MANUEL S. GUTIERREZ (1892-1940)

Prescott and the Verde Valley

Manuel Gutierrez was proprietor of the Victory Grocery in Jerome. Although he looked younger, he was already in his 30s when his desire to fly finally pushed him to take lessons. In 1929, he went to South Central Airport in Phoenix and learned to fly at Stan Roper's Desert Airways. He received his student license in June 1929 and his private license in 1930. His first airplane was an Alexander Eaglerock A-1 biplane, NC7487, powered by a 200-hp Wright J-4 Whirlwind engine.

Despite the mishaps that were common to most pilots of the era, Manuel never lost his enthusiasm for flying. Besides his Eaglerock, he owned a succession of airplanes, including a Monocoupe and a Luscombe. For much of the 1930s, he based his airplanes at Ernest A. Love Field, building a unique stucco hangar and, with the other Prescott aviators, helping to maintain the airport. In July 1929, Manuel was among the incorporators of the short-lived Copper State Airways, a flying school and would-be airline that operated at Prescott and in the Verde Valley. Unfortunately, Copper State was swept away by the Great Depression. along with most of the other small operators.

On October 10, 1940, Manuel Gutierrez was killed when the landing gear of his Luscombe snagged utility wires while landing at Pylant Airport in northwest Phoenix.