

SNOWBIRD MEET, 1946

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towards the horizon, one could see a clear strip of blue sky with more haze on top—"a blue sky sandwich on haze." Approximately in the middle of the flight, the sun could be seen although no direct rays were evident in our local area. At about 4:15, with dusk coming on, we did some formation flying and played follow-the-leader. I followed Dick to the center of Elmira. We turned back at 1500 ft., lost 800 ft. getting back to the ridge and just managed to scrape our way back to Harris Hill.

"The thing that made us wonder was the height that we could obtain on approximately 600 to 700 ft. ridges. Normally, on Harris Hill, we would obtain only about 1200 ft. on the ridge current without thermal help. It seems that there must have been some thermal lift or possibly some wave effect which set up such an even and reliable lift. We lean towards the latter because the lift remained stationary—thermic ridge soaring, you might call it."

Saturday evening there was a very pleasant dinner at Hat's Tavern which lasted long into the night. Jerome Wolcott was on hand, as well as most of the pilots and their guests. Topic of conversation, 'gliding.'

Sunday the wind was on the ridge again. Twelve pilots participated, including practically all the previously mentioned ones and, in addition, Maurice Waters and Frank Rhodes.

The first half dozen pilots in the air found no trouble in getting up 1500 ft. or so on the ridge with thermal aid. Then a large area of general lift developed extending way out in front of the ridge. It was evidently caused by a mild squall and it gave everybody a good ride half way to Corning and back. John Robinson found a spot where the lift was 800 ft. per minute up and was able to get 3800 ft. above Harris Hill. In the process he made a goal and return flight to the center of Elmira. That's pretty good for the northeast on the first of December.

Later on, the ceiling lowered and activities were confined to the vicinity of the ridge. The Snow Bird Meet came to a final climax with six sailplanes doing a Lufberry circle in a snow storm out in front of the ridge. Thirty to forty flights were made in the course of the day with a total of fifteen soaring hours put in. The grand total for the meet was forty hours put in by fourteen pilots flying seven TG-4s, three TG-3s, one 2-22, one 1-19, and one Pratt Read.

It was an amazing Snow Bird Meet in that soaring was done on all four days with plenty of snow on the last. The temperature was above freezing most of the time although it was down to fifteen degrees by midnight Sunday. A lot of fun was had by all and it is hoped even more enthusiasts will come to Elmira for the next one. You can really soar in the winter if you're warmly clad.

Other people participating this year were Ernest Schweizer, Burt Eldridge, Zara Bostock, Elizabeth Howard, Richard McPherson, and, last but not least, Lee Wood, who did a great job doing most of the towing and helping us load the gliders in and out of the hangar daily.

SERMONS FROM CLOUDS

ORIENTATION

(As though reported from station WENY, Elmira)

Commentator to the pilot: Would you care to give us your impressions of soaring?—What does it feel like? The pilot speaks:

If you're not too much rocked about and blown,
To soar's like riding on a thistledown;
But if you sail in air that's bumpy, you
Seem bucking breakers in a light canoe.
I can remember a "cauliflower" cloud
I entered once. Inside its foggy shroud
Were winds so rough and turbulent I tossed
About and turned till I was dazed and lost.
The currents were capricious, and would pick
My glider up and hurl it like a stick;
Then let it fall. The metal fuselage
Was like a drumhead echoing the barrage.
And I could only guess and pilot blind,
All sense of "up" and "down" gone from my mind.
This struggle in the cumulus, though brief,
Was like eternity to me. Relief
Came only when I tumbled into air
Below the gale. I got my bearings there,
And was successful levelling off the plane—
For my horizon had appeared again!

LIFT

(As though reported from station WENY, Elmira)

"He didn't get to Allentown,"
The radio commentator said;
"A lack of current forced him down—
"A lack of breeze; the sky was dead.
"There weren't the thermals to sustain
"A climb, and he could only drift
"A little upward now and then,
"Till, luckless, he ran out of lift.
"He had to spiral to a field,
"And leave his ship (designed for flight,
"And birdlike) grounded there and keeled.
"He had not had a chance for height."

* * *

Oh, when our atmosphere is thinned
And like a pocket without air,
May heaven aid us with a wind,
And send an up-draught, at our prayer.

HELEN HITCHCOCK BJORVAND

ESCAPE GLIDER

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Landing Gear—None. Landing to be made on the keel on plywood bottom stiffened under the pilot's seat.

Dimensions—Span 33 feet, length 19 feet 9 inches. Wing area, 160 square feet. Weight empty, 240 lbs.

Performance—Stalling speed 32 mph with two. Wing loading 3.45 lbs./sq. ft. Glide angle 13 to 1. Minimum sinking speed 4 feet per second.

Design data—From *Flight Without Power*, Lewin Barringer and the *Handbook of Aeronautics*, Vol. I, Parts I and II, from which the Clark YH airfoil characteristics were obtained.