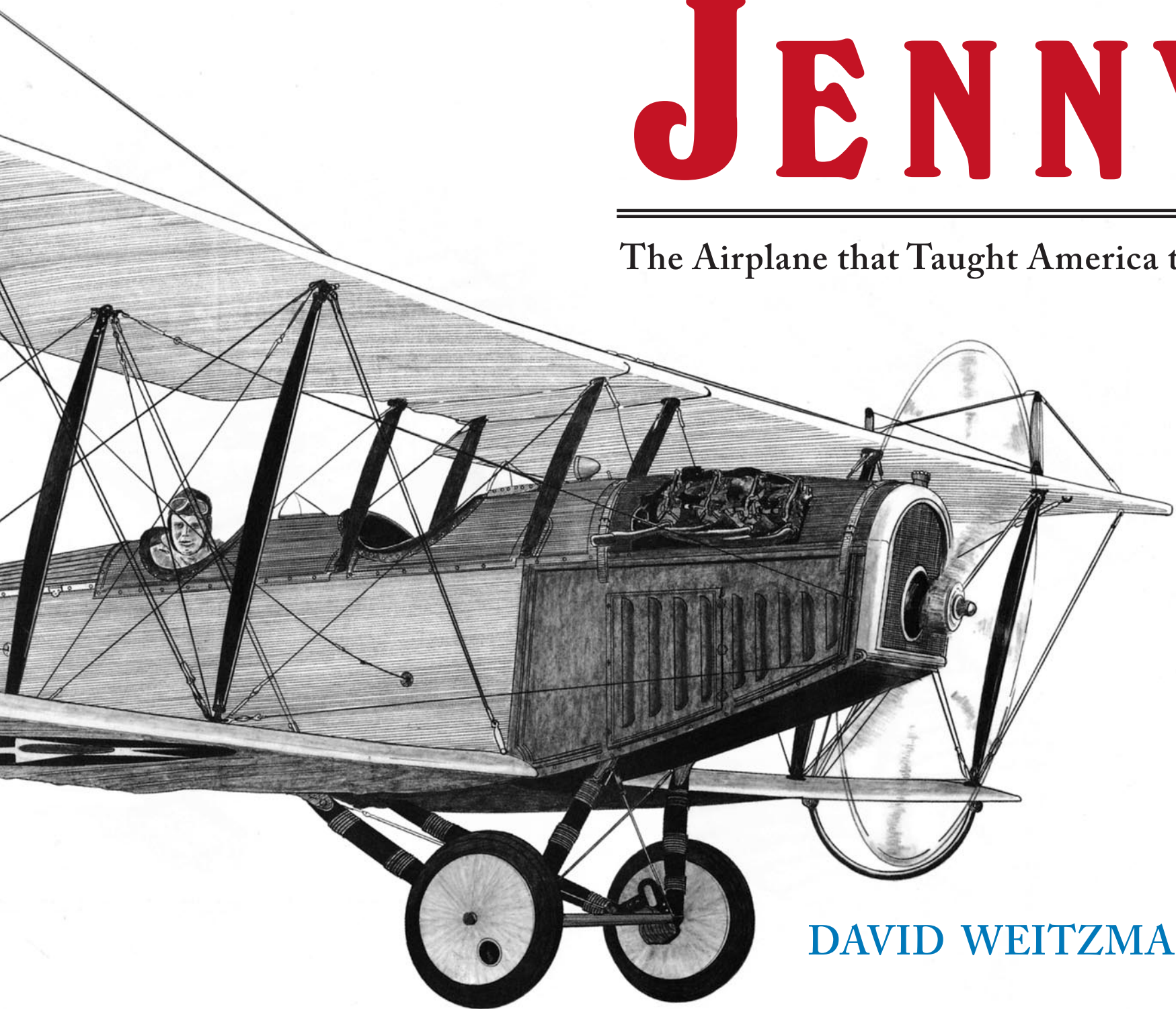


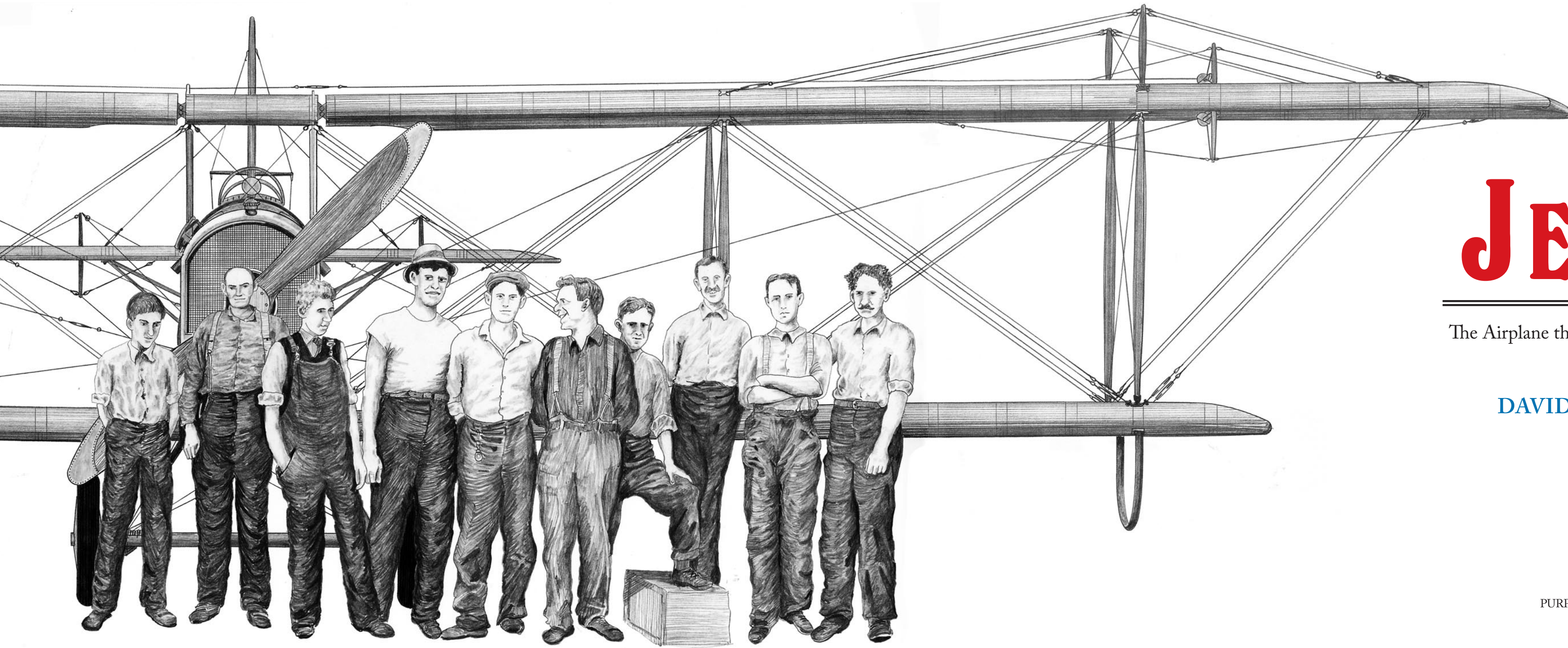
JENNY

The Airplane that Taught America to Fly



DAVID WEITZMAN

Curtiss
JN4D



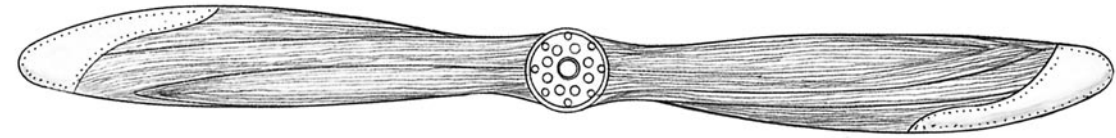
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The Airplane that Taught America to Fly

DAVID WEITZMAN

PURPLE HOUSE PRESS
KENTUCKY

For Tom Lawrence

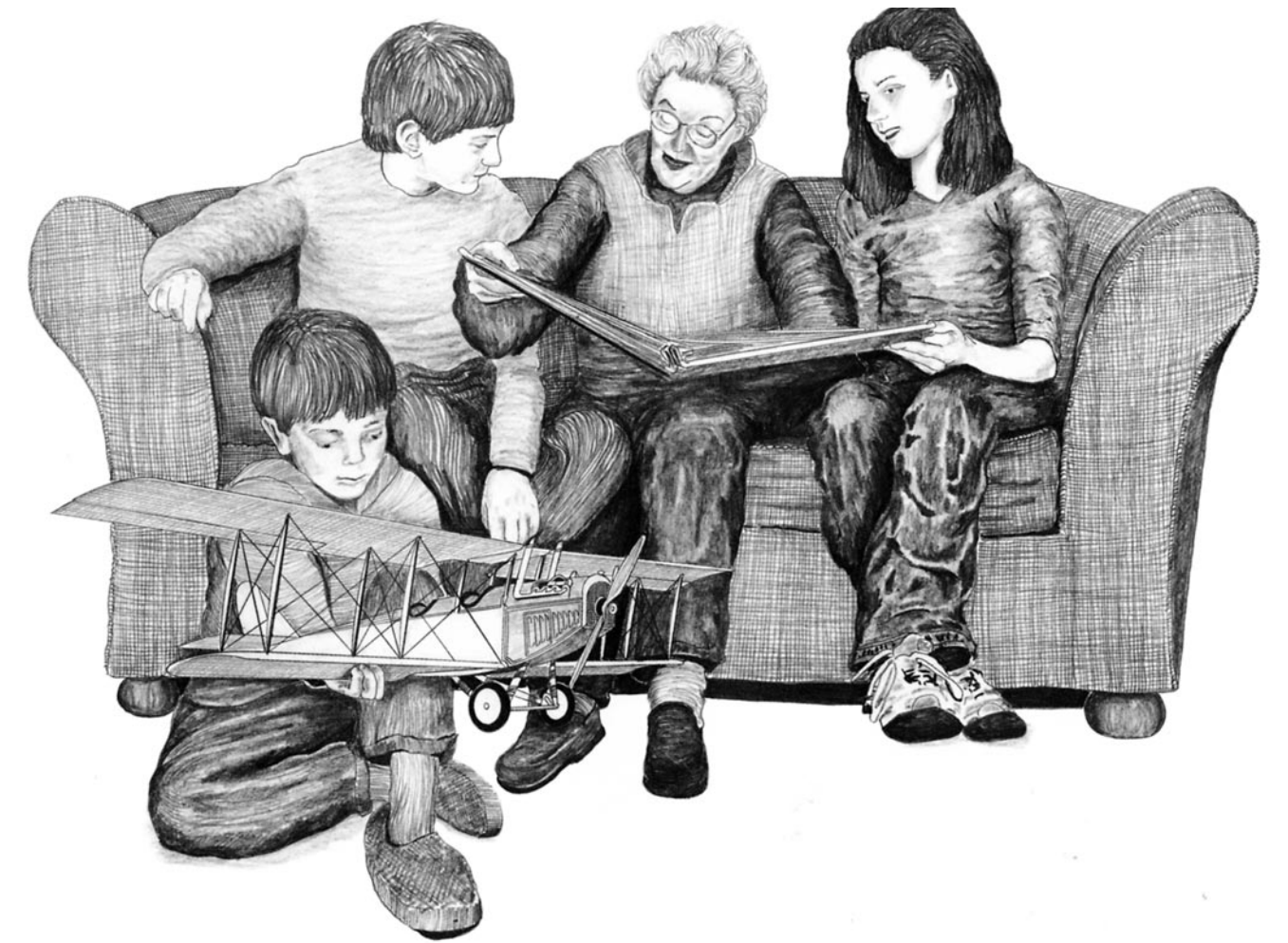


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Summary: Presents the development and history of the JN-4D airplane, commonly called the Jenny, and portrays a woman pilot who trained army air cadets for World War I and later carried air mail.

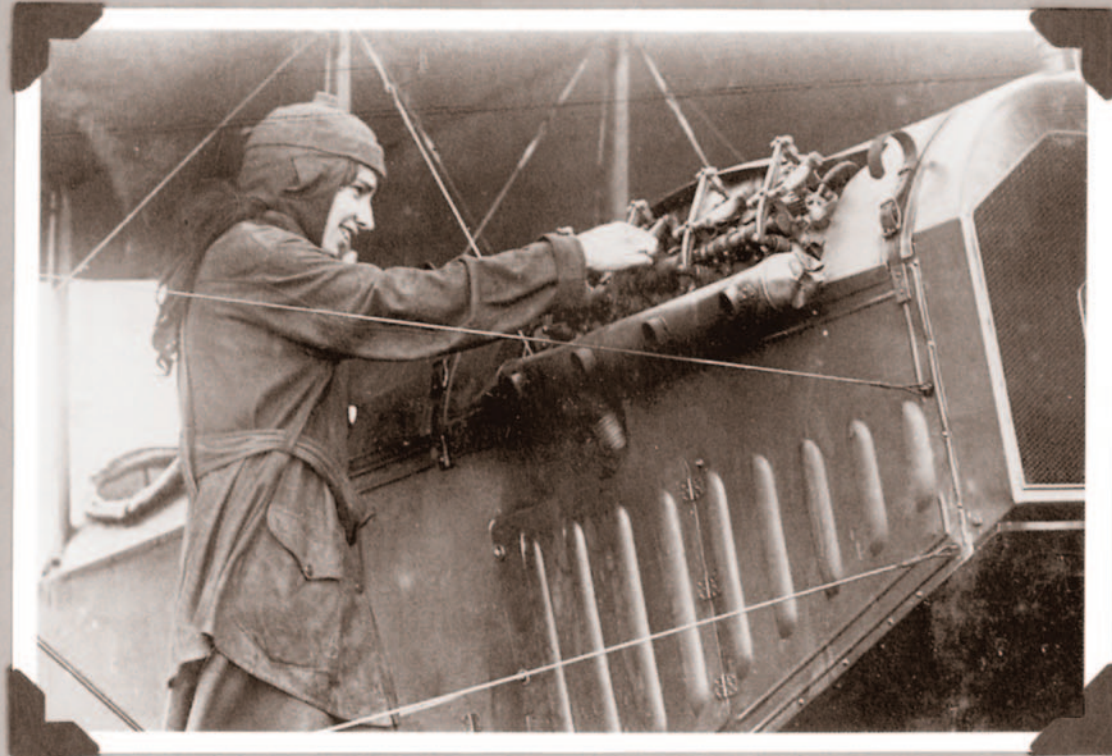
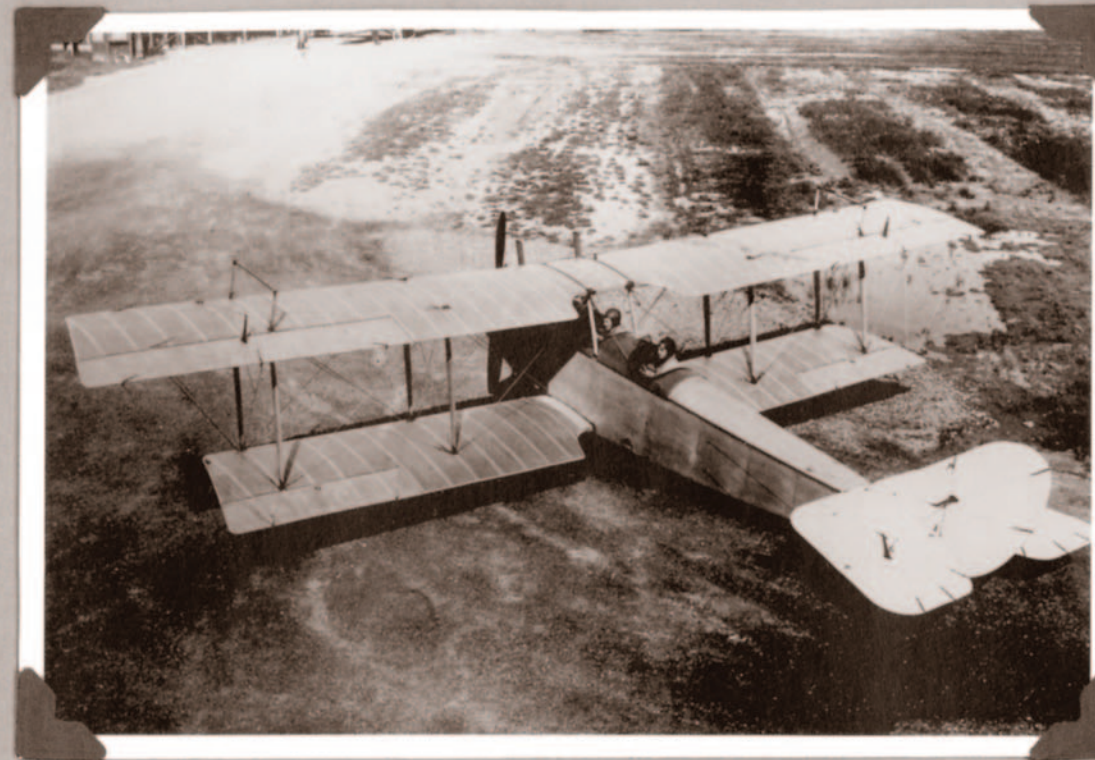
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One cold and rainy afternoon, while rummaging in the attic of their grandmother's house in upstate New York, the children discovered a model airplane and an album bulging with old photographs. They brought their treasures to their grandmother and asked her about the pictures of the woman with the airplane.



Mom



and her Jenny



Oh my, it's been a long time since I've seen these. They are pictures of my mother, your great-grandmother. And that airplane is her Jenny. She was one of the first women in America to get a pilot's license. In 1914, she trained Army air cadets for the First World War—she wanted to fly combat missions, but they wouldn't let her. Then after the war ended, she carried air mail.

Mom always talked about her Jenny with real love—the airplane's official name was JN4-D, but everyone called them Jenny. Thousands were built during the war, more than anyone thought possible. And when it was over, the manufacturer, Glen Curtiss, bought them back from the Army and put them up for sale. Jennys became the favorite of barnstormers, those daredevil pilots who flew around the country and put on shows. The first airplane I ever saw was a Jenny flown by a barnstormer, and that was true for most Americans. They did wing walking and all kinds of crazy stunts. In one of the photographs, there's a man sitting out by the tail. And when the show was over, they'd take people up for rides.

Mom said it was easy to learn. She flew three hours with an instructor, touching down and lifting off maybe ten times. That was all! After just a few more hours of practice, she made her first cross-country flight. Of course, they made short hops in those days. Jenny's gas tank held just enough for about two hours of flying, and then you had to find a place to land. An "airport" was usually just a pasture. You would fly low over it a few times to make sure the grass wasn't too high, that there were no ditches or tall brush which could catch your landing gear and flip the plane over.

When my mom was little like you, there were very few people in the whole world who had ever flown. Then Mr. Curtiss came along and made a lot of airplanes and set up flying schools. America learned to fly in Mr. Curtiss's airplanes. Just about every pilot in America and England between the wars learned to fly in a Jenny, including Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindbergh. And upstate New York, where the Jennys were built, became known as the "cradle of aviation."

