The Phantom 22

Did Whitehead's No. 22 ever exist?
Or did he simply imagine his most successful airplane?

By Louis Chmiel and Nick Engler

In the face of the following evidence one must ask, if a man is capable of fabricating a story for a national publication about an epoch-making flight in a plane that didn't exist, what other deceits might he be capable of and should anything he has said be given credulity?

At the turn of the twentieth century, Gustave Whitehead of Bridgeport, Connecticut made three specific claims that he had successfully flown a powered airplane. On August 14, 1901, he claimed to have made a 1/2-mile flight in a bat-winged monoplane he called the No. 21. This story ran in the *Bridgeport Herald* on August 18. Several months later, he made two more claims of having made 2- and 7-mile flights in a new aircraft called the No. 22 on January 17, 1902. This story was published in the *American Inventor* on April 1, 1902.

The first claim as recounted in the *Bridgeport Herald* has been widely discussed and dismissed, most recently by historian Carroll Gray who discovered it was a cut-and-paste job from an earlier story published in *the New York Sun* on June 7, 1901. These were Whitehead's own words to the *Sun*, only the dates and geography were altered in the *Herald*. But at least there is photographic evidence to prove that the No. 21 existed, even if Whitehead's story of a successful flight was nothing more than wishful thinking. But with the two later claims, Whitehead's powers of invention seemed to grow. The *American Inventor* article was written by Whitehead himself as a letter to the editor. He not only fabricated the stories of the 2- and 7-mile flights; the aircraft itself was also imagined!

Consider these facts. For most items presented, there is further documentation in the appendix at the end of this article:

Exhibit 1: ***There are* NO *known photos of Gustave Whitehead's plane, the No. 22, either stationary, flying, or decaying***.

Whitehead's photo ruse was cunning. He presented a photo of the No. 21 in his letter to the *American Inventor* with the explanation that his plane No. 22 looked exactly like the photo except that it was of infinitely higher quality construction using much better materials, steel, aluminum and silk. When reading about the alleged exploits of the No. 22 in the letter, the reader sees the plane in the photo performing the alleged feats. Whitehead promised to report back with photos and the results of further tests in the spring but these reports never materialized. Whitehead had a habit of making these promises and then shifting the conversation just as randomly as he shifted his airplane designs. In his next outreach to the press he told of his new No. 23 with no mention of the No. 22 or any proof that it ever existed. The only airplane he had on hand, the No. 21, he used as a stage prop for story-telling, creating the illusion of progress.

Exhibit 2: On *January 26, 1902 (9 days after the alleged flights of January 17), the* Bridgeport Herald *reports that Whitehead is still building the 40 hp motor he allegedly used to fly 9 days earlier.*

Whitehead also states in this article that he believes when the question of a lightweight motor is settled, only then will man succeed in flying. And he says that he also believes that if enough money were forthcoming he could accomplish the task himself. This is nine days after he alleged (in a letter to the *American Inve*ntor, published April 1, 1902) that he had flown first two, then seven miles.

Exhibit 3: *In a letter to Stella Randolph written on August 6, 1934, Gustave Whitehead's brother John describes the only airplane Gustave had when John arrived in Bridgeport in April of 1902 as made of wood, bamboo, and muslin, the No. 21.*

He also stated that the motor of the No. 21 had been broken in a flight attempt in 1901 and that no motor had been built since, as his brother had no money. John Whitehead never described an aluminum and steel airplane although he arrived in Bridgeport just three months after the alleged seven-mile flight, about the same time Whitehead's letter in the *American Inventor* was published.

Exhibit 4: I*n her first book, "The Lost Flights of Gustave Whitehead" (1937), Stella Randolph conveniently disposes of the No. 22 by claiming that John Whitehead said that it deteriorated over the winter of 1901-1902, a claim he never made.*

John Whitehead plainly stated that the "original plane" (the No. 21), which he spent most of his letter describing in detail, had deteriorated. A full metal plane would have lasted decades, not three months. John Whitehead made no mention of an aluminum and steel airplane. Even without John Whitehead's testimony, the idea that a plane built of steel and aluminum had deteriorated over three months calls into question Randolph's veracity or her powers of observation. Wing coverings might have been more vulnerable to the elements, but the metal would have remained and could have been easily recovered.

Exhibit 5: *There are* ZERO *newspaper accounts of Gustave Whitehead's alleged flights of January 17, 1902 before the publication of his* American Inventor *letter in April of 1902.*

Everything ever written about the alleged January 1902 two- and seven-mile flights was derived from Gustave Whitehead's own words in that letter. There are no newspaper stories immediately following the flights as you might expect from such a momentous event. All published accounts from newspaper references to Stella Randolph's unquestioning claims come from this letter.

Exhibit 6: *There are* ZERO *references to the existence of a metal-framed framed, aluminum skinned airplane in all the words of testimony of those who claimed to witness Gustave Whitehead's flights.*

When properly conditioned and prompted, people have been able to conjure up recollections of short hops or "flights" by Gustave Whitehead thirty-five years after the fact. They claim some of these occurred in beach locations similar to those Whitehead's described in his *American Inventor* letter. But not one of these witnesses has described what must have been a remarkable and memorable sight for the times, the metal-framed, metal-clad No. 22. The existing testimonies invariably recall aircraft made of the wood and canvass like the No. 21.

Exhibit 7: ***In 1902 Gustave Whitehead submitted a photo of his No.21 to the*** **Aeronautical World** ***presenting it as a photo of airplane No.23.***

This is further evidence that Gustave Whitehead built no motorized planes in 1902 following the deterioration of the No. 21, but he continued to represent the old aircraft as new work. In a story that appeared in the *Aeronautical World* in December 1902, Gustave Whitehead claimed the No. 23 had been built and flown after the No. 22 and he was at that time working on a No. 24. As he added to his imaginary air force, he continued to reuse old photos as evidence of his work. The exact same photo appears in Stella Randolph's second book, "Before the Wrights Flew" (1966), opposite the title page as airplane No. 21, and on page 178 in a copy of the *Aeronautical World* article as No. 23.

Exhibit 8: ***In the spring of 1902, Bridgeport newspapers described the dissolution of a partnership between Herman Linde and Gustave Whitehead, giving one of the reasons as Whitehead's failure to fly.***

In October of 1901, Gustave Whitehead formed a partnership with Herman Linde who agreed to advance him $1000 to build the No. 22. By January of 1902 Whitehead had spent the money but had not made sufficient progress on the aircraft to satisfy his new partner. Linde dissolved their partnership on January 17, 1902 and warned Frank Miller Lumber Company, where Whitehead was buying his lumber, not to put any more materials on account. Whitehead, however, managed to sneak a $38 order past the lumberyard clerks and Linde refused to pay. Linde found himself in court over the bill and the proceedings were covered by the Bridgeport papers. The headline in the April 5, 1902 *Bridgeport Post* was tongue-in-cheek: "Whitehead Flew High –Financially but not Actually – That is to Say, as of Yet He Hasn't." That same day, the *Bridgeport Farmer* was more direct, but the message was the same: "Last Flop of the Whitehead Flying Machine…Airship Did Not Fly." The *Farmer* also takes a potshot at some New York papers that had printed more positive accounts of Whitehead's efforts: "…there is yet no airship. This will be a blow to some of the New York daily papers who have been printing long accounts of the airship and which were amply illustrated." These may have been spin-offs from the *Bridgeport Herald's* August 18, 1901 cut-and-paste fiction concerning the No. 21:

Exhibit 9: ***Gustave Whitehead's breakup with Herman Linde occurred on January 17, 1902, the same date he chose in his*** **American Inventor** ***letter as the date for his flights.***

One might think that an astute businessman (Herman Linde) would chose a better time for falling out with a partner than at the time of a breakthrough event like the alleged two- and seven-mile flights. Those flights would have been grist for the newspaper stories about the disagreement between the two men which sprung up over the next several weeks. Had the flights actually happened, the subject of those stories would have been who owned the rights to an incredibly successful invention rather than stories of a lawsuit over a hundred dollar lumber bill. Gustave Whitehead's world was closer to chaos on January 17, 1902 than to the "eureka" moment he alleges. It should be noted that he chose the January 17th date for his two- and seven-mile flights when he composed the letter to the editor of the *American Inventor,* some time (weeks to months) after the events of that day, and in time for publication in April of 1902. One wonders if this wasn't a poke at Linde.

Exhibit 10: ***Gustave Whitehead's application to display his aircraft at the St. Louis World's Fair, made on January 10, 1902, seven days before the alleged two- and seven-mile flights, describes a wood, bamboo, and silk airplane -- the No. 21, all except for the silk -- to the fair committee.***

One might think that with such a formidable creation as the metal-framed, metal-clad No. 22 being readied within the week for its first test flights, it might deserve some ink in a letter where one is putting ones best foot forward. However, when Gustave Whitehead wrote his letter to the Worlds Fair Committee in January 1902, he failed to mention it. Apparently Whitehead did not discover until a couple of months later, when he composed his letter to the *American Inventor*, that he had an aluminum and steel airplane that he had already flown seven miles.

A Parting Thought

In all probability, the *American Inventor* letter to the editor was a ruse to entice investors to take a chance on winning the prize offered by the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (better known as the St. Louis World's Fair) for the best flight by an airship or airplane at the fair in 1904. The prize was huge – $100,000 – the largest ever offered for an aeronautical competition up to that time, and it was the focus of aviation-minded scientists and inventors everywhere. Because Whitehead had lost his financial backing (Herman Linde) and was unable to fund his own aviation experiments, he used this story to lure new investors.

Story aside, the preponderance of evidence shows that Gustave Whitehead's No. 22 was only imaginary – *vaporware* is the contemporary term. A photo in the December 15, 1906 *Scientific American* suggests that Whitehead did assemble another wooden-framed aircraft hull, similar to the No. 21, but there is nothing to show that he completed it. Furthermore, all of the "evidence" that Whitehead flew in 1902 stems from the claim that he himself made in the *American Inventor*. But if the No. 22 never existed, how could he have possibly made those flights?

Appendix
Supporting Materials and Further Discussion

Exhibit 2
The Contradiction between the *Bridgeport Herald* and *American Inventor*

In his letter to the editor of the American Inventor, Gustave Whitehead stated that the seven-mile flight allegedly made on January 17, 1902 in his No.22 aircraft was driven by a 40 hp kerosene motor of his own design. Stella Randolph on page 14 of her first book cited this *American Inventor* letter in which Whitehead described his new kerosene motor as a *fait accompli* and the power source of his seven mile flight. Stella Randolph and Gustave Whitehead in their own words:

> One of the best descriptions of the Whitehead machines to which the flights of August 14, 1901, and January 17, 1902, are credited is found in his own letter to the Editor of the *American Inventor*,[6] published in the issue of April 1, 1902, in which the inventor compares planes No. 21 and No. 22. Referring to No. 22 of the Long Island Sound flights, he said:
>
> "It is run by a 40-horsepower kerosene motor of my own design, especially constructed for strength, power and lightness, weighing but 120 pounds complete. . . . Ignition is accomplished by its own heat and compression; it runs about 800 revolutions per minute, has five cylinders and no fly-wheel is used. It requires a space 16 inches wide, 4 feet long and 16 inches high. . . ."

In the *Bridgeport Herald* of January 26, 1902, the headline of a story on Whitehead's work states, "Gustave Whitehead and Herman Linde <u>*Delving Into*</u> the Difficult Problem of Flight." (Italics ours.) This is nine days after Whitehead claimed in a national publication that he had made a flight of seven miles. Further the headlines proclaim "The <u>*Great Obstacle in the Way of Success*</u> is to Get a Motor That is Both Sufficiently Light and Adequately Powerful" (Italics ours.) Nine days after his alleged flight powered by a 40 hp motor of his own design, a newspaper quotes the inventor as saying that the obstacle to successful flight is to get a good motor. This deserves to be repeated, the obstacle to successful flight is to get a good motor. The *Bridgeport Herald* headline:

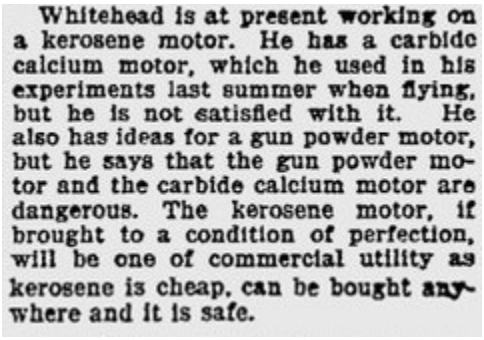

SUNDAY HERALD. JAN 26, 1902.

BRIDGEPORT'S FLYING MACHINE BUILDERS.

Gustave Whitehead and Herman Linde Delving Into the Difficult Problem of Aerial Navigation. The Great Obstacle in the Way of Success Is to Get a Motor That is Both Sufficiently Light and Adequately Powerful. Experiments With Gunpowder, Carbide Calcium and Kerosene Generators.

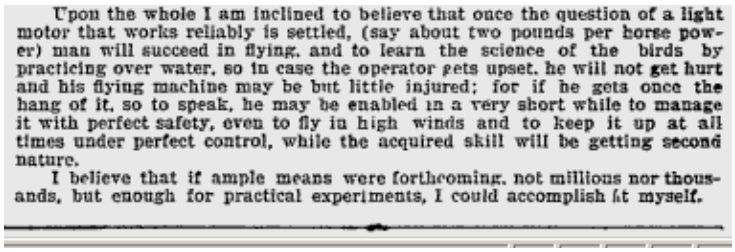
Further on in the body of the story the writer states, "Whitehead is at present working on a kerosene motor." Once again, this is nine days after Whitehead claimed that a 40 hp kerosene

motor of his own design propelled the No.22 seven miles through the skies over Long Island Sound. The writer goes on to state that, "The kerosene motor, if brought to a condition of perfection will be one of commercial utility…" It is worth noting that throughout the story there is absolutely zero mention of any flights taking place in the recent past, including January 17, 1902. The news writer's words from the January 26, 1902 *Bridgeport Herald* story:



Whitehead is at present working on a kerosene motor. He has a carbide calcium motor, which he used in his experiments last summer when flying, but he is not satisfied with it. He also has ideas for a gun powder motor, but he says that the gun powder motor and the carbide calcium motor are dangerous. The kerosene motor, if brought to a condition of perfection, will be one of commercial utility as kerosene is cheap, can be bought anywhere and it is safe.

Further on, at the end of the article, the reason for Whiteheads participation in describing his need for a good kerosene motor becomes a little clearer. In the last lines of a sidebar presenting Whitehead's reflections on flight, he makes his interests known. He states, "I believe that if ample means were forthcoming, not millions nor thousands, but enough for practical experiments, I could accomplish it myself." Never missing an opportunity, Gustave Whitehead solicits money to fund the research to make the flights he supposedly made nine days ago. The most likely explanation for these contradictions is simply that dishonesty requires a good memory. By the time he got around to telling his *American Inventor* story a couple of months later he apparently forgot that he had put out a conflicting story to the *Bridgeport Herald.* Read below Gustave Whitehead's ruminations on what it will take to successfully fly (and his plea for money), published nine days after he claimed to have successfully flown:



Upon the whole I am inclined to believe that once the question of a light motor that works reliably is settled, (say about two pounds per horse power) man will succeed in flying, and to learn the science of the birds by practicing over water, so in case the operator gets upset, he will not get hurt and his flying machine may be but little injured; for if he gets once the hang of it, so to speak, he may be enabled in a very short while to manage it with perfect safety, even to fly in high winds and to keep it up at all times under perfect control, while the acquired skill will be getting second nature.

I believe that if ample means were forthcoming, not millions nor thousands, but enough for practical experiments, I could accomplish it myself.

The *Bridgeport Herald* story comports with John Whitehead's letter to Stella Randolph. (See Exhibit 3.) According to John, the only aircraft in evidence in April of 1902 was the No.21, and no flight attempts had been made since the fall of 1901 due to a broken motor.

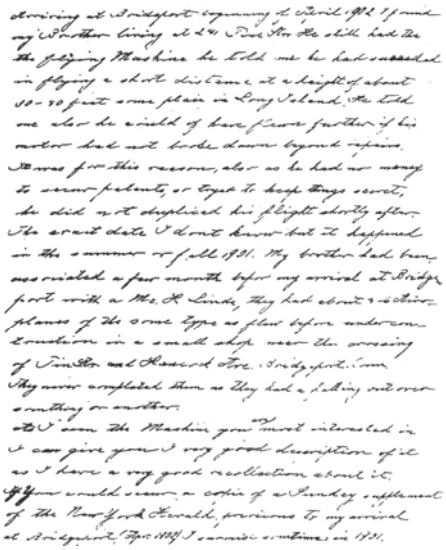
Exhibit 3
John Whitehead's letter to Stella Randolph, August 6, 1934

In 1934, John Whitehead wrote a letter to Stella Randolph describing a visit to his brother Gustave in April of 1902. Stella Randolph published a copy of John's letter in her second book ("Before the Wrights Flew," 1966), but not in her third ("History by Contract," 1978) which she co-authored with William O'Dwyer. Apparently she later understood its incriminating content and omitted it. The

letter is also missing from John Brown's morass of "evidence" on his web site, although Brown does use selective quotes from the letter to shape his case. According to John Whitehead, his brother Gustave had done little since the flurry of attention from story in the *Bridgeport Herald* on the August 18, 1901.

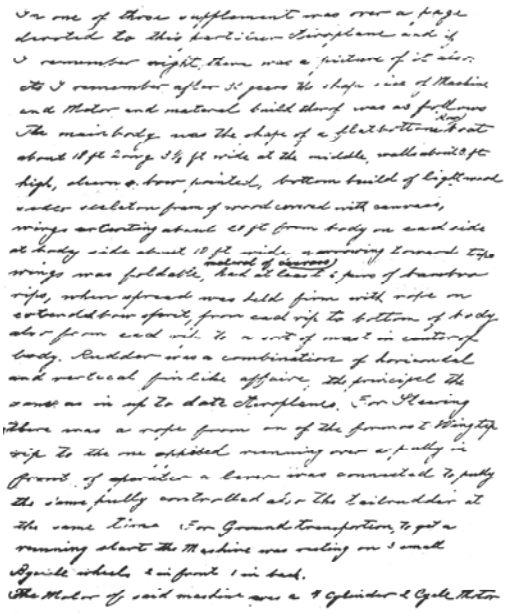
Below is the original letter and a transcript. The most relevant passages are emphasized in italics.

J.W. Letter, Page 1



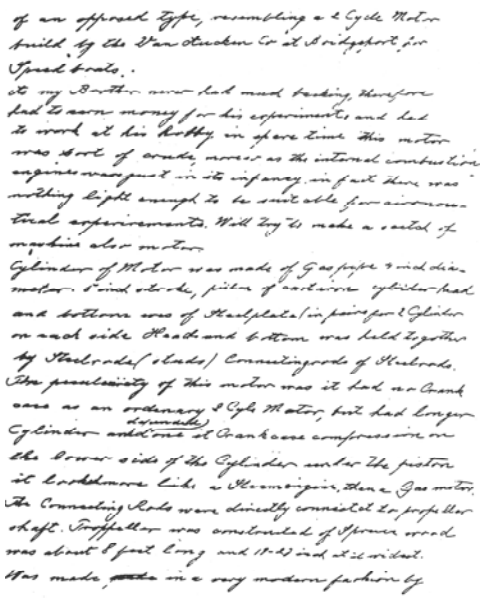
Arriving at Bridgeport beginning of April 1902 I found
my brother living at 241 Pine St. *He still had the*
flying machine he told me he had succeeded
in flying a short distance at a height of about
30-40 feet some place on Long Island. He told
me also he would have flown further if his
motor had not broke down beyond repairs.
It was for this reason also as he had no money
to secure patents to try to keep things secret,
he did not duplicate his flight shortly after.
The exact date I don't know but it happened
in the summer or fall of 1901. My brother had been
associated with a Mr. Linde, they had about 4-6 Airo-
planes of the same type as flown before under con-
struction in a small shop near the crossing.
of Fairfield and Hancock Ave. Bridgeport Conn.
They never completed them as they had a falling out over
something or another.
As I seen the machine you are most interested in
I can give you a very good description of it
as I have a very good recollection about it.
If you would secure a copy of a Sunday supplement
of the New York Herald previous to my arrival
at Bridgeport (April 1902) I surmise sometime in 1901.

J.W. Letter, Page 2



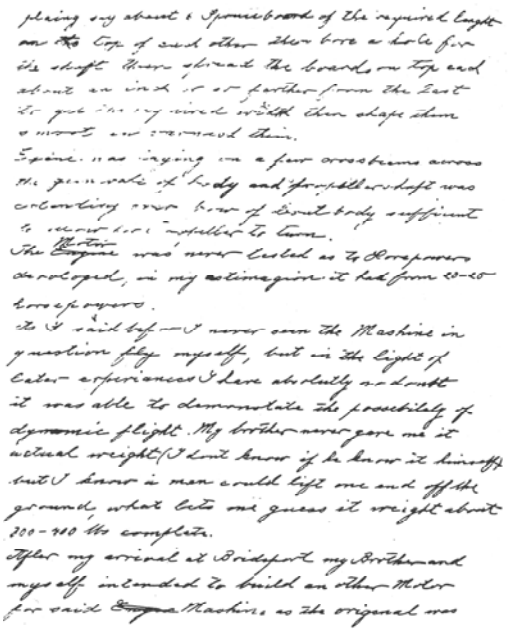
In one of those supplement was over a page
devoted to this particular Airoplane and if
I remember right there was a picture of it also.
As I remember after 33 years the shape size of machine
and motor and material build thereof was as follows.
The main body was the shape of a flat bottom row boat
about 18 ft. long, 3 ½ ft. wide at the middle, walls about 3 ft.
high, stern and bow pointed, bottom build of light wood
sides skeleton from wood covered with canvas,
wings extending about 20 ft. from the body on each side
at body side about 10 ft. wide, narrowing toward tips,
wings was foldable (material of canvass) had at least 5 pairs of bamboo
ribs, when spread was held firm with rope on
extended bow sprit, from each rib to bottom of body
also from each rib to a sort of mast in the center of
body. Rudder was a combination of horizontal
and vertical finlike affaire, the principle the
same as up to date airoplanes. For steering
there was a rope from one of the foremost wingtip
ribs to the one opposed running over a pully in
front of the operator a lever was connected to pully
the same pully controlled also the tailrudder at
the same time. For ground transportation to get a
running start the machine was resting on 3 small
Bicycle wheels 2 in front 1 in back.
The motor of said machine was a 4 cylinder 2 cycle motor

J.W. Letter, Page 3



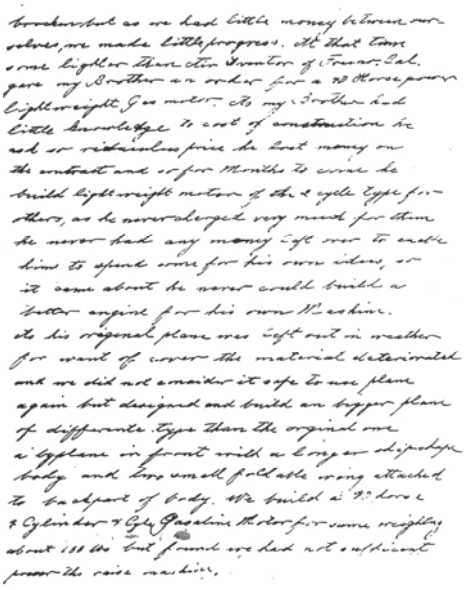
of an opposed type resembling a 2 cycle motor
build by the Van Stucken Co. at Bridgeport for
speed boats.
As my brother never had much backing, therefore
had to earn money for his experiments, and had
to work at his hobby in spare time. This motor
was sort of crude, more so as the internal combustion
engine was just in its infancy in fact there was
nothing light enough to be suitable for aironau-
tical experiments. Will try to make a sketch of
machine also motor.
Cylinder of motor was made of gas pipe 4 inch dia-
meter 5 inch stroke, piston of cast iron cylinder head
and bottom was of steel plates (in pairs for 2 cylinder
on each side heads and bottoms was held together
by steel rods (studs) Connecting rods of steel rods.
The peculiarity of this motor was it had no crank
case as an ordinary 2 cycle motor, but had longer
cylinder and one [?] it crankcase compression on
the lower side of the cylinder under the piston
it looked more like a steam engine than a gas motor.
The connecting rods were directly connected to propeller
shaft. Propeller was constructed of spruce wood
was about 8 feet long and 18-20 inch at widest.
Was made in a very modern fashion by

J.W. Letter, page 4



placing say about 6 spruce boards of the required length
on top of each other then bore a hole for
the shaft then spread the boards on top each
about an inch or so farther from the last
to get the required width then shape them
smooth and varnish them.
Engine was laying on a few crossbeams across
the gunwhale of the body and propeller shaft was
extending over bow of boat body sufficient
to allow propeller to turn .
The motor was never tested as to horsepower
developed, in my estimate it had from 20-25
horsepowers.
As I said before I never seen the machine in
question fly myself, but in the light of
later experiences I have absolutely no doubt
it was able to demonstrate the possibility of
dynamic flight. My brother never gave me it
actual weight (I don't know if he knew himself)
but I know a man could lift one end of it off the
ground, what lets me guess it weight about
300-400 lbs complete.
After my arrival at Bridgeport my Brother and
myself intended to build another motor
for said machine as the original was

J.W. Letter, Page 5



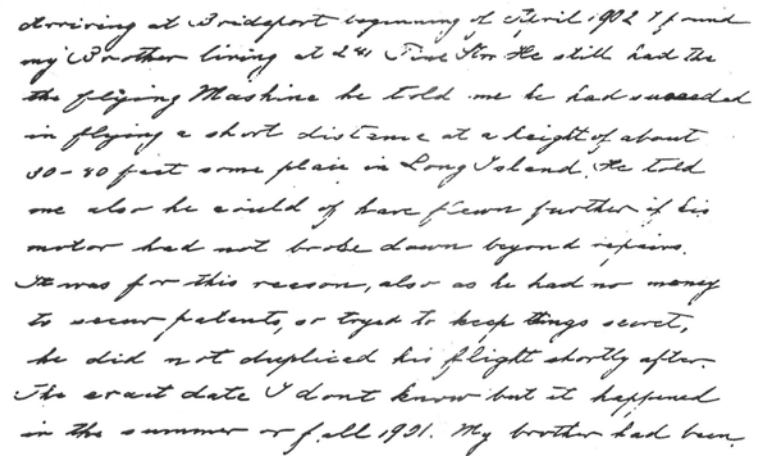
broken but as we had little between our-
selves, we made little progress. At that time
some lighter than air inventor of Fresno Cal.
gave my brother an order for a 40 horsepower
lightweight gas motor. As my brother had
little knowledge to cost of construction he
ask so ridiculess price he lost money on
the contract and so months to come he
build lightweight motor of the 2 cycle type for
others, as he never charged very much for them
he never had any money left over to enable
him to spend some on his own ideas, so
it came about he never could build a
better engine for his own machine.
As his original plane was left out in weather
for want of cover the material deteriorated
and we did not consider it safe to use plane
again but designed and build an bigger plane
of different type than the original one.
A biplane in front with a longer shipshape
body and two small foldable wings attached
to back part of body. We build a 40 horse
4 cylinder 4 cycle gasoline motor for same weighing
about 150 lbs but found we had not sufficient
power to raise machine.

Exhibit 4
How Stella Randolph Disposed of Plane No. 22

To account for the vague and mysterious fate of the phantom No. 22, Stella Randolph on page 57 of her first book, ("The Lost Flights of Gustave Whitehead," 1937) simply did away with the aircraft by saying that it was left out in the weather in the winter of 1901-02 and was no longer safe to use. This information she attributed to a letter of August 6, 1934 from John Whitehead, Gustave's brother. John Whitehead, however, did not say that. Here is Stella Randolph's version of the fate of the No. 22:

> During the winter of 1901–2, the plane that had made the Long Island Sound flights stood out in the weather and was no longer considered safe for use. The motor had been broken, John Whitehead reported in a letter to the writer dated August 6, 1934. So

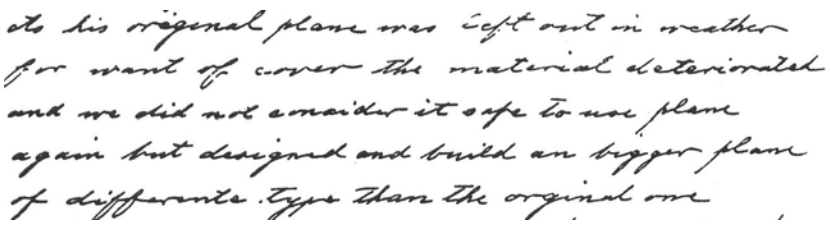
This was simply not true. A newly minted plane, framed in steel with an aluminum skin and aluminum tube ribs, would not have deteriorated over a few winter months. Because Bridgeport is near the sea, the salt in the air might have accelerated the corrosion of the steel and aluminum, but not enough to reduce it from flight-worthy to unsafe in the span of ninety days. Stella Randolph attributed the explanation to John Whitehead's letter and yet his words clearly state that the airplane which deteriorated over the winter was made of wood, bamboo, and canvas, as was the No. 21. (Remember that in the *American Inventor*, Gustave Whitehead describes the No. 22 as being made from steel aluminum, and silk.) John Whitehead calls this deteriorated aircraft the *original airplane* and describes it in great detail. He also states that it was the plane which he was told flew *on Long Island*. (not over Long Island Sound as Ms. Randolph presents). He further says that the airplane was flown in the *summer or fall of 1901* (not January.1902 as Ms. Randolph implies by calling it the Long Island Sound plane). Finally, he says that it was flown for a *short distance*, not seven miles as was claimed for the No. 22. Here are John Whitehead's own words and a transcription:



Arriving at Bridgeport beginning of April 1902 I found my brother living at 241 Pine St. He still had the flying machine he told me he had succeeded

in *flying a short distance* at a height of about
30-40 feet *some place on Long Island*. He told
me also he would have flown further if his
motor had not broke down beyond repairs.
It was for this reason also as he had no money
to secure patents to try to keep things secret,
he did not duplicate his flight shortly after.
The exact date I don't know but *it happened
in the summer or fall of 1901*. (Italics ours.)

Later on in his letter, after describing the deteriorating aircraft, John Whitehead went on to note that it was the "original plane" that his brother claimed had flown in the summer/fall of 1901 that had deteriorated over the winter of 1901-02. Stella Randolph's interpretation of John Whitehead's letter is one of a multitude of instances in her work that call into serious question either her integrity or her competence.



As his *original plane* was left out in weather
for want of cover the material deteriorated
and we did not consider it safe to use plane
again but designed and build an bigger plane
of different type than the original one. (Italics ours.)

Exhibit 5
Nothing was published concerning the January 17, 1902 flights until Whitehead's letter to the editor of the* American Inventor *appears in April of 1902.

In her books, Stella Randolph based her claims concerning these flights on the *American Inventor* letter and the discredited testimony of Anton Pruckner. She then hid the No. 22 from further scrutiny with the senseless allegation that the metal plane decayed in three months time. None of the news articles on John Brown's web site report the flights of the No. 22 before the *American Inventor* letter was published.

Exhibit 6
There are no recorded eyewitness accounts of a metal or part-metal Whitehead aircraft.

There is one witness, Anton Pruckner, who testifies to actually flying in the No. 22 but he offers no description of the airplane and his testimony is riddled with falsehoods. When confronted with his prevarications, he swears somebody told him the flights was true. These testimonies come from people so absorbed in the possibility of being associated with something important that they are able to recall themselves not only observing flights but also being a passenger in flights and even flying the planes themselves, as did Anton Pruckner (source of one of the many affidavits in

Randolph and O'Dwyer's books). Pruckner years later recalled that he wasn't even living in Bridgeport at the time. Its is also telling that Junius Harworth goes on at great length testifying about every detail of the No. 21, which Stella Randolph gives prominence in her book, but has nothing to say about an aluminum and steel No. 22.

Exhibit 7
Another Imaginary Airplane

In his letter to the editors of the *American Inventor*, Whitehead had presented a picture of his No. 21—an aircraft made of bamboo, wood, and canvas – and then claimed that his No. 22 was exactly like the plane in the photo but more sophisticated and made of steel, aluminum, and silk. Whitehead promised that he would send photos of the No. 22 flight in the spring when he resumed his tests. He even invited reporters to observe and photograph. But he never got around to those tests. Instead, Gustave Whitehead reached out to a new source of publicity, the *Aeronautical World*.

In the December 1902 *Aeronautical World*, Whitehead once again plied his bait-and-switch. This time he showed a photo he claimed was the No. 23 while talking about the construction of No. 24. All this aeronautical work – the building of the No. 22 and No. 23 and the partial assembly of the No. 24 – occurred in that period of time when John Whitehead had said in his August 1934 letter to Stella Randolph that they had built nothing. Once again, Gustave Whitehead promised to the readers of the *Aeronautical World* in his December 1902 article that there would be a follow up report on this new No. 24 after the first trials in January of 1903. From the *Aeronautical World* December 1902:

Since Mr. Whitehead's experiments last January with his machine, Fig. 1, he has been working on his improved machine No. 24. which will be ready for its first trial trip about January 1, 1903.

A full description of and report on this promising machine will be published in the Aëronautical World after the first trials. For the present we are only at liberty to state that No. 24 machine will be built on the same lines as. Nos. 22 and 23, but it will be provided with two sets of wing surfaces in place of one set. The most forward of the two pairs, or wing-like surfaces, will be large and patterned after the wings of a bat; the second, or hindmost set, of wings will consist of three superposed aëro-surfaces, which will be concave on their under side from front to rear. By means of

It should be noted here that Gustave's plan to create a plane with two sets of surfaces was similar to the plan that his brother John Whitehead wrote about in his letter to Stella Randolph. The only difference is that in John's version he and his brother went directly from the broken down "original plane", the No. 21, to building a plane with two sets of wings. There were no airplanes No. 22 or No. 23. The airplane John Whitehead described building would be the airplane

Gustave Whitehead called the No. 24 in the *Aeronautical World* article. Here are John Whitehead's words in Stella Randolph's book:

> As his original plane was left out in weather
> for want of cover the material deteriorated
> and we did not consider it safe to us plane
> again but designed and build an bigger plane
> of different type than the original one.
> A biplane in front with a longer shipshape
> Body and two small foldable wings attached
> to back part of body. We build a 40 horse

To further confuse the issue, the photo that Gustave Whitehead submitted to *Aeronautical World* for the December 1902 issue, representing it as the No. 23, was in fact a photo of the original No. 21. Gustave Whitehead was growing more audacious. In the January 1902 *American Inventor* he claimed, "The No. 22 looks exactly like this." In the December 1902 *Aeronautical World,* he declares in the caption, "This is No. 23." See the *Aeronautical World* article as it appeared:

MODEL OF DR. A. GRIETH'S AIRSHIP.

For several weeks the constructor has been hard at work in the pavilion at Agricultural Park oiling and making impervious to wind and weather the chinese silk to be used in the manufacture of the big gas bag that is to float above the aeroplane of the Eagle. A working model of the big air navigator has come in for a good share of the inventor's attention. This model, as it swings in the air or travels on a tight wire, attracts no little attention both from the curious and those of a scientific turn of mind.

The model is made of copper, and with the motor, weighs thirty-five pounds, and has four

W. G. Whitehead's New Machine.

Since Mr. Whitehead's experiments last January with his machine, Fig. 1, he has been working on his improved machine No. 24, which will be ready for its first trial trip about January 1, 1903.

A full description of and report on this promising machine will be published in the Aëronautical World after the first trials. For the present we are only at liberty to state that No. 24 machine will be built on the same lines as Nos. 22 and 23, but it will be provided with

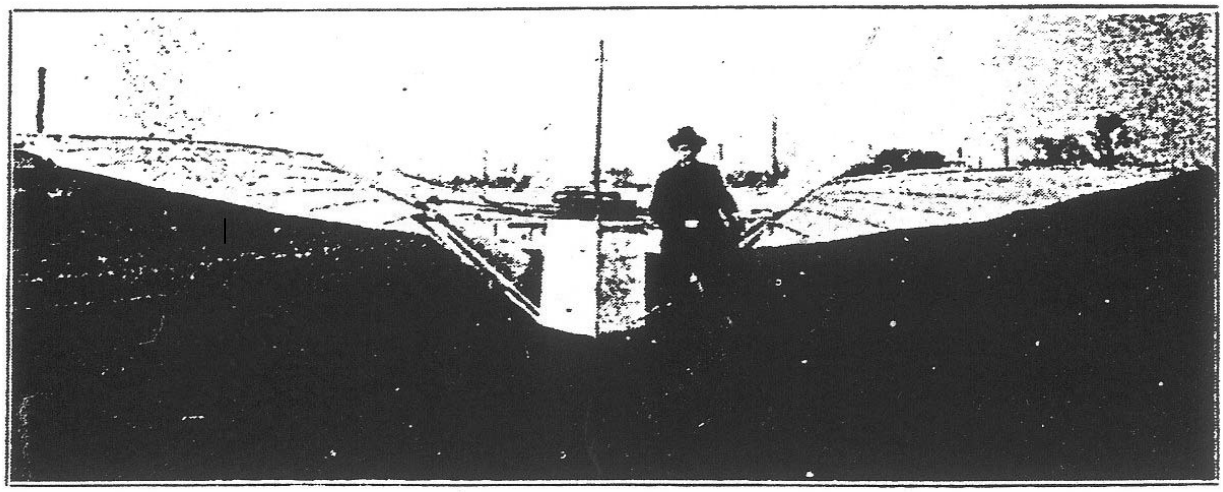


FIG. 1. WHITEHEAD'S MACHINE NO. 23.

Here is the same photo from the page numbered Roman Numeral X in the "Old Picture Series," between pages 240 and 241 of Stella Randolph and William O'Dwyer's "History by Contract" (1978), and it is clearly labeled No. 21. Also in the same book on page 274 is the above *Aeronautical World* article showing the same photo labeled as No. 23!

Front view of Whitehead's No. 21 aircraft described and claimed to have flown in Fairfield, Conn., on August 14, 1901, according to

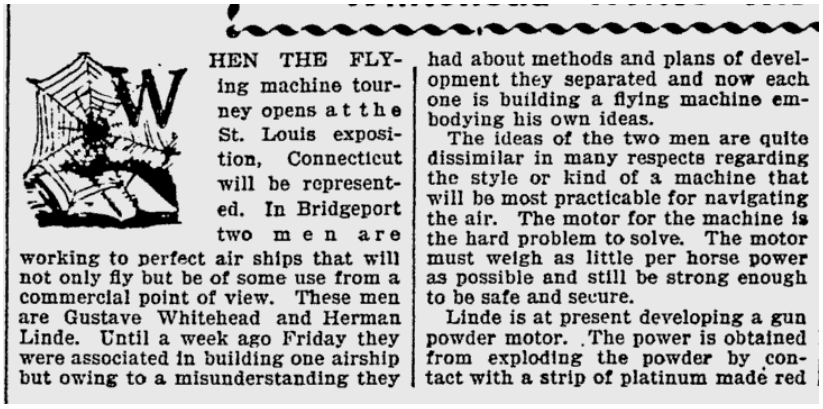
These two conflicting photos also show up in Stella Randolph's second book, "Before the Wrights Flew" (1966), as the No. 21 in the front of the book opposite the title page, and as the No. 23 in the *Aeronautical World* article on page 178. If the *Aeronautical World* photo was mislabeled or a typo the text of the article also misrepresented the photo, how did Randolph miss this *twice*?

In case you're wondering, just as there was no follow up report to the *American Inventor* on the spring "tests" of the phantom No. 22, there would be no follow up report to the *Aeronautical World* on the "tests" of the No. 23. There couldn't be; neither plane existed.

Exhibit 9
The Linde/Whitehead Breakup

The Linde/ Whitehead breakup was reported in the January 26, 1902 edition of the *Bridgeport Herald* on page 5. The Sunday paper states that, "Until a week ago Friday they were associated in building one airship…" That would be nine days back, which would be January 17, 1902. Two months later, Gustave Whitehead chose that same date when he described the two- and seven-mile flights in his *American Inventor* letter. January 17 was not a good day for Whitehead and yet he chose to make it the setting for his grandest fabrication. Had that flight of fancy been true, the *Bridgeport Herald* would have been trumpeting the epoch-making feat and Whitehead's No. 22, while wringing their hands over subsequent dispute between the partners. Instead, all the *Herald* served up was a benign article about motors to power an airplane that had yet to fly.

The January 26, 1902 *Bridgeport Herald* article:



WHEN THE FLYING machine tourney opens at the St. Louis exposition, Connecticut will be represented. In Bridgeport two men are working to perfect air ships that will not only fly but be of some use from a commercial point of view. These men are Gustave Whitehead and Herman Linde. Until a week ago Friday they were associated in building one airship but owing to a misunderstanding they had about methods and plans of development they separated and now each one is building a flying machine embodying his own ideas.

The ideas of the two men are quite dissimilar in many respects regarding the style or kind of a machine that will be most practicable for navigating the air. The motor for the machine is the hard problem to solve. The motor must weigh as little per horse power as possible and still be strong enough to be safe and secure.

Linde is at present developing a gun powder motor. The power is obtained from exploding the powder by contact with a strip of platinum made red

In another story related to the breakup of Linde and Whitehead, Linde was taken to court over unpaid lumber bills. On April 5, 1902, the *Bridgeport Post* headline to the story about the case stated that Whitehead had not yet flown. This was five days after the release of the story in the *American Inventor* where Whitehead described his 7-mile flight.

WHITEHEAD FLEW HIGH

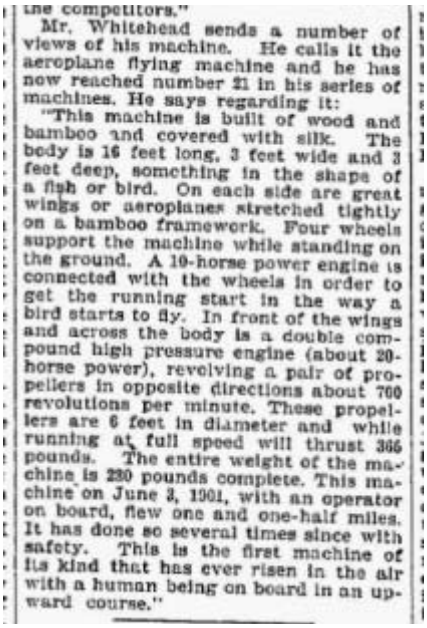
That Is Financially but Not Actually—That Is, To Say as Yet He Hasn't.

LINDE TIRED OF PUTTING UP DUCATS.

Miller Lumber Co. Brings Him into Court—Says He Ordered Brakes Down.

Exhibit 10
Worlds Fair Submission

The newspaper report on Gustave Whitehead's January 10, 1902 submission to the World's Fair Committee shows that he described his aircraft as made from wood, bamboo, and silk. (Perhaps he intended to remove the deteriorated canvas and recover the No. 21.). No mention is made of a steel-framed, aluminum-clad airplane – the No. 22 – which he would later claim to have flown within a week of his submission.

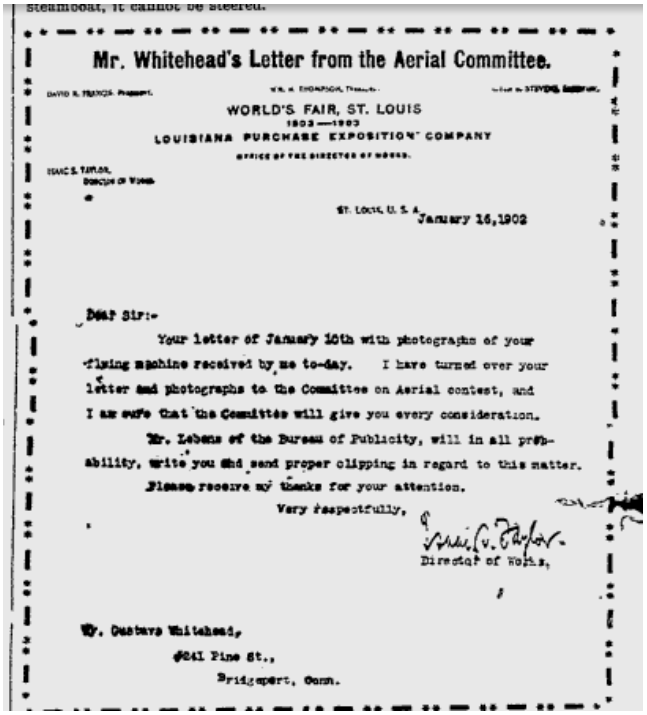


the competitors."

Mr. Whitehead sends a number of views of his machine. He calls it the aeroplane flying machine and he has now reached number 21 in his series of machines. He says regarding it:

"This machine is built of wood and bamboo and covered with silk. The body is 16 feet long, 3 feet wide and 3 feet deep, something in the shape of a fish or bird. On each side are great wings or aeroplanes stretched tightly on a bamboo framework. Four wheels support the machine while standing on the ground. A 10-horse power engine is connected with the wheels in order to get the running start in the way a bird starts to fly. In front of the wings and across the body is a double compound high pressure engine (about 20-horse power), revolving a pair of propellers in opposite directions about 700 revolutions per minute. These propellers are 6 feet in diameter and while running at full speed will thrust 366 pounds. The entire weight of the machine is 230 pounds complete. This machine on June 3, 1901, with an operator on board, flew one and one-half miles. It has done so several times since with safety. This is the first machine of its kind that has ever risen in the air with a human being on board in an upward course."

The response letter from the Worlds Fair Aerial Committee clarifies the date for his submission letter as having been written on January 10, 1902.



steamboat, it cannot be steered.

Mr. Whitehead's Letter from the Aerial Committee.

WORLD'S FAIR, ST. LOUIS
1903 — 1903
LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPOSITION COMPANY

St. Louis, U. S. A., January 16, 1902

Dear Sir:-

Your letter of January 10th with photographs of your flying machine received by me to-day. I have turned over your letter and photographs to the Committee on Aerial contest, and I am sure that the Committee will give you every consideration.

Mr. Lebens of the Bureau of Publicity, will in all probability, write you and send proper clipping in regard to this matter.

Please receive my thanks for your attention.

Very respectfully,

Director of Works.

Mr. Gustave Whitehead,
#241 Pine St.,
Bridgeport, Conn.