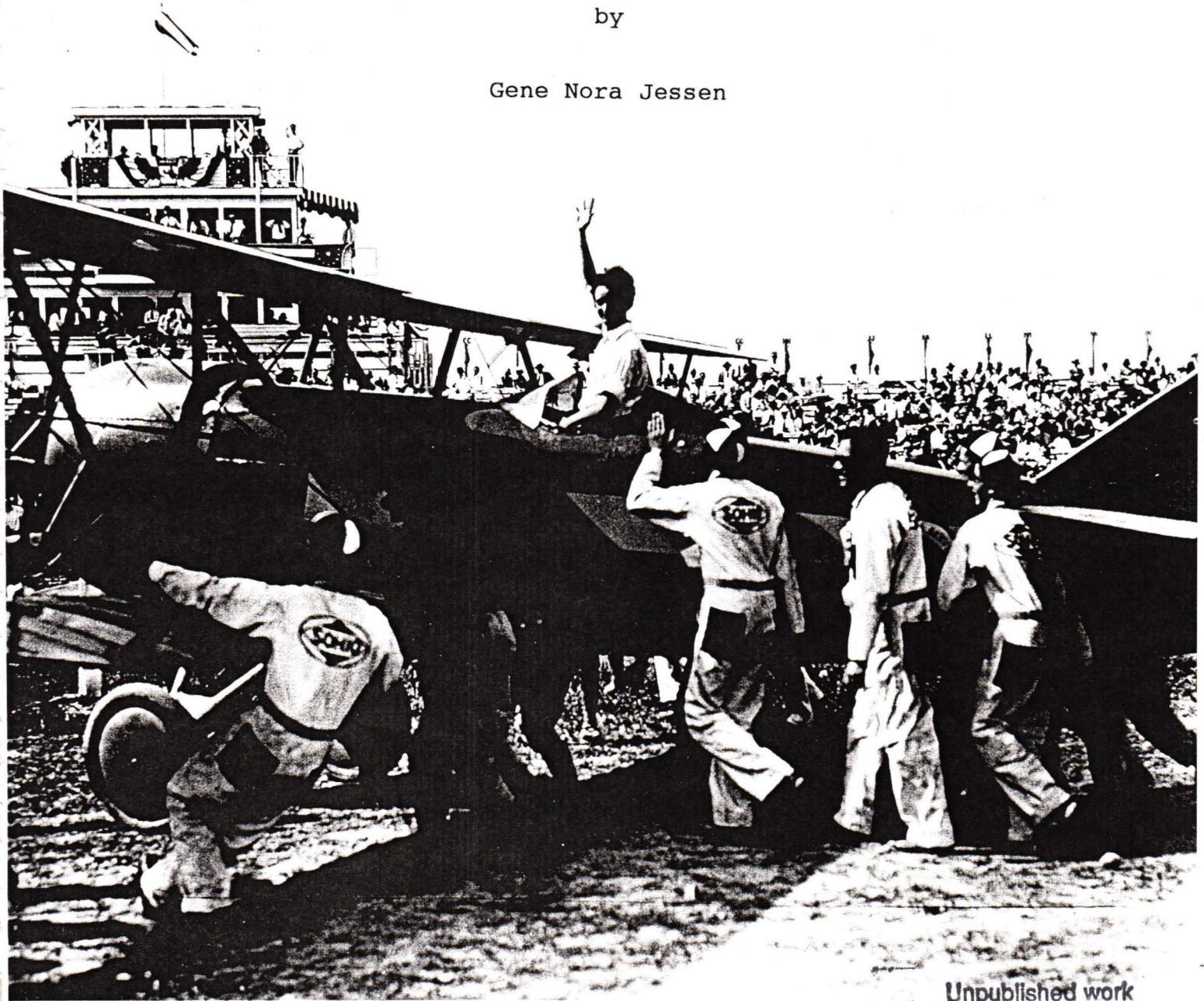


POWDER PUFF DERBY

The 1929 All Women's Air Race

by

Gene Nora Jessen



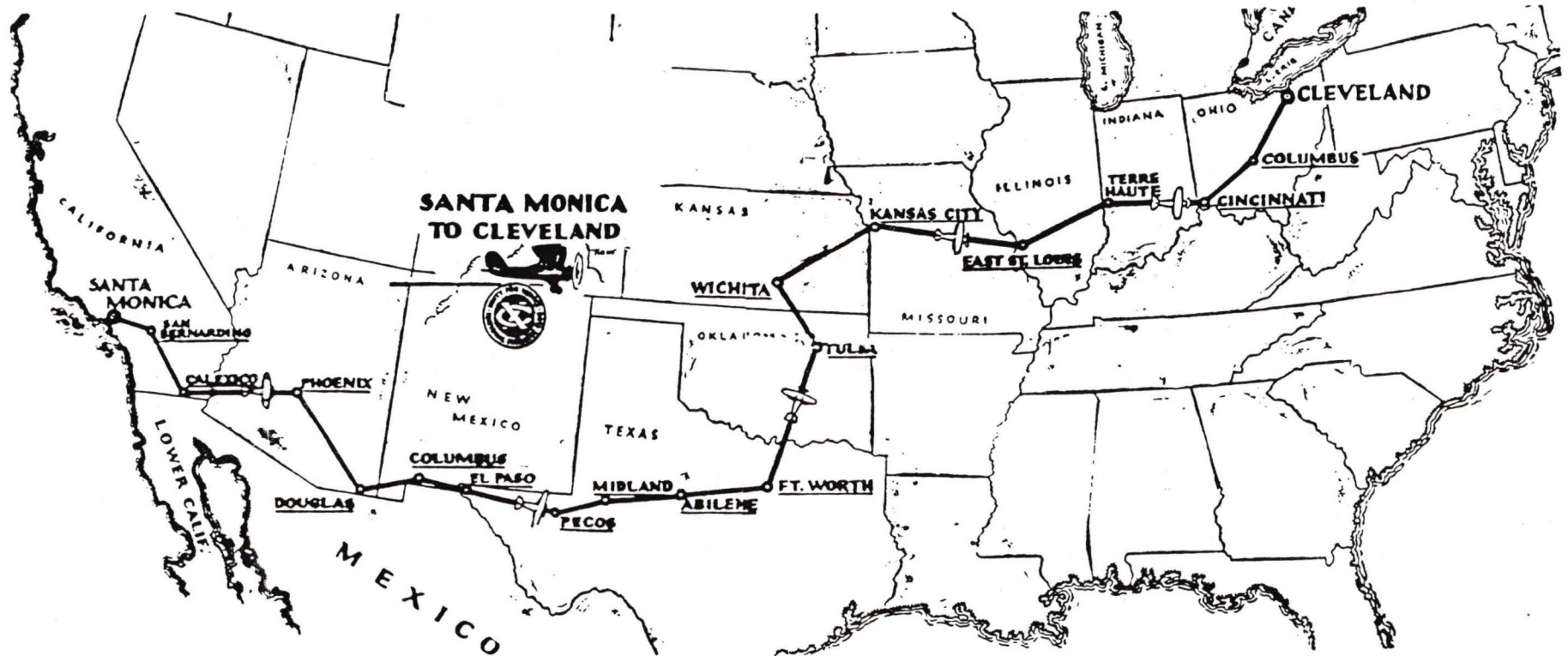
DEDICATED TO

Florence L. Barnes	1902-1975
Marvel Crosson	1900-1929
Amelia Earhart	1897-1937
Ruth Elder	1903-1977
Claire Fahy	unkn-1930
Edith Foltz	1905-1956
Mary Haizlip	1904-1997
Opal Kunz	1896-1967
Jessie Miller	1901-1972
Ruth Nichols	1901-1960
Blanche Noyes	1900-1981
Gladys O`Donnell	1904-1973
Phoebe Omlie	1903-1975
Neva Paris	unkn-1930
Margaret Perry	unkn-1951
Thea Rasche	1899-1971
Louise Thaden	1905-1979
Bobbi Trout	1906
Mary Von Mach	1896-1980
Vera Walker	1897-1978



# AIR DERBY FLIERS REACH CITY THIS AFTERNOON

- Course of Women's First Cross-Country Air Race -



The above map shows the route which the 20 feminine fliers will follow on their flight from Santa Monica to Cleveland, the first cross-country race for women in the history of aviation. San Bernardino is the first stop on the

course, the city being designated as an overnight stopping place through the activity of the San Bernardino Exchange club and the chamber of commerce. The flight is sponsored by the National Exchange clubs and will terminate

before the opening of the national air races at Cleveland. The flight will be made in short hops and is not a test of women's endurance powers, but was called to demonstrate that women can fly as well as men, even long distances.

TO AID  
NATIONAL OF

*Air Derby Entry List Includes  
Outstanding Feminine Fliers*

FIEND SOUGHT  
AFTER ATTACK

COLTON HONORS  
DUE TO HONORARY

*Letty Crisswell Again Leads in  
'Miss San Bernardino' Contest*







CHAPTER ONE August 17, 1929 Dusk

The undercast was milky smooth with an occasional hill poking out the top<sup>^</sup>-- the pilots called it "cumulo granite"<sup>^</sup>-- a cloud with a rock in it. Page McKendrick had been so preoccupied with computing fuel, speed and check points, trying to get to Santa Monica before dark, that she had allowed hope to override reality. As the sun was consumed by the Pacific Ocean, the evening clouds and fog embraced not only the Santa Monica Airport, but the entire Los Angeles Basin. Page "finger flew," blond curls escaping from her leather helmet, head down in the cockpit out of the wind with her finger on the Rand McNally road map. Her head darted up and down to check the terrain against the map. Page was exactly on course and would be on top of Clover Field in a matter of minutes.

*(close this space)*

Eagerness, confidence and hope all united against judgment. The sun was setting. The clouds were birthing. Page's beautiful red Stearman was losing the race. Page was still eight miles east of the airport when it disappeared under the swelling fog blanket.

*Use 2 hyphens  
to represent  
a dash.*

What a ~~really~~ stupid thing to do, she berated herself. She should have stopped on the east side of the San Bernardinos rather than chance getting trapped on top. <sup>i.e.</sup> But the pressure to arrive at the start of the All Women's Air Derby on time had been too great. Now she was stuck. The sun was almost gone and it was too late to reverse course back across the mountains. She had been navigating so precisely that she had to be right on top of the Santa Monica Airport. Now, <sup>she needed</sup> ~~how~~ to get down through the fog.

i.e. =  
lower  
case

(close this space)

Page knew if she stuck her nose down into the fog she'd become disoriented and fall off into a graveyard spiral. Not much was known about why a pilot couldn't hold the airplane straight and level when she couldn't see the horizon, but many pilots had proven the truism that if you couldn't see a horizon, you couldn't fly straight. Just last year at the Waverly Airport, Page had seen a pilot try to fly through the fog. The pilots on the ground <sup>had</sup> heard him circling overhead above the clouds and stood on the runway waiting for him to abandon the airplane and jump. But he just couldn't make himself leave the aircraft. He stayed with it and started down through the clouds in a normal glide. Page could hear the Whirlwind engine wind up as he lost control of the airplane and it spiraled, building speed.

(close this space)

They saw him come out below the clouds and could tell when he saw the ground coming up, because he pulled the nose up and flew



the airplane right out of the wings. It was incredible. The wings couldn't take the stress and departed.

(close space)

Page had heard other pilots tell about spinning an airplane through the clouds-- in a controlled stall the speed doesn't build up during the descent. If there was enough room under the clouds to recover from the spin before hitting the ground, the airplane could be controlled and landed ~~all~~ in one piece. That was the ticket. Page decided to spin right down through the fog and ~~wow~~ <sup>surprise</sup> the crowd at Clover Field.

(close space)

Before she could lose her nerve, Page reduced the power, pulled the nose up into a stall, and ~~as~~ the airplane rolled to the left, kicked in hard right rudder. The Stearman Aircraft Company's stout and reliable air machine fell into as pretty and smooth a spin as Page could wish, and she held the stick back and stomped the right rudder forward as she searched the windscreen for terra firma through the clouds. ~~Page didn't realize~~ she had a death grip on the stick and her right leg was stiff as a board. Her heart accelerated its cadence.

(close space)

The earth was not long in arriving-- first a line which became a road, and then some lights on a boat. A boat. She was at the edge of the water. Page smoothly released the back pressure on the

elevator, persuaded her knee to bend, snatched her right foot off the rudder and eased the stick forward. The airplane forgave her the indignity of such a precipitous arrival and flew right out of the spin and back into straight <sup>o</sup> and level flight upon the smooth application of power. Nothing <sup>g</sup> to it! <sup>she thought o</sup> Page was ecstatic with her first challenge to the clouds. She wasn't truly frightened until her feet touched the ground and she realized the terrible chance she'd taken.

(close space)

~~Page could never guess that within two short decades airplanes would have instrumentation, and the pilots skills, enabling them to line up on top of the clouds and let down in three-minute intervals, ho hum, to the Los Angeles Airport. But on this day, August 17, 1929, <sup>g</sup> Page McKendrick had succeeded in a maneuver attempted by few pilots. Now it was time to locate the airport in the fading light <sup>o</sup> and find Louise.~~

This foreshadowing about the future seems unnecessary, as readers will be aware of the advances made in flying.

As I've noted throughout this first chapter, it is unnecessary to leave an extra space between paragraphs. Although I will not be marking it throughout the manuscript, the paragraphs should be kept continuous through the remainder of the book, allowing 3 double-spaced breaks for scene breaks only.



CHAPTER 2 August 17, 1929 PM

Louise Thaden was frantic. Marvel Crosson paced the hangar with her and Louise ranted, "If Page is alive, I'll kill her! Where is she? If she's down and safe somewhere, why doesn't she call?"

Marvel cast about for some soothing explanation.

*move up* →  
"Louise, Page has put it down someplace and can't get to a phone. Or she's seen the fog and turned back across the mountains."

That comment was a mistake. They both knew Page didn't have enough fuel to get back ~~very far~~ east, and probably the whole basin was fogged in by now.

The hangar and ramp boasted the finest racing ships of the day with the elite female pilots tending them. The All Women's Air Derby had brought them together, fierce competitors ~~all~~, yet totally united cracking the door to the male pilots' world. Page McKendrick was a favorite of those who knew her and ~~were~~ <sup>who had</sup> watching <sup>-ed</sup> her flying skills evolve from timid to poised. She was a Dresden doll beauty and somehow unaware of her uncommon gifts.

Her good friend Louise Thaden was at the top of women's aviation right now. In December of last year she had established a world altitude record for women at Oakland flying a Travel Air 3000 with a high compression Hispano-Suiza 180 hp engine. Climbing through 15,000' on the historic flight, Louise had donned her makeshift oxygen mask and opened the valve of her oxygen tank with a pair of pliers. She climbed for an hour, precisely hoarding airspeed, until she was 27,000 feet above the ground. Louise ran out of oxygen, her ears ringing and her brain mushed up as consciousness faded, with the airplane spiraling down of its own accord to an altitude where she could breath again. Louise came to, regained control and landed safely. The official barograph reading showed 20,260 feet above the earth, higher than any woman had ever flown.

Then in March, Louise Thaden set an endurance record of 22 hours plus, again in a Travel Air, and finally in April set a speed record of 156 mph. A Travel Air which incorporated the newly designed speed wing airfoil had been trucked to Oakland for the record attempt. A letter was attached to the wings which said,

"We believe the wings to be sufficiently strong , but since they are a new development we do not want you to take any unnecessary risks or chances." Signed, Walter Beech.

*(sp) Numbers less than 100 should generally be spelled out in narrative.  
(sp) = spell out*

*move up* ↗

*It was I.C.*



Diving for speed across the course, Louise had coerced all the speed the airplane had, and set a new record of 156 mph. Soon after, Louise passed the tests to be a transport pilot, the fourth woman in the country to do so. Since no one woman had ever held three flight records simultaneously, Louise Thaden was the pilot of the hour, and certainly the one to beat in the Air Derby.

A stir at the hangar door revealed Amelia, trying to tell the news she had ~~to the crowd~~ while making her way to Louise. *crowd the*

"There's an airplane down in a field just outside the airport. It's a woman pilot, and she's been taken by the feds to the sheriff's office. They think she's a dope smuggler!"

It took Louise a minute to take that in and then she laughed.

*move up* "Well, it must be Page. She's overdue, and leave it to her to find the sheriff. She'll probably trade him an airplane ride for the keys to the jail."

*Louise's dialogue & attribution can be kept in one ¶ here.*

Louise was still uneasy, but Marvel assured her it sounded too much like a Page McKendrick trick to be anyone else. They started looking for a ride to wherever the sheriff was. Amelia Earhart had a car and gathered up Louise and Marvel to ~~first~~ locate the airplane. *first* A line boy pointed to the gate ~~and, then a right turn,~~ with the magic words,

he said <sup>o</sup>  
"You can't miss it", ~~which always jinxes, so you do.~~

They took the tight turn on two wheels, much too fast for the fog, and groped toward the field the line boy had pointed out. There were a couple of fence posts down and some airport types looking toward the dark outline of an airplane in the field. It was a Monocoupe <sup>o</sup> ~~for heaven's sake!~~ <sup>Louise knew</sup> Page was flying a Stearman. Phoebe Omlie was the only entrant flying a Monocoupe. She had to be the dope smuggler <sup>o</sup>! What a laugh.



The hyphens are unnecessary here -  
3 double spaces are sufficient to denote the scene break.

Page followed a road east from the bay to what had to be the vicinity of Clover Field. She was still in a race, for as the heat of the sun diminished, the ground cooled and the ~~cloud on the ground, fog, was fed and~~ grew. Her troubles were not over, but Red, her Stearman, sounded strong and dependable. The Stearman Aircraft Company in Wichita, Kansas had provided Page with a Model C4A, a three-place biplane powered with the Wright Whirlwind engine. As the first glamorous aviation event exclusively for women, and terminating at the Cleveland Air Races, this was a great opportunity for the aircraft to be seen by the press and the public. After all, if this darling little girl could fly the airplane, any male with some bucks and zest for adventure couldn't think it too hard for himself <sup>o</sup>!

Page's concentration strayed to Jack Holland, who would probably be able to join her sometime before the race takeoff. Jack was a naval aviator assigned to the U.S. Navy's rigid airship research program in Los Angeles. Experimental flights with airships and airplanes had been underway for some years, with dirigibles expected to provide a refueling base for airplanes at sea. A trapeze apparatus was now being used to carry scout planes for launch from the airship, to be subsequently retrieved during flight. The "Los Angeles" had been built for the US by Germany's Zeppelin Company, to be applied toward war reparations, and the first hookons had just been successfully completed in July. ~~Now~~ a public demonstration during the Cleveland National Air Races was planned. Jack and other Navy test pilots were charged with developing flying techniques to overcome turbulence problems encountered on previous blimp <sup>to</sup> aircraft hookon attempts. Jack had made his first exhilarating trapeze hookon to the "Los Angeles" flying a Vought (~~Pratt & Whitney Wasp~~) observation plane, contributing mightily to Admiral Moffett's research efforts. ~~How~~ could Jack have the nerve to ask Page to skip the Air Derby as too risky, when he was doing such dangerous stuff himself?

*Page wondered how*

*70 Suddenly, up ahead, there was*

~~My God,~~ a tower with a red light on top of it. Though some of the pilots had described the new radio towers, Page had not shaken hands with one on a dark, foggy night at eye level.

*I've edited here to maintain formality in the narrative voice.*



Page instinctively rolled left, away from the tower, and remembered the report of a new tower immediately west of Clover Field. She was upon the field, saw a runway, and, with no wind, set up a glide to the safe haven. Since there could hardly be much traffic, Page didn't bother ~~with~~ flying a traffic pattern, but glided straight in, raised the nose as "Red" settled toward the runway and fanned the rudder pedals for a perfect three-point landing. Page S-turned back and forth to see around the huge round engine, spotted the hangar and parked the airplane. "So, I'm here. Let's have a race!"

Jim and Clema Granger's operation at Clover Field was a madhouse, and Clema declared herself the Mad Hatter. She would do anything for her fellow women pilots, but this organized mayhem was almost over the line. Mary Haizlip and Page McKendrick hadn't made it in yet for the start of tomorrow's race, and it was too foggy now to expect to see them tonight. Two entrants, Marjorie Crawford and Patty Willis, had withdrawn, and Jim had just taken a call from Kansan Mabel Waters that she wasn't going to make it. The famous Irish pilot, Lady Mary Heath, had decided to enter some of the closed course competition in Cleveland instead of flying the womens' race, so <sup>she</sup> wouldn't be coming in. The race sponsor, The National Exchange Club, even at this late date was changing the

route. Will Rogers and his side kick Wiley Post were wandering around kicking tires, and the press were under foot everywhere. The takeoff banquet was already late, there were airplanes to fuel, and somebody had to get that dangerous dope smuggler Phoebe Omlie out of jail. Other than that, things were running pretty smoothly.

Hearing an engine running on the ramp, Clema strode to the hangar door to see who was taxiing around in the fog. A red Stearman. Great God in Heaven! Page McKendrick had gotten in through the fog. Her friend Louise Thaden had been frantic, so somebody had better go find her and let her know Page was here in one piece. A Naval aviator named Jack Holland had been asking about Page, and he was wandering around somewhere with a monkey in tow, of all things. Who had the hotel list? The banquet dais must be rearranged again. ~~Two quarts of oil in a Travel Air.~~ The damnable monkey was hopping onto the entry forms again. Clema had spent enough time on her family's farm that she knew how to wring a chicken's neck. Ringing a monkey's neck couldn't be much harder. That would make her feel a lot better. She'd just wait until Jack Holland turned his back and she'd murder the monkey.

*It was i.c.*

*Clema thought*

*i.c.*

*Clema knew*

*He wanted to know*

*i.c.*

*The relevance of Jack & his monkey may seem unclear here. I've*

*edited to clarify some of Jack's actions, but further clarification will be necessary. Also, such a scene might be more effective if shown in action & dialogue, rather than strictly in narrative.*

CHAPTER 3 August 17, 1929 Banquet

"Get that <sup>l.c.</sup> God damned midget ape outa here before I make a rug out of him."

Pancho had spied Page's pet monkey, and was not impressed. In fact, to the jewelled and coifed Exchange Club wives, come to fete the women air racers, the choice between gaping at either the diapered monkey or Florence Lowe <sup>(u)</sup> ~~(Pancho)~~ <sup>(u)</sup> Barnes was a difficult one. Since Pancho was travelling light <sup>(u)</sup> with only her flying clothes, she appeared at the banquet in jodhpurs and beret, puffing as usual on her trademark black cigar.

"This is a solo pilot race <sup>(u)</sup> so ain't no bare-assed ape gonna help any son-of-a-bitch pilot who can't keep the shiny side up and the pointy end headed east."

Jack Holland gathered up the free-roaming monkey <sup>(u)</sup> Sis Boombah <sup>(u)</sup> just in time to avoid a swift kick from Pancho.

"Mrs. Barnes," he <sup>said</sup> <sup>(u)</sup> addressed <sup>-ing</sup> <sup>(u)</sup> her formally, "there's little doubt this monkey will be enjoying the sights of Cleveland long before you figure out E from W on your compass. You'll find that this is a little different from faking it for Hollywood's cameras."



Pancho unleashed a string of colorful and creative insults addressed collectively to Page, Jack <sup>①</sup> and their ~~progeny~~ monkey. All parties involved were satisfied with the exchange. The pilots who witnessed it were thankful that no honored guests had been close enough to ~~suffer~~ <sup>have their</sup> ears <sup>burn<sup>ed</sup></sup>.

Florence Lowe Barnes came by her airplane genes from her grandfather <sup>①</sup> Professor Thaddeus S.C. Lowe <sup>①</sup> who <sup>had</sup> built hot air reconnaissance balloons for the Civil War's Union armies. The inventor's monies provided a genteel and privileged upbringing for young Florence. The inexplicable chapter of her life was how she'd gotten together with The Reverend C. Rankin Barnes, an Episcopal clergyman. In fact, her high society family had arranged the match, entered into by a young tomboy with little information about being either a wife or lover. The resultant baby boy puzzled Pancho, who turned it over to a nurse, and went off to fly stunts in Hollywood and carouse with the pilots. Though she was loud and coarse, the women pilots liked Pancho, for she was honest and would do anything for her comrades.

Page McKendrick had been delightfully surprised to find Jack waiting for her at Santa Monica, though he had read her raw for flying in the fog. When he threatened to yank her right out of the race, Page surprised herself by standing up to him for her ability and judgement<sup>-</sup> though she knew in her heart it <sup>had been</sup> was a calculated

risk to spin down through the fog. <sup>had</sup> So it worked, ~~didn't it?~~ <sup>l.c.</sup> And ~~besides, what right had~~ Jack Holland <sup>had no right</sup> to decide whether she could fly in this race or not? <sup>o</sup>

She had mixed feelings about the monkey <sup>o</sup> Sis Boombah. The crazy monkey was awfully cute, and would be fun company, but she was a little uneasy about what her fellow racers would think. And she wasn't crazy about the scheme Jack had in mind. Captain Roscoe Turner had gained renown for flying with his live lion <sup>o</sup> Gilmore <sup>o</sup> ~~x~~. Jack <sup>wanted to</sup> ~~would~~ see what this little monkey could do for Page.

~~Beautiful~~ <sup>g</sup> Ruth Elder <sup>made</sup> ~~effected~~ a grand entrance, and the attending journalists slithered on their own drool to her side. A successful movie ingenue turned darling aviatrix, the public was spellbound by Ruth's daring adventures. The frenzy to be first to solo the Atlantic merely shifted from male to female after Charles Lindbergh captured the title ~~FIRST~~ <sup>o</sup>. No other man could be <sup>l.c.</sup> ~~FIRST~~, but a woman could. Though the fall of 1927 hardly offered favorable weather for an Atlantic crossing, Ruth Elder was afraid that another woman might beat her to the record, and pulled out all the stops to make the flight. In fact, Frances Grayson was just as determined to be the first woman pilot across the water, and was hot on Ruth's heels.

Ruth Elder and her instructor <sup>had</sup> George Haldeman <sup>had</sup> gathered sponsors and a Stinson Detroiter ~~for the flight~~ which they christened "American Girl". The disastrous Dole race to Hawaii which left ten dead at sea, including female pilot Mildred Doran, dissuaded neither Ruth nor George from attempting the Atlantic in the gathering winter weather. On October 11, 1927 "American Girl" took off for any land east of the Atlantic Ocean. Carrying enough fuel for <sup>SP</sup> 48 hours of flying, October 13 brought no word of the flyers and the aircraft was known to be down.

On October 14 radio bulletins proclaimed that Ruth and George were alive. An oil pressure drop had persuaded them to make a precautionary landing at sea alongside a Dutch freighter rather than go on with the ~~excellent~~ chance of engine failure. The aircraft was lost and Ruth and George proceeded to Europe by freighter. The flyers were <sup>praised</sup> ~~feted~~ <sup>them</sup> for their accomplishment, though the title ~~FIRST~~ had eluded ~~Ruth Elder~~.

Knowing that Ruth had not completed the crossing, Frances Grayson stepped up her efforts <sup>to be FIRST</sup> ~~to be FIRST~~. She recruited pilot Wilmer Stultz, taking off October 17 in a Sikorsky Amphibian called "The Dawn", only to return with fuel problems. They tried it again on October 23, to return once again with engine trouble. Stultz



refused to give it a third try so late in the year. Furious, Frances hired another pilot and navigator, and "The Dawn" took off from Roosevelt Field, NY December 23, 1927 -- never to be seen again.

Wilmer Stultz lived to fly another day, and was contacted by Mrs. Amy Phipps Guest of Pittsburgh to fly her across the Atlantic as a passenger. After her family persuaded her to abandon such a foolhardy scheme, Mrs. Guest asked her friend, publisher G.P. Putnam, to find a "suitable aviation-minded young woman" to make the crossing under her sponsorship. G.P. located a social worker in Boston, a 500-hour pilot named Amelia Earhart.

Amelia crossed the Atlantic as a passenger with pilots Wilmer Stultz and Louis Grodon in a Fokker Trimotor named "Friendship". ~~The trio departed Newfoundland June 17, 1928 and the rest, as they say, is history.~~ Amelia was <sup>i.c.</sup> FIRST <sup>and i.c.</sup>. She was also infused with the passion to one day fly it by herself.

Barnstorming, record flights, stunting in Hollywood and any kind of far-out publicity scheme seemed to be the primary avenue to flying jobs in 1929. Ruth Elder and Amelia Earhart had captured the public's hearts -- Ruth by her beauty and enthusiasm and Amelia by her modest demeanor in the face of acclaim. "I was only a passenger, you know" she said.

The relevance of the historical information (pp. 4-16) to the present plot may seem unnew to readers. Although interesting, the plot should be firmly established early on to avoid causing readers to lose interest.

Most of the famous women pilots of the day were present in the room in Santa Monica, <sup>and the</sup> ~~In January of 1929, Bobbi Trout had flown an endurance record in a Golden Eagle and then broken it later that same month. She was hired to demonstrate the Golden Eagle, and was racing under her employer's sponsorship. Record holder Louise Thaden was racing the Travel Air flag. Ruth Nichols was the first woman to fly in all 48 states, and was flying for the Fairchild Airplane and Engine Company. Marvel Crosson, every bit as pretty as the photogenic Ruth Elder, had been flying commercially with her brother Joe in Alaska and was another Walter Beech protege flying the Travel Air. She probably had the fastest ship of the lot.~~

move up

Again, this historical data seems to interfere with the development of the plot. I've suggested omitting it.

<sup>i.e.</sup> Flustered Exchange Club official Warren Otto was shepherding the racers, club members and guests to their banquet seats getting the festivities underway. The pilots were already calling him Mr. Toot behind his back ~~(Otto inside out)~~ because he was clearly unhinged by the turmoil around him. Warren Otto's serene daily life in the bank had hardly prepared him for this gregarious group of astonishing ladies. No one took orders, each wanted to change the rules, and they possessed an unsettling outdoorsy look. This was an extraordinary experience for the unworldly bachelor who had never even ridden in an airplane, let alone help direct an air race. The board membership of the Santa Monica Club called him to duty, and he desperately wanted to get the takeoff done tomorrow in an orderly manner. He seemed to be alone in that wish.



"Mr. Toot, er, Otto", Page McKendrick called out, "Clema Granger has gone down to the sheriff's office to retrieve Phoebe Omlie. They'll be late, so Clema said to take her off the dais ~~and~~ she and Phoebe will slip into seats in the back when they arrive."

Warren didn't want to know what Mrs. Omlie was doing at the sheriff's office. He had been eager to meet Phoebe Omlie, a senior pilot of the group in flying hours. She and her husband had done rescue work during the Mississippi River floods, and were highly regarded ~~flyers~~. ~~This~~ Page McKendrick was a sweet girl - not nearly as forward as some of the other women pilots, <sup>like</sup> ~~That~~ Pancho Barnes ~~was almost too much to bear~~. Warren didn't know many men with such a zesty vocabulary.

The pilots were gathering papers, including their racing numbers, at a table in the back of the room. Pretty Marvel Crosson was <sup>SP</sup> #1, Pancho Barnes <sup>SP</sup> #2, <sup>and so on</sup> ~~Blanche Noyes #3, Louise Thaden #4, and~~ ~~then~~ there were some odd ball numbers <sup>SP</sup> such as Bobbi Trout's #100 <sup>SP</sup> and Thea Rasche's #64 for the twenty-one airplanes. There was no <sup>SP</sup> #13.

Even at this ~~eleventh~~ <sup>still</sup> hour the route was being changed. It seemed that any town with an Exchange Club wanted the racers to come through, <sup>it</sup> and stops were being added. ~~Will Rogers allowed as~~ ~~how,~~

"It was too bad Mexico City couldn't raise <sup>(SP)</sup> \$50 or it, too, could have seen our women fliers<sup>(S)</sup>" Will Rogers said<sup>(S)</sup>

Page McKendrick and Jack Holland joined Louise Thaden and Thea Rasche to enjoy Will Rogers' speech, take a look at the latest changes just circulated and ~~incidentally~~, dine. Thea, a German pilot, had made a name for herself in the United States via her German aerobatic license. The Moth Aircraft Corporation asked Thea to fly a de Havilland Gypsy-Moth for them, to which she agreed with pleasure. The promised airplane was not ready in time <sup>but</sup> ~~however~~, a substitute was available, and ~~poor~~ Thea had been scrambling around Los Angeles trying to locate it. She would take off tomorrow without even having test flown her aircraft. <sup>It was i.c.</sup> No wonder <sup>she</sup> ~~Thea~~ looked worried.

Thea Rasche handed a telegram to Louise Thaden<sup>(S)</sup> whose face became somber. Louise, without comment, passed the yellow paper on to Page and Jack. It said,

<sup>move up</sup>  
<sup>i.c.</sup>  
"BEWARE OF SABOTAGE".

CHAPTER FOUR August 18, 1929

Race Day 1 Santa Monica, California

Though the takeoff wasn't scheduled until 2:00 PM, the pilots and their entourage arrived at the airport early to fuel, test fly, plot the course ~~(again)~~ <sup>and</sup> pace, give ~~take~~ advice, adjust, check the weather, and ~~encounter lesson number one~~ <sup>learn about</sup> in dealing with reporters. Each of the racers had been in the public eye enough to have dealt with a curious and adoring public. However, only Amelia Earhart and Ruth Elder had any idea of the ~~dimension~~ of reporters' ambushes which lay ahead <sup>1</sup> under the guise of the public's need, ~~yea right~~, to know.

The press had already pointed out that of the eleven female transport pilots in the United States, ten were in this race. Nevertheless, the group was variously dubbed the Petticoat Pilots, Sweethearts of the Air, Ladybirds, or Flying Flappers. Male opinions of the little ladies daring to race airplanes were dutifully reported <sup>^</sup> -- "Women pilots are too emotional, vain and frivolous to fly and are hazards to themselves and others."

Page McKendrick and her monkey did little to negate that viewpoint. The excited monkey was tied by a rope to the tail wheel



of Page's airplane and, though no one understood <sup>why ①</sup> ~~monkey language~~, the creature was ~~obviously~~ throwing a temper tantrum, jumping up and down screaming. This appeared to be ~~no organ-grinder-take-coins-from-the-children breed, but~~ one mean ape. Unaware that he was walking into an ambush, a reporter asked Page why the monkey was at the start of the air race. Page responded <sup>②</sup> as if this were a routine matter, that the monkey was her co-pilot. ~~Gotcha!~~ The reporter's lead for page one was found, <sup>and</sup> <sup>③</sup> Page and Sis Boombah posed for a picture.

While Page was setting Jack's monkey business publicity plan in motion, he was doing peculiar things to the airplane. Jack would put a blanket over his shoulders and hunch over the elevator hinge, obviously making a secret adjustment. His maneuvering did not go unseen, and the other racers and mechanics were soon buzzing in speculation about what special elevator adjustment would make the airplane go faster. Then, when everyone was sure to be watching, Jack dropped a small white pill into the fuel tank <sup>^</sup> -- apparently an additive of some sort to boost the efficiency of the fuel and make the airplane go faster. The Holland brain <sup>GP</sup> ~~washing~~ campaign was launched. A tall and shy <sup>GP</sup> 23-year-old local pilot by the name of Howard Hughes was watching <sup>④</sup> ~~the doings~~, and smiled at the McKendrick/Holland production.

Many of the women were half of a flying duo. Claire Mae Fahy arrived with her husband, a Lockheed test pilot, Lt. Herbert J. Fahy, who had in May established a new solo endurance record of nearly 37 hours. He followed her along the race route to be on hand to tend to the mechanical needs which would undoubtedly arise along the way. And it was easier to worry where he could see her rather than from a distance.

Marvel Crosson's male flying partner was her brother Joe, with whom she had gone to Alaska to seek their fortune in aviation. She had been the very first to enter the Air Derby in her Travel Air, and had proven the seriousness of her intent by flying the entire route in advance for practice. Coincidentally, Marvel had achieved an altitude record for women the same day as Herb Fahy's endurance record. Marvel was a formidable competitor, and her engaging grin lit up her face when she learned that her race number was #1. She announced that such great good fortune would surely carry her into Cleveland first.

Page McKendrick's male pilot support, Jack Holland, was troubled about Page's racing clear across the country at full throttle in the summer heat. There would be mechanical problems, there always were, and Page barely had the 100 hours flying time required for entry into the race. (Some of the pilots had obviously padded their log books with a little Parker Pen time to

find ~~100 hours~~.) Although Jack was proud of Page for learning to fly, and supportive, to a degree, of her ambitions, he felt the serious and dangerous stuff, racing cross country, was for men. Page admitted that she was inexperienced, <sup>i.e. said</sup> But ~~how~~ <sup>only</sup> could she remedy that ~~if she didn't fly?~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~And some people thought there was something wrong with a woman wanting to do such a masculine thing as fly dirty, dangerous airplanes. But how could it be fair for men alone to experience the glory of soaring above God's earth and the satisfaction of taking the machine up and bringing it back to the ground again safely, in one piece, through one's own personal skills and judgment? What a marvelous experience men had been hoarding for themselves!~~

*If these are Page's opinions, they might be placed in dialogue, to help deepen her character for readers. Otherwise, I've suggested omitting them.*

Though totally organized, Warren Otto was on the run <sup>①</sup> tending to all the last minute details of getting the race off at 2:00 PM. He was quite worried about Thea Rasche's anonymous warning. The officials had no reason to believe it to be anything but an ugly prank. However, Otto's growing interest in Page McKendrick skewed his ability to address the situation with dispassionate reason. ~~Could it be serious?~~ <sup>He wondered if</sup> ~~Could anybody~~ <sup>②</sup> actually sabotage a race plane? Such an unthinkable act was outside Warren Otto's sphere of imagination. But what if someone put sugar in this lady's gas tank and the engine quit over a mountain top <sup>③</sup> ~~and she spun in and the airplane exploded and her body - no that's crazy.~~ Warren sought out Page for reassurance about her ability and safety. He had



every intention of seeing <sup>her</sup> ~~this~~ girl again.

<sup>He</sup> Warren found Page lying under the aircraft, wiping oil off the airplane's belly. Jack <sup>had</sup> ~~having~~ gone over to check in with the Shell Oil officials. Page's baggy flying clothes didn't hide her petite femininity and Warren blushed at the turn of his thoughts. Page looked up as the flustered banker composed himself and assumed an official tone.

"Miss McKendrick, is your airplane a go for the two o'clock takeoff, and is there anything that I, or rather, the race committee, can do for you?"

Page presumed that this was the standard sendoff speech and ~~responded with a succinct "We're ready"~~ <sup>she said</sup> ~~Page~~ <sup>she</sup> noted that Mr. Otto seemed preoccupied as he paused to gather his thoughts before continuing the conversation. He surprised Page by asking if she would mind if he proceeded to the next race stop and checked on her welfare there. She knew that wasn't standard and the realization of Warren Otto's infatuation with her slowly dawned. Page was flattered and intrigued.

This might be more effectively shown using action & dialogue rather than narrative summary.

"I'd be pleased to see you at San Bernardino, Mr. Otto, and will watch for you there."

"Be terribly careful" he blurted out, and fled.

By 1:30 all the airplanes were lined up for takeoff and awaiting the 2:00 PM radio-relayed pistol shot from the Cleveland terminus. The race was 2,800 miles long, averaging 300 miles per day. The racers were to be in Cleveland, Ohio by August 26 for the start of the Cleveland Air Races. At stake was \$25,000 in prize money, plus the hope for fame <sup>to be</sup> leveraged into jobs. <sub>Dr</sub>

There were two divisions, the first for aircraft with engines of 510 cubic inch displacement or less, which included the Monocoupe, Fleet, Golden Eagle, OX-5 Travel Air, Moth and Eaglerock. The second category was for up to 800 cubic inch displacement, which included the Wright J5 Travel Air, Waco, Swallow, Lockheed, Spartan, Rearwin, Curtiss Robin, American Eagle and Stearman. <sup>9</sup> Since Mary Haizlip didn't arrive in time for the start, <sup>SP</sup> 20 aircraft were flagged off in one-minute intervals <sup>-x</sup> two minutes sometimes to let the dust settle. Clover Field's proximity to the movie studios ensured that celebrities <sub>Dr</sub> such as cowboy star Hoot Gibson and ~~Tarzan's~~ author, Edgar Rice Burroughs, were milling about wishing all the girls luck and fun. <sup>9</sup> Wiley Post flew escort in his "Winnie Mae" Lockheed Vega, and Carl Lienesch flew along in the Union Oil Company Travel Air. Will Rogers shook his head in admiration as the courageous pilots lifted off for Cleveland, each intent on being the first one to the finish line, ~~despite onerous~~ <sub>Dr</sub>

~~responsibility for not embarrassing all women pilots by doing something stupid. Rogers tempered his emotions with a light remark to the excited spectators,~~

"It looks like a Powder Puff Derby to me!" he exclaimed lightly.



DAILY TELEGRAM "The she derby got off the ground and away in the air, and what is humorously referred to as the stronger sex went back to the kitchen sink and the radio. The husbands left by motor to go ahead and prepare proper food for their wives in each town. I tried to find a mother in the outfit. There was so many Mrs. I thought I might find one wayward soul. But all had had no time for maternal worries. They had given their lives to the carburetors."

Yours, Will Rogers

The text of the telegram should be indented from both margins, to separate it from the body of the manuscript.

CHAPTER FIVE Sunday August 18, 1929

Race Day 1 Takeoff Santa Monica 2:00 PM

As soon as Page McKendrick taxied into the takeoff lineup, astonished Exchange Club members noted Warren Otto's uncharacteristic frenzied dash for his car. He totally abandoned his further responsibilities on the race committee. The lovesick bachelor made ~~good~~ <sup>SP</sup> about the same ground speed as the airplanes ~~on~~ <sup>on</sup> ~~route~~ the 66 miles to San Bernardino. However, he picked up ~~one~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~each~~ flat tire and <sup>a</sup> speeding ticket along the way.

Louise Thaden pulled into takeoff position <sup>1</sup> in the popular ~~Travel Air 4000~~ with her larger engine putting her in the DW "heavy" competition class. Walter Beech had gone the extra mile for Louise, and she had the new NACA full engine cowling. That one aerodynamic improvement was rumored to give her <sup>SP</sup> 20 additional miles per hour. Just sitting on the ground, the modified airplane looked substantially faster, smooth and streamlined. Everyone had heard the rumors that Walter Beech had a Travel Air Mystery Ship ready for the Cleveland Air Races <sup>2</sup> (~~one of which Pancho later owned~~) but, fortunately, he hadn't provided Louise with one. The enclosed cowling was enough of an advantage.

~~Actually,~~ <sup>91</sup> Louise didn't have the fastest of the Travel Airs. <sup>though</sup> Marvel Crosson had the special narrow fuselage model 2000, which was built specifically for racing. Her brother Joe had converted it to a 4000, replacing the ~~OX5 with a Wright J-6-7~~ engine and adding some weight in the tail. It was faster than Louise's. <sup>9</sup> Pancho's Travel Air 4000 had some hastily made changes for speed with a full cowling. The Travel Air factory had rated for speed, Marvel #1, Louise #2, Pancho #3 and Blanche #4. The rest of the Travel Airs were mostly standard. ~~Nevertheless, Amelia Earhart's Vega was the most feared competition.~~

Again, the relevance of this technical information may seem unclear to readers, causing them to be distracted from the plot.

Louise Thaden couldn't block the memory of her departure from the Travel Air factory with the new airplane. Walter Beech himself followed Louise as far as Ft. Worth to ensure that everything was working well. She <sup>had</sup> became <sup>o</sup> woozy during the flight and found herself unable to concentrate enough to hold a heading.

Upon arrival at Ft. Worth Louise's head <sup>had</sup> ached <sup>o</sup> ~~to the point~~ where her brain seemed to be working at about 50%, and she was unable to judge even how to fly the traffic pattern. She managed to get the airplane on the runway then passed out. Walter Beech was horrified that he'd almost lost Louise to carbon monoxide poisoning due to the new <sup>o</sup> tight cowling, and he spent that night running a four inch tube into the cockpit to feed in fresh air.

Amelia Earhart and Edith Foltz were firing up their enclosed cabin jobs, Amelia in a high wing Lockheed Speed Wing Vega and Edith in an Alexander (~~Eaglerock~~) Bullet with a Kinner 5 engine. Amelia was competing in the higher-powered "DW" class, and Edith in the lighter aircraft, ~~designated~~ "CW" class. <sup>They had the</sup> ~~What a luxury that~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~must be,~~ flying inside, out of the constant wind, <sup>o</sup> But without consciously hearing the engine sounds and the wind in the wires, <sup>many</sup> ~~wouldn't~~ <sup>feared</sup> there <sup>would</sup> be a danger of missing some developing mechanical problem? <sup>Too many</sup> <sup>o</sup> Were enclosed cockpits <sup>were</sup> just a fluke <sup>o</sup> ~~or a sign of the~~ ~~future?~~



Page was finally number one for takeoff, and taxied into position. She wiped her hands on her coveralls, carefully pushing her charts under her left leg. Her heart pounded. Page consciously breathed deeply and slowly. She peered around the cowling, since it was impossible to see over <sup>o</sup> ~~even had she been six feet tall.~~ The flag dropped, and Page applied full power smoothly as the engine roared in response. She fed in right rudder to compensate for the torque making the airplane want to turn left. As she gathered speed down the dusty runway, the tail lifted and she was ~~now~~ able to see ahead. <sup>9</sup> There were crowds along the sides and at the end of the runway. <sup>o</sup> ~~"engine keep running, there's no where to go if you decide to rest now".~~ Somebody had said that there were 3,000 people out for the takeoff <sup>o</sup> and it looked as if they were all in front of her. She was over the fence and the crowd, building climb speed and making her slight turn toward an easterly course.

~~"Hooray! We're racing to win!"~~

The first leg had been purposely kept short to leave time for all the media hysterics. There had been rides to give, interviews, sponsor stroking, and airplane tinkering prior to takeoff. The first overnight stop, San Bernardino, was only 66 <sup>SP</sup> miles east. Page noted her takeoff time and took up a heading of <sup>SP</sup> 070 degrees. <sup>There wasn't</sup> ~~Not~~ much reason to climb looking for a tailwind <sup>o</sup> since the distance was so short. She'd probably just get up into a helping tailwind when

it would be time to descend ~~for landing~~. Page poked her head up outside the cockpit to locate the road which, ~~according to Mrs Rand and McNally~~, should take her to the foothills town of San Bernardino. She slouched back down again, partially out of the wind. There was no way to avoid the full sun.

She could see a road and a railroad ~~as advertised~~. Page juggled the standard road map and new aeronautical chart, keeping them out of the wind while holding the control stick between her knees. The new government flying chart even showed terrain, with the mountains off to the north. The visibility was pretty good and if she headed right for that notch up ahead she ought to stay right on course.

Page could see Vera Dawn Walker in front of her and a little to the left. It was amazing that 20 airplanes could be headed from Santa Monica to San Bernardino only one minute apart, and she could see only the one in front of her and Thea Rasche who took off right behind. Vera's position was worrisome <sup>and</sup> <sup>wondered if she should</sup> ~~Should~~ Page be farther north where Vera was?

<sup>Hi Come on</sup> <sup>thought</sup> "Com'on, Page. ~~You know~~ Vera's one of the least experienced pilots of the group. Why do you jump to the conclusion <sup>she's</sup> ~~Vera's~~ on course and you're not? Let's have some self-confidence here. Poor little Vera is losing time off course. ~~That's it~~. I'm right on."

Insert 3  
double  
spaces for  
a scene break.

Mary Page McKendrick had been born the only daughter among four brothers in a substantial southern family, her father having made his fortune in the furniture manufacturing business. Though a frail child, Mary Page, who always went by her middle name, felt in her heart that God had called her to serve him in the church, and she entered the convent to study for orders. The young girl's health did not stand up to the pressures, and Mother Superior kindly advised Page that she must serve in another way.

A wounded Page returned to her family hearth with vacant ~~expectations.~~ The family reassured her there was another path, and ~~group~~ tackled her depression. *hopes.*

The adventurous brother, Matthew McKendrick, dragged his despondent sister out to the airport where he was learning to fly. Page would wait in the car during his lesson and watch the glamorous aviators, wishing she had nerve enough to talk to them and make friends.

Mr. McKendrick approached Jack Holland, who was teaching Matthew to fly, about giving his daughter a job at the airport so she'd have something to do. The anxious father would even pay her salary if ~~that~~ <sup>it</sup> were kept secret from the girl. Jack Holland knew a golden goose when he saw one, and readily agreed to make a job as "scheduler" for the shy young girl.

*As the plot, the central character in a conflict, has not yet been firmly established, readers may be frustrated by too much background information on these characters. See my critique for more on this.*



Jack Holland was a dirt-poor Texan, who <sup>had</sup> ~~more credit to him,~~ pulled himself up from the deepest poverty to a place of responsibility in the aviation community. It had been a by-hook-or-by-crook endeavor, and Jack hadn't been too proud of some of the things he'd done to get where he was, but he was bright and ambitious and on his way to making a name for himself ~~in aviation.~~ He had some brilliant engineering ideas, despite little formal education, and a burning desire to implement them.

Jack's solicitous manner to the girl came from his recognition that she might be his <sup>access</sup> ~~entre'~~ to the McKendrick fortune. <sup>He hoped that</sup> ~~Maybe~~ if he became friendly enough with Matthew and Page <sup>o</sup> the old man would underwrite some of Jack's ventures. It was one of his better ideas. He teased Page and took her flying. As his relationship with the family grew warmer, Jack was struck with a brilliant scheme. He needed to marry into this family. Unfortunately, Jack had already been to the altar, his bride remaining behind in Texas while Jack became established in Aberdeen, North Carolina.

One weekend, while Page watched the business, Jack hot-footed it to Ft. Worth, filed for divorce, informed his wife that there was no longer room in his life for her, and that was that. Jack Holland would soon be <sup>an</sup> ~~the~~ eligible bachelor <sup>o</sup> and knew exactly where he was going.

Jack's courtship of Page was an ecstatic time in her life, blinding her to any evaluation of his motives or background. Unfortunately, Mr. McKendrick's judgement, normally that of an astute businessman, was obscured by his daughter's ~~glow of~~ happiness. Perhaps he simply preferred not to discover any ~~fatal~~ flaws, which, on the heels of his daughter's preceding disappointment, might send her damaged psyche over the edge.

The romance took its course as Jack joined the church<sup>①</sup> preparing to marry Page in St. John's Cathedral. A fortuitious event intervened when the Navy acted on Jack's earlier application, recruiting him for the exciting airship research program. The couple's personal plans were put on hold when Jack Holland departed for the military life in Los Angeles.

Page had been more horrified than flattered<sup>upon</sup> discovering that Jack thought she could fly an airplane, but his encouragement and confidence in her gave her the will to do it. She was a timid student who needed constant support, but readily learned to handle the controls and fly<sup>to</sup> ~~the airplane by rote.~~ ~~Actually,~~ she possessed a large measure of natural mechanical ability<sup>②</sup> and had become a good pilot. Page was amazed at the ~~dose of~~ independence and confidence flying gave her, and Jack was slow to comprehend the personality change that flying had wrought on his betrothed.

A near disaster almost extinguished Jack Holland's master plan. Page never ~~did have~~<sup>had</sup> any idea how it happened, but one morning she got the airplane into an inverted spin, and knew from having listened to all the hangar ~~flying,~~<sup>talk</sup> that she wasn't going to fly out of it. She calmly thanked God for a happy life, unstrapped her seat belt and fell out of the inverted airplane. Since the airplane was falling right on top of her, Page "swam" away from it, opened her parachute and floated safely to the ground.

When Page didn't arrive back at the field, Jack, thinking she'd had a mechanical problem and landed, flew a grid pattern until he located the airplane. His heart nearly stopped when he came upon the ~~total~~ wreckage, but he soon caught sight of Page's parachute and her small figure waving up at him.

Page's steadfast faith that God would take care of her protected her from undue after effects of the accident. The surprise benefit was Page's membership into the Caterpillar Club and its attendant widespread publicity. Pilots who had jumped from a disabled airplane to save their own lives commanded automatic entry into the exclusive club-- the name had something to do with metamorphosing from a ground-bound caterpillar into a free flyer, <sup>although</sup> ~~or~~ some said the name came from the parachute silk. ~~Whatever.~~<sup>Regardless</sup> Jack couldn't believe his good fortune with the national interest in Page's escapade.



The announcement of the upcoming All Women's Air Derby in conjunction with the Cleveland Air Races had to be the next gift of providence, though Jack was initially appalled that Page wanted to enter the race. He hadn't fully comprehended Page's developing confidence, as her friendships with the women pilots warmed and she caught their infectious courage. Jack acquiesced to her wish, obtained Stearman sponsorship and worked hours on her race plane.

One day Jack brought Page a pet Spider monkey imported from Mexico. Page was ~~surely~~ surprised but studied up on monkey care, and named the personable creature Sis Boombah. Jack announced that Sis Boombah was to be Page's co-pilot in the air derby.



Page McKendrick sat straight up in her seat leaning her head out into the wind stream.

*move up*  
"Yipes! There's a Vega <sup>was</sup> #6 on the side of it -- Amelia <sup>with the sp</sup>  
*was* She's headed back. <sup>Page mumbled</sup> I wonder what her problem is. <sup>Page knew</sup> She's holding ~~altitude~~  
*She was holding* <sup>so</sup> the engine must be okay. <sup>I</sup> I'd best pay attention to what I'm doing and let Earhart take care of herself."

~~Many, in a second group of airplanes following the racers - husbands, assorted relatives, mechanics and race officials - saw Amelia Earhart headed back for Santa Monica. Fortunately, her problem was not serious; the jammed starter was quickly repaired and Amelia was off again, losing only 15 minutes.~~

*This information might be provided later, when Amelia arrives at San Bernardino, in a scene of dialogue. It seems unnecessary here.*

Page concentrated on her navigation<sup>^</sup> -- holding a heading, keeping the notch in the mountains ahead in the same perspective, and staying exactly parallel to the mountains on the north. The weather was fine and visibility<sup>was</sup> good. As she passed over the little town of Montebello she saw a Travel Air on the ground<sup>^</sup> -- it seemed to be taxiing back to the end of the pasture for takeoff. *she wondered if someone else had had a mechanical problem, but couldn't tell* ~~Did someone else have a mechanical problem? She learned later that who it was.~~ ~~Mary Von Mach got sandwiched in too close between two other airplanes and had landed to avoid a collision.~~

Page knew from her computations of time, speed and distance that she was coming up on San Bernardino. ~~Heads up.~~ Everyone would be making a fly by at the time clock, then flying a traffic pattern for landing. The racers were excited and disinterested in the good<sup>^</sup>manners rule of giving <sup>^</sup>way to conflicting traffic, <sup>^</sup>but ~~Nevertheless,~~ <sup>would still have</sup> they ~~had~~ to be alert to any opposing airplanes. Page could see a field of dust dead ahead, and knew it must be the airport. She made a powered descent so she'd lose no time in a glide.

"Come on, sweet and steady ~~Red Stearman~~, keep the air speed up until we're past the time clock, <sup>she said</sup> and ~~don't lose any precious seconds.~~"

Page knew that a good pilot ~~has a skinny neck and~~ kept her head swivelling looking for other aircraft. Even in that great big sky, two airplanes could try to occupy the same space at the same time and that didn't work.

~~"Descend smoothly . . . speed up . . . where's the landing area~~ the swirling dust <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ covering everything. ~~\*~~ Page saw an airplane directly in front of her and hoped that made her number two in line. The time clock was supposed to be at the approach end of the runway and she dove for it to get as much speed as she could. After crossing the ~~timing~~ line, <sup>she</sup> ~~Page~~ pulled up into a sweeping, climbing turn to come around and land.

She could see the crowds had left ~~mighty~~ little room for landing. They'd driven ~~is~~ their cars right onto the landing field <sup>and</sup> there was no "runway" as such. The airplanes were so close together that by the time someone landed and rolled ~~out and~~ off the landing strip, the next one in line was right there <sup>she</sup> trying to avoid overtaking the first one. Since no one wanted to pick up and go around, conflicting with those being timed, some airplanes landed dangerously close to each other. Pilots on the ground watching the



show were impressed <sup>o</sup> with ~~these women pilots.~~ They knew what they were doing. They got on the ground and out of the way as fast as possible, both for their own safety and out of concern for the following ship. It was a <sup>perfectly</sup> ~~dramatically~~ staged ballet ~~... until~~ until Opal Kunz arrived late in the pack.

By the time Opal landed with Amelia Earhart right behind her, the visibility was terrible <sup>due to</sup> ~~for~~ all the dust stirred up, despite the gallons of water poured on the new sod by local Exchange Club members. Opal couldn't see the exact landing area until she was right on top of it. She landed the airplane about 10' above where the ground was and pancaked in, damaging the undercarriage. Amelia then overshot the appropriate touch <sup>down</sup> spot, but the crowds parted at the end of the runway <sup>giving</sup> her adequate room to get the airplane stopped short of the fence. As it turned out, the damage to Opal's Travel Air was confined to the shock absorbers <sup>and</sup> the ship was repaired in time for the next morning's takeoff.

Page's emotions were still flying high as she taxied into the fueling area, happy that <sup>the</sup> ~~her~~ first leg had gone so well. The airplane performed as expected and she'd navigated precisely. ~~What more could you ask for?~~ Page shut down the engine and hopped out, looking around for Louise and Marvel. <sup>9</sup> Marvel came bounding over, every bit as happy as Page.

move  
up ↗

"Hey, that was great! I'd love to go on right now!"

This dialogue  
might be developed  
if important to  
the plot, or  
omitted if  
not.

Page was delighted that Marvel was having as good a time as she. ~~What great and super fun!~~

Page found her private fuel supply and put her request in with the refuelers for the next leg. Jack had arranged for a special stock of fuel just for Page. Sis Boombah was not a happy ~~flyer~~, hopping and screaming frantically. <sup>2nd l.c.</sup> The press was drawn like bees to honey.

DAILY TELEGRAM: "They are aviators, but they are still women. They had only been out sixty miles when they all struck and wanted to have it their way." Yours, Will Rogers

Again  
intent  
from both  
margins

CHAPTER SIX Sunday August 18, 1929

Race Day 1, Evening, San Bernardino

To save weight, the racers didn't carry many clothes, and the citizens of San Bernardino started what would become standard hospitality each evening of the race. Each local Exchange Club entertained their guests with a banquet, consistently including a chicken entree, until the fliers preferred to eat anything else <sup>o</sup> ~~even feathers!~~ The pilots pulled out their one wrinkled, dress-up frock and a long evening of dining, speeches and gossip ensued. Most agreed the evening entertainment combined with late night pilot meetings then a pre-dawn wakeup call was the toughest part of the race. No one got rested <sup>o</sup> and the sleep debt compounded.

The racers were cleaning up for dinner when a clanging fire truck roared up to the hotel.

"Herb, I'm not getting out of this warm tub. Let the hotel burn down around me," Claire Fahy yelled to her husband.

The sudden  
introduction  
of this  
character may  
seem jarring to  
readers.



move  
up ↗

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The sudden introduction of this character may seem jarring to readers.

Herb Fahy was checking for smoke. The firemen didn't seem to be moving any hoses ~~but, rather, were~~ just coming into the hotel.

Again, the relevance of the characters to the plot should be made clear to avoid confusing readers.

"Claire, I'm almost dressed and it doesn't look like a fire. I'll see what the commotion is all about. I'm taking a key."

As Herb left their hotel room he heard the firemen clumping up the stairs and watched them make their way to a room at the end of the hall. He followed them as other hotel guests peered out their doors, and some racers joined the parade. As the firemen entered room #214, they left the door open and Fahy and the others watched. It was Page McKendrick's room and the firemen were taking the hinges off the bathroom door. ~~How odd.~~ Both Page and Jack were standing out in the hall, ~~so~~ <sup>and he wondered</sup> who could be locked in the bathroom?

At that moment Jack Holland spied <sup>2</sup> ~~the~~ newspaper reporter and photographer who had been hanging around the hotel talking to racers, and he invited them in. He spoke with them quietly and they positioned themselves close to the bathroom door ~~as it was about to come off.~~ Racers elbowed their way closer for a better look <sup>When the door was removed</sup> ~~and~~ there was that idiot monkey <sup>1</sup> Sis Boombah <sup>1</sup> calmly sitting on the edge of the sink eating her supper. She had locked herself in the bathroom, and the fire department had been called to extricate her.



Just as the realization of Holland's clever publicity ploy hit Herb Fahy, he caught Jack Holland's eye. Jack's smile was one of sublime satisfaction. Page didn't win the first leg of the race, but she'd reap front page publicity in the San Bernardino Daily Sun in the morning <sup>thanks to</sup> ~~along with~~ her co-pilot <sup>①</sup> who knew how to lock a door but hadn't yet mastered unlocking. ~~Yeeeeeek! What a scam.~~

~~Indeed,~~ <sup>9</sup> Phoebe Omlie won the first leg in the light plane class, and Pancho Barnes won the heavy plane class. ~~The press pointed out that Phoebe's plane "was carrying her along at breakneck speed when she crossed the line".~~

"Just before I reached the line," Phoebe said, "I nosed my plane down with the motor wide open. I was hitting about 130 miles <sup>(SP)</sup> per hour, I believe." ~~Next day the paper bubbled, "Mrs. Omlie is probably the best flier in the whole bunch and she is one of two to hold transport licenses." Interesting observation, but not accurate.~~

~~The beauties were not overlooked. "Ruth Elder could probably defeat the others decisively in a beauty contest though might cut a stiff argument from Marvel Crosson and Louise Thaden."~~

Pancho crossed the finish line at 2:43:21 P.M., just 27 minutes and 21 seconds from Clover Field, the fastest of any ship

Members in dialogue should be spelled out.

This newspaper information seems extraneous, & I've suggested omitting it.

on the first lap. The press politely reported that she was dubbed "Pauncho" by her "flying mates", which wasn't quite true.

Chafing at domesticity, Florence Leontine Lowe Barnes had left her clergyman husband, baby boy and Hollywood flying job behind to go to sea <sup>①</sup> ~~as an able-bodied seaman~~, a feat only she could have pulled off. She had cut her black hair short, dressed in oversized grease-stained clothes and signed on under the name Jacob Crane. The other sailors were awed at Crane's vocabulary <sup>②</sup> ~~when told what a "f---ing, lily-livered, lady-finger-eating, gutless bunch of sons of bitches" they were.~~ When her Panamanian banana boat <sup>③</sup> running guns to Mexican revolutionaries <sup>④</sup> made a tempting port, she and another sailor jumped ship to drink and carouse ~~(a dangerous adventure)~~ with the revolutionaries. She was given the name Pancho, which she carried the rest of her life.

Pancho's derby aircraft had played an important part in the motion picture, "The Flying Fool", which was shown to the racers after dinner in San Bernardino. After fueling and cleaning up the aircraft, a few minutes with their sponsors/husbands/mechanics, a long banquet with speeches and entertainment <sup>⑤</sup> then a movie, a new day was <sup>already</sup> bearing down when the racers finally got into their contestants' meeting to discuss the next day's events.

The relevance of this history seems unclear. It should be clarified or omitted, to avoid slowing plot development.

Monday's route would be 144 miles to Calexico for a stop, then on another 204 miles to Phoenix for the night. Some of the racers had flown the course backwards en route to the start in Santa Monica and were ~~quite~~ concerned about the Calexico stop. The runway was too short for the heavier aircraft, making it an unnecessarily dangerous stop when Yuma was an easy and close substitute. Pancho led the revolt at midnight.

The Derby contestants had already drafted and signed a petition allowing Mary Haizlip to compete despite the delay waiting for her airplane in Santa Monica. The petition, dated August 19 read: "We, the undersigned pilots of the Women's Air Derby from Santa Monica to Cleveland do hereby wholeheartedly consent to the entrance of May Haizlys (sic) in this event, her start to be made this date from Santa Monica."

Another petition was prepared, signed and presented to the officials demanding that the Calexico stop en route to Phoenix be eliminated and Yuma substituted.

*move up* →  
"We, the undersigned, pilots in the women's air derby, hereby declare we will go not farther than this point (San Bernardino) unless routed by or through Yuma instead of Calexico."



They were particularly angered that they had not been furnished with a definite routing until just a few hours before takeoff at Santa Monica. ~~In fact,~~ Thea Rasche had forwarded aircraft parts to Yuma anticipating her arrival there, and others had arranged for fuel in Yuma instead of Calexico.

At 2:00 AM, local race committee chairman Dr. L.W. Ayers flatly refused to allow any deviation from course and announced that those so doing would be disqualified. The final authority, Floyd Logan, the air race chairman in Cleveland, had <sup>left</sup> ~~exercised the foresight of leaving~~ his telephone off the hook. Someone eventually roused him and he allowed a compromise that the en route landing could be in Yuma, but all racers were required to fly over and be identified at Calexico. At 2:30 AM the racers went to bed for two hours' sleep in anticipation of their 6:00 AM departure.

Only the Daily Sun reporters got less sleep than the pilots. Their impressions filled the front page of Monday's paper.

"In the light plane class, Bobbi Trout, a trim young girl with a daredevil look in her eye, finished second in an elapsed time of 36 minutes and 23 seconds. She is flying a Golden Eagle plane with a Kinner motor. Mrs. Keith-Miller, flying a Fleet plane in the light class, completely lost her bearings near the end of her jaunt and went clear to Redlands before she discovered her mistake.

see  
note  
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Returning, she landed with a total elapsed time of 1 hour, 12 minutes and 59 seconds. She could have made it about as quickly in an automobile."

"Amelia Earhart, flying a big Lockheed monoplane, finished eleventh in an elapsed time of 43 minutes flat. Amelia, sometimes known as the 'Lady Lindy,' had a lot of hard luck at the start, and had to turn back to Clover Field soon after the takeoff because of motor trouble. ~~Amelia, by the way,~~ <sup>She</sup> furnished another thrill when she overshot the runway in landing, and was almost at the end of the long field when she finally brought her plane to earth, causing the crowds to jump hither and yon looking for something to crawl under."

"Opal Kunz, piloting a Travel Air plane with a Challenger motor pancaked her ship when about 10 <sup>ft</sup> feet above the ground and crashed, wrecking the undercarriage. But Miss Kunz' mishap brought out some of the prettiest flying feats seen during the afternoon. Coming into the field directly behind Miss Kunz when the accident occurred was Miss Neva Paris of Great Neck, NY in a Curtiss Robin Challenger plane. Miss Kunz' plane bogged down right in the middle of the runway, and, swerving her ship, Miss Paris came in diagonally at high speed and managed to set her craft down perfectly, despite the handicap."

see  
note  
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"Women may be fliers, but they're just women after all. This was conclusively demonstrated yesterday as one by one the pilots landed and were summoned to have their pictures taken."

"'Just a minute,' was the invariable response. Then out came compact boxes and lipsticks and only after their application would the girls consent to face the camera."

"'This is the first real test of women's ability to fly,' said pretty Ruth Elder, who tried to fly the Atlantic, fell into the ocean and later into the movies. 'None of the girls cares much about the prize money, but they want to show they can make the trip successfully.' Maybe they don't care about \$25,000 in prizes which will be distributed at the end of the race, but it's a safe bet none of them will turn it down."

"Page McKendrick's co-pilot, a diapered female monkey named Sis Boombah, found her privacy interrupted last evening as she sought solitude in her hotel bathroom. The San Bernardino fire department responded to a request for extrication from a bathroom. Assuming the trapped party to be a child, San Bernardino's finest quickly mounted a rescue, only to discover the victim dining contentedly while perched on the bathroom porcelain. Perhaps by the end of the race Miss McKendrick will have trained her co-pilot to not only lock bathroom doors, but also to unlock them. We hope that the co-pilot's navigational ability is superior to her mechanical talents." ~~Accompanied by photo.~~

See note back of p. 49



FIRST LEG STANDINGS

## Light Planes

<u>Race #</u>	<u>Contestant</u>	<u>Elapsed Time</u>	<u>Aircraft &amp; Engine</u>
8	Phoebe Omlie	32:15	Monocoupe, Warner
100	Bobbi Trout	36:23	Golden Eagle, Kinner
54	Claire Fahy	44:11	Travel Air, OX5
61	Thea Rasche	46:30	Gypsy Moth, DH Gypsy
109	Edith Foltz	52:55	Eaglerock, Kinner
43	Chubbie Keith-Miller	1:12:59	Fleet, Kinner K5

## Heavy Planes

2	Pancho Barnes	27:21	Travel Air, Wright J5
4	Louise Thaden	27:50	Travel Air, Wright J5
105	Gladys O'Donnell	29:19	Waco 10, Wright J5
1	Marvel Crosson	29:23	Travel Air, Wright J5
3	Blanche Noyes	31:15	Travel Air, Wright J5
16	Ruth Nichols	32:50	Rearwin, Ken-Royce
<del>7</del>	<del>Page McKendrick</del>	<del>33:04</del>	<del>Stearman C4A, Wrgt J5</del>
66	Ruth Elder	34:40	Swallow, Wright J5
18	Opal Kunz	38:36	Travel Air, Challenger
11	Margaret Perry	40:19	Spartan, Wright J5
23	Neva Paris	41:22	Curtiss Robin, Chlnger
6	Amelia Earhart	43:00	Lockheed Vega, Wrt J5
113	Vera Dawn Walker	51:04	Curtiss Robin, Chlnger
5	Mary von Mach	not available	Travel Air, Wright J5
76	Mary Haizlip	not yet started	Amer Eagle, Phantom J6

see note  
over  
→

The newspaper report, pp. 46-9, seems to be of uncertain relevance to the plot, and may distract readers. The information about relevant events might be more effectively shown in scenes of dialogue between the characters, allowing their personalities to be developed, as well as clarifying their involvement in the events. Using the newspaper instead seems to inhibit character development & unnecessarily slow the progress of the book. If important to the story, the standings list might still be included.

DAILY TELEGRAM: "Biggest news in the papers today was that Colonel Lindbergh had won the horseshoe pitching contest out in the Black Hills of Virginia, at Camp Hoover. What's the matter with this country when an aviator can walk off with a horse-shoe pitching test? Is there no limit to this man's cleverness?"

*This item seems extraneous to the story, & might be omitted.*

Yours, Will Rogers

CHAPTER SEVEN Monday, August 19, 1929

RACE DAY 2 San Bernardino - ~~Calexico~~ - Yuma - Phoenix

Warren Otto was already at Page's airplane and wiping it down as she arrived at the airport in the pre-dawn dark. He told her he'd arranged for an airplane ride along the route with an Exchange Club official, had called the bank to advise that he was on vacation, bought toiletries and basic clothing changes and was along for the duration. Warren himself couldn't believe what he was doing <sup>o</sup> ~~it was so totally out of character.~~ He watched carefully as Page checked the fuel tanks, the level of the oil and finished <sup>preparing</sup> ~~pre-flighting~~ the airplane. Page was intrigued with the smitten banker and pleased to have some support in her corner along the route.

Jack Holland had fueled Page's airplane the evening before, checked it over carefully <sup>checked</sup> ~~and then had done~~ it again, then went to



the hotel with Page for the "monkey business". He went over with her again and again <sup>as well as</sup> ~~the fueling scenario~~ and the various mechanical problems he thought she'd run into <sup>he</sup> then had to hustle back to Los Angeles where Uncle Sam was in charge of his time. Jack was sincerely concerned about Page's safety in the race though Page was a little annoyed that he thought she couldn't handle it on her own. <sup>the fueling details</sup>

All the women were somewhat paranoid about men "helping" them and <sup>were</sup> resentful of the hurdles for women in aviation. There had been some talk of meeting at Cleveland and forming some sort of organization just for women pilots so they could network for jobs.

Takeoffs this morning were in reverse order of yesterday's landings <sup>1</sup> putting Vera Dawn Walker off first and Phoebe Omlie last. Page was in the middle of her horsepower group -- not where she wanted to be, but respectable. Louise Thaden was only nine seconds behind Pancho Barnes. Those Travel Airliners were the ships to have.

Jack Holland had forgotten a tranquilizer for the monkey, but she couldn't get in any trouble strapped down securely. Page had a sturdy harness and Sis Boombah would be sitting down low out of the wind. Too bad she didn't have a good book to <sup>read</sup> ~~while~~ away the <sup>1</sup> ~~time!~~ <sup>Page thought</sup> Jack had done a good job on the airplane. He'd shortened the propeller, rolled the wings and lifted the tail, all to get more speed. But his secret weapon was the fuel.

Jack's military contacts disclosed the army's experimentation with assorted gasolines. For some time, pistons stressed for higher compression had increased airspeed by boosting horsepower, but the pistons quickly burned out. The army learned that the Pennsylvania gasolines were high in paraffin content with a low knock rating and would burn the pistons rapidly. The California gasolines, high in aromatics, had a high knock rating and were kinder to the higher-compressioned pistons. Jack had some of the new ~~Shell 100 octane~~ aviation gasoline shipped to each air derby stop for Page's airplane. She would have every advantage Jack knew how to provide. The white pills the racers had seen him drop in the fuel tanks were simply a psychological ploy, <sup>to</sup> ~~Might as well~~ keep the competition off balance.

Ruth Elder could be seen waving her arms in an agitated state as she tried to deal with <sup>the</sup> ~~either stupid or brain-dead~~ mechanics. The so-called mechanics <sup>①</sup> who had been provided for the racers <sup>②</sup> were quickly testing Ruth's engine after draining out the five gallons of oil they'd mistakenly ~~(!)~~ put in the gas tank <sup>③</sup> and ~~replacing it~~ ~~with gas~~. It was troubling.

Page saw a crowd gathering around Edith Foltz' Alexander ~~(Eaglerock)~~ Bullet. Its appearance was quite radical alongside the other aircraft in the lineup <sup>④</sup>; few people had seen a low wing ship <sup>⑤</sup> and the landing gear actually retracted up into the wings after

takeoff. Edith was being criticized by some pilots for flying such a freaky airplane, but there was no doubt of its speed. ~~Perhaps this design would catch on in the future.~~

~~Edith Foltz was decidedly the clothes-horse of the group. She had designed and trade-marked the Foltzup Suit, a flying outfit which quickly converted to street wear. The skirt pulled up and became a jacket and knickers were worn beneath for climbing into the cockpit. Her unusual airplane and garb attracted a lot of attention. That is, after Page's monkey.~~

*This detail seems extraneous to the plot. I've suggested omitting it.*

Page carefully <sup>and</sup> contentedly preflighted her shiny Stearman. ~~Red airplanes go faster - even sitting on the ground!~~ She was euphoric about her splendid airplane, the challenge of getting every last <sup>bit of speed</sup> mph out of it, the excitement of navigating precisely over rough terrain, and happiness at simply being there. ~~She could not guess that the day would bring tragedy to the Air Derby.~~

*This kind of foreshadowing seems unnecessary, as these events should be allowed to occur naturally for readers.*

Vera Dawn Walker was cranking up to taxi first for takeoff. Page waved to Ruth Elder in her Swallow <sup>Ⓛ</sup> whom she would follow on takeoff, mounted <sup>Ⓛ</sup> her ~~steed~~ and prepared to race. She S-turned carefully ~~the only way she could see where she was going as she joined the line of racers.~~ <sup>there was</sup> No sense taxiing into a hole and damaging a prop at this point.



The starter flagged her into position and Page concentrated on her course out of San Bernardino, held the 120 degree heading in mind, and checked her few instruments as she listened carefully to her engine. The starter flagged Page into takeoff position and ~~dropped the flag as the time clock started.~~ Page <sup>she</sup> had held the brakes and started to add power, but not full power which would stir up rocks and damage the prop. If the timing was right, she'd have the power in as the flag dropped. ~~Perfect!~~ Page was on the roll for Calexico.

I've edited to keep these events in sequential order.

The flag dropped and it was perfect.

At six o'clock in the morning the air was smooth and Page had decided to take the direct route to Calexico rather than <sup>travel</sup> on the east side of the San Jacinto range where the valley was lower. Page was a good navigator and felt she could hold a steady heading ~~just west of the San Jacinto then Santa Rosa mountains~~ until the high valley dropped off and she'd see the Salton Sea to the east. Then simply hold a heading to Calexico/Mexicali. <sup>she</sup> ~~sure~~ wish <sup>ed</sup> they'd put a big fence up on the Mexican border so she could fly to the fence and turn left.

she would

9/1 She

which was

~~Page~~ started a long climb to 7,000', necessary to clear the high valley terrain, while watching her oil temperature gauge for overheating. Achieving altitude was a struggle, and the racers flew most of the route from 500 to 1000' above the ground. It was 220 statute miles to Yuma via Calexico, then another 165 to

Phoenix. She'd land at Yuma for fuel and to be timed. If she didn't wander, Yuma should be just over three hours away.

Visibility was good and Page could fly parallel to a road, head up out of the cockpit for a look, then back to the chart as she verified her heading. The road made a left turn off through the Banning Pass as expected. She was right on course. She would snuggle up to the mountains on the left and see Hemet on her right. After that there wouldn't be much to navigate on until the mountains slid into the Salton Sea and it was downhill to Calexico. There'd be one little bump at Superstition Mountain, a 759' hill as compared to 10,804' San Jacinto. Page was struck at the audacity of pioneers in covered wagons finding their way through this vast country <sup>Ⓟ</sup> while at the same time realizing that if she went down in these tall foothills it might be a long time before anyone found her. Bad thoughts, <sup>she chided herself Ⓟ was</sup> Her airplane ~~is~~ running good. ~~It's red for~~ <sup>up underlining here.</sup> ~~heaven's sake. All's right with the world.~~

Even at 7:00 in the morning there was a slight breeze from the west <sup>Ⓟ</sup> giving Page a little lift on the windward side of the mountains. She barely outclimbed the terrain without having to circle and lose time, and at 7,000' she was almost rolling her wheels on the ground at the high point. In another twenty miles the terrain started lowering.

Shortly after 8:00 AM the first airplanes commenced timing by Calexico. Claire Fahy landed, according to the first press report, due to a leaky fuel tank. But Claire was truly frightened as she taxied in to speak with the race officials. Claire's race #54 Travel Air had broken flying wires, a dangerous condition which could cause the wings to collapse at an altogether inappropriate time.

Claire jumped out of the airplane as the engine died, and was so agitated that she could hardly speak. Not expecting anyone to land, the timers knew something was wrong even before questioning the pilot, who was carefully examining the broken wires. Claire immediately declared,

"You can see these wires have been eaten through with acid. My airplane has been sabotaged. Seeing the wires parted in the air made me wonder if I had any chance of landing in one piece. Who could do such a despicable thing?"

The stunned officials and onlookers couldn't believe the race planes could have been tampered with at either Santa Monica or San Bernardino. But here was evidence of serious trouble. Claire Fahy declared herself out of the race.



Mary von Mach's Travel Air, ~~named MaryAnn after her mother,~~ made a stop at Calexico then went on. ~~Mary Haizlip, who~~ <sup>she</sup> had gotten a late start and was trying to catch up with the other racers, arrived in the Calexico area after dark. Only after landing did she realize she'd overshot her mark and landed on the south side of the border at Mexicali on the Baja Peninsula. Several hours spent cutting red tape preceded Mary's short flight back across the border, and a night in Calexico.

DAILY TELEGRAM: "It was a warm sultry night and Dr. Eckener of the Zeppelin didn't know if that still air would raise him high enough to get over the mountains, so Los Angeles had a banquet and twenty local townsmen spoke. They rushed from the dinner to the field and the ship raised so fast they had to throw fourteen typewriters and two radio announcers overboard to get it back to a flying level."

Yours, Will Rogers

Again, these comments seem irrelevant to the plot, & might be omitted.

CHAPTER EIGHT Monday, August 19, 1929

MORE RACE DAY 2 Yuma to Phoenix

*Murray Crosson*

Page was in perfect position to see the Yuma airport <sup>but</sup> and just couldn't pick it out. This desolate sand dune country required only a little wind to drift a blanket of sand across the fields hiding any clue <sup>of the</sup> where they had hidden an airport. Page had learned not to become fixated on where she thought the landing field should be but <sup>instead</sup> to scan a wider area.

Her eye caught what could be the tail of an airplane rising awkwardly above the wings <sup>and</sup> ~~cocked off to the right~~. Either someone had made a forced landing in a farmer's field or else a <sup>troubled landing</sup> ~~notable arrival~~ at the Yuma Airport. Page gambled on the latter and headed for the crippled airplane. As she approached the field, Page could see people surrounding the airplane to bring the tail down and pull it out of the landing area. Page flew across the field west to east to be timed then circled back around to land west, most nearly into the wind. The bent airplane had a number 6 <sup>SP</sup>

on the tail-- Amelia Earhart again. Amelia must be jinxed. The man who flew to the west coast with her was killed on his return back east, Amelia had a jammed starter on the race takeoff and now some sort of problem at Yuma.

Concentrate. <sup>she reminded herself</sup> Concentrate. There <sup>was</sup> a 30 degree crosswind with the sock showing a strong wind out of the northwest. Page could feel it as the airplane wanted to drift south. She turned the nose into the wind to stop the drift, then straightened out the nose and dropped the right wing to eliminate any side load on the landing gear, while at the same time concentrating on landing well short of the disabled Vega. She took a small bounce, then the front wheels wanted to dig into the soft sand. Page held the stick back into her gut to keep the tail wheel down ~~in the sand~~, wishing she had a load of bricks in the tail. It was easy to see how Amelia could have dug in and gone over on her nose. Page kept some power in and the airplane moving to avoid bogging down, and quickly taxied out of the way for the next arriving aircraft.

~~Page expected to see more airplanes ahead of her at Yuma. Race planes pulled aside and the pilots were helping Amelia move her airplane.~~ It turned out that Amelia landed long, nosed the plane over and broke the propeller. Another prop would be flown in from Los Angeles, and the other pilots generously waited for the Vega to be repaired and the heat to intensify before going on.



Pancho Barnes straggled in with a wild story. With few good checkpoints in the desolate country, Pancho had followed railroad tracks into Mexico. ~~She was~~ totally disoriented and unable to locate any kind of a landmark, <sup>she had</sup> ~~so~~ put her ship down near a homestead to inquire. When Pancho discovered she was in Mexico she took off in a hurry back across the border. It turned out she was not the only foreign tourist that day.

*This story might be more effectively shown to readers in action & dialogue, allowing more development of Pancho's character.*

The delayed afternoon flight from Yuma to Phoenix combined all the worst conditions flying had to offer. The 120 degree temperature was debilitating, and the air so rough that Louise Thaden seriously questioned if her airplane could possibly stay together as it repeatedly slammed an invisible wall. At that ~~very~~ moment Walter Beech was god, and her fate was in his hands. If the airplane Beech had provided were strong enough to withstand the beating it was taking, the sudden wild ride up, then stomach wrenching descent, it could take anything a ~~mere~~ pilot would inflict upon it.

In clear air Louise ran full speed into an unseen eggbeater which first rolled her then spit her out. Even with her seat belt cinched tight, <sup>she</sup> ~~Louise~~ lifted almost completely out of the cockpit. She struck her head on something, shattering her flying goggles and then, regaining her senses, flew into a momentary calm. The worst was anticipating the next hit. When it came, fear's ugly waves

washed into Louise's soul, ~~depositing grains of fright.~~ Then the next wave rolled in ~~,~~ and another. A reservoir of courage, ~~fortitude, stubbornness,~~ and pride, spiced with that measure of fear, begat tenacity. Louise set the fear aside and went on. A mist of engine oil bathed her sweaty clothes and exposed skin, adding filth to her misery of soreness and exhaustion.

Despite the ~~jeopardy of the~~ time clock's inexorable progress, some of the racers would likely have landed had there been anywhere to do so. There seemed to be no alternative to riding it out. There was nothing below but desert, sand, low hills, scrub brush and wind. The choice between certain disaster landing in that inhospitable terrain, ~~as opposed to survival to this point in the~~ <sup>and remaining in</sup> air, persuaded the pilots to go on.

Many <sup>later</sup> said they spoke to God about their wish to make it to Phoenix.

Ruth Elder lost her maps over the side in the rough air, and landed her <sup>red</sup> Swallow in a pasture prior to the desert country <sup>in order</sup> to establish her position. ~~Her RED Swallow, that is.~~ Ruth's anxiety that the cattle grazing nearby would be cows <sup>2</sup> instead of red-airplane-hating bulls became one of the classic, and most embellished, tales of the ~~'29 Air Derby.~~ <sup>i.e.</sup>

These events should be presented in chronological order, to avoid confusing the proper sequence of events.

~~Amelia Earhart had offered insightful words the day before,~~

~~"It's a sporting event and nothing else. If the 21 of us all get to Cleveland safe and sound, it ought to be proof enough that women can fly, and fly as well as men." Ouch.~~

*These remarks should be shown as they happen to clarify their relevance, or else omitted.*

When the main body of racers departed Yuma, Claire Fahy ~~(who was on the ground at Calexico with broken brace wires)~~, Bobbi Trout and Thea Rasche had not yet arrived. All were known to have departed San Bernardino. Obviously, their fuel was exhausted and they were on the ground somewhere.

~~There had been special interest in German pilot Thea Rasche's progress due to a UP story in the paper that morning, dateline Tokyo:~~

~~"The second leg of the longest and most perilous flight ever attempted in the history of aviation came to a triumphant end this afternoon when the giant dirigible Graf Zeppelin alighted at the Kasumigaura airport near here after a 6,600 mile non-stop flight through the uncharted skies of northern Asia -- carrying 20 passengers, a crew of 40 men and Germany's ambitious hopes in commercial aviation."~~

*This news article seems irrelevant, & I've suggested omitting it.*



Thea's sponsorship in the Air Derby by the Moth Aircraft Corporation was somewhat muddled when their promised racing plane was not ready on time. Thea ~~took~~<sup>had taken</sup> loan of an older Gypsy-Moth which had a hole in the fuel tank. The airplane was repaired, however, there was no time for a test flight prior to the start of the race.

Again, the chronological relation of these events would avoid confusing the time line, and clarify their significance for readers.

Prior to Yuma, Thea <sup>had</sup> experienced engine failure and made an emergency landing near Holtville, California, damaging the airplane. Repairs were made and she proceeded on to Fly Field in Yuma the next day with the following document:

~~We the undersigned were present when Miss Thea Rasche was forced to land at the Thiesen ranch near Holtville and saw her take off gasoline clarifier which contained scraps of rubber, fibre and many other impurities. Signed, Geo T. Thiesen and three other witnesses.~~

single-spaced, indented from both margins

move up

~~The document went on,~~ I also examined the gas tanks and found them both to have plenty of gasoline but the gas line had some obstruction in it that refused to let the flow come thru. I picked up the pieces of sediment from the clarifier and found them to be the same as stated above. The engine had been missing sometime and finally went dead altogether which sounded like lack of gasoline to me. Signed, Gilbert Morgan, ~~Geo T. Thiesen, and three other witnesses.~~

Thea suspected foul play. She told of the telegram from New York warning of sabotage, <sup>and</sup> ~~Thea~~ also pointed out that her airplane had not been guarded in San Bernardino.

Lieutenant Herbert Fahy arrived in Yuma the next day along with a passenger, Claire. He joined in the string of mishaps by striking the edge of a concrete marker in the middle of the landing field with his wheel, smashing his landing gear and wing.

9 Regarding Claire's broken brace wires Herb stated publicly,

<sup>move up</sup> "The wires show evidence of being burned with acid. I am convinced that there is something rotten in this race. I'll do everything in my power to have it called off."

The missing Bobbi Trout was within sight of Yuma, <sup>but</sup> ~~yet piled up in another country.~~ <sup>1-2</sup> Her new Kinner engine had been cutting out, and within six miles of Yuma it quit dead. Bobbi looked for a smooth landing site, thinking she'd clear some dirt out of the carburetor and be on her way. ~~Actually, she was out of gas.~~

Bobbi glided to a promising looking field near the town of Algodones on the Mexican border. Too late she realized she'd be landing across the plowed furrows. When the wheels struck the furrows, the beautiful Golden Eagle cartwheeled and came to rest on its back.

Bobbi's factory support came to her rescue in Mexico, but it was three days before the airplane was partially repaired and towed across the border to the Yuma airport. ~~Of course~~ Bobbi continued the race. ~~Now~~ she was breaking in a new engine and three days behind, but was determined to fly to the finish line - much to the satisfaction of her fellow racers and an admiring public.

By dark, 17 <sup>(5)</sup> race planes had landed at Sky Harbor in Phoenix. All the missing airplanes could be accounted for <sup>(1)</sup> except Marvel Crosson. Ghastly rumor had Marvel crashed in the wild Gila mountain country near Wellton, Arizona.



~~DAILY TELEGRAM: "Got a lovely invitation from Henry Ford to come to Dearborn tomorrow and hear Mr. Hoover tell Mr. Edison what the electric light had meant to him before becoming a Republican. Was headed over there and ran into a thick fog and had to come back here. Chicago might be wicked, but that lighted field looked mighty good at night, and I sure want to thank Mr. Edison personally tomorrow for inventing those little things."~~

Yours, Will Rogers

CHAPTER NINE Tuesday, August 20, 1929

RACE DAY 3 Phoenix to Douglas

The Yuma Morning Sun announced: ~~While~~ While the eyes of an anxious nation are turned toward Wellton, Arizona, where the plane of Marvel Crosson, woman flier crashed into a Mesquite jungle in the Gila River valley, yesterday afternoon, United States Department of Commerce agents last night launched an investigation of ugly charges that several of the airships had been deliberately tampered with to put them out of the woman's air derby. ~~It~~

*single-spaced, indented from both margins*

~~"It was reported from Los Angeles, last night, that the race would be halted at Phoenix until the investigation had been completed."~~

It wasn't.

~~"In the meanwhile, several posses combed the dense thicket on~~

*see note p.67*

the north bank of the Gila all last night seeking trace of the lost plane. Three witnesses saw it go into a nose dive, yesterday afternoon, and crash to the ground. The searchers, led by Deputy Sheriffs Victor Gael and J.C. Livingston, are combing an area of one hundred square miles."

"They were furnished with horses to conduct the search, although in many places the men were forced to crawl over wide areas on their hands and knees. The jungle extends towards Roll, and men of wide desert experience say it is the worst section in Arizona."

"Four ~~aero~~<sup>air</sup>planes will fly over the area this morning."

"Miss Crosson's ship, flying at about 2,000 feet, wobbled in the air, flopped like a wounded bird and dove towards earth with the tail spinning madly. The sound of the crash could be faintly heard through the thin desert air."

"It was the opinion around Wellton last night that the flier was either killed instantly, or seriously injured and buried in the wreckage of the ship."

"The jungle growth is impassible in many places, <sup>and J.C.</sup> Searchers said they ~~could~~<sup>might</sup> pass within a hundred yards of the ship and fail to notice it because of the denseness and height of the mesquite."

Again, this newspaper account takes away

from the immediacy of the scene, seeming to inhibit character & plot development.

A scene in which some of the pilots discuss these reports might be more engaging

~~"Sheriff James Polhamus has all available men in the brush."~~

The fliers who had managed to get a little sleep in the night awoke to the near certainty of Marvel's death. Louise Thaden and Gladys O'Donnell were particularly close to Marvel and alternated tears with unrealistic optimism. Surprisingly, the gentle Page McKendrick took a leadership role in rallying the distraught group.

"If I had crashed and were unable to go on, my worst nightmare would be that I had caused the race to stop. I would want my friends to honor me by carrying on my mission to prove the abilities of women pilots and the modern airplane. Would Marvel want us to mope around, wring our hands and consider calling off the event? Oh, no. She would tell us to carry on where she left off. Our pain shall become her tribute."

Her comrades were moved to hear the loving homage to their friend ~~Marvel Crosson~~ and could feel the group come to consensus even without speaking. The race would go on, each pilot more strongly dedicated than ever to fly well, compete fairly and make a good showing for Marvel.

~~"Ladies, start your engines!"~~

Again, this scene, if it were more fully developed, might more effectively present events to readers than the newspaper summary.





The Phoenix RON (<sup>stop</sup>~~Remain OverNight~~) had been an oasis. After landing, the pilots remained at Sky Harbor to clean plugs, wipe down engines and airplane surfaces, change oil and fuel for the next leg. Policemen and Boy Scouts kept the friendly spectators away from the aircraft while essential tasks were accomplished.

A comfortable hotel, friendly people and an extra two-hours<sup>of</sup> sleep ~~(~~the takeoff was moved from 6:00 AM to 8:00 AM~~)~~ rejuvenated the racers. They again took off in reverse order of their arrivals, and the standings were:

DW (heavy) class

Pancho Barnes	3:21:10
Louise Thaden	3:37:20
Gladys O'Donnell	3:38:48

CW (light aircraft) class

Phoebe Omlie	4:17:15
Edith Folz	5:10:52
Chubbie Keith Miller	5:28:14

After the unbearable heat of Yuma, where the nice townspeople had gone home for ice water for the racers, everyone pressed to get airborne in Phoenix's early morning cool ~~(more like, not quite so hot)~~. The regular morning "weather briefing", a dubious science,

called for typical afternoon buildups with increasing westerly winds, but morning winds were forecast light and variable. Page had studied her 208 mile course out of Phoenix into Douglas with its initial heading of 120 degrees. <sup>Her</sup> ~~Page's~~ small overnight suitcase and Sis Boombah were securely strapped into the two small front seats, with the pilot sitting in the aft cockpit. Amelia had generously offered to carry some of the girls' larger suitcases, <sup>although</sup> ~~many said she just needed the ballast~~ Vera Dawn Walker remarked on Amelia's kindness,

~~"She needed the baggage for ballast. She really did. Amelia is really a grand sport, but there are dozens who can fly rings around her."~~

Page had nothing critical to say about Amelia Earhart. Amelia was always a meticulous flyer <sup>1)</sup> and cautious. She liked the limelight but never failed to promote <sup>i.e.</sup> ALL women pilots. Wiley Post was carrying luggage for racers too, as were other officials flying the route.

The race director had cautioned the pilots to follow roads, railroads and known landmarks, and not try to ~~dead~~ <sup>by</sup> reckon, applying computations of wind and magnetic variation to the compass course. Page was trying a combination of ~~pilotage~~ <sup>2)</sup>, keeping known landmarks in sight, and backing it up with ~~dead~~ reckoning. Out of Phoenix she kept the Superstition Mountains to the east and the low Santan

Mountains immediately west of <sup>her</sup> course, skirting the tallest peak. The visibility was good, making it easy to see Newman Peak, and the road and railroad coming from the west leading into Tucson. Just north of Tucson, <sup>she</sup> ~~Page~~ stayed equidistant between Watson Peak and Mount Lemmon, following the almost dry Santa Cruz River.

Page verified <sup>her</sup> ~~"on course"~~ <sup>by</sup> crossing the road and railroad southeast of Tucson threading between Rincon Peak (8,482') and Mount Fagan (6,189'), and aiming just to the east of Apache Peak (7,711'). These mountains all showed up where they were supposed to be and in the right relationship to each other, giving Page confidence that her heading was valid. ~~Of course,~~ the light winds gave her the opportunity to gain a little altitude where she could see better and keep track of her bearings. By the time she went past Tucson, Page had pretty well established that holding approximately 130 degrees on the compass would <sup>get</sup> ~~give~~ her <sup>to</sup> ~~just about~~ ~~the correct magnetic heading for Douglas.~~

If these specific altitudes aren't significant to the plot, they might be omitted or mentioned less formally,

Page flew ~~right~~ over the old mining town of Tombstone keeping the Mute Mountains on the right, then on to Douglas in the Sulphur Springs Valley. The trouble-free leg was a strong confidence boost for an inexperienced pilot, <sup>but</sup>

such as: "... Rincon Peak, at about 8500 feet, and Mount Fagan, just over 6000 feet..."

<sup>up</sup> <sup>move</sup>  i.e.

Not all the racers found that leg so easy.



Vera Dawn Walker's only instrument, a compass, was not reliable and she resolved to fly from one town to the next via the highway map rather than try to navigate with it. She had been advised that once over Tucson she'd see smoke from the smelters in Douglas and could follow the railroad tracks right to the airport. <sup>but</sup> ~~Only~~ she took the wrong set of tracks heading east.

"I knew I was going the wrong direction when I saw those dry salt beds near Lordsburg, New Mexico. I said to myself that I better land while I can, so I did and refueled. I wasn't there three minutes before the entire town was ~~there~~ at the strip crowding around my plane."

"I got started again and was going southwest this time towards Douglas when I hit this cumulus thunderstorm ~~near, well~~ it wasn't near anything. ~~Maybe it was kind of near Willcox.~~ I fought with those controls and battled that storm and finally just dove to get out. ~~I mean you~~ <sup>I</sup> couldn't tell where in the world ~~you were~~ <sup>I was</sup> in that storm. I lost flying speed and, like I said, just dove to get out. The controls finally responded <sup>or</sup> that would've been it for old Vera Dawn."

"Course I had to put the plane down in this cow pasture and I did that all right <sup>but</sup> I was surrounded by cattle <sup>and</sup> y'know they'll eat the fabric right off your plane <sup>so</sup> I had to stick with

*It is unclear here who Vera is talking to. You might clarify to avoid confusion.*

the plane. They just looked at me and I stared at them until finally some man came walking by with Chubbie Keith Miller<sup>^</sup> - she'd crashed right nearby<sup>^</sup> - and they got me out."

~~Indeed,~~<sup>91</sup> Chubbie had run out of fuel and was down at Elfrida, Arizona. Someone reckoned she had walked 18 miles for help, then she spent the night helping repair her damaged airplane. ~~Even were the 18-mile trek somewhat overstated, one could only imagine the Aussie training for this flight by hiking her native Outback in its consummate heat and desert dust.~~

It was a day of forced landings. Opal Kunz made a forced landing, out of fuel. Blanche Noyes wandered off course landing in Cananea, Sonora Mexico, and had an imaginative tale to tell.

"I ran into a bad ground fog, mostly factory smoke, and lost myself completely. I thought I had better land and get my bearing."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>up</sup> <sup>move</sup> → "I'd swear it was an orange grove I landed in, although everybody says it must have been mesquite. I had to dodge horses and cows. And then suddenly, from every direction, Mexicans began to appear. <sup>(11)</sup> ~~I never have seen anything as mysterious as the way those Mexicans bobbed up.~~" →

Again, it is unclear who Blanche is talking to. These scenes might be developed more fully, allowing dialogue between the characters, rather than monologues.

"I asked them questions, but couldn't get a thing out of them. All they could do was shake their heads and hopelessly say *\*Quien sabe?\**"

Foreign words should be italicized.

*l.c.*  
"Where ~~is~~ the United States? I asked them." *was*

*but*  
"I got nowhere with that, so I pulled out my map and showed it to them."

"Oh, ~~yes,~~ <sup>9</sup> <sup>11</sup> they knew what a map was, but for the life of me I couldn't get anything <sup>directions</sup> out of them <sup>directions</sup> about ~~directions.~~"

"Just then a lot of Mexicans rode up on horses with fancy trimmings. So I thought it was time for me to get out. I took off and flew north about twenty miles, when I hit Douglas."

~~Blanche had learned to fly only six weeks before the Derby.~~





By the time the women arrived at Douglas, Marvel Crosson's body had been found. Twelve miles north of Wellton, four Arizona ranchers had seen an airplane similar <sup>in description</sup> to Marvel's plunge into a grove of distant cottonwood trees. They did not see a parachute open. Though searchers had looked for the spot all night, they couldn't locate it in the dark, rough country. At first light Deputy Sheriffs Victor Gael and J.C. Livingston located the aircraft wreckage and 200 yards away Marvel was found, "with every bone broken". The men said that she had been killed instantly, speculating that she had been thrown from the airplane with the parachute pack rupturing upon impact with the earth. Others theorized she had jumped either too low for the parachute to open or that it malfunctioned.

~~"WOMEN HAVE CONCLUSIVELY PROVEN THAT THEY CANNOT FLY,"~~ so said a Texas oilman by the name of Halliburton. "Women have been dependent on men for guidance for so long that when they are put on their resources they are handicapped!"

Race manager Frank Copeland responded:

~~"We wish to thumb our collective noses at Halliburton. There will be no stopping this race."~~

These remarks seem extraneous to the plot, & I've suggested omitting them.

DAILY TELEGRAM: "The women's air derby started from right close to my shack, and Fred Stone and I were over to the field quite a bit. We met and had a long chat with this Marvel Crosson that was killed. We both talked at the time of what a fine wholesome type of girl she was, no riding boots or riding breeches or spurs or anything but just a neat gray suit. She had a great record as a flier."

Yours,  
Will Rogers

*Indent from both margins.*

CHAPTER TEN

Wednesday, August 21, 1929

RACE DAY 4 Douglas - Columbus - El Paso - Midland

Page awakened with a dreadful headache.

*move up* →

*she thought* ⊙

*l.c.* Where am I? *l.c.* This is Wednesday, I must be in ~~...~~ *l.c.* DOUGLAS, ARIZONA. *l.c.* FLYING IN AN AIR RACE! I am ~~really~~ flying an airplane in a race across the continent of the United States of America, *l.c.* ⊙ With a stinky monkey."

Even with the windows open poor old Sis Boombah was morning breath all over. Page was tired of leaving a trail of messy baby diapers along the route - she wasn't about to find a way to wash them out. She was increasingly embarrassed at the evening lockup ~~in~~ the bathroom ritual. The rest of the group was competing strictly on ability, not gimmicks. ~~Page suddenly thought,~~ *she remembered that Marvel was dead* ⊙

~~"Sweet Marvel is dead."~~

A knock on the door came before Page had even rolled out of bed ~~and~~ she presumed it was the hotel wakeup. <sup>i.c.</sup> But Warren Otto's voice called out gently,

*move up* →  
"Page, are you up?"

~~She answered,~~ "Not really. Give me a minute to wash my face."

Page scurried around trying to make herself presentable <sup>then</sup> ~~and~~ opened the door to Warren Otto. He was embarrassed to catch her not yet ~~altogether~~, but caught his breath at her pure loveliness <sup>without</sup> ~~sans~~ adornments <sup>as basic as combed hair.</sup> Page said,

"I was just thinking of Marvel <sup>Page said</sup> ~~and~~ all this seems so unimportant with her life squandered. What are we doing here?"

~~Warren reminded her,~~

"This race is to prove to the public that airplanes are the transportation of the day and the future, and that women have as strong a right to fly them as men. <sup>Warren reminded her</sup> Marvel is cheering each one of you on ~~and~~ you mustn't be discouraged."



Warren's positive words were just what Page needed to get past the immediate tragedy and on to the business at hand. Warren handed Page the morning paper with Sis Boombah prominently pictured on the front page ~~above the fold~~ being "rescued" by an embarrassed Douglas fireman. Page quickly set it aside. ~~Warren said,~~

"The weather looks great, <sup>Warren said</sup> ~~though~~ <sup>there will</sup> probably be normal thunderstorm activity late in the afternoon. I've already wiped the oil off the belly of your airplane. Let me have Sis Boombah. I'll feed her <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ clean her up with a fresh diaper and walk her around a little. I'll take you to the airport when you're ready."

~~And~~ <sup>Page</sup> that was just what ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> needed. Warren got a quick kiss on the cheek, the monkey, and a push out the door.

~~Louise Thaden was up early, also, reflecting on her friend Marvel Crosson in her journal.~~

~~"When the fore ordained time for death comes, how better could one choose than this; . . . the spirit flying free, knowing no transition from the lower fringes of Heaven into its wondrous infinity."~~

These lines are of uncertain significance to the plot. I've suggested omitting them.

Pancho Barnes <sup>had</sup> bounced back from the malaise infecting the racers and was already at the airport <sup>D</sup> painting her airplane. She had strayed into Mexico en route to Douglas and, with her sense of humor intact, was painting in large white letters on the fuselage of her Travel Air <sup>i.c.</sup> MEXICO OR BUST. Might as well tell the world-- especially since today's leg ran right along the Mexican border. Someone would surely stray across. ~~Would that the border actually appeared as a red line like it did on the new sectional charts.~~

The racers gathered by their airplanes. Ruth Elder's Swallow and Gladys O'Donnell's Taperwing Waco had mechanics' help from the start of the race. The others had sporadic assistance from husbands or sponsors, or were dependent upon local mechanics to troubleshoot the inevitable mechanical problems which developed along the way. Not surprisingly, the women became pretty good ~~shade tree~~ mechanics themselves. ~~1929 was aviation's exuberant youth, and airplanes had evolved to only youthful reliability.~~

<sup>move up</sup> Page and Warren Otto arrived at the Douglas Airport along with dawn. <sup>2nd</sup> Page greeted the other racers <sup>D</sup> <sup>1</sup>

~~"Hi Edith. Your airplane looks fast even tied down. Good luck."~~

~~"Morning Opal. Hope we find a good tailwind today."~~

~~"Pancho, does MEXICO OR BUST mean you're going, or have already been?"~~

Her fellow racers noted Warren Otto's presence and approved. They didn't care much for that pushy Jack Holland, but certainly couldn't express their suspicion that Holland was exploiting sweet little Page McKendrick.



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Edith Magalis Foltz, the girl with the big, friendly smile, stumbled into aviation ~~quite~~ by accident. She had inexplicably invested in a long-winged OX5 Eaglerock and <sup>had</sup> hired a pilot to barnstorm it. Inevitably the airplane was damaged, and in early 1928 Edith herself delivered a new prop, hanging around for a few days after repairs to watch the barnstorming.

Despite leaving a toddler at home, the few days turned into a few months, and by the time she returned to Portland, Oregon, Edith was doing the barnstorming herself. She took out an Oregon State transport license so she could carry passengers for hire, then in 1928 flew nearly 100 co-pilot hours in a ~~tri-motor Bach~~, the first west coast charter transport between Seattle and San Francisco.

Readers may be surprised to find Edith's character being given emphasis & point of view so far into the story.  
See my critique for more on this.



Edith was certainly an oddity, and was well aware that most transport companies argued against hiring women pilots because "women passengers wouldn't trust another woman". This early feminine airline pilot made it a point to ask the women who flew with her on Western Air how they felt about her, and they all seemed pleased. ~~So there you are.~~ Western Air sold to United Airlines and that ended her career as a budding charter transport pilot.

Edith had endured some critical comments in the Air Derby about competing in such a freaky airplane<sup>25</sup> the Alexander Bullet. Edith said retracting the gear on an airplane and enclosing the cockpit wasn't "oddball" it was state of the art. And the Bullet was fast. She was holding her own in the CW, ~~lower horsepower,~~ class standing right behind Phoebe Omlie. ~~And the girls loved her ingenious Folzup flying togs.~~

It was time to fire up and go. Edith suffered standard pre-takeoff nerves as she taxied out. The luxury of an enclosed cockpit allowed her to spread out her charts on the right seat where she could reach for them as needed. Under the rules each racer wore a parachute and carried a gallon of water and three days' food <sup>in case</sup> she should go down in a remote area and need it. Edith could reach around the seat and swig some water as the cockpit temperatures spiraled, and she had jettisoned the ~~hot~~ helmet and

goggles needed for flying alfresco. ~~"Freak airplane", indeed.~~  
 Edith loved the Bullet, though she conceded sometimes the Kinner engine was less than reliable.

The route out of Douglas to Columbus was <sup>(SP)</sup> 066 degrees if you cut through a tiny corner of Mexico. Douglas was close to 4,200<sup>x</sup> feet in elevation with higher terrain on the Arizona<sup>^</sup>/~~New Mexico~~ border<sup>o</sup> where it was necessary to cut between a 6,900<sup>v</sup> peak and 8,565<sup>x</sup> foot peak and across dry river beds<sup>o</sup> then there was a road running right into Columbus. The Columbus-El Paso leg was <sup>(SP)</sup> 080 degrees and <sup>(SP)</sup> 77 statute miles right down the border fence. When you spotted the Rio Grande River and a lone hill just west of ~~the City of~~ El Paso, you were getting pretty close to the airport.

A storm was brewing. The whistling wind called for the display of impressive cross-wind landing techniques duly noted by the local ~~affectionately-named~~ airport bums. The first airplanes into El Paso were lucky to get into hangars. The latecomers tied down tight in the open and the pilots secured the controls so the ailerons and elevators wouldn't beat themselves to death<sup>o</sup> <sup>They</sup> covering <sup>red</sup> all the openings they could.

Number 105, Gladys O'Donnell, taxied in struggling with the crosswind, and with the help of some local volunteers secured her Waco. A race official sought her out with a telegram from Long

Beach. Since telegrams were invariably serious business, Gladys perched on the wheelpant of her airplane out in the wind to read it immediately. Lynn Owen, age 29, a pilot for the O'Donnell's flying school was killed when he got lost in heavy fog and crashed. His student was uninjured.

Gladys was overwhelmed. She had been contending with navigating in the heat and the wind <sup>①</sup> (~~with an honest-to-god 48 minuscule hours in her log book~~), was bone tired and her mind was still burdened with Marvell. News of the death of this fine young man, a member of their airport family, blew a hole in Gladys' valiant composure. She dropped her head in her hands and sobbed. She couldn't stop.

El Paso became the end of Race Day #4<sup>^</sup> -- going on to Midland was out of the question and the rest of the leg was aborted. Mother Nature threw a terrible tantrum with a <sup>furious</sup> sand storm <sup>①</sup> ~~the likes of which non-desert people had never experienced.~~ Visibility was down to a quarter of a mile and the wind <sup>made</sup> ~~spawned~~ a high-pitched shriek around the buildings. The El Paso hosts scrambled for overnight accommodations for the <sup>ir</sup> unexpected <sup>quests</sup> ~~RON~~.

An imposing figure awaited Thea Rasche's arrival in El Paso. F.K. Baron von Koenig-Warthausen, taking time from his world tour in a Klemm aircraft, diverted to Texas to encourage his fellow



countryman. Unfortunately, Thea was running a lap behind and did not pass through El Paso until the next day.

The Derby's managing director spoke admiringly of Thea saying,

"She has worn blisters on both hands working the throttle of her 80-horsepower motor to hold her enviable position in the DW class in the face of more powerful machines. She has exhibited rare skill in making up time, speeding on the take-offs and landings and using competent navigation."

Margaret Perry had been ill at the start of the race and flew through the fourth day with an unremitting high fever. She looked awful in El Paso, but was determined to continue. Earhart won the day's lap, <sup>but</sup> ~~however,~~ Thaden and Omlie retained their leads in overall elapsed time.

The newspapers were following the race intensely, <sup>and were full of information about the sabotage investigation as well</sup> and were full of information about the sabotage investigation as well.

~~Dateline SAN BERNARDINO, CAL, Aug 21.-(UP)~~

\* The district attorney's office today questioned those who handled the airplanes of the competitors in the women's air derby of the National Air races in an attempt to learn whether some ships were tampered with during the first overnight stop of the derby.\*

single-spaced, indent from both margins

"Field guards, the men who serviced the planes and race officials were called to the office of Chief Deputy District Attorney Thompson, in charge of the probe. Thompson said he intended to prove or disprove the sabotage accusations."

"Claire Fahy, forced down at Calexico, contended that acid had been placed on the struts of her plane, making it necessary for her to leave the race. Thea Rasche, German aviatrix, asserted that dirt had been placed in her gasoline. She went down near Holtville but re-entered the competition later."

"The opinion prevailed among officials that the sabotage charges were not well founded. It was admitted, however, that preparations for the handling of the planes of the derby had been inadequate."

~~Since El Paso was an unplanned overnight, the tired pilots were off the hook for a banquet. A little side trip across the bridge to Juarez, Mexico was in order, NOT to include chicken.~~

I've edited to keep the newspaper account direct & concise to avoid slowing the progression of the novel.

move  
up

single-spaced  
indent from  
both  
margins

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DAILY TELEGRAM: "The Zep, in taking off here in Los Angeles, just missed spoiling a great trip and killing everybody by missing a high tension line surrounding the field. Towns bury their dead but they never bury their electric lines. There is one sure fire recipe for a pilot in a strange town, that don't know where the field is located. Locate a high tension line, follow it till it crosses another higher tension one. There is almost sure to be a field there. If not, follow it till it comes to an intersection of three or more lines and there will be located the city's municipal field. It's as sure as the sure fire method of locating a speakeasy by following the town's leading citizens."

Yours, Will Rogers

Again, this information seems irrelevant to the plot.

CHAPTER ELEVEN Thursday, August 22, 1929

Race Day 5 El Paso - Pecos - Midland - Abilene - Ft. Worth

Mrs. Clark D. Stearns was by title the Second Vice President of the Women's National Aeronautical Association. The irony that her feminist comments are quoted under her husband's name and her own given name is unknown doesn't detract from what she felt and said:

"Ye can read the face of the sky - but can ye not read the signs of the times?"

Mrs. Clark D. Stearns was reflecting generally on inspiration generated for women by the Derby; specifically on airplane fire.

The introduction of this seemingly minor character at this point in the novel may be confusing to readers. I've suggested omitting her, allowing the established characters to be developed instead.



*see note p. 86*  
~~"What would you do", she asked her audience, "if you were operating an airplane in a race two thousand feet above the earth, and your plane caught fire?"~~

~~"Die of fright." "Jump." "Take to the parachute."~~

~~"Forget the parachute. Those were the words of Mrs. Noyes. Had Blanche Noyes heeded her first fleeting thought to jump, she would have lost her place in the race, wrecked needlessly her plane, disappointed those who depended upon her, and greatest loss of all - missed the experiences which increased the stature of her soul."~~

~~It's unlikely that the stature of her soul crossed Blanche's mind as she smelled smoke from her cockpit about 30 miles short of Pecos. It was more likely she quickly envisioned explaining to Dewey why she abandoned the airplane. Most pilots readily admit to a great fear of fire, particularly in a fabric airplane, and would have taken to the silk post haste. Blanche explained,~~

*When Noyes*  
*SP*

~~"You see, my husband was my instructor. I had only soloed six weeks before the race. It never would have occurred to me to enter, but Mr. Noyes was so sure of me that I did enter to please him. Somehow, when I thought of his disappointment, and that of all those depending on me - I just had to forget the parachute, and stick to the ship."~~

When Blanche saw <sup>the</sup> smoke curling up from the baggage compartment behind her <sup>she</sup> remembered Dewey's advice to side slip away from fire, keeping it away from your face and lungs. A side slip is a quick descent maneuver avoiding the speed of a dive. The nose is raised to lower the airspeed, carefully keeping enough speed to avoid a stall. <sup>This i.c.</sup> Technique calls <sup>ed</sup> for a deliberate cross control, stick all the way over to the left with the left wing down and full right rudder, or vice versa, controlling the degree of turn with the amount of rudder. Dewey taught his bride well and Blanche quickly side slipped down 2,000 feet turning just enough to miss the worst of the mesquite. Blanche bounded out of the cockpit and frantically tugged on the fire extinguisher <sup>she</sup> which was stuck so tightly in its case she couldn't get it out.

Summoning some unknown reservoir of strength, this tiny actress-turned-pilot ripped the whole case out of the floor <sup>she</sup> bringing wooden flooring with it <sup>and</sup> after all that <sup>she</sup> couldn't make the damned thing work. The frantic aviator grabbed the burning material with her bare hands and threw desert sand on it to extinguish the fire. Her hands were burned, but the ship was saved. She guessed that a mechanic had dropped a cigarette or ash on top of her packed clothing and it had smoldered.

The next order of business was to get on to Pecos, for the clock was ~~ever~~ running. Without electrical starters, most aircraft

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of the day had to be hand propped, or cranked, to start. Since Blanche was alone, she had no choice but to crank her own ship for the very first time.

The intrepid aviator turned the hand crank on the fuselage up by the firewall. *She*

*move up* →  
"I turned the engine over for four minutes, at least, before *she* got it going. ~~I nearly broke my back.~~

Blanche's goal on takeoff was to do as little damage as possible plowing through the mesquite. The old pilot's adage that any landing you walk away from is a good one applied to Blanche's takeoff in the desert. She tore holes in the bottom of the fuselage and wings, and damaged the landing gear, but the ~~blessed~~ machine flew!

Blanche headed straight for Pecos. ~~Louise takes up the story,~~

→ "Dust had not settled yet from Pancho's arrival when Blanche Noyes circled low overhead. Her plane looked like a wounded duck with a broken wing and badly crippled legs."\*

"It's going to be a crack-up, <sup>(11) Louise</sup> I yelled, shutting off <sup>her</sup> my engine and leaping out of the cockpit. <sup>(12) X</sup> Get fire extinguishers,

*I've edited here to clarify who Louise is talking to.*



call an ambulance. <sup>W</sup> <sup>Q</sup> The crowd was milling over the landing strip.  
① Get them back <sup>D</sup> " Louise yelled ①

Blanche put the ship down with perfect precision on the right wheel. As it lost speed, it settled easily onto the broken left wheel and slowly, ~~with great dignity,~~ ground looped. ¶ As the wheels touched <sup>Louise</sup> ~~I~~ ran toward her. \*

<sup>^</sup> <sup>move up</sup> →  
"Are you all right?"

¶ Blanche's  
"Her <sup>^</sup> face was black. Silently she lifted two shaking <sup>D</sup> scorched hands. Tears made white rivulets down her cheeks. Sympathy and letdown from the strain were too much. Between sobs the story came out. \*

~~"Fire in the air is perhaps the chief dread of all pilots. It's typically feminine that after having done a spectacularly efficient job, one hundred percent perfect, she should have a good cry. One of the big differences in reaction between women and men pilots is that women sometimes cry and men usually go out and get drunk. Crying or drinking might be called a means of purging the system of a collected poison which if not removed may leave a pilot with a bad case of the jumps."~~

These lines seem unnecessary.  
I've suggested omitting them.

~~Actually,~~ <sup>9</sup> the El Paso - Pecos leg shouldn't have been a tough one with the air all washed out and visibility good. It was simply going to be a long day adding on all the miles not completed the day before <sup>0</sup> due to the sand <sup>0</sup> storm. The route still crossed high desert, but the morning air was <sup>smooth</sup> ~~not yet manufacturing jarring~~ ~~potholes and bumps.~~

Nevertheless, adventures were to be had.

It was discovered at Pecos that Mary Haizlip's American Eagle, especially built for racing, carried only two hours' fuel, total. Though the airplane had a normal category license, it had been purposely designed with <sup>a</sup> ~~limited tankage~~. She came into four timing stops dry. Since Mary was afraid if she mentioned her limitation she might be disqualified, she just lived with it. With no reserve ~~or hedge~~ of any kind, Mary Haizlip displayed an extraordinary amount of courage and was competing on pure guts.

Pancho Barnes' quota of luck ran out at Pecos. Contrary to speculation, it didn't ~~really~~ have anything to do with the previous evening's soiree into Juarez whence the Mrs. Reverand Barnes had obligingly answered a challenge. Simply chugalugging a pitcher of beer to win a bet <sup>hadn't</sup> ~~impaired the competitor~~ <sup>her</sup> ~~not~~ a whit. The accident was really caused by the race managers' deficient crowd control.

Again, this scene might be fleshed out in action & dialogue, allowing readers to experience it directly, instead of second-hand.

Pecos' 3,000 citizens had done their best to clear enough mesquite and sage brush to make a narrow landing strip for the ~~air~~ racers. On race day, seemingly every car in town was parked along the strip for a good view of the women and their airplanes, not ~~really~~ leaving any safety margin <sup>o</sup> and making for some very exciting near misses. Probably few realized that when pilots raised the airplane's nose for landing, they were virtually blind to the front and kept their momentum straight down the runway by way of their peripheral vision <sup>only o</sup> ~~out the sides.~~ One fearless and foolhardy citizen infringed so far into the landing strip that Pancho hit his car, bashing in the top and demolishing both the Travel Air's upper and lower right wings. Pancho was not injured but the airplane was mortally so. Pancho was out of the race.

Pecos behind them, the racers pressed on to Midland, Texas, happy to be moving into lower terrain. Navigation was easy on this leg <sup>o</sup> with a road and railroad delineating the course. A new spectacle appeared <sup>o</sup> oil wells <sup>o</sup> Small clusters of oil rigs grew into forests with vertical arms keeping rhythm up and down <sup>o</sup> ~~up and down.~~ This worthless looking land was one of God's jokes, where He submerged pools of black gold <sup>o</sup> patiently awaiting the internal combustion engine.



Walter Beech's factory crew<sup>x</sup> test pilot Pete Hill and his teenage son Pete, Jr., along with two mechanics<sup>x</sup> were waiting for the Travel Airs at Midland. They were to provide maintenance support for their covey of racers along the rest of the route.

They suspected that Marvel Crosson had suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning just as Louise Thaden had ~~en route to the start.~~ There was evidence that Marvel had been vomiting over the side and could no longer have been aware enough of her surroundings to fly the airplane. She didn't bail out<sup>o</sup> and was probably unconscious when the airplane impacted the ground. The Beech men would follow the racers to Ft. Worth<sup>o</sup> ready for any modifications necessary.

Blanche Noyes had ferreted out no airplane mechanic at Pecos, but did find a man to weld her landing gear together. Duct tape was good enough to patch the fabric. Blanche crossed her fingers and headed on her way<sup>o</sup> knowing the gear had to hold for only three more landings until she could have a new landing gear installed at the factory in Wichita.

Edith Foltz and Margaret Perry both ended their day at Abilene, 138 miles short of Ft. Worth. Edith decided to have her landing gear, which had been damaged at Pecos, repaired. Margaret was ill. They both intended to catch up with the main body of racers in Wichita the next night.

Vera Dawn Walker had grown up in a town near Abilene, but had been absent for many years. She had numerous relatives there who had been hearing of <sup>her</sup> ~~the exploits of their glamorous relative~~ and <sup>they</sup> came out in force to greet her. In the excitement of Vera Dawn's arrival they swarmed the airplane and her father almost walked right into her spinning prop. An alert bystander grabbed him back so his daughter didn't suffer the horror of killing her own father.

By the Abilene stop the exhausted racers were clearly hanging on to a vision of <sup>the</sup> day's end at Ft. Worth. They were dirty, deafened by the engine noise, hungry, and straining to stay awake <sup>o</sup> ~~and alert.~~ They avoided any thought of banquet chicken. Ft. Worth <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ cattle country! <sup>o</sup>

DAILY TELEGRAM: "Claremore, Oklahoma (Will's home town) has grabbed off another distinction it being the only town between Santa Monica, California and Cleveland, Ohio that those Cleveland race officials haven't made those poor girl aviators stop at."  
Yours, Will Rogers

CHAPTER TWELVE Friday, August 23, 1929

Race Day 6 Ft. Worth - Tulsa - Wichita

The Ft. Worth morning paper followed the lead of Will Rogers' daily opus, needling Ft. Worth's own renowned publisher Amon Carter who had hosted an evening dinner at his "farm" near the city,

\*Those race officials have those girl aviators landing at every buffalo wallow that has a Chamber of Commerce and will put up a hot dog sandwich. They even made 'em eat with Amon Carter.\*

single-spaced, indent from both margins

The proud host didn't even catch the joke. But those girl aviators almost lost their good manners and fell down laughing when their Amon Carter Texas spread turned out to feature ~~...~~ chicken.

Page and all the other exhausted racers had arrived in Ft. Worth to be engulfed by some 20,000 spectators, but did their duty mingling with their kind hosts and \*enjoying\* their dinner. A



~~schmaltzy~~ <sup>called</sup> song "Sweethearts of the Air" almost broke them up.

Page and Jack were unable to make contact with each other that evening ~~since~~ Page hadn't known where the racers would be staying and Jack was en route to Cleveland himself with the Navy's airship demonstration team. <sup>It, i.e.</sup> Didn't matter though. The airplane was running well, the special fuel was in place and Page had a secret weapon, the support of Warren Otto. Even though Warren knew nothing about airplanes, Page was coming to appreciate his quiet ~~and~~ sensible presence and his unwillingness to take charge of her life.

Another dawn had arrived and today would be the Tulsa - Wichita leg. Wichita was anticipated as the highlight on the route. The City claimed title as the Air Capital of the World and would undoubtedly feel obligated to prove it when their special guests arrived. Already, each stop drew larger and more excited crowds to the airport ~~than the last.~~

Warren Otto had already wiped down Page's red Stearman and carefully checked all the movable surfaces, inspection plates, tires and cotter pins as he had learned from watching Page ~~preflight her airplane.~~ Sis Boombah was calm. ~~Warren said,~~

"I'll go get a couple of quarts of oil now that the engine's cool <sup>Warren said</sup>" ~~He~~ <sup>^</sup> He headed for the fuel office.

Page ~~hadn't~~ noticed a woman standing near the airplane <sup>which was</sup> unusual because there had been guards about and the public was being discouraged from coming onto the field. ~~Page said,~~

"Hello, are you a pilot?" *Page said ☺*

The woman shook her head ~~no~~. She seemed troubled, started to speak, changed her mind, turned to walk away then looked back at Page. ~~Page inquired,~~

"Are you looking for a particular racer? Perhaps I can help you find her. I'm Page McKendrick from North Carolina."

The woman gathered herself together and ~~said,~~

*move up* → "My name is Barbara Holland. Mrs. Jack Holland."

*Barbara's dialogue & attribution can be kept in one ¶.*

Page had put her hand out in greeting and stopped as the electricity went off. She just couldn't process what she'd heard and her senses arrested. Mrs. Jack Holland. ~~My Jack Holland.~~ Is that what she said?

The woman quickly went on, obviously intent on having her say and getting out of there.

"I'm sorry to shock you like this, but I <sup>am</sup> Jack Holland's wife. He's in the process of divorcing me. I suspect that you're not aware of my existence <sup>and</sup> and it probably doesn't matter, but I was compelled to tell you. I'm sorry to bother you <sup>^</sup> - I guess I just had to see you to believe this is happening to me. Good luck in the air race."

The woman turned to go and Page couldn't think of a single thing to say to her. Mrs. Jack Holland was gone <sup>and</sup> Mrs. Jack Holland-to-be came back to life. <sup>She was</sup> Hurt <sup>i.c.</sup> Ashamed <sup>i.c.</sup> MAD <sup>^</sup>

She filed away what had just happened into a little closet in her mind and loaded Sis Boombah and her overnight into the airplane. She couldn't handle ~~whatever all this meant~~ right now.

9 Warren Otto returned and poured the two quarts of oil into the engine wondering why Page was so ~~abruptly~~ distant. They quietly went through the pre-takeoff ritual and prepared for the buildup of tension until the takeoff. Page seemed to return to the present <sup>and</sup> and said to Warren <sup>emotionally,</sup>

<sup>move up</sup> →  
"Thanks for helping me."

She startled him with a quick, desperate hug, turned quickly to her airplane and pulled her leather helmet on <sup>and</sup> signaling dismissal and departure. Warren Otto was baffled.



Louise Thaden was hanging onto her lead at Ft. Worth by 21 minutes with Gladys O'Donnell, Amelia Earhart and Ruth Nichols all breathing down her neck. ~~Of course,~~ everyone knew that anything could still happen. Phoebe Omlie had only one real challenger left in the light airplane class. Elapsed times upon departure at Ft. Worth were:

Heavies:

Louise Thaden	11:04:30
Gladys O'Donnell	11:25:52
Amelia Earhart	11:46:52
Ruth Nichols	11:51:08
Mary Haizlip	12:24:06
Page McKendrick	12:31:44
Ruth Elder	13:35:03
Mary Von Mach	15:12:32
Neva Paris	15:55:10
Opal Kunz	18:44:27
Vera Dawn Walker	21:30:15

Light Planes

Phoebe Omlie	13:28:30
Thea Rasche	16:20:31
Chubbie Keith Miller	24:56:15

*single-spaced*

Margaret Perry was out of the race at Ft. Worth. The high fever and general lassitude with which she'd been contending since the start was finally diagnosed as typhoid fever and she was hospitalized.

Others continued valiantly to fly the route even though they were hopelessly behind, ~~but with~~ resolve to finish in Cleveland. ~~Louise Thaden was quoted as saying,~~

~~"Were there a prize for tenacity, Trout and Haizlip surely would be in an uncontested tie for the award."~~

Bobbi Trout's crew had worked feverishly for 24 hours in 120 degree temperatures to repair her Golden Eagle in that plowed field in Mexico. Kind-hearted locals <sup>had</sup> leveled off a takeoff strip for Bobbi, then a mechanic noticed additional damage to the underside of a wing. They gave up <sup>and</sup> removed the wing and towed the airplane to Yuma to finish it.

~~A singular incident occurred while Bobbi's entire family gathered in Yuma during the airplane repair. The family met a seventeen-year old Mexican girl who was working her way to Los Angeles. They were mutually attracted and adopted the girl, Frances, who became a lifelong member of the Trout family. So Yuma couldn't be remembered as all bad.~~

*This incident seems irrelevant to the plot.*

Finally on Thursday <sup>August</sup> ~~the~~ 22<sup>nd</sup>, the day of the El Paso to Ft. Worth leg, Bobbi got into the airplane and flew out of Yuma intending to catch the racers by Saturday. Since she was now breaking in a new engine, a Kinner rep flew ~~wing man~~ beside her in a Vega. ~~Bobbi declared it splendid.~~ She was out but not down.

Bobbi delighted everyone along her lone route. The Associated Press <sup>said:</sup> ~~gushed:~~

*single-spaced, indent from both margins*

\*Miss Trout has been hailed as the most popular woman flier in the west. She has the appearance and voice of a 17 year old boy, being ~~very~~ slender with close-cropped brown hair and a gift of spontaneous and unconscious expression. She is unassuming <sup>(sp)</sup> ~~to a marked degree~~ and with half a hundred people standing about eager to do something for her she did nearly everything for herself ~~and~~ then thanked everyone present for their assistance. She expressed absolute confidence of making Fort Worth by Friday night and of catching the derby sometime Saturday. ~~The young lady took off and headed for El Paso in the same direct manner in which she met the reception committee and anyone wishing to bet against her would have found a hundred ready to call the bet at the airport."~~

Evelyn Trout was always more interested in boys' things than girls', even taking manual training in school and becoming an adept mechanic. She was the first girl in high school to have the trendy new hair bob, acquiring the name Bobbi accordingly.



Discovering flying, Bobbi sold a service station she had operated to pay for flying lessons. She earned a transport license and was drafted by the Golden Eagle company to demonstrate their product<sup>^</sup> - which is how she got so involved in record endurance flights.

Bobbi had been scheduled to fly a <sup>(3P)</sup> 90 hp Golden Eagle Chief in the Derby, but in light of the competition a 100 hp Kinner engine was installed to make hers the fastest airplane in the lower horsepower class. ~~Now,~~ while the others were leaving Ft. Worth, Bobbi was blistering along to catch up ~~with the pack.~~

*Allow 3 double spaces for a scene break.*

Departing to the northeast out of Ft. Worth, the racers moved into different terrain. They could fly at lower altitudes than they had been <sup>(D)</sup> ~~since the ground was closer to sea level,~~ and the section lines straightened themselves out into ~~one-mile~~ square patterns. Instead of navigating towards a peak or mountain range, the racers could cut a section line at <sup>an</sup> ~~for example, a 45 degree~~ angle <sup>(D)</sup> and hold that angle consistently. It was as good as a compass.

Crossing the Red River meant farewell to ~~the colossus that was~~ Texas, and suddenly below them was red earth <sup>(D)</sup> ~~they had entered Will Rogers country.~~ Progressing through southern Oklahoma brought lower visibility and smoke over to the east toward Broken Bow <sup>(D)</sup> where forest fires were incinerating trees and brush.

Gladys O'Donnell was delayed <sup>in</sup> departing Ft. Worth <sup>by</sup> for a flat tire. Others made some extra landings before their luncheon date in Tulsa.

Ruth Elder had lost her map in the wind over the side ~~(again)~~ and held her heading as best she could, but decided to land and find out where she was. ~~Oh for a movie camera for the ensuing comedy routine.~~ The landing was just fine near Muskogee where she was able to determine her position, but the takeoff presented a slight problem <sup>2</sup> her path being impeded by a recalcitrant herd of cows. Ruth chased them away <sup>1</sup> swinging her motor crank overhead, then she inexplicably left the essential crank behind. Most of the airport crowd waited for her late arrival and gave the glamorous pilot a big ovation.

Mary Haizlip was forced down twice in Oklahoma by a dirty oil line, and Vera Dawn Walker made a precautionary landing to cool an overheating engine. ~~Mary collected the loveliest reception of all at Tulsa. Her husband, Capt. Jimmy Haizlip of Safeway Airlines and their small son smothered Mary with hugs and kisses.~~

~~Mr. "Big Mouth" Erle P. Halliburton, who had provided an earlier statement to the press as a self-appointed authority, was on hand in Tulsa to elaborate on his position.~~

*This character seems insignificant to the plot, & I've suggested omitting his remarks.*

~~"The women's 'On to Cleveland' air derby is contributing nothing to aviation. It should be cancelled immediately."~~

~~"Women are lacking in certain qualities that men possess, just as men are lacking in certain qualities that women possess. Handling details essential to safe flying is one of the qualifications women have not mastered successfully."~~

see note  
p. 103

~~Most onlookers took his words in a joking mien, however, Amelia sat in the cabin of her airplane talking soberly to Mr. Halliburton for 15 minutes. Amelia's credentials justifying her huddle with Halliburton were noted by the press:~~

~~"Her ship is probably the fastest one in the race but also one of the most difficult to handle."~~

The Tulsa stop included a Chamber of Commerce luncheon complete with an address by William Martineau, President of the State Press Association. His theme was "newspapers' difficulty in determining and discriminating between good and bad publicity of aviation". ~~Ha!~~ The women were asked to respond -- which several did, and diplomatically, <sup>and</sup> ~~too~~. Ruth Elder's comment that American women would be fighter pilots in <sup>the</sup> a future ~~war~~ was quoted widely. ~~She was right, though she probably wasn't envisioning it sixty plus years in the future.~~



After lunching and <sup>the</sup> speaking<sup>es</sup>, the racers were taken by the Tulsa society ladies to the Mayo Hotel for a reception. Amelia Earhart was the natural spokeswoman for the group, and was usually sought out by the press and stop officials. But <sup>they</sup> all gladly attended the late night banquets and interminable receptions and entertainment along the way, and invariably expressed their enthusiastic appreciation for the inevitable rubber chicken. The racers recognized these as public relations duties connected with their objective of promoting aviation and women in aviation.

At last it was time to check that the airplanes had been fueled, give them a good preflight and take up a northwesterly <sup>course</sup> heading for Wichita.

Two modern aviation breakthroughs were encountered departing Tulsa. It was the only time during the race that the pilots were given a chart of the winds aloft <sup>1</sup> compiled from special observations of the upper air. The information helped the racers select an en route altitude with either the best tail <sup>1</sup> wind or the least damaging head <sup>1</sup> wind.

Arrangements had also been made for a live radio broadcast from an army airplane. The plane was equipped with a short wave transmitter and would rendezvous with the fliers as they approached Wichita, broadcasting a running account of the event.

A short wave receiving set in a downtown studio picked up from the airplane and was amplified. The program was sent out over telephone wires to the station<sup>①</sup> and broadcast on the <sup>it</sup> ~~station's~~ regular wavelength. A Topeka station normally broadcasting on the same wavelength cooperated with the Wichita station<sup>①</sup> agreeing to stay off the air. As the ladies landed in Wichita they were each interviewed live. ~~Modern technology!~~

The Wichita Eagle newspaper, which had devoted substantial resources to the Derby stop, conspicuously sent their own airplane out to ~~also~~ greet the arriving racers.

The Air Capital of the World was organized <sup>2nd</sup> ~~to the hilt~~. <sup>1-2</sup> They had the advantage of knowledge of various glitches along the way<sup>①</sup> <sup>They</sup> ~~and~~ exerted every effort for comfortable, safe and fun <sup>^</sup> hospitality.

Spectator viewing planned for some 10,000 people offered a clear picture of the arrivals, but no access to the airplanes. All the turf runways were well sodded and airport lights had even been installed<sup>①</sup> should someone come in late. A large new hangar was reserved for the race aircraft with a mechanic assigned to each airplane<sup>①</sup> ~~X~~ both for maintenance and security, and accommodations were provided for the accompanying fleet. Each racer had her own hostess who housed her and chauffeured her in a car with her name

on the side of it. Festivities were arranged from the 3:30 arrival time until conclusion of the dinner <sup>and</sup> dance at 9:00 PM, at which time the local officials promised they'd let the women get some rest.

Louise Thaden arrived first ~~after en route rain,~~ to a huge welcome <sup>^</sup> from the public and her family. She had lived in Wichita and they claimed her as their own. <sup>9</sup> She said in her radio interview,

*move up →*  
"Today really brought up the most beautiful part of the trip so far, but one of the most welcome sights we'll see will be that fine big landing field at Wichita."

~~"Can't help mentioning one thing more before I close tonight. That's about this 'sabotage' business. To be short and sweet, it is 'the bunk'. Nothing to it."~~

Thea Rasche was a big hit with the crowd, <sup>2nd</sup>

~~"I am glad to be here. Everything is going well, but not as well as I would like it to go for me."~~

~~"There are no poor sports flying in this race."~~

*Again this dialogue seems undeveloped & possibly distracting.*



move up ↗

l.c.

The radio announcer filled in with other aviation news of the day between arrivals.

~~"The Navy is continuing tests on the dirigible Los Angeles carrying as many as six hookon airplanes at one time . . . Captain Roscoe Turner has taken off from Glendale, California with passengers and landed 19 hours and 53 minutes later validating further the feasibility of a daylight transcontinental airplane passenger service . . . 18 pursuit planes and two Sikorsky amphibians carrying 45 United States Navy fliers en route to the national air races at Cleveland passed over Wichita, the largest such fleet ever seen . . . nine men departed Portland, Oregon racing to Cleveland . . . Anne Morrow Lindbergh made her first solo flight in Hicksville, NY after nine hours of instruction from her husband Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh.~~

This extraneous detail might be omitted.

During the social amenities of the evening, Page McKendrick let the Jack Holland closet door in her brain swing slightly ajar <sup>①</sup> but ~~and words such as betrayal, honesty, commitment and love tumbled out. She quickly swept them back away because she couldn't both~~ fly an air race and deal with the demolition of her spirit at the same time. She didn't share her soul's wreckage with anyone.

closed it again ☺

DAILY TELEGRAM: "They are having about eighteen different red tape investigations as to 'Why an aeroplane should run into a storm.' Why don't they find out 'why a ship should run into one?' 'Why a town should run into one?' 'Why an individual should be allowed to venture out when he knows there is one at large some place?' In fact let's all get together and by the aid of our chambers of commerce, pass a resolution denouncing storms. You can only defeat the elements by organization, so let all government and civic bodies get together with the real old fighting spirit and show old man thunder and lightnin' where he stands." Yours, Will Rogers

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN Saturday August 24, 1929

Race Day 7 Wichita - Kansas City - East St. Louis

An ~~veritable~~ airborne traffic jam launched from Wichita Saturday morning. Not only the Women's Air Derby departed, but all the newest factory products were going to Cleveland for show and sell.

The Travel Air Company was sending three "speed jobs", as the paper called them, including two monoplanes, <sup>the much anticipated</sup> ~~(the mystery ships)~~, and a biplane, with Walter Beech flying one ~~of the group~~. The paper reported that Louise Thaden would be entering the races in her Derby Travel Air, but she was also listed to fly Travel Air's fastest airplane, a Chevrolet-powered ~~low-wing model~~. Swallow was sending two Kinner-engine trainers. Cessna would enter one Wasp

powered plane to be flown by Colonel Art Goebel, the Dole flight winner. Stearman was expected to send two J-6 7-cylinder three place bi-planes, along with a 9-cylinder model.

~~Olive Ann Mellor, a Travel Air executive, announced that two new model Travel Airs would be displayed on the show floor in Cleveland. Olive Ann, an exceptional businesswoman and developing manufacturer, was soon to marry Walter Beech, the consummate pilot and designer, and they would establish and operate Beech Aircraft Corporation together.~~

*This detail seems irrelevant to the plot, & I've suggested omitting it.*

An unexpected source of aviation news turned up in the person of Hollywood gossip columnist Louella Parsons, who broke the story of Ruth Elder's engagement. The Wichita Beacon was compelled to <sup>give</sup> deliver quite a sarcastic treatment of Ruth's immediate past husband, Lyle Womack, a handsome football player from Iowa University, who was presently down at the bottom of the world on a Byrd Antarctic expedition. The Kansas City Star remarked that the glamorous pilot might not be well acquainted with her intended, Walter Camp, Jr., son of the late football coach at Yale, since she didn't even know what business he was in.





Page McKendrick pulled into takeoff position, added power at the flagdrop, and started rolling, then as the tail rose, waited for enough speed to lift off. Regardless of personal distractions, <sup>she</sup> Page savored that moment of flight as she lifted free of the earth.

*She wondered what she had ever done to deserve the gift of flight.*

~~"Why me, God? Why did you give me this gift?"~~

Page turned to a heading of 042 degrees, <sup>(SP)</sup> ~~almost~~ cutting the section lines at a <sup>almost</sup> 45 degree angle, for 175 miles to Kansas City. The continuing leg on to East St. Louis would be 250 miles <sup>(SP)</sup> ~~on an east/southeasterly heading~~. After all the desert country, this was the first weather the racers were to encounter with lowered visibility and ceilings. There was an advantageous ~~(quartering)~~ tailwind out of the west, increasing in velocity with altitude. However, since the racers had to stay under the solid cloud layer, they couldn't get up to the most favorable winds.

Page's ledger was still solidly ~~lopsided~~ on the positive side. The Stearman Company had entrusted this superb machine to her care to fly across nearly the entire country. The engine was continuing to run smoothly, and only minor repairs had been required. The camaraderie of the women racers was stimulating and supportive. She was placing tolerably well in the race; at least she hadn't embarrassed herself or been forced to drop out. Her knowledge and flying skills were being strengthened dramatically. She was

privileged to be soaking up the resplendent immensity of her homeland. Her family loved her unconditionally. A man of total integrity and no need to dominate was at her side. Even discovering the black soul of Jack Holland before the wedding was a plus ~~in the ledger~~. God's blessings were great.

*(no underlining here)*

The ledger's negative page had only one entry. Page had been betrayed, embarrassed, ~~shocked~~ and exploited by a grotesque human being. Though it couldn't be dispassionate, for Page had loved and committed to Jack Holland, her assessment of the ~~appalling~~ revelation by Barbara Holland, and its impact on her life, was calm. Page's expanded self-confidence, derived from flying in the Air Derby, increased her ability to deal with Jack's betrayal. She stopped using Sis Boombah for publicity. She had been a monkey exploited by Jack Holland ~~x~~ too.

The takeoffs from Wichita were not without excitement for the huge crowds. The racers taking off to the south made steep turnouts to the left towards Kansas City, ~~excepting~~ Ruth Elder, who made her turn to the right, skimming the cheering crowd before turning on course.

While running up the engine, Gladys O'Donnell put her airplane on its nose and dinged a prop tip. Mechanics hastily filed it, and Gladys took off ~~just~~ a few minutes later.

Telephone reports came in of an airplane down northeast of Wichita near Andover, then an inbound Western Air Express pilot said he saw a plane down near El Dorado, though his passengers observed a subsequent takeoff. ~~Who~~ever it was went on, for searchers found no one there.

Neva Paris, who grew up in Kansas City, received her home town's homage upon arrival there. ~~Reporters declared her "bubbling over with pep and enthusiasm", and asked,~~

"Could any woman learn to fly?" *a reporter asked* ☺

"Yes, indeed. As much so as they can learn to drive a car. The way they are making planes today, there <sup>'s</sup> ~~is~~ no great danger. That <sup>'s</sup> ~~is~~ ~~just~~ what this woman's derby hopes to prove <sup>^</sup> that women are as much at home in the air as men."

"Do you still get a thrill out of flying?"

"Oh yes, I always will <sup>^</sup> -- it <sup>'s</sup> ~~is~~ a sport of the gods. ~~I believe~~ I enjoy take-offs the most. They never seem to lose their allure. But I am getting the greatest thrill of my life right now <sup>Ⓛ</sup> in this air derby. I <sup>ve</sup> ~~have~~ never been so interested in anything before. I want to see it go over big <sup>!</sup> it <sup>!!</sup> ~~will~~ do wonders for aviation."



Neva Paris was the beacon lighting the way for a gathering of the women pilots when they met under the grandstands in Cleveland. She became the ardent <sup>i.c.</sup> Secretary <sup>and i.c.</sup> Treasurer of the ensuing association, the Ninety-Nines Club, named for the sum total of charter members - then in the first month of the new year would die in an airplane.

This non-chronological presentation may be confusing to readers, & I've suggested omitting it.

The Kansas City stop was ~~a~~ quickie for fuel and a bite to eat, with some of the racers not even leaving their aircraft. The society reporters seemed to dominate the duty roster that day for the Kansas City Star. ~~They especially loved the foreign accents.~~

"Slender little Mrs. Keith Miller of Australia, her nose peeling from sunburn, and her eyes not a little hollow and weary, clambering sorely out of her plane at the Kansas City Airport today proceeded promptly to powder <sup>her</sup> ~~that troublesome~~ nose with a great care not to bruise it."

see note p. 115

"~~Aye~~ <sup>h</sup> your blithering deserts, she said, do I like them? I sat down in one for ten hours the other day, and look <sup>el</sup> you."

"Little Mrs. Miller was not aching for a bed of rest."

<sup>Now</sup> ~~Naow~~ I shall not leave my plane until I see it serviced. Bring on your oil and gas. ~~Well~~ <sup>≡</sup> fill up the extra tank, please,

and look you that it runs cock-full. Overflowing, ~~quite~~ - do you catch me?"

~~"Mrs. Louise Thaden of Pittsburgh, leader in the race," was described as "a decidedly flip young woman in a blue shirt and tan trouserettes."~~

~~"Tallish with bobbed hair and brown burnt face, Mrs. Thaden has lighter streaks on the sides of her cheeks where the helmet straps around."~~

"The boyish looking lass in white unionalls is Gladys O'Donnell. Mary Von Mach of Detroit wore a black shirt, corduroy breeches and high-tops and looked quite fit for a hunting trip. Her face was brown as an Indian's."

"What a contrast, that skin, with Phoebe's. Phoebe Omlie of Memphis, of course, leader in the light plane class. Mrs. Omlie doesn't tan - she burns. She wears a cloth hat, not a helmet, <sup>l.c.</sup> And unlike Mrs. Miller, who was light as a jockey aboard her little ship, Mrs. Omlie goes in for a solidifying weight. It keeps her little Monocoupe steady as it tears through atmosphere with a sturdy purr."

Again, this newspaper account may remove readers from the immediacy of the events. They should be shown in action & dialogue to clarify their significance to the plot.

"That orange Lockheed is Amelia Earhart's<sup>1.5</sup> - Amelia, with the calm air. She freckles and tans<sup>1.5</sup> And looks a bit weary. Thea Rasche, buxom German fraulein, was last to arrive in a slow plane. Ruth Elder landed with the wind, but smiled down her embarrassment at the blunder."

So much for the beauty pageant/~~style show blow-by-blow~~. The reporter did manage to include one technical quote from Mary Haizlip having to do with wind correction.

see  
note  
p.115

"I allowed 5 degrees coming over<sup>(st)</sup> and I smacked the field right on the nose."

The racers continued on to Parks Airport in East St. Louis, on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River. They generally followed the Missouri River most of the way, crossing it twice then keeping it on their right wing until it led them into East St. Louis. Once again they were in strong aviation country, the town with the foresight to sponsor Lindy.

There were several minor mishaps along the way. Mary Haizlip landed in Washington, Missouri with a broken fuel line<sup>(D)</sup> which she repaired. A farm youth offered to help her crank the airplane for takeoff, but when he couldn't, Mary cranked it herself.



Finding the postage-stamp size airfield in low visibility was a strain, ~~then~~ getting an airplane on it, and stopped <sup>-ing</sup> short of the fence, turned out to be an even bigger challenge. Additionally, the airport complied with some ~~perverse~~ unwritten law that the shortest fields are required to have obstacles, such as telephone lines, at both ends.

Blanche Noyes and Neva Paris both suffered landing gear damage after intentionally ground looping upon landing, to avoid running off the end of the field. Thea Rasche was still contending with dirt in the gas. Bobbi Trout, catching up to the main body of racers, welded a loose exhaust pipe before moving on. These were all typical malfunctions and normal <sup>u</sup>field repairs ~~in the aircraft of the day.~~ All were repaired in time for the Sunday morning takeoff.

A growing tumult over the Graf Zeppelin engulfed the racers, <sup>and</sup> ~~along with~~ the public. The behemoth was making good <sup>60</sup> 60 knots out of Tokyo towards the American mainland. Every airplane and balloon in southern and central California was booked for watching the great airship's arrival from the air. The appearance would be broadcast in four languages, while a naval flight patrol circled the airship to ensure its safety in the airplane-saturated sky.

Warren Otto, who had left his car in San Bernardino and caught a ride in an Exchange Club official's personal airplane, was appalled to be groping through the haze straining to see the Parks Airport, even though they knew they had to be right on it immediately east of the river. Luckily they arrived after most of the racers and spotted the airplanes, several parked at the edge of the field, one landing and another scrambling to get out of the way. Warren's admiration for these women was immense. ~~how they handled themselves and their airplanes in this competition.~~ The race had been a life-changing event for the reticent young man. Exposure to women who had dreams and pursued them, some even in life-threatening situations, caused <sup>him</sup> Warren Otto to examine his own safe, even boring, path through life. ~~Was there a lot more that he was missing?~~

His admiration, even infatuation, ~~may love,~~ for Page McKendrick must be acted upon aggressively, he decided. The young, dependable businessman had had seven days of serious reflection about his life and future. He decided that dependable and steady were positive traits which had served him well. <sup>1-c.</sup> But he was ready for some adventure and risk taking. And, it needed to include this incredible girl Page. He wasn't going to make the mistake of letting her slip out of his life for small reasons, such as living on the opposite end of the country, her engagement to Jack Holland or Page's oblivion to his passion. He hadn't much time to fix all that.

Allow 3  
double  
spaces  
for a  
scene  
break  
here.

DAILY TELEGRAM: "The plane accident was terribly unfortunate, and it no doubt will have a tendency with some of the more skeptical ones to say that aviation is unsafe. The death will receive tremendous publicity all over the country, but on Monday morning, when you read this, if you had the entire statistics of everybody all over our country, who was killed today by autos, well, it will be lucky if it's under twenty-five. Yet some of their deaths will never be published beyond their own country newspapers. Yet every one of them is just as dead as those on the plane. So, sir, travel by air is here to stay, and all the doubt in the world can't stop it. And accidents by plane will be taken the same as we take the news that a train at a grade crossing has killed a truckload of people just a matter of fact."  
Yours, Will Rogers

*If this relates to present events, it might be summarized & kept. Otherwise it might be omitted*

CHAPTER FOURTEEN Sunday August 25, 1929

Race Day 8 E. St. Louis - Terre Haute - Cincinnati - Columbus

Fog did not deter the racers from hustling to the airport at dawn, though this Sunday morning would have been a good time for a leisurely breakfast. Warren Otto's plan for some private time with Page had been thwarted the evening before by the ~~now standard~~ banquet, then <sup>the</sup> late-night pilots' meeting. Page looked so tired after the day's flight, and subsequent evening activities, Warren didn't have the heart to encroach on the few hours she had left ~~for~~ sleep. Tonight <sup>^</sup> - in Columbus <sup>he thought</sup> ☺



Today the Cleveland Aeronautical Exposition was opening, and tomorrow the All Women's Air Derby would terminate there<sup>^</sup> if the fog ever lifted in St. Louis. Three cross-country derbies were underway, the women from Santa Monica, plus two mens' derbies from Portland, Oregon and Miami Beach. Captain Roscoe Turner, flying companion to the live lion Gilmore, was attempting to set a new record for a one day east-west transcontinental flight. Over 100,000 people were on hand in Cleveland for the event's opening ceremonies.

Standings were solidifying, and with only 536 miles left, it would be hard to make up enough time to overtake another racer. Any changes in standing now might be dependent upon forced landings or pilot mistakes today and tomorrow. Louise was ahead in the DW class with 16:27:57 elapsed time, Gladys O'Donnell <sup>was</sup> next <sup>1)</sup> at 17:14:33, Ruth Nichols third, and Amelia <sup>fourth</sup> <sup>2)</sup> ~~seven minutes behind her~~ at ~~17:50:37~~ and ~~17:57:21~~ respectively. Page tucked in behind Amelia <sup>and</sup> at ~~18:40:17~~. Blanche Noyes was a good two hours behind Page.

The CW class had tightened some, but Phoebe Omlie was undoubtedly the winner unless she got in trouble today. Phoebe's elapsed time at St. Louis was 20:23:32, Edith Foltz was two hours behind her, Chubbie another hour, Thea yet another. This race was Phoebe's to lose.

Erle P. Halliburton continued to believe his opinions had great value to the advancement of aviation, and apparently the newspapers agreed, for some persisted in reporting his vacuous remarks.

Again I  
I've suggested  
these remarks,  
as they  
seem  
insignificant  
to the plot.

"All the pilots should have been forced to fly over the course at least four or five times. One plane was not even licensed. The death of Marvel Crosson, one of the best women pilots today, was needless. If it hadn't been for her fear and confusion regarding the course, she would have been leading now."

The women were outraged that such a pompous jackass would associate "fear" and "confusion" with Marvel Crosson. His blatant prejudice was appalling. Disparaging a dead person verified his inconsequence.

The women completed their preflights in the gray, damp morning air. Mary Haizlip had suffered six emergency landings so far, and her fuel lines were drained. ~~"with every imaginable thing taken out except an elephant."~~ She was undaunted. ~~Mr. Halliburton didn't know the words courageous or resolute.~~

With time on their hands, waiting for the fog to burn off, Travel Air mechanic John Burke passed the time doing additional engine inspections. He was stunned to discover that Louise's

magneto points had been filed, which could only be an act of sabotage. That night in Columbus he slept with the ship.

Warren double checked Page's airplane, ensuring that Sis Boombah was snug and happy, and that Page's small bag was strapped in so it wouldn't get loose and interfere with the controls. Warren saw some stale popcorn lying around the hospitality tables and gave a small bag to the little monkey. That would keep her happy until airborne, at which time the drone of the engine usually put her to sleep.

The rising sun quickly consumed the fog and the racers were impatient to get on towards Cleveland. Warren got Page started, then saluted her departure. His heart ached to see that precious girl head out across two states in a wooden crate powered by an engine which could often at unexpected moments choose to retire from its labors. However, he knew he'd best erase "crate" from his vocabulary if he planned to spend much time around Page.

It was a beautiful day for flying with a nice road and railroad (~~the iron compass~~) to follow all the way to Terre Haute. Louise Thaden had fuel siphoning out of her fuel cap due to a missing washer necessary to keep the cap tight.

*This detail seems vague & might be clarified.*



The Terre Haute airport was large, and the crowds were poorly controlled. Consequently, the pilots stayed close to their airplanes to protect them from the throng. ~~it~~ it turned out the fuelers were an equal hazard. They must have been recruited right off the street, and had little idea what to do with a fuel nozzle. ~~inconceivably~~, one fueler unscrewed Louise's oil drain plug. Refreshment tables were laden with cheese and chicken sandwiches, and the hosts were puzzled why only the cheese disappeared. Following a quick radio interview, the racers headed out.

Since the next stop, Cincinnati, had been a last minute add on, even those who reverse-flew the course hadn't been there. Not many prominent check points along the route aided the racers, though a road and the Ohio River funnelled into Lunken Airport. Lunken was hard to see down in the river bottom. ~~in~~ in fact, it was called "Sunken Lunken" because it was down in a hole, protected from the river water by dikes. Edith Foltz never found the airport and went on to Columbus, untimed.

Bobbi Trout was down again, making a dead-stick landing in a little field near Greensburg, Indiana. Without even partial power to stretch her glide to a better field, Bobbi had to put it in a fenced field with her approach between tall poplars. She side-slipped to squeeze in, but knew there wasn't enough stopping room, so purposely ground-looped to halt before she tore up the fence.

Bobbi's right aileron dragged over the fence and suffered a large hole, <sup>which was</sup> ~~no~~ <sup>i.e.</sup> problem. She utilized a piece of tin can and some bailing wire for a patch. After determining <sup>that</sup> the engine failure was caused by an electrical problem, an electrician from <sup>the</sup> town <sup>did</sup> ~~effected~~ the repair and she was on her way. ~~Tenacious Trout had to be her moniker.~~

~~Chubbie Keith Miller was down at Xenia, Ohio with engine trouble.~~

Each of the racers felt a sense of relief on their last leg of the day into Columbus. <sup>Next was</sup> ~~Columbus, then~~ <sup>^</sup> Cleveland <sup>^</sup> Louise's husband of a year, Herb, would be waiting for her at Columbus. Since Warren Otto's pilot didn't have to make all the stops, they overflew the racers, and were waiting at Columbus with a tall glass of ice water. Page rather expected there would be some message there from Jack, since they'd been out of contact for most of the race. He couldn't know that Page had met his wife.

Actually, Jack Holland had slipped away from his duties in Cleveland for the day, borrowing a car from a Navy buddy's family, to surprise Page upon her arrival in Columbus. He was ~~commiserating with the timers,~~ checking the standings <sup>^</sup> as the first of the racers arrived. Jack imagined his fortuitous appearance would give Page a start, as indeed, it did.

The Columbus airport was in the process of building concrete runways, but the edges were unfinished and there was a 10 inch dropoff to a soft shoulder. The racers had been cautioned to stay in the middle of the runway on landing, and not to turn off until they saw a flagger indicating a safe off ramp. They were on the alert. More used to landing on sod, those with metal tail skids were surprised at the trailing shower of sparks.

Page didn't realize that Sis Boombah's popcorn had spilled onto the cockpit floor, and the monkey's current project was to get it back. She was down low in the seat where Page couldn't see her, and had been patiently chewing on her harness to free herself. Successful at last, Sis Boombah slipped the harness and seat belt, and sat happily on the floor devouring popcorn.

Page was pleased with herself for navigating right to the Columbus airport with no sashaying around looking for it, and making her "fly by" without losing a second. The onlookers appreciated the pretty red Stearman zooming across the timing line, then pulling up into a graceful climbing turn to enter the traffic pattern for landing. These women were good pilots.

Level on downwind, Page came around and entered base leg watching for traffic so she wouldn't cut off another racer concentrating on her dive for the timing line. Sis Boombah had



been quite contented eating her popcorn on a stable platform, until Page went into her timing and landing sequence. Now the monkey was rolling back and forth across the cockpit floor during steep turns <sup>o</sup> and the loose corn pitched around everywhere.

Sis Boombah spied a delectable morsel up forward in the left hand corner and dove for it, managing to wedge herself between the firewall, rudder cable and the left side of the fuselage. Simultaneously, Page was beginning a tight descending left turn, making a compact pattern to the flare for touchdown. Sis Boombah had effectively jammed the rudder putting Page in a left turn with a lot of permanent rudder.

The engine noise drowned out the monkey's rage, and Page had no idea what had happened to her rudder, except ~~she knew~~ <sup>that</sup> it was hung, and all she had left to control the airplane were ailerons, elevator and power. To counteract the yaw to the left from the stuck rudder, she had to hold considerable right aileron, which would cause the airplane to contact the runway somewhat crossways. She could go up and down, and put the wing down, but couldn't stop the nose from turning.

Page's approach had put her in pretty good shape for making the runway, but she knew she'd have a terrible side load <sup>o</sup> ~~on~~ landing. She wanted the aircraft mass to go on down the runway, but

it would still be turning. To complicate matters, Page had a right crosswind which was now impossible to adequately correct for, and she was drifting left.

Jack Holland knew instantly that Page was in trouble, for she'd be using right rudder to stop the drift if she could. <sup>He wondered</sup> What could be wrong? <sup>and</sup> The airplane appeared to be intact <sup>and</sup> he couldn't see anything external inhibiting the rudder movement. ~~Did her shoe heel get caught under the rudder? Couldn't be. She'd have simply yanked off her shoe.~~

Allow 3 double spaces to change to Jack's point of view

Warren Otto didn't know much about aerodynamics, but he'd not seen Page make a landing like the one he was witnessing now. She came around to line up with the runway to land, reduced the power, and levelled the wings <sup>and</sup> but the nose kept turning. He <sup>also</sup> understood there was something wrong. <sup>and</sup> The pilots watching knew she was in trouble, and a few had presence of mind enough to grab fire extinguishers and start running to where she was unquestionably going to roll it up.

Allow 3 double spaces to change to Warren's point of view

Warren watched as if it were a silent movie. ~~There was no sound, and~~ his mind did not accept that this was real. Page managed to put the airplane on the concrete runway, but it quickly dropped off the edge into the soft dirt and the wheels dug in for a cartwheel. The airplane pirouetted on its nose and left wings,

then over on its back, slid <sup>①</sup> and stopped. The wheels <sup>were</sup> ~~achieved an~~  
unnatural <sup>ly facing upward</sup> ~~upward attitude~~ <sup>②</sup> still turning. Gasoline poured from a  
ruptured fuel tank.



DAILY TELEGRAM: "This thing of talking about 'somebody's life being too valuable to risk in an airplane' is not only the bunk, but it's an insult to the men we ask to do our flying. Where does anybody's life come in to be any more valuable than anybody else's? Ain't life just as precious to one as to another? If flying is dangerous pass a law and stop it. But don't divide our nation between a class that should fly and one that shouldn't. Aviation is not a fad, it's a necessity and will be our mode of travel long after all the people who are too valuable to fly have met their desired deaths by the roadsides on Sunday afternoons."

Yours, Will Rogers

*Inclent  
from both  
margins.*

CHAPTER 15 Monday August 26, 1929

Race Day 9 Columbus - Cleveland

Reality instantly reappeared to Warren Otto, and he took off on a dead run towards Page's Stearman. A vehicle picked him up along the way, and they careened down the concrete runway. Warren prayed in fright to all Page's saints and patrons to ~~let~~ let her be alive and ~~no~~ <sup>let there be</sup> no fire.

Jack Holland had a little more ground to cover, but he was sprinting, too, as the airplane tumbled. Despite Jack's callous strategy for using Page, this moment provoked an emotion even stronger than the fright he'd felt when she parachuted. ~~My God, he truly loved this girl!~~

~~In fact,~~ <sup>cloud</sup> the ~~obscurat~~<sup>ion</sup> around the wreckage appeared to be wind-blown dirt and not smoke, though gasoline was flowing along the ground. Civilized courtesy gone, Warren shoved the gathering rescuers away, totally unaware that he was wielding his open pocket knife ready to free Page from her safety belt should there be fire. The upper wing and strong cockpit construction had protected Page from being crushed. She was hanging upside down, more stunned than hurt. <sup>9</sup> The first man to her was actually laughing. He told the crowd,

<sup>move up</sup> "She said, 'Just throw in a match and go away'. Is she ever disgusted."

As a rescuer unfastened Page's seat belt, Warren gathered her into his arms so she wouldn't fall on her head. His relief that she was all right left him ~~totally~~ unable to let go of her, and he held her until they could both regain their composure.

Jack Holland arrived, <sup>and seemed to be an</sup> ~~an~~ amalgam of emotions and confusion ~~relieved that Page was OK, angry that she must have messed up, irate about the wrecked airplane, disappointed she wouldn't finish the race, distracted by the screaming monkey - and, just who was that man Page was clinging to?~~

Jack's personal thought seems to intrude on Warren's point of view here, & I've edited to avoid it.

Sis Boombah cried piteously to be extricated, and Page turned back to the airplane, acknowledging Jack's arrival with a black look. A mechanic offered a pair of pliers to bend out the rudder cable and free the distraught monkey. Jack Holland <sup>looked</sup> ~~had never felt~~ ~~so~~ helpless as Page took charge of the rescue, comforting the frightened animal. It was clear what had wedged the rudder and caused the accident, ~~Page's co-pilot, Sis Boombah.~~ Jack vaguely ~~remembered seeing this other fellow at the race start in Santa Monica, but he'd sure gotten friendly with Page in just a few days.~~ ~~What was going on?~~

Page thanked the crowd for helping her as the men prepared to remove the wreckage to a hangar. Warren Otto took charge of the whimpering, bruised monkey and discreetly gave Page and Jack some space for themselves.

The timid little girl who had come to Jack Holland for flying lessons just a few short months ago was gone. In her place was a self-assured, strong woman who would not be taken advantage of. How ironic that at the moment Jack Holland discovered his genuine feelings for Page, she was indignantly telling him goodbye.

"Jack, I <sup>we</sup> ~~have~~ met your wife. She seemed to be a fine person, deserving of much better than you. I <sup>am</sup> ~~am~~ hurt and embarrassed to have been taken in by your masquerade. I have no further interest in associating with you."



Jack was nonplussed <sup>and seemed uncertain of how to respond</sup> ~~should he deny his marriage? Explain the pending divorce? Declare his newly-realized passion for Page? She would believe nothing now.~~ She wasn't even waiting for an explanation or apology. Page turned her back and walked away.

The confrontation with mortality wiped out any further traditional courtship for Page McKendrick and Warren Otto. Superficial flirtations shifted to honest soul baring. The two talked all night <sup>^</sup> about his life and hers, their strengths and disappointments, the Jack Holland calamity, airplanes, autonomy, and commitment. They went on to Cleveland in the morning with Warren's Exchange Club friend, and some clear decisions had been made. They would make a life together. Besides, Sis Boombah was ~~so~~ attached to both <sup>of them</sup>.

---

Since takeoff for the last lap into Cleveland wasn't until 1:00 PM, the racers had gotten the best night's sleep in a week. Nevertheless, they were at the airport mid morning to find the souvenir and autograph hunters about in full force <sup>They</sup> ~~and~~ commenced to check over their airplanes for flight. <sup>↑</sup> Ruth Nichols had some maintenance done on her Rearwin, and made an early test flight. As usual, the fliers looked up at the sound of an approaching airplane, and watched her landing.

Columbus' new concrete runway was still under construction, and the first portion was closed. The pilots had all landed "long" over the closed part the previous afternoon, touching down at the beginning of the usable portion. A large steam roller was working at the edge of the runway, just about where the usable portion began.

Ruth Nichols descended over the closed runway and seemed to drift a little as she came to the usable part. Unbelievably, she hit the steam roller and somersaulted, coming to rest upside down on the soft dirt. Observers could see Ruth crawl out from the wreckage as they raced to her. Miraculously, she was unhurt, <sup>but her</sup>  
~~Ruth's~~ third-place standing dissolved.

For such a senseless tragedy to befall one of the most experienced pilots of the race, the holder of transport license number two, simply proved that bad luck could reach out to anyone. Ruth Nichols had organized aviation country clubs across the United States, touring 90 <sup>(SP)</sup> cities in 46 <sup>(SP)</sup> states without a single forced landing. ~~This was in the day when flight plans usually carried the cryptic note, "Arriving G.W.W.P." (God willing and weather permitting).~~ She had quietly flown the entire race well, without fanfare or drama - and now <sup>was</sup> ~~THIS~~ a victim of random fate.

The Columbus takeoff was the first time the competitors departed in one minute intervals in the order of their standing, which would probably allow them to arrive in Cleveland in about the same order. Louise Thaden and Gladys O'Donnell lined up side-by-side first on the runway. With Ruth Nichols out, Amelia moved into third place and Blanche Noyes followed. No one much liked the side-by-side takeoff arrangement with the severe dropoff along the edge, but no one objected.

~~Since conventional geared airplanes were impossible to see out of until the tail came up,~~ the pilots needed to lean out the side to see to go straight down the runway on takeoff. Wedged in between an airplane on one side and a dropoff on the other, there was little room for a miscalculation, or drift. They all rose to the occasion. ~~All Louise could think about was how easy it would be to lose her "guaranteed" first place.~~

Herb Thaden had been at the Columbus banquet the evening before with Louise and had chuckled at the sight of the fliers in their formal evening gowns. Their brown arms turned stark white just above the elbows, then the tan color took up again for a V neck and face which was trimmed white around the eyes where the goggles had been. Louise had confided to Herb her sadness that the race was nearing the end.

Again, this event might be shown in proper chronological order to avoid confusion.



~~"We have consoled together, helped each other, worried about each other, laughed together over our mistakes, silently wept together, endured together, recognized our strengths, combatted our weaknesses. Never mentioned have been the afraid times; anticipatory on the ground, actuals in flight."~~

Again, without being developed further, this dialogue seems irrelevant.

Cleveland was only 120 miles away, <sup>(SP)</sup> 44 minutes for Louise Thaden, and the flight itself was a little anticlimactic. Ruth Elder did manage to get lost once again, landing in Akron, but persevered. Edith Foltz had engine trouble not far outside Columbus, landed, then with characteristic grit resumed the race. Bobbi Trout, officially out and not being timed, was determined to fly herself into Cleveland and did so. Considering the repairs along the way, she was flying an ~~altogether~~ new airplane from the one with which she'd started.

Excitement was heating up in Cleveland for the Graf Zeppelin, also. The airship had made a spectacularly fast <sup>(SP)</sup> 75-hour crossing from Japan on its <sup>a</sup>round the world flight <sup>o</sup>and, arriving early, circled Los Angeles for four hours awaiting dawn for landing. Over 100 airplanes flew convoy for the Graf.

A chemical company, rather than an oil company, refueled the leviathan of the air, measuring out six hundred thousand cubic feet of ~~gas and~~ a mixture of natural and chemical gases. Navigators

plotting the course appeared to be following the Derby trail through Yuma, El Paso, Oklahoma and Kansas<sup>^</sup> - the lower, southern route to their destination in Lakehurst, New Jersey.

~~There was one woman aboard the Zeppelin, Lady Grace Drummond-Hay, an English aviator and journalist representing the Hearst newspapers. She was a war correspondent and adventurer. She said,~~

"The Zeppelin has pioneered across two oceans and two continents, bringing America and Europe within forty-two hours of each other, Europe - Berlin and the outward fringe of the far East - Tokyo, within ninety-three hours of each other, Japan and San Francisco within seventy hours of each other. the Zeppelin has drawn the world together in 224 hours and 24 minutes. Trackless adventure through pathless space - a new trail blazed by the meteor-like Zeppelin."

*This detail about the zeppelin seems unrelated to the plot. I've suggested omitting it.*

~~It was hard to imagine flying around the world in that kind of time.~~

Each of the pilots flew the last leg with singular concentration, yet also reflecting on the past week. There had been trials and challenges, grief and exhilaration, but the camaraderie of the women generated sustenance which extended well into the future among all women pilots.

But not all the world was converted to esteem women pilots by their finishing the perilous route in fragile craft. As the arriving Derby pilots descended upon the welcoming Cleveland crowd, a reporter asked Colonel Lindbergh, (x) "Is aviation a woman's game?"

He answered, "I haven't anything to say about that. I'm sorry."

Louise Thaden arrived over the finish line first from Santa Monica with Blanche Noyes and Gladys O'Donnell right behind her. The frenzied crowd rose to their feet and swarmed Louise's blue and gold Travel Air, forcing her to shut the engine down in the middle of the field to avoid endangering someone with her ~~revolving~~ propeller. Throngs of reporters and photographers engulfed the airplane. A horseshoe of flowers adorned the neck of the winning airplane, and then the pilot.

A radio microphone was shoved over to Louise and she graciously performed as she had all along.

"Hello <sup>o</sup>folks. The sunburn derby is over and I happened to come in first place. I'm sorry we all couldn't come in first, because they all deserve it as much as I. They <sup>ire</sup>~~are~~ all great flyers."



She <sup>later</sup> wrote for the Wichita Eagle newspaper,

*move up* →  
"There is one big pleasure I will get out of winning. I will

now be able to make good my promise. I have won the cup for Marvel Crosson and it will be inscribed with her name and turned over to her people."

*Insert page break*

Final standings for ~~the "heavies":~~

*Heavier Aircraft:*

- |                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Louise Thaden    | 9. Mary Von Mach        |
| 2. Gladys O'Donnell | 10. Vera Dawn Walker    |
| 3. Amelia Earhart   |                         |
| 4. Blanche Noyes    | Lighter Aircraft:       |
| 5. Ruth Elder       | 1. Phoebe Omlie         |
| 6. Neva Paris       | 2. Edith Foltz          |
| 7. Mary Haizlip     | 3. Chubbie Keith Miller |
| 8. Opal Kunz        | 4. Thea Rasche          |

Others:

- Pancho Barnes - out, wrecked
- Marvel Crosson - died
- Claire Fahy - out, separated wires
- Page McKendrick - out, wrecked
- Ruth Nichols - out, wrecked
- Margaret Perry - out, illness
- Bobbi Trout - finished untimed

Dateline Oakland, Calif Aug. 27, 1929 (UP)

"The Shuttle, a Boeing mail transport plane, was poised here for a take-off this morning on a projected transcontinental refueling endurance flight - a test of the feasibility of shuttle airplane service between the Atlantic and the Pacific."

*This detail seems unrelated to the main focus of the novel.*

Sixty-five and a half years later another shuttle airplane was flown by female astronaut pilot Eileen Collins, "a test of the feasibility of shuttle airplane service" into outer space around the planet Earth. ~~29~~ Derby racer Bobbi Trout entrusted her Orville Wright-signed pilot certificate to Eileen Collins who carried it into space. Bobbi still can't understand why she couldn't go too.

#

*1991 - August*

Flight is abiding peace. Absolute serenity.  
It is faith and compassion. Purest joy.  
It is a spirit totally free. Flight is  
yesterday's yearning. The fulfillment  
of today's dreams. Tomorrow's promises.

Louise Thaden



EPILOGUE

PANCHO BARNES established a speed record in her Beech Travel Air Mystery Ship, flew stunts in Hollywood, trained thoroughbred horses, flew flight test, chauffeured Will Durant, married four times, ran for County Supervisor, operated a CPT pilot training school, wrote music, farmed, and established a guest ranch near Edwards Air Force Base named The Happy Bottom Riding Club. A legal battle with the Air Force over Pancho's guest ranch took over her later years and she died alone in the desert in 1975.

MARVEL CROSSON died in the 1929 Women's Air Derby. Her brother Joe gained fame as an Alaskan bush pilot and in 1935 flew the bodies of Will Rogers and Wiley Post out from their disastrous crash in Barrow. Talk of a Congressional Medal of Honor was quashed by Joe who said, "it was not at all in keeping with what I did."

AMELIA EARHART became the first president of The Ninety-Nines which was organized at the end of the Women's Air Derby. She went on to establish many of aviation's firsts, including her attempt to fly around the world, on which flight she was lost in 1937. Numerous imaginative theories and mysteries surround that flight, including ~~eyewitness reports of being captured and shot by the Japanese, dying of dysentery in prison, spying for President Roosevelt, and even living in hiding today in The United States!~~ Amelia's friend Louise Thaden believes that she simply missed Howland Island, ran the fuel dry and went down at sea. Amelia said to Louise before her risky last flight, "If I should bop off, it'll be doing the thing that I've always most wanted to do."

RUTH ELDER undertook a screen career which faded after her initial splash in Flo Ziegfield's "Glorifying the American Girl" based on her aborted Atlantic crossing. The flamboyant beauty hobnobbed with European royalty, let "\$250,000 slip through my fingers", and married and divorced six times. She died on October 10, 1977, one day short of the 50th anniversary of her famous attempt to conquer the Atlantic.

CLAIRE FAHY was killed when the engine failed on her taperwing Waco while taking off at Tonopah, Nevada in 1930. Her husband Herb was killed the same year while demonstrating a new Lockheed "Sirius".

EDITH FOLTZ (STEARNS) barnstormed, flew several air derbies, was an early transport pilot, and taught primary Civilian Pilot Training. Edith managed a new feeder airline out of Portland, Oregon. She served in Great Britain with the Air Transport Auxiliary during WWII, ferrying RAF heavies - Halifaxes, Wellingtons and Lancasters. Edith taught instrument flying to Naval Cadets in Corpus Christi, Texas after the war, and died in 1956.

MARY HAIZLIP was the United States' second female commercial pilot (after Phoebe Omlie) and held world altitude and speed records, along with placing in numerous pylon and closed course races. In the 1931 National Air Races she became the second highest money-winner, male or female, and later flew flight test for three aircraft companies. Her husband Jimmy was also a famous racer in the thirties. Mary lives today in the Los Angeles area, and has been a Malibu realtor for many years.

OPAL KUNZ, a wealthy New York socialite, was married to world-renowned gem expert & Tiffany's VP, Dr. G.F.Kunz. Learning to fly in June of 1929, she bought a 300 hp Travel Air, but was not allowed to fly it in the Derby since it was said to be "too fast for a woman to fly". So she rented a 200 hp Travel Air. Opal was prominent in the organization of The Ninety-Nines, and then later the Betsy Ross Corps supporting national defense. She taught 400 students to fly in the Civilian Pilot Training program during WWII. When Yuri Gagarin went into space, Opal wrote President Kennedy volunteering to go for the United States. She died in 1967.

JESSIE "CHUBBIE" KEITH MILLER (PUGH), an Australian, first gained fame as a passenger with British distance flyer Bill Lancaster, on a 1927/28 flight from England to Australia in an Avro Avian. In 1930 she established a Woman's solo record crossing the United States, and attempted a Pittsburgh, PA to Cuba flight which nearly ended in tragedy on the return, this being her last major flight. A bizarre romantic entanglement with Lancaster, while both were married to others, resulted in Lancaster's killing another suiter in a fit of jealousy. Lancaster later disappeared over the Sahara, and his body was found 29 years later. Chubbie died in London in 1972.



PAGE MCKENDRICK was a figment of the author's imagination.

RUTH NICHOLS, having organized and promoted the aviation country clubs prior to the Women's Air Derby, was highly visible and experienced at cross country flying. She went on to establish several transcontinental speed, altitude and distance records. Joining the scramble to become the first woman to make the transatlantic crossing, Ruth crashed in Saint John, New Brunswick and AE passed her by, this experience perhaps shifting her attention to humanitarian causes and the founding of "Relief Wings". She continued to fly all her life.

BLANCHE NOYES followed the Women's Air Derby by competing in the National Air Races and winning many closed course races. An actress, having learned to fly from her ~~dashing~~ airmail pilot husband Dewey only six weeks prior, Blanche jumped into aviation with both feet and stayed there. In 1936 Blanche and Louise Thaden won the Bendix air race competing against both men and women. For 35 years Blanche headed the FAA's air marking program.

GLADYS O'DONNELL's second place win in the '29 Air Derby whetted her racing appetite. She metamorphosed from a 46-hour pre-Derby pilot to the winner of the 1930 event; in fact winning \$8,800 in prize money that year and subsequently 29 competitive events. Gladys and husband Lloyd operated a flying school in Long Beach, and Gladys became an early movie pilot. Her later years were devoted to Republican politics.

PHOEBE FAIRGRAVE OMLIE topped her victory in the Derby with a grand prize Cord automobile, from the (co-ed) National Sweepstakes Derby in 1931. Flying the campaign trail in 1932 for President Roosevelt led to an unprecedented governmental appointment, then later Phoebe introduced a Vo-Ed program in the Memphis public schools, a first. Husband Vernon taught author William Faulkner to fly, who later included the thinly-disguised Omlies in stories. Vernon died as an airline ~~accident~~ passenger in 1936 - Phoebe nearly 40 years later in poverty and self-imposed isolation.



NEVA PARIS acted after the gathering under a shade tree at the end of the Derby, as the women determined to organize and "promote good fellowship among licensed women pilots, encourage flying among women and create opportunities for women in commercial aviation." She signed a letter to all 128 U.S. female pilots, of which 99 eventually formed the group, The Ninety-Nines. Opal Kunz was to write on Jan. 13, 1930, "It should be remembered by all of us that this club was really founded by Neva." Neva had just been killed in a spin at Woodbine, GA en route to Miami.

MARGARET PERRY (COOPER MANSER) recovered from the typhoid fever attack suffered during the race, and married Larry Cooper, a movie stunt pilot. She became active in The Ninety-Nines, following Amelia Earhart as the group's second president. She later returned to her home state of New York, married Harold Manser and became involved with a fitting tribute to Amelia, as trustee of the AE Memorial Scholarship program. Margaret's life was one of constant service until her death in 1951.

THEA RASCHE, known as Germany's "Flying Fraulein", returned home to qualify in seaplanes and gliders. Thea sold her airplane upon the Nazi rise to power, and became editor of an aviation magazine, leading to a spot in a DC-2 crew flying an England/Australia air race. Thea lost her editor's job after charges of "too much sympathy for the Anglo-American enemies", subsequently spending the war years in Berlin. Thea was one of only three female honorary members of a men's aviation group, the Quiet Birdmen.

LOUISE MCPHETRIDGE VON THADEN, with simultaneous speed, altitude and endurance records prior to the Derby, was the pilot to beat. Continuing post derby in the record-breaking mode, she was invited by Walter and Olive Ann Beech to fly a factory Staggerwing in the Bendix trophy race, which had chivalrously been opened to women. Louise and co-pilot Blanche Noyes beat all the men; Louise was awarded the 1936 Harmon Trophy as the outstanding woman pilot in the U.S. Life's later joy was encouraging Civil Air Patrol cadets to become aviators. Louise said in her book "High, Wide and Frightened," "To us, the successful completion of the Derby was of more importance than life or death...the public was skeptical of air travel. We women of the Derby were out to prove that flying was safe". In August, 1989, Susan Louise Dusenbury, a DC9 pilot for Airborne Express, flew Louise Thaden's restored D-4000 Travel Air in a 60th anniversary replay of the 1929 Derby route.

(EVELYN) BOBBI TROUT, along with Eleanor Smith, set the first women's refueling endurance flight record shortly after the Derby, staying aloft 42<sup>8</sup> plus hours. In 1931 she topped that with Edna May Cooper, a motion picture actress, flying for over <sup>8</sup>5 days in a Challenger Curtiss Robin, stopping because of a cracked piston. Always an inventor and innovator, during WWII Bobbi's company salvaged discarded rivets from various aircraft manufacturers and recycled them. She was also a prospector, realtor and investor. Today Bobbi lives in southern California, and flies her red Porsche along the freeways. She's written a book entitled "Just Plane Crazy".

MARY VON MACH was the first woman admitted to Parks Air College in St. Louis, graduating in 1931 with her transport license and flight instructor's rating. During WWII Mary gave up her dream of operating a flight school to do final inspections on the Pratt & Whitney engines for B-24 bombers - for which she was honored by the War Congress of American Industry. Mary was installed in the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame, being the first woman in Michigan to become a transport pilot and to own and operate an airplane.

VERA DAWN WALKER was known as the pint-sized test pilot. After the Derby she flew a sales tour, demonstrating the Panther McClatchie experimental Rocker Armless Engine, during which she declared herself the unofficial forced landing champion of the world. In 1931 she flew a Pratt and Whitney-powered Stinson to Guatemala, which was highlighted by a forced landing at the edge of a lake, resulting in a week-long aircraft retrieval. Vera soon returned home to recover from tuberculosis and never flew again.