

INTRODUCTION

For some time now many of us have felt the need for some sort of organization or publication that would provide a means of contacting other persons with similar interests, in addition to providing the type of quality information about old aircraft, aviation history, etc., that is not carried in any other current publication in the United States.

The American Aviation Historical Society has been founded to try and fill that need and this can be done if all of the members will cooperate. This is a non profit organization for the sole benefit of all the members at the lowest possible cost to each while still providing the maximum amount of quality information. There will be no advertising, or payment for articles, so that the quarterly Journal will directly reflect the degree of participation of the membership.

Our aim is to provide the stimulation for a greater degree of interest on the part of all the membership, as well as attract new members who have not before realized the vast amount of historical information concerning our own aircraft and aviation activities that needs to be digested, documented, and preserved before it is lost forever.

There are two main sources of information in this country that need to be brought together, and we hope this Society will serve that purpose. The first group is composed of a growing number of enthusiasts and scale model builders whose hobby, or non paying interest, lies in collecting books, photographs, plans, and information about airplanes and aviation. Those furthest advanced in this group have uncovered vast sources of documentary data, such as the annual registers of all civil aircraft licensed in the U.S., but this alone is not the complete story. The second group, composed of the professional pilots, aircraft engineers, and others who have made their living in aviation during the same period, is equally important and adds the first hand information of personal experience to that which the first group has produced.

If these two broad groups of people, with a common interest, can be brought together the potential is tremendous. Each has something that the other lacks and can use; each can contribute something of value for the benefit of all. If each time that an article, or letter, is published every member with additional knowledge or information will write in to the Journal the result will be a total not known by any of us as individuals.

Our subject, anything that has happened in American aviation history, is intended to be understood in its broadest sense. Specifically, to use airplanes as an example, this includes not only the design, construction, and life history of American built planes in the United States, but also all data relating to any use or service in any foreign country. Not only do the export histories of U.S. planes properly belong within our scope, but also the reverse; foreign built aircraft that have been licensed or operated in the United States. Surely all will agree that the story of the French Caudron winning the Thompson Trophy Race is a legitimate part

of American aviation history. Similarly the activities of our aircraft and men overseas in World War I and II are an integral part of our subject.

An important factor that should not be overlooked is the fact that good historical reporting is objective and impersonal. By this we mean that errors, mistakes, designs that did not work out, crashes etc., are all equally as true and important as those things that did succeed. There has been a tendency in recent times to attribute an unrealistic quality to old airplanes simply because they are old, as well as a lack of realization that today's airplanes are just as much a part of tomorrow's history. There is no reason to believe that the problems confronting the engineers and pilots of today are any simpler or easier than those that perplexed the men of the 1920's.

We are starting with a small membership and all funds are being used for the preparation and publication of the Journal. As we grow larger the number of photos included, and perhaps the method of printing, may be improved. Our aim is to print only photos that have not been published before, and to provide information that is not available elsewhere. We are also interested in assisting other members as much as possible and thus references will be used to provide valuable additional information.

A few members have asked why our subject is limited to American history, rather than a world wide approach. The answer to this is twofold. First, the organization Air Britain, founded in 1948, covers this subject in excellent and thorough manner and leaves little room for improvement. Secondly, there is such a vast amount of information on American aircraft and American history that needs to be worked on that it is our duty to spend our efforts on our own history before we use them to do others work for them. All members are urged to join Air Britain and take advantage of their magnificent range of publications. Address your correspondence to the Hon. Gen. Sec., D.K. Fox, 318 Barking Road, East Ham, London E.6, England.

The wants and disposals section of our Journal is intended as a free service to members and should be used as widely as possible. If questions are asked of general interest please send your answer to the Editor so that they may be published for all to read. Correspondence concerning detailed information, sale of books etc., should be sent directly to the person concerned.

This, then, is our first issue. We hope you will like it, and will send us your contributions, opinions, and criticisms.

William T. Larkins
Secretary