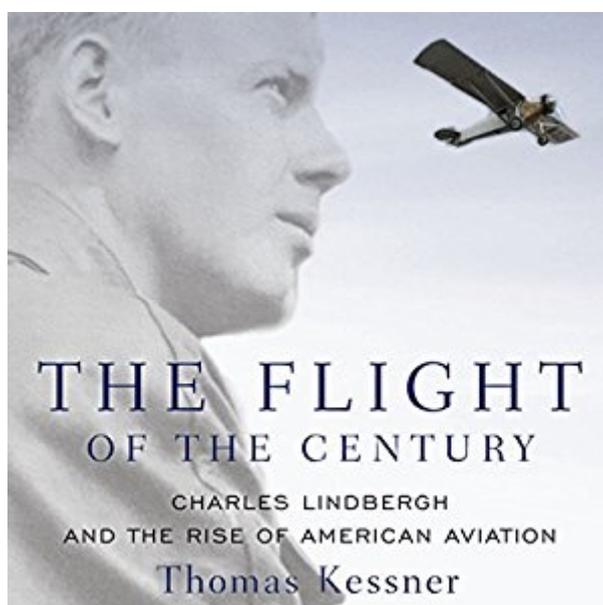


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# The Flight Of The Century: Charles Lindbergh And The Rise Of American Aviation: Oxford University Press: Pivotal Moments In US History



## Synopsis

In late May 1927, an inexperienced and unassuming 25-year-old Air Mail pilot from rural Minnesota stunned the world by making the first non-stop transatlantic flight. A spectacular feat of individual daring and collective technological accomplishment, Charles Lindbergh's flight from New York to Paris ushered in America's age of commercial aviation. In *The Flight of the Century*, Thomas Kessner takes a fresh look at one of America's greatest moments, explaining how what was essentially a publicity stunt became a turning point in history. He vividly recreates the flight itself and the euphoric reaction to it on both sides of the Atlantic, and argues that Lindbergh's amazing feat occurred just when the world - still struggling with the disillusionment of World War I - desperately needed a hero to restore a sense of optimism and innocence. Kessner also shows how new forms of mass media made Lindbergh into the most famous international celebrity of his time, casting him in the role of a humble yet dashing American hero of rural origins and traditional values. Much has been made of Lindbergh's personal integrity and his refusal to cash in on his fame. But Kessner reveals that Lindbergh was closely allied with, and managed by, a group of powerful businessmen - Harry Guggenheim, Dwight Morrow, and Henry Breckenridge chief among them - who sought to exploit aviation for mass transport and massive profits. Their efforts paid off as commercial air traffic soared from 6,000 passengers in 1926 to 173,000 passengers in 1929. Kessner's book is the first to fully explore Lindbergh's central role in promoting the airline industry - the rise of which has influenced everything from where we live to how we wage war and do business. *The Flight of the Century* sheds new light on one of America's fascinatingly enigmatic heroes and most transformative moments.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have read a few books about Lindbergh and his famous feat, but this book is probably about the best covering the man and the flight about as well as possible that isn't his autobiography. I recently ordered the book because I was the magnificent film with Jimmy Stewart and I wanted to read more. This book filled in many gaps (but at the same time I realized that the movie did a great job actually) and was a great read. I learned quite a bit more than I knew and this is a much better book than what I considered the fairly dreadful Berg biography (that author didn't know anything about aviation, was totally obsessed with Anne Morrow Lindbergh and frankly it showed - Lindbergh's combat record and this amazing transatlantic flight were like a blip in that book - not here!). Excellent! Enjoyed the read.

It was a great thrill reading about the life of Charles Lindbergh after hearing a lot about him from my parents as I was growing up. They were married a day or two after the famous flight in 1927, making the lore of the Lindbergh story all the more important to them. He was a true hero of their generation, making his importance all the more poignant. The subplot about the kidnapping of the Lindbergh's first son was disappointingly lightly treated in the book even though it struck a great resonance from Lindy's contemporaries. The true intense importance of Lindbergh's achievement lies in the inspiration of our nation to become a leader in the commercial use of aircraft. The importance of his flight to Paris could have been a one-off event if Lindbergh did not use it to make the world realize the importance of developing long distance flights for transportation of goods and people more efficiently. The fact that he personally developed flight maps for so many routes in the US and then in Central and South America made his achievement even greater. The latter part of the book deals with the later stages of his life when he became involved with a famous scientist, studied mysticism and then became a supporter of the Nazis. His achievements in air were truly groundbreaking. The latter parts of his life were a great disappointment to his fan base.

Charles Lindbergh was a childhood hero of mine. When I was 10 years old I read "The Spirit of St Louis" and always admired his aviation accomplishments, but for years was unaware of his personal life and controversial political beliefs. "The Flight of the Century" filled that void. I thoroughly enjoyed this wonderfully written and highly informative book.

The flight of the century, I thought was a story of Capt. Lindberg (as a civilian ex mail pilot) crossing the Atlantic Ocean. What a surprise to get one of the best books I have ever read about the entire life of Lindberg and his family. As a pilot of over 32 years of flying I thought I knew quite a lot about Lindberg. I did not know very much until I read this book to the end. Once again thank you for selling such quality books. I felt the trip from New York to Paris France was great and I felt I was right with him. The weather he went through reminded me of getting caught myself in similar conditions, no fun but it happens to all who can count their flying hours by the thousands. His flight in a single engine unproved airplane, next to no instruments to speak of (as we had later) was the test of a real pilot. What impressed me was all he accomplished in his life aside from aviation. He left a lot of things for us. One thing I would like to say about his flight to Paris, I always felt there was something helping me when I needed help, I'll leave it there but his help in WW II was of very much. One thing he helped a lot of P-38 pilots was how to get the best fuel consumption by setting the throttle and presser setting different. That alone brought pilots home instead of crashing. I could go on for ever but you will have to read the book, his life was something people should know about. So much he left us and so little credit given him. Col. DeVere Woods Ret.

I found it difficult to put this book down. Thomas Kessner truly gave me a greater appreciation for the Lindbergh flight. But the book is about more than solo flight across the Atlantic. In this book we learn about his parents and grandparents, his upbringing and rather fragmented education. Lindbergh's fascination with mechanical things is brought to light, and his penchant for detail. These were to contribute to the ultimate success of his flight. I have often wondered why we has successful at all considering the Spirit Of St. Louis was built for less than \$15,000, while his competition had nearly ten times as much capitol and all of the current experts on flight. This book answers those questions.

Very interesting. Especially regarding the kidnapping. Commercial flying and the stunt aviators craze in this country was amazing. Good read.

Lindbergh's cross-Atlantic flight gave the American power centers just the spokesman and symbol they needed to try and jump-start American commercial aviation. A picture is painted of Lindbergh as a gifted pilot and aviator, and one cold fish who came to willingly accept the money tossed his way by the developers of commercial aviation in the form of appointments, speaking tours and

insider trading information. A bit slow in developing, the pages about the preparation and conduct of the crss-Atlantic flight are riveting. The book does not gloss over Lindbergh's later embracing of eugenics or support for Adolph Hitler.

I had never really studied Lindbergh before, basically I only knew about his historic flight and the kidnapping of his son. This book did a good job of shining a light on his early years, which clearly had a major impact on the type of person he ultimately became. I found the book difficult to get through, mainly because through the filter of hindsight I Lindbergh a difficult person to like. This isn't the author's fault, the writing was good enough. But unless you're ready to vet a picture of a hero with all his imperfections, take a pass.

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