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Article Summary: *The McCook Daily Gazette* was the first newspaper to deliver by air on a regular basis. Harry D Strunk, publisher of the *Gazette*, adopted air delivery to increase recognition of the purchasing power of farm families, poor road conditions, rising postal rates, and the public's fascination with aviation.

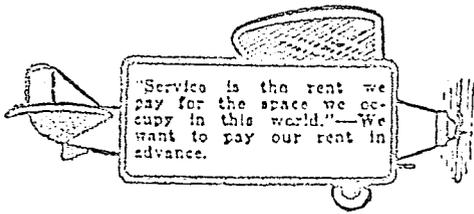
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# THE McCOOK

Volume VI—Number

United Press Leased Wire

McCOOK, NEBRASKA, FRI

## SKYWAYS CONVERGE

### MANY PLANES HERE TO ATTEND TWO-DAY FETE

*Squadrons of Planes On New American Legion Field Joined By First Nebraska Air Tour Caravan To Take Part In McCook's Air Show*

**IDEAL DAY FOR FLYING**  
**Crowd from Over Big Area Will Witness Dedication And Inaugural Events**

Green touting, welcomed at Auburn, Falls City, North Platte and other points on their itinerary, the members of the Omaha All-Nebraska air tour, in 27 airplanes, were to be given a most stirring reception at 1:30 p. m. Friday when their arcosy of the skies landed at the McCook American Legion airport to take part in the inauguration of The Gazette's air delivery service and the dedication of the legion airport, which were to be features of the Friday afternoon program of the big two-day aeronautical carnival sponsored by The Gazette.

The overhanging clouds of Friday morning had scattered afternoon and the day was regarded as almost perfect for the type of program that was to be presented.

The Omaha flight was to be heralded by the arrival of the plane bearing Major H. J. Hoagland, flight commander, and his aides. Shortly after Major Hoagland landed a

**Big Crowd Gathers**  
 By noon today it appeared definitely that the Omaha fleet was to see the largest crowd of its great flight when it arrived in McCook. Persons were gathered only at the airport

**Wounds Wife; Kills Self**  
 Keokuk, Ia., Sept. 13.—(U.P.)—Believed by police to have been jealous because of the presence of his wife's first husband, David Kay, 43, shot and seriously wounded his wife and then killed himself yesterday. Mrs. Kay was shot in the thigh. The first husband, named Young, lived in the rear of the Kay home and was the father of Mrs. Kay's twelve children.

**SAYS GIRL BANDIT IS INSANE PERSON**

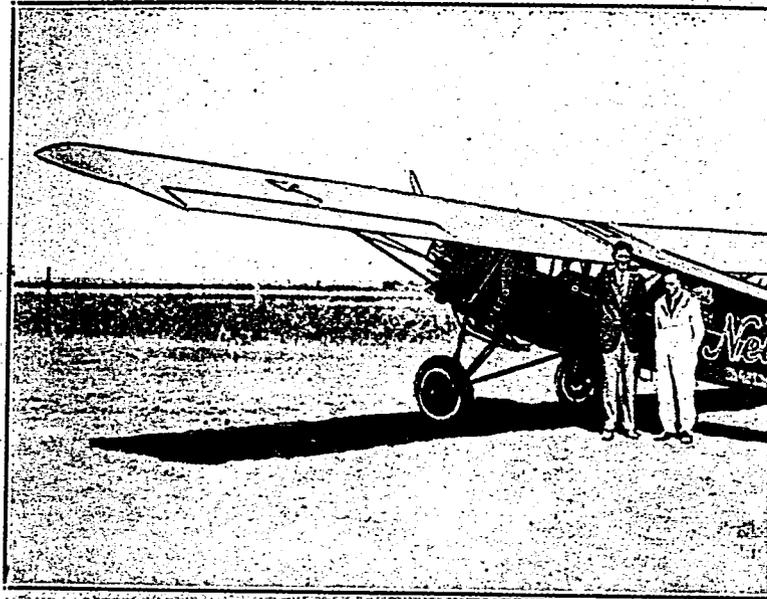
**Husband of Texas Girl Who Robbed Bank Is Calmly Trying To Save Her**

New Braunfels, Tex., Sept. 13.—(U.P.)—A young attorney today called a succession of witnesses before a jury of 12 German farmers in a crowded little courtroom here and with a calm which sealed his personal feelings, sought to prove his wife insane.

The wife, Mrs. Rebecca Bradley Rogers, sat motionless and unresponsive through spectacular spots on the wall from the ceiling has hardly taken her eyes from the four days of her charge of bank robbery. She appeared the victim of preoccupation in which there was no room for emotion.

Otis Rogers had met "Becky" on the shaded campus of the Texas University a little more than three years ago. The two were married secretly. Hardly had he left the campus when he was called to her defense. That defense today was the claim that the girl whose companionship was woven

### Inaugurates New Newspaper



Above is pictured The Newsboy, The Daily Gazette's new Curtis with the now famous Challenger motor, which was formally placed at the American Legion airport. With Steve Tuttle at its controls this edition of the Gazette over the longest newspaper run

### Saturday Set For Date Of Funeral Of a Flyer

Lincoln, Sept. 13.—(U.P.)—Funeral services for Frank Cropsy, Lincoln aviator, killed when his plane crashed during a stunting exhibition at Columbus Wednesday, will be held here Saturday afternoon.

Cropsy, who was touring with the Nebraska air trippers, was killed instantly when the wings of his ship collapsed as he was bringing his plane out of a power dive. The plane fell 1,000 feet.

### WIDER PROBE OF LOBBY DEMANDED

**Shearer Case Puzzles Men Of Senate As To What Else Has Gone On**

### GOVERNOR TALKS ON ADVANCEMENT SHOWN BY STATE

**Tells Of Progress Shown Since Early Days Of Transportation**

### URGES FLOOD CONTROL

Governor Weaver in speaking at the dedication of the American Legion airport and the inaugural of daily delivery by air of newspapers by the McCook Daily Gazette before the crowd which packed the stands of the fair grounds Friday afternoon, discussed the general progress of Nebraska from territorial days to the present time. He further reviewed the history of transport

# NEWS ON M'COOK PORT

## Service



biplane monoplane, powered in service Friday with ceremony. The ship took the air to deliver any newsboy ever carried.

## Boy "Steel Pigeon" Has

### Drawn Fire From Judge

Memphis, Tenn., Sept. 13.—(AP)—Employment of an 18-year-old school boy by Federal prohibition agents.

## BY LIZ WATTS

He made the comment from Federal judge Harry B. Anderson that "in a disgrace, a crime, and ought to be stopped."

Hedley Stranks, the youth testified during trial of two alleged prohibition violators, that all summer long he had bought whiskey a "prohibition."

## ABANDON HOPE OF FINDING LOST SHIP

## to Trace Remains of Boat or Crew For Which Lake Michigan Hunt Waged

## NEWSBOY CARRIES PAPERS FOR TEST

Gazette Plane Carries Its First News Cargo To 39 Towns

## THE FLYING ATTAINS GREAT SPEED

from minds of members of The Daily Gazette mechanical staff. The plane, carrying 39 bundles of newspapers, was piloted by Steve Tuck, a member of the American Legion air field a bare four hours after it took off with its first maximum load of newspapers, which were distributed by the plane in a preliminary test of the route of its first actual flight.

On September 13, 1929, bundles of newspapers literally fell out of the sky over thirty-three towns in southwestern Nebraska and northwestern Kansas.

As is the intention when the route is finally and permanently established, The Gazette, the delivery last night was made in two flights. The first was made as far as Olinas, returning by way of Beaver City, Wilsonville, Danbury and the St. Louis branch of the Burlington. The second flight was made from Olinas to Trenton, south to Atwood, Kan., and west to Cedar Bluffs, Kan.

The first flight was completed with the second load of papers and fuel in exactly one hour and 45 minutes. It took two hours and 18 minutes after taking off with the second load the plane appeared out of the south in the last gathering dusk. The total mileage covered on the two legs of the journey is estimated as over 100 miles.

The arrival of the newspaper on that mid-September day eclipsed the news and information in it.

Hayden testified he then sought

## HOPES SEEN THAT NAVY REDUCTIONS COME SOON

Announcement Of Premier MacDonald's Intended Visit To America Forecasts One Of First Mighty Steps To Be Struck Against War

## NEWSBOY TAKES TO THE AIR

Winnipeg, Man., Sept. 13.—(AP)—This from Haynes, but otherwise well known pilot, who has been flying for many days when the plane was taken on by motor trouble in the Wild Knap Lake district, was found Thursday by a fellow flier, Victor Partridge. News is the pilot of an exploration company.

## THAYER CONVICTED OF KIDNAPING

One Of Principals in Fight Over Beer Will Pay His Penalty For Offense

Hayden testified he then sought

Hayden testified he then sought

Hayden testified he then sought

## FACT SEEMS ASSURED

Apparently Leading Up To Big Agreement

By Lyle C. Wilson  
Washington, Sept. 13.—(AP)—Civilization flared its muscles in London and Washington today for the first of a series of mighty blows against war.

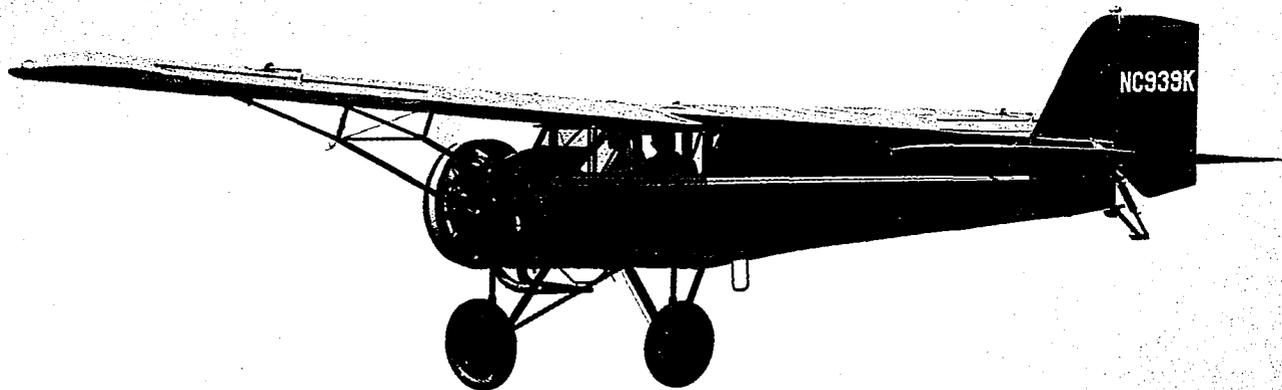
Announcement of Premier MacDonald's intention to arrive here October 4, plus expressions of optimism at the state department combined today to make Anglo-American agreement upon a general reduction appear assured.

If agreement is within grasping distance and can be won, events of tremendous international significance are expected to flow from the Hoover-MacDonald negotiations.

The basis upon which MacDonald and President Hoover are hopeful of agreement was not clear today. Thirty-six hour zero President Hoover's ideal of naval disarmament seemed to be fading before British insistence upon cruiser tonnage which would have more curtailment of the American building program almost impossible. Only the secondary objection of limitation was clearly available.

After hours of conferring, instructions were sent Ambassador Dawes and a few hours later the British foreign office informally announced MacDonald would sail for the United States September 28th.

The White House withheld comment upon MacDonald's announcement pending arrival of official word from him but the announcement



The *Gazette's* Curtis Robin cabin monoplane, christened *The Newsboy*, became a familiar sight in southwestern Nebraska and northwestern Kansas. The Curtis Robin above, though not *The Newsboy*, is a similar model and vintage. Museum of Flight, Seattle

ORMALLY SUBSCRIBERS IN TOWNS AS FAR AWAY as Benkelman, Nebraska, fifty-four miles west of McCook, or Orleans, Nebraska, seventy-three miles east, or Atwood, Kansas, fifty miles south, would have received their daily papers in the mail several days after they were printed. However, on this day, and for the next ten months, subscribers stepped out on their porches to retrieve their *Gazettes* on the same day they came off the press.<sup>1</sup>

What made the McCook newspaper's delivery so fast on that Friday the thirteenth was *The Newsboy*, a Curtis-Robin cabin monoplane that

had been christened just minutes before departure on its inaugural delivery flight. As the plane roared into the air before a crowd estimated at five to six thousand, McCook's superintendent of schools

asserted, "There goes the first newspaper delivery flight known to the American press world!"<sup>2</sup>

The superintendent's statement, while enthusiastic, was not entirely accurate. Air distribution of newspapers had been tried before. *The New York Times* had flown newspapers to Havana for delegates of the Pan American Conference in January 1928 and to President Hoover and members of his cabinet in Washington in May 1928. *The Los Angeles Times* delivered its newspaper to San Francisco by air in April 1928. In 1929, three New York newspapers, the *Times*, the *World* and the

*Evening Journal*, as well as *The Chicago Daily News* and *The Boston Transcript*, used air-delivery service. A League of Nations conference in November 1929 endorsed a plan for the governments of Europe to encourage international delivery of newspapers by airplane. Nevertheless, *The McCook Daily Gazette* was the first newspaper to deliver by air on a regular basis.<sup>3</sup>

Why did Harry D. Strunk, publisher of the *Gazette*, risk using this relatively new technology—the airplane—on a full-time basis for newspaper delivery? How did this innovation affect the *Gazette*, whose effort was later described by journalism historian Frank Luther Mott as "pioneering"? Strunk's reasons for adopting air delivery included an increased recognition of the purchasing power of farm families, poor road conditions, rising postal rates, and the public's fascination with aviation.<sup>4</sup>

Strunk, thirty-seven years old and in his nineteenth year as publisher of *The McCook Daily Gazette*, had arranged an extravagant inauguration for his new delivery service to match his claim of being the first to offer regular air delivery. McCook swelled with visitors who came to witness the christening of *The Newsboy*, attend the dedication of the new American Legion Airport, view an air show, hear speeches, including one by the governor of Nebraska, and to inspect several aircraft close up.<sup>5</sup>

Strunk also capitalized on the All-Nebraska Good-Will Air Tour, a week-long tour of twenty-

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## THERE GOES THE FIRST NEWSPAPER DELIVERY FLIGHT KNOWN TO THE AMERICAN PRESS WORLD!

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seven aircraft organized by Omaha businessmen to promote their city. On the morning of September 13, 1929, when the twenty-seven air-tour pilots touched down at the new McCook airport, eight other airplanes, including two sent by the Army from Fort Riley, Kansas, were already on the ground.

The *Gazette's* coverage of the event dominated the front pages on September 12, 13, 14, and 16. Reporters from five other newspapers and cameramen from two newsreel companies also covered it.<sup>6</sup>

The air-delivery inauguration celebration was unparalleled in southwestern Nebraska, where wheat fields stretched for miles along the plateaus, and cattle grazed in the rugged terrain where the land drops off to the Republican River. The only events that even came close were the occasional circus and the annual county fair.<sup>7</sup>

But the public spectacle does not explain why a publisher with two decades of newspaper experience would gamble on airborne delivery to towns with populations ranging from 187 (Beverly, Nebraska) to a high of only 1,166 (Atwood, Kansas). However, Strunk's willingness to risk the resources of his newspaper to provide it to readers outside of his immediate trade area showed his initiative and enterprise. "He was a gutsy guy, aggressive and forward thinking," his son, Allen, recalled.<sup>8</sup>

A Nebraska native, Strunk quit school in 1906 at age fourteen to become a printer's devil on his hometown newspaper, *The Pawnee City Republican*, earning two dollars a week. By 1909, the seventeen-year-old Strunk had become shop foreman at *The Norton (Kansas) Daily Telegram* and was responsible for ten typesetters.<sup>9</sup>

Spotting a *McCook Tribune* advertisement seeking a printer, he moved the fifty-five miles north to McCook and worked at the *Tribune* for nine months. Then, with a fellow printer, Strunk opened a job-printing shop. Strunk's son recalled that the partners did not have enough money even to pay for ink when they started the venture.<sup>10</sup>

In 1911, six months after opening the job shop, the two printers mortgaged their equipment and used all

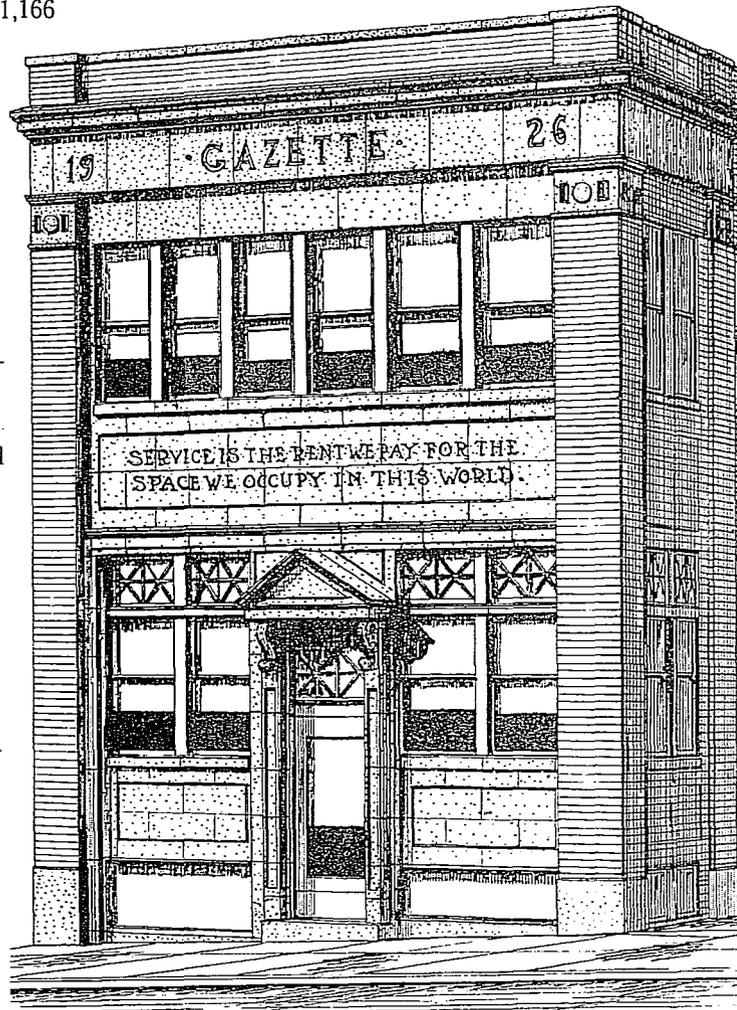
their savings to open their own newspaper, the semi-weekly *Red Willow County Gazette*. From the second day of publication, Strunk, at age nineteen, shouldered the publisher's responsibilities alone—his partner committed suicide.<sup>11</sup>

On July 1, 1924, Strunk gave McCook, population 6,688, the distinction of being the smallest city in the state to have a daily newspaper. It was a bold move considering the small number of advertisers in the area, said Allen Strunk. Nevertheless, two years later Strunk moved the *Gazette's* offices, presses, and Linotype machine to a new building on Main Street. The Linotype, acquired in 1914, was first between Hastings, Nebraska, and Denver. Strunk's next innovation was the air-delivery service, which continued until July 1930, when the airplane was damaged in a windstorm—ten months in all.<sup>12</sup>

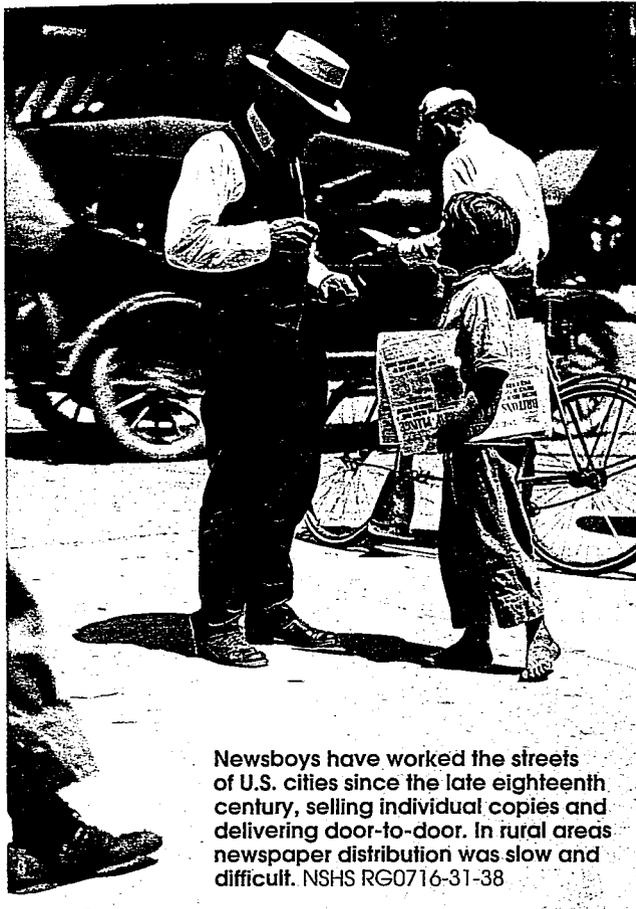
Strunk began promoting air delivery in August 1929 and in a story on August 19 claiming to be the first newspaper in the world to regularly deliver newspapers by airplane. A week earlier the news-



Strunk arrived in McCook in 1909 to work for the *McCook Tribune*. He and a partner soon opened a job printing shop, and six months later launched the semi-weekly *Red Willow County Gazette*. On the second day of publication, with the suicide of his partner, nineteen-year-old Harry Strunk became sole publisher. *McCook Gazette*, June 15, 1932



The *Gazette* became a daily in 1924, and in 1926 moved to a new building on Main Street that featured the newspaper's motto, "Service is the rent we pay for the space we occupy in this world." *McCook Gazette*, June 15, 1932



Newsboys have worked the streets of U.S. cities since the late eighteenth century, selling individual copies and delivering door-to-door. In rural areas newspaper distribution was slow and difficult. NSHS RG0716-31-38

paper touted its own pilot training school. *The Newsboy's* pilot would teach lessons in the mornings and fly the delivery flights in the afternoons.<sup>13</sup>

On September 12, the day before air delivery began, Strunk introduced a new nameplate for the *Gazette*. It featured aviator's wings behind the name and small airplanes in the "ears." Boxes over the ears held the newspaper's motto and edition. Strunk promised a ride in *The Newsboy* to every two-year subscriber.<sup>14</sup>

Following a test run to the most distant towns in his circulation area, Strunk observed:

The airplane will be used to cover such points as are now poorest served by other means of transportation. If adequate service can be maintained otherwise over any part of the territory later, that method will then be use [sic] and the airplane route extended to other points not now being served.<sup>15</sup>

Newspaper delivery boys, or newsboys, have worked on the streets of U.S. cities since the 1760s, when the *New York Mercury* hired a boy to relieve the apprentice who had been delivering papers. "Going door to door, [newsboys] joined watchmen, lamplighters and other public servants in town."<sup>16</sup>

Benjamin Day instituted the London Plan of

Circulation that established a mercantile relationship between the newspaper and the carrier. Day hired young people to either sell newspapers on street corners or establish home delivery routes. Later, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* adapted the London Plan to a home delivery system. Youth carriers received their newspapers earlier than dealers and street-corner newsboys and they delivered newspapers to homes an hour before street sales started. Under this system, labeled the Philadelphia Plan, the *Ledger* attained 80 percent home delivery by 1870. While this plan cost more in wages and record keeping, it was more responsive to advertisers and subscribers. Publishers using the London Plan had to guess at circulation figures, and their advertisers had to accept the guesses on trust, but the *Ledger's* publisher could show advertisers actual files of subscriber names.

Truck delivery of newspapers began during World War I as publishers, pressured by great changes in the industry, began to consider broadening their circulation zones. Between 1914 and 1930, 1,495 dailies began, and 1,753 merged, died, or switched from daily to weekly publication. In 1914, there were more than 2,200 daily newspapers in the United States, but by 1930, the number had fallen to 1,942. Higher circulation and lower costs were keys to survival in this volatile time, and publishers sought subscribers in nearby towns within range of delivery trucks.

The postal service also brought newspapers to rural readers, and before increasing numbers of automobiles prompted more road building, the mail was the only viable means to deliver newspapers outside the range of carrier foot routes. However, the mail had several disadvantages, including rising rates, slow or unreliable delivery, and no Sunday delivery.<sup>17</sup>

"Everybody ought to be rich," declared the chairman of the Democratic National Committee in a *Ladies' Home Journal* article, characterizing the ebullient mood of the 1920s when publishers were looking for new ways to distribute newspapers. Consumers were buying on credit, and investors bought stocks on margin. Predictions of financial disaster were more to be feared than Bolshevism. President Herbert Hoover predicted the possibility of eliminating poverty in the near future, and his secretary of the treasury, Andrew Mellon, concurred with economists who said that the nation had achieved a "permanent plateau of prosperity."<sup>18</sup>

Consumers, ready to forget the hardships of World War I and "return to normalcy," began

Liz Watts is associate professor and graduate coordinator in the School of Mass Communications at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. A similar article titled "The Flying Newsboy: A Small Daily Attempts Air Delivery," was first published in *Journalism History* Vol. 28:4 (Winter 2003).

buying radios, automobiles, and other consumer goods on the time-payment plan. These purchases spurred an increase in newspaper advertising from about \$275 million in 1915 to \$800 million in 1929. *Editor and Publisher* magazine explained the time-payment phenomenon as "one of the most prolific inspirers of rather than deterrents to advertising."<sup>19</sup>

The era's prosperity also touched Nebraska. In 1930 almost 44 percent of the population of the United States was rural. Nebraska's population was nearly 65 percent rural, but Nebraskans, too, enjoyed improvements in their housing and transportation. For example, by 1930, 50 percent of the farm homes in southwestern Nebraska and northwestern Kansas had running water, and 80 percent had telephones. Slightly more than 43 percent of the families in the west north-central states had radios.

Some also were using automobiles and trucks. There were more than 25 million autos and trucks in the United States during the 1920s, and in 1924 about 25 percent were owned by farmers. Having an auto or truck made rural life more "up-to-date."<sup>20</sup>

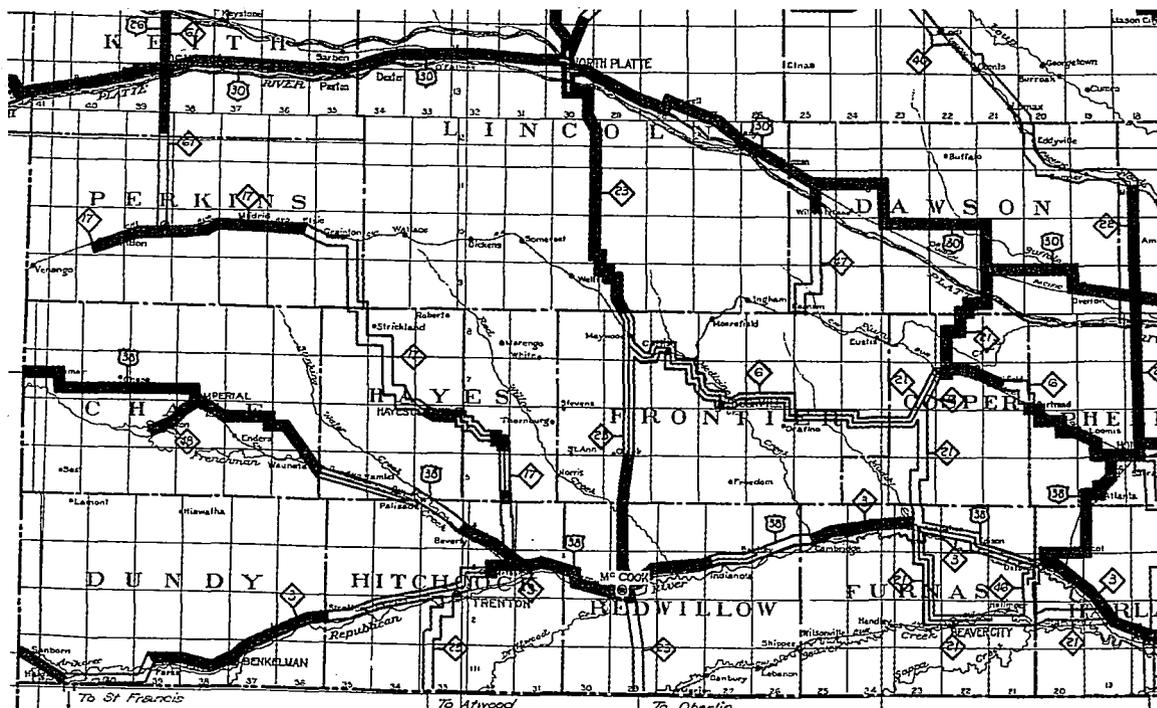
Furthermore, Nebraska's literacy rate during the 1920s was higher than average, and Nebraskans were apparently heavy consumers of reading material. Nebraska's illiteracy rate of 1.4 percent was well below the 6 percent rate of the entire United States. By 1930, the national and state rates had fallen to 4.3 percent and 1.2 percent respectively.<sup>21</sup>

In a 1922 study of fifteen hundred Nebraska farm homes, J. O. Rankin found that most received what Rankin labeled a "country weekly" or a daily newspaper published in Omaha, Lincoln, or Kansas City. One in eight homes received two dailies, and three out of four received at least one newspaper.<sup>22</sup>

Despite improved living conditions, however, shopping for rural Americans was inconvenient and deficient. In 1929 sociologist E. L. Kirkpatrick called for "a pronounced improvement in the purchasing opportunities" for rural dwellers and farmers who were victims of "an ineffective, non-modern and antiquated system of procuring goods, facilities and services in exchange for

Automobiles and trucks proliferated faster than roads could be improved, making distribution of newspapers to outlying towns and rural readers difficult. Although mail delivery was an option, deliveries arrived days after the date of publication, and no delivery was available on Sunday.  
NSHS RG3021-9-2





A 1928 Nebraska highway map suggests the state of roads in southwestern Nebraska at the time Strunk was contemplating aerial delivery of the *Gazette*. Heavy dark lines indicate improved (gravel surface) roads. Many miles of roadway in the region lacked even that improvement.

incomes.” The alternatives for farm families were going without, accepting inferior goods, or leaving the farm for the city where attaining the standard of living they wanted was more possible. But as autos and trucks became more common during the 1920s, farm families could acquire better goods and avail themselves of more entertainment opportunities.<sup>23</sup>

Two studies of the buying habits of farm families conducted during the 1920s showed that 40 to 50 percent of the respondents were willing to travel to large trading centers to purchase groceries, clothing, and furniture. The advantages of shopping in a larger town rather than a nearer village were access to a wider variety and better quality of goods.<sup>24</sup>

While daily newspaper publishers in the trade centers of larger towns had the opportunity to sell advertising for the goods and services of a much larger retail and professional class, they faced the question of how to get their papers into the hands of readers. The mail was too slow, and the second-class rate structure too costly.

The trend of credit buying in a get-rich-quick atmosphere, coupled with the knowledge that rural families who liked to read newspapers were willing to travel to larger trade centers to make purchases, created an enticing opportunity for newspaper publishers, but new delivery method was needed, and Strunk selected a system that bypassed land transportation to expand his

circulation and advertising revenue.

Not long after Strunk had started working for newspapers, the Good Roads Movement and local boosters were promoting local road improvement, and shortly after 1900 automobiles were being seen on the streets of Nebraska towns. But when Strunk started his air delivery service, the major east-west road in southwestern Nebraska, U.S. Highway 38 (now U.S. 34 and 6), was still being improved. The *Gazette* reported that more than thirty-one miles of this road were waiting to be graveled, and bids to complete the work on portions of the highway west of McCook were not let until fall 1929.<sup>25</sup>

In 1914, the year Henry Ford introduced automobile assembly line, the total mileage of all rural roads in Nebraska was 810 miles. Between 1914 and 1921 the mileage increased by 6,284 miles; by 1926 it had increased by 7,436 miles. Hard-surfaced roads multiplied as well. From 1904 to 1914 more than a thousand miles were added; between 1921 and 1926 an additional 2,741 miles were improved.<sup>26</sup>

Improved roads helped farmers take advantage of market conditions for crops, decreased the cost of transporting farm produce to market, increased land values, and improved rural community life, the school systems, and medical and veterinary services. “Good roads facilitate an immediate and constant contact with the outside world which is of the deepest significance,” wrote sociologist Carl

Taylor. Some of the smaller social and business centers in isolated sections would be eliminated, he predicted in 1930, because farmers could travel to more distant buying centers. The country and town would be connected, making the country an integral part of the community.<sup>27</sup>

All rural dwellers had to be excited by better roads. Before World War I, roads in Nebraska were terrible. After snow and rain, motorists faced the prospect of sinking in mud, and farmers often made extra money by using their horses to pull autos and trucks from muddy entrapments.<sup>28</sup>

Good roads also improved rural mail delivery, bringing newspapers from other communities. By 1929, rural mail routes covered more than 1.3 million miles of road. In the same year, Rural Free Delivery handled 1.8 million pieces of second-class mail, most of it newspapers and other periodicals. In enumerating the social and economic effects of the RFD, Taylor said the service possibly provided "an immediate and continuous knowledge of world events, since through this service daily newspapers, the chief vehicle of such knowledge, are delivered to farm homes."<sup>29</sup>

The staff correspondent for the *Omaha Bee-News* who accompanied the All-Nebraska Good-Will Air Tour in September 1929 observed Nebraska's highways from the air. He described hard-packed gravel, sand and clay highways interspersed with side roads in poor condition. *Gazette* delivery truck drivers would have encountered problems off the main highways. Most roads outside McCook were dirt, and in 1925 there were no farms in Red Willow County on gravel, concrete, brick, or macadam roads. More than half the 1,135 farms in the county were on improved dirt roads. Of the ten counties in the *Gazette's* intended circulation area, only two had farms located on hard-surfaced roads.<sup>30</sup>

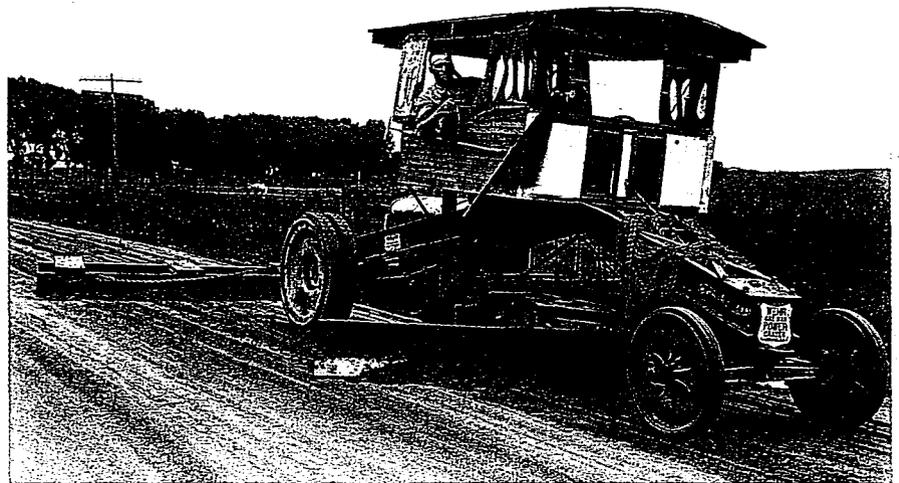
Nebraska highways developed as a farm-to-market system in which county commissioners designated "roads [to] serve the greatest number of local people without special reference to connection with transcontinental routes." Thus, roads that would permit farmers to bring crops or cattle to market more efficiently were to be developed and improved. Before the development of state highway systems, rural dwellers were expected to maintain these "farmer's roads" themselves.<sup>31</sup>

Floods and mud were perennial problems on dirt and gravel roads. A flood in July 1928, for example, pushed the Republican River, which paralleled two highways in southwestern Nebraska, out of its banks. Traffic south of McCook was

halted, and was "slightly delayed" on U.S. Highway 38, the *Gazette* reported. The cost of repairing the washed out sections was estimated at "quite a sum" because the shoulders had to be rebuilt and the accumulated silt removed.<sup>32</sup>

In 1917, the Nebraska Legislature accepted funding provided by the 1916 Federal Highway Act to build "all-weather" graveled roads and hard-surfaced highways. County commissioners designated which roads would be improved. A two-cent tax on gasoline was approved in 1925, and the estimated three million dollars of tax revenue was designated for road construction and maintenance. By 1927 the state highway system included six thousand miles of roads.<sup>37</sup>

Between 1917 and 1926, the state spent more



than fifteen million dollars in tax revenues and more than twelve million dollars in federal funds on roads. Road maintenance became a state responsibility in 1926, and by 1928 the Nebraska Good Roads Association advocated increasing highway funding to support the cost of road maintenance. In April 1928, the association noted:

The mileage of graveled highways is steadily increasing and with it is increasing the cost of maintenance. The experience the State has had is proof that before the present system of State highways is completely surfaced, the cost of maintenance alone will more than equal the entire amount of funds which are now available for both construction and maintenance.<sup>33</sup>

Maintenance costs in 1927 increased by 12 percent over 1926, and the association worried that there would be no state funding available for 1929 to match about one million dollars in federal

Most "farmer" roads were not graveled and became virtually impassable in bad weather. In the late 1920s the *Gazette* editorialized in support of farm road improvement, completion of highway surfacing projects, and proper road maintenance.  
NSHS RG3021-9-7

road-building support because maintenance would consume most available funds. The two-cent gasoline tax continued to yield more revenue each year, but the association argued that the increase was not keeping pace with the maintenance costs generated by more traffic. In 1929 Governor Arthur Weaver succeeded in doubling the gasoline tax after a battle with the legislature.<sup>34</sup>

Rural mail delivery also spurred road development in Nebraska. In 1920 there were 1,107 mail routes totaling 30,674 miles. From 1920 to 1925, the number of routes increased by an average of nine per year, and the total mileage increased an average of 616 miles per year. Nebraska closed the decade with the same number of rural mail routes it had in 1920, but with a 17.72 percent increase in mileage (36,215 miles). The number of routes decreased from 1925 to 1930 through route consolidation and extension.<sup>35</sup>

Road builders were hard pressed to keep pace with auto and truck manufacturing. In 1914, nearly a half a million trucks were produced in the United States. By 1929, almost a million trucks moved off the assembly lines. In 1914, 1.3 million motor vehicles were registered nationally. In 1921 the number was 10.5 million; in 1929, 26.5 million.<sup>36</sup>

Strunk knew the condition of the roads around McCook. In 1928 one of the objectives in his service pledge, a list of goals published on his editorial page, was better artery highways, and in 1929 he called for general improvement of farm-to-market roads, the completion of highway surfacing projects, proper road maintenance, and the establishment of bus lines.<sup>37</sup>

Because most of the roads in Strunk's anticipated ten-county delivery area were dirt or gravel, and because road maintenance varied with the governmental entity in charge, he knew that over-

the-road delivery of newspapers to distant towns probably could not be accomplished efficiently. Eighty percent of the truck trips in rural areas covered less than 20 miles, and the average trip was 8.1 miles. Even at the state-mandated speed limit of thirty-five miles per hour, there was not sufficient time to deliver newspapers to thirty-three towns in the entire intended circulation area of about 400 square miles.

In a test flight on September 12, 1929, however,

*The Newsboy* flew seventy-three miles to Orleans and back in an hour and forty-five minutes, and flew eighty-eight miles to Benkelman and Imperial and back in two hours and thirteen minutes.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, the newspaper could be delivered in less than four hours—less than half the time than it took for truck delivery—and readers received their newspapers on the same day they had been printed. The only problem that remained to be solved was finding room in the airplane for enough newspapers. One seat was removed, and a chute was cut into the floor to allow the newspapers, packed in canvas bags, to be dropped to the waiting carriers. Steve Tuttle, the first pilot, accompanied by his brother George, made the drops from 500 feet.<sup>39</sup>

Historian Frank Luther Mott writes that it was the increase in postal rates for newspapers brought on by the passage of the War Revenue Act of 1917 that forced newspapers to look for alternate delivery systems. The rate was to increase annually between 1918 and 1921 to a final graduated rate determined by the zone. The change increased the cost four to five times. Newspaper publishers protested the increase, but for ten years Congress ignored their protests. By 1928 some publishers had instituted a truck-carrier system to get papers to readers. Others resorted to shipping out-of-town copies as rail baggage at a cost of thirty cents per hundred pounds as opposed to one dollar and eighty cents per hundred pounds in the mail.

A representative of the American Newspaper Publishers Association told Congress in 1924 that second-class postage increase was the only class increased since 1912. With the rate increase mandated by the War Revenue Act of 1917 subscription rates also increased, and daily newspapers lost 20 to 40 percent of their mail circulation. Overall, the rate increase was responsible for removing nearly six hundred million pieces of second-class mail from the mails. The Post Office Department countered by declaring that the publishers' association request would result in an annual loss of more than 5.5 million dollars.<sup>40</sup>

In 1928, the publishers association sought to return the rates to the 1920 level, and a rate reduction of sorts did occur that year when the first- and second-zone rates for all were lowered from two cents to one-and-one-half cents. The chairman of the ANPA postal committee predicted that the annual four million dollars of business diverted to cheaper delivery methods would return to the Post Office if a bundle rate were instituted, but this did not happen.<sup>41</sup>



Strunk's plan was for Steve Tuttle, *The Newsboy* pilot, to make morning *Gazette* deliveries and give afternoon flying lessons. The lessons did not offset costs as he had hoped. McCook *Gazette*, June 15, 1932

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**THE NEWSPAPER COULD BE DELIVERED  
IN LESS THAN FOUR HOURS—  
LESS THAN HALF THE TIME THAN IT TOOK  
FOR TRUCK DELIVERY.**

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Strunk scheduled the kick-off of air delivery to coincide with the arrival in McCook of the All-Nebraska Good-Will Air Tour, a widely publicized twenty-seven-airplane tour promoting the city of Omaha. *Omaha World-Herald*, Sept. 10, 1929

By 1929 Nebraska had already played a role in aviation development. Lindbergh, the nation's most famous aviator, had taken his first flying lessons in 1922 in Lincoln from the Nebraska Aircraft Corporation. The Post Office, having instituted airmail service in 1918, extended the New York City-Omaha route to San Francisco by way of North Platte in 1920, carrying airmail on a six-days-per-week schedule (there were no Sunday flights).<sup>44</sup>

In February 1923, pilots at North Platte (sixty-eight miles north of McCook) had conducted experimental night flying for the Post Office. A specially designed course between the North Platte airfield and an emergency landing field twenty-five miles away tested rotating beacons, routing markers, terminal and emergency field lighting systems as well as aircraft equipment. Although several useful improvements to equipment developed from the tests, the biggest accomplishment was getting the air mail pilots to fly in darkness. By fall 1923 the world's first night airway—an 885-mile route from Chicago to Cheyenne—was ready.<sup>45</sup>

The effect of postal rate increases on the *Gazette* is not entirely clear. Until 1924 it was published semiweekly; then it became a daily. In 1928, the year before air delivery began, the annual subscription rate was \$5.20. In 1929, the rate dropped to \$4, only to increase in 1930 to \$7. The changes may have had more to do with the move to daily publication and the cost of the air-delivery service than with the postal rate increase. Nevertheless, the industry-wide concern over the second-class postal rate increase is likely to have been shared by Strunk and the *Gazette*.<sup>42</sup>

In 1928, about a year after Charles Lindbergh's trans-Atlantic flight, the McCook Chamber of Commerce considered a plan for an airport northwest of the city. In January 1929 the city purchased the land, but could not afford the \$1,000 cost of a new hangar. The McCook American Legion Post took on the hangar project in the summer. A \$750 grant from the chamber of commerce, supplemented by the proceeds from concessions sold at the September 13 air show, was enough to finance the building.<sup>43</sup>

The All-Nebraska Good-Will Air Tour showed that commercial aviation had a start in Nebraska. The twenty-seven planes from Omaha landed at new or near-new airports in seven Nebraska cities. Two Omaha newspapers sent reporters, and the tour was front-page news in both papers. The *Bee-News* reporter, writing in first-person, described his plane buzzing farm- and schoolyards to greet the spectators who turned out to greet the "air tourists" at each stop. The week-long tour generated hundreds of column inches of newspapers copy,



Although the *Gazette's* air delivery service was short lived, it typified the innovative thinking and business acumen of Harry Strunk, shown here at his typewriter in the new (1926) *Gazette* building. Courtesy McCook Gazette

and the *Gazette*, too, described the receptions, air stunts, safety features and accidents associated with the tour.<sup>46</sup>

Interest in aviation had emerged in McCook much earlier. In July 1913 a group of exhibition flyers obtained a disassembled biplane. It soon became the first airplane to take off—and crash—there. About ten years later, the Morton Brothers airplane factory opened in McCook. The city also claimed two World War I fighter pilots, one of whom later became the pilot for the country's first physician to make house calls by air.<sup>47</sup>

Not surprisingly, aviation coverage was common in the *Gazette*. The newspaper leased the United Press wire and subscribed to the Newspaper Enterprise Association features and pictures service, both of which carried aviation news. In August 1923, for example, a four-column photo on page two featured the airmail pilots nicknamed "Night Riders of the Year." It was accompanied by a cutline describing the North Platte night flight experiments. In September 1923 the newspaper printed a photo of the military's "newest and greatest" bomber surrounded by an admiring "crowd of civilian aviation enthusiasts who

outnumbered the Army folks."<sup>54</sup>

The *Gazette's* coverage of Lindbergh's solo trans-Atlantic flight began May 20, 1927, and continued through June. "Lindbergh Off on Paris Flight," covered seven columns on page one of the May 20 edition. A photo of Lindbergh with his mother completed the coverage.<sup>48</sup>

Two local stories competed with the Lindbergh coverage. One, covering a murder in Benkelman, fifty-four miles west, had a seven-column headline on May 23; the Lindbergh story filled two columns and was accompanied by a four-column photo of the pilot saying goodbye to friends at Roosevelt Field, Long Island. Coverage about the controversy over where to build the new Red Willow County Courthouse bumped the Lindbergh story May 25.<sup>49</sup>

Commenting on aviation for *The New York Times* in 1930, Charles Lindbergh compared aviation development during the previous decade to the development of the railroad industry in the ten years after the Civil War. "Today there are 25,000 miles of established airways over which 83,000 miles a day are being flown," he wrote, noting that in 1920 there had been no airways and the miles flown in a day's time were measured in

the hundreds. He credited the passage of the Air Mail Act of 1925 and the Air Commerce Act of 1926 as “paramount” influences in the development of the aviation industry. The evolution of airmail made commercial aviation possible, and the Air Commerce Act created air routes equipped with navigational aids. In 1929 passengers tripled from the previous year, Lindbergh noted, adding that air transportation was cheaper than rail fare and a Pullman fee.<sup>50</sup>

The commercial airplane manufacturing industry had begun in 1923. In five years, it had 34 percent rate of profit, the highest of any industry in the country. Output of aircraft—and pilot training—also increased sharply. More than four thousand aircraft were manufactured in the United States in 1929, up from slightly more than one thousand in 1927. By January 1, 1930, more than ten thousand pilots licenses had been issued, more than four thousand of them in 1929.<sup>51</sup>

Lindbergh changed public reaction to aviation. According to William M. Leary, an airmail historian, the fledgling industry soared after Lindbergh made his historic solo trans-Atlantic flight in May 1927.

[His] heroic journey provided a significant stimulus for aviation: investors poured millions of dollars into the developing industry, thousands of young men learned to fly, municipalities across the country built airports, and an “air-minded” public patronized the air mail.<sup>52</sup>

The development of the airline industry, McCook’s own history of aviation, and the city’s new airport inspired Strunk to consider acquiring an airplane. He had already established a reputation for taking risks and acquiring new technology. Using an airplane to expand his newspaper enhanced this reputation.

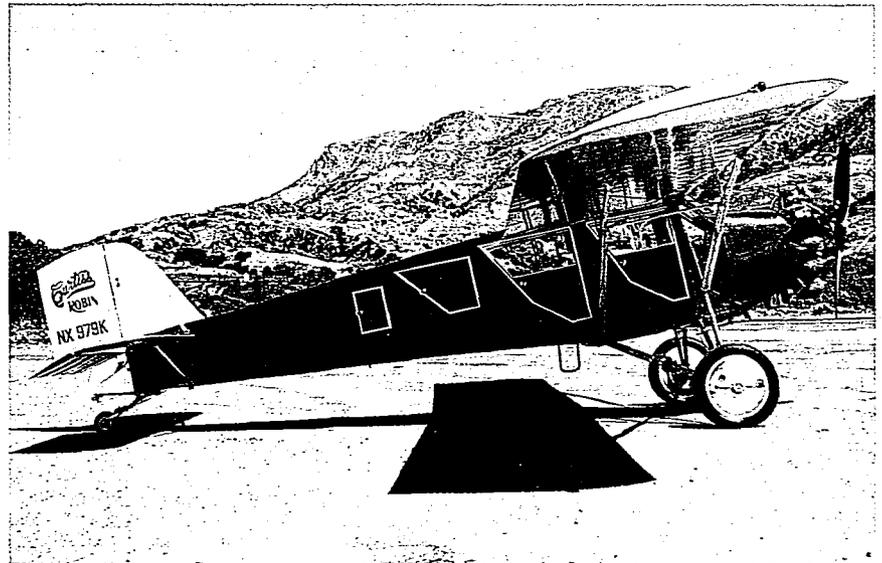
Strunk took time out from the 1929 air show to write an editorial for the Saturday, September 14, edition. He was elated by the state- and nationwide publicity generated for McCook by the events, but lamented that the name of the *Gazette* had been omitted from most of the coverage. However, he conceded that it did not matter. “Fortunately we have our own medium of informing the people of Southwest Nebraska and Northwest Kansas,” he wrote. The inauguration of the air delivery service backed his statement.<sup>53</sup>

How did the *Gazette* profit from the *Flying Newsboy*? In 1928 the *Gazette*’s circulation was 2,800. By 1929 it had increased by 360. By 1930, the *Gazette* had added 1,340 subscribers, for a total of 4,500. In 1931, after airplane delivery ended,

circulation dropped to 4,050, but even so could claim an increase of 45 percent over its 1928 numbers.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, the *Gazette*’s promotion of the air delivery service and the air show in September 1929 earned the good will of McCook merchants. The *Gazette* had carried the chamber of commerce advisory that merchants should stay open after the air show events to accommodate the thousands of people who had come. Later, it noted that the manager of the Montgomery Ward store reported having had eighteen to twenty thousand customers on the show’s second day.<sup>55</sup>

In July 1930 a windstorm damaged *The Newsboy* and forced Strunk to end the air delivery service. It had been an expensive experiment, and the flying lessons did not offset the cost as Strunk had hoped.<sup>56</sup> Bundles of newspapers were taken to the bus stop at the Keystone Hotel, about a block from the *Gazette* office, and carriers picked up



their papers at the bus stops in their towns. But only towns on the bus line continued to receive the newspaper for daily home delivery.<sup>57</sup>

A second *Newsboy* airplane, piloted by Ben Frank, began air delivery on January 20, 1950, and was in service for four years until the contract fee rose from seven to nine cents per mile. Thereafter pickup trucks, all nicknamed *Newsboy*, were used to take bundles of papers to surrounding towns. The original *Newsboy* airplane went to a museum in Seattle, Washington.<sup>58</sup>

From the 1930s to the present, the *Gazette* has consistently maintained high circulation for a small-town newspaper, distributed by air, by commercial bus lines, by a second airplane, and

Air delivery ended in 1930 when a windstorm severely damaged *The Newsboy* and other planes at the McCook airport. Eventually restored, the original *Newsboy* is now in the collection of the Museum of Flight in Seattle. Museum of Flight, Seattle

# THE MCCOOK DAILY GAZETTE

finally by pickup trucks. Between 1965 and 1990, it had the largest circulation of all U.S. daily newspapers printed in counties with a population under 17,500, a distinction achieved by bringing copies of newspapers to carriers who then delivered them to readers in the small towns in southwestern Nebraska and northwestern Kansas.

Today, the *Gazette* holds its own in the face of declining population. The Nebraska Press Association web site lists the *Gazette's* circulation at 6,709, fourth largest among newspapers with a circulation of 5,000 to 9,999. The *Gazette* is the only newspaper in that group located in southwestern Nebraska, a region with much sparser, more scattered population than in central and eastern Nebraska.<sup>59</sup>

Harry D. Strunk, the innovating, risk-taking publisher of a small daily newspaper in McCook, Nebraska, succeeded in making his publication a true mass medium in the late 1920s, a time of rapid change in the newspaper industry, in transportation, and in consumer buying habits. Accurately sizing up the volatile situation, he elected to undertake air distribution to an expanded circulation area. His Curtis-Robin monoplane, *The Newsboy*, represented not only the fastest delivery medium available, but also a new technology that was rapidly capturing the public's curiosity and imagination. The result was a level of loyalty among readers and advertisers that has remained with the *McCook Gazette* to this day.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See "Stage Set for Mammoth Air Show," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 12, 1929; "Newsboy Carries Papers for Test," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 13, 1929; Allen D. Strunk to Liz Watts, Dec. 4, 1987. Strunk is the son of Harry D. Strunk, *Gazette* founder, and succeeded him as publisher. McCook, Nebraska, is the county seat of Red Willow County in southwestern Nebraska. It is approximately 14 miles north of the Kansas-Nebraska state line, 228 miles southwest of, Lincoln, and about 270 miles northeast of Denver, Colorado.

<sup>2</sup> A photo of the plane filled three columns on page 1, Sept. 13, 1929. According to Allen D. Strunk, it was his father's idea to name the airplane *The Newsboy*, and paint the name on the sides of the plane. Allen D. Strunk to Liz Watts, Dec. 4, 1987.

<sup>3</sup> See "Havana Gets Times Day Early By Air," *The New York Times*, Jan. 17, 1928; and "Late Times Edition to Capital by Air," *The New York Times*, May 7, 1928; "Delivering the News by Plane," *The New York Times*, May 6, 1928; "Air Delivery of Newspapers Urged Governments of Europe; League Would Erase Frontiers for Carriers," *The New York Times*, Nov. 30, 1929; Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1947), 717.

<sup>4</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism*, 633.

<sup>5</sup> "Thousands Witness Air Show Event," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 14, 1929.

<sup>6</sup> Allen D. Strunk, "Gazette Became Number One," *Centennial History of McCook, Nebraska* (McCook, Nebraska: The McCook Daily Gazette, 1982), Commercial Section.

<sup>7</sup> See "Thousands Witness Air Show Event," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 14, 1929; Allen D. Strunk, "Gazette Became Number One;" and *Fifteenth Census of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), 680. The 1930 census listed McCook's population as 6,688.

<sup>8</sup> See "Air Tour Blazes New State Trails," *Omaha Bee-News*, Sept. 13, 1929. Also see "Thousands Witness Air Show Event," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 14, 1929. Before landing in McCook the All Nebraska Air Tour participants flew to five other Nebraska cities, York, Grand Island, Kearney, Broken Bow and North Platte. Telephone interview with Allen D. Strunk, Feb. 6, 1988; *Fifteenth Census of the United States*, 416, 675. The towns to receive air-delivered newspapers were listed in the *Gazette* Sept. 13, 1929.

<sup>9</sup> Telephone interview with Leopold "Bus" Bahl, Jan. 16, 1988. Bahl, who worked for three Strunk generations at the *Gazette*, retired after sixty-three years with the newspaper. He began in 1922 as a carrier at the age eleven. He recalled that he rode in *The Newsboy* as the pilot's assistant when it was so windy no one else was willing to go. McCook businessmen vied for the opportunity to go as the assistant, but lost interest on windy days.

<sup>10</sup> Telephone interview with Allen D. Strunk, Feb. 6, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> Allen D. Strunk, "Gazette Became Number One."

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*; "Six Planes Wrecked in Storm Here," *McCook Daily Gazette*, July 21, 1930.

<sup>13</sup> "Steve Tuttle Is To Pilot Plane on Newspaper Route," Aug. 19, 1929; "Air Show Notes," Sept. 13, 1929, *McCook Daily Gazette*; Telephone interview with Allen D. Strunk, Feb. 6, 1988.

<sup>14</sup> "Inauguration of Gazette Airplane Delivery Service and Dedication of New America Legion Airport," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Aug. 30, 1929; Newspaper flag, *McCook Daily Gazette*, Aug. 30, 1929; Newspaper flag, *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 12, 1929. Versions of this flag were used until 1987. The motto of the newspaper was "Service is the rent we pay for the space we occupy in this world. We want to pay our rent in advance."

<sup>15</sup> See "Steve Tuttle Is to Pilot Plane on Newspaper Route," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Aug. 19, 1929; and "Air Show Notes," *McCook Daily Gazette* Sept. 13, 1929; "Newsboy Carries Papers For Test," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 13, 1929; Telephone interview with Allen D. Strunk, Feb. 6, 1988.

<sup>16</sup> William J. Thorn with Mary Pat Pfeil, *Newspaper Circulation: Marketing the News*, (White Plains, N.Y., Longman, 1987), 32.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 45, 47, 63, 64, 246-47

<sup>18</sup> As quoted in George E. Mowry and Blaine A. Brownell, *The Urban Nation 1920-1980* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1981), 59.

<sup>19</sup> "Response to Advertising Increased by Installment Buying Practices," *Editor and Publisher*, Feb. 11, 1928, 20.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Emery and Edwin Emery, *The Press and America*, 7th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1992.), 265, 290.

<sup>21</sup> *Statistical Abstracts of the United States 1935*, 7; Newell Leroy Sims, *Elements of Rural Sociology* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1940), 152.

<sup>22</sup> J. O. Rankin, "Reading Matter in Nebraska Farm Homes," *Bulletin 180*, Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Nebraska, June 1922, 10. He reported that one out of every 40 farm homes received no periodicals or failed to report receiving any. Southwestern Nebraska was one of two areas failing to report.

<sup>23</sup> E. L. Kirkpatrick, *The Farmer's Standard of Living*, (New York: The Century Co., 1929), 137-138, 104; Newell Leroy Sims, *Elements of Rural Sociology*, 318, 321, 322, 226.

<sup>24</sup> Carl Taylor, *Rural Sociology* (New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1933), 214.

<sup>25</sup> "Contracts Let for Highway Gravel to Close D.L.D. [Des Moines, Lincoln, Denver highway] Gaps," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 12, 1929. According to Dick Genrich, highway inventory mapping supervisor at the Nebraska Department of Roads, the 1934 map shows that U. S. Highway 38 was paved from the western border of Red Willow County east to Cambridge. Telephone interview, Jan. 29, 1988.

<sup>26</sup> *Statistical Abstracts of the United States 1935*, 43.

<sup>27</sup> Carl Taylor, *Rural Sociology*, 242-249.

<sup>28</sup> Bruce H. Nicoll and Gilbert M. Savery, *Nebraska: A Pictorial History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 134, 136.

<sup>29</sup> Carl Taylor, *Rural Sociology*, 221.

<sup>30</sup> "Air-Minded Throngs Swamp Fliers at Grand Island and Kearney, Circle Above School During Recess Period" *Omaha Bee-News*, Sept. 13, 1929; *The United States Census of Agriculture of 1925* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1927), 1145. There were 707 farms on improved dirt roads and 404 farms on unimproved dirt in Red Willow County. The ten counties in the circulation area were Chase, Dundy, Hitchcock, Hayes, Red Willow, Furnas, and Harlan in Nebraska, and Cheyenne, Decatur and Rawlins in Kansas. Chase County had one farm on a macadam road and Dundy County had one farm on a brick or concrete road.

<sup>31</sup> "Roads and Road Building in Nebraska," *Nebraska Highways*, Oct. 1927, 6.

<sup>32</sup> The Republican River parallels State Highway 3 (now U.S. 34) from Benkelman to Culbertson, U.S. Highway 38 (now U.S. 6 and 34) from near Culbertson to Arapahoe, and State Highway 3 (now State Highway 136) from Arapahoe to Orleans. See "State Highway Withstands Floods," *Nebraska Highways*, Aug. 1928, 3.

<sup>33</sup> "Roads and Road Building in Nebraska," *Nebraska Highways*, Oct. 1927, 5-7. The Nebraska Good Roads Association was an organization that promoted road building.

<sup>34</sup> "Maintenance Cost Increases," *Nebraska Highways*, Apr. 1928, 5; M. Jones, "Weaver Pleases Nebraska People," *The New York Times*, May 12, 1929.

<sup>35</sup> *Annual Reports of the Postmaster General, 1920-1929*.

<sup>36</sup> Alex Groner, *American Business and Industry* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1972), 276.

<sup>37</sup> See editorial pages of the *McCook Daily Gazette*, 1928-1929.

<sup>38</sup> "See *Annual Reports* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Public Roads Administration, 1950), 37. "Newsboy Carries Papers For Test," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 13, 1929. The 1930 map does not show a road between Benkelman and Imperial. The mileage presented here is based on the 1987 *Rand McNally Road Atlas*.

<sup>39</sup> Telephone interview with Leopold Bahl, Jan. 16, 1988.

<sup>40</sup> Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism*, 633; "High Mail Rates Endanger Small Papers," *Editor and Publisher*, Aug. 15, 1925, 7; "Mail Circulation No Longer Sought By New York State Dailies," *Editor and Publisher*, Aug. 22, 1925, 8; "Is An Increase of Second Class Rates Justified?" *Congressional Digest*, Feb. 1925, 168.

<sup>41</sup> "ANPA Adopted Resolution Asking Congress To Reduce Postal Rates on Newspapers Distributed Through the Mails." *The New York Times*, Apr. 26, 1928.

<sup>42</sup> Allen D. Strunk, "Gazette Became Number One"; See also the *N. W. Ayer Publication Directory for 1928* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer Co.), 653; 1929, 635; 1930, 589; and 1931, 566.

<sup>43</sup> See "Plan for Airport Offered Chamber," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Mar. 12, 1928; and "M'Cook Is Given Hangar for Port," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 12, 1929.

<sup>44</sup> Perry D. Lubkett, *Charles A. Lindbergh, A Bio-Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 6-7; Postmaster General, *Annual Report of the Postmaster General* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), 45.

<sup>45</sup> William M. Leary, *Aerial Pioneers*, 178.

<sup>46</sup> Randall Blake, "Air Tourists Enjoy Scenery, 'Fresh Ozone,'" *Omaha Bee-News*, Sept. 13, 1929; See *The Denver Post*, Sept. 14, 15, 1929; *Omaha World-Herald*, Sept. 14, 1929; *Omaha Bee-News*, Sept. 13, 1929; *The Lincoln Star*, Sept. 15, 1929; and *The Nebraska State Journal*, Sept. 13, 1929. Also see *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 12, 13, 14, 16.

<sup>47</sup> Ted Truby, "Aviation in McCook," *Centennial History of McCook, Nebraska* (McCook, Nebraska: The McCook Daily Gazette, 1982), Commercial Section; Telephone interview with Ray Search, amateur historian, McCook, Nebraska, Jan. 16, 1988. As a young man Search would hang around the Morton Airplane Factory in McCook and help to sew the covering on airplane wings. He took up flying as a hobby but was grounded permanently by his fiancée.

<sup>48</sup> See "Night Riders of the Year" *McCook Daily Gazette*, Aug. 30, 1923; and "Crowd Admires Newest and Greatest Bomber," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 23, 1923; "Lindbergh Off On Paris Flight," *McCook Daily Gazette*, May 20, 1927.

<sup>49</sup> See page one stories, *McCook Daily Gazette*, May 23, 25, 1927.

<sup>50</sup> Charles Lindbergh, "Future of Air Transport by Three Leaders," *The New York Times*, May 4, 1930.

<sup>51</sup> Silas Bent, "Collapsing Time and Space," *World's Work*, Nov. 1930, 67; Myron M. Stearns, "The Men Who Fly the Planes," *World's Work*, July 1930, 62.

<sup>52</sup> William M. Leary, *Aerial Pioneers* (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution, 1985), 237. Leary provides a chronology of the United States Air Mail Service.

<sup>53</sup> "McCook Draws Front Page Position," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 14, 1929.

<sup>54</sup> See the *N. W. Ayer Publication Directory for 1928*, 653; 1929, 635; 1930, 589; and 1931, 566. The amount of increase, 1,250, divided by the 1928 circulation of 2,800 equals .4464.

<sup>55</sup> See "None Injured in Crash of Airplanes At Show," *McCook Daily Gazette*, Sept. 16, 1929.

<sup>56</sup> Letter from Allen D. Strunk, Dec. 4, 1987.

<sup>57</sup> See Ted Truby, "Aviation in McCook"; Letter from Allen D. Strunk, Dec. 4, 1987.

<sup>58</sup> See Allen D. Strunk, "Gazette Becomes Number One." The original *Newsboy* airplane is now part of the collection of the Museum of Flight in Seattle.

<sup>59</sup> Gene O. Morris, telephone interview, Oct. 7, 1996. Morris is a longtime *Gazette* reporter, editor, and publisher since 1990. He said the *Vail, Colo.*, newspaper surpassed the *Gazette* in 1990 because of seasonal increases due to tourism. See Nebraska Press Association, "Nebraska Newspapers Listed by Circulation," <http://www.nebpress.com/neblistings/circulation/drc-html>, Dec. 10, 2001.