Emory Conrad Malick
(Handout #2)

The idea of Black aviators was rare, but not new prior to the Second World War. The mixed race, Emory Conrad Malick built and flew a biplane at his home in Seven Points, Pennsylvania. He would fly his glider across the Susquehanna River to work on a farm. 1910, Malick took his aviation skills from the mountainous country of Snyder County to the big city of Philadelphia. He would make regular runs from Philadelphia across the Delaware River to Camden County, NJ. He transported passengers for the Flying Dutchman Air Service and took aerial photographs for Dallin Aerial Surveys. He also worked as a carpenter and master tile-layer.

Two years later, he earned an International Pilot License (FAI #105) at the Curtiss Aviation School in San Diego, California, becoming the first licensed Black pilot in the United States. In 1914, he purchased, assembled, and improved a Curtiss "Pusher" biplane for his own use. He flew his "Pusher" plane over Snyder County and Northampton County, PA and was the only licensed pilot in that region of Pennsylvania.

The United States Department of Commerce first issued a Federal Aviation License in 1927. Malick became the first African American to earn a Federal Transport License (#1716), along with a Federal Mechanic License (#924), that same year. The first license was issued by and to William MacCracken, Jr. (#1). President Calvin Coolidge appointed MacCracken the first Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Aeronautics (later the Federal Aviation Administration -FAA), reporting directly to Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, the future U.S. President. MacCracken had wanted aviation pioneer Wilbur Wright to have license #1, but Wright said he did not need a license to show he was first. He then offered it to Charles Lindbergh who thought it was more appropriate for MacCracken to get license #1.

Malick flew for the Aero Service Corporation and Dallin Aerial Surveys. He also ran his own Flying Dutchman Air Service on weekends. On March 4, 1928, at an air show in Camden, New Jersey, Malick took two passengers on a short ride in his Waco three-seater. They were barely in the air and the engine conked out. The wind took the plane as Malick tried to bank left and he crashed the plane. "The entire plane seemed to crumple as if it had been smitten by the fist of a giant," reported the Sunbury (Pennsylvania) *Daily Item*. His passengers were hurt, but they

survived. Malick, later that year, crashed again, injuring himself and killing his passenger. The trauma devastated him, and he never flew again.

Malick remained interested in aviation though. At a Snyder County banquet of fliers, Malick showed the pilots his 60-horsepower engine that powered his 1914 flight over the county. Still, he refused all offers to go up in the air again. Documents at the Snyder County Historical Society report that during the 1930s, when local pilots asked to take him up, he would answer, *"I had my fun, and now I'm done."*

Sadly, in December 1958, at 77 years of age, Malick slipped and fell on ice in Philadelphia. He died in the hospital in obscurity. He had no identification on him, and his body was unclaimed in the morgue for more than a month, until they could establish who he was, the first licensed Black pilot in the United States.