

FROM The RIVER'S EDGE

By
George MacAlevy



Lighter Than Air

I just ran across a notation that it was in July, 1919, that the first East to West transatlantic air crossing was made. This flight was made by a dirigible, the R-34.

This year, 1919, was remarkable for the number of firsts. The first transatlantic flights of any sort was accomplished earlier that year when the flight of the historic NC4 was completed in May of that year. This was a flight of several hops and was filled with all kinds of frustrating experiences. That would be a later story in itself.

In June of 1919, another distance regularly from

transatlantic flight was made in one hop. This was accomplished by a pair of British Royal Flying Corps officers, Alcock and Brown. They flew a World War I bomber, a Vickers Vimy from Newfoundland to Ireland, where they ended up in a bog. Their landing was a trifle unplanned as it happened.

Thus, the flight of the dirigible R-34 was the third first of the year for aerial crossings when the flight of the historic NC4 was completed in May of that year. This was a flight of several hops and was filled with all kinds of frustrating experiences. That would be a later story in itself.

Lakehurst, New Jersey to Friedrichshafen, Germany in an average time of 52 hours.

The German attempt to use the dirigible as bombers in World War I met with little success. Since the rigid airship, or dirigible first became successful under Count von Zeppelin, even today many people refer to all dirigibles as Zeppelins. Perhaps that is the way it should be. He or his firm built more than half of all the rigid airships ever built.

Our first Navy dirigible, The Los Angeles was a Zeppelin, taken from Germany at the end of the war. Britains R-34 was acquired from the Germans in the same way.

The lone attempt at Polar exploration with lighter than air craft also ended in failure when the dirigible Norge disappeared forever over the polar ice cap.

The last dirigible to fly was a Zeppelin as was the first. That was the Graf Zeppelin II. She was scrapped shortly after the outbreak of World War II in Europe by order of Herman Goering.

All of the dirigible experience of Britain and the United States came in the period between the two world wars. The only three large ones built in the United States all perished from structural failure. The first was the Shenandoah which cracked up in a storm over Ohio and Indiana. I had watched her fly over Western Pennsylvania the day before she met her end. Then Goodyear built the two giants, the Akron and the Macon. First the Akron broke up over the Atlantic. Later, the same fate befell the Macon over the Pacific. Both of these ships had systems for launching and retrieving airplanes. They were, in reality, Flying Aircraft Carriers.

Too late to do any good, it was discovered that the early aluminum alloys, known as Duralumin, were subject to stress failure due to intercrystalline corrosion within the alloy. As the acquired German dirigibles lived to a ripe old age, they, the Germans, had solved this problem but had kept the solution to themselves. After the loss of the Akron and the Macon, our Navy was satisfied with the non-rigid type of airship, known as Blimps.

The British built two giant airships also. One, the R-101, was built by the government. The other, the R-100, was built by private enterprise. The famed English Author, Neville Shute, was the chief engineer in building the R-100. His book, Slide Rule covers the life of the R-100 from drawing board to her ultimate scrapping.

Whereas all the Zeppelins had a cylindrical body with a blunt round nose and a tapering tail, the R-100 and 101 was shaped like an elongated football, a radical departure from conventional dirigible design. The R-101 cracked up over France shortly after she was completed. The R-100 was a success story up to that point. When the R-101 was lost, the British Government panicked and scrapped the successful R-100.

We are all familiar with the German passenger dirigibles during the prewar years up to 1940; the two very successful Graf Zeppelins and the tragic Hindenburg.

Had the Hindenburg been filled with Helium, the tragedy would not have occurred. However, the U.S. had a world monopoly on Helium at the time, and since Hitler was rattling the sword rather loudly in those years, we refused to sell any to Germany. The Hindenburg was designed and built to use Helium. There had always been a problem with Hydrogen. The gas bags that hang inside the structure of a dirigible are fabric, and no fabric known at that time was completely leakproof when filled with such a light gas as hydrogen. So there was always a slight amount of escaped hydrogen around these airships. You were always riding on a bomb when in one of them.

Now that the intercrystalline corrosion problem in aluminum alloys has been solved, the price and availability of Helium have also been made an economic feasibility. Will airships ever come back?

Players schedule concert

The Portland Chamber Players will present an open air concert at Mt. Hood Community College Monday, July 31, at 8 p.m.

The music of Mozart, Bartok and Khachaturian will be featured.

The concert will take place in the barbeque area next to the lake on campus.

No admission will be charged. Musicians will include: Marilyn Kregel, violin; Carl Ottobrine, violin; Patricia Miller, viola; Bruce McIntosh, cello; Catherine Palladino, Clarinet; and Sylvia Killman, piano.

The evening of chamber music is a joint production of Musicians Performance Trust Fund Local 99 AF of M, Oregon Arts Commission, National Endowment of the Arts and Mt. Hood Community College.

The concert will be moved to the college theatre in the event of rain.

Horse show set Aug. 4-6

The 17th Annual Half-Arabian Owners Horse Show will be Aug. 4-6 at Clackamas County Fairgrounds, Canby. Exhibitors come from throughout the western states, and Steve Johnson, show manager, expects 300 entries. Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Friday, 8 a.m. Saturday, and at 9 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free.

Promoted

Leon W. Evans, 19, son of Mr. and Mrs. Franklin H. Evans, Rt. 1, Estacada, recently was promoted to Army Specialist Four in Germany, where he is serving with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Evans, a mechanic in 2nd Squadron of the regiment near Bad Kissingen, entered the Army in July 1971, completed basic training at Ft. Lewis, Wash., and was last stationed at Ft. Knox, Ky.

He is a 1971 graduate of Estacada Union High School.

Fuchsia show set Aug. 4-5

Oregon Fuchsia Society will have a show Aug. 4 and 5 at Montgomery Ward Garden Center at Mall 205.

It will be from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Aug. 4 and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 5.

There is no admission charge.



A PORTION OF the Mt. Hood Highway by Aldercreek recently was opened. The road branching to the left is the old part of the highway and the branch to the right is the

new portion of the road. The Highway Department has said that hopefully construction work on the six mile stretch will be completed sometime in October.

Book review

Local author writes Indian adventure

Buffalo Horse by William Sanderson

The Caxton Press Limited has chosen NEZ PERCE BUFFALO HORSE as its first release of 1972. Published in April, the book was written by Bill Sanderson of the Sandy-Estacada area, and illustrated by Pers Crowell.

Sanderson is the cartoonist for the Post.

In this exciting adventure story, the author has drawn on his extensive knowledge of Indian history, and equally extensive knowledge of Appaloosa horses. This breed of horse, on which the story centers, is familiar to Mr. Sanderson, since he has raised Appaloosas himself.

BUFFALO HORSE picks up the narrative, which began in an earlier book HORSES ARE

FOR WARRIORS, about the same Nez Perce tribe. In the latter, the Nez Perce had captured their first horses, and brought them back to their tribal territory in what is now Idaho and Eastern Oregon.

In BUFFALO HORSE, the Nez Perce chief, Two Hands, decides that the large herd of horses which they've acquired should be used for something more practical than warring purposes. His son, Lame Wolf, and friend, Little Elk set out to scout the distant buffalo plains to see if these shaggy beasts could be hunted on horseback.

En route to their destination, they are ambushed by a party of Blackfoot, and Little Elk is captured, along with the two horses. Lame Wolf escapes, although he has many wounds from the battle.

When his father and friend

fail to return, Young Wolf, son of Lame Wolf, is sent to bring them back. In the course of his journey, the 14 year old horseman has many harrowing experiences. The first one was finding his father, and helping him to pull the arrows from his wounds. Following this, the two agree that Young Wolf should be the one to tail the Blackfoot, and look for Little Elk, while his father would go back to the Nez Perce camp to get help.

Before he accomplishes his task, Young Wolf takes several important steps toward manhood, while he faces the many challenges he encounters in the wilderness. Among these are a lightning storm, his first buffalo kill, a meeting with a strange tribe, and a buffalo stampede. One important step was finding a blood brother in an alien tribe, who aids him in

his search.

Readers of all ages will find themselves turning the pages quickly to find out what's going to happen next. Young readers will enjoy the action, which is constantly evolving. The well-researched history of the Nez Perce tribe, who developed Appaloosa breed should appeal to the more mature readers.

The reader appeal is much enhanced by the drawings, which appear frequently throughout the book. Maps on the end sheets relate Young Wolf's route to present day geography. These, along with the integrated narrative, serve to present a lucid picture of Northwest Indian life in the eighteenth century.

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