



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of VICTOR RUSSEL FRITZ

Started modeling in 1908



Transcribed & Edited by SS (11/2002); Reformatted by JS (08/2009)

Career:

- Designed and built thousands of model airplanes
- Served as assistant secretary of the Aero Club of Pennsylvania
- Appointed the director of the model aeronautic exhibit at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia
- Wrote for aeronautical publications
- Taught industrial arts at Olney High School in Philadelphia
- Served as field director for the Philadelphia Model Association
- Took up mountain climbing as a hobby; died on a mountaintop in the western U.S.

The following biography on Victor Russel Fritz came from The History of the Academy of Model Aeronautics: Including Part One and Part Two From the Beginning to the Year 1966 written by Willis C. Brown and Dick Black that was published first in 1966; the second part was published in 1967. This biography comes from Part One written by Willis C. Brown. It was completed by November 1965.

Victor Russel Fritz

(Field Director Philadelphia Model Airplane Association)

Extracted with permission from 1936 Model Aircraft Yearbook

“Did graduate work at University of Pennsylvania. Became a model airplane enthusiast in 1908. Made successful early flights. Has designed and built more than 2,000 model airplanes. Assisted in building a bi-plane glider in 1910. Flight experience began in 1910 with a glider flight. At present time is sportsman pilot. Member of the National Aeronautic Association. Assistant secretary of the Aero Club of Pennsylvania. Co-officer is Percy Pierce.

“Appointed director of the model aeronautic exhibit at Franklin Institute, Philadelphia. Director of the training program of the Philadelphia Model Airplane Association, which has developed many of the outstanding model airplane designers and flyers. Many hold national records. Gas model flying made popular in and around Philadelphia. Later spread all over the country. Contributed original interest and material support.

“Sponsored and followed by airplane Maxwell Bassett’s famous two-and-one-half hour flight from Central Airport, Camden, New Jersey, to Middletown, Delaware. Maximum altitude reached on this flight was 8,000 feet. Model was powered with a Brown motor, one of the originals. Bassett still has this motor and uses it occasionally in competition. Contributor to current aeronautical publications.

“Personal statistics: is instructor of industrial arts at Olney High School in Philadelphia. Franklin Institute, with which he is affiliated, is world-famed for its exhibits. Flies to all model contests.

“The Philadelphia Model Association, of which he is field director, is carried on in cooperation with the Philadelphia Evening Record and the Philadelphia Playground Association. Unlike other organizations, the PMAA does not send representative members to out-of-town or National meets. Those who go must pay their own way. Inasmuch as PMAA members participate in all eastern meets, no Philadelphia meets are held for out-of-towners. We wonder why.”

Addendum: 10 or 15 years ago it was observed that Vic had grown a beard and taken up mountain climbing as a hobby. He took on this specialized hobby with the same intense enthusiasm that he was noted for when promoting model aeronautics. He had put on some weight, which probably contributed to factors that ended his life on a high mountaintop in the west.

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