

# Wright "B" Flyer, Inc.

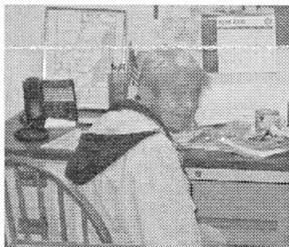
## WRIGHT LANDINGS



### FREDDIE KLEFEKER

#### Freddie Klefeker Passed Away Feb 26, 2009.

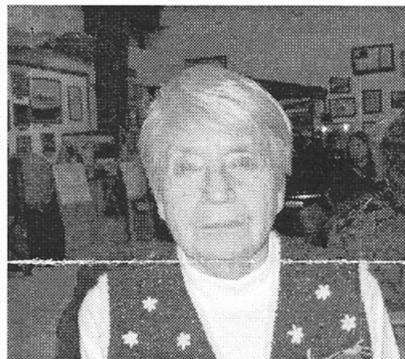
Freddie was born into a large, upper class, East German family. Her early days were filled with siblings, horses, boarding schools, music lessons, and love. During WWII, Freddie's father was a target of the Russian Army, as he was a leading German industrialist. As a teenaged Freddie, her younger, deaf brother, and her sister narrowly escaped when the Russian Army captured her family & their farm. They spent weeks crossing the countryside and hiding from the army, and eventually made it to Berlin. Here, they restarted their lives.



Freddie at work on cross-word puzzle

Freddie's Berlin was like nothing we've ever experienced. When suffering from anemia, Freddie went to an army barracks for medical treatment. Short of iron supplies, they recommended she eat as much raw liver as possible. Freddie took college classes in Berlin, where one of the requirements for all college students was that they assisted in knocking extra mortar off of bricks for the rebuilding of the city. Freddie was married for a short time, but when she was offered the opportunity to move to Dayton, OH, she seized it.

Arriving in Dayton, Freddie worked many different day jobs, all the while putting herself through night classes at



Freddie at Christmas Party

University of Dayton. Upon receiving her accounting degree, she began working for the Beerman Company. She loved that job very much, and was close with the Beerman family. Freddie was also able to reconnect with her love of horses when she discovered the Miami Valley Hunt Club. It was here that she met many

Work has continued throughout the Winter with the Silver Bird. Jim Stoutemayer has been working on the difficult job of wiring while others have been working on the drive train (chain) system and working to complete the remainder of the plane. The plane should be complete this spring to allow taxi tests to begin when the weather becomes warm

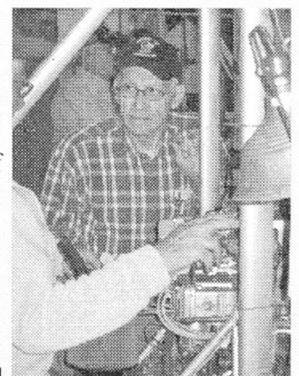


Jim chokes on wire!

enough. Although the "schedulers" are anxious to have the plane appear at events this spring and summer it will still have to undergo a thorough flight test as required by the FAA prior to any events or carrying of passengers. Then, and only then, if it becomes the first plane in history to not require any modification or tweaking (redesign) it will be on its way to its busy schedule of events.



Smile, Freddie!



You want it where?

### SILVER BIRD NEARS COMPLETION

## SIGNAL CORPS # 1

Next Spring the Silver Bird will travel to Ft Sam Houston, Texas to recreate the first flight of Signal Corps #1 by Lt Benjamin Foulois on March 2, 1910.

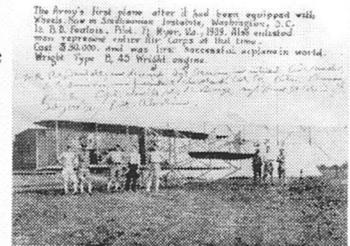
Shown at right is a photo of Signal Corps #1 (SC1) with the ground crew. This aircraft and crew is essentially the entire United States Air Force circa 1910. The crew shown consists of (L-R): Pvt. Glenn R. Madole, Sgt Herbert Marcus, Pvt. R. W. Brown, civilian mechanic Oliver G. Simmons, Pvt. Felix Clarke, Cpl Vernon L. Burge, Sgt Stephen J. Idzorek, and Pvt. William C. Abolin.

In August 1910 Simmons and Madole had added the tricycle gear to SC1, eliminating the need for the catapult launching system. The new wheels were only partially successful. The same month, the Wrights displayed a plane at Asbury Park, NJ, with two pneumatic tired wheels and elastic cords which acted as shock absorbers. The Army subsequently bought a set of "Wright wheels" and added them to the plane.

Lt Foulois tried to keep Mr. Simmons employed by the Signal Corps by offering

him a raise to \$2000 per year, but was told "no" by the CSO. Mr. Simmons went to work for Robert Collier and later founded the National Tool Company of Cleveland. He also flew the first airmail in New Jersey from South Amboy to Perth Amboy on July 4, 1912.

Vernon L. Burge became the first enlisted pilot in 1912 when Lt Frank Lahm taught him to fly while stationed in the Philippines. In Aug 1912, Cpl Burge received aviator's certificate #154.



Signal Corps #1 and Crew

## FREDDIE KLEFEKER (CONT)

of her life-long Dayton friends. Eventually, she bought her horse, Martel, who was the love of her life. They traveled together to hunts all across the Midwest. Freddie was very proud of her keen understanding of finances, and used this in both her professional and personal lives. She eventually became the CFO of a local 3M distributor. She avidly tracked and traded stocks, and joked often that she ran her own little hedge fund. Freddie served as the treasurer and then president of her condo association until the time of her death. Freddie also kept her mind sharp by doing the crossword puzzle, playing word games, and reading.

After her retirement, Freddie became very active in the Dayton volunteer community. She loved the Humane Society & SICSA and supported both organizations. She was a long time volunteer at both the Cox Arboretum and the Wright "B" Flyer hangar. Freddie also was a long time member of the Friendship Force, and through this organization she traveled to many countries and entertained countless guests from other countries visiting Dayton.

Although she had lived in the United States for more than fifty years, Freddie

never lost her distinctive, German accent. After years of answering questions about her accent, which inevitably led to questions about her past in Germany during the war, Freddie began making up stories about where she was from. Her favorite story was that she was an Eskimo. One Saturday, an elderly woman named Ursula stopped into the hangar to see the Wright "B." Upon hearing Freddie's accent, she inquired about Freddie's birthplace. Freddie responded that she was an Eskimo. Ursula laughed and told Freddie that she knew better. She correctly identified the region in Germany where Freddie was born and spent her childhood.

Ursula, it turns out, grew up less than 20 miles from Freddie. They knew the same families and had similar experiences during the war. After holding in so many terrible experiences for so many years, Freddie finally found someone who understood what she experienced during WWII. Freddie and Ursula became close friends, talking every week.

Freddie loved the Wright "B" Flyer organization and its people. She began volunteering in 2004 and very, very rarely missed her Thursday & Saturday shifts. She brought doughnuts & snacks for "the guys," and worked hard to know every-



Freddie poses with Neil Armstrong

one's name. Freddie kept the gift shop stocked and operating, and she trained most of the other gift shop volunteers. Callers remembered her by name and looked forward to meeting her when they arrived for their flights.

Freddie was in a car accident in late November and suffered extensive injuries. She spent several weeks in the hospital and rehabilitation. Although she returned home in February, she was still recuperating & healing. She suffered a minor injury in late February and never fully recovered. We were so fortunate to know Freddie, and we will miss her greatly.

## HARRY N. ATWOOD

One of the more interesting, and certainly more publicized events in a Wright "B"-type flyer was Harry N. Atwood's landing on the White House lawn. The landing culminated a busy period for Atwood. He and Charles K. Hamilton completed a record flight from Boston, New London, New York, Atlantic City, Baltimore, College Park, and then Washington. They crashed one plane at Atlantic City on Sunday and then crashed an Army Burgess-Wright at College Park on July 11th. Small wonder Charles Hamilton was reluctant to let Atwood "finish" the flight into Washington in his plane. Atwood purchased the plane from Hamilton and amazed the crowds on July 13th and finally landed on the White House lawn July 14th.

*The following information is extracted from The New York Times articles as well as "How Our Army Grew Wings," by Chandler and Lahm.*

Even in 1911, airplane flights over the city of Washington were so infrequent as to cause considerable stir among government officials as well as the general public. Harry N. Atwood, the well-known civilian aviator, had been promising a flight to Washington for some time. On June 30, he started from Squantum, Mass., and after several stops, reached Atlantic City. Here he damaged his airplane in trying to take off with Charles Hamilton as a passenger. The latter then had his own Burgess-Wright towed behind an automobile from New Britain, Connecticut. In this airplane, the two aviators reached Baltimore where they stopped to refuel and wait for suitable weather.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, Lieutenant Arnold as pilot, with Lieutenant Kirtland as passenger in a Wright machine, flew from College Park over the city and around the Capitol building at an altitude of 2,400 feet. Officials and others immediately assumed that this was the long-awaited Atwood arrival. Roofs of buildings as well as the streets and all open places were quickly occupied by spectators. Nearly 4,000 persons hurried by every available means of conveyance to the Washington Monument grounds. According to newspaper accounts, the Senate was in the midst

of a roll-call, but upon report of "Atwood" arriving, decorous Senators including Lodge, Penrose, and Root deserted the proceedings. In fact the Senate hastily recessed without formality. Vice-President Sherman hurried to an automobile, gathering several of his colleagues on the way, and ignored the speed laws in his eagerness to reach the landing place in time. . . .

. . . . But "Atwood" did not arrive! The two lieutenants turned back to College Park and soon after landing learned of the great commotion their practice flight had aroused.

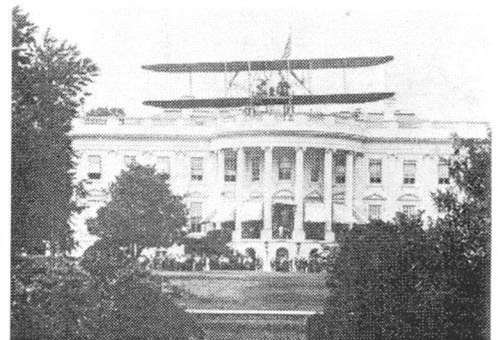
WASHINGTON, July 11—Harry N. Atwood, the Boston Aviator who started on June 30 from that city to fly to Washington, reached College Park, eight miles outside the limits of the capital, at 5:45 o'clock this morning, thereby earning a trophy offered by The New York Times. [Atwood] was accompanied on the last stage of his journey by Charles K. Hamilton, who made the memorable flight from New York to Philadelphia and return last year for The New York Times and who traveled as Atwood's passenger, the final stages of the flight being made in Hamilton's aeroplane, Atwood's having been wrecked in the surf in Atlantic City last Sunday.

At 10 o'clock this morning the aviators returned to the army aviation field at College Park where they were welcomed and congratulated by Capt. Charles DeF. Chandler, commanding the Army Aero Squad, and Lieuts. Arnold, Milling, and Kirtland, the army aviators. After Atwood had been congratulated and had told his story to the officers the new Burgess-Wright aeroplane was wheeled out of the hanger for a test flight. Atwood got into the machine and it skidded along the ground for about fifty yards and then left the ground, climbing to an altitude of about forty feet. On the first turn, just as it was about half completed, the engine stopped dead and the aeroplane crashed heavily to the ground. The planes were wrecked and the underwork badly damaged. It was after the wrecking of this machine that Hamilton decided that his machine had been risked enough and decided to ship it back to Waterbury. Atwood was seen at the New Willard to-night

after his return from College Park and said that the chances of his finishing the flight from College Park to the capital were remote. "I guess it is all off," he said, sadly, "and nobody regrets it half as much as I, for I had my heart set on making the complete trip."

WASHINGTON, July 13—In a flight far more spectacular than his famous ride around New York Harbor, Harry N. Atwood, winner of The New York Times trophy, completed his Boston to Washington Flight at 6:45 o'clock this evening when he flew from the Army Aviation Field at College Park to the Capitol City. At 10 o'clock this afternoon Atwood came to the aviation field at College Park and announced to the correspondents that he had purchased Hamilton's aeroplane for \$3,725 and that he would make the long-postponed flight to Washington at 6 o'clock. . . . Reaching the [Potomac] park Atwood again circled around in the air and then climbed to a thousand feet over the Washington Monument. For a minute the aeroplane seemed to be perfectly still, and then like a flash of lightning it shot down directly for the top of the monument. The spectators shivered, and on all sides persons could be heard saying that Atwood surely would be killed. When the aviator got within ten feet of the top of the monument he gracefully righted the aeroplane and again circled the park, while the crowd below cheered him again and again.

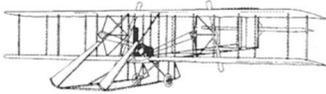
Atwood made his final, most famous trip to Washington on July 14th landing on the White House lawn.



Atwood lands on White House lawn

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Wright "B" Flyer

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## 2009 Schedule

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 6 Jun          | Troy Strawberry Festival                       |
| 20 Jun         | Caesar Creek Expo                              |
| 20 Jun         | Wright-Dunbar Village                          |
| 26 Jun         | Tattoo 2009                                    |
| 27/28 Jun      | Fairborn Heritage Days                         |
| 11 Jul         | Nutter Center                                  |
| 17-19 Jul      | Dayton Air Show                                |
| 25/26 Jul      | Air Venture Cup Race                           |
|                | Commander Aero                                 |
| 25 Jul – 2 Aug | Oshkosh  |
| 29 Aug         | KCGS 100 <sup>th</sup>                         |
|                | College Park, MD                               |
| 7 Sep          | Kettering Holiday at Home                      |
| 12 Sep         | Statue of Liberty                              |
| 18/19 Sep      | WACO Fly-in                                    |
| 19 Sep         | AF Marathon                                    |
| 19 Sep         | Xenia Old Fashioned Days                       |
| 2 Oct          | Porsche Escape – Porsche Club of America (PCA) |
| 5 Oct          | Practical Flight                               |
|                | Huffman Prairie                                |

## A Busy Winter

This has been an extremely busy winter. Progress has continued on the Silver Bird. After the wiring is complete, ground tests and then taxi tests can commence. It is my hope to progress quickly but cautiously through a disciplined flight test program to thoroughly evaluate the new airplane as required by the FAA [and common sense]. We still did not accomplish all I had hoped to accomplish over the winter—cleaning, redecorating, making the hangar look more like a museum. Much remains to be done. Many of the tasks are just not glamorous and are frankly, quite easy to put off to another day. We still are in need of volunteers in all areas. If you are interested, for example, in helping to publish a newsletter, have I got a deal for you. This is definitely one of those tasks “pilots” and “mechanics” seem to have little interest in. Stop down to the hangar when the flying season begins (or before) and ask what you can do to help our organization. We need your help.

Mitch

Please purchase our “Leader in Flight” license plates!



[http://bmv.ohio.gov/vehicle\\_registration/leader\\_in\\_flight.htm](http://bmv.ohio.gov/vehicle_registration/leader_in_flight.htm)