



Art Sampson

1900-1962

Art Sampson had already achieved aviation success in Alaska when he came to Wahpeton in 1928 to head the newly formed aviation department at the North Dakota State School of Science (NDSSS). By the age of 28, he had been the first passenger pilot licensed in Alaska and had helped organize the first commercial aircraft service in the northern territory.

Under Sampson's direction, the State School of Science was one of the first schools in the country to offer a training program in aviation mechanics. In 1931, the aviation department was one of the first schools to be approved by the Department of Commerce for the repair of licensed aircraft. The NDSSS aviation program was approved for participation in the civil aeronautics pilot training program by the Civil Aeronautics Authority in 1939. Sampson along with A.F. Cassidy, conducted both the pilot training program and the ground school program for the new government flight training program which was open to young men between 18 and 24.

Art Sampson was appointed Wing Commander of the Civil Air Patrol for North Dakota in 1942. At that time, the duties of the Civil Air Patrol was to be the auxiliary to the Army Air Corps throughout the United States.

In addition to the teaching, Art Sampson and partner Merle Ralston invented a "clipped winged" device which increased the slow flight characteristics of the Piper Cub, allowing more maneuverability at low air speeds for spraying, winter patrolling, and other specialized flying. The device received approval from the Civil Aeronautics Board in 1949. He also designed and oversaw the building of the "Wildcat", a low wing monoplane built from scrap materials. His innovative design was clocked at 144 MPH on its tenth test flight.

Art Sampson retired from NDSSS in 1953 and continued to operate a welding and repair shop in Battle Lake, Minnesota until his death in 1962.