



LOOMIS

American Soaring Techniques Today

Dick du Pont wrote this interesting paper some years ago. Yet the prophetic wisdom with which it was written makes it vividly stimulating today.*

IN SPITE of the fact that the title of this paper is "American Soaring Technique Today," it is my personal opinion that there is no such thing as a true American soaring technique. The reason for this opinion will become apparent to you from what follows:

In giving you information on soaring based on my own experiences with it, I am sure I can shed but little light on the subject as a whole. I mean by this that the comparatively small amount of soaring that one individual can find time to do is such a small part of the total amount of soaring that has been done in this country that it should be valued as no more than one insignificant report in thousands that should be recorded and analyzed in order to obtain anything like a complete picture.

To endeavor to give you a conception of a proper technique in soaring, or to give a good general picture of the meteorological phenomena observed and used by the sailplane pilot, might well be compared with one lone meteorologist at some designated weather station, attempting to give an explanation from his own observations of the entire science of meteorology as is known today, without his having any information from the

thousands of other meteorological stations scattered over the globe.

Perhaps I am a little extreme in this example, since soaring pilots do exchange ideas and experiences through the Soaring Society of America.

With this thought in mind, you must realize that there is probably no American pilot who should set himself up as an authority on soaring in the broad sense of the word, and least of all, myself, who, although I have made a number of outstanding flights from Elmira in the past years, have confined my soaring activity very largely to this section of the United States and have never done any soaring outside of this country.

I am not a meteorologist, or, in fact, a scientist of any sort, so anything I have to say on this subject comes strictly from a sailplane pilot whose experiences, observations and opinions are probably at wide variance with those of others.

There is, of course, no necessity for me to mention the elementary principles of soaring flight to such an audience. However, it might be worthwhile to give those of you are not already familiar with sailplanes some idea of the varying performances of the planes we fly.

Sailplanes have a wide variation of performances,

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