

## **Iola Built Ship Makes Test Flight**

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### **Small Biplane Designed By Durard Murry Makes Debut**

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#### **FLIGHT IS A SUCCESS**

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#### **Pilot Womack Declares It Is an Excellent Ship**

The first Iola built airplane spread its fledgling wings yesterday afternoon at the Iola airport and made its initial flight, soaring into the air, climbing, diving, turning and returning to the ground in a perfect landing to meet the cheers and congratulations of a hundred enthusiastic onlookers.

It was the thrill of a life time for one Durard Murray of Iola, designer, builder, and half owner of the ship, as he watched his creation successfully complete its first test flight. He admitted afterward that his heart was beating so hard as the plane taxied down the field for the take-off that he could hardly hear the roar of the motor, and when he watched the plane leave the ground, circle through the air and come back down again just as any well bred airplane should, he could hardly contain himself.

Nor was Fritz Womack, manager of the South Street Auto Parts Co., airplane pilot and half owner of the ship, exactly the calmest individual on the field. He was the one who sat in the cockpit while Murray was holding his breath on the ground. He too admitted afterward that yarning wasn't one of the things that occupied any great share of his time while the affair was going on.

But with all the thrills over, the fact remains that an airplane, designed and built in Iola, completed a successful test flight at the airport yesterday afternoon. And that is something that not every town in the state of Kansas can boast. Durard Murray, designer and builder of the plane, was originally a Colony boy but has spent the past few months in Iola and calls this his home because of the fact that his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Murray, live just a few miles northeast of here. About three years ago Mr. Murray entered the airplane business in the employment of the Winstead Brothers, who operate an airplane repair depot near the Travel Air factory at the Wichita airport. For about eighteen months he worked there repairing and rebuilding planes, picking up a most thorough and practical knowledge of airplane construction and design. Then he went to the American Eagle factory in Kansas city where he worked for six months.

Three months ago he came to Iola, has spent part of his time working with B.T. Barber and most of the rest of it building the airplane which acquitted itself so admirably yesterday afternoon.

Although separate parts of the ship have been gathered up from here and there and everywhere, the airplane itself

represents new construction practically from its nose to the tip of its tail. The wings, fuselage, tail surfaces and even the landing gear have all been made by Mr. Murray. It is powered by a Le Rhone motor.

It is a small sport two place biplane and will be exceedingly trim in appearance when the finishing touches have been put on. The design is strictly original with Mr. Murray but resembles in general size and shape the Laird plane that Tod Tobey owns here. It is most sturdily built.

After the first flight yesterday afternoon by Mr. Womack, Tod Tobey was invited to take it up and he did, putting it through plenty of maneuvers to test its flying qualities thoroughly. Both pilots reported that they were delighted with its

performance aside from a rather distinct tendency to be "tail heavy." This, of course, can and will be corrected immediately. Aside from that, nothing remains but to finish the cowling over the cockpits and generally paint and spruce up its appearance.

Mr. Womack bought a half interest in the plane during the early part of its construction and of course has helped considerably with the building of it. The two partners now hope to sell their product and start immediately upon the construction of two others; one just like this one and the other, a monoplane, plans for which they have already prepared.

If all goes well, they may build a lot of airplanes. And, who knows? Iola may have an airplane factory here yet!