

"Women Can Fly Too"

Only Viking stock, America, the twentieth century could have produced Florence Gunderson Klingensmith, the woman transport pilot who died proving that women can fly on an equal basis with men.

Any person, man or woman, who saw the beautiful race she was flying (or read about it in the papers) when she pulled out of the course knows she amply proved what she set out to prove, and knows that only the tearing of the wing fabric in the greatly overpowered racer she flew and not her magnificent flying ability caused her to crash.

Her story, fine, courageous epic that it is, deserves a proud place among records of human glory, more particularly even, in the history of feminism, since her heroic death so concretely points up the tragic psychological situation which comes about when a woman pilot is denied, because of her sex, the chance to compete with men on an equal footing. At the National Air Races in Chicago in 1930, held also at Curtiss Airport, I talked with Florence Klingensmith and I think I understand a little of the eager defiance which prompted her entry in the Phillips Trophy race. At the time I spoke with her she was airport hostessing for a living in trick French blue and brass buttons. Her state of mind was exactly that of a male pilot who has been condemned to running a barbershop at an airport.

What a story hers is!

At thirteen Florence Klingensmith learned to drive a car and at sixteen she was putt-putting around Fargo, N.D., on a delivery motorcycle for a local store. Later they gave her a truck, but discharged her for getting too many speed tickets. So she swapped the cab of a truck for the saddle of a bronc and rode the range in Montana for a while. Then she went to work in a logging camp in northern Minnesota. In October 1929, while I was with Curtiss-Wright I had this letter from her:

"For six weeks I attended a small electrical ground school - a lone girl with four hundred boys. Then, with no cash in hand, I was ready for the flying itself. From March until June 1, I worked as a mechanic's apprentice, and through dirt and grease I worked my way to one solo flight out of every six hours of instruction.

"Still lacking the money to do much flying, parachute jumping was my next move, but it did not prove highly profitable. After spending three months glued to the ground, I promoted a boosters' flying club which proved unsuccessful. From that came the idea to promote my own plane. After three months of hard talking, discouragement and persistency I won out with \$3,000 in hand. With this and advances from advertisers, I was able to buy a Monocoupe and had enough money left over to take care of overhead expenses. I flew my airplane home from the factory myself, and have been flying steadily, ever since.

"On July 6 I secured my limited commercial license, and since then I have carried a great number of passengers. I am now ready for a transport license; have had experience on several types of ships; and recently competed in my first race, placing fourth. I have had to be my own mechanic, and my own ticket seller in addition to flying my own plane. It has been a hard ladder to climb, but I love it more than anything else in the world."

When she took her first parachute jump, I understand, she hit the ground unconscious from fright and had to be carried from the field. The next day though she was back on the job again ready to make another jump. Small wonder she was able to convince the business men of Fargo with her "I'll risk my neck if you'll risk your money" argument.

As operations manager of the Fargo Airport she organized meets and flew in them. Later she looped her plane 143 times of the Fargo airport for what was then the woman's world record. In the fall of 1930 she went to Minneapolis as airport hostess for Northwest Airways and wore the aforesaid trim, brass-buttoned uniform. She later had the title of traffic manager, but always most of the work of this woman who was called "Treetops" by her friends was ground work. Still she earned enough money to pay fuel and hangar rent on a ship of her own and got in hours in quantity outside of her working day.

Her looping record had started a friendly contest with Laura Ingalls of New York. They surpassed each other consistently until, in June 1931, Florence Klingensmith looped 1,078 times to a record which still stands for women. For 5 hours and 12 minutes she kept her plane performing a continuous series of loops. In 1932 she won the Amelia Earhart Trophy in a woman's race at the National Air Races in Cleveland.

At the International Air Races this year on September 3d, her 27th birthday as it happened, she placed second in an all-woman's race. The account of her final

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race the next day against men and the conventions of her profession was given in the Chicago Daily News in a fine, unsigned story. Here is what its writer said in part:

"As the powerful planes stretched out in battle for position, the lone woman who had dared to match skill with the best pilots in racing clung tenaciously to fourth place, cutting pylons sharply. Actually, she took the turns far more sweetly than anyone else flying. At the moment she left the course she was averaging 220.65 miles per hour.

"Just before taking off in the race, Florence Klingensmith said, 'I have been flying five years, three of them in national competitions. This is the first time, of course, that I have had such stiff competition, but then my entry in this race is the first by any woman in such a class. I don't know that I will win, but I do know that I will place. The plane is fast enough and I can fly it.'

"It was suggested that many of her sex were perhaps able to pilot a ship, but had very little idea as to what was inside of a motor or how a plane was put together.

"'Oh but I have,' she replied, 'Ask the men if I don't know all about planes. Ask them if I don't do all my own mechanical work. I learned planes from the ground up. I'm as good with a plane as any man.'

Frank Phillips of Oklahoma who sponsored the race for which there was a \$10,000 purse as well as a trophy summed up the general feeling about the outcome of Florence Klingensmith's entry in the race thusly: "This young woman paid with her life for the privilege of pioneering for progress. As a soldier for aviation she had long since counted the cost and held it cheap. Her death was at once a challenge and an inspiration to carry on in the conquest of space."

Amy Mollison Flies American Transport Planes

"She can fly by instruments as well as any co-pilot on the line," was the verdict of one of the Transcontinental and Western Airline pilots after Amy Mollison had completed her guest co-piloting job over a run from Newark to Los Angeles. All the way out the pilots had let her have the controls of the 12-passenger Ford most of the time and she made landings at some of the airports along the route. At Los Angeles, as a passenger, she tried "talking in a normal voice" in one of the new quiet high speed Douglass Transports built for T.W.A.

Previously this Englishwoman had co-piloted an 18-passenger Condor from Greenville, S.C., to Atlanta, Ga., when she flew on an inspection tour over Eastern Air Transport from Newark to Atlanta and return. Mrs. Mollison also took over the controls of one of the ten-passenger Stinsons on Boston-Maine Airways, on one of its regular nine-o'clock runs.

Various reasons why Amy Mollison took on these co-piloting stints have been given—not that any woman pilot in her right mind was ever known to turn down such golden opportunities as those. Probably though she was motivated by reasons in addition to that primary instinct of all pilots to build up transport flying time. She is, for example, keenly interested in the development of commercial aviation—more so than in private flying—and feels that in this country we are at least two years ahead of England in that respect. She was especially interested in observing our progress in night flying, instrument flying and in the speedy functioning of our ground service. Her co-piloting, on the other hand, offered an excellent opportunity for intensive practice on "big stuff" for the flight which she and her husband plan to undertake shortly, and on which she hopes to relieve him for long periods at the controls of the twin-engined De Haviland plane.

Airplane Demonstrator and Saleswoman

(Item VI - Bread and Butter and Aviation Series)

Beginning back in 1929 on Curtiss Robins, Frances Harrell Marsalis has demonstrated Moths, Cessnas, Travelairs, Curtiss Fledglings, and Thrushes and Birds. She probably has had more comprehensive experience as a demonstrator and saleswoman of airplanes than any other woman in aviation. Between sales, which never did grow on bushes so to speak, she has instructed students, ferried ships, made one notable endurance flight together with Louise Thaden and raced ships at national and local meets. In 1930, as the woman member of the Curtiss-Wright Exhibition Team, she won front rank position among American exhibition fliers regardless of sex. Today she is demonstrating and selling ships at Roosevelt Field, Mineola, L.I., for Waco Sales of New York and hopping passengers when sales prospects are scarce.

Frances Marsalis has to her credit a number of actual airplane customers signed up on the dotted line as proof of the patience, persistence and A to Z performance knowledge of different types of planes, all of which are essential in making sales. Several women's names are on the list since women pilots who are buying ships as a rule like to buy from a woman whenever possible.

From Porto Rico's Woman Pilot

(Clara E. Livingston, transport pilot, formerly of Jamestown, N.Y., owns an airport, runs an aviation service and grows fruit in the West Indies. She does not like water jumps, but what can you do, she asks, when you can fly clear around your own island in two hours. Last month she flew herself and a passenger to the Los Angeles races.)

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"Two years ago I first flew my ship down here, with my instructor, in the hope of developing commercial aviation. We started the Porto Rico Aviation Company but found little interest in the matter and my instructor soon went back to the States leaving such few charter trips, etc., as turn up from time to time to me. Most of these trips

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are to the neighboring islands of St. Thomas and one was to Santiago de Cuba. The latter was an emergency matter or I would not have undertaken two overwater jumps.

Apropos water jumps, I would like to mention that I do not have one word to say in their favor although I have some 25 of them between islands; and I never recommend them to prospective passengers. I take all possible precautions - life preservers, a collapsible boat, and best of all, whenever possible I fly beside one of the Pan American planes so that their radio can report any forced landings.

I got my private license in October 1930 at the Curtiss School at Valley Stream. The next summer I bought my Rearwin Ken Royce (with Challenger motor) and got an L.C. license that fall. Then I flew home and built up enough time during the winter to get my transport in June 1932.

It's hard to make much of a story of our trip to the Los Angeles Races, for everything, including the blessed old Challenger, ran with such uneventful smoothness! There were delays waiting for good weather, for I admit I'm still a "fair weather pilot", having had only a little blind flying. But we didn't mind much for we had no schedule and were simply out to see the country.

Mrs. Adolph Wolf, whose husband is an associate justice in the Supreme Court here, was my passenger all through the trip. She does no flying herself, but has had a good many hours in the air. I think she was particularly brave to undertake the water crossings with me, as she had already had the experience of a forced landing in the water and still had a clear memory of the large shark which followed them for miles as they were towed into port.

The route from here to Miami is always the same, Santo Domingo, Port-au-Prince, Santiago de Cuba, Havana, Miami. From there we went through Pensacola, New Orleans, San Antonio, El Paso, Douglas, Yuma and San Diego to Los Angeles. This took about 51 hours. Another 69 hours brought us home via San Francisco, Reno, Salt Lake City, Cheyenne, Omaha, Chicago, Nashville, Atlanta and Jacksonville. We planned to leave Haiti with the Pan American Airways ship on July 26, but heard that a hurricane was hovering very near Porto Rico on that date so waited for the next P.A.A. ship July 28. Anyway we were two days ahead of our promise to return before the open season for Caribbean hurricanes which is supposed to begin August 1st. We had left here on May 30th.

Yes, I'm the only woman pilot here, the only other pilot, with the exception of the pilots of the P.A.A., being a Porto Rico boy who is flying a Standard. I might mention also that my own field is the only one beside the P.A.A. field. As I said before, they are not air-minded here. Clara E. Livingston

To Date Data on Women Pilots (Total 605 -- 64 Transport -- 43 Limited Commercial -- 1 Industrial -- 497 Private and Solo)

September's record has two new transports, 2 new limited commercials and 5 new pilots to show for itself. Bernice Blake of Manchester, N.H., who has been flying since 1929, is her state's only woman pilot. Her change from L.C. to transport brings New England's total of woman transports up to six; the others being, Maude-Irving Tait, Nancy Hopkins Tier, Mary Moore Sansom, Edna M. Gardner and Edith E. Descomb. H. Lockhart Cortright, former L.C. pilot of Pethayres, Pa., is the other new transport....Margaret Spitz, 18-year-old Detroit pilot, and Pansy Bowen of Visalia, Calif., are the new limited commercial pilots. The 5 pilots not previously listed are Bessie Owen of Santa Barbara, Calif., Yvonne Beatlie, 16-year-old Calif. pilot; Dorothea Maloney, Private, Westbury, L.I., N.Y.; Mrs. Walter B. Selmer, San Marino Co., Calif.; Mrs. G.O. Darden, and Mrs. Wray Smith, Atlanta, Ga.

Women Pilots and the NRA

Sixteen women pilots gave an aerial parade of the Blue Eagle over Manhattan on September 11th lead by Elinor Smith, chairman of the aviation committee of the women's division of the New York City NRA. The woman's flying squadron organized by Clema Granger during the Buy American First campaign took the air again recently in the name of NRA's Blue Eagle.

Amelia Earhart attended the NRA hearing on the code for pilots. She protested a section of the code which states "members of the code agree not to initiate service between cities already served by another member, over an identical route." That, she argued would create a monopoly and would prevent establishment of new air lines.

Meets, Shows and Records

Ten women pilots took off from Roosevelt Field in massed flight for the Fifth Canadian Air Pageant at St. Hubert's, Montreal. Amy Mollison led the group made up of Manila Davis, Betty Gillies, Annette Gipson, Una Kimmey, Frances Marsalis, Helen McCloskey, Peggy Remey, Helen Richey, Jean Trunk.

The woman's race for the Walter E. Olson Trophy at the International Air Races in Chicago was won by May Haizlip, woman's speed record holder, in a Wasp-powered Weddell-Williams, averaging 191.11 m.p.h. Florence Klingensmith, who led the winner in a Whirlwind Gee Bee on two laps of the five lap race over a ten-mile course, came in second. Margaret Bowman in a Wasp, Jr. Gee Bee, and Henrietta Lantz in a Gypsy-powered Howard Special came in third and fourth respectively.

At the American Legion Air Circus at Bowles Agawam Airport in Springfield, Mass., on September 1, Mary Sansom, Transport of Hartford, Conn., made good her promise to win back the looping record for Connecticut women outside the state since contests of the sort inside have been forbidden. Having lost the record to Edith Descomb with 376 loops on May 29, a week after she had boosted it to 246 loops, Mrs. Sansom took it back with 397 successive loops.

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Mary Wiggins, licensed pilot of Los Angeles and professional daredevil par excellence broke into the news reels recently when she helped smash up a couple of old locomotives. She was featured performer at the Brockton, Mass., state fair and September 14 was called Mary Wiggins Day in her honor.

Aline Rhonie Brooks, Betty Gillies, "Tiny" Goddard and Frances Marsalis will make an exhibition flight for the New York Junior League's benefit for their home for crippled children on September 20th. They will drop 10,000 handbills advertising the benefit as well as little red parachutes with free tickets attached.

Elimination contests are now being held throughout the country in preparation for the National Charity Air Pageant at Roosevelt Field on October 7 and 8. Four men and four women from each state will be eligible for the flying championships. Two men and two women will be chosen from each state for the finals in bomb dropping. There will be headquarters for 99s at the Field.

The three women pilots who qualified at Framingham, Mass., on September 9 to represent Massachusetts are Margaret Kimball, Lexington; Barbara Southgate, Framingham; "Teddy" Kenyon, Waban.

An Upstanding Flying Family

The three sons of Clema Granger, husband-taught pilot, are all busy getting in time for their flying licenses. Jim Granger, Sr., has taught hundreds of students and has never had a solo student damage a ship. He holds Transport License No. 395. James Jr. has been flying gliders since 1930; Harry's flying dates back to Jenny days. Although he was an adept student his father refused to solo him because of his extreme youth. Norman, the third son, soloed in 4½ hours. All together, under the able direction of Jim, Sr., this flying family operates and has been operating steadily for the past seven years, a flying service at Clover Field, Santa Monica, Calif. They are offering one week's free hangar space to any 99 member from outside Los Angeles County who flies her ship to Santa Monica.

Under the Wing of the Government

Inspired by the "sky appeal" of Amelia Earhart and Amy Mollison in promoting goodwill for their respective countries, the French ministry of the air has selected Maryse Hilsz, French woman pilot as the French Ambassador of the Air. The first official flight of Mlle. Hilsz, who holds the world's solo endurance record for women and has made several long distance flights, will be made in the fast Breguet used by Codos and Robida in their flight from Paris to Hanoi. The same biplane was used in carrying the first air mail across the Sahara and in winning the Bibesco cup. This distinguished ship, which has a single 650 h.p. motor in it, is the property of the French government. Miss Hilsz's assignment to fly it shows how definitely the government has taken her under its wing.

Other women pilots who have done their flying more or less under the wing of the government are Berta Moraleda of Cuba and Emma Encinas of Mexico. Herta Junkers of Germany is now doing some educational flying among young Germans in cooperation with the government. And all of Russia's women pilots fly under the wing of the government both before and after they graduate from the civil aviation schools. Most of them are engaged in commercial aviation. They fly planes which sow fields from the air or planes with apparatus for spraying insects. The second most popular division is flying the air mail, while the least interesting type of job open to Russian women fliers is flying on the transport lines.

N.B. The additional data which has been assembled on the subject of the physical fitness of women to fly commercially is being held up until next month when some very interesting news which ties in with the subject will probably be ripe to break.

Flying News Notes: Elliott Roosevelt, who is aviation editor for the Hearst newspapers, recently told Amy Mollison that Mrs. Roosevelt wanted to learn to fly some months ago it seems but her husband put the brakes on a bit. However as soon as his brothers have finished school all three of her sons plan to get together and teach the President's wife to fly. The Englishwoman thought that pretty splendid since of all the British Royal family only the Prince of Wales flies and his brother a bit... Mrs. Ursula Hanson is making an aerial survey of the upper reaches of the Amazon. She plans to open a British empire air route to the Pacific....Einette Heaton, a 17-year-old American girl is learning to fly at Heston Airdrome, London....Some of the most engaging photographs ever taken of the Lindberghs have come from Scandinavia, particularly the one on a boat leaving Lerwick, Shetland Islands, for Copenhagen, and the one of Anne warming that good "sending fist" of hers in her coatsleeve....Margaret Spitz, Detroit L.C. pilot, who goes in for looping her cabin Stinson, recently flew it to Atlantic City in 4 hours and 4 minutes. While there on her summer vacation she was made a lifeguard.

From Pennsylvania: Lockhart Cortright of Bethayres, new Transport pilot is being married on September 20 to Bill Page, also a Transport. They have a Moth and a brandnew Plymouth, a sweet little house and many possibilities. The wedding will be a gala affair. Sylvia Nelson, L.C. pilot of Ardmore, Pa., will be maid of honor and some of the groom's pilots friends will usher. Honeymoon plans are secret, probably aeronautical....Cornelia Jones, former pilot and 99, of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, is also being married this month. After her marriage she expects to move to Wyoming and live on a cattle ranch....No air meet is complete without one or both of Pittsburgh's flying Helens, and their flying activities promise to be as extensive as ever what with Helen Richey trading her old ship off for a very bright red Cessna with a J-5 in it and Helen McCloskey buying a beautiful new Monocoupe....Downie Tepsic, a

Pittsburgh solo pilot, has more than 43 hours toward her L.C. She has also made three parachute jumps, and like Mary Elizabeth Owen, Transport Pilot, parachute jumper and rigger from Texas, she finds jumping more thrilling than stunt flying....Mary Tillotson of Philadelphia has been keeping up her flying all summer down on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and most of the natives are quite accustomed to having her and her husband hop in and out of their vegetable patches....Dorothea Leh, who is 99 Governor for the Middle Eastern Section, an L.C. pilot, and husband John H., are stepping out to Chicago this month. They wanted to fly but decided to drive instead in order to have the car to go places in at the Fair.

From California: "Poncho" Barnes of San Marino, Calif., returned from a recent trip to Mexico with the official title of General in the Mexican Army!....Genevieve Haugen of Los Angeles is engaged to Henry Clive, the distinguished artist....Pansy Bowen, new L.C. pilot, is no longer in charge of the Government Weather Bureau at Visalia, Calif., as it has been abolished as part of the economy program....The newspapers were mistaken, it seems, about Thyra Merrill's marriage announced in the May issue....Clover Field, Santa Monica, serves as a flying base for a number of 99's, including the sectional governor, Margaret Cooper, Elliotte Roberts, Esther Jones. Henrietta Summer has moved her Travelair there, and Georgialee McGaffey and her husband have transferred their Bird there from Mines Field. Bessie Owen and her new Stinson are recent newcomers from Santa Barbara at Clover Field. Ruth Nichols has been a frequent visitor during her stay in California....99s who are trying their hand at motorboat racing are Ruth Stewart, Adoree Neville and Clema Granger....Miss Schimmoler, 99 Secretary-Treasurer, of Ohio has decided to settle down in California.

ABOUT THE NINETY-NINES

National Election Returns, 1933

Ninety-Nine officers for the coming year, as reported by Betty Huyler Gillies, chairman of the ballot committee, are:

President - Margaret Cooper, Beverly Hills, California
Vice-President - Gladys O'Donnell, Long Beach, California
Secretary-Treasurer - Lauretta M. Schimmoler, Glendale, California

Lauretta Schimmoler Wants Dues Now

While election of the new governors could not be held until after the national officers were voted on, dues are payable to present officers for the current year. Send \$2.50 to your governor immediately. The increase of fifty cents covers a subscription to the Ninety-Niner. The little magazine is the best bond the club has and it is going to try to be self-supporting on part of each member's fees plus non-member subscriptions at \$1 each.

Governors as well as all 99 members please note that the new address of the Secretary-Treasurer, Lauretta M. Schimmoler, is: General Delivery, Glendale, Calif.

New Members: Yvonne Beatlie, Calif.; Jacqueline Cochran, recently of Long Beach, Calif., now of New York City; Margaret Gilmartin, New York City; Clara B. Gilbert, New York City; Elvy Kalep, New York City; Dorothea Maloney, Westbury, L.I.; Ethel Anne Sheehy, Fontana, Calif.; Dorothea E. Wilson, Hollywood, Calif.

Sectional News

New England Section: A special meeting was called by the governor, Maude-Irving Tait, on August 26 at the Springfield Airport for the purpose of answering the questions brought up at the national meeting of the 99s. There were ten members present; including, Cecile Tierney of Quincy, Mass., who was attending her first 99 meeting.

Mildred H. Chase, Sectional Reporter

Southwestern Section: Capt. Peter Freuchen was guest speaker at the August meeting of the Los Angeles Chapter. He is a Danish Whaling captain and ship owner, as well as a noted explorer and writer, and is mapping the air route from Chicago to Denmark via Greenland for Pan American Airways. Ruth Nichols of New York attended the meeting and outlined several constructive suggestions regarding the constitution.

A 99 benefit bridge party will be given on September 30 at Edith Clark's home. Eighty tables will be sold for \$2 each. The proceeds will go to a Courtesy Fund for helping members keep their licenses.

The Northern Chapter held its annual election of officers. The new chairman is Harriet Isaacson. Marjory Hook is secretary-treasurer. Genevieve Haugen, Sectional Reporter

You Can't Keep a Young Girl Down

Most enthusiastic passenger of Mrs. Madeline Johnson of Atlanta, Ga., is her daughter Madeline, Jr., aged two; while Donna Patrick, aged 12 days, recently flew from her home in Alliance, O., to Cleveland in the arms of her mother with her father at the controls. She slept peacefully through the flight, but burst into tears after landing.