

Pilot Was Sailor on Secret Trip

Descent of Eric the Red Sailed Around Globe as Youth; Came to U. S. in 1909.

Wanted to Go on Stage

(Continued From Page One.)
one succeeded in deserting a few days later. A German sailor lost his temper one day and chucked the other overboard to the mercy of the sharks. Fortunately the negro could swim like a dolphin and he managed to reach the coast of Guadalupe without falling foul of a conger eel, a shark or an octopus.

Some of the members of the crew on this voyage were picturesque characters—characters such as one rarely finds excepting at sea or prospecting for gold in Alaska. One was a Frenchman, a man of parts, who had studied for the priesthood, got into trouble at Nantes, cached his clerical garb and fled to sea. He was half starved when Erik and his shipmates picked him up on the beach at Rio.

Another was an ancient mariner of three score and 10, who had sailed before the mast for half a century. He took a fancy to young Erik and used to spin yarns to the Swedish lad by the hour as they sat on the poop deck mending sails and baling for bonfire—tales out of his own life, tales that would have given Conrad enough material for a dozen more masterpieces like "Typhoon" and the "Nigger of the Narcissus."

Still another sailor with whom Erik rubbed shoulders was a Danish count who had been disappointed in love and gone off to sea to forget the past. A man of magnetic and charming personality, who would have been as much at home at a dancette in a Copenhagen salon as he was on board a tramp windjammer, he spent nearly all his hours when off watch luring haunting melodies from a quaint home-made violin that he had improvised from a wooden hardtack box.

It was on this voyage that Erik caught his first glimpse of America, the country to which he was utilizing to transfer his citizenship and whose air service he was destined to become as famous as his ancestors, Left the Lucky and Erik the Red.

When he went ashore at Biloxi, Miss., Erik got his first impression of America from a scene that met his gaze when he peered through the show window of a little drug store. He saw a row of children standing at a marble counter indulging in a mysterious colored drink. He longed to join them, but was too timid. However, since then he has long since become reconciled to saying "skool" over a glass of ice cream soda, which he doesn't, however, think quite the appropriate beverage for a descendant of the vikings.

On that third and last voyage Erik eluded the Welsh skipper shortly after they had put out from England. This captain was a better bully than he was a navigator, just as many sea-faring men become after dealing with crews of Malays, negroes and Moors. One day he hit Erik, and the two had a bit of a dog fight on the deck until pulled apart by the rest of the crew. From then on the skipper never spoke to Erik except to give orders when the latter took his turn at the wheel. At the end of the voyage the captain came and invited him to ship with him as mate on the next trip. Evidently he admired the young Swede's ability both as a fighter and as a sailor.

Finally Heard Call of America.

Hearing that the sailors were well paid for working on racing yachts in America, Erik embarked on a passenger steamer from Hamburg in the spring of 1909. He was 21 when he arrived at Hoboken. His first job on this side was as a rigger in the shipyard at Greenwich, Conn., but soon after he got the post he wanted on a yacht and spent the summer racing for a New York millionaire.

When fall came he had to hunt for some other way of earning a living and wandered aimlessly about the streets of New York for some days until a job was offered to him as a Swedish rubber and swimming instructor in Fleischmann's Turkish bathhouse. In 10 days the heat had reduced him by 12 pounds. So he quit and got his next job in grand opera.

Lina Cavalleri of "Merry Widow" fame was being starred as Salome by Oscar Hammerstein. Erik became one of Herod's stalwart Roman centurions, complete with sword and shield and full armor. His principal job was to watch Salome do her dance of the seven veils around the head of John the Baptist.

Noting that Mr. Hammerstein made no attempt to sign him up for a long career in opera, Erik walked the sidewalks of New York until A. T. Deere & Co., importers of high grade foreign automobiles, took him on as a handy man and general rouabout. Here he stayed until the spring of 1911, and he got his first experience with motors.

When autumn came he got restless and in company with his cousin, "Bill Vernon," who had also run away to sea, he started out on the most picturesque series of ups and downs of his entire romantic career. "Bill and Erik" became famous along the gay White Way. That is, they became well known "in a small sort of a way," as Bill would say.

They taught swimming on the beach at Miami. They spent their evenings entertaining the daughters of America's idle rich. They worked as extras in films that were being produced by Bison and Kalem. They helped Wallace Reid produce a sensational picture that centered around a shipwreck at sea, a shipwreck in which scantily clad feminine passengers were capsized in the harbor at Jacksonville, Fla., and then gallantly rescued by the gallant Wallace Reid, ably assisted by the gallant Erik and Bill.

One year they bummed their way back to New York from Florida and

landed in town with only 22 cents between them. After working for T. E. Adams, the Broadway agency for the Lancia motor car, they taught the tango, and lived by their wits.

Bill had a winning streak and often cleaned up anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars a night "rolling the bones." When Bill "rolled them babies" everybody else in that

Long Island watching the aviators, envying them. He resolved to become an airman himself.

Up until the fall of 1915 Bill and Erik lived a restless sort of hand-to-mouth existence, now repairing auto mobiles, now touring North America with Riccardo Martin, the opera star, in his high-powered car, finally joining the experimental department of



Lieut. Erik H. Nelson, the daring Norse-American, whose life has been with more adventure than any hero of romantic fiction of the middle ages.

rendezvous pushed aside their poker chips, put their cues in the billiard racks and gathered around. Bill was a born comedian, and to hear him "talk to the babies" was better than seeing Frank Tinney or Montgomery and S. taeno 7896 7899 8908&a and Stone at \$3 a seat.

From Drama to Automobiles.

Erik never gambled. But he used to stake Bill and they would go 50-50—or go hungry.

During that winter Erik spent a few months playing in "Ben-Hur." He carried a spear, turned his thumbs down when the villain's chariot lost a wheel and otherwise filled an important role as a unit in the Roman cheering section during the big race. Bill used to sit up in nigger heaven night after night in order to give Erik a hand when he appeared on the stage, hoping vainly that she producers would pick him to star in their next show.

In the fall of 1913 Bill and Erik migrated south again to Miami. They sold fruit for a while, then started a small auto repair shop, and wound up the winter working for an aviator who gave exhibition flights. But when the airman cracked up his plane and went broke Bill and Erik had to make their way back to New York as stowaways.

The following year Erik tested cars for the Lancia people and he would lie for hours in the grass out on

the Curtiss Airplane company in Buffalo.

The next year found them down in Miami again, this time working on shares with an aviator who had a seaplane. The pilot was inexperienced and did a nose dive into the bay with

and Erik, who jumped in and brought him ashore on his back.

That autumn Erik tried to join the Lafayette squadron. Failing, he went back to work for the Curtiss people in Buffalo. But now he was a recognized expert in building and testing engines.

The following February Erik and Bill tried to enlist in the United States air service, but were turned down despite their experience. In July of 1917 Erik crossed over to Canada and tried to get into the royal air force, but was turned down on account of his age. Then he tried the royal air force recruiting offices in New York and also made a second attempt to get into the air with Uncle Sam's army. Both attempts failed.

In October, 1917, he managed to squirm into the American air service, took his ground school training at Cornell and became a bombing pilot in Texas. Meanwhile Bill had grown impatient to get overseas and shipped to France with the artillery.

Erik never managed to get to Europe with a squadron, but was held in Texas as an instructor in bombing, and then in stunt flying. In January, 1919, he made one of the longest cross-country flights that had ever been made up to that time. He flew over the Grand canyon of the Colorado river and enabled a photographer to take aerial pictures of it for the first time. The flight was from the gulf to the Pacific and return. Erik and his associates flew over 4,000 miles. This was the beginning of extensive cross-country flying in America.

Crossed Nearly Every State.

In the late summer and early fall

of 1919, Erik in a squadron of four planes visited 32 cities, crossed nearly every state, and flew a total of 7,000 miles doing recruiting work. He not only was the chief engineering officer on this flight but piloted his own plane. He came back with the marvelous record for the whole squadron of never having had a forced landing.

A few weeks later a great tidal wave wiped out the city of Corpus Christi. Erik was ordered to fly there with a doctor, and was the first human being from the outside to reach the ill-fated city. Flying low over the rooftops he saw the streets dotted with dead. He saw one entire section of the city that had been swept clean as though by a giant broom. It was impossible to find a single landing place.

The following spring the air service decided to attempt one of the most difficult flights in the history of aviation. It was to be from Mitchell field, Long Island, to the gold beach at Nome, Alaska, far up on the shores of Bering sea on the polar rim. Then back to New York again.

Lieut. St. Clair Street, another of the ablest aviators in America, and a man who has done a great deal of the heavy and thankless work behind the scenes in connection with the recent round the world flight, was the commander of the New York to Nome expedition. Erik Nelson was the chief engineering officer of the flight.

Erik achieved the seemingly impossible feat of pulling all of the planes through that hair-raising Atlantic to Arctic flight without a single

forced landing. He also played the central role in the most sensational single episode of this journey across the United States, over the ice capped Rockies of Canada, and across the ranges and vast tundra plains of the far north.

During a five-and-a-half-hour flight to Hazelton, British Columbia, the plane suddenly became nose heavy and threatened to crash into a mountain. There was only one apparent way to save it. That was for Nelson, who was riding in the rear cockpit, to crawl right out on top of the tail of the plane and sit there for the rest of the journey.

Although nearly frozen by the icy winds sweeping down from the Arctic, and in danger of being blown off, he clung there on the fuselage for over an hour. Although he saved the ship from being smashed up and eliminated from the flight, the landing gear caught in a depression and was wrecked.

The plane came to a stop with a suddenness that hurled Erik clear over the top wing and through the air for thirty feet. The rest of the airman in the flight landed carefully and rushed over expecting to find Erik badly hurt.

Escapes Death When Thrown.

When they reached him, although he was badly shaken up, they found him busy fixing the damaged landing gear. He did not want to delay the next hop north any longer than necessary.

Needless to say Lieutenant Nelson won the admiration of all of his fellow airmen on that flight, and it was his fighting qualities, his remarkable

help bring the honor of having sent out the first aerial squadron to circumnavigate the globe.

Romantic and picturesque as had been the careers of Smith and Nelson, neither of them had experienced as many thrills nor faced death as often as Lieut. Leigh Wade, pilot of the cruiser Boston.

Read the next installment of this story of the thrilling round-the-world flight in The Omaha Bee tomorrow.

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record both as an engineering officer and as a cross-country pilot, that caused him to be the first man selected for the round the world flight.

On his return trip from Alaska, Erik brought three passengers back in his cockpit. They were three Alaskan sled dogs. One named "Nome" was his closest pal until the chief of the air service sent him as a pilot and chief engineering officer on the San Antonio to Porto Rico flight. The close friendship between man and dog was then renewed and continued until Erik jumped into one of the world cruisers at Santa Monica and started off around the world to win undying fame for himself and

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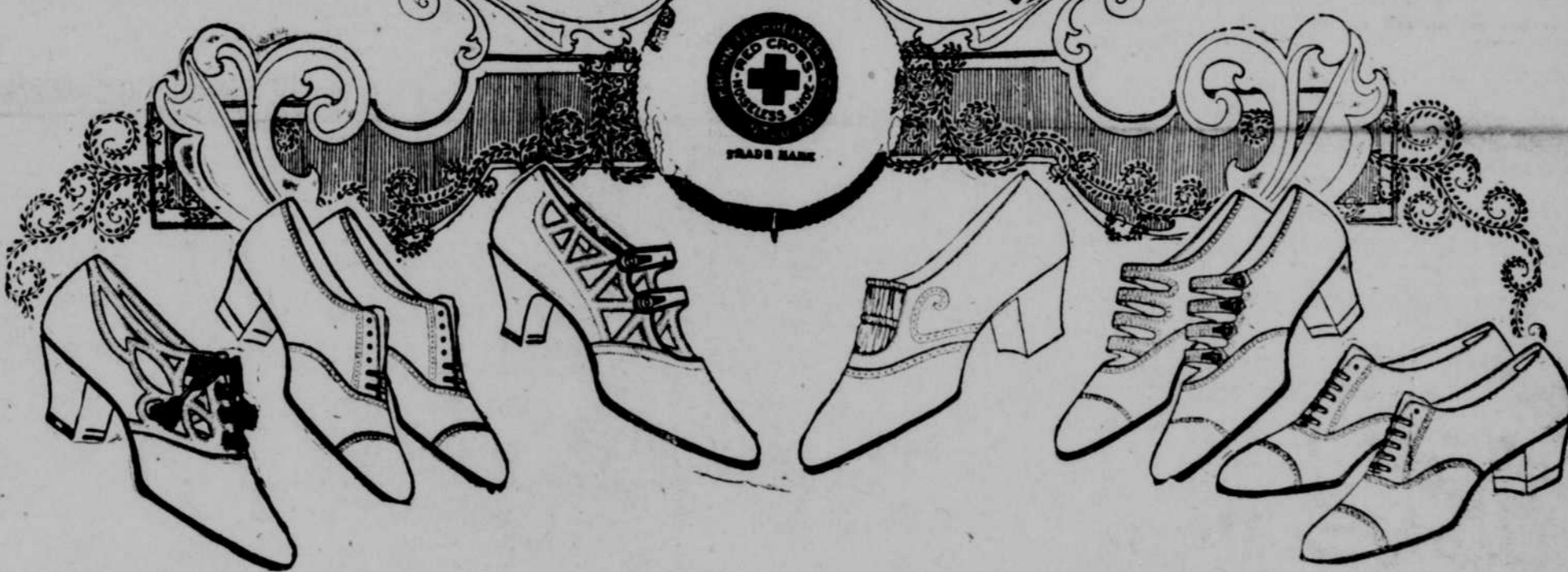
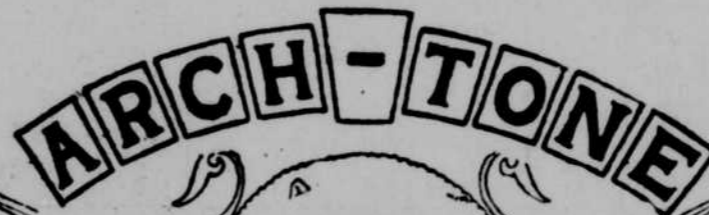


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9:30 pm	Ar. St. Petersburg	Lv. 11:15 am
12:01 pm	Ar. St. Augustine	Lv. 6:40 pm
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