

Dick Johnson, Jensen and I got good early starts and charged off west at a surprisingly fast rate toward a reported "sandy area that gets real hot." The soaring was good and we left all others behind until Jensen, in great joy, went ahead very fast, got low, zig-zagged around in that recognizable last frantic search for anything, and then seemed to stop in midair. It registered then that Jensen had hit the sand with not a bit of dust, the real *wet* sand spot in the middle of Kansas.

Johnson and I slowed down in the suddenly weak thermals and it was interesting and frustrating to see the Ka-6's come tiptoeing right on past us. The next 30 miles to Pratt and a fine cover of good cumulus were wrackingly slow but then up we went to 8,000 feet. We made good speed, passing the Ka-6 types, to be the first at Greensburg and turn for home. Back to Pratt under the same good clouds was easy and perhaps the following long glide over the wet spot was easier too because of our proper earlier introductions. Back near Wichita the lift improved again. By now we could draw a map of the thermal areas, and I made the Wichita turn third, long after Ryan in the Sisu and immediately after McClanahan.

It was late then and the only clouds were back on course to Greensburg, and strangely too, sort of over the wet spot. I went back west over the same ground, for the third time that day and climbed slowly under the last cloud. The final glide, with two very weak thermals over woods and swamp, drifted me to a low approach to Pratt airport at 1915. I phoned in and heard that I'd beaten Carris by half a mile. I felt good. We drove back to Wichita and heard that Ryan and the Sisu had picked up 40 min-

utes on us on the first leg, 37 minutes on the second, and had gone 63 miles farther. I felt terrible. Time, 8 hours 3 min.; 271 miles, second for the day and the 813 points brought me to third overall. I felt a little better there a hundred points below overall first place Ryan.

August 7th came and the task was free distance in a slow flow from the south curving to the northeast ahead of a weak front. Getting away early was easy under new small cumulus and I moved northwest to get under even better looking clouds. Near Hutchinson these good clouds began to street up towards the northeast and one long run and two short ones were made at high speed without turning. In addition, here a high shelf of cirrus could be seen to the west and this too, made us keep more to the east.

About this time Schreder slid under me and followed down the streets to Salina. All the rest of the day I saw Dick coming into the thermals after I thought I'd shaken him. The first hour and a half of the flight covered a lot of ground then but the distance from Wichita wasn't good because of the crooked flight line. At Salina, under an irregular pattern of fair clouds I started to work north to begin to get distance. The going was slow and it became apparent that the sky was clear both to the east and the west and we flew under a hand of clouds pointing almost straight north. Next, about 130 miles north of Wichita, the clouds became more scattered and formed in wisps for mere seconds only not really in streets but in fingers of Good Bermuda high penetrating north. It was difficult to pick the longest one of the three or four that were visible, but a selection was made, the one to the east, and I tip-

toed along after the fleeting wisps and on into clear blue sky. The last seventy miles were with dry thermals, once in smoke from a bonfire and finally to a ridge just across the Platte River.

The ridge was low but sweet smelling smoke from an alfalfa mill was blowing against it and after a few lazy passes the smoke bubbled and we climbed to 2,000 feet above the ground, blissfully sniffing.

The last glide north was over rough ground and I had to double back to a good field. 277 miles, fourth for the day, and the 983 points kept me in third overall. Best of the day; Schreder, 280 miles.

I think the map is interesting in that it shows the landing along the fingers of good air. The Johnson Brothers demonstrated something by flanking almost everybody and landing about 200 miles apart.

August 8th was rest and August 9th came with cloud cover. Abels made the turn point at McPherson but couldn't get back and the rest of us stayed close to home. No contest.

August 10th came, the last day, and from our morning inspection Ed and I knew this would be a contest day. We started talking early in the morning about what the weather would be, the character of the thermals, the winds, and every other factor we could recall.

E. J. called the speed task north 81 miles to Salina. The course was across a front moving towards us. Ed and I talked more about the character of this weak front, its expected visible signs on the ground and aloft, and how to use it.

I decided to improve my flying in the thermals because they were again going to be small, weak and broken and I felt the contest could be won in the thermals. And so the tension built. I drank Ed's tea at lunch before he could rescue it but Ed claimed we weren't clanked yet. Not loose either.

I had next to last start and was towed up to the line several hundred feet below release altitude. However the tow pilot blithely pulled back on the stick as we came to the line, in a gay show of getting that several hundred feet right on the spot and so we hung like bobber and worm.

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