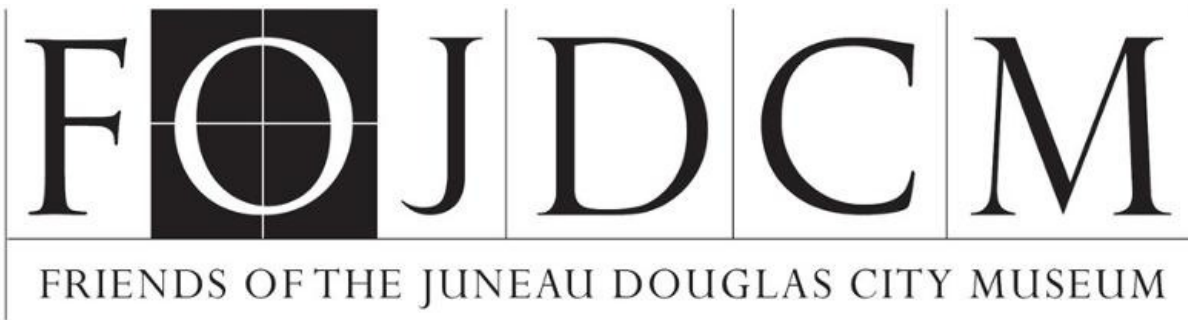


HISTORY ON THE CHANNEL YOUR MONTHLY NEWS FLASH



First Alaskan Airplanes Wing Way Over Juneau to White Horse

August 12, 1920 *Alaska Daily Empire*

DARING FLYERS SKIM HOUSETOPS, DROP MESSAGES

Lt. Ross Kirkpatrick, piloting plane No. 4 in the New York-to-Nome pathfinding flight, flew low over Juneau at 2:32 this afternoon in the first aeroplane ever to make a flight in this part of Alaska. He was followed one hour later by two other machines. The fourth machine had not put in an appearance shortly before press time, four o'clock.

The first plane was sighted from Thane shortly before 2:20 and the news sent here by telephone. As prearranged, a general fire alarm was sounded. Within three or four minutes the plane was first sighted near the waterfront, almost directly over South Franklin Street, then winging across and beyond Main Street, cruising east of the courthouse building and speeding directly up the Channel.

When it was first observed by Mrs. W. T. Tolch of Thane, the plane was at a considerable height, but dropped down to a level of approximately 200 feet at Thane, holding there up the Channel and across the town. Just over South Franklin Street, a gaily decorated package was released from the plane which dropped on the roof of the Brunswick Building [today's Harrisburg Building], and was picked up by Dave Housel. Mr. Housel handed it to Theodore Heyder, driving a Peerless Bakery automobile. Miss Helen Troy of the Empire staff, who was on the scene, noticed that it was addressed to Governor Thomas Riggs, and conveyed it to Mrs. Riggs. It is directed from the New York Times and will remain at the governor's house unopened until the arrival of the Governor in a few days. [It was a copy of the Times from their mid-July departure date from New York].

Despite the shortness of the notice, many people were at the vantage points to witness the first aeroplane flight up Gastineau Channel. Numbers watched the flight from the top of the Goldstein building, a number from courthouse Hill, and other points around the town.

Plane No.4 consumed only 2 1/2 minutes in making from the end of Admiralty Island, where it was first sighted, to Juneau. It takes boats between two and 2 1/2 hours to make the same distance.

The planes following the first to arrive followed the same course as their leader, coming directly up Gastineau Channel and heading almost due west from Juneau. Both were at a height estimated at from 3000 to 3500 feet.

Juneau had not been included in the line of flight as originally planned. The change was made at the request of Mayor Robertson, who wired Captain Streett, commander of the expedition, asking for a flight over Juneau. His request was granted by Captain Streett, and it was planned to pass over the city yesterday. Fog at Wrangell yesterday forced abandonment and a wire was received this morning saying that they would be here at 10:15 this morning. When they had not arrived at noon, and however, it was generally believed that the flight had again been postponed. Shortly after noon a flash was received over the cable that three planes had taken off from Wrangell. The next stop scheduled is at Whitehorse, which it is planned to make this evening.

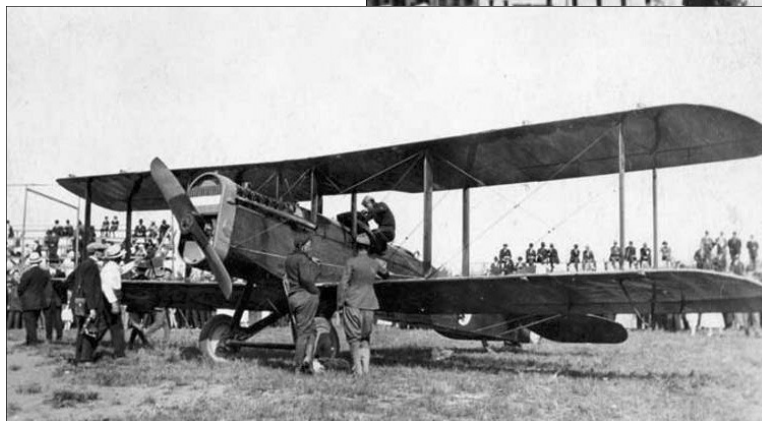
[The squadron eventually arrived in Nome on August 23].



... “then winging across and beyond Main Street, cruising east of the courthouse building and speeding directly up the Channel”. (UAF 1991-98-755)



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One of the squadron’s planes in Fairbanks, enroute Nome. A deHavilland DH-4B, with a 12-cylinder 400-HP Liberty engine. (AMRC-b76-14-50)