

THE FLYING PIONEERS

By HAROLD E. MOREHOUSE

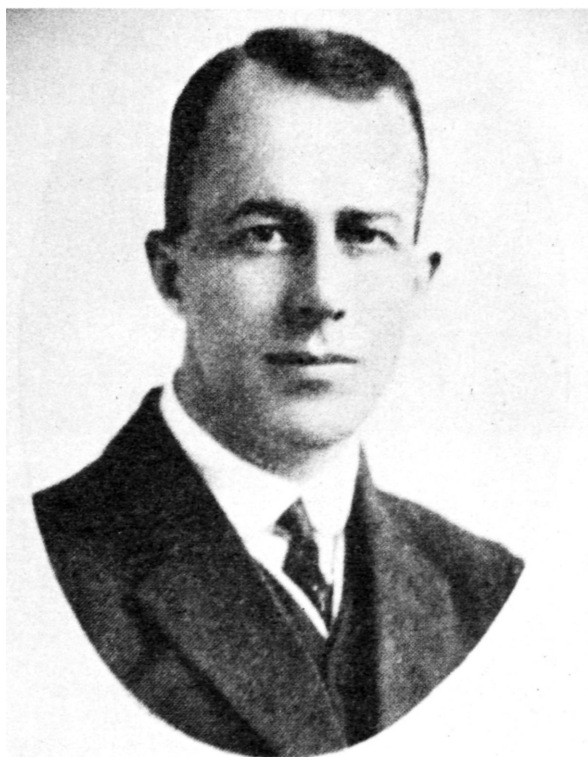
"The Flying Pioneers" was begun by Member Harold E. Morehouse in the JOURNAL, Volume 4, No. 2 (Summer, 1959) and has been presented each year since. The series represents many hours of research and correspondence with the Early United States aviators and their contemporaries, now running to fifty-six biographies.

From correspondence between Mr. Morehouse and his subjects, many interesting facts have come to light to show these airmen and their contributions to the science, technology and history of aviation. Also many human interest stories have come forth. In a recent letter Mr. Morehouse indicated that, from a lead in one of these articles, Mr. Harry N. Atwood was reunited with his family after many years of separation, for which gracious thanks are due all around. (1)

ALBERT B. GAINES, JR.

As a wealthy sportsman and ardent motorist, an expert at trap shooting, Albert B. Gaines, Jr. learned to fly in 1913 and became one of the Pre-World War One supporters of sport flying. His Hudson Wright Company was one of the first around New York City and was the outgrowth of his combining the joy of water flying with his movement among financial circles,

Albert B. Gaines, Jr.



Gaines was born August 11, 1884 at Rochester, New York, where his father operated a chain of hotels and was a founding member of the Hot Springs, Arkansas Health Resort. He attended Princeton, Class of 1905, and reportedly entered the stock brokerage business in New York. He did ultimately become well known in financial and social circles there.

Observing the many early flying events in the New York area, he became interested in aviation, entered the Wright Flying School at Dayton, Ohio in August, 1913. By the latter part of the month he had "graduated" and was flying alone in fine form, having made excellent progress throughout his course. His instructor was Oscar A. Brindley, and others in the class were Howard Rinehart, Lindop E. Brown, and C. J. Peterson. (2)

In mid-October, after a brief business trip to New York, Gaines returned to Dayton to resume his flying practice and then performed his license tests with ease, obtaining FAI License No. 269, dated October, 1913, qualified on a Model B Wright landplane. During his training there were some new Wright Company water flying developments and Gaines made arrangements to return the following Spring to take some additional flight instruction on their new Flying Boat.

Back in New York Gaines signed up as a member

Frederick C. Hild



of the United States Aviation Reserves, along with a long list of other well known American names. There was an active drive launched in April, 1914 to form Reserve Units at various points, and Gaines offered his services to the Government. During the summer he was in Dayton on several occasions, and took Flying Boat instruction from Howard Rinehart. He was thinking of the possibility of introducing it as a sport in the New York area.

The next April Gaines proposed opening a water flying school in New York and after some preliminary arrangements he announced the forming of the Hudson-Wright Company in May to give flying boat instruction and do sales promotion work for the Wright Company around Metropolitan New York. The new venture had the earnest support of Orville Wright, who hoped to interest other New York sportsmen in the joys of water flying, and thought possibly to sell more airboats following demonstration and promotional work. Incorporators with Gaines were D. F. Gaines (a relative), H. Charle and the financial firm of Spooner & Cotton of 14 Wall Street. Two others later became involved; Philip Boyer who headed the concern and Morgan J. O'Brien. The company offices were at 242 West 59th Street.

Their first Wright airboat arrived in New York on June 24th and was taken to the hangar of Captain Thomas S. Baldwin on Staten Island for assembly and initial tests.(3) It was flown to 132nd Street on the Hudson where headquarters were established.

It was announced that the new airboat would operate at Long Beach on Saturdays and Sundays to carry passengers to stimulate interest in this wonderful sport. Gaines was assigned as company pilot and he started flying the new craft at once. For publicity he planned a flight to Albany and return over the Hudson River. On July 11, while making a short check flight prior to takeoff on the Albany trip he ran afoul of a common hazard. He hit a floating log in the river as he landed and turned turtle. Riding with him as a passenger was Edward A. Morse. Both men were thrown into the river. They were quickly rescued by motor boats which also towed the floating plane ashore.

Upon examination the hull was found to be badly damaged and it was necessary to return it to the Wright factory for repairs. Because of the extensive restorations to be made, the Wright Company sent another airboat to New York at once to keep operations active pending return of the original craft. Wright also sent company pilot Howard Rinehart to New York to assist in getting the Hudson-Wright operations under way. The rebuilt airboat was back in use about September 1, but apparently the Hudson-Wright venture was not successful, and all operations were closed at the end of the 1915 season. Gaines went to the Wright Winter school in Augusta, Georgia as assistant instructor to Howard Rinehart, returning to New York the next spring.

Gaines joined the Governors Island Training Corps for Reserve aviators and took additional flight training on Curtiss JN-4 planes during the summer of 1916. Captain Philip A. Carroll was the organizer and commander of the squadron; the instructor was Filip A. Bjorklund. Gaines was commissioned First Lieutenant, Signal Officers Reserve Corps, Aviation Section in early 1917, was assigned to active duty and went overseas in the early spring of 1918, where he served as an instructor on French Caudron planes.

After the war Gaines returned to New York and the brokerage business but continued to fly as a

sport. He made his home in Englewood, New Jersey, and, in the early summer of 1933 was working on an airplane at the Teterborough Airport. Gaines and a companion, Emmett Anderson, were returning to Englewood from the airport about midnight of the thirteenth of July when they collided head-on with a disabled car standing in the road during a dense fog that obscured the entire area. The damaged car they struck was being towed by a truck which had stopped in the road to check the tow line. Anderson was killed instantly and Gaines was pronounced dead on arrival at the Jersey City Hospital.

Gaines was survived by his wife, a four year old daughter, his mother and a brother, also of Englewood. He was buried in Arlington Cemetery, Washington, D. C. on July 15, 1933. At that time he was a member of Hayden and Stone, New York stockbrokers, and of the Princeton Club. He held Expert Pilot License No. 97. His name appears on the Wright Memorial Plaque at Dayton.

FREDERICK C. HILD

Frederick C. Hild, aviator, draftsman, airplane manufacturer, exhibition flyer and businessman had a brief but very busy career in aviation. He founded what was undoubtedly one of the first aeronautical supply houses in the world but retired from aviation in 1920 to manufacture floor installation equipment.

His interest in aviation began as a witness to the first public demonstrations and air meets held in the New York area in 1910. He had an opportunity to take measurements of Earl Ovington's French-built Bleriot Monoplane and made a set of drawings of this famous early plane. Hild then rented a booth at the New York Aero Show, held at Grand Central Palace from December 31, 1910 to January 7, 1911, and offered these drawings for sale at \$10.00 a set, under the name of the American Airplane Supply House, Garden City, Long Island. The response was such that Hild and his brother-in-law, Edward F. Marshonet, entered into a partnership to manufacture parts and supplies for those who had purchased drawings. A similar booth was used at the Boston Aero Show February 20-25, 1911, and advertising of their products was started in various aviation magazines. They soon received general recognition for the use of first class materials and excellent workmanship.

Thus encouraged, they built a complete Bleriot with a 4 cyl. 50 hp Roberts engine which was completed in June, 1911 and sold to William Haupt of Philadelphia. On his first test hop Haupt made a twelve minute flight at Mineola, Long Island. He had been a former automobile race driver and learned to fly on the Wanamaker-owned Bleriot. Haupt was so pleased with this new airplane that he shipped it to Altoona, Pennsylvania at once for an exhibition engagement.

Hild and Marshonet built two more Bleriot, one for A. J. Brackett of Boston, the other for A. C. Menges of Marion, Indiana, the latter to be equipped with 70 hp Gnome engine. A. V. Reyburn of St. Louis, Missouri ordered one with 100 hp Emerson engine. The new firm built and sold four more to sportsmen aviators during 1911.

Over the winter months of 1911-1912 they built airplanes for spring delivery, one with a 75 hp Roberts engine which was sold to Z. H. Garcia, who later exported it to the Dominican Republic. In April they announced a two-seater dual control airplane for

for training. At their exhibition at the 1912 Aero Show at Grand Central Palace it was stated their aircraft, and parts, were as good as, or better than any French-built equipment yet seen in this country.

In mid-summer Hild decided he wanted to learn to fly and proceeded to teach himself on one of their single-seater Bleriot's. By early August he was flying. He did some flying over the winter months of 1912-13 as weather permitted and on February 15 he flew cross-country to Floral Park and return, circling Garden City and Mineola. Hild now had an enclosed cockpit for winter flying.

On February 28, 1913 Hild received his F.A.I. License No. 216 at Garden City, flying a Roberts-Four Bleriot, to become the first person to qualify on an American-built Bleriot with such an engine. Later he started from Hempstead, intending to land in Central Park as a publicity stunt, but as he flew down the East River to 23rd Street he ran out of gas. He glided down and under the Queensboro Bridge to a landing on Blackwell's Island in the Penitentiary Yard. After refueling he attempted to take off but taxied into some deep mud and stood the Bleriot on its nose, breaking the propeller. He barely escaped being put in jail for this episode.

That same month Hild opened a flying school at Hempstead with a new two-seater, dual control plane and started carrying passengers. He flew over a polo game in progress at Meadow Brook, Long Island, and "stole the show" but his flying license was revoked for this infraction of flying rules. On occasional week-ends he raced Billy Watson in a Simplex Race car at the Long Island Speedway.

On August 15, 1913 Hild flew in his first exhibition on the Road at Newton, New Jersey. In August he started a week's engagement at the Asbury Park, New Jersey Athletic Park Parade Grounds, attracting huge crowds. From there he flew to Sea Girt, New Jersey to fly at a Soldiers Encampment. His American Aeroplane Supply Co. made a Bleriot for G. C. Beidler of Rochester, then, in December, the company suffered a bad fire, losing three completed air planes.

Hild was engaged to do test flying for Maxmilian Schmitt at Paterson, New Jersey on a new monoplane with a Gnome engine in April, 1914. In early May he talked of the possibility of making a flight from Paterson to Washington, D. C. with this plane to demonstrate it to government officials but this cross-country flight attempt was cancelled. In July he was giving daily exhibitions at Secaucus, New Jersey, flying a Bleriot with 60 hp Ashmussen engine. Apparently in the fall of 1914 Hild went to Europe where he was connected with the French Aviation Reserve for a time at Tours.

It is not recorded just when the American Aviation Supply House went out of business, but over the winter months of 1914-15 Hild entered into a partnership with William C. Diehl of North Bergen, New Jersey to start a flying school. Diehl had built a monoplane and made some hops in it at the Guttenberg Race Track there and had acquired three other planes. They decided their chances of success would be better in the middle west so shipped all equipment to Chicago, where they opened their school in the spring of 1915. This venture was not a success, so they shipped everything back that fall and established the Eastern School of Aviation at Sheepshead Bay, Long Island with both Hild and Diehl as instructors. This school was quite successful and a goodly number of students were taught

to fly.

The company announced its new Eastern tandem tractor biplane using an 8 cyl. 120 hp maximotor in the Spring. Edward Marshonet joined the firm as designer and construction engineer, and a small factory was set up. Designed to meet government specifications, the first finished airplane was offered for military training service. First flight tests were made in late September and favorable comments were received at once for excellent workmanship and good flying qualities. Both Hild and Tex Millman conducted the flight tests on this new plane which was soon put into regular service at their flying school. In December the company was reorganized and called the United Eastern Aeroplane Corporation. The entire personnel and facilities of the original firm were retained and enlarged. The flying school was continued and the new company announced its intention to manufacture planes for pleasure, military and commercial use.

Hild became one of the founder members and attended an early meeting of what was to become the Aircraft Manufacturers Association on February 13, 1917 at the Manhattan Hotel in New York. The new United Eastern company exhibited one of its trainers at the Pan American Exposition held in Grand Central Palace. Later some airplanes were built with floats and Hall-Scott engines.

Apparently the firm went out of business toward the end of World War I. In December, 1919, Hild and Marshonet announced a new small light plane at Hempstead, Long Island. They had plans for building their own 40 hp engine and to again manufacture planes for sport and pleasure, but this venture was short-lived.

Hild retired from the aviation business in 1920 and moved to Chicago where he founded the Hild Floor Machine Company in 1927. He operated this business until 1954 when he retired and moved to Florida.

Flying Pioneer Frederick C. Hild had only recently joined the Early Birds organization and was beginning to renew his interest in pioneer aviation circles. He died suddenly at Miami on October 31, 1965 at age 73. He was survived by his wife and one son.

(1) JAAHS, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1960) p. 42.

(2) For biographies of Howard M. Rinehart and Chriss J. Peterson see JAAHS, Winter, 1958 and Winter, 1964.

(3) Capt. Thomas S. Baldwin was widely known in aviation circles in the early 1900's, particularly for his balloons.

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