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Laura Ingalls
(Friend of the Gray Family)

By *Wallace F. Gray*

Laura Ingalls (1901-1967) [note the date discrepancy] was a famous aviator, closely associated with Lockheed Aircraft and friend of our family. (Not to be confused with the famous writer, Laura Ingalls Wilder.) As a child I knew her. She came to our house in Santa Monica, California, for dinner on occasion. She referred to my father, Firman C. Gray, as *Alphonso*, named after a king, she said.

At one of the dinners at our home she told us how she flew over the capitol (and/or the White House) at Washington, D.C. throwing out "America First" pamphlets. She was breaking the law by flying over that area and eventually got in trouble for it. (See <http://www.ctie.monash.edu.au/hargrave/ingalls.html>)



The autograph reads: *“To Wallace Gray with lots of good wishes, for lots of good things. From your friend, Laura Ingalls. February 8th, 1937.”*

Obituary from the *Daily Review* of Burbank, California, January 17, 1967:

Laura Ingalls, famed early aviatrix, dies

Miss Laura Ingalls, who became the first flyer to complete a solo flight around the South American continent in 1934, died recently January 10, 1967 [discrepancy] in Burbank. She was 66 [another discrepancy].

Miss Ingalls had lived in California 30 years and at 1027 Country Club Drive 12 years.

The daughter of a socially prominent New York family, Miss Ingalls' great love was flying.

She placed second in the 1936 National Air Races in a special contest for women. She completed a transcontinental trip, flying alone in her Lockheed Orion, in 15 hours and 39 minutes.

Miss Ingalls was also enthralled by aerial acrobatics. The first woman to earn a transport pilot's license, she performed 980 continuous loops in her DH Gypsy Moth and 714 consecutive barrel rolls over St. Louis.

In 1935 Miss Ingalls set out to set a record for the first non-stop coast-to-coast flight from east to west. She made the flight in 18 hours and 19 minutes. She then broke Amelia Earhart's nonstop record by 5 1/2 hours.

Miss Ingalls leaves a brother in Paris, France and a sister-in-law in New York. Private funeral services and burial were held.

Records and Resume of Flying Career of Laura Ingalls. This document was written presumably by Laura and was found among my father's possessions. It was dated October 28, 1935, with one addition made after that date.

December 23, 1928--Soloed on Roosevelt Field, Mineola, Long Island, N.Y.

June 1929--Enrolled in Universal Flying School, Lambert-St. Louis Field

September 1929--Obtained Limited Commercial license from Department of Commerce

April 12, 1930--Obtained Transport license from Department of Commerce.

Graduated from Universal Flying School Transport course with mark of 98 - only girl in the School.

May 4, 1930--Established Women's Loop record in D.H. Gypsy Moth over Lambert-St. Louis Field - 344 loops. Previous record 47 loops.

May 26, 1930--Bettered first loop record at Muskogee, Okla. by making 980 consecutive continuous loops in 3:40. (D.H. Gipsy Moth)

August 13, 1930--Established World barrel-roll record for men and women of 714 rolls over Lambert-St. Louis Field. (D.H. Gipsy Moth)

August-Sept. 1930--Won third place Women's Dixie Derby from Washington, D.C. to Chicago, Ill. Price \$800.

October 1930--Established first Women's Transcontinental round trip record between Roosevelt Field and Grand Central Air Terminal, Glendale, California and return. Time 30:25 to California; 25:20 on return flight to Roosevelt Field. Airplane: D.H. Gipsy Moth.

January 1934--Granted 3rd Class Radio Telephone license with authority to use code. Call letters K H T J Q

February 28, 1934--Took off from North Beach Airport, Jackson Heights, L.I. in Lockheed Air Express for flight to South America.

March 8, 1934--Took off from Miami for Havana, Cuba. Crossed the Caribbean Sea to Merida, Yucatan. Continued down through Central America to France Field, Cristobal, Canal Zone.

March 13, 1934--Flew non-stop from France Field, Cristobal, C.Z. to Talara, Peru, a distance of 1296 miles - 460 miles over water. Continued down the West coast of South America to Santiago, Chile.

March 21, 1934--The Andes were crossed at an altitude of 18,000 ft. through the Uspallata Pass between Santiago, Chile and Mendoza, Argentina.

N.B. This is the first solo flight by an American woman over these formidable mountains and has only been accomplished previously by two other women. (German and French).

The flight continued to Buenos Aires and up the East coast of South America, touching at Para, at the mouth of the Amazon, Paramaribo, in the jungles of Duth Guiana, Port of Spain, Trinidad and up through the West Indies to Miami.

April 22, 1934--Arrived Miami, Florida.

April 25, 1934--Arrived New York, Floyd Bennett Field, completing 17,000 mile flight.

Records established on South American flight:

The longest solo flight ever made by a woman - 17,000 miles

The first solo flight by a woman from North to South America

The first solo flight around South America by man or woman

The first complete flight by a land plane around South America by a man or woman.

The first land plane to negotiate the perilous route up the East coast of South America

The first American woman to fly the Andes solo.(Miss Ingalls was awarded the Harmon Trophy for Women in 1934 for this outstanding achievement.)

January 26, 1935--Obtained S.A.T.R. license at Union Air Terminal, Burbank, California. Test given by James H. Kinney, Department of Commerce inspector and specialist in blind flight and radio experiment for the Government.

N.B. This is the first time this license has been issued to a woman.

February 1, 1935--Took delivery on Lockheed ORION NR 14222. Low wing monoplane. Retractable landing gear; Pratt & Whitney Wasp (supercharged); Hamilton controllable propeller; air brakes (flaps); Sperry Gyro Pilot; Westport radio compass and receiver. Gas capacity 630 gallons; oil 40 gallons. Range - 3500 miles.

This is the first time a woman has operated an airplane of this type equipped with the most modern mechanical devices either in the United States or in Europe.

July 11, 1935--Established non-stop record from Floyd Bennett Field to Union Air Terminal, Burbank, Cal. Time: 18:19 (Lockheed ORION). The first woman to make this flight establishing an initial record for Women from East to West. The flight surpassed the previous Men's record by 5½ hours.

N.B. The East to West non-stop flight has only been accomplished twice before in the history of flying in the United States.

September 12, 1935--Non-stop flight from Union Air Terminal, Burbank, Cal. to Floyd Bennett Airport, New York - Time: 13:34:05. This flight surpassed Miss Earhart's non-stop record in 1932 by 5½ hours and her two stop record by approximately 3½ hours. Miss Earhart's transcontinental records were the only previous records for the transcontinental route established for Women. (Lockheed ORION). See Laura's story on this flight below in the article ORION.

N.B. Both East to West and West to East records for non-stop flight for Women are held by Lockheed ORION NR 14222. The East to West record however is for both men and women. (The above Resume was written October 28, 1935. The following was added.)

1936-1938--Acrobatic Exhibition flying throughout the West in Ryan low-wing monoplane.

Genealogical Information. Written by Laura Ingalls on February 7, 1953. This document was found among my father's possessions.

160-15 Powells Cove Blvd.
Beechhurst, L.I.

[A Google Earth image from 2013 depicts this address as an H-shaped, low-rise brick apartment building in Queens named "The Towers of Beechhurst." It is about a block from Little Neck Bay to the north, between the Throgs Neck and Whitestone Bridges to the east and west, respectively.]

Father - F. Abbott Ingalls, born 107 State St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mother - Martha Houghtaling, born 321 Clinton Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. daughter of David M. Houghtaling, born Kingston, N.Y. descendant of Jan Willemsen Hoogteling, who arrived in NY May 9, 1661. DHH made fortune (in those days) in tea. Married Laura McAlister, of Waterloo, N.Y., for whom am named. Moved to NYC. Died there.

Father's forebears from Lynn, Mass. and Bristol, R.I. Related to Bowers, Bourns and Anthonys; mother - Hannah Bourn. William Bowers Bourn went West in [18]49, struck gold and his son, my father's first cousin, with Will Crocker, owned or controlled much of San Francisco, viz. Cousin Will owned Empire gold mine and with Will Crocker, the Spring Valley Water Supply and all sorts of things I don't know about or remember. Lived in a show place at San Mateo; bought historic Muckross Abbey in Ireland for only daughter when she married an Irishman; gave ambulance and unit in First World War; had Paderewski play for them at a thousand dollars a night, etc. etc.

Self & brother -- F. Abbott Ingalls, Jr., born Brooklyn, N.Y. Officer in both World Wars, with MI in latter. Married Mabel Morgan Satterlee in 1926, granddaughter of J. Pierrepont Morgan.

Note: Character analysis of Laura Houghtaling Ingalls, of some interest and astonishingly accurate when viewing record and/or accomplishments: Unusual MENTAL activity, highly imaginative, possessed of exceptional drive and energy when directed toward fixed objective. Should guard against excessive emotional impulses. Strong-willed and independent. Courageous, etc. etc. Zodiac sign: Sagittarius.

My mother, partly through ill health, was extremely emotional and without adequate self-discipline; spoiled by her parents who thought she was wonderful and could do anything. Brilliant along certain lines, she possessed the trait I find most exciting in the American character, viz. the ability to hurdle difficulties and achieve the reputedly impossible. I grew up under such influence.

Additional: - My first cousin, Irene Hazelhurst Houghtaling, married Henry R. Carse, a one-time VP of the Guaranty Trust Co, & later president of the ELECTRIC BOAT CO. at Groton, Conn. The only privately owned company to build submarines. Their agent at one time was Sir Basil Zaharoff (!) and they did big business with England, South America, etc. Mr. Carse's company was called to Washington to testify as to their activities when the Nye Committee began investigations on "America's Armament Makers". Mr. Carse & his partner were on the stand for several days. Believe they were cleared. I remember thinking that this was scandalous - that anyone connected with my family should be supplying "implements of war" to other nations. "Capt. Henry", as I called him, was several times a millionaire, and "Money talks" an exceedingly clear persuasive language, doesn't it? They lived in New Rochelle. The one son lives there now.

Letter from my father (Firman C. Gray). In a letter from my father to Jill Hutchby of Berkeley, California, who was a friend and former mechanic of Laura Ingalls before her death in 1967, Firman wrote the following:

"I worked for Lockheed as a mechanic at the time Laura Ingalls received her Orion in 1934. I was in charge of the service work she required from the factory. In her flights I helped with maintenance on the plane when it was in Burbank.

"For a period of 30 years I never saw or heard from her.

"On October 31, 1966 while on a visit to Lockheed I called her on the phone. She was very pleased and wanted to know why I had called. She told me she was not able to get around any more and would I do some errands for her.

"We were able to take care of her needs and on January 6, 1967 we sent her to the hospital and on January 10, 1967 she passed away in her sleep."

Excerpt from a book by Laura. Whether this book was ever published I do not know. This was a draft to my father (Firman C. Gray.)

A Record is Broken by Laura Ingalls

In a handwritten note dated August 30, 1964. Laura writes to Firman: "Read this - if you will. It is not bad - but can be made much much better - Intensified and shortened and the WHY - although that is told on other pages. The "why" a "Record and the joy of flying for a purpose."

4

(My crescent and cross)

"Wish you had time to read "Air Express." It would give you better idea of the "person" or pilot and the potential."

The record that Laura is referring to and the subject of this chapter is a description of her non-stop flight on September 12, 1935, from Union Air Terminal in Burbank, California, to Floyd Bennett Airport, New York, in a time of 13 hours, 34 minutes and five seconds. This flight surpassed Amelia Earhart's non-stop record in 1932 by five and one-half hours and her two-stop record by approximately 3½ hours. Miss Earhart's transcontinental records were the only previous records for the transcontinental route established for women.

The flight was made in Laura's Lockheed Orion NR 14222 which she took delivery of on February 1, 1935. The Orion was a low wing monoplane with retractible landing gear, Pratt and Whitney Wasp (supercharged), Hamilton controllable propeller, air brakes (flaps), Sperry Gyro Pilot, Westport radio compass and receiver. Gas capacity was 630 gallons; oil 40 gallons. Range was 3,500 miles. It was the first time a woman operated an airplane of this type equipped with the most modern mechanical devices either in the United States or in Europe.

When this narrative was written is unknown. Also, is this part of a book she was contemplating?

ORION

Everything moves on - and still I wait. Is anything worth the price of so much waiting? What care I for contracts and Certainty? Let me take off and do what I am able and never mind the rest. But no--deep within me lies a cold determination - I will succeed; and for such success I must allow myself every chance within my power to choose; there is so much which must be left to Chance.

September 11th [1935]. I have a wire from Dr. Kimball that things look good! (Dr. James Kimball, head of the United States Weather Bureau in New York.) I check with Mr. French -

Okay. To-morrow is the day! The third attempt - the fourth load take-off bearing well over three thousand pounds of gas. What think you of an Orion?

I do not manage any sleep before this take-off either; there is too much to do. I doze for a bit at the Hotel and then back to the hangar. Pacific Airmotive, who have checked my engine and are now old hands at Transcontinental take-offs, decide they will pump up the Cleveland struts in the wings after I have gassed; they think it will be more accurate to do this when the whole weight is in the ship. I have done this gassing now so many times, am so sure of all the moves that I allow myself just time enough, so it is none too early when the operation is finished. Slowly the heavy ship is towed back from the gas pit to the Pacific Airmotive hangar and I leave the men working on the gear to send telegrams and look again at maps. The night is clear - the fog is still far down the Valley; the morning will be good, but it will be the last for probably several days. New York stands open.

Returning to the hangar in half an hour, I see effort - and feel the atmosphere of pressure and anxiety... They cannot raise my wings - a leaking valve - with that terrific weight upon the wings; each time the pressure escapes. The men are working desperately - Eddie Cooper himself upon a wing - struggling to force in air. Reporters are hanging about - they continue to ask when I will take off. When... Now this! My struts - at the eleventh hour.

Then I see "Alphonso" (Laura's name for Firman Gray.) I told him not to come - an awful time to get up; he lives an hour's drive away in Santa Monica. But he is there. He stands around and watches - doesn't talk - never talks much. He has nothing to do with Pacific Airmotive and will not interfere with their personnel. But he loves the Orion. Eddie Cooper wrenches out the information that they cannot raise the wing in time for a take-off now; later, perhaps...

With a bowed and bloody head I stumble toward the Terminal Building. Another stark defeat. Why do things always seem to mean life or death to me; why must I want things with such blind desire that nothing else exists but that one thing - and denied it, I am plunged in darkness and despair. Is it because Rhapsody waits at the other end, for those who go down to the depths? No matter - I would give much to take disappointments in a humdrum way - lightly, casually; instead of knowing every nerve taut and quivering in anguish.

"Cancel those wires to New York - please..." (Why hast Thou forsaken me? I drag back to the hanger - My head still down - seeing nothing. Out of the muffled obscurity of sounds in the direction of my ship - I hear...a sixth sense - almost before the words. The voice - tense, quiet, impersonal - hardly speaking to me: "One strut is up ... they'll have the other in a few minutes..." The blood leaps in my body. (Why such little Faith?)

Alphonso loves the Orion! Pacific Airmotive or not - he cannot stand by and see us go down to defeat. A Lockheed pump snatched swiftly from a locked Factory has done the work. Without question, he has saved the day and the honor of an Orion.

Headlong I tear back to the Terminal: STOP that cancelling wire! Wire New York my time of take-off - collect..."

Back to my ship in bounds. It is already 5:15; I should have been gone an hour ago! I force myself roughly into my unwieldy flying suit; I am curt and concentrated when they come about with questions. Good heavens! Can't they wait and see...

I am in my ship at last - it is 5:25. Dutch, who has given the check and run the engine up earlier, tells me it is smooth as silk. Dutch loves engines as much as I do - and he knows everything about them. All right, Dutch - thanks; with that report I don't need to worry.

I give my engine ten minutes on the Apron; my oil has been warmed with an immersion heater for an hour previously; then I wheel about and taxi down to the runway end.

Ruthlessly I push my heavy tires into the turf and without aid, drag my tail around on brakes and engine, until I face the runway - the longest on the field. For there is anger in me, because I have known recent pain and perhaps am not yet through... I make one brief farewell gesture - and bend myself behind controls and throttle.

And because I have flung myself at this take-off, it is the poorest and yet the best flying I have done. True, a new tachometer is on my Board and the strange face holds my eyes that split second too long, so that I begin sheering to the right. I control with rudder and instantly begin a movement to the left... With cold fury I collect my ship and with only a moderate vibration of my gear (Lockheed have again checked and strengthened) I pull off and in a deafening half circle perilously near the ground, sweep to the left - pass the western edge of the field and head into the East. Thrice have I thus roared down the San Fernando Valley flying this unnatural weight of gas - laboring for altitude. Thrice I cleared at 9,000 feet the rocky summits of the Cajon Pass. Thrice have I burned over the desert into the sunrise toward the East. Now I call upon whatever gods there be, within these mountains which I love - riding the winds over these desert stretches - that this time shall suffice.

Beside me in the cockpit, on the oil tank, rests a Moving Picture camera, loaned by Hearst Metrotone News; the only time a camera has been carried on a solo record flight. I have an idea it would be fun to see pictures taken by the Pilot in transit.

I say "solo"; but had it not been for my loyal co-pilot one of those strong, silent men, about whom very little has been said, I could never have managed the various moves in connection with handling the camera. This co-pilot of mine is essentially of a retiring nature - no foolish talk - always the man of action! I call him "Little Elmer", but that is affectionate familiarity, for my use only.

Officially and formally, he is known as the Sperry Gyro Pilot. He flies the ship better than I do, with a fine steady hold of stick and rudder and while he did the work, I was able to change reels, wind the spring of the camera, pack away used films and thoroughly enjoy myself "shooting" all the best views. "Little Elmer" hardly needs my endorsement, for he is known far and wide as the greatest single contribution to the mechanics of flying which has thus far been invented!

At Seligman, Arizona, I lose my first hour of precious daylight and looking down at the world below, I know that no longer am "I waking - I only" alone within the Universe. I have leaped

into the morning, according to arbitrary man-made meridians and it is now everybody's breakfast time. The weather is beautiful; not much help in winds but this is not the season for winds. My Radio Receiver brings me clear musical signals from the Dept. of Commerce beam on the lap between Winslow and Albuquerque. My engine sounds as smooth as cream - Dutch would be satisfied. My ship is easing off a trifle in weight; I have emptied my rear fuselage tank and always feel encouraged as the center of gravity comes forward.

At Tucumcari, N. M. I. lose my second hour. I try a passing camera shot at Tucumcari's table-top mountain, which I can hardly distinguish from a distance at this altitude of 10,000 ft., although I remember when I flew this same country in the Moth (the D. H. Gypsy Moth. Laura did acrobatics in this plane), struggling along at 5,000 ft. how that mountain used to point up out of the horizon - an unmistakable landmark.

Ah me - a Moth. Against this Eagle, which now bears me on cleaving wings. But I shall always love the Moth - for the Moth taught me to fly. Five times that tiny ship carried me across the Rockies; five times we fluttered small but determined over the enormous western miles against big bullying head winds. Our cruising speed only 85 MPH in still air and when held back by a velocity of 30 or 40 MPH, it gave a ground speed of but 45! Navigating the Western plains and mountains at that rate of progress is rigorous endurance. Not only at low speed does the wind take greater toll in drift, but the interminable approach to watched-for landmarks dissolves every certainty into doubt. We doubt our Time; we doubt what speed we think we make, as indicated on the Instrument; and particularly we doubt our ground speed, as indicated on our map. It seems we must surely be further on, than to all appearances we are! But still the mountains rise blue in the far distance - still ahead is an even higher range which must be cleared, although the little Gypsy engine is straining every cylinder and unable to climb higher. It seems almost unfair. The immensity of Earth, the immensity of Wind - against this one small speck - which continues, nearly at a standstill, to remain aloft and inch indomitably toward the West.

Now Wichita lies behind us - cleanly; without edging, we have hit the wide square field. The time is checked and I try for a camera shot at the city, standing clear and sharp in the midday sun. Too high not much detail possible at 10,000 feet; too swift - at full throttle we are travelling like a comet - blazing overhead and vanishing. A long swing past Kansas City and the first glimpse of the Missouri River. That means home ground - the Missouri.

Afternoon sunshine flooding us. In golden intensity drawing the utmost in color and richness from the earth. How beautiful this world. How utterly green and luscious after the desert panorama. How level and soft the land below me - how bowered in fertility and cultivation. For a while the Missouri flows beside me and I think back to the gray menace I have seen encamped about these waters, but to-day they spread spacious and serene between resplendent banks. I pass over St. Charles and look down with affection at the modest cluster of roofs. Curious, to realize that I once lived there. But poignancy of remembrance will cling forever to St. Charles. It is the spot of ground upon which I stood for a space and gazed forward... toward those things for which I yearned. And now - a slight shortening of breath - always my heart long there before me - Lambert-St. Louis Field.

Lambert-St. Louis! In the glow of sunset light - radiant beyond compare. The old Dream... The new longings. Memories pulling at my heart - of other days. Suffused in the intolerable brightness of things which will never be again. Always the Unattainable because we cannot go back. Forever beautiful, because once the fulfillment of a desire still burning and unsatisfied. The long late afternoon light slants across the surrounding fields, over the peaceful farms and calling distance which I have loved since first I saw it, on my way to learn to fly. Always within this region, thin and far, I hear the sound of magic horns, faintly blowing. Always I listen breathless, while echoes answer: "Dying, dying, dying..."

On into the East. Twilight... dusk... darkness.

Beyond Indianapolis, I lose my third hour and it is now evening. My engine runs easily - temperature and pressure at normal. My wings are spread without effort, the gas remaining hardly a thought. We seem so closely knit, we three - after these long hours together. The very fibers of my being are in my springing wings; the engine and my heart are each within the other. I pull out the knob on my Instrument Board and engage the Sperry Gyro Pilot. I twist and stretch a little against my belt and parachute harness; relax my feet from the rudder pedals and reach for a thermos flask of coffee - resting back to watch a full moon grow bright.

Ever since dusk, the country has been covered by ground fog; low and not thick. Lights are visible looking straight down, but ahead, nothing but a pale sea of vapor. The cockpit is very dim -the radium-treated dials hard to read because the moon is in my eyes.

We pass the solid mass of lights which shape Columbus, the entire area beyond pearl gray, and blurred by fog.

I am making good time - and that is well. But I am not thinking of the Record. Singularly, although my heart spins out unflinching to reach my destination, my mind remains rapt and absorbed within the cockpit. My mind is held completely by each Present moment - the Immediate curiously sufficient.

And yet, in spite of Time - of the concentration which there is on Time, we swing within a timelessness. We hang suspended, unmoving - within some measureless conception, between eternities of time seeming to tremble upon the very threshold, if we but knew to penetrate, of some vast, unlimited Dimension; some boundless freedom among the spheres - some Outlet into Celestial Space. Strange... at night - the thoughts - the loftiness of the spirit.

On... into the brilliant darkness. We are over the Alleghenies - looking down upon them, nebulous and obscured in the lambent unreality of light... swimming beneath a moving waste of mist. Inchoate Matter - as in the Beginning. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"...

The moon grows brighter - a platinum-white Goddess. The Earth continues to pour out libation; seeming to offer up clouds of incense to a lustrous divinity. The Eastern sky is luminous as silver alloy.

After passing Columbus, my Radio, which had been unfailing and clear to that point, died out. The effect of mountains on Radio is still a mystery which must be solved. There is no line of beacons directly on my Course, which runs south of Pittsburgh so I am not able to check myself against the intensity of moon and this rising tide upon the ground. I know some wind is with me, but cannot tell my drift.

And then I see one or two winking beacons to my right, where none should be; and then one far to the North. Unless a ship is flying true, down one of these flashing chains, it is difficult to gauge the direction of a few isolated points in the wide expanse of impenetrable horizon. Are those to my right, part of the Harrisburg line and that distant gleam from Cleveland? Or have I been drifted deep into the South and is this Washington to my right and Harrisburg-Philadelphia to the North? Surprising the uncertainty - at night after a long flight, on an approach which is not routine and without the Radio beam, when one has come to depend on it. I know my position and have only to hold my Compass Course, but a Record is at stake and every moment counts.

A great glow to the South - surely Philadelphia. But I am not positive. I hang on to my present Heading and then at last an enormous sea of phosphorescence to the Northeast - NEW YORK! I am South - but not as much as I had feared, over this distance of 480 miles from Columbus. "Oh, wind a-blowing all day long, Oh, wind that sings so loud a song."

I alter Course slightly and break out over South Amboy, a vast circumference of lights now shimmering before me. Ahead, in the far distance, a small green flash... Green - the color of safety! Green, which even on the ground is comforting, but which at sea, or in the air, takes on intense significance. At night, winging high above Earth's measureless caverns, with gas running low, that light among all other lights punctuating the darkness, means refuge to those who fly; refuge from the impossible. Beautiful, incredibly, the flash of green!

I fly for this tiny point of green - and Floyd Bennett Airport. Floyd Bennett, where my Sponsors are always waiting hopefully. Floyd Bennett - my Ultima Thule.

Only twice before, at long intervals, have I approached New York at night and for a moment find it hard to get my bearings; to distinguish between black water and black land, with this dazzling perplexity of lights on all sides.

Enveloped in the dark speed of high altitude, we rush on - we are abreast we dominate New York. New York! The dream city of them all. A legendary city, set upon the sea, in unbelievable magnificence, reaching fabled towers into the dawn. Looked upon at night, from the vast dome of sky, incredible! Flung prodigally and bursting upon the eye like treasure long sought; the reality richer a thousand-fold, the fulfillment more bewildering in palpitating brilliance than the wildest of imaginings.

In a swift leap, I am above the field - shoot past - and swing back to circle down by gradual degrees.

The night is hot and sultry near the ground. I change my propeller pitch; I drop my gear. Back on mixture control lever and stabilizer. The Airport floodlights are blazing across the big field,

purple-blue and blinding. I do not want them for landing and circle until they are finally turned out and then make my approach. The red warning light glows darkly in the leading edge of my left wing; the single landing light sends out a golden cornucopia piercing the heat vapor heavy near the surface.

Nearer... lower.... sweep the great black wings, closing in on that chosen point of contact. There stands the chimney - here rise the trees. Plenty of margin; perspective is not so accurate at night and after long hours in the air. Land well out in the field.

A burst of throttle - a long whirring near the ground... clearer, nearer, within the penetrating light ray which rivets my vision - rises the tufted bosom of the earth. We skim the grass blades for seconds and then easing back, settle securely upon the field. My ship and I take one deep breath together.... and taxi forward to reach the concrete runway - the same, which a short while before, I was not allowed to use and we roll smoothly toward the hangars and Administration Building.

The Record is under my belt. My landing time 11:18 P.M. (EDT); my elapsed time: 13:34. We have bettered the previous Woman's non-stop record by 5 1/2 hours and the record time with two stops, by 3 1/2 hours. But we are Orion!

Under the success and my passionate pride in my ship - under the noise and glare and confusion, I wonder strangely at the ever-increasing cost of achievement; because more and more is attempted - the reach ever greater - further.

There is no consciousness of fatigue. The current which has sustained momentum is still pulsing strong. There is only the instinctive and deep realization that the decision taken that August day on far Lambert-St. Louis Field continues compelling and unalterable; that either for rhapsody or despair:

"... still my purpose holds - to sail (fly) beyond the sunset

And the paths of all the Western stars until I die!"

Her prison Experience

From the New York Times, Oct. 5, 1943, page 6:

LAURA INGALLS RELEASED
Completes Prison Sentence for
Failing to Register as Nazi Aide

WASHINGTON, Oct. 4 (AP) The Justice Department reported today the release of Laura Ingalls, woman aviator, from the Alderson, W.Va. Women's Reformatory, where she completed a sentence for violation of the Foreign Registration Act.

Miss Ingalls, accused of having failed to register as a German agent in the United States, was sentenced on Feb. 20, 1942, to serve eight months to two years.

She was transferred from the District of Columbia jail to Alderson on July 14, 1943. Saying she was released Friday, officials had no information as to her present whereabouts.

Officials said that Miss Ingalls had been a model prisoner.

Related Links: [Some of these links don't work, but they are part of the original document.]

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Ingalls_\(aviator\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Ingalls_(aviator))

<http://www.ctie.monash.edu.au/hargrave/ingalls.html>

http://www.gocornerstore.com/Inventory_files/October%20T&F/October_T/9T.html (contains my autographed photo)

http://www.nasm.si.edu/research/aero/women_aviators/laura_ingalls.htm

<http://www.hill.af.mil/museum/history/ingalls.htm>

[http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/encyclopedia/l/la/laura_ingalls_\(aviatrix\).htm](http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/encyclopedia/l/la/laura_ingalls_(aviatrix).htm)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/lindbergh/timeline/>

THE END