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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Hammondsport the site of World War I espionage and intrigue? Hammondsport the site of the world’s first vertical flight? The more we explore our collections the more we realize how many amazing stories remain untold!

The Curtiss Museum is much more than a static monument to one man’s life and legacy. We are more than a repository for one small town’s history. Every day we work to uncover the countless stories beneath our feet that connect us to the myriad men and women whose talents and passions brought about the world we now call home. We are the story of America, and of the world. The Curtiss Museum honors and preserves all of these stories by providing a venue where past, present, and future innovations merge to tell a much larger story.

Stay tuned for more information, and see you soon.

BENJAMIN JOHNSON
Executive Director
An Excerpt from “Glenn Hammond Curtiss, the Aerial Experiment Association and the John Newton Williams’ Helicopter of 1908,” by Paul J. Fardink

Following colorful attempts at a variety of careers (including soldier and racehorse breeder) John Newton Williams discovered his talent in mechanical engineering. The rest as they say is history…

In 1908, John Newton Williams was an engineer and entrepreneur hailing from Derby, Connecticut. His mechanical genius became evident and he soon had numerous patents mostly specializing in bank/check punches and typewriters culminating with the Williams Typewriter Company which finally located in Derby, Connecticut.

It was early in 1900 that John Newton Williams became interested in powered-flight and his studies led him to believe that a helicopter would have the greatest potential for success. In 1904, he started building a helicopter model using two sets of counter-rotating blades capable of flight, and in 1905 he built a larger, more successful model. Williams constructed models to demonstrate the characteristics of his helicopter concept. Power was supplied to the counter-rotating rotors by the spring of a window shade roller. In flight, Williams was able to make the model hover or fly horizontally. He used these models to demonstrate the feasibility of building a full-scale machine.

Williams would eventually raise $4,000 allowing him in 1907 to build a full-scale machine in Ansonia, Connecticut. Williams first ordered a 4-cylinder, 20-horsepower engine from Curtiss, but it did not provide sufficient power to lift this machine. Williams next connected the machine to factory power using a series of belts and flexible shafting in order to test the efficiency of the counter-rotating rotor systems. In a series of trials starting with 13 and moving to 19 horsepower, the machine lifted (generated) from 250 to 430 pounds of thrust. And, in a final trial, in which the horsepower was not measured, a thrust of 560 pounds was achieved thus convincing Williams of the need for a larger engine.

When John Newton Williams arrived in Hammondsport with his helicopter in January of 1908 at the invitation of Glenn Curtiss, he found the A.E.A. members busy with their first airplane, the Red Wing. Curtiss had offered the use of his V-8 engine to Williams and the A.E.A. immediately became involved in the testing of his helicopter.

Through their collaboration the powerful V8 was able to generate the thrust needed and Williams was able to achieve vertical flight! The site of the launch is located on the Hammondsport Central School campus and was officially recognized as the site of first vertical lift off by the Vertical Flight Society in 2017. The marker was installed in July 2019 on the school grounds.
John Newton Williams with his Curtiss-powered helicopter in Hammondsport, 1908
NEW FALL EXHIBIT
100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

First Transatlantic Flight
Visit the museum this fall to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first transatlantic crossing by air. In recognition of this historic event, the Curtiss Museum will be displaying a detailed account of this historic ocean crossing with graphics, illustration and photography. Come to learn more about the history of NC-4 and the amazing people and machines who made it all possible.

First Across Education Project Commemorates the 100th Anniversary of the First Transatlantic Flight
The objective of the “First Across” project is to expand knowledge and awareness of a little-known historical event with deep technological and industrial ties to both Steuben County and New York State. Museum Education Director, Makenzie Witter has created an educational unit for teachers that showcases the many ways this region and state helped to develop the technologies and techniques enabling transatlantic flight. The project was funded through an Educational grant from the Corning Foundation.

Photograph shows Navy-Curtiss Flying Boat NC-4 in Ponta Delgada, the Azores, Portugal after its first trans-Atlantic journey in 1919
(George Grantham Bain Collection – Library of Congress)
In Memoriam

NORM BRUSH

Long-time museum volunteer Norm Brush passed away peacefully at his home on March 13, 2019. Norm was born and raised in Bath, NY the son of Gordon and Leatha (Marlatt) Brush. He was a graduate of Haverling Central School in Bath. Norm was a US Army Veteran who served in Korea during the Korean War. He was a very loyal and dedicated employee of Fagan’s Inc. in Bath for 68 years, as an Appliance Technician and Funeral Assistant. He had a passion for airplanes, both flying and working on them. Norm was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for his 60 hours of volunteer work at the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum of Local History in 1996. He dedicated a total of twenty-four years volunteering at the Curtiss Museum’s Restoration Shop with his expertise in helping rebuild exhibits, numerous airplanes and OX-5 engines, using his mechanical abilities, taught to him by his Dad. Norm was also the recipient of The Wright Brothers “Master Pilot” Award for Fifty Years of Dedicated Service in Aviation Safety from the Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration on September 19, 2009. He was the Past President and Secretary for the OX-5 National Aviation Pioneers. Norm loved anything with an engine. He was an avid motorcyclist and snowmobiler and loved working on anything with a motor.

TV Host Samantha Brown Visits the Curtiss Museum

On Sunday, June 30, 2019 travel show host Samantha Brown and her crew visited the Curtiss Museum while filming for an upcoming episode of her show “Places to Love.” During her roughly week-long stay, Ms. Brown and her team visited a wide variety of people and places throughout Corning and the Finger Lakes, with Hammondsport-area stops at Depot Park, the Curtiss Museum, and Dr. Frank’s. While at the Curtiss Museum she spent the majority of her time meeting with Art & John Wilder in the restoration shop. Art gave her the full tour, which included taking a seat in the P-40.

The episode featuring Corning & the Southern Finger Lakes will air sometime in 2020.
P-40 WARHAWK

Progress continues to be made on the airplane which now features stick and rudder operations from the cockpit, including hydraulics of the gear and main flaps. Our good friends at Hilliard Corporation in Elmira, NY have helped in solving a daunting problem with the landing gear motion. They worked with us to create and install the proper gearing to operate the landing gear. They have made and installed the proper 1.05 to 1 ratio gears for the left side. This test gear is actually nylon and will be replaced one more time with steel. The hard part is done, the right side will follow shortly.

Our friends, Tony Vickio and Larry Orr completed the decorative Tiger Mouth and Star and Bar artwork unique to our P-40N.
Albany Flyer
Albany flyer is rebuilt and on display. The restoration shop crew has put a lot of emphasis on completing the re-building of our 1910 Flyer, and it is now in its final display spot with a few details yet to complete.

GLENN H. CURTISS OX-5 HALL OF FAME
On June 28th, a gathering was held in memory of Norm Brush naming him to the OX-5 Hall of Fame. Norm learned of this acceptance just prior to his passing.

Art Wilder offers remarks to friends and family of Norm Brush prior to placing his plaque onto the OX-5 Hall of Fame.

How did you first hear about the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum?
As a resident of the area.

What inspired you to become a volunteer?
I like being around people, and I am retired.

Are there any other organizations you volunteer with?
Yes, Milly’s Pantry in Penn Yan, NY – I bake desserts for the restaurant

What do you enjoy most about volunteering in general/ at the GHCM?
The people: the customers and staff are great fun.

How long have you been a GHCM volunteer?
About 15 years

How have you benefited?
I've learned things about flying I didn't know. I've learned to use computerized cash register, which I also need in my other volunteer position.

Would you recommend volunteering to others?
Absolutely! I look forward to the times I come in to volunteer. Where else can you go to meet and greet interesting people and laugh a lot!
SEPTEMBER 14TH & 15TH
WINGS & WHEELS 2019

The 2019 Wings and Wheels event is shaping up to be one of the best ever. Great history, lots of family fun, food vendors and seaplane rides available both days will make this an event not to be missed. Join us in this beautiful little town for a couple of days of celebration of seaplanes and an awesome cars.

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY - FREE FOR ALL TO ATTEND!
While researching information for our upgraded exhibit panels, we’ve uncovered quite a few interesting bits of local history that seem to have been lost in the bigger picture. One of these fascinating bits of Hammondsport history has to do with the role of local law enforcement in difficult days of World War I.

**German Spies in Hammondsport**

Before the United States officially entered World War I, the Curtiss Aeroplane & Motor Company was busy supplying aircraft and engines to Great Britain and her allies, against the protests of the German government.

Local law enforcement at the time consisted of Hammondsport Police Chief Joseph Eastwood, and a few part-time constables from the Town of Urbana whose primary duty was controlling the rowdiness of factory workers on Friday nights. Things changed, however, on July 25, 1917 when local police apprehended a man taking photographs of the Curtiss plant and equipment. As rumors of German spies flooded the area, and fears of sabotage grew, a contingent of nineteen soldiers under the Command of Lt. A.L. Blades was brought to Hammondsport to guard the plant around the clock.

When the soldiers were required elsewhere, a special unit was soon formed to take their place. Comprised of twenty-six Curtiss employees, the group was appointed as Special Deputies of the Steuben County Sheriff’s Department in late August 1917. They guarded the plant 24-hours a day, seven days a week until the facility was closed down shortly after Armistice Day, November 11, 1918.

During their service they kept the plant safe, investigating two possible sabotage attempts, and several thefts of raw materials by untrustworthy employees.

**Richard Leisenring, Jr.**
CURATOR
1. Make gifts of appreciated stock or property to avoid recognizing gains.
   How it works: It may be advantageous to gift to the museum appreciated stocks or property you no longer use. You forego paying capital gains taxes on the appreciation and at the same time the value of the charitable contribution may (if you itemize) decrease income taxes.

2. Use your IRA distribution - if you are at least 70 ½ years of age and have an IRA distribution to take this year it may be beneficial to direct some of the withdrawal to the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum, and other charities, you care about.
   How it works: Speak with your financial advisor to direct funds from your IRA to the Curtiss Museum. You can pay your membership annual gift this way, make gifts in honor of friends and family, or support your favorite program at the museum. The great thing about using your IRA funds is that you do not recognize the income and that can have a positive effect on your tax bill come January 2020. As with all potentially taxed advantaged gifts individual circumstances will affect the benefits and outcome for you. Always consult with your attorney and financial/tax advisor to learn specifics related to your situation.

3. Making a Gift in your Will
   Naming the Glenn H, Curtiss Museum as a beneficiary of your will or trust is easy! You can add the Museum to your will or trust with this simple phrase “I give the sum of ______dollars ($__________) or _______percent of my estate to the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum, a nonprofit corporation for general purpose and use.”*

* This is suggested language; always consult with your attorney on specifics of your estate plan.

To discuss the details of making a gift to the Museum contact:
Amy Gush, Relationship Officer, at 607-569-2160 or email her at community@curtissmuseum.org