

MODEL C

In issue #111, we mentioned a Burgess Model C. A description was given, and a crude sketch, both from the magazine Aircraft. We had no more information regarding the Model C, but expressed the hope that some might come to light. Since then we have the opportunity to read sections of Starling Burgess' unpublished autobiography, and are able to add a bit more to the tale of the mysterious--and inglorious--Model C.

In May of 1910 Greely Curtis went to Europe to see how aeronautics was progressing over there. He purchased a Bleriot monoplane for his own use and, at Bleriot's insistence that the best aviation motor obtainable was the 30 hp Clement-Bayard, bought six of them. The cost of the monoplane was \$5,000; the six motors came to \$9,000. Total, \$14,000.

No one in the Burgess organization ever got around to flying the Bleriot, which was eventually sold to a New York sportsman for \$3,000. His check proved to be worthless, and the Burgess Co. repossessed the Bleriot which was, eventually, consigned

to the trash heap.

The fate of the Clement-Bayard motors was even more distasteful; given block tests, each one broke down completely.

The Model C was fitted out with one of the infamous Clement-Bayard engines and put on exhibition at the Aero Show, where it earned compliments for its neat and attractive appearance. It was priced at \$4,500 and, being designed for students, was guaranteed to be of heavier construction than other Burgess aircraft.

If any account of the Burgess Model C actually flying exists, we have been unable to locate it. It is probably quite safe to conclude that the overweight and underpowered biplane never left the ground. This, in spite of a company ad which said: "Our Model A flew successfully, but the Model B beats it. Our Model C is even better." Burgess ads should be taken with a certain amount of skepticism.

Note:

Many years after the Burgess Co. had ceased to exist Starling Burgess wrote the story of his aviation career. The book was never published, and it may never have been completed. We have had the opportunity to read sections of the manuscript, although a number of chapters were missing. Even so, it made fascinating reading and we can only hope that some day the missing sections will come to light.

Throughout the time covered in this article, the name was Burgess Co. and Curtis. To save space, we refer to it as the Burgess Co.

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