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PHONE NO. 71 LAKE LAND, FLA.

LEWIS WEBSTER, WHO WAS BORN IN LAKE LAND, WAS ONE OF FLIERS ON TRANS-CONTINENTAL TRIP

Lakeland people are unaware that there was a Floridian among the fliers recently making the trans-continental trip and especially will they be surprised to learn that the Floridian was born in Lakeland.

The young man is Lewis Webster, son of Mr. E. E. Webster, well-known Polk county resident who now lives in Bartow, but who has lived in Lakeland, Mulberry and other points for nearly thirty years, being a well-known sawmill operator of the county. Mr. Webster has just received a letter from his son describing his trip across the United States, which he kindly allows the Telegram to print. The letter follows:

San Francisco, Calif., Oct. 8, 1919. Dear Homefolks:

I am now settled down on the Southern Pacific Railroad and it is almost time for the train to start me on my return trip East.

I had a most wonderful trip flying over the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada. It was worth a whole year out of my life.

I started from Roosevelt Field, Mineola, New York at 9:15 a. m. on Wednesday and on Monday at 6:26 p. m. I landed safely at Presidio Field San Francisco. It is needless to say that I was tired and dirty but I was rushed right up to the Palace Hotel together with my mechanic and there after submitting to a flashlight picture for the newspaper reporter and giving a brief story of my trip we had a good warm bath and a delicious supper.

And now I will endeavor to briefly relate my experiences of the Trans-Continental Flight. The end of the first day found us at Bryan, Ohio, a distance of 650 miles since 9:15 a. m. We arrived at Bryan at 6:33 p. m., and I will add right here that we were bound by rules to make a 30 minute stop at each control stop. Our first control stop was at Binghamton, N. Y., the second at Rochester, N. Y., the third at Buffalo, N. Y., the fourth at Cleveland, Ohio, the fifth at Bryan, Ohio, but on account of the late hour and the poor visibility I was forced to land at a little town by the name of Styker to find out where I was. I had no sooner landed than people began to run out to see the plane and upon questioning them I found out that Bryan was only about 8 miles further west so I immediately took the air again and within seven minutes I landed on the control field at Bryan.

Well, the next morning when I awoke it was raining and the wind was blowing at the rate of about 30 miles per hour from the south. The visibility was very poor and the clouds were close to the ground. I waited here until about 12:10 p. m. until the rain stopped and then I made a mad dash for Chicago. This was without doubt the roughest lap of my journey because although the rain had ceased the wind and clouds were still in evidence. The air was so rough that at times I would get bumps that would knock me out of my seat and I could feel the pressure on my safety belt. Anyway I reached Chicago at about 2:00 p. m. and there I met Art, Edgar and Lucia who were there awaiting my arrival. I was sorry that I could not visit with them but the "Race" was on and so soon as I had gassed and oiled my machine and had downed a good Red Cross dinner I pulled out for Rock Island, Ill. It was 5:15 p. m. when I left Rock Island for Des Moines and I arrived at Des Moines at 7:00 p. m. but it was so dark that I failed to find the right field and after circling around looking for the field for 10 minutes without any luck I picked out a hay field on the North side of the city and landed. The field looked plenty big enough from the air for a good landing but to my surprise there was a small fence which consisted of two barbed wires strung on small pipe posts; and which divided two fields. I made a good landing by my speed after reaching the ground carried me through this fence. Luckily there was no damage done to the plane nor ourselves. As soon as I had landed I could see flares from Very's pistols being sent up to the southeast of us so I decided that the right field must be in that location. I gave my mechanic orders to stake the machine down for the night and to cover up the engine and propeller, and immediately set out to find the right field so that I could report to the Commander of the control stop. After walking a little over a mile I succeeded in hiring an automobile to carry me to the right field. I reached the Commander of the field at 8:00 p. m. just 50 minutes after I had landed. One of the rules of the race were that all time spent out of control stops would be counted as flying time so you can see why I was so anxious to report to the Control Manager. After getting my

pilot book fixed up I returned to the vicinity of my ship and spent the night at a farm house.

The next morning (Friday) we got up at daybreak, ate breakfast and went out to get our ship. We found the engine so cold that we had difficulty in starting it. After a lot of hard work we succeeded in taking to the air again. We were only a few minutes in getting into the right field now as it was broad daylight. It was 10:20 a. m. when we finally got our gas and oil and pulled out of Des Moines. Omaha was then our next stop. This was made in less than two hours.

We were only out of Omaha about ten minutes when our engine began to misbehave and we were forced to land at Lane, Neb. I had no trouble in making a safe landing here and upon inspecting our engine we found that the mechanics at Omaha had put in too much oil and this had raised our oil pressure and forced the oil through the cylinders into the spark plugs. After draining out a gallon and a half of oil and cleaning our spark plugs we again took to the air and were soon in St. Paul, Nebr. We passed through the control stop at North Platte and stopped at Sidney, Nebr., for the night. Here we got our plane in readiness to make an early start in the a. m. and then went to bed for a good rest. My ears were in such an uproar from the constant noise of the motor that I could not sleep much.

Well, Saturday morning we left Sidney about 7:40 and from there on to Sacramento, Calif., we were flying over mountains. Saturday we passed through the following control stops—Rawlins, Wyo., Green River, Wyo., Salt Lake City, Utah and into Salduro for the night and Sunday.

The landing fields at Rawlins and Green River were very poor and small. The landing field at Rawlins was a race track only 1000 feet long and this is pretty small for as large a plane as the D H-4. At Green River, Utah, I had a hair raising episode. The landing field was small and sandy and way down in the valley of the Rocky Mountains. And when I got ready to make my "take off" I found that if I headed into the wind that I would have to take off up hill and toward the river. The field was so sandy and rough that I bounced along all of the way across it while picking up flying speed and we ran off the precipice and by luck we had enough forward speed to hold us in the air as we bounced from the steep bank of the river. I then had to make a sharp bank to miss the mountains and gain enough altitude to climb over them. We reached Salt Lake City about 2:45 p. m. and it certainly looked good to me as I had passed the highest of the Rocky Mountains upon reaching here. We had over three thousand feet of altitude to lose before landing here and we passed over the Mountains at not more than 200 feet just before reaching Salt Lake City. By 3:15 p. m. we were pulling out of here and on our way across the Salt Lake and the Salt Desert to Salduro. We covered this distance of 100 miles in 55 minutes and only flew at an altitude of about 500 feet. The last 70 miles of this lap was nothing but salt. I could have landed on it anywhere. It is rather a deceiving surface to land on. From the air it looks like snow but when you have once landed you find that it is a much harder surface. It looks almost like ice with small cracks running here and there and is almost as hard and slippery as ice. I got down with a safe landing on it all right but a little S. E-5 that came in just behind me hit so hard that he broke his undercarriage and had to work all day Sunday in order to get into the race again on Monday. Up to this point I was holding third place out of about 50 planes that left Mineola. Salduro, by the way is not a city, it is nothing but a salt factory, and to think that I picked such a place as that to spend Saturday night and Sunday when I could have stopped in the beautiful City of Salt Lake. But it was not so bad at that as we had no crowds to bother us while we worked on our ship to put it in trim for the last lap of our journey.

Sunday I met some very nice people who were connected with the salt industry and was invited over to one of their homes and, "it's a shame" but we had a little at home dance even if it was Sunday. I acted on the assumption that—"The better the day, the better the deed." There were two young married couples and a little French girl and it was indeed a jolly little party. One of the ladies had a wonderful voice and entertained us with a few solos. I left early (at 9 p. m.) so, that I would get a good

(Continued on Page 3.)

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