

excellent, accurate memory and vitality to live well into her 90's, have made it possible to record history which would otherwise have been partly lost.

The people of Keota, too, have been uniformly helpful. They have opened their doors and given their information freely, solely in the interest of helping preserve their town's history for all the people of Iowa to enjoy.

Iowa's 1928 Plane Wedding

In May, 1927, a slender young flier named Charles Augustus Lindbergh electrified the world with a non-stop flight from New York to Paris, turning people's eyes skyward and giving aviation a tremendous boost in popularity. There followed other long-distance flights, endurance flights, and also flights which might best be classed as stunts, among them weddings performed in the air.

One such, billed as the first "plane wedding" in Iowa and "the only such marriage performed in the presence of an entire bridal party," was performed August 27, 1928, while the plane circled over the grandstand at the Iowa State Fair. On the ground, Mendelssohn's wedding march was played by Creatore and his grandstand band, providing appropriate nuptial music. The bride was Thressa Brown of Grinnell, the groom, Myron Millhollin of Newton, the officiating minister, Rev. Frank W. Mutchler, pastor of the Union Park Church of Christ in Des Moines. A Ford monoplane referred to as the Wamblee-Ohanko was selected for the occasion "because of its large passenger capacity . . . fifteen persons."

The wedding day's schedule was this: First, a banquet at the Administration Building, given by the State Fair Board. The bridal party then proceeded to the grandstand and was

introduced to the crowd; they then returned to their private cars and proceeded to the Des Moines municipal airport where the plane was waiting "on the hill," and took off at 1:30 p.m. In those years the airport was near Altoona, a fairly short drive from the fair grounds, rather than at the present location in the southwest part of Des Moines. The wedding was scheduled for 1:45 p.m. but apparently took place about 2:00 p.m., after which the wedding party returned to the grandstand for further festivities.

The whole story was told the next day in the Des Moines Tribune-Capital by reporter Betty Gay, who had been one of the persons on the plane. The following is her account as it appeared in the newspaper:

"I now pronounce you man and wife"

Above the roar of the three motors of the giant tri-motored Ford plane, Wamblee Ohanko, as it swooped in front of the grandstand at the state fair, the Rev. Frank W. Mutchler pronounced these words which made Myron Millhollin and Miss Thressa Brown, man and wife.

The ceremony, which took place about 2 p.m. Monday, is the first plane wedding attended by a full bridal party. Fourteen persons were in the cabin of the plane, which is owned by the Rapid Air Line, Inc., and piloted by Clyde W. Ice.

The afternoon was ideal for the event. After a luncheon at the administration building given by the state fair board, the party drove in two cars before the grandstand. As they were introduced through the amplifiers, the bride, bridegroom, best man, matron of honor, the Rev. Mr. Mutchler and the parents of the couple arose and received applause from the thousands gathered for the event.

The lead automobile, an eight seated McFarlan owned by F. M. Barnes of Chicago, then started for the municipal airport, conveying the bride, bridegroom, best man, matron of honor, the Rev. Mr. Mutchler and a *Tribune-Capital* reporter.

The second car, driven by Julius Kunz of Wesley, followed. "I'm not a bit afraid," said Miss Brown, as she protected her shower bouquet of Iowa flowers [rubrum lilies, gladiolus, and daisies] from the breeze. She had been "up" before.

"I wish we'd get going," replied the bridegroom nervously in the approved bridegroom manner. It was to be Mr. Millhollin's first adventure in the air.

Miss Brown wore a pink crepe dress with an ensemble coat to match, decorated with printed roses and six inches of silk fringe. She wore a smart white sport hat and pearl choker beads.

Mrs. Lower, matron of honor, wore a yellow and white sport dress, with checkered blouse, a stitched yellow silk sport hat, choker pearls and a mink neckpiece.

For many of the party that climbed into the big plane, this was their first airplane ride. As the plane taxied to the end of the field on oversized tires, shooting up the grass like a lawn mower from the muddy ground, all eyes were turned toward the windows.

At the edge of the field, Pilot Ice "stepped on 'er," and, with an increase in the clatter of the heavy motors, the Wamblee Ohanko rose from the ground, bumped down again, and rose.

The breeze which tore at the cornfields below did not phase the big cabin plane, although there were occasional shrieks from the members of the party as the plane ducked into air pockets.

The plane seemed hardly to move at all, although the speedometer showed us that we were eating up space at the rate of 100 or more miles an hour. Horses and cows were as tiny carved things. Sink holes filled with water dotted the cornfields.

In no time we were zooming down in front of the grandstand, turning sharply on our side, and returning again. On this second trip, the wedding ceremony was performed in the front of the cabin, the best man and matron of honor attending.

Over the chugging of the motors we could hear only an occasional word of the ceremony. But it was soon over, and everybody was climbing over to kiss the bride—especially the bridegroom.

Again we circled past the grandstand, and thence for a

tour over the city while our tiny shadow followed us over the still tinier buildings. The Equitable building was dwarfed to nothing.

It didn't seem as if we had been up twenty minutes and had witnessed a wedding ceremony, as we arrived at the airport again, swallowing hard as we dropped down from our 1,500 foot altitude.

Outside the plane, the Rev. Mr. Mutchler, widely known in Des Moines as the "marryin' parson," shook hands with the newlyweds.

"I hope she always cooks your potatoes just right," he told the groom, "and you always buy her dresses and hats and clothes when she wants them."

Back in the automobile again the Rev. Mr. Mutchler called back to Pilot Ice, "Are you married?"

"Nope," returned Mr. Ice.

"Well, if you ever want to be," replied the parson, "come to me and it won't cost you a cent!"

As the car sped back to the fair grounds Mr. and Mrs. Millhollin opened an envelope given them just after the ceremony by Julius Kunz, as representative of the fair board. It contained \$50 and a congratulatory letter.

After an argument about who the money belonged to, the Millhollins decided to put it in a fund to buy furniture for their apartment in Newton, where Mr. Millhollin is connected with the Rock Island railroad, and where the couple will make their home.

At the fair grounds the party proceeded to the grandstand to review the races. They have a special box reserved for tonight, also.

Among those who witnessed the unique wedding were: Mr. and Mrs. Everett Brown, the bride's parents; Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Millhollin, parents of the bridegroom; Mr. and Mrs. O. E. Lower, best man and matron of honor; Miss Myrtle Mutchler, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Mutchler; Mr. Mutchler, a *Tribune-Capital* photographer and reporter.

Mr. and Mrs. Millhollin will leave Des Moines today, returning to Newton and taking their honeymoon late in

September at the time they had originally planned their wedding.

Sixty thousand persons saw them married, and wished them happiness.



MR. AND MRS. MYRON MILLHOLLIN OF NEWTON, IOWA, MARRIED IN IOWA'S FIRST AIRPLANE WEDDING AUGUST 27, 1928, AT THE IOWA STATE FAIR.

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