



WEDELL-WILLIAMS AIR SERVICE CORP.

and AIR RACING

by Bob Hirsch

Part I The Corporation

Patterson, Louisiana, is a small town with a population of about 2,923. It is situated at 29° 42' North and 91° 18' West or about 75 miles west on a heading of about 260° from New Orleans. The airport was the main base of operations of the Wedell-Williams Air Service Corp., formed in 1928. The corporation also operated from the Wedell-Williams Airport at Jefferson Highway in New Orleans through 1935.

The company had dealerships in Pratt & Whitney, Curtiss-Wright and Kinner engines. They also had an aviation school, an aerial photography, air transportation, and amphibian service, and they were a factory service plant and official repair station No. 44 for the Department of Commerce. But what made this corporation known in the fast-moving aviation world, and reserved them a place in history, is that they were also manufacturers of custom low-wing airplanes for sport, mail hauling, and most noted, racing purposes. Like the Granville brothers and Gee Bee Company, the airplanes they built were fast. This was due largely to the outstanding mechanical ability and the design and construction genius of Jimmy Wedell. Like a majority of race pilots and designers, Jimmy Wedell did not survive to influence designs of World War II and to reappear after the war. Had he lived up through the war, most likely there would have been Wedell-designed aircraft in production and more innovations to make our fighters faster and stronger. He would most certainly have influenced engineers of the big corpora-

tions as he did in the racing world. For he was an aircraft constructor extraordinaire.

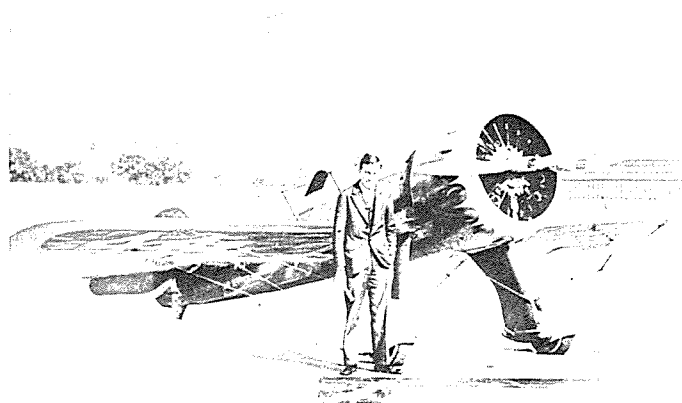
James Robert Wedell was born in Texas City on the Gulf Coast on March 3, 1900, as the turn of the century produced men who first sought to break their earth bonds and just three years before man's first powered controlled flight. In the next 10 years men accomplished what man only dreamed of and tried unsuccessfully for over 1,000 years. His father was a bartender in a tough neighborhood waterfront bar. The mother died while Jimmy was an infant and his brother Walter was still a baby. The father did not remarry but brought up the two boys by himself which meant that they pretty much did some of the upbringing themselves. Since Jimmy was the older of the two it can be seen how he grew up fast and with a flair of independence. He was motivated by a gnawing curiosity for mechanical and engineering subjects and accrued a sense of destiny and dedication to the fascinating new science of aeronautics. He was born into the right era. Walter also was born in Texas City. Their youthful days were spent in school and at the Army light training field which gave them a youngster's natural bewilderment and awe of this flying. Walter, growing up watching his older brother do things, must have been influenced by Jimmy because he somewhat shared his brother's dreams and goals.

1914 through 1918 were Jimmy's apprentice years where he lived near flying activities of the Army Air Service. He gained

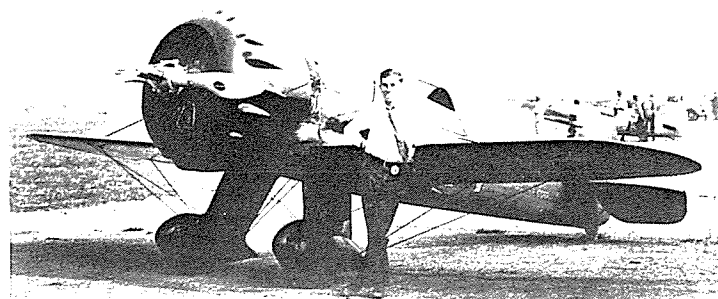
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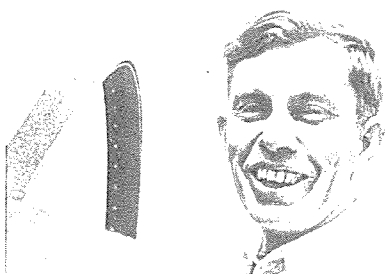
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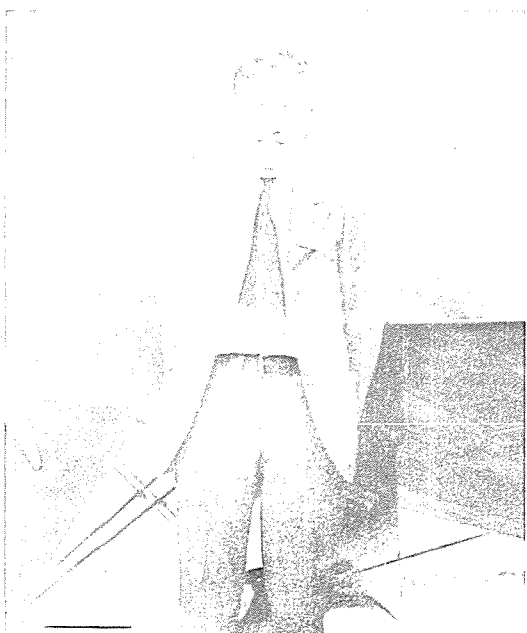
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- 1 Jimmy Wedell beside his No. 44 sporting the new P&W Wasp Sr. while at the Chicago International Air Races at the Curtiss Reynolds airport in 1933. This was the height of his career topped off with a new world speed record. Just a short time earlier he had won the National Air Races Thompson Trophy when Roscoe Turner, out in front with his new *Wasp* Sr., cut a pylon.
(Author's Collection)
- 2 Jimmy Wedell in front of his 1931 version of the No. 44 at Glendale, California. This was after the National Air Races at Cleveland. He was headquartered here in preparation for an assault on the Three Flags record, a flight between Mexico and Canada.
(Author's Collection)
- 3 Jimmy in front of modified No. 44 now sporting the same P&W Wasp Sr. that powered the 1932 Gee Bee R-1 and rated at 800 hp. He is wearing his International Air Races contestant badge indicating this photo was taken at the Chicago races after the Los Angeles Nationals. So, after the National Air Races, No. 44 went back to Patterson for the new engine installation.
(Author's Collection)
- 4 James Robert Wedell in his typical flying gear, a suit and tie.
(Author's Collection)
- 5 Jimmy in front of the No. 44 in its third configuration. This photo is believed to have been taken at Los Angeles in 1933 during the National Air Races. The aircraft was modified in July 1933.
(Author's Collection)

his mechanical ability during this time. Despite his ninth-grade education he had an amazing capacity for physics and mechanical tinkering. He read everything he could get his hands on that had to do with this new mechanical age. After the war he quit working for others and started his own garage by renting a small shed about 10'2", which was just about large enough to work on a motorcycle or the engine of an auto and hang up his tools.

This must have, however, become a profitable business. That is, enough to save something because he was able to buy two war surplus Thomas Morse S-4C scout airplanes, each with a 110-hp Le Rhone C-9 rotary engine. With a little scrounging, trading and cannibalizing, he was able to rebuild one plane and one good running engine he considered capable of flying. He was now ready to become a birdman so he looked up an old barnstormer by the name of Francis Rust and traded some mechanical work on his *Jenny* for approximately one hour of instruction, most of which was spent in landings and takeoffs. Right after soloing in the *Jenny* he climbed into his Thomas Morse and took off. In a short time he returned and landed. From then on he was on his own. He picked up tricks of flying and aerobatic maneuvering as he went. He was thinking about how he could make a living from this fun and enjoyable new flying world so new and exciting.

Jim obtained license No. 1572 which is a somewhat low number, as many pilots were flying by this time. But then, to fly an airplane a license was not required by the government but was issued through the Aero Club of America, and many pilots did not have to prove any degree of competence. He had two logbooks, one through 1931 and one from 1932 until his death in 1934. The second logbook is full of record flights and races and many of them not recorded by the news media of that time. During his younger days he lost some of his sight in one eye from a motorcycle accident. It was sufficient to flunk him out of the military flight training physical examination. He nevertheless went on to become one of the nation's top aviators. He had the intuitive feel for what makes an airplane fly on the step. He learned to handle one-eyed depth perception by shifting his vision quickly from one side to the other on landings and balancing out the horizon.

Jimmy taught Walter to fly and eventually they had two airplanes flying. The Wedell brothers then barnstormed the Gulf Coast area which produced only meager returns. There really wasn't enough in it for two and Walter, becoming impatient, joined the Navy and worked his four-year tour as a telegraph operator. Jimmy then traveled by himself to the border towns of U.S. and Mexico where he found it lucrative to fly various contraband across the border. His JN4 *Jenny* was soon painted all black since night flying became the normal. He had acquired the nickname in Texas from his ramblings as "The Air Hobo from Texas." But now on the border, and most flying being done at night, his new logo was "The Air Phantom." Jim and Walter were never in serious trouble, at least none that they could not fly out of.

He flew for the four years his brother Walter was in the Navy. Some of it was rather lean but gradually he had operations covering several points along the Mexico-Texas border. Despite his sight deficiency in the one eye, in Mexico he was called "Sir James the Night Hawk." This came about from his

ability to attend a party, consume large amounts of beer and tequila and then fly through the dark, unlighted open country by the stars, navigate to and land on small makeshift airfields lighted only by flashlights, auto lights, or small flares. Actually he was a quiet but assuming young man seemingly determined to get somewhere and with a tremendous hunger for learning the physics and mechanics of the airplane. He also developed a knack for making it work for him.

When Walter finished his hitch in the Navy he joined Jimmy again in this new operation. They could now fly two airplanes thus carrying more payloads. The Thomas Morse S-4C had long been traded for load-carrying aircraft. But Jimmy also met Benny Howard who had built his own from scraps and which really carried a load. It put him to thinking. Almost all flights were made at night but changes were to come. The United States Government was becoming concerned about the increase in border flights and Mexican revolutions, and still smarting from the punitive expeditions into Mexico, decided to tighten the rope on illegal border crossings. Thus, the U.S. Border Patrol got a new Aviation Department along with the latest and best equipment such as Wacos, Stearman and Pitcairn biplanes. The WW-I *Jennys* and DH-4s could not outrun them and so night flights were a necessity.

Jimmy countered this by building his own plane. It was a low-wing, wire-braced monoplane using a war surplus Hisso engine and spare parts came from the surplus sales and airplane junk yards. Fast enough to outrun any of the biplanes and still carry a good load, it was a result of his carefully studying the specifications of mail planes. They suited his purpose. He or Walter could now outrun a border patrol plane in broad daylight and the front seat was broad enough for two passengers, or one and baggage enough for two.

It was really just a matter of time before this operation would catch up with them. Most likely some collusion on each side of the border bringing about some close ones prompted the two brothers to reevaluate their chances, and so Jimmy and Walter moved north looking for more legitimate, if not so profitable, business. They kept migrating north until finally settling in New Orleans, Louisiana, and starting up business operations in maintenance, instruction and charter services. This was about 1927.

Another cargo carrier flying across the border in the 1926 era was Benny Howard flying what he called his DGA-2 which was built up of parts of several airplanes. He too decided it was unhealthy to continue the game and he eventually sold his plane for \$600 and went to work for the Alexander Aircraft Co. as an engineer for \$200 per month. He eventually left this to fly Ford Trimotor Transports from St. Louis to Chicago for the Robertson Mail Line and later the Transcontinental Air Transport Co. He finally ended up with Universal Air Lines where in a corner of their hangar he built his famous DGA-3 "Pete" in his spare time. "To keep himself out of mischief," as he put it.

All the border town pilots had by necessity a few things in common; first was survival, which included financial survival. Second, they all had airplanes that were either designed or modified to go faster and carry a bigger load and also withstand the rugged handling and rough field usage. The 1925 records accrued by the museum shows two Hisso-powered



OX-5, 90-hp powered Lincoln-Page PT, NC-9415, which was a development of the LP-3 "Page Trainer." The Wedell-Williams Air Service owned three LP-3s, two purchased in 1928 and one in 1929 along with the PT.
(Author's Collection)

Lincoln *Standards* in which Jim had changed all four wings. He used only the lower wings, fitting all four with ailerons. The two ships ended up as clipped-winged *Standards* which were faster and with a greater rate of roll. The records also show a Lincoln-Page OX-5 powered and rebuilt by Willys Morrow which carried a notation on its registration and entered by a Harry M. Dangler who was then the acting Prohibition administrator at Ft. Worth, Texas, that this craft No. 3368 was engaged in carrying liquor interstate and duly noted by the Department of Treasury. They were wanting information on a "James Wedell."

About the mid-'20s Jimmy and Walter settled down in New Orleans and went into business on a cow-pasture type airfield along the side of Jefferson Highway. It was eventually named the Wedell-Williams Field. They joined up in a partnership with a James Menefee in the flight school and charter flights.

Flying was really better picking in the second half of the '20s. It was finding more business uses and generally becoming accepted by the public. Jimmy began flying reporters and news photographers to news story happenings such as disasters, or news events like the Angola Penitentiary bloody prison riot.

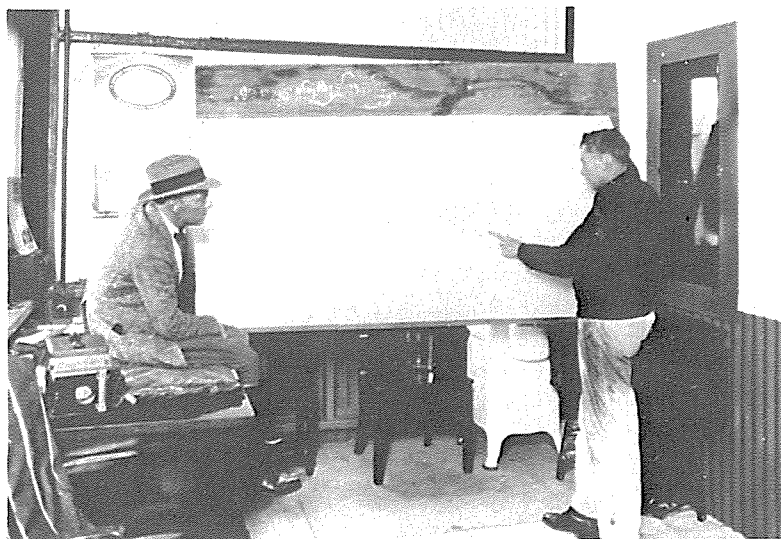
He was involved in the Louisiana State Aerial Tour about September 1927, and was in the lead when, on his last leg back to New Orleans about 75 miles west, his engine quit. He spiraled down looking for a field and found one near the lakeshore at Patterson, Louisiana. He got a lift to town and after phoning his brother, he met and had a talk with the town mayor, Harry Palmerson Williams. While repairing and checking out his airplane he decided this would be an ideal spot to set up another airfield operation. Williams and a real estate agent helped Jimmy get the land and he soon moved in to build a hangar and start operations.

The Patterson airport had a water system with tanks made of very hard cypress called tank stock which came from the heart of the tree. Its capacity was 7,000 gallons and the staves were fitted and formed by hand and then bound by threaded iron bands. Workmanship was so finite that no leaks would appear. If they did, the staves or the wooden pegs would swell and stop the leaks. There was a WW installed electric pump to one of the tanks that pumped water to a tank halfway up the beacon tower which furnished steady pressure for drinking water and washroom facilities. One day Fulton Felterman and Eddie Robertson fell in and came home soaking wet.

Though these two were hard workers, they too could have their fun moments.

The New Orleans Wedell-Williams Airport had a commercial rating. It was rectangular in shape and covered 90 acres. It was located four miles west of New Orleans on the Jefferson Highway near where the Huey P. Long Bridge was later built. It had a sod surface and altitude of six feet. The day markings were standard circle and Wedell-Williams on the hangar roof. The field provided weather reports and the taxi rate to town was \$1.50. A bus ran each hour. Its address was Box 64, Station F, New Orleans, Louisiana. The manager was Raymond Brand and the two telephone numbers were Cedar 1960 and 1659. There were no landing or floodlight fees and storage was \$1.00 per foot. Grades of fuel were 75, 80 and 87 octane. Seaplanes used the Mississippi River one quarter of a mile south of the field. Roads to town were paved.

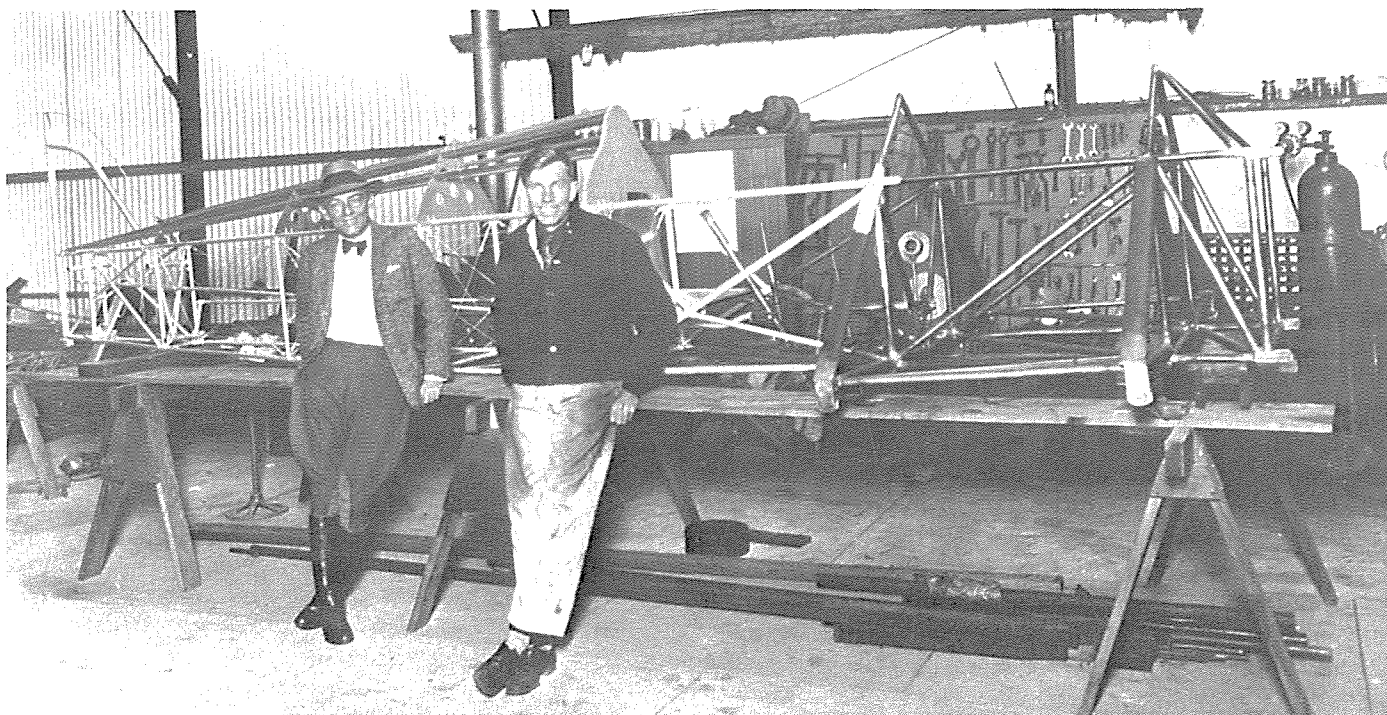
It was while at Patterson that Jimmy and Walter built a reputation. Williams, now an ex-mayor, watched Jimmy's operation and business grow and finally decided to incorporate flying with his own business. He was a successful businessman and wealthy sportsman, considered to be a multimillionaire, of which not too many existed. Williams was one who had raced cars, sailboats, and speedboats so the desire to learn to fly was natural. He wanted to buy one of Jimmy's airplanes and wanted Jimmy to teach him to fly it. It was during this period that he became so impressed with the Wedell brothers that he offered to finance the organization. Menefee was bought out and the Wedell-Williams Air Service



Jimmy Wedell and Harry Williams known as "Mr. Harry" going over building plans in the New Orleans office.
(Author's Collection)

Corp. was formed with around a million dollars in assets and capital. Its address was 605 Whitney Bank Bldg., New Orleans, Louisiana. Jimmy was vice-president, Walter assistant vice-president, and F.D. Dennis was secretary and treasurer. Ed Robertson was appointed factory manager. It must be assumed that Harry Williams retained the title of chairman of the board, besides president, which allowed him to keep controlling tabs on the corporation's destiny.

Judging from what the corporation accomplished, Jimmy must have done well enough to have gained the complete confidence of Williams because building racing airplanes



requires a lot of time, money and effort, and is usually a high-risk, low-profit gamble. It could only be viewed by businessmen as having advertising rewards. But then at Patterson, it did just that.

Harry Williams began buying planes for the corporation and operations expanded. At one time they owned as many as 42 planes making him the largest private owner of aircraft in the world. The Wedell-Williams Air Service Corp. had the first trimotor (a Krutzer) on a scheduled airline in Louisiana. They also had the first amphibian. Jimmy loaded a group of Patterson people in a seaplane one day to test how much load he could lift. It was kept moored just behind the bank on the Atchafalaya. Palmer Peterson and Guy Kaufman were among those volunteering for the flight. The plane was an all-metal Hamilton monoplane sold to a South American country. Jim flew the load to 16,000 feet and returned without incident. The floats were then removed and wheels reinstalled, and all were shipped to South America. Ernest Lee Jahncke was a relative of Williams. He was also a very active Republican and was at one time Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Powerful political connections got the corporation mail contracts between New Orleans and Dallas, Ft. Worth, Shreveport and also Houston. The corporation tried to merge with the Robertson Airplane Service Co. at St. Louis, but the company held back and bid alone for the route and lost it to American Airways. The W-W company now had several well-known pilots on its payroll with more to come.

The Wedell-Williams Corp. owned two aircraft built by General Airplanes Corp. of Buffalo, N.Y. They were Wright J-6-5 165-hp, Model E *Aristocrats*, NC492K s/n 41, and NC493K s/n 42. One was the airplane in which Walter met his fate on a flight from Patterson to New Orleans. A total of 43 Model 102 As and Es were built by the General Airplanes Corp.

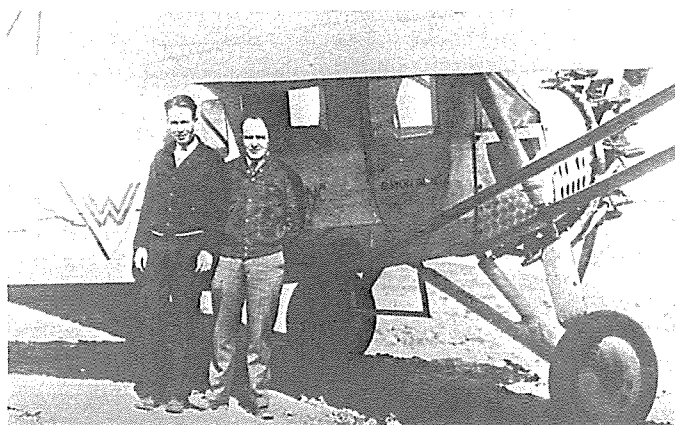
On March 13, 1929, the Wedell-Williams Air Service, Inc., purchased five airplanes from Menefee Airways, Inc. Both air services used the Menefee airport at Chalmette, Louisiana,

Jimmy Wedell and Harry Williams in front of the fuselage structure of airframe 101, NR-9471, which became NR-278V as airframe 103. This photo is from the fall of 1929. Note that there is no forward cockpit but instead room for either mail or fuel tanks. 1929 was the beginning of the Bendix Trophy race. This airframe was suited for this purpose.

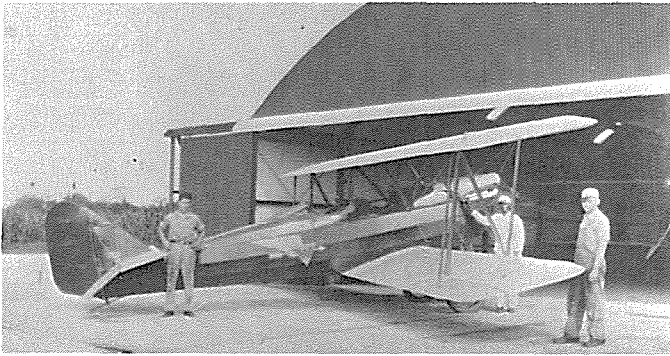
(Photo by J.H. Weathers, Jr., from the Newman Collection, University of New Orleans)

and this was their registered address. The planes were: one Ryan monoplane No. C-6650; two Lincoln Pages Nos. 4413 and C-5847; one Travel Air No. 7642; and one cabin monoplane with Hisso motor and unregistered.

There were also tools and motor parts and airplane equipment. The sale price was \$15,000. An interesting note is that the Menefee Airways, Inc., had T.C. Menefee as president, J.R. Wedell as vice-president, and R.E. Bauman as secretary and treasurer. Then the W-W organization was registered with J.R. Wedell as president, H.P. Williams as vice-president, and E. Dennis as secretary-treasurer. Bob Bauman registered payment in full on May 13, 1929. The Hisso-powered cabin monoplane became the *Maiden Orleans* No. 9471 and was listed as a Wedell-Williams Special in 1929.



Walter Wedell and K.C. Jones beside the Wedell-Williams cabin monoplane that appears to be the Ryan B-7. (Author's Collection)



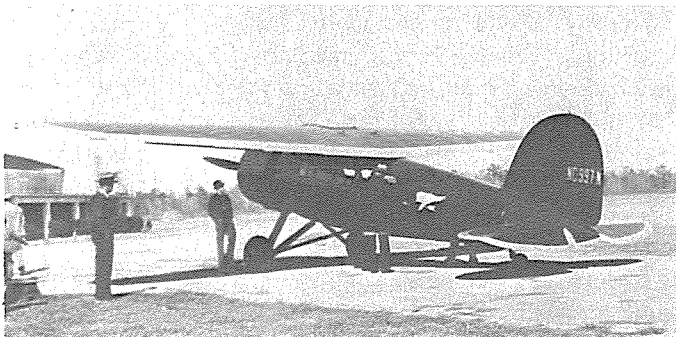
One of the Wedell-Williams trainers at Patterson about 1928. The airplane appears to be an OX-5 powered Swallow. (Author's Collection)



Roy Nottle in front of an oddly marked fleet trainer. The Wedell-Williams logo was in existence because it can be seen on the rudder of the Lockheed in the background. The fleet may have operated at New Orleans and nobody ever got around to applying the new paint scheme. (Author's Collection)



Lockheed Vega 5B leased by the Wedell-Williams Air Service for airline runs. Photo taken at the Shreveport, La., airport. Newhand is on the right in the white coveralls. The gentleman on the left appears to be K.C. Jones. (Author's Collection)



Lockheed Vega NC997N of the Wedell-Williams Air Service in the typical red with white trim on wings and tail. (Author's Collection)

Jimmy went in for doing things big especially when others were involved. This can be illustrated by noting that in getting his brother married, and of all places, in an airplane. They used one of their Ryan cabin planes and had flower girls draping the plane with flowers before takeoff. They also had a local New Orleans radio station play music and broadcast the vows. The whole town listened to the two-way hookup. Walter married a Henrietta Filiberto of New Orleans. Jimmy's wedding was not so newsy, but he was not one to let himself seek the limelight.

Between 1930 and 1934, Jimmy, in his quiet unassuming manner, was right in the middle of the growing air racing sport. Joseph "Pops" Rizzo served Patterson for 30 years as a member of the Police Jury, Town and Air Boards. He was also the town tailor and tailored a new suit for Jimmy before every major air race or speed record attempt. He also outfitted him with a new Rizzo design cravat. Jimmy always raced in a suit and tie. Harry Williams also ordered 20 suits in one 15-minute visit to Rizzo's shop. It is because of his exploits that the corporation became well known and eventually went into the annals of history of the aviation world. Jimmy was not only one of the greater pilots of this country, but was also a prolific designer and builder of racing aircraft, and a high-speed flight experimenter. He was also self taught. Whatever he learned he had the knack of putting to use. His shop foreman, Eddie Robertson, once said, "I don't understand to this day how he did it." Not being a schooled engineer, he was a genius. Anyone that could do with steel tubing, wood, glue and linen what Wedell did, and fly it himself, had to be good. To build the world's fastest land plane out of his head and set the record by himself can only mean he was in a class by himself. There were very few of them but they made a greater impact on aviation than many of the schooled engineers of that day.

There were two sides to Jimmy Wedell, one of a little hell-raising and calculated risk-taking, and the other of compassion for others. As an example, after Jim had set a world speed record at the Chicago races in 1933, he returned to the New Orleans Jefferson Highway Airport. Here he took Walter, Jr., the three-year-old son of Walter and Henrietta Wedell, and strapped him in the 44 on his lap while sitting on the parachute, the safety belt over both their laps. He then took off and flew around the traffic pattern in his record-breaking No. 44. Walter, Jr., was the only three-year-old to fly in a record-breaking racing airplane, but Henrietta could have killed him for such a trick. When Jim Wedell and Jim Haizlip came back to Patterson from the 1932 races, they roared down the main street—side by side, at 300 feet and at about 280 mph. Mr. Harry met them at the airport and Haizlip handed him a check for \$13,625, one-half of which would be his for piloting the No. 92. If no money was won, Harry would pay Jim's expenses as that was the contract.

The other side of the coin was when he made a mercy flight for a six-month-old girl named Sue Trammel who was suffering from hydrocephalus and needed an operation by a famous brain surgeon at John Hopkins hospital in Baltimore. Jim was in West Columbia, Texas, visiting his wife and family. Harry Williams created all the activity by calling Jim back and setting up the company *Vega* NC997N. The *Vega* was scheduled to fly Prince Louis Ferdinand Hohenzollern,

the grandson of Kaiser Wilhelm. The flight was on December 26, 1933, which was when winter weather set in. Within 30 minutes after Jim received the life and death situation telegram from Harry, he was landing their *Aristocrat* at Houston, where the little girl was, and the *Vega* landed shortly after being flown in from Patterson. NC997NB was the *Vega* that was assembled from parts sent to the W-W Corporation from the Lockheed factory. The other *Vega* was NC540M which was to be modified for the London-to-Melbourne race if the Delgado/Wedell-Williams racer was not ready. Evidently there was a combined effort to build a racer, but how far it went isn't known.

The plan was for Jim to fly little Sue, her mother, father and grandmother (Mrs. W.W. Fondren), and a special nurse, Anne Swinson, in the *Vega* which was the company's fastest transport. Walter then used the *Aristocrat* to take the prince and his party to New Orleans. After a quick check Jim shoved the throttle of the P&W engine to the firewall and the red *Vega* lunged forward and lifted off at 2:00 P.M. At 1,600 feet, Jim leveled off and pressed ahead at about 155 mph. He made a straight-in at New Orleans and landed at 4:00 P.M. After taking on 80 gallons of fuel he was off again and down at Atlanta at 7:45 P.M. and again at Greensboro at 11:37 EST. He touched down at Baltimore's Friendship Airport at 1:57 A.M. after 10:05 hours of flying time and 1,400 miles of territory, most of it in bad weather, rain and snow. They were fortunate no icing occurred. By 2:28 A.M. he was again in the air heading for Washington, D.C., to talk to CAA officials about rebuilding one of their *Vegas* into a long-distance race plane for the upcoming Mac-Robertson, London-to-Melbourne international race.

Some of the other key personnel of the corporation were Johnny Worthen who joined the corporation almost at the beginning. He was an instructor pilot and commercial pilot. Charles "Frenchy" Fortun was the parachute rigger and draftsman. He also kept up the flight logs and aircraft logbooks, including Jimmy's. Frenchy was a small man, very small, with a fantastic ability and foresight. He played the role of an aviation pioneer well. He wore a waxed mustache, riding britches, boots, white scarf, the whole works. He was a perfect miniature of Roscoe Turner, but he was an excellent



Harry Williams in the cockpit of NR-536V, No. 92. Harry Williams took to flying like a fish takes to water. He built up an organization that dominated the southern states flying business. It was also his undoing.

(Author's Collection)

draftsman, designer, engraver and mechanic. Eddie Robertson was construction manager and later called plant manager. At any rate, he and Jimmy welded up the frames of the aircraft and later, with Jimmy away too much and with too many things to do to run the corporation, Eddie managed all construction. Eddie Robertson passed away on March 2, 1982.

Being a mechanically minded bunch, the W-W group also had their hot rods. J.W. Chadwick's blue racing Chevy which was modified by the W-W workers was purchased by the local police department just to keep up with the other hot rods. Frenchy Fortun had a hopped-up Model A Ford with a "Fronty" overhead valve and downdraft carburetor making it competitive enough to challenge "Mr. Harry" on the route to the airport. They would wait for each other each morning just to race. Frenchy painted it the same bright red as the No. 44, 1931 racer.

If one was to inspect the superb craftsmanship of the Wedell-Williams racers today, it would be difficult to travel back in time to the '30s when Fulton Feltermann was building the wing panels and spars for the racers. He was a master craftsman and built all the racer wings. He'd build the spars from six layers of hard wood bonded together which was stronger than any solid wood of same dimensions. His wood covering and forming was a work of a superb craftsman. There were also many others: Eddie Robertson, shop superintendent and head mechanic, J. Wood Chadwick, who worked the wing ribs, cowls and wheel parts, linen covering and painting; Rukins McKneely, aircraft engine mechanic, who later became Amelia Earhart's mechanic; Charles "Frenchy" Fortun, craftsman; "Shine" Adams, master craftsman; Charles Ferson, mechanic; Douglas Worthen, mechanic, who later became an airline pilot; Lionel "Rep" Mensman, airplane mechanic. Tomm Lemon, Cyril Vetter, Romeo "Snake" Hurst, Joe Hebert, M. Hartegen, J. Hendrick, a Mr. Purvis and Wiltz, J. Wood Chadwick, Howard Rochell, and Don Young (Turner's mechanic) were all helpers with one specialty or another.

This small group of men squeezed the equivalent of a lifetime of aviation history into a short five-year, action-filled period. In this period their racing aircraft beat the best in the world and they helped influence the thinking of the higher



Approaching the Patterson airport in the very early 1930s. The road was surfaced with shells and a gutter was dug in the dirt along the side of the road. The small building at the rear of the hangar was the engine test section and was quite advanced for that period.

(Author's Collection)



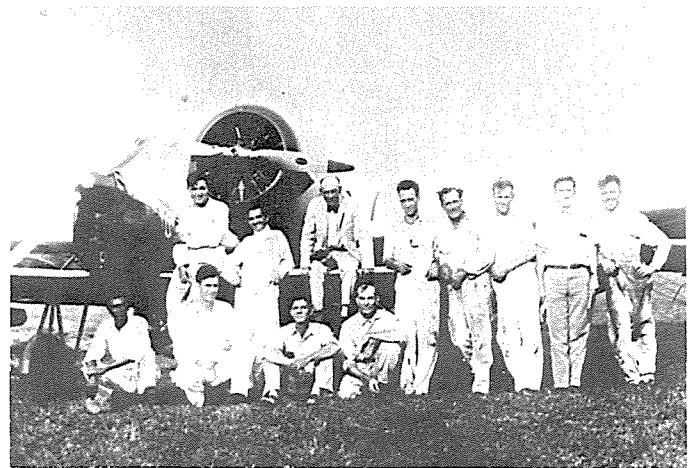
Jimmy Wedell and crew at the 1931 National Air Races. The No. 44 placed second in the Thompson Trophy race. (Author's Collection)

schooled engineers designing our fighting aircraft.

Eddie Robertson was one of a kind, always faithful to his employer and giving 100 percent-plus each and every day often including a seven-day week. He started out at Harry Williams Cypress Mill in the early '20s as a mechanic and later as the electrician. The Williams Saw Mills were the largest complex in the world, seven miles of railway with main track, sidings and spurs. Eddie redesigned some of the electrical equipment and maintained it. The town of Patterson derived its electrical power from the generators housed in the sawmills. Eddie was responsible for changing the power from DC to AC and was responsible for keeping it all running.

When the mill closed, Williams told Eddie to stick around and kept him on the payroll. He brought him into the Wedell-Williams Air Service as a mechanic. In the next seven and a half years as the business boomed, Eddie became chief mechanic and supervisor of the corporation airfield. He was tops in his field doing welding, electrical and engine work. He and a small group of dedicated men built speed planes and made them fast enough to dominate the big-bore air racing of the '30s. These planes not only could dominate the pylons, but could win cross-country races. They also maintained the company commercial aircraft often completely rebuilding one or another. Eddie could tune the racing engines so they would idle like a clock ticking on, purr long periods wide open and put out a bit more than designed in. He designed the Patterson night lighting and built it for night landings. It included end-of-field flood lighting. When the corporation was sold in 1936, Eddie went to work in a sugar factory in Franklin.

One of the early pilots to fly the corporation racers was Errett Williams, Greenville, N.C. He had formed the Williams Flying Service, Inc., in Charlotte with capital stock



Patterson crew in front of the *We-Will Jr.*, NR-10337, in 1930 before heading for the Chicago National Air Races. The Wedell-Williams Air Service Lockheed *Sirrus* is in the background. (Author's Collection)

of \$50,000 and set up headquarters at Greenville. Williams was president, J.E. Farquhar was vice president, and George M. Greer was secretary and treasurer. Errett Williams had won several races at Miami in January 1930.

Another pilot to fly the famous W-W planes was Roscoe Turner. Turner was born in Corinth, Miss., on September 29, 1895, in a log cabin and of farming parents from Scotch-Irish-English descent. At 16 he was driving a five-ton ice truck in Memphis and earning his own way. He tried to sign up for flying training in the Aviation Section of the Army Signal Corps, but was turned down for lack of a college degree. He was taken as an ambulance driver and got his transfer to the observation group where he became a balloon observer and obtained a commission as 2nd Lt. He also won his wings as a balloon pilot but he never did see action. Roscoe Turner never



Don Young, Joe Mackey and Roscoe Turner in his ever-present uniform at Cleveland in 1939.
(Author's Collection)

joined the corporation, but flew his model 44 built for him at Patterson, La. He was one of the pilots who helped the corporation by making historical flights.

After the war, he opened a garage servicing and selling autos and motorcycles until he bought half interest in a JN-4 with an Arthur H. Staines who was a stunt flyer. He flew in a flying circus and barnstormed until he bought an 18-passenger Sikorsky and flew passengers and freight and leased it to corporations. He finally leased it to Howard Hughes for "Hell's Angels" where it was made into a giant "Gotha" bomber. Turner will be noted throughout the story so not everything is covered here.

Roscoe Turner was, without a doubt, the most flamboyant air race pilot of all time, and much of his winnings and records were set in the model 44 W-W racer built for him. It was what he needed to make his climb to fame and fortune. He later would admit his uniform was a big act and what he thought people wanted and air racing needed. He was in the press more than any other pilot except Lindbergh. He would wear a sky blue tunic with whipcord riding britches that the U.S. Army officers wore, a Sam-brown belt and highly polished boots. He'd wear either a crimson helmet or an officer-type hat. All that and lots of gold trimmings. He would very often be photographed with a lion cub on a leash. He would take it up in his *Vega* for the publicity which is why Gilmore Red Lion Gasoline and Oil Co. backed him in getting the plane to begin with. It all paid off. He had more sponsors than any other pilot and had them when others had none. Sponsors like MacMillian Ringfree Oil, Heinz 57 Varieties, 20th Century Pictures, Bendix, H.T. Spark Plugs, Smith Props, P&W Motors, and many others, often in plural at one time. To his friends, Turner seemed to be two men. The dashing dandy of air racing, and the other, a human individual who would give some of his winnings to a less fortunate competitor, or widow, even if it left him broke.

Turner played in some movies and had a weekly aviation show on Chicago radio. Cartoonist Zack Mosley of "Smilin' Jack" patterned some of his stories after Roscoe. When not in flying gear he dressed in the latest fashions: spats, gloves, derby and all. When Gilmore Oil Co. backed the model 44 project and Harry Williams agreed to the contract, Turner

took Don Young, his master mechanic, with him and construction began on the first racer NR-54Y. Turner and Young were to oversee the project, but both were in there helping, and Turner telling Wedell continually to double the strength and materials. Then they would bargain for the difference. This could have added to the problems later. The wings may have ended up too stiff and with no counterbalance.

There was a change in the 32 models that was not on the 1931 model 44. The wing ribs did not fit over the spars but butted into them which saved from half an inch to a full inch in wing thickness. The thin wings were why the W-W racers were so fast, but also fast to build up a stall in tight turns.

Don Young was not only Roscoe Turner's mechanic, but one of the sharpest mechanical minds in the business. He, along with Tony Le Vier and Art Chester, were considered mechanical wizards in the business of air racing. He was a shy retiring individual who remained on the sidelines but never out of the action. He never backed off from his convictions and often grounded Turner for some whim of his when all was not in order. He was usually right and Turner learned to depend on that to the degree if Young didn't okay the ship, he wouldn't go. Don Young knew every system of the Wedell-Williams racers, how they worked and what they were capable of, and their limitations. After all, he was helping to build the first Turner racer himself while Turner was on the West Coast getting the finances from Earl Gilmore.

Before he met and joined Turner, Don worked for Lockheed in the metal fittings shop where they built by hand the engine mounts and landing gear fittings, tailskid, exhaust stacks, etc. They did their own cutting, welding, tempering, sandblasting, plating and polishing, to final finish the single part, often without prints to work from. When Roscoe retired, Young went back to Lockheed during the war years. Before Roscoe Turner died, Young went back to help restore the Laird Turner for the museum Turner's wife and brother Bill were helping to build. Those last days together must have been filled with memories. Roscoe had great ideas how the museum would be sustained but didn't live long enough to see it set up. After he died, Don Young did not attend the funeral. There were enough politicians attending to make a show of it for a full day. They were full of speeches of all they



Some extraordinary pilots: L. to R., Charley Meyers, Jimmy Wedell, Roscoe Turner, Jimmy Haizlip and Lee Gelbach.
(Author's Collection)



Jimmy and ground crew in front of No. 44 in 1931. The Wedell-Williams Air Service had a crew of dedicated men during the 1929-1936 period.
(Author's Collection)

were going to do for the museum, but as soon as they departed, they quickly and completely forgot the museum ever existed. They are the same today, so things haven't changed much.

Joe Mackey of Mackey International Airlines in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., was a longtime friend of Roscoe Turner. He was also an air show stunt pilot and had been around the Cleveland shows a long time. He had flown just about everything with wings, but he couldn't land the Wedell-Williams racer and as he put it, "I was all over the airport on landing the damn thing, but otherwise it was a sweetheart to fly." Joe was a typical pilot of that era but was very good at aerobatics. He was born in Columbus, Ohio, and spent much of his boyhood days at Norton Field, which was a small grass strip that military planes used. His first job was with Stuart Aircraft at Cleveland. After learning to fly, he would fly booze in from Canada. He would get a lot of flying hours this way without logging it. Joe passed away in February 1982.

Another pilot associated with the corporation was Jimmy Haizlip who stood 4' 11" in boots. He was born in Little Rock, Ark., on January 9, 1896, and christened James G. Haizlip. His family moved to Oklahoma when he was nine. He attended school in Muskogee and worked with his father in a lumber business. In 1917 he joined the Army and was able to transfer to the aviation section at the Austin Texas Ground School. He was in the fourth detachment of "Casual Cadets," so-called because most of them became casualties. He went to France and got his training in Caudrons and Nieuports, ending up as an instructor and never saw action. He returned to the USA and instructed at Rockwell Field, San Diego, later returning to Norman, Okla., to attend college. He started up a flying school there with Roy Hunt whom he had taught to fly. He would put on stunt shows on the weekends to attract crowds from the college and get potential students. It was there he met Mary. She was from a family that moved in diplomatic circles in Washington.

Mary Haizlip had sought out the flying school and Roy Hunt had approached her to teach her to fly. But Jimmy nudged Roy out and took Mary over for himself. Roy said he took her in hand and 14 days later he literally took her hand and today he still holds it. Mary's first race was in a biplane made by American Eagle Aircraft and having a race number

71 in 1930. She also flew Earl Rawland's Cessna GC-2 Warner-powered racer placing third in the 500 cu. in. displacement race. In breaking the world speed record for women, she was the first to utilize 100 octane gasoline in a speed plane. She also went on to become the chief test pilot for a subsidiary of the Ford Motor Co. in Detroit.

Mary entered a Lambert-powered Monocoupe in the Women's Air Derby from Los Angeles to Cleveland along with about 20 other women in 1931. Her flight progressed without incident until over New Mexico she spotted a plane down. It was Ruth Stewart's white Lockheed *Vega*. Since there was no radio aboard she backtracked to her last check-in point and pinpointed the location. She lost two hours of race time doing so and thus was put way back in the standing, but was praised for her sportsmanship. She later moved up from 20th to second place by flying through a squall line.

Jimmy Haizlip spent one year on the Mexican border flying DH-4s. On August 15, 1920, he left the service and at age 28 went to Oklahoma University, flying to pay his way and living on coffee and doughnuts. He joined the Spartan School of Aeronautics and then in 1929 he joined Safeway Airlines. Eight months later he joined Jimmy Doolittle and the Shell Oil Co., and in 1930 they got their Travel Air "R" type racer and in that same year he was already winning races and his wife was doing the same. The "R" was modified with a P&W *Wasp* Jr. and Doolittle bailed out on a test hop.

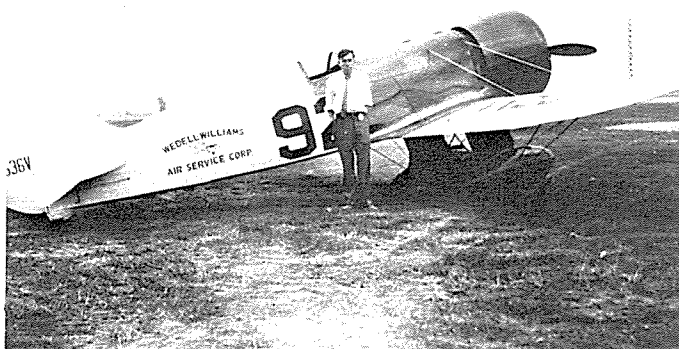
In 1932, Mary and Jim Haizlip were invited to spend time at Patterson. Jim was contracted to fly the 92 and Mary was to



Jimmy and Mary Haizlip in 1932 while staying at Patterson as a guest of Harry Williams. Jimmy was contracted as pilot for No. 92 and backup pilot in the event of a problem.
(Author's Collection)

be Jim's decorated companion. Jim did not find Patterson as he envisioned it, a small country airport. Instead it was a level, firmly sodded airport lighted for night flying, with two large hangars, office and shops, and some 50 airplanes, most of which were the latest models, and about five or six Lockheed *Vegas*, which was the most expensive single-engine airplane on the market. At the 1931 prices, there must have been at least \$500,000 invested. They noted Jimmy Wedell was Harry Williams' chief aviation advisor, aircraft designer, builder, test pilot and race pilot. They knew his mind carried a heavy load and was always working toward some future event. Jim and Mary sized up Harry Williams and decided not to push for Mary to fly 92. Since Jim's function at Patterson was a standby pilot with no management interest in building, he felt comments on the racers might better be left unsaid. However, he knew that 92 was going to be slower than 44 and Turner's. The larger P&W engine with no fuselage diameter increase left a large gap between the cowl and fuselage at the trailing edge and would create a lot of air-stream turbulence around the fuselage. This would cost measurably in top speed. Before leaving Patterson in 92 for Los Angeles, Jim had two 1" holes drilled into the leading edge of the wing and connected $\frac{3}{4}$ " hoses to them that routed fresh air into the cockpit. His insistence brought it about. His experience in the Mystery S type was that monoxide fumes seeped into the cockpit area.

Jimmy Haizlip tells of an eerie incident that he would never forget. It occurred on one Sunday afternoon in 1934. Jim and Mary had been napping after a ceremony noon dinner, while they were still living in Ferguson, which was a suburb of St. Louis. It was about 4:00 P.M. and she spoke of a vivid dream she had and it was apparent she was badly shaken. Jim had to press her to tell it. She said she had seen Jimmy Wedell in her dream and that he had crashed in an airplane on the far side of Patterson Field. Jim pressed for more details while it was still recallable, but all she could tell was that it was not one of the racers. The best she could tell was that it was a biplane and it looked like a British *Moth*. Jim had said it was not likely since the only *Moth* he had seen was always in the back of the hangar with the wings folded. He had never seen it fly. However, that very same evening around seven o'clock Jim received a call from the *St. Louis Globe Democrat* telling him that it had just come over the wire that James Wedell was killed in a fatal crash in a *Tiger Moth*.



Jimmy Wedell by Wedell-Williams No. 92. It appears to be taken in 1933 either at the Los Angeles National Air Races or the Chicago International Air Races. (Author's Collection)

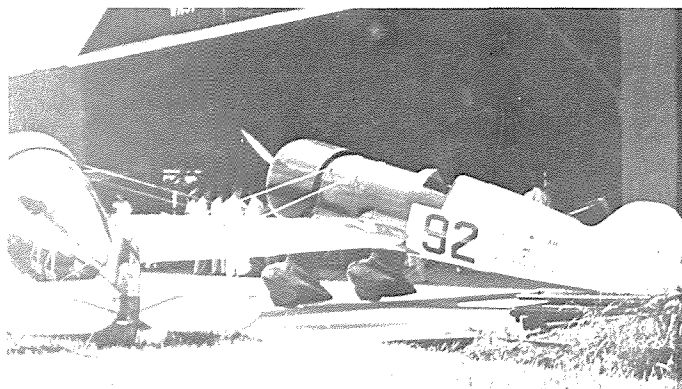


Mary Haizlip in front of the Wedell-Williams No. 92 at Cleveland. She was the only woman to fly any of the Wedell-Williams racers. After setting a women's world record in the Shell speed dash contest, Harry Williams backed her in any event she wanted to enter. (J. Reid Patterson Photo)

Jimmy Haizlip died on December 8, 1983, at the age of 87. In 1982 he and Mary were enshrined in the Oklahoma Aviation Hall of Fame. His ashes were scattered over the Pacific Ocean by Mary and General Doolittle.

Harry Williams, Jimmy and Walter Wedell would get together and agree on who should fly each of the racers and in which events. Then Williams would draw up a contract and mail it to the prospective pilot. There would be few, if any, refusals since the Wedell-Williams racers were considered the best flying racers at that time. There were sometimes impromptu changes at the races which was usually handled verbally with agreements.

Another pilot associated with the corporation was Lee Gehlbach, the son of a farming family near Lincoln, Ill. He was born in 1903. He joined the Army from ROTC at Brooks Field, San Antonio. He graduated from Kelly Field in September 1925 and was assigned to the First Pursuit Group at Selfridge. He was one of the official Lindbergh escort flights



Numbers 44 and 92 sitting as though they were forgotten relatives while corporate personnel and relatives are making funeral arrangements for Jimmy. (Author's Collection)



Scene of the crash of the de Havilland DH60GM *Moth* in which Jimmy Wedell was killed. This photo was taken after Jimmy's body was removed and taken back to the hangar and then to the hospital. The student in the back seat was accused of freezing at the controls but swore that he was not doing the flying and didn't have the stick. Jimmy was in the front seat and the student was in the rear seat which is why the student was not seriously injured. The cause of the accident was never discovered. The *Moth* took off at a very steep angle, stalled and crashed. (Author's Collection)

which met the cruiser *Memphis* out of New York Harbor. He went with the group to Canada also, and did a spectacular stunting exhibition which ended by his looping around the Victoria Bridge. He departed the Army on October 1, 1929, by resignation after he and two other officers had a bout with the Secretary of War and won. They were ordered to refund \$55 each for a payment the Army HQ decided would not be allowed. They declined and the Secretary issued stoppages against their pay. They countered with a lawsuit and won by a Supreme Court decision that the Secretary of War could not do that and had a federal court injunction restraining the Secretary from his collection tactics. He was twice eligible for the Caterpillar Club. He was the only pilot to have flown both the Gee Bee and the Wedell-Williams racers.

Doug Davis was another pilot associated with the corporation and the only pilot to die in one of the racers. He came from Atlanta, Ga. He was a Travel Air Co. pilot in 1929 and won the Thompson Trophy in the famous T.A. Mystery S. He also flew the second Model R to first place in the Experimental Ship Race. The second ship was powered with a Chevrolair D-6 engine of 120 hp (not General Motors Co.)

Pilots who flew the W-W racer were Jimmy Wedell, Harry Williams, Walter Wedell, John Worthen, Jimmy Haizlip, Mary Haizlip, Doug Davis, Lee Gehlbach, Roscoe Turner, Errett Williams, Joe Mackey, Bill Ong, Art Davis, W.A. McDonald and Dave Elmendorf.

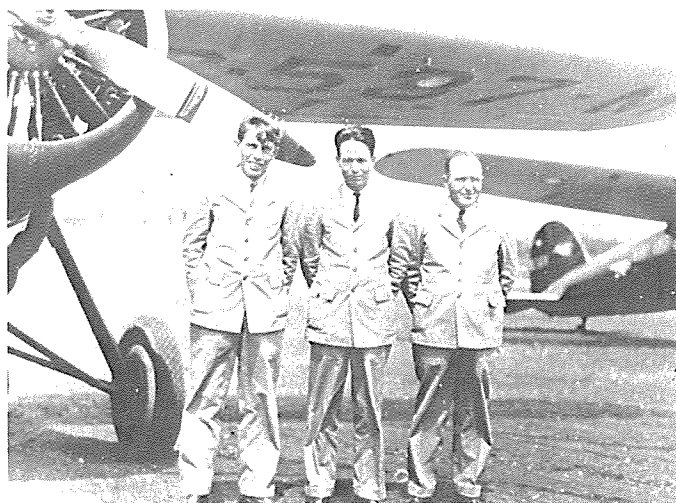
The Wedell-Williams Air Service airline pilots were Art Brown, L.C. Cloney, C.B. Donaldson, H.A. Frese, K.C. Jones (chief pilot of flying school), R.W. Henderson (Lockheed factory pilot who ferried their Lockheeds from factory and made airline trips for W-W), L.C. Lee, G. Sanders, M.L. Sater, S.J. Stanton (flew Cessna racer in Circus Derby), Walter Wedell (chief pilot, James Wedell (president and vice president—he and Harry Williams seemed to swap these titles), Errett Williams (chief pilot, no relation to Harry), John Worthen (chief pilot), and C. Doug Worthen who was also a mechanic.

There were many people and organizations that became associated with the corporation, but none was more impor-

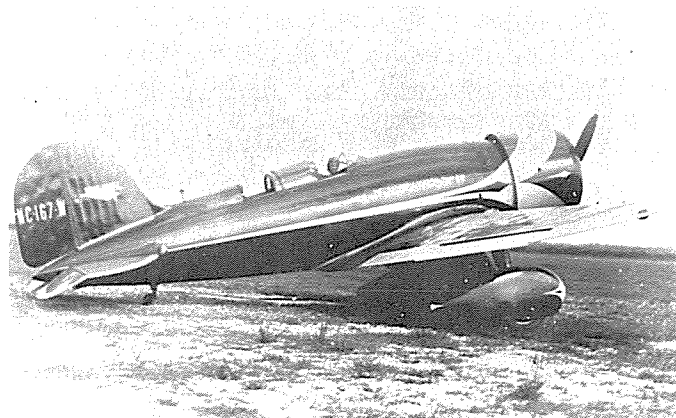
tant to the race plane owners than Furlonge H. Flynn and Ray Peck who were Tech-Reps from the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Corporation special race team. They would arrive on the scene before the races, don their white coveralls, and start giving their assistance in tuning up the *Wasps* and *Hornets* before qualifying trials. They'd work around the clock snatching sandwiches, coffee and sleep wherever they could. Their expert touch and unflagging energy in rustling up critical spares gave many a race pilot the boost he needed to be competitive rather than a stand down.

On August 20, 1932, Palmer Peterson, Ruckins McKneely and Roy Ross departed Patterson and rode their Harley-Davidsons and headed for Lansing, Ill. They had just finished putting the last-minute touches on the 44 and 92 before they headed west for Bendix. They passed through Hammond, Ind., where Don Young would be refueling Roscoe Turner's Gilmore Special when he arrived. They finally arrived at their destination and settled down to wait for the racers. They checked the field layout, contacted the Shell Oil Co., briefed the airport manager and located a big funnel for fueling the racers. They also spent some of their meager dollars for chamois to strain the fuel. The racers were due in on the 29th of August and after fueling they were to ride on to Cleveland.

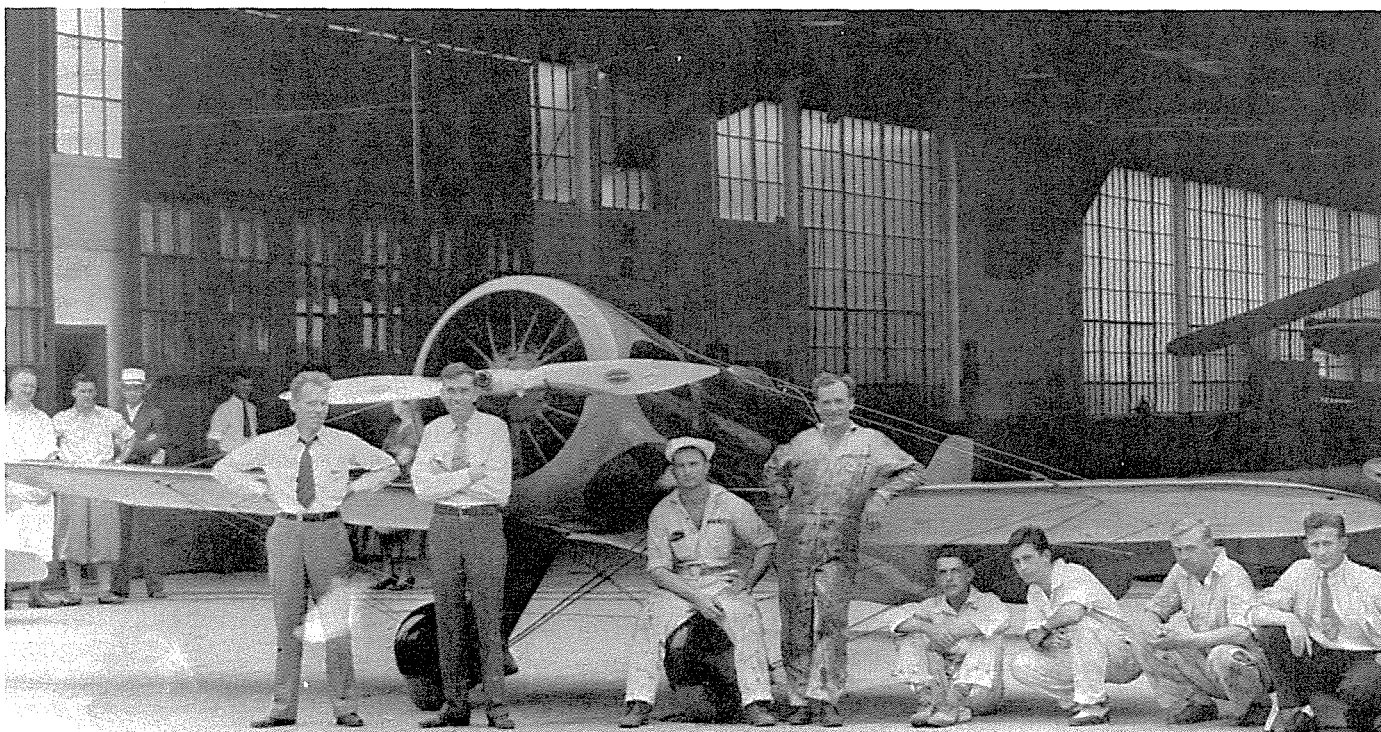
After the races, the three cyclists packed their gear and



Jimmy, Walter and K.C. Jones who was the air service chief pilot. Note the uniforms and the two Lockheed Vegas. This is before the Vegas were painted with white trim. (Author's Collection)



The Wedell-Williams Air Service Lockheed *Sirius* NC167W. The *Sirius* and the four Vegas were painted bright red with white trim. This seems to have been the standard color scheme for Wedell-Williams aircraft during the years 1930 and 1931. (Author's Collection)



Walter, Jimmy and crew at Cleveland in 1932.

(Author's Collection)



Jimmy Wedell, second from right, and the Patterson crew in front of No. 92 on its rollout. NR-536V kept its registration and race number through its life span.

(Author's Collection)

checked out of their \$2.50 per night hotel and headed back to the land of bayous. However, just before departing, Roy Ross was offered a ride back with Walter Wedell in the Lockheed *Vega*. He told Palmer to take his cycle and sell it for a train ticket. Palmer and Bo then rode the two cycles day and night since money was short and they couldn't afford hotels. Palmer's \$18 ran out in Tennessee and Bo staked him the rest of the way home. They were welcomed home at Ed Daigle Confectionery store in Patterson where Harry and the rest always hung out. Ed was also a barber and had a shop next door and a card room in the back. They'd had a good time but it was also good to be home. The store had a pinball machine and toasted cheese sandwiches and a special concoction called "Ecta-Cream" that everyone loved. It had really been a low-budget tour for the trio. They had less than \$100 between them. Roy had \$25, Palmer had \$18, and Bo had



Doug Davis holding the Thompson Trophy he won flying the Travel Air "Mystery S".

(Author's Collection)

just a little fatter wallet, so he could help out on odd expenses.

It should be recognized that Roscoe Turner had the most influence on Jimmy and did the most to keep the W-W racers in the news and out in front in competition. He was also a competitor while Jimmy lived. Turner has always claimed to be co-designer of the model 44 and in a way he may have been. He was there and no doubt had some influence on the



Errett Williams and wife at the National Air Races about 1930 as spectators. Errett did no more air racing after 1931. He was killed in Lockheed Vega NC537M at Marshall, Texas, later in the 1930s. A generator he was hauling shifted causing the aircraft center of gravity to go out of limits.

(Author's Collection)

project since it was he who brought about the financing and he was to do the flying in it. He was an excellent mechanic and gadget inventor. He was influential in Jimmy obtaining the services of Howard Barlow as an engineering consultant. Turner's mechanics, Don Young and Jim Foreman, were also involved in the aircraft and had some design and building influence on the 1932 racers. Some other names associated with the corporation were S. Coloney, commercial pilot, Allen Wiltz, and Newhand (first name unknown).

During the time when the Wedell-Williams Air Service Corp. was best known for its part in the air racing world of aviation, the corporation did not participate in the numerous smaller races throughout the country with the exception of the early days when they were just beginning to become interested in racing. This was 1929 through 1931. Although after becoming well known there were many invitations to enter, or even just to show, but the various air services which were flourishing consumed considerable amounts of time and effort and they became preoccupied with normal routine business. The corporation simply had too many business interests.

During the early part of the year to midsummer of 1931 Jimmy Wedell had built, or rather rebuilt, the "We-Will Jr." into a pylon racer by increasing the cubic inches of the engine and reducing the overall size. He was anxious to test it in competition and so he had it entered in events of the southern states. However, for some reason he did not venture out of the general southern states. Most likely the reason was during that summer Jimmy also became preoccupied with rebuilding NR-536-V into the model 44 for the upcoming Nationals at Cleveland.

By this time Harry Williams' keen business sense acknowledged the advertising value of building race planes to win big events. So racing became an integral part of the corporation and Jimmy was allowed to go as far as he wanted in constructing special aircraft, just so they were capable of winning whatever competition they were intended for. If the prize monies

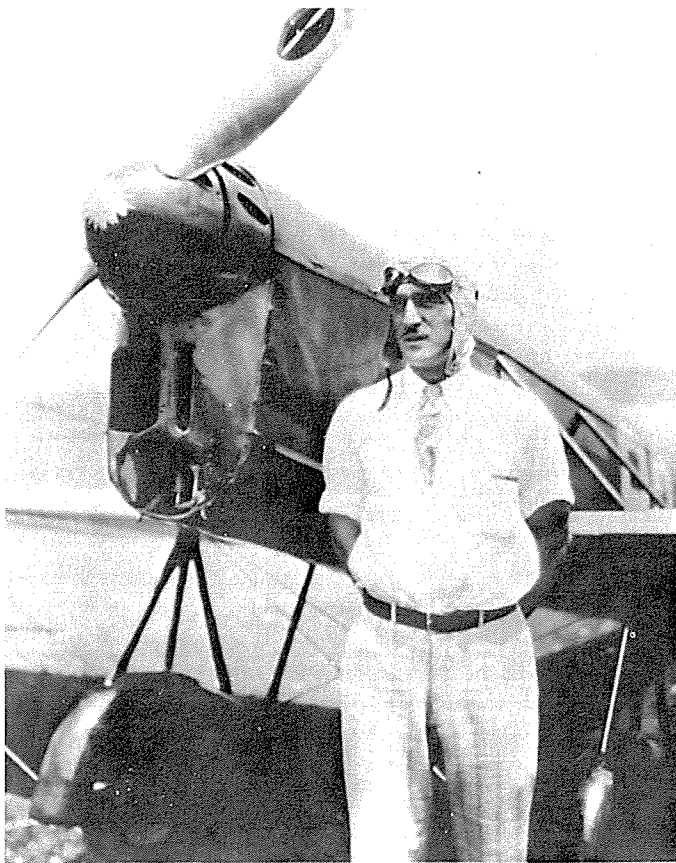
did not cover the cost it was still considered good business.

The first design was not at first intended as a racer but as a fast mail carrier. The corporation had envisioned that a carrier with increased performance that others could not obtain could capture them larger route contracts. However, this did not materialize and the second ship, NR-536-V, was built into a two-seat sport plane using a Wright *Whirlwind* radial instead of the WWI surplus Hisso engine that would be fast disappearing and hard to supply parts for. The We-Will Jr. was built for specific competition from the beginning. But all three were made ready for the 1930 races to be held at Chicago. This was the first of the corporation's serious efforts in preparation for racing events. Part II will cover these aircraft in more detail. But even with all their preparations the corporation's only 1930 national notice was with the We-Wini which had the lowest power-to-weight ratio of the three.

On May 19, 1936, the final tragedy hit the Wedell-Williams Corp. This time it was the final blow. Harry Williams and Johnny Worthen, the only survivors of the original group who built up the corporation, took off on a flight from Baton Rouge's Parish Airport. They were on a hop to Patterson flying a black and white Beechcraft *Staggerwing*. They were hardly away from the airport when the rpm suddenly dropped and the engine quit. The four-place cabin biplane came down cutting a 600-foot swath through a clump of small trees, plowed into the ground, and exploded. Had not the explosion and resulting fire been part of the accident, they might have survived since the G forces in coming to a halt in 600 feet would not have been excessive, and with good seat belts and shoulder straps, survival was possible. An odd thing about this airplane is the registration number was NC-278V, which means it must have belonged to the W-W corporation and the number especially applied for since No. 44 was NR-278V. However, in screening the Beechcraft *Staggerwing* listing none can be found that belonged to the Wedell-Williams Air Service; therefore, it has been assumed by many that the ship was either leased or borrowed. However, a copy of the schedule of properties shows it was purchased April 1936 and crashed May 1936.

Harry Williams' widow, the former silent film star Marguerite Clark, rid herself of what was now felt was a jinxed corporation. She first disposed of the Houston-to-New Orleans mail route contract and then sold the firm's total assets to Eastern Airlines for a reported \$175,000. The initial investment of Harry Williams was never realized, but Patterson and New Orleans were put on the map in the annals of aviation history. Now there were four widows. Most certainly they could not help but feel the airplane had struck them a low blow. Yet their men created airplanes that would, in the minds of men, live forever, or at least for many years to come.

Prior to 1930, Eastern Airlines had been Pitcairn Aviation Inc., then North American Aviation Inc., then Eastern Air Transport Inc. by 1930. But with the advent of the Airmail Act of Congress in 1934 it became Eastern Airlines. Eddie Rickenbacker, then the president, had about 15 meetings with Marguerite before the deal was finally consummated. He considered this one of his better transactions since it gave Eastern Airlines its first penetration into Texas with the remaining routes of the W-W corporation.



Stan Stanton in front of Wedell-Williams No. 90, *We Will Jr.* at the Chicago races in 1930. He flew the Cessna GC-1 against the Wedell-Williams ship flown by Jimmy Wedell. Stan won one leg of the Cirrus Derby and placed seventh overall. Stan was impressed with the No. 90 and as Earl Smith was flying the GC-1 at Chicago where he placed fourth in the 1,000 cu. in. event, Stan did not fly the No. 90 at Chicago.

**SCHEDULE OF MISCELLANEOUS PHYSICAL PROPERTY
WEDELL-WILLIAMS AIR SERVICE CORPORATION
JUNE 30, 1936**

	Jan. 1, 1936	Additions Jan. 1, 35 to June 30, '36	Retirements Jan. 1, 1935 to June 30, 1936	Balance
Racer NR62Y	12,000.00	x		
Racer NR64Y	4,000.00	x		
Loening NC 140N	10,000.00	800 x		
Lincoln NC140N	500.00		500.00	
Lincoln NC141N	500.00	250 x		
Savoï Machetti NC351W	2,000.00			
Aristocrat NC492K	2,000.00	x		
Aristocrat NC493K	2,000.00	1100		
Racer NR536V	10,000.00	x		
Fleet NC600M	1,500.00		1,500.00	
Fleet NC648M	1,500.00		1,500.00	
Fleet NC762V	2,000.00	800 x		
Ryan B1 NC6650	1,500.00	1300 x		
Lincoln NC7394	500.00	450 x		
Ryan B1 NC7671	1,500.00	1200 x		
Lincoln NC9415	500.00		500.00	
Totals	52,000.00		4,000.00	48,000.00
Amount transferred from \$501 to \$502 — June 30, 1935				48,000.00
Beechcraft purchased April 1936.		7,823.95		
Crashed May 1936			7,823.95	
One of above motors sold Dec. 1935			500.00	500.00
Balance—June 30, 1936				47,500.00
Amount of hangar and equipment, Patterson Airport as transferred, from \$501 to \$502				42,692.00
Balance June 30, 1936				90,192.00



No. 44 upon completion in 1932. It was the first of the three to be completed.

WEDELL-WILLIAMS PAYROLL

New Orleans

R. Braud	\$216.66	
E.D. Denis	200.00	
L.N. Trosclair	152.00	
L.J. Specht	130.00	
B.A. Parker	130.00	
A. Thornhill	110.00	
E.F. Newman	86.66	
J.B. Thornhill	65.00	
R.F. Ricks	60.00	
M. Silverman	80.00	
R.G. Broussard	30.00	
R.W. Lavender	30.00	
M.L. Sater, Chief Pilot, Base	250.00	
L.C. Cloney, Pilot, Base	150.00	
C.D. Worthen, Pilot, Base	150.00	
H.A. Frese, Pilot, Base	133.33	
Plus 165:00 hours flying time at \$4.48 per hour		\$ 739.20 Estimated

2,712.85 Total

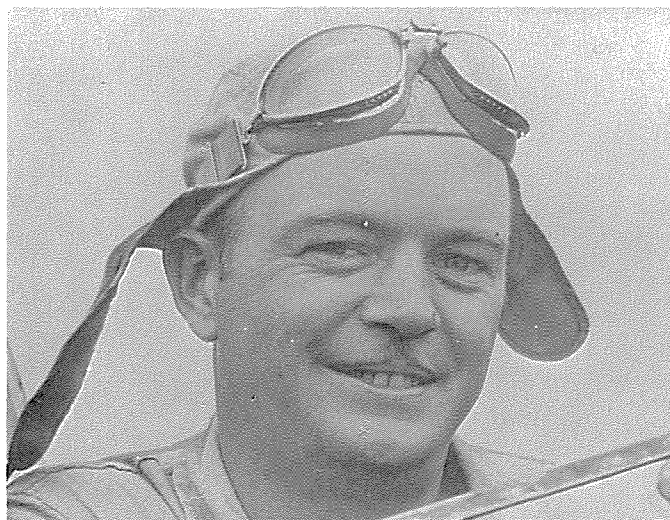
Patterson

S.S. LaSha	325.00	
E.J. Robertson	224.90	
F. Felterman	156.00	
C.H. Ferson	151.66	
C.A. Fortun	151.66	
J.O. Hebert	108.33	
E.P. Lemmon	108.33	
J.W. Chadwick	108.33	
R.D. McKneely	108.33	
R. Hurst	81.90	
A.J. Adams	78.00	
	\$1,602.44	Total
	\$4,315.29	Grand Total

DETAILED ACCOUNT OF REAL PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

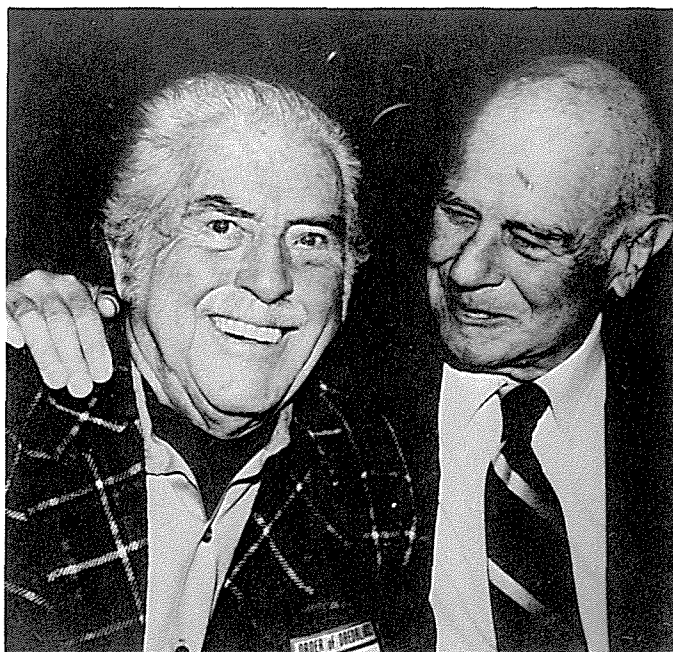
ACCOUNT NO. 501
AS OF AUGUST 31, 1936

	Book Value	Depreciation	Net
Jefferson Airport	\$31,872.51	\$22,310.82	\$ 9,561.69
Aircrafts:			
Vega 104 W	5,750.00	4,312.50	1,437.50
Vega 197 E	4,906.00	3,679.50	1,226.50
Vega 540 M	5,750.00	4,312.50	1,437.50
Vega 997 N	5,750.00	4,312.50	1,437.50
Ryan 721 M	4,152.80	3,114.60	1,038.20
Eaglerock 737 H	708.96	708.96	
Eaglerock 6394	616.50	616.50	
Aircraft Instruments	2,306.34	1,054.44	1,251.90
Engine Instruments	60.76	38.92	21.83
Engines:			
Wasp Jr. #78	5,094.00	3,820.50	1,273.50
Wasp C #2006	4,250.00	3,187.50	1,062.50
Wasp C #2865	3,847.20	2,885.40	961.80
Wasp C #2896	4,250.00	3,187.50	1,062.50
Wasp C #2899	4,250.00	3,187.50	1,062.50
Wright J-5 #9077	1,016.04	1,016.04	
Wright J-5 #9666	883.50	883.50	
Aircraft Communication Equipment	519.48	332.42	187.06
Airways Communication Equipment	144.23	92.28	51.95
Shop Equipment	100.37	47.82	52.55
Chevrolet Truck at Patterson	400.00	256.00	144.00
Caterpillar Tractor at Patterson	400.00	256.00	144.00
Furniture and Fixtures	1,474.83	803.38	671.45
Parachutes (Two)	500.00	322.94	177.06
Totals	\$89,003.51	\$64,740.02	\$24,263.49



Joe Mackey in Roscoe Turner's Wedell-Williams racer. This could be either 1938 or 1939. (Author's Collection)

The record-setting Shell Oil pilots Jimmy Haizlip and Jimmy Doolittle. (Author's Collection)



AIRCRAFT OF WEDELL-WILLIAMS AIR SERVICE CORP.

Reg. No.	Home Field	Manufacture & Type	Prod. No.	Engine	ATC Issued
C-1946	Greenville, S.C., Williams Flt. Serv.	Eaglerock Comb 3 POLB	228	OX-5	1927
C-3787	Greenville, S.C., Williams Flt. Serv.	Eaglerock Comb 3 POLB	371	OX-5	1927
C-7194	Greenville, S.C., Williams Flt. Serv.	Eaglerock Comb, 3 POLB	581	OX-5	1927
C-5847	Patterson Fld.	Lincoln P-3 3 POLB	219	OX-5	1928
C-7394	New Orleans, LA	Lincoln P-3	246	OX-5	1928
C-6650	New Orleans, LA	Ryan B-1 5 PLCLM	135	Wright J-5	1928
C-7671	Patterson Fld., LA	Ryan B-1 5 PLCLM	163	Wright J-5	1928
NC-197E	Patterson Fld., LA	Lockheed Vega 2D	38	Wright 220hp	1928
C-4413	Chalmette, LA	Lincoln P-3	184	OX-5	1929
NC-6394	New Orleans, LA	Eaglerock PT 2 POLB	306	Wright J-5	1929
NC-141N	New Orleans, LA	Eaglerock PT 2 POLB	319	OX-5	1929
NC-140N	New Orleans, LA	Eaglerock PT 2 POLB	318	OX-5	1929
C-764-2	New Orleans, LA	3 POLB Travel Air 2000	unk	OX-5	1929
NC-721M	New Orleans, LA	Ryan B-7 6 PCLM	253	P&W Wasp	1930
NC-924M	New Orleans, LA	DH Moth 60GM	123	D Gipsy 85hp	1929
NC-600M	New Orleans, LA	Fleet 2 2 POLB	175	Kinner 5	1929
NC-648M	New Orleans, LA	Fleet 2 2 POLB	223	Kinner 5	1929
NC-492K	New Orleans, LA	General 102E Aristocrat 3 POLB	41	Warner 165	1929 Oct
NC-493K	New Orleans, LA	General 102E Aristocrat 3 POLB	42	Warner 165	1929 Oct
NC-737H	New Orleans, LA	Eaglerock A-14	866	Wright 165	1929 Oct
NC-351N	New Orleans, LA	Savoia M RCHETTI S-56 3PO AMB	12A	Kinner 125hp	1930
NC-140H	New Orleans, LA	Loening Amphibian 6PL PG Am B	237	Wright Cyclone 525hp	1929
NR-9471	New Orleans, LA	Wedell-Williams Spcl. 1 POLM	101	Hisso	1929
NR-278V	Patterson Fld., LA	Wedell-Williams Spcl. 1 POLM	103	Hisso	1929
NR-10337	New Orleans, LA	Wedell-Williams Spcl. 1 POLM	105	Am Cirrus	1929
NR-536V	New Orleans, LA	Wedell-Williams 2 POLM	104	Wright R-760 220 hp	1930
NC-9415	New Orleans, LA	Lincoln PT 2 POLB	306	OX-5 90hp	1929
NC-104W	Patterson Fld., LA	Lockheed Vega 5B 7 PCLM	121	P&W Wasp	1930
NC-537M	New Orleans, LA	Lockheed Vega 5B	106	P&W Wasp	1929
NC-540M	New Orleans, LA	Lockheed Vega 5B	109	P&W Wasp	1929
NC-982H	New Orleans, LA	Kreutzer K-5 6 PCLM Air Trans	108	3 Kinnors	1929
NC-762V	Patterson Fld., LA	Fleet 7 2 POLB	343	Kinner 125	1930
NC-7W	New Orleans, LA	Lincoln PT-K 2 POLB	609	Kinner 5	1930
NC-15H	Patterson Fld., LA	Ryan B-5 6 PLLSM	200	Wright J-6	1930
NC-697M	Patterson Fld., LA	Fleet 2 2 PPOLSB	243	Kinner 5	1930
NC-698M	Patterson Fld., LA	Fleet 2 2 PPOLSB	259	Kinner 5	1930
NC-749V	New Orleans, LA	Fleet 2 2 PPOLSB	260	Kinner 5	1930
NC-167W	Patterson Fld., LA	Lockheed Sirrus 8A 2 POLM	167	P&W Wasp	1930
NC7671	Patterson Fld., LA	Ryan B-1 5 PCLM	166	Wright 220	1931
NC-997N	New Orleans, LA	Lockheed Vega 5C	139	P&W Wasp	1931
NR-278V	Patterson, LA	Wedell-Williams Spcl. 1 PLM	103	P&W Wasp Jr. Spcl. 550hp	9/1/32
NR-536V	Patterson, LA	Wedell-Williams Spcl.	104	P&W Wasp Jr.	8/1/32
NR-60Y	Patterson, LA	Wedell-Williams Spcl.	unk	Menasco 6 cyl.	1933
NR-62Y	Patterson, LA	Wedell-Williams Spcl.	unk	P&W Wasp Sr.	1933-34
NR-64Y	Patterson, LA	Wedell-Williams Spcl.	unk	Menasco 6 cyl.	1933
NR-67Y	Patterson, LA	Wedell-Williams Spcl.	unk	P&W Hornet	1934 N/C
NC-278V	Patterson, LA	Beech Staggerwing	unk		193—