

MS-359

K.S. “Slim” Lindsay “Quiet Birdmen” Book

Special Collections and Archives
Wright State University Libraries
Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio



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Introduction

The K. S. "Slim" Lindsay "Quiet Birdmen" Book was donated to the Wright State University Special Collections and Archives by Priscilla "Percy" Webb on June 13, 2007. Percy Webb is the daughter of Mr. Lindsay. The collection consists of one leather-bound book, dated May 1, 1936, housed in one clamshell Hollinger box spanning 1 linear foot. The Quiet Birdmen Book contains 640 photographs of "Quiet Birdmen" members displayed on 160 pages. Included in the book are photographs of such pilots as H.H. "Jimmie" Doolittle, E. E. "Pop" Cleveland, Roscoe Turner, Walter R. Brookins, Wiley Post, E.V. "Eddie" Rickenbacker, and C.A. "Slim" Lindbergh. In October 2007, a small addition was added to the collection consisting of several photographs and biographical information about Mr. Lindsay. There are no restrictions on the use of the book.

Biographical Sketch

There is no information concerning the date of Mr. K. S. "Slim" Lindsay's birth or his family. According to information received from his daughter, he died in 1979 in Tremblant, Canada.

Mr. Lindsay's early career was primarily as a salesman. From December 1919 until May 1924, he owned and operated an automobile business in Northboro, Massachusetts. He 1922 he learned to fly and obtained a pilot's license from the State of Massachusetts in September 1924. From 1924 until April 1928, he was employed as a salesman for a variety of companies including General Electric, Sprague Electrical Supplies, and the Clapp Rose and Vaughn Company.

In April 1928 his focus turned to aviation. From April to September 1928 he organized and operated the National Air Pageant Association which equipped and managed air shows in the New England and New York area. In September 1928 he bought a substantial interest in the New England Aircraft Company operating a Brainard Field, Hartford, Connecticut. The company was sold to Curtiss Flying Service in January 1929. From June 1929 to December 1931 he worked for Curtiss Flying Service and later, Curtiss-Wright Company, as an operations manager at a number of locations including Worcester, Massachusetts, Cleveland, Ohio, Chicago, Illinois, St. Louis, Missouri, and Valley Stream Field in New York. In December 1931 he left Curtiss-Wright after the operations at Valley Stream Field were reorganized.

In June 1932, he went to work for Roosevelt Field, Inc. as operations manager of the field. He served in this capacity until 1936 when he moved to Garden City, Long Island, New York and went to work for the B. G. Corporation in New York City. The B. G. Corporation manufactured airplane spark plugs and Mr. Lindsay was the major salesman for the company and the world traveler.

In 1947 Mr. Lindsay retired and moved to Canada. For several years he operated a ski lodge, The Tremblant Club. In 1956 he became a Canadian citizen.

A photograph of Mr. Lindsay is on page 112 of the book.

History of “Quiet Birdmen”

Very little information is known about the “Quiet Birdmen” organization. The following information was taken from the “World War I *Aeroplanes*, Inc. AeroForum website (April 21, 2006).

The Ancient and Secret Order of Quiet Birdmen was founded in January 1921 at Marta’s Italian café at 75 Washington Place, New York City. Author and editor Ladislav “Laddie” d’Orcey convened the meeting to discuss the “old days” of flying. Attendees at that founding meeting included Harry A. Bruno, Richard “Dick” R. Blythe, Curtiss company aviator in the 1920’s Charles “Casey” S. Jones, and Earl D. Osborn, who at the time was Secretary and Assistant Treasurer of Aeromarine West Indies Airways, Inc.

Aviation writer Harry Hersey, an attendee at one of the earliest Marta’s gatherings, came up with the term “Quiet Birdmen,” as an ironic name. The gatherings were anything but quiet. Soon thereafter the distinctive QB emblem came into being—a pair of wings attached to a blue shield with the letters “QB” in the center.

Very quickly “Mondays at Marta’s” took on a life all its own as other aviators joined in. About 1931, the number of aviators attending these informal gatherings became so great that Marta’s ceased to be available. For the next seven years the gatherings were held at a number of locations around New York City. In 1938, the Architectural League became the group’s permanent base of operations.

Soon other “QB Hangars” were established around the country, all adhering to the group’s strict prohibition against having a “Kingfish,” a constitution, by-laws, dues, assessments, agendas, officers, speeches, “Big Shots,” head tables, attempts to sell anything, conduct business of any kind, or have “Kee-wees” (non-aviators) as members. The group also refused to accept women as members or to permit women at its gatherings, with the exception of women who were “professional entertainers”—despite the great number of outstanding women aviators available as possible members.

At the 1938 Cleveland Air Races a meeting of Quiet Birdmen decided to adopt a limited organizational structure comprised of a Board of Governors, with one representative from each QB Hangar, which would then appoint an Executive Committee. Each QB hangar would also appoint a “Key Man” to handle Hangar affairs. A “QB Code of Procedure” was adopted in September 1939 spelling out the organizational structure, while maintaining the “informality and uniqueness” of the group. The Code of Procedure was later amended in September 1953.

QB Hangar parties are known for their rowdiness and good fellowship, often fueled by substantial quantities of alcohol – known to QBs as “the sacred potion.” Two of the constants at QB gatherings are a silent toast to members who have “Gone West” and the telling of jokes.

The official publication of the QBs is the BEAM. The BEAN features reports on activities of QB Hangars, although publication of photographs of QB parties in the BEAM is forbidden. Many of the most famous male aviators have been QBs, including Eddie Rickenbacker, Charles Lindbergh, Robert Fowler, Roscoe Turner, as well as many of the most well-known contemporary aviators.

In sum, the “Quiet Birdmen” is one of the oldest continuously functioning aviator organizations in existence, unchanging with the times, still rooted firmly in its traditions of the 1920’s and 1930’s.

Box and Folder Listing

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	“Quiet Birdmen” Book	May 1, 1936
	2	Biographical Information & Correspondence	1934-2007
	3	Unidentified Photographs	c.a.1930s