

## **\* Kearney's First Air Show**

**Summer, 1911**

Aviation Meet.

Aeroplanes 7 years old

Few people in Kearney had actually seen one.

Wright Bros – 1902

Competition – Alexander Graham Bell

Glenn Curtiss

Europe – Henry Farnam

Wrights & Curtis – rivals – hired pilots to go around giving flying exhibitions

Omaha 1910

Hastings, July 1911 – 1<sup>st</sup> day was Kearney Day

30-40 cars planned to drive over

Big rain – several dozen went by train

About a dozen cars.

2 arrived, one pulling the other

One man had 7 blowouts on one tire.

Bigger crowd took train next day.

No train back till morning

Commercial Club arranged for demonstration

\* Sec., Charles Oehler made the arrangements

Lawyer, candidate for county judge

Glenn Curtis Co. to give demonstration Friday, Aug. 4, 1911

Athletic Park – between Railroad & UNK

South of Highway 30, east of tailrace

(practice field, apartment houses, homes, businesses)

Ball game with Columbus scheduled here that afternoon

Rescheduled for 11 a. m.

Aviator Charles Walsh

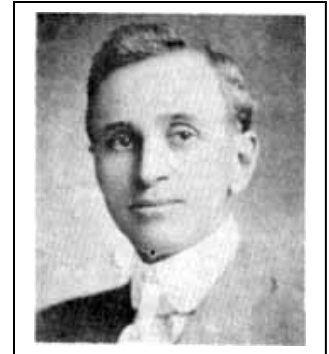
1. explain his Farnam Aeroplane

2. Four flying demonstrations of quick rises, sharp turns, easy descension

Admission 50¢

Kearney & Black Hills Railway – special train from Calloway,

stay to return passengers in the evening



Every day in week leading up to the meet, summarized in Hub with something new  
Saturday - Commercial Club had cloth banners to put on cars going out of town to  
Advertise

Monday – Evangelical Church ladies – chicken dinner 25¢

Tuesday – 2 passengers – Oehler was suggested, and one other

Wednesday – Empire Store had Aviation Sale of clothing and dry goods

- UP was running special train instead of motor, arrive Kearney 10:30, leave at 8
- Special train from GI, leave there at 9, return at 8
- Grocers closing stores for afternoon

Thursday – Walsh, mechanics, plane arrived – probably by train

- Assembled in afternoon
- Co. A Nat. Guard to do guard duty – met in evening to plan strategy
- Flour Mill & dry goods stores to close also
- Hub to go to press at 2:30
- Gates open at 2, show at 3
- 50¢ for cars
- Tickets on sale at Lee's Drug Store

Friday – special trains, standing room only, 100 people

- Train from west 600 people
- Stores & manufacturing businesses closed at noon
- Walsh & mechanics worked on plane all morning
- National Guard on duty guarding Athletic Field
- Weather was fine
- Autos began arriving
- Restaurants were full
- Boarding houses & hotels were full of people who came last night
- Est. 5,000 people at ball park – 1<sup>st</sup> time they had ever seen a plane

Aviator explained his plane

Climbed aboard plane

Had trouble getting off the ground

Mechanics & National Guardsmen dragged it back in place.

Traveled 400 yards, rose, crowd cheered

Up 30 feet – plane tipped, caught on telephone wire, crashed!

- in cottonwoods along tailrace
- Silence

Crowd rushed in

Guard pointed bayonets

Walsh gave permission for souvenirs

Silk on wings, frame, plane gone in 15 minutes  
Reason for accident – took off with wind instead of against it.  
Basic rule of aviation had to be learned by experience in the beginning

New plane ordered – Rescheduled for Aug 9  
Ride promised to girl who had the nerve to do it.

Hub articles again  
Site moved to bluegrass field south of Industrial School, east of cottonmill  
(no telephone lines?)  
Don't trample alfalfa field on east  
No admission charge  
Methodist Ladies aide meeting postponed  
Mrs. Walsh & baby arrived

A success – 4,000 people

\* 6 flights  
(note power plant, center, & ice house, right)

Flew toward Kearney twice  
Flew over Normal School campus once  
Passengers –

- Margurite Scoutt “nerve to fly”
- A. M. Easterling of the Hub
- Oliver Norton & Curtis Oehler, son of Charles Oehler

\* Mother Collins, 81, did not go for a ride, just sat in plane and had her picture taken

All left next day for Fremont.

End of Kearney's first experience, not the last.

