There is still some debate about the time and place of Harriet Quimby’s birth; the evidence points

to May 1, 1875, in the State of Michigan. Her father, William, and mother, Ursula, also had another child

and her name was Kittie. After a failed attempt at farming, the Quimby’s headed to California and settled in the San Francisco area. In her younger years, Harriet aspired to be an actress, however, she ended up as a journalist working for the San Francisco Bulletin. She wrote articles about art colonies in Monterey and San Francisco’s Chinatown. By 1905, Harriet set out for New York where she eventually got a job with the prestigious publication, Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly. Her writing style indicated that she had an excellent formal education. Her articles were aimed mostly at women and ranged from household tips to financial guidance. Her work also included interviews of many unusual people and, on one assignment, she was invited to visit the Vanderbilt automobile race track. She was given a ride in a race car and, after several 100 mile per hour laps, she was literally hooked on high speed. She even purchased her own car and advised readers on how to maintain automobiles “properly.” In 1910, Ms. Quimby attended the Belmont Park International Aviation Tournament. This visit eventually changed her life. She met John and Matilde Moisant. John’s brother, Alfred, operated a flight training school in the town of Mineola, New York. John was somewhat of a national hero for his skill and accomplishments in aviation. He promised Harriet and Matilde that he would teach them how to fly; however, prior to doing this, a tragic accident took his life during an exhibition in New Orleans.

Harriet was still determined to learn to fly so, in the summer of 1911, she started training. She tried to keep it a secret by showing up for her early morning flights wearing a long duster coat and a helmet. Eventually, the word got out and she became “headline news” in her own newspaper. This was during a time when women were supposed to be “at home” and certainly not out driving fast motorcars or flying.

On July 31, 1911, Harriet passed her ground and flight tests and became the first American woman to receive an internationally recognized pilot’s license. She was second in the only a few days. During her qualification trials, she set a record for precision landing by being only 7’ 9” from an official mark... a feat that many men had failed to achieve!

Harriet Quimby was an outstanding beauty. Had she pursued her earlier desire to be an actress, there is little doubt she would have been a star. She became known as the “Dresden China Aviatrix,” which at the time was the equivalent of what we now call “gorgeous!” In her newspaper, she wrote about her training, and she even speculated on the future of aviation. This included airline travel, aerial photography, safety and airmail.

On July 25, 1909, Louis Bleriot, a well-known French aviator, became the first human in history to fly across the English Channel. He did this feat in an airplane of his own design. Bleriot became an international celebrity, and this inspired Harriet to become the first woman to make the flight.

She sailed to England in March of 1912 and eventually met and became friends with Louis Bleriot. Harriet had plans to purchase a new 70 horsepower Bleriot airplane, but one wasn’t available at the time. She convinced the builder to let her use one of his 50 h.p. model XIs for her attempt to fly the Channel. Some of the glory of her flight was taken away when, just days earlier, a woman had flown across the English Channel as a passenger. The pilot on that trip was Gustov Hamel. Quimby and Hamel became friends and days before Harriet was set to depart, he offered to fly her trip in a disguise. He said he would land somewhere secret so that Harriet could come out and be in the plane when the world by only a few days. During her qualification trials, she set a record for precision landing by being only 7’ 9” from an official mark... a feat that many men had failed to achieve!

Harriet Quimby was an outstanding beauty. Had she pursued her earlier desire to be an actress,

there is little doubt she would have been a star. She became known as the “Dresden China Aviatrix,”

which at the time was the equivalent of what we now call “gorgeous!” In her newspaper, she wrote

about her training, and she even speculated on the future of aviation. This included airline travel, aerial

photography, safety and airmail.

On July 25, 1909, Louis Bleriot, a well-known French aviator, became the first human in history

to fly across the English Channel. He did this feat in an airplane of his own design. Bleriot became an

international celebrity, and this inspired Harriet to become the first woman to make the flight.

She sailed to England in March of 1912 and eventually met and became friends with Louis Bleriot. Harriet had plans to purchase a new 70 horsepower Bleriot airplane, but one wasn’t available at the time. She convinced the builder to let her use one of his 50 h.p. model XIs for her attempt to fly the Channel. Some of the glory of her flight was taken away when, just days earlier, a woman had flown across the English Channel as a passenger. The pilot on that trip was Gustov Hamel. Quimby and Hamel became friends and days before Harriet was set to depart, he offered to fly her trip in a disguise. He said he would land somewhere secret so that Harriet could come out and be in the plane when the

French people found her. She declined and decided to make the trip as planned in her Bleriot XI!

The Bleriot airplane had a 25’ 7” wingspan. It was 29’3” long and weighed 661 pounds. The height

was 8’7” and had a wing loading of 4.38 pounds per square foot. The original engine was made by

Anzani and it was a 3 cylinder, 25 h.p. air-cooled radial that turned a Chauviere 2-bladed propeller.

The Bleriot was constructed of ash, bamboo, steel tube and covered with a rubberized fabric. In the early morning hours of April 16th, 1912, Harriet took off flying this airplane near the English city of Dover. Cruising speed was around 36 miles per hour. It was a gray, cloudy day and many times she flew in clouds and conditions that were extremely dangerous. She had intended to land in Calais but ended up south ofthere on a beach near Hardelot. The flight took 59 minutes. When she landed, local fishermen gave her a champagne welcome and carried her on their shoulders to an awaiting crowd. Unfortunately, Harriet did not receive the recognition she deserved because just two days earlier, the great ocean liner, Titanic had sunk and this still dominated much of the world news.

After returning to the United States, Harriet hired a publicity manager and one of the events on

her “calendar” included the Third Annual Boston Aviation Meet near Quincy, Massachusetts. She was

scheduled to fly a new two-seat Bleriot that had been shipped from France. The event organizer,

William Williard, was given the privilege of making a promotional flight with Harriet. History describes

him as being overweight and excitable. These were two characteristics that eventually brought disaster

to the flight. Harriet and her passenger took off and flew out over Dorchester Bay in front of thousands

of spectators. At an altitude of approximately 1500 feet, it was observed that Williard apparently

unbuckled his seat belt and leaned forward to attempt communication with Harriet. Apparently, Harriet

had unbuckled her seat belt to answer him and it was at that time, the Bleriot pitched downward

throwing Williard out of the aircraft. It was observed that Harriet tried to regain control, but she too was

thrown from the plane. Both died in the fall.

Harriet Quimby was a very skilled pilot and there is speculation that, had she lived, her career

would have totally overshadowed that of Amelia Earhart. Some historians even say that she could have

been the first human to fly the Atlantic solo. She was flying before World War I, and years ahead of

Lindbergh and Earhart.

Initially, she was buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in New York. A year later, she was moved to

the Kenisco Cemetery where she remains today.

The story of Harriet Quimby demonstrates how a very brave, young American woman not only

achieved the first pilot’s license, but also made a historic flight under some very dangerous

circumstances. This literally opened the door for women to enter the world of flight.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VERIFY READING QUESTIONS NYW AEX 2022 1 of 6:

1.Harriett became the first woman \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. How long was the flight over the English Channel?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Harriet didn’t receive the recognition she deserved because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**NYW STAFF INSTUCTIONS FOR AEX CREDIT:**

**COPY AND PASTE “VERIFY READING WITH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS” INTO EMAIL WITH**

**“AEX 2022-1 0f 6” IN SUBJECT LINE TO AMARTIN31392CAP@JUNO.COM.**