

The Problem with Charles Lindbergh - I

Lead: After his solo flight in 1927, Charles Augustus Lindbergh was arguably the most famous man in the world.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Lindbergh spent his youth in Little Falls, Minnesota and in Washington where his father, for five terms, represented the sixth district of Minnesota in Congress. He tried college, but dropped out of Wisconsin after his sophomore year to pursue a growing fascination with aviation.

Stunt flying in a World War I Curtiss Jenny through the south and Midwest was followed by army flying school and a service as airmail pilot between St. Louis and Chicago. During this period he convinced a group of St. Louis businessmen to back him in the competition for the \$25,000 prize offered by French-American hotel owner Raymond Orteig for the first nonstop New York to Paris flight.

He and his group scraped together the money and settled on an unusual design. It was a tiny single-engined, high wing monoplane built by Ryan Aircraft in San Diego, California. Despite these supposed shortcomings, *The Spirit of St. Louis*, made the trip in 33 1/2 hours in May 1927. Lindbergh,

at twenty-five, became the most famous person in the world. Decorated and honored by the United States and many other nations, he began a life long struggle between universal notoriety and an almost painful shyness. Time and again he would attempt to reclaim a private life for him and his family only to be thrust back into the spotlight for one reason or another.

In 1932 his son was kidnapped and killed and for four years until the execution of the murderer the story was not far from the front pages. To escape the publicity they moved to Europe but were soon caught up in a controversy of another nature. Next

time: A Nazi Decoration and America First.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.

Resources

Gill, Brendan. *Lindbergh Alone*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Publishers, 1980.

Lindbergh, Charles Augustus. *The Spirit of St. Louis*. New York, NY: Scribners' Publishing Company, 1953 and 1977).

Ross, Walter Stanford. *The Last Hero: Charles Augustus Lindbergh*. New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishing Company, 1967.