



Who's Who  
of  
Ballooning  
By Ebert Fecks

GRAY, George Hawthorne      USA      (1889-1927) K      (GB/SB)

See APPENDIX-B/C/AA/AH/AI.      Military & Sport Aeronaut.

FIRST aeronaut into stratosphere; Son of a steamboat captain.

b: 16 Feb.1889, Pasco, WA;

d: 4 Nov.1927, Sparta, TN.

e: University of Idaho, 1913.

p: Professional Officer in U.S. Army; 1915, Enlisted as an infantry private for Mexican War; 1917, Commissioned Second Lt. (2 June), Army Air Service; Scientific balloonist, Did extensive research on high-altitude (Cosmic rays, atmospheric pressure, & humidity); 1927, Captain at time of death.

f: Graduated Ross Field B-School 1921; Airplane school 1923; Graduated Scott Field Airship School 1924; All known flights were made in open wicker baskets; Made 107 B-Flights in his lifetime.

l: 1926, Placed second in Gordon Bennett Race. \*\*\*Epic flight 4 May 1927 from Scott Field, IL. Flight reached 42,470' on attempt to set a new World altitude record. Flight covered 110 miles in one hour 32 min. Rapid descent caused Gray to parachute from 18,000' over Golden Gate, Illinois. NOTE: Parachuting from the balloon invalidated FAI record. \*\*\*Epic flight 4 Nov. 1927 from Scott Field, IL. Flight reached 44,000' before pilot died of anoxia (pressure loss), and landed gently near Sparta, TN. Fate attributed to a clock that froze, allowing him to exhaust his oxygen supply before reaching a safe altitude.