

Barnstorming Airmen Dare Death In Flimsy "Jennys"

Almost Unlimited Ceiling of Today
Was Scant 500 Feet 26 Years Ago



Adventurous pioneer birdman, Charles K. Hamilton, about to take off in the rickety plane that fell into a lake, ending a stunt flight before thrilled onlookers.

Spectacular Flight Of Charles Hamilton In Curtis Biplane Ends In Muddy Lake

"SWOOPING like a rapacious bird from a height of 500 feet, the Curtis biplane, with Charles K. Hamilton, dove into the newly formed lake at The Meadows yesterday. Fenced about with steel rods and the wooden framework of the aeroplane, Hamilton held his seat while the machine turned somersault in the water.

"The biplane with its powerful engine, which had purred about in the air, lay like a stricken thing in the water, with its bicycle wheels turned foolishly upward."

The crazy flight in Seattle of a rickety airplane that reached a ceiling of only a few hundred feet only to come to an inglorious end, bottom up, in a muddy lake, was described by a Seattle newspaper in glowing terms. Hamilton's flying was termed "spectacular" by the crowd



Hamilton's biplane flopped over backwards in the lake, but the aviator managed to escape from his open seat, although hemmed in by rods and struts.



For a time it seemed that Hamilton's attempt would be completely successful, as he soared above the heads of the crowd which had gathered to do him honor, and possibly see his crash. But he reached only a few hundred feet, and after "playing with death," came down to an inglorious "flop" in the water.

which watched him "play with death" as he "soared into the turquoise sky."

But the shadows of events to happen in 1936 were cast 26 years ago by Hamilton, on March 12, 1910, and as time marched on, the muddy

lake found itself between one of the nation's largest airplane factories and one of the finest airports on the Pacific Coast. Where Hamilton pioneered a "jenny" no self-respecting present-day aviator would trust with an ounce of mail, trans-

port planes pause on their coastwise flights. Huge bombers and fighting planes are rolled from the Boeing Aircraft Company to join the army and navy, modernized shadows of Hamilton's efforts.

Aviators Cracked Up Patched Planes; Gave Lives To Blaze Air Trails Of The Future

Barnstorming adventurers once landed in corn fields and meadows in virtually every city on the Pacific Coast. Intrepid, in their way, they pioneered an industry with undying faith in the future. Like Hamilton, they cracked up their patched planes frequently, many losing their lives. The aviators of that day sat precariously in open-air seats, hemmed in with rods and struts until they looked like monkeys in a cage and these strange contraptions that could only attain a height of a few hundred feet, grew to planes with a ceiling of over six miles.

ON the day following his dip in the lake, Hamilton could not get his plane off the ground; the engine was too temperamental. Then the next day the birdman and his manager had a row; there was no flight. March 15 saw Hamilton's manager accusing him of getting drunk and bringing suit for \$8200 against Hamilton for his wrecking of the plane in the lake. But the next day the two men patched up their quarrel long enough to hastily leave town, in the face of threatened suit by holders of rain-checks for the next flight.

It was a turbulent life at best, this barnstorming, but continued for years while rapid strides in aviation were being made. Six years after Hamilton's ignominious defeat and retreat, the Boeing Aircraft Company started business in Seattle in a one-room shop. Twenty years after that modest beginning, today it ranks as one of the world's largest producers of commercial and military aircraft. The modern factory is just beyond the lake where Hamilton dunked his plane.

Beyond the lake is Boeing Field, the King County Airport. And now that lake, the last reminder of Hamilton's flight, is disappearing for the convenience of modern aircraft which need increased landing area. Labor under the WPA is filling the lowland and no more Hamiltons will get wet.

Every industry and science had its valiant pioneers and only their obvious courage saves accounts of their exploits from appearing pathetically comical in view of today's accomplishments. The newspaper of 25 years ago continued its story of Hamilton's daring:

"His exploits were designed to make the crowd gasp. He was making his fourth flight when the accident occurred and throughout the afternoon he had played with death. With a nerve that never shivered, he soared into the turquoise sky, describing a helix as he mounted upward.

"The snarl of the engine softened to a gentle purr as the distance from the earth grew greater (500 feet). Wondering seagulls circled about the aeroplane as if started at the appearance of some strange brother from another world."

IN 26 years that 500-foot ceiling became 27,200 feet for a modern transport; the single, temperamental engine became two, with a total rated horsepower of 1100; the single flyer became a crew of three, ten passengers, baggage and cargo. The flimsy biplane itself became a graceful monoplane with a maximum speed of 202 miles per hour.

Time may march on, but the route of progress is marked by the striving of puny men who didn't give up, washing-out countless planes and lives between the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk, Hamilton at Seattle and perfection in 1936.

Oroville "Wild Man," Last of His Race, Used Stone-Age Weapons

THIS is the strange tale of Ishi, famous as the "wild man of Oroville," an old, half-starved California Indian, who lived as had his ancestors in prehistoric times, killing game with primitive stone-tipped arrows. Ishi was the last survivor of the ancient Yahi tribe.

The scene opened in Oroville, Calif., in August, 1911. Dogs near a slaughter house began a furious barking. A butcher saw an almost naked man crouching in the corral, surrounded by snapping hounds. The dogs were called off, the emaciated copper-skinned Indian was taken by the sheriff to jail, where he was fed and locked up. The stranger understood nothing which was said to him; he had a wild look about him, and no one could say where he came from or who he was.

The story traveled south. Professor T. T. Waterman, anthropologist at the University of California, picked out a list of old Indian words, packed his bag, and rushed to Oroville.

"I'll bet he's a Yahi," he said.

Apparently the old Indian understood none of the carefully chosen words—until the Professor pointed to the frame of a cot and said "si'win'i," which meant "yellow pine." The Indian's face lighted up, he lost his fearful look, and a few minutes later was able to explain in his own tongue that he was the last Yahi Indian on earth. His name was Ishi, or "I am a man."

He was taken to San Francisco, and later to the Department of Anthropology at the University. All he saw was new—he had seen trains at a distance, and thought them devils that chased men over the hills.

Tall buildings did not impress him. Electric lights did not amaze him. But all mechanical gadgets pleased him as they would a child. A faucet that gave out hot or cold water was a miracle, and matches that made fire were useful. In the sky he saw an airplane piloted by Harry Fowler on his attempt at transcontinental flight. "White man up there?" Ishi asked. He was told there was, and shook his head, very much amused.

It seemed impossible that his tribe could have lived so close to civilization without being seen. The explanation was simple. The ancient valleys of the Yahi people were about 40 miles north of Oroville, inhabited by Indians who lived primitive lives. Rumors had drifted in that wild In-



Left: Ishi ("I am a man"), the only survivor of ancient Yahi tribe, as he appeared in civilized garb at the University of California. Right: Proving that he could still shoot after a few years of soft life, Ishi enticed the deer within range with his calls and shot it. He is shown removing one of his stone-tipped arrows from a spot close to the jugular vein.

dians has been seen in the country around Deer Creek.

Largely by accident, about three years before Ishi was found, a group of surveyors discovered a small party of these Indians in that broken section of hills. One naked Indian stood on a rock beside the stream, a double-pronged fish spear in his hand—waiting to strike. He saw the white men, and vanished into the trees. The surveyors returned next day, pushing through



underbrush—and suddenly a stone-tipped arrow smashed into a nearby stone. They had been attacked with a weapon of the stone-age! Continuing, they came upon a hidden camp, where an old man was being helped into the forest by a woman as feeble as himself.

INTERESTED anthropologists went in search of these Indians, but none could be found. They had died, or hidden themselves so well that no white man ever saw them again.

Ishi was a member of this lost tribe. Coming directly from a primitive existence to civilization seemed to affect him very little.

When he died in 1916, his bow and stone-tipped arrows were put beside him. Jars of food were set in his grave for his pilgrimage to the Yahi happy hunting ground. With his passing, the Yahis became a people of the past, their words and deeds unrecorded in any book save for the story that Ishi could relate.