

## Early Flight in Medina

By Susan McKiernan

Excerpts from Medina County *Gazettes*:

**1904** AI Root was the first to order an *aeroplane* from the Wright Bros. They refused the order because they didn't want a good friend taking flying-machine risks at an advanced age.

**1905** Jan The first accurate eyewitness account describing the Wright airplane in flight was published in AI Root's "Gleanings in Bee Culture". Root witnessed the event. He sent his article to the *Scientific American* magazine, but they didn't believe the story was worthy of publication and therefore rejected it. Mr Root was right "as he always is about inventions calculated to diminish time and distance". From *Famous American Flights* by Richard Stimson <http://wrightstories.com/gleanings-in-bee-culture/>

**1910** Oct 14 p. 6 A story of the Wright Bros flying machine.

**1913** July 11 Jim Gabriel's flying machine was badly damaged in the July 4 storm.

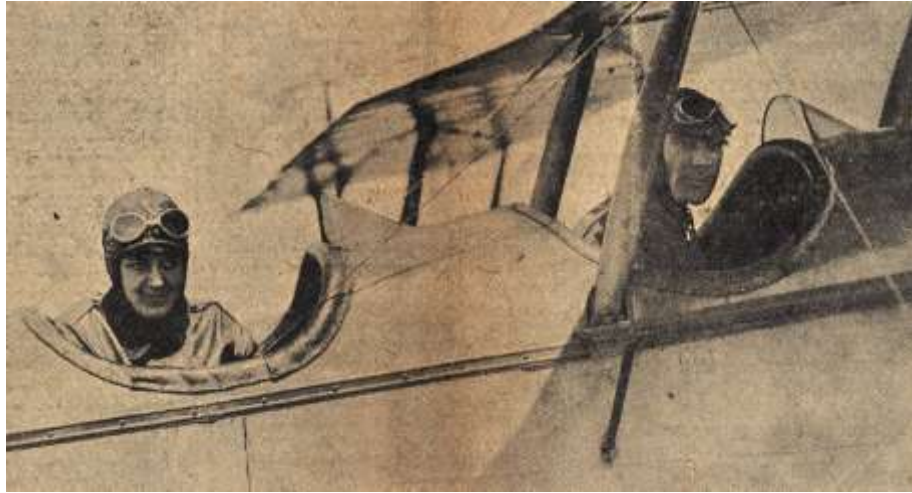
**1915** AI Root in a Wright Brothers style airplane at the Medina County Fair:



**1918** Clarence A Gardner, package agent for the Interurban, was the first Medina boy to fly in the war

**1918** Nov 26 Neuman Van Deusen wrote in his diary that he saw eight airplanes pass over Hinckley

**1919** May 23 Genevieve Brintnall is the first county woman to fly in a plane. In Virginia, she went up 4000 feet while the 150-horsepower Curtis JN4H bi-plane did "fancy stunts, including the loop-de-loop, Immelman turn, side-slips, skids, tail spins and nose dives". She is "crazy" for flying and experienced no sickness.



**1920** July 1 p. 12 Airplanes were forced to land on East Smith Road.

**1922** Feb 7 Budd Sanford of Brunswick flew to Wooster in 24 minutes, 90 mph. He didn't feel to be moving fast until they passed over an automobile. He bought a wrecked plane for a song and although he knew nothing about airplanes, he restored it, quite a mechanic.

**1922** April 11 Weaver Aircraft Co is building airplanes at the plant of Medina Mfg Co. The first was built in Lorain; Buck Weaver flew it here. It will not be sold but will be kept for exhibitions and demos. This second one will be even better: it will take to the air more quickly and can hold 3 passengers since they cut down the wings.

**1922** April 25 Budd Sanford bankrupt. Only got \$375 for his airplane. Now working at a garage in Strongsville. In June he opened a garage in a barn ½ miles S of Brunswick.

**1922** April 25 Medina Aviation Club organized by Arlie Pritchard, Howard Calvert, Budd Sanford and WP Goembel.

**1922** April 28 An article on how experts rate the Waco plane designed by Eldwood J Junkin and Clayton J Brulcher (Brukner): "Great things in store for the Waco", the best small flying machine in this country.

**1922** May 2 Airplane rides as a favorite sport. Amherst Spitzer, Richard Abbott and George Frazier ride. George Weaver pilots a Waco.

**1922** May 5 A dirigible over Medina, "We are getting used to airplanes but not seeing a dirigible. The 6 passengers were served percolated coffee, "hot dog", sandwiches, potatoes, ice cream and cake. The ship was up 6 hours.

**1922** May 5 HH Root spoke before the Chamber of Commerce in Bellefontaine, WP Goembel flew him, 2 hours each way.

**1922** May 9 AI Root Co is advertising by airplane, dropped leaflets.

**1922** May 30 Geo Wright had an airplane show.

**1922** June 2 An airplane passed three times over Spring Grove Cemetery, dropping flowers on Memorial Day.

**1922** July HR Calvert bought the second Waco plane in two weeks

**1922** Howard Calvert bought a farm one mile south on the Pike from AJ Lamont, will have poultry farm, bought a Waco plane.

**1922** June 13 Aviator Lee Mason of Chicago in Wadsworth hospital after 900' drop on June 9. His airplane fell into Chippewa Lake just after George Wright's parachute left it. George landed in the lake close to the plane and at the same time. A rowboat saved him but his jawline broken and skull fractured at the base. Not much to salvage of the airplane, only the motor could be saved.

**1922** July 4 JH Jacobs of Cleveland crashed his sea plane into Chippewa Lake. He was strapped in his seat and died.

**1922** July 7 Medina Aviation Club has made 230 passenger flights since May 1. The red airplane traveled 6000 miles in two months. Students Jim Ray and Howard Calvert are now pilots, making trips to Akron, Kent, Cleveland, Oberlin, Bellefontaine etc. Flying by moonlight and other "cloud rides" are popular.

**1922** July 11 p. 3 HR Calvert editor of Root's publications went up in an airplane for a cloud ride 3500'. Description.

**1922** July 21 First Waco Model 5 plane built in Medina by Weaver Aircraft. It was assembled at 3 pm at the Ed Burnham Farm (now Corkscrew) and ready to take to the air at 6:00. JT Calvert had an airplane ride with his son Howard of the Medina Aviation Club, over 5000 feet. Mrs JT also had a ride and AI Root had his second airplane ride. Wacos are made at the Medina Manufacturing Co plant. Orange and cream, with the metal cowling and engine hood of dull aluminum. "Buck" Weaver was pilot. It rose gently and climbed at a very steep angle. It was constructed with a new high life wiring. A Curtis 0x5 model. A marvel for speed, climbing ability, and load carrying capacity. 30' wingspan, can hold 4 full-grown passengers and can go from 25-85 mph. It's very safe as it can fly at only 25 mph. It can land without a large field as the ship stops quickly after landing. The first Model 5 will be saved and used at exhibitions and in demos and races. The 2<sup>nd</sup> will go to HR Calvert and the 3<sup>rd</sup> to Wm Goembel, instructor for Medina Aviation Club.

## THE FIRST ONE

### "Waco" Airplane Built Here Is Finished

The first "Waco" Model 5 airplane built by the Weaver Aircraft Company at its Medina plant was finished last Monday. At 3 o'clock the boys began assembling the plane at the field just north of the Ed Burnham farm on West Liberty street. At 6 o'clock the plane was ready to take the air. It was painted in handsome colors, orange and cream, the metal cowling and engine hood being dull aluminum. On its first flight, with "Buck" Weaver, pilot, the ship rose gracefully in the air and climbed at a very steep angle. It handled exceedingly well in the air, and its responsiveness to the controls was evident to all who watched it as it quickly dipped from side to side at the slightest movement of the ailerons.

Constructed with the new high lift wing, and motored with the old reliable Curtis 6x5 motor, this little airplane is a marvel both for speed, climbing ability and load carrying capacity. Although its wing-spread is only 30 feet it will carry three or four full grown passengers with perfect safety. Its greatest point of superiority over any other plane on the market is its wonderful speed range and its remarkably slow flap speed. It can be throttled down to 25 miles per hour and instantly speeded up to 85 miles per hour in horizontal flight. The safety of a ship which can land at a speed as low as 25 miles per hour is evident. Almost any novice could land a plane at such a speed, and only a small field is necessary, as the ship stops so quickly after touching the ground.

The first "Waco" Model 5 will be kept and used as a demonstrator by the Weaver Aircraft Co. and will be entered in the races at Chicago Aug. 1-15. The next Waco will be finished in about two weeks and will be delivered to H. R. Calvert, while a third will go to W. P. Goembel, instructor for the Medina Aviation Club.

**1922 July 28** Safety issues of flying addressed: engines stalling, air pockets, stunts.

**1922 Aug 18** The second Waco airplane was delivered to Howard Calvert.

**1922 Aug 18** Three machines took part in Chippewa Lake exhibition, fine parachute drop by George Wright. A red Curtis plane on the way home to Medina fell at the Medina Aviation Club's field just north of town at Dannley's old farm field close to the Cleveland Road, killed James A "Jim" Ray of Medina and Fred Yahn of New Jersey. He was born in England, came to US alone age 14, "loved his ship".

**1922 Sept 29** Philip Goembel, graduate of Wooster College last year, now attends MIT and flies there. He will show them the high life and how far they can get to heaven. Over the summer, he gave airplane rides in Oberlin.

**1922 Oct 3** Air Pilot Phil Goembel sailed his Waco to Boston to MIT. He has \$500 in radio equipment.

**1922 Oct 24** There were over 250 ships in the Detroit airplane race. Howard Calvert flew one. There were big Martin bombers, commercial planes, a 25-mile circle passed over the field 10 times, all using Liberty motors. Planes from as far as Texas and California.

**1922 Nov 14** Philip Goembert of Wooster joined the Medina Aviation Club.

Buck Weaver takes aerial views in his yellow and orange Waco: Sandusky, Norwalk, Bellevue, Fremont, Port Clinton. He uses an Army Graflex camera at a height of 2000 feet, but the camera can shoot from 10,000 feet. Buck, one of the leading aviators in the country, is head of the Weaver Aircraft Co of Medina, engaged in the manufactory of Waco planes, one of three plane companies in the US. Popular price, swift and strong machine. Curtis 0X5 motor. Can't turn them out fast enough. He has been flying since 1915 and was a civilian instructor for the Army in WWI. Some of his pupils were winners at the recent aero congress at Selfridge Field in Michigan.

**1922** July HR Calvert to get the second Waco plane in 2 weeks, WP Goembel instructor for Medina Aviator Club will get the third.

**1923** Howard Calvert pilots a Waco plane, keeps it in the barn at Shive place (now Corkscrew).

**1923** Waco plane Model 5 assembled on Ed Burnham's farm (Corkscrew) on West Liberty; "Buck" Weaver is pilot

**1923** Feb 16 Airman Phil Goembel married Seville native Edna Troutman in Medina and left for their honeymoon flying to Atlanta. They were mobbed at each landing, their luggage stolen as souvenirs.

**1923** Aug 5 Phil Goembel's engine failed and he had to crash-land a passenger airplane into Chippewa Lake.

**1923** Nov 6 Howard Calvert was arrested by the Akron Aerial Police Patrol as an advertising stunt for an auto show. Harold Kullberg, Akron's Air Cop and a WWI ace with fourteen German planes to his credit, praised Calvert's Waco, "the most remarkable ship he had even flown, having flown many types as a test pilot for the Army". He bought a Waco for their second police plane.



**1926** Oct 19 A dirigible flew over Medina on its way from its hanger in Lakehurst NJ to a landing pole built by Henry Ford in Detroit.

**1926** Hot air balloons from the student's Flying Field at Wingfoot Lake landed in Charley Beckwith's wheat field in Weymouth.

**1926** Oct 26 A commercial airplane landed at the Alfred Beck farm south of Medina. The pilot left a guard behind while he went to look for repair parts.

**1926** April 26 p. 8 WE Richon's farm at the north edge of town was made into a flying field by PR Baldwin of Berea who flies a Curtiss plane.

**1927** May Passenger airplane service between Cleveland, Akron, Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati and Louisville KY uses Waco planes now made in Troy Ohio.

**1927** July 26 Chas Lindberg is at Cleveland Airport.

**1927** Dec 2 Harvey Bolich of Stony Ridge to open a private landing field in the southern part of the county.

**1928** West Liberty Motor Sales Co Chrysler. The 30x60 metal roof is marked for aviators with lettering 60' long and a huge arrow pointing to Cleveland airport paid for by the owners, painted by Lavelle Kirk.

**1928** 45 acres of the CE Snyder farm leased for airport ½ mile from town, the US Government wants landing fields 20 miles apart between airports, one is still needed one between Cleveland & Wooster. The government will improve Smith Road from Medina to the airport.

**1929** March 5 Akron *Beacon Journal* article about Medina: 4000 people, nearly 100 business places. Interesting because of its historic background. Beautiful. Imposing courthouse. "19 miles from Akron where the world's greatest airport is being built"

**1929** May 14 Ohio has 64 airports and landing fields and 44 more proposed (both listed)

**1929** Sept 10 Spartan plane landed at Medina's *emergency* landing field

**1929** May 31 Something new in automobile trailers: a traveling house suspended from the rear of a regular automobile with 2 wheels on the trailer. The creation of Glenn Curtis, airplane builder. It is called the *Arrow* and is equipped with all conveniences for travelers.

**1930** Aug 26 A 59' beacon for airplanes erected near Litchfield Center.

**1930** Airport on route 18 West of Medina on the Chamberlain farm.

**1930** Airplane field built by the federal government in 1927 dismantled, 45 acres on the Chas E Snyder prop, will use radio to guide pilots now.

**1930** Oct 14 Airplane accident at the Medina landing field on Smith Road.

**1930** Oct 24 National Airport Co will erect a station on the farm of JK Bihn at York. Large beacon lights will span every 200 miles from the Atlantic to the Pacific, plus an emergency landing field and brick building. Medina airport on Smith Road to close, building being dismantled and lights and beacons off.

**1933** Airplane rides at the Burnham Farm "see Medina & Co Fairgrounds from the sky \$1" by Ralph Bowman

**1935** Airplane rides at Chippewa Lake \$1.

**1937** Jan 29 p. 2 New flying club in Medina with Taylor 'Cub'.

**1937** May 18 p. 8 Eugene 'Red' Cole gives flying lessons on John Chamberlain's farm west of Medina.

**1937** Sept 7 Macey Hallock age 12, won a Junior Aviator Air meet in Akron for designing and building a model airplane

**1938** Mar 25 p. 6 Lost: Franklin Van Epp's rubber-powered model airplane, last seen 3000 feet going Southeast over Medina.



**1939** May 3 A new Medina Airfield on the Joseph Zsarney place at Fenns Corners 2 miles north of Medina. Operated by Aladar Zsarney and Eugene 'Red' Cole. Two of their 3 planes were anchored at Chamberlain farm west of Medina and were wrecked by the July 25 storm, ending air activities on that field. The new hangar signals the boys' determination to keep aviation alive in the county. The field was donated by Aladar's father Joseph and local businessmen also contributed. They have an OX Traveler for primary training and a Waco J5 for intermediates, and hope to get a new Taylor craft for student use. They also fly passenger flights.

**1939** Nov 1 Pilot Zsarney added an Eagle Rock OX5 bi-plane.

**1939** April 28 'Red' Cole is teaching flying to Mr Blakeslee of Medina, Elmer Zsarney, Helen Pritchard et al. Eight hours \$48.

**1940** Taylor Hovercraft purchased by Medina Flying Club which they will house behind Arlie Pritchard's home north of Medina.

**1940s** Robert R Daso is a flying instructor

**1940** Aladar Zsarney manages Synkraft Studios in Medina and the Medina airport two miles north of town (later Pat O'brien).

**1940** Bruce Hallock designed and built a model airplane that won first prize.

**1941** July 8 p. 1 Capt SI Griesmer of Wadsworth, a pilot with Eastern Airlines, was chosen to pilot a 21-passenger airliner in four landings and take-offs to test the new lights at the Washington, DC airport.

**1941** Feb 28 A military airplane crash in Newfoundland. Capt Joseph C Mackey was the only survivor, he was married in Medina in 1930.

**1944** Jan 4 p. 1 First Lieutenant William Hasel, son of Mr & Mrs Paul Hasel of Valley City, is flying against the Germans from England. He was employed by Rome Aircraft Pump Corp in Elyria. He has not yet decided what to name his plane.

**1944** July 25 p. 1 Lt Robt Johnson was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for 34 bombing missions.

**1944** Oct 10 T/Sgt Carl E Dreibilbis gets clusters added to his medal. He is a Flying Fortress Gunner over Germany.

**1945** 100-acre land leased to Wooster men for an airfield, one of a series to be between Cleveland and Florida. WVS flying Service lessons, repair, storage. Land accessible from 18 or Branch Rd. The old Seeley farm. Accommodates 2½ mile runways diagonally. To be called Medina Pritchard Field after Arlie Pritchard.

**1945** Aug 28 p. 1 Medina Flying Club active again.

**1945** Dr Nathan I Galin opened a dental office on the second floor of 47 Public Square, open Th-Fri-Sat. He will still open his Detroit office Mondays and Wednesdays, commuting by plane.

**1946** May 7 p. 1 Medina Flying Club has an air crash.

**1949** Weymouth native Edward P. Honroth owner and manager of the Sky Haven Airport in Summit County died in an airplane crash on August 20.

**1954** Conrad Wilkins of Medina was civil aeronautics administrator at Cleveland airport.

See also <https://www.nationalwacoclub.com/waco-aircraft/waco-company/waco-history-2/> and <https://sites.google.com/site/wrightbrothersplane1903/home>