

COLORADO AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY
COLLECTION #134

COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CLARK HATHAWAY
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INVENTORY: COLORADO AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION:

The Colorado Aviation Historical Society was founded in 1966 as an all volunteer organization for the purpose of recording and preserving Colorado's aviation heritage. The group established a museum at Stapleton Airport in Denver in order to display early aviation memorabilia. One of the first items obtained by the Society for exhibition was an early Jenny biplane. Officers of the Society were Ed Mack Miller, author, commercial pilot, and World War II veteran; and Dave Scherer, aviation writer for the Rocky Mountain News.

In 1969 the Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame was formed for the purpose of honoring great Colorado pilots. Initially, the nominees were to be those individuals who had been active in aviation prior to 1935. The honorees at the First Annual Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame Banquet held on November 11, 1969 were George W. Thompson, Reginald Sinclair, A.E. Humphreys, I.B. Humphreys, Frank Van Dersarl, Ivy Baldwin, Allan F. Bonnalie, Jerry Vasconcells, Will D. "Billy" Parker, and Chriss J. Peterson. Each of these men made significant contributions to aviation in Colorado prior to World War I.

George W. Thompson was the first native Coloradoan to fly in a plane he designed and built. Subsequently, he made numerous flights throughout the state. He died in a plane crash in 1912. Engraved on his tombstone at Crown Hill Cemetery are the words: "Colorado's First Aviator."

Reginald Sinclair, a native of Colorado Springs, was one of the first American pilots to fight in World War I as a member of the Lafayette Escadrille, an American unit in the French Army. Sinclair served in the Naval Aviation division during World War II. He was also a member of the first Colorado State Aeronautics Commission.

A.E. Humphreys was a flyer for the Navy during the 1917-1919 period. His service was so distinguished during the first European conflict that he was awarded the Naval Cross. Humphreys was the first owner of a business aircraft in the Denver area.

I.B. Humphreys, A.E. Humphreys' brother, operated the first commercial airfield in Denver. The airfield was located at 26th Avenue and Onieda Street.

Frank Van Dersarl was the first Coloradoan to design his own gliders and planes. He owned and operated the first aviation school in Denver.

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- FF 1 Correspondence, 4 June 1965 - 15 August 1971
- 2 Information and data sheet
- 3 By-laws, Aviation Hall of Fame, 28 October 1968
- 4 Newsletter, 18 August 1968-May 1975
- 5 Hangar Flying: The Voice of the Rockies, August 1971.
- 6 Logo: "Baloons to Ballistics: Colorado Aviation Historical Society"
- 7 Invitations: First Annual Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame, 11 November 1969 *AND*
INVITATIONS TO OTHER BANQUETS, 1985-1986
- 8 Membership cards, 1969-1970.
- 9 Newspaper clippings, 1968-1986.
10. *POSTAL COVERS, 1986*