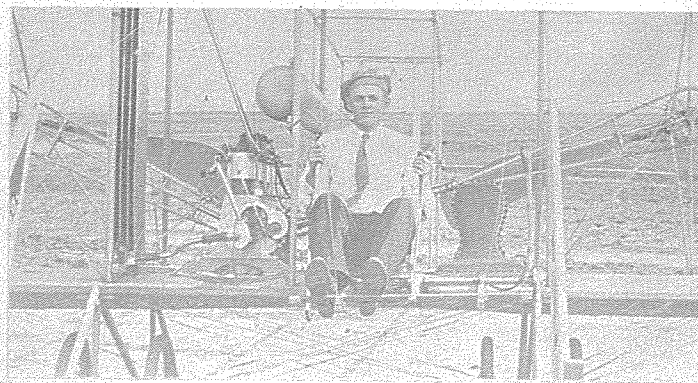


THE FLYING PIONEERS
OF AVIATION



Harry M. Jones



Charles L. Wiggin



Farnum T. Fish



Bernard L. Whelan



Marjorie Stinson

HAROLD E. MOREHOUSE *

FLYING PIONEERS OF AVIATION

CHARLES LIVINGSTON WIGGIN (1893 -)

Born in Atlanta, Ga., November 7, 1893, Charles L. Wiggin was mechanically inclined as a boy and became interested in aviation during the early flying days of the Wrights. In the early spring of 1910, when he heard that the Wrights had a school at Montgomery, Ala., he decided to go and see it for himself. By the time he arrived the school was packed up ready to return to Dayton, Ohio, so he followed them. After seeing some flying and the activities of the school, he decided to try and get a job to stay in Dayton where he could spend his spare time at the flying grounds. He found work at the Stoddard-Dayton Auto Co. He was eager to learn and was soon acquainted with the students who were learning to fly at Simms Station.

Wiggin remained in Dayton that winter and stayed on his job, again frequenting the flying field in the spring of 1911. The class that spring included: Lt. John Rodgers, U.S.N., Lts. Arnold and Milling, U.S. Army, Gill, Bonney, Cal Rodgers and Brindley. By this time he had learned to be more helpful about the field and again soon earned the good will of the class. They always called him "The Kid." Without his knowledge, Cal Rodgers had taken a liking to him for his readiness and willingness to work and learn anything that was to be done at any time. When Rodgers finished his course he purchased a new plane and started out on his own to fly exhibitions. At this time he invited Wiggin to join him as helper and mechanic - he jumped at the chance.

Charles Wiggin was Rodgers' first passenger as they started to fly exhibition dates in western Ohio. From there they went to the famed Chicago

* Mr. Morehouse began this series in the Summer 1959 (Vol. 4, No. 2) issue of the Journal. Biographies presented so far include: W. Brookins, A. Hoxsey, A. L. Welsh, DuVal La Chapelle, R. Johnston, F.T. Coffyn, Max T. Lillie, C. P. Rodgers, Andrew Drew, J. C. Turpin, O. A. Brindley, H. M. Rinehart, P. O. Parmelee, L. W. Bonney, H. W. Gill, G. W. Beatty, Katherine Stinson, H.R. Atwood, Arch Freeman, J.W. Kabitski, DeLloyd Thompson, C.M. Vought, Walter E. Lees, L. Earle Sandt, Elwood "Gink" Doherty, Frank Kastory, Joe Pallissard.

Meet, where Wiggin mingled with and saw all the aviators of the world. After the Meet they stayed around Chicago for a few days carrying passengers and then had a two day exhibition date at Appleton, Wisconsin. Following this, they began to make plans to enter the Wm. Randolph Hearst Transcontinental Race. He was with Rodgers on this famed trip, starting at Sheepshead Bay, L. I., on September 17, 1911, and ending at Long Beach, California December 10th. This expedition proved Wiggin's mettle as an aeroplane mechanic. Nearly every landing meant repairs or serious rebuilding, and involved a tremendous amount of work; but he did his part well and stuck with the task night and day throughout the trip. He stayed in California with Rodgers through the winter months and toward spring they began to carry passengers and fill some exhibition dates.

On April 2, 1912, Rodgers said "Wiggin, I'm going to teach you to fly." They started off on his "second ride" and when in the air Rodgers turned the warp control over to him which he operated for several minutes. The next day Rodgers was killed while flying alone and that ended Wiggin's flying lessons. Mrs. Rodgers went east with Cal's body and Wiggin took care of the wreck, putting it in the basement of the hotel where they were staying. After her return to California, Mrs. Rodgers granted him permission to rebuild the plane, after which it was taken to Dominguez Field, where she intended to sell it. While it was there Wiggin asked permission to taxi it a little at times when there was no wind. The first time he tried it he ran into a large pile of pipe at one side of the field and partially smashed it again. After repairing the damage, Wiggin took it out again, the first nice morning when he was alone. This time as he was taxiing about, the plane suddenly jumped off the ground and before he realized what was happening, was ten feet in the air and heading for the boundary of the field. Remembering that Cal had always said "When you're in trouble and don't know what to do, get yourself some altitude and think it over." He did just that. He had a faint understanding of lateral balance from the little instruction Cal had given him, so he "eased it around" about a five mile circle and brought it back into the field for a safe landing. He taught himself to fly in those few minutes. This was in July, 1912. When Mrs. Rodgers arrived at the field, she was both angry and proud of him. From that start he continued practicing and in due course developed into a full fledged pilot.

Mrs. Rodgers gave him constant encouragement and backing, and after spending the summer in California he headed east, arriving at Cicero Field, Chicago, Ill. about September 1, 1912. There he flew in the annual 1912 Chicago Meet September 12-21 and made a remarkably good showing for a novice. Since rules of the Meet required that all participants hold a license, Wiggin flew and passed his tests at Cicero a few days before the starting date, using the EX Wright. His license, No. 175, was dated October 2, 1912. At the conclusion he was well up with the more experienced aviators in total winnings. September 29th Wiggin left Cicero by air for Peoria, Ill. for an exhibition engagement. On the way he experienced engine trouble and was forced to land at Washington, Ill. with a cracked cylinder. In landing he broke a propeller. At this time he was still flying the Cal Rodgers Model EX Wright Plane.

That month Wiggin headed south for the winter, Early in December, 1912,

Mrs. Rodgers and Wiggin formed the Rodgers Aviation Co. at Atlanta, Ga., and began booking exhibition engagements from there. On January 12, 1913, he attempted a night flight at Tampa, Fla. In the air a jammed rudder control caused him to spiral to the ground, resulting in a smash up. Wiggin was thrown from the machine, but was not seriously injured. After a time he and Mrs. Rodgers were married and they continued to work as a team in their aviation business.

After flying exhibitions in Florida for the remainder of the winter, he shipped his plane back to Cicero Field, Chicago, where he based for summer operations. In June he flew his EX Wright at Cicero, making daily flights, and continued mid-west exhibition engagements for the season. In spring of 1914 he had a special gyro-motored loop tractor built by Joseph Pendhayn. After circling the field he had an accident in landing. The plane turned completely over, caught fire and was destroyed, but Wiggin escaped unhurt. About July 1st he started flying the EX Wright again at Cicero. He remained at Cicero through July, then flew at Cascade, Iowa, August 3rd to 5th. Returning to Cicero, he gave the EX a thorough overhaul, installing stronger spars in the wings, and on August 29th was flying again.

In the winter of 1914 Wiggin shipped south again and formed the Wiggin School of Aviation at Jacksonville, Fla., with H. K. Crowell as assistant instructor. In mid-March, 1915, they were making a flight together to take pictures of the Atlantic Beach Hotel from the air when the elevator broke and jammed in such a way that they could not glide down. Leaving Crowell to operate what controls were left, Wiggin climbed forward on the skids to force the plane into a glide. They were flying at about 250 feet in view of the hotel resort guests. Together they successfully brought the plane down on the water about two miles off shore and were rescued by a motor launch.

Wiggin continued exhibition work until World War I, when he became an instructor at several government flying fields. Toward the end of the war he became an experimental test pilot flying, among other types, the large multi-motored Caproni Bomber. He continued active flying until 1925, after which he made occasional flights in small planes for his personal pleasure. For a number of years Wiggin was associated with Thomas A. Edison and was the originator of the well known "Edison Line" of juvenile furniture. He also patented several inventions of his own while he was with the Edison Co.

Charles Wiggin is one of the real flying pioneers of aviation. He was a celebrated early exhibition pilot and instructor, great admirer and close friend of Lincoln Beachey, and a member of the Early Birds. A devoted friend of Cal Rodgers, he deserves great credit for the very definite part he played in the accomplishment of the first transcontinental flight. He and Mrs. Wiggin are now living at Westport, Conn. and are writing their memoirs, including "The Cal Rodgers Story" which will be released September 17, 1961, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the first east-to-west transcontinental flight across the United States.

HARRY M. JONES (1890 -)

Harry M. Jones was born at Providence, R. I., March 7, 1890. His first love of adventure led him to the sea, then he turned to motorcycle racing. After aeroplane rides with Phil Page and Cliff Webster at the Burgess Co., Marblehead, Mass., Jones was completely absorbed by aviation. As a result, he signed up for a flying course with the General Aviation Co. school at Saugus, Mass. in May, 1912. Instructors there were Harry Atwood and Arch Freeman, using Burgess-Wright planes. Atwood took him for a few rides, then turned him over to Freeman, who taught him to fly. In the same class were H. Roy Waite and Jack McGee. Because of delays when the instructors were away on exhibition dates, Jones did not make his first solo flight until late in the summer. At the age of 22 he had become Rhode Island's first aviator.

In the fall of 1912, Jones learned of a wrecked Burgess-Wright plane in storage at Saugus which was for sale at a bargain. He investigated and bought it, after finding out that a couple of Burgess factory mechanics would help him rebuild it. This was completed in December and he began flying it at once. At this time there was a prize of \$10,000 waiting for the first aviator to land on the Boston Common and Jones was determined to win it. Joe Toy, then Editor of the Boston Post, wanted to help Jones get started and therefore acted as his manager and advisor. On January 2, 1913, after less than three hours solo flying time, he flew from Saugus, over the heart of Boston and landed safely on the Common, the FIRST AND ONLY aviator ever to do so. After actually accomplishing the landing, Jones went to get his prize money but was told the offer was good only during 1912, and since he had landed on January 2, 1913, he could not collect it. However, the feat, together with the accompanying publicity, fired his ambition and now he was anxious to get flying experience and add to his laurels.

This flight got him into another difficulty. Jones had flown and passed his tests for a pilot license in November, 1912, but the licenses had not yet been issued. After landing on the Common, the Aero Club of America held up issuing Jones' license due to his infraction of rules by landing in a public park. Jones' Manager, Toy, was so disturbed by the decision of the Aero Club that he asked them to return the fees and forget it. This action on Toy's part cost Jones his right and privilege of an early license as he deserved.

As a result, Toy then made arrangements for Jones to make a flight to New York, still determined to help him get started. On January 8, 1913, Jones was sworn in by Boston Postmaster E. C. Mansfield as a Special Air Parcel Post Carrier on "Experimental" route No. 604603 from Boston to New York, with stops at Providence, R.I., New London, New Haven and Bridgeport, Conn., and New York.

On January 13th Jones started on this flight from Franklin Park, Boston, carrying 25 pounds of parcel post and a few letters to the Mayors along the route. He also carried packages of Boston Baked Beans which he planned to

distribute on his stops. He reached Providence the first day all in good order, but when he attempted to take off for New London on January 16th, he bogged down in soft ground and smashed up, wrecking his plane, although he was not injured. This necessitated major repairs to the plane and he was not able to leave there until February 15th. From that point on he was beset with fog, bad weather troubles and inexperience, making progress very slow, but he did not give up. His next stop was Mystic, Conn., where he spent the night. Leaving Mystic the next morning, February 16th, he flew over New London and landed at the Connecticut National Guard Camp grounds at Niantic, Conn. He was "weathered in" until February 28th, when he flew to New Haven and landed on the football field at Yale University. Jones was delayed there until March 4th when he flew to Bridgeport. He left Bridgeport March 5th and flew to Rye, N. Y., landing on the golf course. Weather again delayed him until March 9th, when he left Rye and headed for Governors Island, his final destination. While flying at about 1300 ft. five miles west of Rye his engine quit. Descending, he encountered some very gusty air near the ground, hit a sea wall, and came to rest in some mud flats off shore. Jones made the last thirteen miles of his journey by rail to New York, where he faithfully delivered the parcel post to the Postmaster.

Again he had to rebuild his plane, and on March 22nd he left Rye at midnight to fly to Governors Island. This was probably the first midnight cross-country flight ever attempted in the United States. All went well as he flew over the Bronx and Harlem and down over Manhattan. There he encountered a stiff westerly breeze which blew him off course. He became confused and made a landing on the south shore of Long Island, near the present Idlewild Airport, after being in the air about an hour. Again he failed to reach his destination, but had enjoyed the midnight flight. On March 25th he left there, flew over Brooklyn and landed on Governors Island to complete his trip. It had taken him 56 days to fly the 230 miles, but he had delivered the FIRST authorized Air Parcel Post ever to be flown between those two major cities.

Early in June, 1913, he was employed as pilot and advisor for Gerald Hanley, a wealthy Providence sportsman, who had purchased a Curtiss Flying Boat for sport and pleasure. Shortly after the boat was put into operation, Hanley decided he wanted to learn to fly. Curtiss instructor Raymond V. Morris was sent to Providence to teach him, and at the same time he gave Jones additional instruction. Together with Morris, he remained with Hanley for the remainder of the flying season. He had flown approximately 6500 miles that year.

During the winter of 1913-1914 Jones designed and built a flying boat and finished it during the early summer of 1914. He made a copy of the Curtiss Flying Boat hull, used Wright wings, dual chain-driven 3-bladed propellers, and a Sturtevant 6-cyl. engine mounted low in the hull. Some flying was done with this plane, but it did not prove to be a success. Through the winter months of 1914-1915, he built an enclosed fuselage land tractor, using Wright wings and a 6-cyl. Sturtevant engine.

In the spring Jones started a flying school at Squantum, Mass. He finished his new plane about June 1st, and on June 10th flew it over Boston carrying a passenger. On June 18th he had a serious smash up with the new plane and was in the hospital for a few days, but escaped serious injury. By this time Jones was known as the NEW ENGLAND AVIATOR. Following this he joined the Sturtevant Aeroplane Co., first as their field manager and later as a test pilot. He remained there until 1917, at which time his work included acceptance test flying of planes delivered to various government air fields.

During World War I Jones served as a civilian Army flight instructor at Essington, Pa, Lake Charles, La., and San Antonio, Texas, remaining with the service until 1919. After 1919 he was commissioned 1st Lieutenant, then Captain, in the U. S. Army Reserves. That year he established the airport at Old Orchard Beach, Maine, which was to become the hopping off place for many famous trans-Atlantic flights. At Old Orchard Beach, he operated a flying school, did cross country work, and until 1933 had an extremely popular beach resort passenger carrying business with the latest type cabin planes. In that year he became Airport Supervisor for the state of Maine. In that capacity he was instrumental in the development of many airports throughout the state. Later he was engaged in inspection work at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Corp., then at Brewster Aircraft, and finally Wright Aeronautical Corp., where he remained until 1943. At this time he joined the C.A.A. on inspection duties, where he is still engaged today. During his 25 years of flying, he reportedly logged over 10,000 hours in the air, carried over 100,000 passengers and taught many to fly. He held Transport Pilot Certificate No. 2449, Aircraft Class 4M, and holds A and E License M-1570.

A truly sincere and hard working flying pioneer, who has devoted his entire life to aviation in all its phases, he is rightfully deserving of a full measure of credit for his many contributions to its development through the years. During his active flying career, Harry Jones flew over twenty different types of land and water planes. His name appears on the Memorial Plaque at Governors Island, N.Y. with those of other pioneer flyers who made landings there during the early days of aviation. An Early Bird, well known and loved for his congenial and courteous manner, he now lives in Williamsport, Pa.

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MARJORIE STINSON

Born at Fort Payne, Ala., the younger sister of Katherine Stinson, Marjorie became intrigued and envious of Katherine's flying successes and entered the Wright Flying School, at Dayton, Ohio, in mid-June, 1914. She was taught to fly by Howard Rinehart, and by August 1st was ready for her license tests. August 8, 1914 she obtained License No. 303 on a Wright. August 16th she joined Katherine, who was flying at Kansas City, and made her first public exhibition flights there. Together they made their headquarters at Cicero Flying Field, Chicago, Ill. where Marjorie Stinson continued to practice through the fall of

1914.

In 1915 she continued practicing and did some teaching, including instructions for her brother Edward. In May of 1915 she made arrangements to start a mail carrying route between points in Texas, but this did not work out. Toward the end of 1915, she, with Katherine and Edward, established their own flying field and school at San Antonio, Texas, and in January, 1916, they had fourteen pupils. Their school turned out many World War I pilots, both United States and Canadian.

During the summer of 1916 she did considerable flying at various mid-western points. That summer she and Katherine made their exhibition headquarters at the newly established Ashburn Field, Chicago, where they both flew on July 4th. Among her exhibition dates that season were: 3 days at Chicago Heights the latter part of July; Cleveland, Ohio, September 2 - 9th; Napoleon, Ohio, September 18th and at Ashburn Field, Chicago, October 30th. In September, she started, in addition to her Wright, flying a new 50 Gnome tractor built for her by Walter Brock.

In 1917 the Stinsons had their school operating, and they organized a group of civilians interested in flight instruction and known as the "Texas Escadrille". Many of these later went overseas in World War I. At that time Marjorie Stinson was known as "The Flying Schoolmarm". She continued to train students at the Stinson School through 1918. After World War I, in the spring of 1919, she went with the Navy Department in Washington, D. C., in one of their drafting departments. She remained with the Navy until 1926 and then transferred to the War Department, remaining there until she retired in 1936.

Following this, she did some writing for various aviation magazines. While her flying career was distinctly less sensational than that of her sister Katherine, Marjorie Stinson nevertheless deserves full credit for her courage as an early pioneer woman pilot and instructor. She is a member of the Early Birds, still living in Arlington, Va.

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BERNARD L. WHELAN (1890 -)

Bernard L. Whelan was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 19, 1890. He attended the University of Dayton, and was employed by the National Cash Register Company before taking up aviation. He joined the Wright Flying School at Simms Station in the spring of 1913 and started training early in June. He was taught to fly by Oscar Brindley and proved to be an exceptional pupil, making his first solo flight on the eighth day after starting his instruction. He obtained Pilot License No. 247 there July 16, 1913, on a school Wright.

Whelan continued flying practice until spring of 1916, when he became an instructor at the Wright School, on the site which later became McCook Field. There, through 1916 and 1917, they trained a number of students, including many

Canadians under contract by the government.

When the Dayton-Wright Co. was formed in mid-summer of 1917, he joined it, with Howard Rinehart, on the staff of test pilots and remained until 1923. After World War I, Whelan assisted in the testing of a number of new post-war Wright aeroplanes, did some instruction work and considerable cross country flying as a personal pilot for Mr. Kettering and Col. Deeds, both company executives.

In 1923 he and Rinehart formed the Rinehart-Whelan Co. and established their business at the old Dayton-Wright Field at Moraine City, south of Dayton. They planned to engage in passenger carrying, training, photography, overhaul and sale of aircraft, engines and parts. It was not long until they got the urge to build a plane of their own design. They brought out a two-seater sport machine and did some flying with it, but it was not a success and the project was abandoned. This partnership was dissolved in 1928. Whelan also did considerable cross country flying for Col. Deeds, who had purchased a private twin-engine Sikorsky.

After the Rinehart-Whelan Co. dissolved, Whelan became an active pilot for the United Aircraft Corp., East Hartford, Conn., where he remained until 1931. About this time Hartford was building a new municipal airport and he became manager there, remaining until 1943 when he became General Manager of Sikorsky Aircraft, Stratford, Conn. where he still is today.

Bernard Whelan is an Early Bird, Transport Pilot No. 585, with thousands of flying hours to his credit without a serious accident. A very active early pilot who loved to fly, he has devoted his entire life to aviation and well deserves the place he holds in the industry today. His name appears on the Wright Memorial Plaque in Dayton.

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FARNUM T. FISH (1893 - 1917)

Farnum Fish was from Los Angeles, California. He built a glider there in late 1910, in which at 17 years of age he made some towed flights. He entered the Wright School at Dayton, Ohio, in the fall of 1911 and was taught to fly by Al Walsh and Cliff Turpin. Flying a Wright, he obtained Pilot License No. 85 on January 10, 1912 at Dayton. He immediately purchased a machine and started exhibition flying on his own.

As an amateur flyer he flew in his first air meet at Dominguez Field, Los Angeles, January 20-28, 1912. He was 18 years old but made a remarkable showing at once, specializing in daily endurance flights and carrying passengers. When the event ended, he was second in hours flown during the meet. Following this, he flew in an air meet at the Emeryville Race Track, Oakland, California on February 17-21, and again made a good showing. That winter he

kept his aeroplane in a special hangar he had built at the Vernon Race Track near Los Angeles.

About the first of April Fish started flying at the Polo Grounds, Coronado, San Diego, carrying passengers and also flying in a small local meet held there. On April 14th he flew non-stop from San Diego to Dominguez Field, Los Angeles, 130 miles. May 12th he began flying at Cicero Field, Chicago, Ill., and on May 17th was arrested for landing without sanction in Grant Park, Chicago. May 26th he flew over water from Chicago to Milwaukee, Wisc. to take part in a meet there. The distance was 80 miles, flown in 2 hours, carrying 50 pounds of silk from the Boston Store, Chicago. He returned to Chicago and flew in the opening day meet at Cicero on May 30th.

In June 1912, Fish became Assistant Instructor for Harry Atwood at Atwood Park, Boston, Mass. There he flew in the Boston meet, June 29 - July 7, entering major events and carrying passengers. Through July and August, in addition to his work with Atwood, he also flew exhibitions and carried passengers around Boston. On August 30 he started flying a several days engagement at Bethlehem, Pa., carrying passengers. Following this, he flew in the Chicago meet at Cicero Flying Field and Grant Park, September 12 - 22, where he was active in all the major events. When the meet ended, he was awarded first prize for total time flown during the meet.

He did not fly actively during 1913 and 1914, but in 1915 started flying for J.S. Berger, exhibition booking agent, and in March of that year was sent to Mexico by Berger, along with Howard Rinehart and Eugene Heth, to fly for Villa. Berger had contracted to procure and sell aeroplanes to Villa and supply flyers for them. That spring, on one of his flight missions for the Villa forces, he found himself at 500 feet over a garrison of enemy troops. For a few moments he was in continuous rifle fire and was hit in four places. He succeeded in getting back to his base, and just as he landed, fell forward over the controls, totally exhausted. He was bleeding badly and his machine was spattered with blood back to the tail. He was not dangerously wounded, but he very nearly lost control of the plane due to loss of blood. He recovered in a few days, but the experience satisfied his ambition for this kind of flying and he returned to his home in Los Angeles to recuperate.

He did some flying in 1916, and on June 11th and 12th made flights at the dedication ceremonies of the new aviation buildings at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in Cambridge, Mass. Through July he toured the New England States giving exhibitions and carrying passengers. In late July he offered his services to the Government, and as a result, became a civilian World War I instructor during the spring of 1917. While engaged in this, he lost his life in a student training accident at one of the government flying fields.

Early in his flying career, Farnum Fish became known as the "Boy Aviator." He was a natural born flyer and loved to fly. His boyhood antics led him into trouble several times in 1912 and his license was revoked for a few days for reckless flying. Strangely enough, he said he took up flying for his health. His name appears on the Wright Memorial Plaque at Dayton along with the other pioneer aviators who learned to fly there.