

*After a lengthy review process, the Board of Directors has adopted revised Bylaws, a few revised policies, and several new policies, all with an eye to the future and OAHS growth.

*President Kindred, Wilbur Heath, and Mike Grant met on November 5 with Travis Palmer of the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Palmer was given a tour of the facility and the airport, and they discussed ways in which the City can work with the airport to enhance tourism and flight tourism in the area. We are in the process of locating a suitable modular building to serve as a fixed-based operation down by the gas pumps. If you know of anyone who has such a building please have them contact Wilbur Heath who can then connect them with the appropriate people.

*The parts for the heater are here and we have begun the work on getting it installed. We are very excited to get it up and running so we can do work here during the winter.

*We would like to say Thank You in the biggest way to Walt Dunden, who generously donated his aircraft hangar to the OAHS this last summer. The wings for the Baby Fleet are all set up in that space and ready for the volunteers to renew their work (thanks to Mark Baxter and Stephen Worley for the work already done).



Volunteer Opportunities

We always have plenty of things for a volunteer to help out with, and now that we have an extra hangar AND a heater in the main hangar, more work can be done during cold weather months on the various restoration projects. Contact Tim Talen if you want to help out there.

It would be really helpful to have a comprehensive calendar with important dates in aviation history—both in Oregon and in other locales. This is the kind of thing that someone can help with from home or by visiting the History Center. If you would like to do a little research on birthdays, deaths, first flights, first air races, etc., let me (DJ) know. This is the kind of info that people have requested to be included in the newsletter and on the Facebook page, and I simply do not have the time to do it.

We are working on possibly switching from PastPerfect to an open-source piece of archival software called Archon. If, after installation and testing, we decide to make the switch, we think that everything *should* copy over from PastPerfect, but just in case it doesn't we don't want to be duplicating our efforts, so right now we've put a hold on entering data into the current software. Once we've gotten through this installation and testing patch, I'll post on the website which software we are using and put out a call for volunteers to help get the archives fully entered in, with detailed search terms, photos, etc.



Random Flight

By President Douglas Kindred



We've been busy here at the History Center this past season. Hopefully we'll have heat in the main hangar soon and can plan some events this winter. Also, the Stinson is well on the way to being repaired as good as new.

Summer is over and now the grey and cold days interspersed with brilliant crisp sunshine will be upon us. In some ways I look forward to this because it also contains my favorite season, "TGMCNY" (that's kid speak for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years). I think I look forward to that time of year almost as much as Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. One big difference, there is less chance of getting off the ground during TGMCNY. I do have one favorite memory of a Thanksgiving Eve. It was one of those brilliant November days and I couldn't wait to finish the workday because I had reserved a Skyhawk for the evening to get current on my night flying. As was my custom, I planned to take off near sunset and perform several touch and goes till the sun finally set. Once I felt satisfied with that, I headed off towards the foothills of the Cascades and then made a slight left turn and followed I-5 Northwards. I decided to climb up to nine thousand just to get a view of the valley. It was one of those calm, clear nights and the freeway was a solid red northbound and white in the other direction. I thought, "Those poor people trying to get to grandma's." It was bumper to bumper as far as the eye could see. Arriving back at the airport I could see ground fog starting to creep in and after a close in approach, I landed and headed home to get ready for the big day. The fog settled in and the sun didn't appear again until New Years day. I remember that because again I rented the Skyhawk and took my brother-in-law, his daughter and my daughter and flew for three and a half hours from the valley up to the summit of the Cascades and then out to the coast and back home. The girls were eight or nine and once the sun lit up the cabin they were asleep. Now that I think about it, every time my kids flew with me they fell asleep.

Have a Happy Holiday Season and make it a plan to visit us soon.

It's Renewal Time!

If you received this newsletter by mail, you should find a renewal form and return envelope in your newsletter. Please call or email if you do not—they do sometimes slip out of the packet. We would greatly appreciate for you to take a moment and renew your membership for the coming year. If you would like to make an additional donation for one of the restoration projects, please mark the appropriate item on your renewal form. The only approved restoration projects are the ones listed on the form, so if you would like to designate a donation for something else please contact us first and we'll be happy to help you identify how best to note your donation.

The Signs at Jim Wright Field

As many of you know, the signs for the airport have been in a state of sorry disrepair for some time now.

Early this summer we asked Betty Wright and Ron Englund for a good photo of Jim for the purpose of creating new images for the airfield signs.

At the ODA tenant meeting on July 16, Betty and Ron gave this photo to Matt Maass, the State Airports Manager. He asked for, and was granted, permission to make a digital copy of the photo.



Several months went by without a word, and then on November 6, Don Hankwitz, Airport Operations Specialist with the ODA, contacted Wilbur Heath in order to drop off the new images.

Frankly, we couldn't be happier!

The signs are printed directly onto metal ovals, which will hold up to the weather much better than did the old ones. The guys are working on installing the signs and, weather permitting, expect to have them all installed by December 1.

Once Again Bear His Likeness