

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF AIR COMMERCE
WASHINGTON

STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE CONCERNING AN AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
WHICH OCCURRED TO A PRIVATELY OWNED PLANE
ON JUNE 20, 1935, NEAR PAMPA, TEXAS

To the Secretary of Commerce

On June 20, 1935 at about 6 00 p.m. near Pampa, Texas, a privately owned airplane crashed with resultant death to the pilot and one passenger and the complete destruction of the aircraft.

The plane, a Monocoupe, model 113, was flying in violation of the Air Commerce Regulations. About a week previous to this flight, a Department of Commerce Inspector had grounded the plane as unairworthy. The pilot, Thomas M. Keenan, holder of a Department of Commerce transport pilot's license, was killed in the accident. The passenger was Pat E. Loving of Wellington, Texas.

It was learned from investigation that this was a demonstration flight and M. Loving sat at the controls on the pilot's side of the plane. The dual control stick was not installed in front of the seat in which the pilot sat, therefore, the amount of assistance the pilot could render in case of an emergency is questionable.

The plane took off and flew to a point about two miles from the airport. It was then observed to suddenly nose down and start to turn into the wind. While half-way through this turn the nose of the plane suddenly went very high and the plane was observed to slide backwards toward the ground. At about 100 feet from the ground the nose of the plane whipped down into a vertical dive from which recovery was not made.

Witnesses were too far from the plane to tell whether or not the engine stopped but all agree as to the maneuvers which the plane went through. There is nothing in the records of the Department of Commerce to indicate that Loving had ever had any piloting experience. Nothing was brought out in the investigation to indicate that the unairworthy condition of the plane was responsible for the accident although it could have played some part.

It is the opinion of the Accident Board that the probable cause of this accident was carelessness and negligence on the part of the pilot for allowing a passenger to sit at the controls of the airplane without attaching the dual control stick which would have enabled him to have taken over control of the plane when difficulties were first experienced.

Respectfully submitted,

Eugene I. Vidal,
Director of Air Commerce.