



**QB MEMBER PROFILES
PROFILE NUMBER 1**

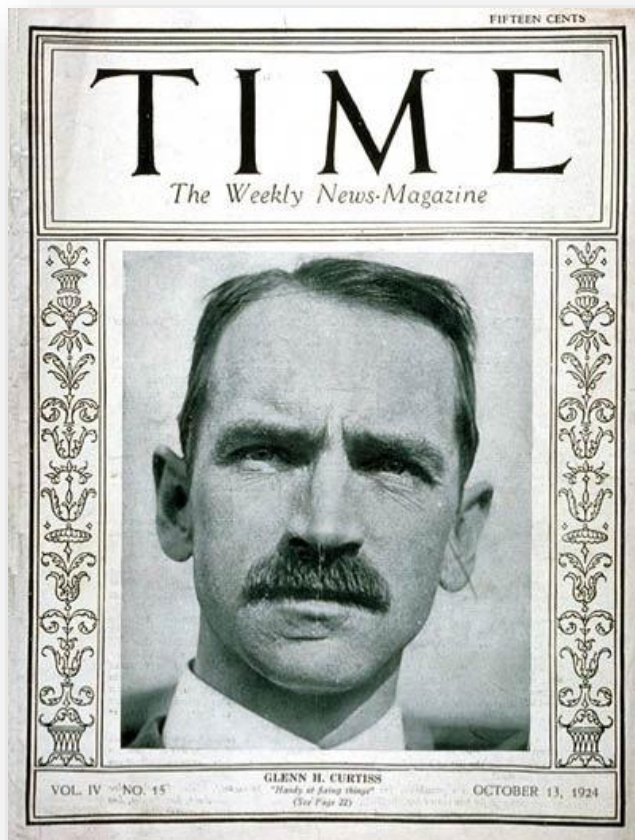
Glenn H. Curtiss

QB #1900

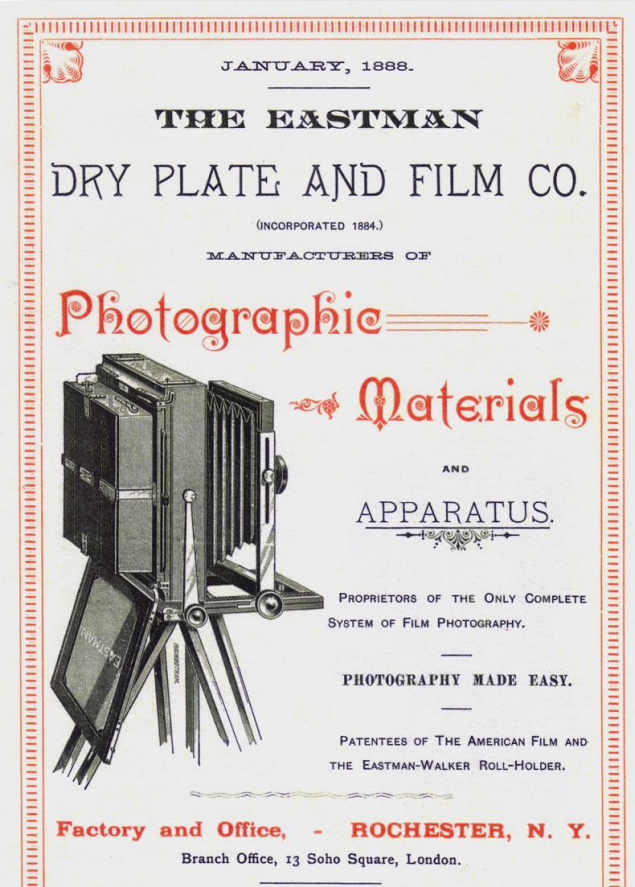
Hangar: #1, New York, NY



QB Profiles - Glenn Hammond Curtiss



- **Born in 1878** Hammondsport, NY. His father, Frank Richmond Curtiss was a harness maker. His paternal grandfather was Claudius G. Curtiss, a Methodist Episcopal clergyman.
- His parents named him after the lovely **glens** (narrow valleys) of the region and the town of **Hammondsport** at the southern end of Keuka Lake in the Finger Lakes region of upstate NY.
- Curtiss' **father died** of a stroke in 1882 when Glenn was **four**. When his younger sister, Rutha, **lost her hearing** as a result of childhood meningitis, his mother moved with Rutha to Rochester, NY so she could attend a school for the deaf. Glenn remained in Hammondsport with his grandmother until he ended his formal education with the **8th grade at age 14**.
- In 1903 Curtiss moved to Rochester, where his mother, a teacher, had opened a storefront school and Glenn found a **job** as a stencil maker and film stock assembler at **Eastman Dry Plate and Film Co.**, now known as Eastman Kodak.
- Although he loved working with cameras and became a **talented photographer**, he was frustrated by the **dullness and slowness of the assembly line**.



QB Profiles - Glenn Hammond Curtiss



- While at Eastman, Curtiss asked to be **paid by the piece** rather than by the hour. Unbeknownst to them, Curtiss had **developed a device** that cut the work time in half and **quadrupled the output**.
- When Glenn Curtiss had saved up enough money, he left his factory position and bought a bicycle, becoming a **bike messenger** for the Rochester branch of the **Western Union Company**. He would speed through the streets delivering **telegrams** faster than anyone else. On the weekends, he raced his bicycle at events throughout the region, usually taking home cash prizes, becoming known as the **champion rider** for western New York State.
- In **1895** his mother remarried J. Charles Adams, whose family owned large vineyards on the shore of Lake Seneca, near Hammondsport. They moved to Rock Stream, NY in that year, where Glenn went to **work** in his stepfather's vineyard while continuing his cycling sport with the support of the **Hammondsport Wheelman's Club**.



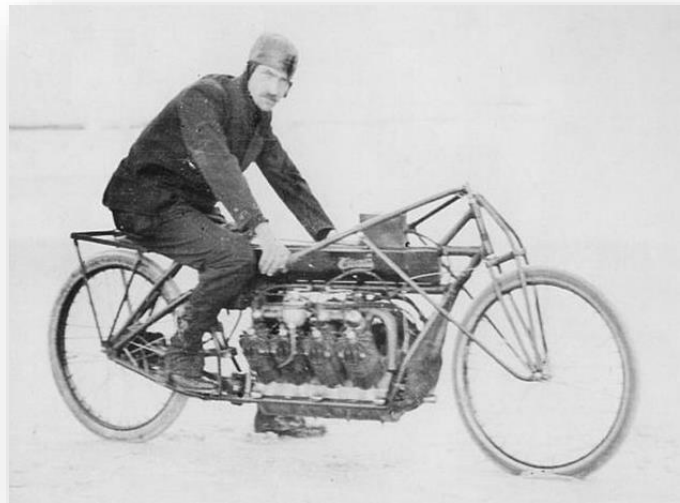
QB Profiles - Glenn Hammond Curtiss



- In 1898, at **age 20**, Curtiss married Lena Pearl Neff, a sawmill superintendent's daughter. She was Glenn's closest confidant and friend for life.
- Being a **"man with family responsibilities,"** in 1900 Curtiss opened a bicycle rental and repair shop in Hammondsport that was the home of his own **Hercules-brand** bicycles, and later his **motorcycles** of the same name.
- Sadly, Curtiss and Lena's first child, their **son Carlton**, died before his first birthday. When Lena was expecting a second child, Glenn **stopped his lucrative exhibition flying** to be near his family. **Glenn Hammond Curtiss II** was born healthy in 1912.
- In 1901 he formed the **Hercules Bicycle Company** and soon thereafter the **G.H. Curtiss Manufacturing Company** to produce his own motorcycles. After initial experiments with engine kits from the E.R. Thomas company, Curtiss designed and build his **own engines**, which were known for their **high quality and low weight**, ideal for motorcycles, and later, aircraft. The first Hercules motorcycles were produced in 1902 and sold for \$180.



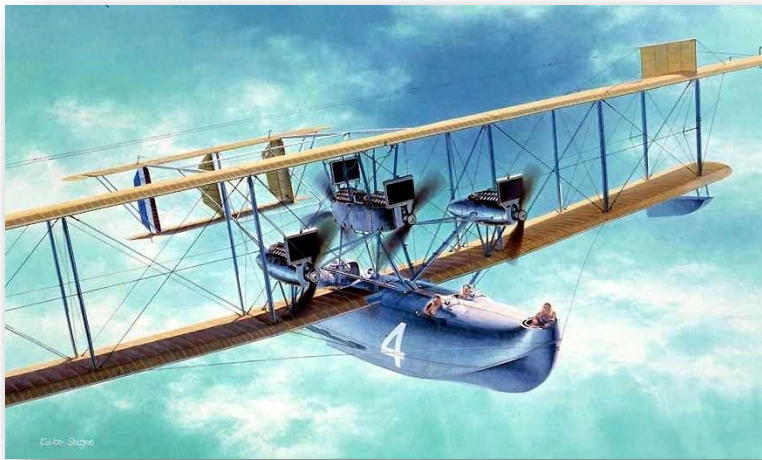
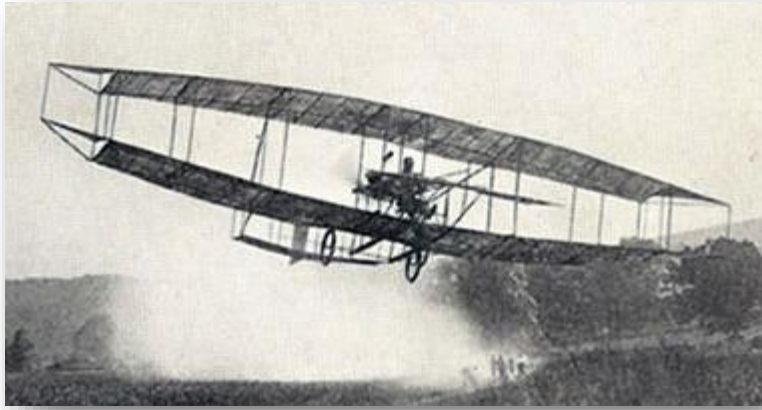
QB Profiles - Glenn Hammond Curtiss



- As a serious competitor, Curtiss developed a series of **racing motorcycles** with which he won numerous races and set many records. On January 24th, 1907, piloting this V8-powered machine, Curtiss set a **world's speed record** of 136.36 miles per hour on Ormond Beach in Florida, winning him the title of “**The Fastest Man on Earth.**” This record stood until 1930.
- Curtiss' first experience with aviation was as supplier of engines for early airplane builders and to dirigible pioneer **Captain Thomas Scott Baldwin** of San Francisco, California. When he flew in the summer of 1905 as engine mechanic on Baldwin's successful demonstration flight of **US Army Dirigible Number One**, Curtiss' skepticism of aviation disappeared, and he became an important force in aircraft development.
- In the summer of 1907, at the invitation of the inventor of the telephone, **Alexander Graham Bell**, Curtiss joined the **Aerial Experiment Association (AEA)**, based at Bell's estate in Baddeck, Nova Scotia, Canada. As an expert on lightweight engines, Curtiss became the primary supplier for AEA's aircraft.



QB Profiles - Glenn Hammond Curtiss



- During 1908 the AEA made several successful powered flights in three designs, the **Red Wing, White Wing and June Bug**, all powered by Curtiss B-8, V8 engines. While flying the June Bug, a craft of his own design, Curtiss won the first aeronautical prize, the Scientific American Cup, ever awarded in the United States. His use of **ailerons** to control flight direction set off years of bitter patent debates with the **Wright Brothers**, who had earlier turned down Curtiss' offer of an engine for the aircraft.
- Shifting his attention from motorcycles to aircraft, Glenn established the **Curtiss Aeroplane Company**, which became the world's largest aircraft manufacturer during World War I, earning him the title of "**Father of American Aircraft Manufacturers.**" The most widely produced model during the war was Curtiss's **JN-4, "Jenny,"** used to train US pilots.
- The Curtiss **NC-4 "Flying Boat"** crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1919, making the **first transatlantic crossing** in the history of our country. Curtiss was named "**Father of Naval Aviation.**"



QB Profiles - Glenn Hammond Curtiss



- The Aero Club of America under Federation Aeronautique Internationale (F.A.I.) issued **pilot's license # 1** to Curtiss in recognition of "the first person to publicly fly in the United States" (July 4, 1908 June Bug flight).
- **Blanche Stuart Scott**, student of Glenn Curtiss and later called the "Tomboy of the Air," was the **first woman to fly in public** in the US on Sept. 2, 1910 when the plane's throttle block "accidentally" slipped out of place and she "soared" to 150 feet.
- Another of Glenn Curtiss's students was **Emory Conrad Malick**, who became **America's first licensed African-American aviator** on March 20, 1912 with F.A.I. License #105.
- In September 1920, the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company underwent a financial reorganization. Glenn Curtiss cashed out his stock in the company for \$32 million and **retired to Florida**.
- Until his death in 1930, Curtiss remained active in business as the developer of Hialeah, Miami Springs and Opa-Locka, FL. Through the **Curtiss Aerocar Company** of 1928 he developed and produced a streamlined, luxury "5th wheel" travel trailer.



NC Connections - Glenn Hammond Curtiss

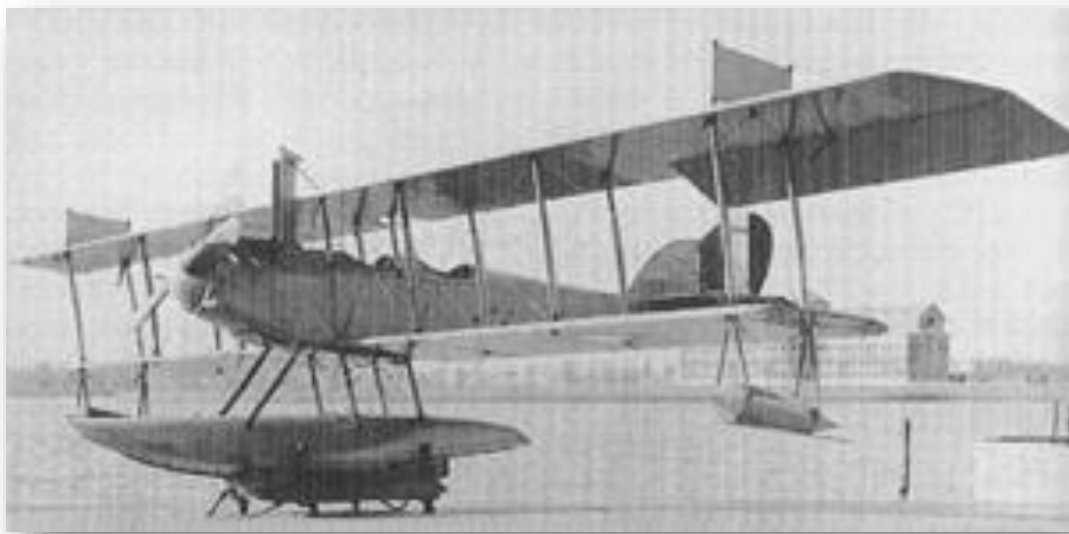


- Exhibition flyers roared into North Carolina in 1910, beginning with flights by Eugene Ely and J. A. D. McCurdy in **Curtiss planes** at **Raleigh** on 10 November. **Lincoln Beachey** gave an exhibition at Wilmington on 9 Mar. 1911 and briefly opened a flight school at **Pinehurst** for the golfing set that spring. He flew at **Durham, Asheville, Greensboro, Winston-Salem**, and other towns, generating huge popularity for aviation.
- At Greensboro in 1911, entrepreneur Lindsey Hopkins of **Reidsville** started the **Lindsey Hopkins Aviation Company**, paid for the flight lessons of auto mechanic **Thornwell H. Andrews** of Charlotte, bought a **Curtiss** airplane, and sponsored exhibitions across the country. Hopkins was a director at The Sperry Corp., North American Aviation (Eastern Airlines was a subsidiary).
The **Carolina Airplane Company**, founded in 1918 by veteran pilot **Harry Atwood**, built **Curtiss** seaplanes at **Raleigh, Smithfield, and Goldsboro**, but underpowered, the navy rejected them. Planes were assembled and flown at **Camp Greene**, outside **Charlotte**.



Noted Curtiss Production Aircraft through 1920

- Curtiss Model F, 1912, 150+, Single engine biplane flying boat.
- Curtiss Model R, 1915, ~290, Single engine biplane utility plane
- Curtiss JN-4, 1915, 6,813, Single engine biplane trainer
- Curtiss Model N, 1916, 560, Single engine biplane floatplane trainer
- Curtiss HS, 1917, ~1,178, Single engine biplane flying boat patrol airplane
- Curtiss JN-6H, 1918, 1,035, Single engine biplane trainer
- Curtiss Eagle, 1919, ~24, Three engine biplane airliner



Curtiss Jenny – Mad Mad Mad Mad World Flown by Frank Gifford Tallman III, QB 8585

