

6-1-1982

***Florida's Aviation History: The First One Hundred Years* by Warren  
J. Brown**

Robert Killebrew

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory>

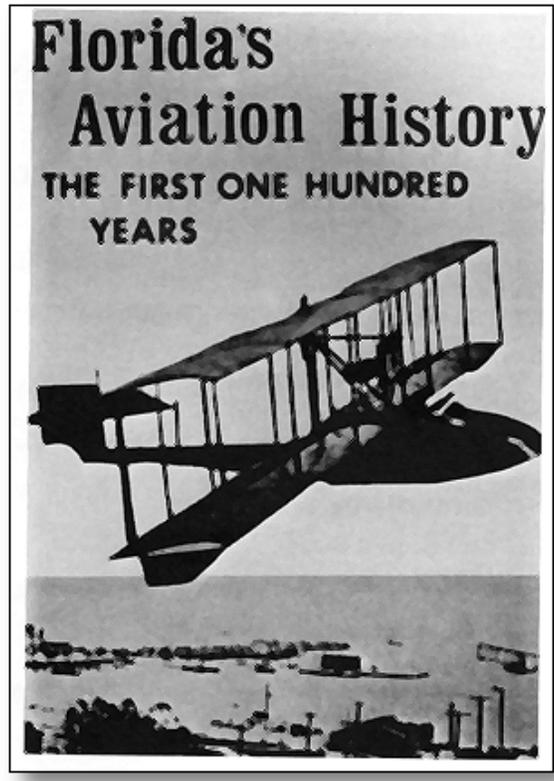
---

**Recommended Citation**

Killebrew, Robert (1982) "*Florida's Aviation History: The First One Hundred Years* by Warren J. Brown,"  
*Tampa Bay History*. Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory/vol4/iss1/10>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Access Journals at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Tampa Bay History by an authorized editor of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact [scholarcommons@usf.edu](mailto:scholarcommons@usf.edu).



The cover of *Florida's Aviation History*.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Florida's Aviation History: The First One Hundred Years*. By Warren J. Brown. Largo, 1980. Aero-Medical Consultants, Inc. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. viii, 246.

Warren Brown has produced a delightful series of vignettes about aviation in Florida life and business from 1908 to 1980. The style is not scholarly, and the author can not resist editorializing here and there, but he has done an impressive research job to provide dates, names and places in a profusion which should gladden a professor's heart. It is obviously a labor of love. He covers items such as the establishment of the early airlines in Florida, both home-grown and from out of state, aviation by areas and the impact of early military aviation in the state. His style recalls the freewheeling wood-and-wire days when pilots wore leather jackets and turned their caps around. Every flight was daring. Historians whose research takes them anywhere near old airfields, defunct aircraft manufacturing companies or any of the characters who made up the old "Alligator Club" will find this book a fruitful source of leads and facts.

One of the more interesting themes woven through the book is the struggle of early aviation boosters to make flying pay. Perhaps to build on this theme, Brown devotes considerable space to detailing the early efforts to start flying schools, manufacturing companies and airlines. The

growth of aviation respectability is one of a number of interesting historical side trails which lead from this book into research fields. The book's chapters are arranged to cover episodes and events rather than proceeding strictly chronologically. The reader had better be prepared to skip around a bit. This lack of continuity makes the initial reading a little disconcerting, until the reader finally decides just to relax and enjoy. Sample chapter headings are "The Glenn Curtis School," "Aeromarine and Florida Airways" (a lot of seaplane action in those early days, as one might expect in this area), "The Embry-Riddle Story" and "Tampa Bay Aviation." The last chapter, one of four to deal with aviation in specific localities, begins with Lincoln Beachley's night flight over Tampa, "which was widely acclaimed in the world press and helped to put Tampa on the world map" (p. 202). Brown gives a lot of attention in the Tampa Bay chapter to the development of local airfields; this section should provide some nostalgia for readers who can remember the 1920s and 1930s. Today, of course, flight has become routine and almost dull – the price, perhaps, of commercial respectability. The author's lines about Weedon Island's strip says it all: "Flying over the area in 1980, one can still see remains of runways, and there, standing alone, amid weeds and jungle, the solitary hangar that once represented a bustling airport in earlier years." (p. 208).

The book is paperbound, footnoted for facts but without sources, and has a good bibliography. Researchers will find this a better than average local history.

Robert Killebrew

*Beyond the Fourth Generation.* By Lamar Johnson. Gainesville, 1974. University Presses of Florida. Photographs. Maps. Pp. xiii, 230.

*Beyond the Fourth Generation* is a first person history. It is a view of historical events relating to over 50 years (1921-1974) of water management in south Florida as experienced by Lamar Johnson, surveyor and engineer, who played a major role in those activities. As noted in the preface, the author's goal was to ". . . show the motivation of early generations. History in the dry record of public documents does not always reflect the mood of the times. The attitude of the period is often more interesting than the events."

In the telling of this history, Mr. Johnson has done some careful research to supplement his own story as well as background his time period against what had happened in the years prior to his coming to south Florida. He describes, for example, the early railroad era in Florida, how the state "lost" 30,000 lakes, and the early surveying and drainage activities in the Everglades.

The book contains many photographs, several of which picture the early equipment used to drain the Everglades. Definitely missing from the book is a clear map of the region. The reader will be forced to refer to road atlases in an attempt to pinpoint where events described had taken place. Because the author did not adopt a strictly chronological sequence in telling his story, some of the chapters may seem disjointed. However, that small point does not affect the flow of the total book.

It is interesting to note that some of the items Mr. Johnson suggested for further study, such as the raising of the overall level of Lake Okeechobee, have been accomplished, or are now under