

A Minnesota First – A Martin County Connection

In the world of modern aviation, women are employed as pilots for major airlines, for the military, they participate in space travel, they fly in air races, they seed clouds, they teach students to fly, they transport corporate officers, and much, much more. Women have accomplished many “firsts” in the history of aviation.

Some of the notable aviation accomplishments made by women include the following: E. Lillian Todd was the first woman to design and build an aircraft in 1906, Therese Peltier was the first woman to pilot an aircraft in 1908, Blanche Scott was the first woman to solo an airplane in 1910, Raymonde de Laroche was the first woman in the world to receive a pilot license in 1910, and Amelia Earhart was the first woman to cross the Atlantic solo in 1932.¹ These are but a few of the accomplishments made by women in the history of aviation.

Among those aviation accomplishments made by women, a Martin County woman also achieved a “first” in the history of Minnesota aviation. That notable “first” was the fact that in 1931 the first female licensed to pilot an airplane in Minnesota was from Martin County. Her name was Cora M. Fuller of Fairmont. She obtained her pilot’s license by flying a Stinson-Detroiter monoplane solo over Hall Lake, making two trips of approximately five minutes each and attaining an altitude of 500 feet. There may have been other women that piloted airplanes in Minnesota before her; however, she was the first to be issued a pilot’s license, that being on April 30, 1931.

Her preparation involved eight hours of instruction from Fairmont flyer, Floyd Eltgroth. According to Eltgroth, she banked her plane masterfully and finished her flight with a perfect landing. He went on to say that she stepped off the plane as cool and collected as if stepping out of an automobile. Mrs. Fuller’s log book shows that she flew a total of 8,162 miles during her first year as a pilot.

Cora Fuller was born in 1893 and passed away in 1972. She was married to Roy Fuller, also a pilot. In addition to her accomplishments in aviation, she was an ardent golfer, she worked in her husband’s produce company, and she also worked as a bookkeeper at Paulson’s Pharmacy.

For more information on this topic, or to become a member, contact the Pioneer Museum in Fairmont.

¹ <http://www.wai.org/resources/history.cfm>



Cora Fuller taking off in her
Stinson Detroider Monoplane
Fairmont Airport 1931

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
AERONAUTICS BRANCH

Date, *April 30, 1931.*

(This Letter of Authority Must be Kept in Your Personal Possession)

- *Cora May Fuller*
Farmont,
Minnesota

DEAR SIR:

You have completed the tests and examinations required by the Air Commerce Regulations for a *Private Pilot's* License and are authorized to operate as such pending receipt of the actual license. Unless this authority is sooner suspended or revoked, it expires upon receipt of license, or not later than two months from the above date.

The holder of this Letter of Authority, if for Limited Commercial or for Transport Grade, is authorized to transport persons for hire in only the types and classes of aircraft listed below for which the holder has been found qualified, as shown by the proper indorsement of an authorized Inspector for the Department of Commerce.

CLASS	TYPE	LAND OR SEA PLANE	INSPECTOR'S SIGNATURE	DATE
Class 1.—Aircraft weighing 3,500 pounds or less, gross weight.	a. Single eng., open	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
	b. Multi-eng., open			
	c. Single eng., cabin			
	d. Multi-eng., cabin			
Class 2.—Aircraft weighing 3,500 to 7,000 pounds, gross weight.	a. Single eng., open	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
	b. Multi-eng., open			
	c. Single eng., cabin			
	d. Multi-eng., cabin			
Class 3.—Aircraft weighing 7,000 pounds or over, gross weight.	a. Single eng., open	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>	
	b. Multi-eng., open			
	c. Single eng., cabin			
	d. Multi-eng., cabin			

CLARENCE M. YOUNG,
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Aeronautics.

By *[Handwritten Signature]*
Department of Commerce Inspector.

[Handwritten Signature]

N
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
 AERONAUTICS BRANCH

LICENSE NO.
19829

PRIVATE PILOT'S LICENSE

Issued to **CORA M FULLER**
 Date issued **APRIL 30 1931**



Age **37**
 Weight **125**
 Height **5' 3 1/2**
 Color hair **RED**
 Color eyes **BROWN**

Cora M Fuller
 PILOT'S SIGNATURE

This Certifies, That the pilot whose photograph and signature appear hereon is a Private Pilot of "Aircraft of the United States". The holder may pilot all types of licensed aircraft, but may not for hire, transport persons or property, nor give piloting instruction _____ to students.

Unless sooner suspended or revoked, this license expires as indicated on page 2.

L. Lawrence H. Young
 ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR AERONAUTICS

This Private Pilot's License expires

APRIL 30 1932

Unless extended below by proper endorsement of a duly authorized inspector of the Department of Commerce.

LICENSE RENEWALS	
INSPECTOR'S ENDORSEMENT	EXPIRATION DATE
<i>H. Longewy</i>	<i>4/30/33</i>

Note: All provisions of the Air Commerce Regulations are made a part of the terms hereof as though written herein.