

CALIFORNIA AVIATION HISTORY

Hiller Aviation Museum Exhibit Safari
Answer Key

1. Where was the US Navy cruiser *Pennsylvania* when Eugene Ely landed on it in 1911?

~~Pacific Ocean~~

San Francisco Bay

~~Mission Bay~~ ~~Lake Tahoe~~

A small landing platform had been built on the USS Pennsylvania at Mare Island Naval Shipyard for the 1911 test. Ely took off from Tanforan Racetrack (near modern day San Francisco International Airport) and landed aboard the cruiser as it lay moored in San Francisco Bay. Ely's landing demonstrated the feasibility of operating aircraft from ships and is considered the "birthday" of US Naval Aviation.

2. Thomas Marriott's Avitor model flew in 1869. What other transportation system important to California was completed in 1869?

~~Interstate Highway System~~ ~~Golden Gate Bridge~~

Transcontinental Railroad

~~Panama Canal~~

Before the completion of the transcontinental railroad, crossing from the eastern states to California was an arduous, months-long journey. Marriott built his Avitor to show that it was possible to link the continent by air. While the model flew successfully when tethered to and controlled from the ground, completion of the railroad precluded Marriott from attracting the funding needed to attempt to build a larger version capable of carrying passengers while flying untethered.

3. Examine the three glider designs built by John Montgomery. Which one was launched by a balloon?

~~Gull~~

Santa Clara

~~Evergreen~~ ~~Sequoia~~

While the Wright Brothers first flights at Kitty Hawk predated Montgomery's Santa Clara glider, the latter's flights were observed by thousands, very few of whom had ever seen an aircraft fly. The Wright Brothers did not undertake any large-scale public flight demonstrations until 1908.

4. Take the controls of the Wright Model B (*Vin Fiz*) simulator. Did Cal Rodgers begin or end his 1911 journey across the country in California?

~~BEGAN~~

ENDED

The Vin Fiz took 49 days, 75 flights and 16 crashes of varying severity to complete the journey from New York to California in 1911. Today, scores of commercial airliners complete the same journey daily in flights seldom lasting over six hours.

5. What Bay Area school hosts the football stadium where Stanley Hiller Jr. first flew his XH-44 helicopter in 1944?

UC Berkeley

~~Stanford University~~

~~Santa Clara University~~ ~~San Jose State University~~

Young Stanley Hiller Jr. attended the University of California at Berkeley as a student for a brief time, but dropped out to build his own company and focus on advancing an innovative new technology – a story that later became quite common among pioneering entrepreneurs in California.

6. Visit the Bay Area Airports exhibit under the rotating beacon. What historic aircraft operated from Moffett Field (NUQ)?

~~Wright Flyer~~ ~~Fokker Dr I~~

Airship USS Macon

~~Thaden Argonaut~~

The gigantic skeleton of Hangar One visible from the Bayshore Freeway in Mountain View gives a sense of the enormity of the Macon, the last Zeppelin-style rigid airship operated by the US Navy. Based at Moffett Field for most of its short career, the Macon suffered structural failure in a storm off the California coast and crash-landed at sea near Big Sur in 1935. All but two of her crew were rescued. After the crash the Navy focused instead on smaller aircraft.

7. Check out the 1928 Travelair biplane (painted in Pepsi Cola colors) hanging from the Gallery ceiling. Where did famed California pilot Louise McPhetridge Thaden start and end her record-setting endurance flight in this airplane?

~~San Francisco~~ ————— ~~Los Angeles~~

~~San Diego~~ ————— **Oakland**

Louise McPhetridge came to California in 1928 while working for the Travel Air Corporation. Here she met and married pilot and engineer Herbert von Thaden, whose all-metal Argonaut graces the wall of the Hiller Aviation Museum's Atrium. Her record setting endurance flight in 1929 lasted over 22 hours. Barred from competing directly against male aviators during 1930-1935, McPhetridge Thaden famously won the 1936 Bendix Air Race over a course from New York to Los Angeles, handily beating the best male and female aviators of the day.

8. Climb aboard the P-2 simulator cockpit located next to the blue and yellow Link trainer. Carefully examine this artifact. Where was this simulator used for flight training?

San Jose, California ————— ~~Chicago, Illinois~~

~~Sacramento, California~~ ————— ~~Seattle, Washington~~

California's year-round flying weather made it a hotbed of aviation innovation and also a popular flight training location through most of the first century of flight. Flight training remains an important function at airports throughout California.

9. Use the Sky Portal (Google Earth) exhibit to visit four busy California airports. How many airliners are parked at terminal gates at each destination? Which do you think is the busiest airport in California?

Answers will vary slightly

SFO 50-60

OAK 5-10

SJC 5-10

LAX 80-90

Busiest Airport LAX

San Francisco International Airport is the busiest local airport, handling over 57 million passengers per year – double the number of Oakland and San Jose combined. However, Los Angeles International is easily the most-used airport in the state, serving over 87 million passengers in 2018. LAX is second only to Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in the United States and ranks fourth busiest in the world.