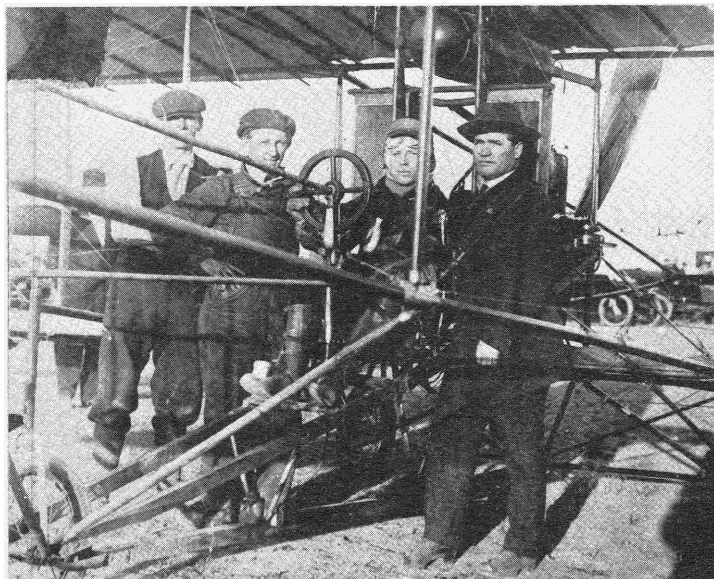


CAPT. MAUPIN & THE BLACK DIAMOND



By ERNEST L. TRUE

Photographs courtesy of Mr, Ted Maupin, son of the late Capt. Land B. Maupin,

LEFT:

Weldon Cooke won first prize for endurance, \$7,000, in BLACK DIAMOND at 1912 Dominguez Air Meet, Capt. Maupin (right), and Williamson (cap on backward), Man at left unidentified.

BELOW:

The BLACK DIAMOND in 1933, rebuilt for display at the Oakland Airport. Williamson had stored the original 4 cyl. Roberts engine at his home and it was restored to the airplane, now in NASM collection.

A man whose family had a zest for life found himself enroute to California from Kentucky in 1894. Arriving in central California, Land B. Maupin, age 14, was delighted to find that the Sacramento River had river traffic similar to his beloved Ohio River. It wasn't long before he began serving an apprenticeship aboard a river dredge. In 1905 he assumed command of such a vessel and thereby acquired the title of Captain. In this capacity he met Bernard P. Lanteri, a ship builder in Black Diamond, now known as Pittsburgh, California.

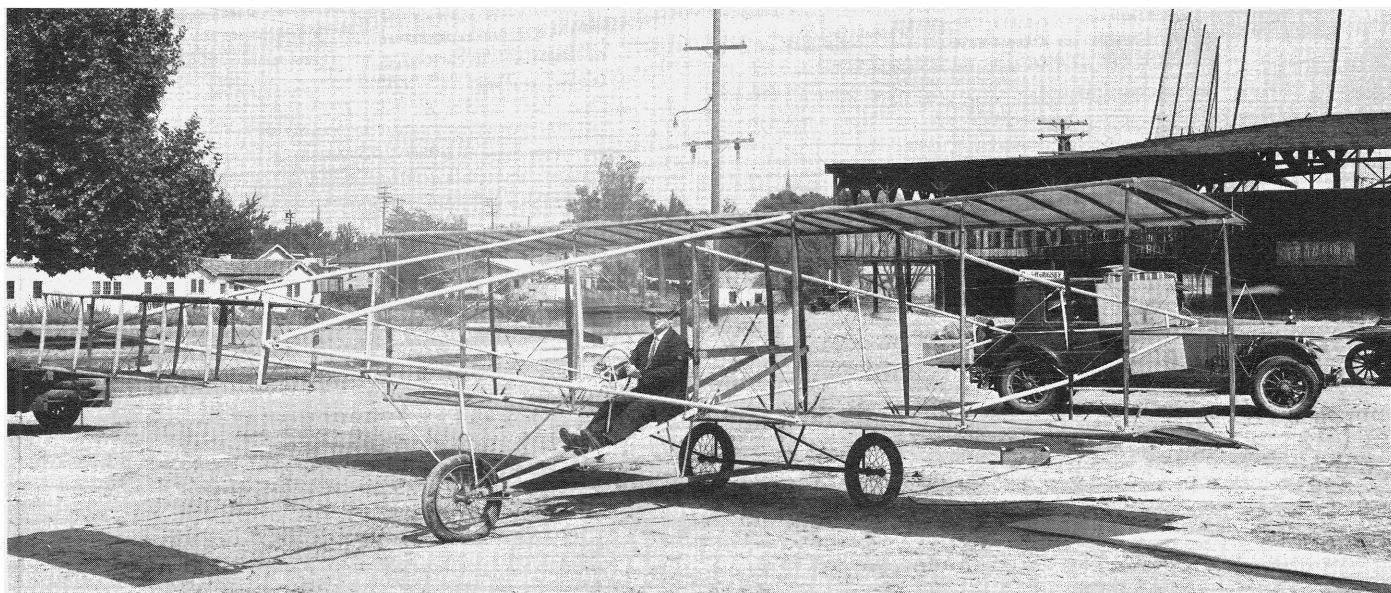
Both men were craftsmen — Lanteri with the artistic ability to design sailing ships and Maupin with the unique talent of being able to fashion almost anything, with or without the proper materials. During one of their trips down river to San Francisco, they were able to view and study a Curtiss biplane pusher and on that day in 1909 they instantly decided to build an aeroplane.

Lanteri took charge of all wood construction, Maupin shaped and forged all the metal parts and Mrs. Lanteri cut and sewed the fabric. The three built the aeroplane in about one year's time and it is reported that Lanteri

made the first very short test hop on November 9th, 1910. The field used was directly in front of the Lanteri Ship-yards and is now the site of the United States Steel plant.

Both men continued to make these "from-one-end-of-the-field-to-the-other" type flights until early 1911 when Captain Thomas Baldwin appeared and flew the BLACK DIAMOND professionally for its first extensive flight. So impressed was Baldwin with the handling characteristics of the aeroplane that he reportedly pleaded in vain for permission to attach a parachute to the aircraft and use it for a jump. He was refused on the grounds that such a stunt was too hazardous and the Baldwin BLACK DIAMOND association was ended.

A third man had been added to the crew, Dick Williamson, a mechanic and apparently somewhat qualified in flying for it was he who taught Weldon Cooke the basic rudiments of flying. Cooke had appeared from Oakland, California and was destined to carve a niche in aerial history with the BLACK DIAMOND. Weldon Cooke gave flying demonstrations at Walnut Creek, Antioch and Stockton. Then came an offer from Santa Rosa to appear



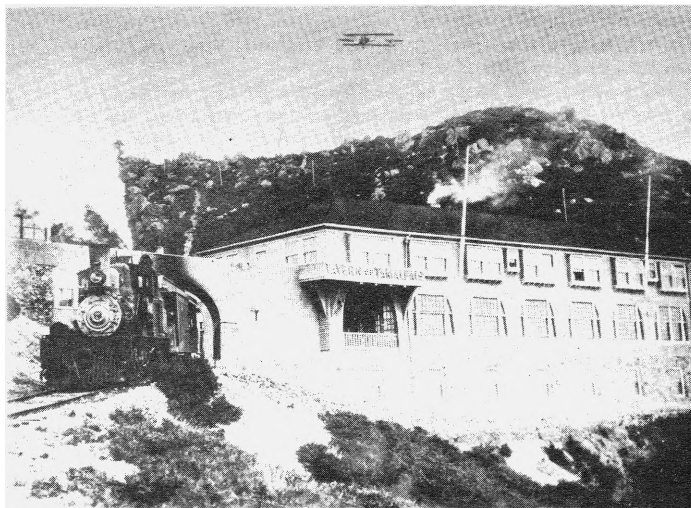


The **BLACK DIAMOND** at Oakland in 1911, with pilot Weldon Cooke, Madge Murphy, and mechanic Dick Williamson.

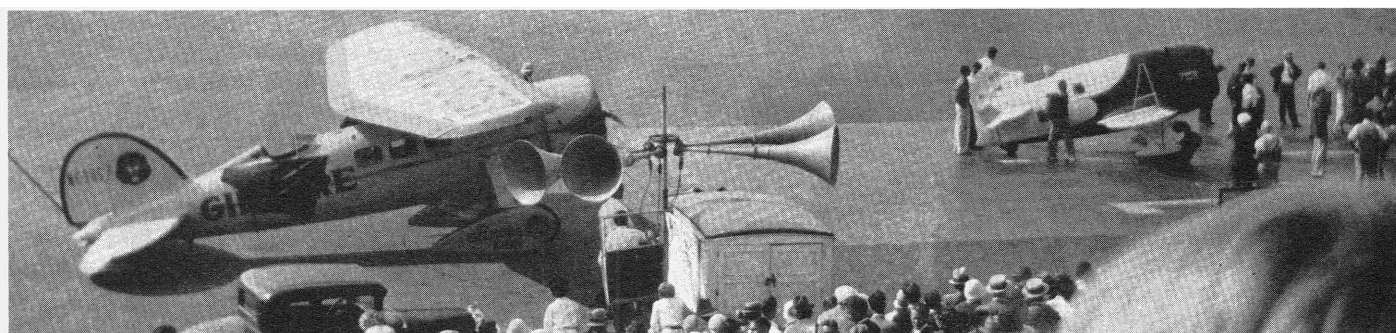
for \$350 followed by a \$200 per Sunday offer from the Elmhurst motordrome near Oakland. 1911 was becoming a lucrative year and in the late summer the Tamalpais Inn, located near the summit of 5,600 foot Mount Tamalpais offered \$350 to the pilot who first flew over this north of the Golden Gate mountain. Cooke took the offer up at once and brought home the \$350. A Columbus Day celebration in Alameda netted another \$350 and the city of Oakland offered \$300 if Cooke could qualify for the 1912 Dominguez Air Meet.

The Diamond Aeroplane Company and their combined eyes on one event — the endurance contest — which just happened to pay the largest prize money. Everyday for the entire nine day run of the meet the participating aircraft would take off and endeavor to remain in the air for two hours, at the end of the nine days, Weldon Cooke had compiled 17 hours, 15 minutes, and 21 seconds out of the possible 18 hours and was awarded the \$7,000 first prize money.

Back in Black Diamond the men gave some thought to producing their aeroplane commercially, but somehow the challenge was gone and their watery trades kept calling them back. The **BLACK DIAMOND** was dismantled and stored in Maupin's barn in Tudor, Sutter County, California. Twenty one years later the Port Authority of the City of Oakland requested its restoration for display in their museum at the Oakland Airport. This request was complied with, however, this not to be the final resting place for the **BLACK DIAMOND**. In an incident at Oakland



Airport in 1948, the airplane had been left exposed to the blast of a warming-up DC-6 and it was rolled into a ball. The decision of the authorities was to junk the wreckage as irreparable, but a friend of Paul Garber's telephoned him, advising of the decision. Mr. Garber responded immediately and offered to remove the remains to the Smithsonian collection, where it is today, awaiting restoration at some future date.



Two of the most colorful airplanes of the heyday of 1930's racing are shown together here in a photography by Victor Stuhr, courtesy of Lloyd Phillips. The Lockheed Vega, sponsored by Gilmore Oil Co., was flown by Col. Roscoe Turner for the company's publicity. The GEEBEE Racer was flown by famous oil company pilots

Jimmie Doolittle and Jimmie Haizlip. Technically the Granville Bros. R-2 Super Sportster, with Race No. 7, it was flown in both Bendix and Thompson Trophy Races, was crashed in late 1933 by Haizlip.

PROJECT OILWINGS

The Society's "PROJECT OILWINGS" is drawing to a conclusion in 1970. Shortly the Committee, under the leadership of Project Leader David R. Winans, will begin to summarize the information at hand and begin the collection of the many photographs and drawings promised by the

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Members. The cover design is in the final proposal stage, and negotiations are under way for the financing of the printing costs. It is intended to complete the selection of data, writing of captions and text and appended data by mid-year, with publication to follow soon after. Appropriate announcement of price and availability will be made in the Society NEWSLETTER.