

AUGUST 23, 1929

# Our City

(AT THE AIR DERBY)

AT FORT WORTH Thursday, there was a light blue, cloudless sky and a stiff, albeit rather hot, breeze swept the plains to greet the lady entrants in the continental air derby.

Also some thousands of people (20,000, the papers said) were at the Fort Worth landing field to greet them.

It is a great landing field that those progressive and enterprising people of Fort Worth have provided. Houston, Dallas and San Antonio each has its individuality as a city. But Fort Worth comes mighty near to being Texas itself.

We must watch that Fort Worth. Any city in Texas will have to hustle to keep abreast of the times with it.

But back to the derby. The sun was far down in the Western sky, and from that Western sky, at 5:30, should come the lady racers of the air. At 5:32, a little dark speck was seen against the bright blue of the sky. Just enough west of the glistening sun to be seen at all. It was a little dark green monoplane, piloted by Louise Thaden, first to arrive.

With pretty sweeps and curves she circled the flying field and came gracefully across the line.

Then two were seen, and then another and another. In little more than 30 minutes every one of the 15 had crossed the line.

Three of the planes are "closed cars." The pilots of each of these cars opened the door and stepped out, looking reasonably spick and span.

Not so with the pilots of the open cars. Wind and sun tanned, greasy and begrimed, they looked like they had been through a lot of wear and tear.

Plainly they were youths, but whether girl youths or boy youths it would have been impossible to tell from their appearance.

Each had her hair cropped as closely as a boy's. They were clad in overalls and their helmets completed the picture.

Ruth Elder was just about to land when a close competitor gracefully swept the earth just beneath her, requiring Ruth to circle the field again.

Thursday evening at his country home, Amon Carter, Texas' host and entertainer extraordinary, gave a dinner in honor of the flyers.

Planes attending the derby flyers bring clothes and other things for the racing pilots. For these, they had to wait and so they were somewhat late at the party. After a long day over the Western plains, they were brave girls to come to the party at all.

Ruth Elder, as the most of you know, is a very pretty girl, and she has a graceful and gracious manner. Mrs. Keith Miller of Australia is rather comely to look upon. The other contestants are the plucky, adventurous girls.

You could hardly have ever seen a more angular person than Amelia Earhart. Yet, in a general way, she is strikingly similar, in physical type, to Lindbergh. She is a capable girl, though taking herself a good bit too seriously.

Dawn Walker, in manner and features, is typical of the West Texas plains from which she came. For all her 90 pounds, you have the feeling that she could ride a bucking broncho—or guide a little monoplane from Santa Monica all the way to Cleveland—whichever she chose.

"My mother and father paid \$3100 for my airplane," said one of the girl pilots, "and I just must see that I get it safely across." "No, my dear," said Our City, "your mother and father are paying a lot more than that \$3100. Their hearts are taking a pretty long, adventurous journey across this big continent with you."

Another was asked if the flyers were following the railroad lines. "This is a race," she said, "and the winner of it should be the one who steers the shortest distance by the compass all the time. But," she said, "I am thinking first of all of getting there and so, frankly, I mainly follow the railroad lines."

"I missed a mountain only by inches," said another, "then I didn't feel like flying any more, so I landed in a field, stayed all night at a farmhouse and took an early start next morning."

There is no denying the tragic death of Marvel Crosson has had its effect upon every one of them. Not one of them but asked anxiously if every one had checked in safely at Fort Worth Thursday night.

At the Carter dinner, a beautiful tribute was paid to Marvel Crosson and every one of the brave remaining girls was plainly and deeply affected.

Two overseas pilots were talking to the girls, and it was astonishing to see how plainly those fellows, who flew the very best planes of 10 years ago, were just pioneering, primitive fliers of a day gone by.

As the racing planes were coming in, a National Air Transport plane landed, and the husky pilot stepped out in the most business-like way, taking from his plane bag after bag of Uncle Sam's mail. A Texas Air Transport Company plane came in, on its regular schedule, bringing passengers.

Flying is further advanced to an every-day reality today than automobiles were less than 25 years ago.

Henry Ford thinks that they must find a way to fly them slower, and especially to land them slower, before they will come into very general use.

But those are only two little doubts. Less than 25 years ago, most any wise fellow could give you a whole hat full of doubts about the automobile—a daily necessity for all of us now.

If we are going to keep abreast with the times, we must be air-minded. It is one of our very big problems. It would be unlike Houston not to be in the very forefront of it.