

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF AIR COMMERCE
Washington

REPORT OF THE ACCIDENT BOARD
BUREAU OF AIR COMMERCE

Statement of probable cause concerning an accident which
occurred to an airplane of Waco Distributors, Incorporated,
at Hills Grove, Rhode Island, on August 28, 1935

To the Director of Air Commerce

On August 28, 1935 at about 8.15 a.m. on a temporary field adjoining the State Airport at Hills Grove, Rhode Island, an airplane engaged in a cross-country flight crashed with resultant fatal injury to the pilot, serious injury to the passenger and the complete destruction of the aircraft.

The airplane, a Waco, model YOC, was owned by the Waco Distributors, Incorporated, of Boston, Massachusetts and bore Department of Commerce license number NC-14621. The pilot, Joshua Crane, Jr., of East Boston, Massachusetts, held a Department of Commerce Transport pilot's license. The passenger was Arthur E. Howe of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The pilot, en route to Cleveland, was making a landing at the Hills Grove airport for the purpose of picking up a second passenger. Weather at the time was clear with a southwest wind of 20 miles per hour and gusty. The airplane approached the field from the northwest, made a tight circle to the left and started a straight glide to the airport with the airplane in a nose-high position and settling fast. After a matter of a few seconds in this position and at an altitude of approximately 500 feet, the airplane whipped into a left spin, from which the pilot did not recover before striking the ground.

An inspection of the airplane indicated that both men had their seat belts fastened. The belts were not broken, but the seats were torn loose from the floor. The airplane was so broken up that very little could be learned as to the condition of the control system prior to the accident except that all control surfaces were still attached and the left wing flap was found to be in full down position while the right one was in full up position.

In analyzing this accident, full cognizance was given to the fact that most probably the left wing flap functioned while the right one did not. However, from the statements of other pilots who have landed this same type of aircraft under the same flap condition the failure of one flap of this type to operate makes no appreciable difference in the handling qualities of the aircraft.

It is the opinion of the Accident Board that the probable cause of this accident was failure of the pilot to maintain sufficient flying speed to properly control the aircraft in the existing gusty wind conditions.

Respectfully submitted,

ACCIDENT BOARD.

Jesse W. Lankford, Chief, Safety Section Richard C. Gazley, Chief Engineer
(Secretary) Manufacturing Inspection Service

Joe T. Shumate, Jr.,
Chief, General Inspection Service
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Advisory.

A. A. Vollmecke, Engineer