

# Colorado Aviation Research Center

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September 6, 2008

Dear Ken,

In response to your question - Who was Colorado's first licensed aviatrix?

In August 1992 Ben Jordan, who died in March, 2006 wrote a letter to the board members of the Colorado Aviation Historical Society. In his letter Ben claimed that a widely held belief that Donna Tracy Meyers was Colorado's first licensed pilot of the female persuasion was erroneous. Ben's asserted that Evelyn "Bobby" Trout' was Colorado's first female licensed pilot.

A copy of Ben's letter is enclosed. To support his claim, Ben also provided a one-page summary entitled *Early Colorado Licensed Women Pilots*, a copy is also enclosed.

In an attempt to settle the dispute, Scott Hamilton, at that time the President of the Colorado Aviation Historical Society, obtained copies of twenty-three pages from the FAA archives in Tulsa. They were barely readable - and added little to resolving the issue.

Below are the pertinent facts, as Ben saw them.

**Angela L. (Mrs. Anthony F.) Joseph**  
Soloed on June 8, 1928  
Private license # 3947 - October 13, 1938

**Evelyn ("Bobbi") Trout**  
Soloed on April 30, 1928  
Private license # 1613 - date unknown  
Commercial license issued in January 1929 (?)

**Alberta Elizabeth Jeffryes (Mrs. David R.) Griffith**  
Soloed on October 11, 1929  
Private license # 27024 - date unknown

**Donna Tracy (Mrs. John A.) Myers**  
Soloed - date unknown  
Private license # unknown - date 1937



Preflight - The first heavier-than-air flight in Colorado - February, 1910 - Denver's Overland Park Racetrack. Pilot - Frenchman Louis Paulham, flying a Henri Farman biplane



Ben did not know Donna Myers' license number. The archives of the Colorado Aviation Historical Society contain two boxes of Donna and John Myers' memorabilia. Among the contents is a December 3, 1937 Department of Commerce letter that assigns Mrs. Myers license number 37930.

Also, the Internet contains several websites that chronicle the life and many achievements of Evelyn "Bobbi" Trout. They confirm the solo date cited above and also identify the date of her private license, September 1, 1928.

The table below lists the Colorado aviatrixes in ascending order of their license numbers and it adds the two license dates that were not included in Jordan assessment.

Name	Private License Number	Date
Trout	1613	September, 1928
Joseph	3947	October, 1938
Jeffryes	27024	Not known
Meyers	37930	December, 1937

Obviously, as stated above the license number of Mrs. Joseph is incorrect. It was issued after Mrs. Meyers' 1937 license. As such its form should be either 39x47, or 394x7, or 3947x. In any event Mrs. Joseph's license number is "greater than 39000."

Below is a "corrected" version of the table.

Name	Private License Number	Date
Trout	1613	September, 1928
Jeffryes	27024	Not known
Meyers	37930	December 1937
Joseph	"greater than 39000"	October 1938

Thus Bobbi Trout would seem to be the clear winner -- validating Ben Jordan's assertion.

However,

Bobbi Trout was born in Greenup, Illinois on January 7, 1906. In her early years, her family moved frequently... to Missouri, Colorado, Canada, and eventually to Los Angeles. Ben Jordan's fact sheet indicates that she lived in Oak Creek, Fort Collins, and Greeley Colorado.

In any event, by 1920, or earlier the family had settled in Los Angeles. And, in 1920 Bobbie, age 13 or 14, was helping her father in his automotive service station. Her first airplane ride was on December 27, 1922 from the Rogers Airport in West Los Angeles. Not that it is terribly important, but the Rogers Airport was essentially the front lawn of Will Rogers's estate. In California, she soloed on April 30, 1928. And she received her private license on September 1, 1928 while living in California.

After a long and distinguished flying career Bobbi Trout's last flight as pilot-in-command was in 1984, in California. She died on January 1, 2003 in La Jolla, California.

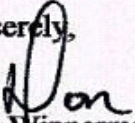
The entirety of Bobbi Trout's flying career was in California, not Colorado. Her time in Colorado was when she was a little girl.



As such, I conclude that Bobbie Trout should not be considered a Colorado pilot, and that **Alberta Elizabeth Jeffryes (Mrs. David R. Griffith)** was Colorado's first female licensed pilot, as her license number (27024) is much lower than Donna Myers' (37930).

As a barely related item, the inscription on George W. Thompson's tombstone in Denver's Crown Hill Cemetery reads "Colorado's First Pilot." George's first flight was on January 1, 1911. Prior flights in Colorado, by Coloradans include the flight of Lynn Mathewson and Walter Marr which occurred on July 22, 1910; and the flight of Howard Gill at the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo on September 24, 1910.

Sincerely,



Don Wippermann

Enclosures:

Ben Jordan letter (copy) dated, August 6, 1992 [see Donna Myers folder]

Ben Jordan's fact sheet (copy), undated [see Donna Myers folder]

Department of Commerce letter to Donna Tracy (copy), dated December 3, 1937 [see Donna Myers folder]

Cc: Marilyn Chang