



Clinton County Historical Society

P. O. Box 174

Saint Johns, Michigan 48879

THE CLINTON INDEPENDENT

APRIL 1987

PAINE- GILLAM SCOTT MUSEUM MARKS 50TH REMEMBRANCE OF SOHN'S DEATH

Clements A. Sohn,, known as the original batwing jumper, was promoting aviation when he was killed while jumping in Paris on April 25, 1937.

On April 25 Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum will remember Sohn with a service at Fowler. Activities include:

APRIL 25: "A 50TH YEAR REMEMBRANCE" of Clements A. Sohn
1 p.m. Most Holy Trinity Cemetery, Fowler
Followed by open house at PGS where Sohn's batman wings and other memorabilia will be displayed.

(Information below from essay written by Connie Miller-Simmons of Denver. She wrote the essay in 1975 when a Fowler High School student)

"...Sohn was born near Fowler...Dec. 7, 1910,...son of Mr. & Mrs. Gottlieb Sohn. ...as a student he served an aviation apprenticeship under Art Davis, a noted Lansing flyer. He became a licensed pilot and then took up parachute jumping.

He made his first jump in Florida in 1932...gradually increased the time of his delayed jumps and then came up with the idea of fastening material to his arms and between his legs so that he might swoop and dive while making his jumps.

Sohn was well known to Ionia Free Fair fans....appeared as a "Bat Man" in 1934...a few weeks after he made his first bat-wing jump at Miami.... (he) appeared before Ionia audiences in 1933 as a mile jumper, an act where he fell from an airplane, plunging several thousand feet before opening his parachute. To thrill the crowd Sohn carried with him a sack of flour, which marked his path from the airplane to the ground.

(He) had 2 parachutes which he wore every time he jumped...

In 1936 Sohn narrowly escaped death while performing in England. His first chute fouled in his wings, forcing him to pull the emergency chute....he landed among parked cars...

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