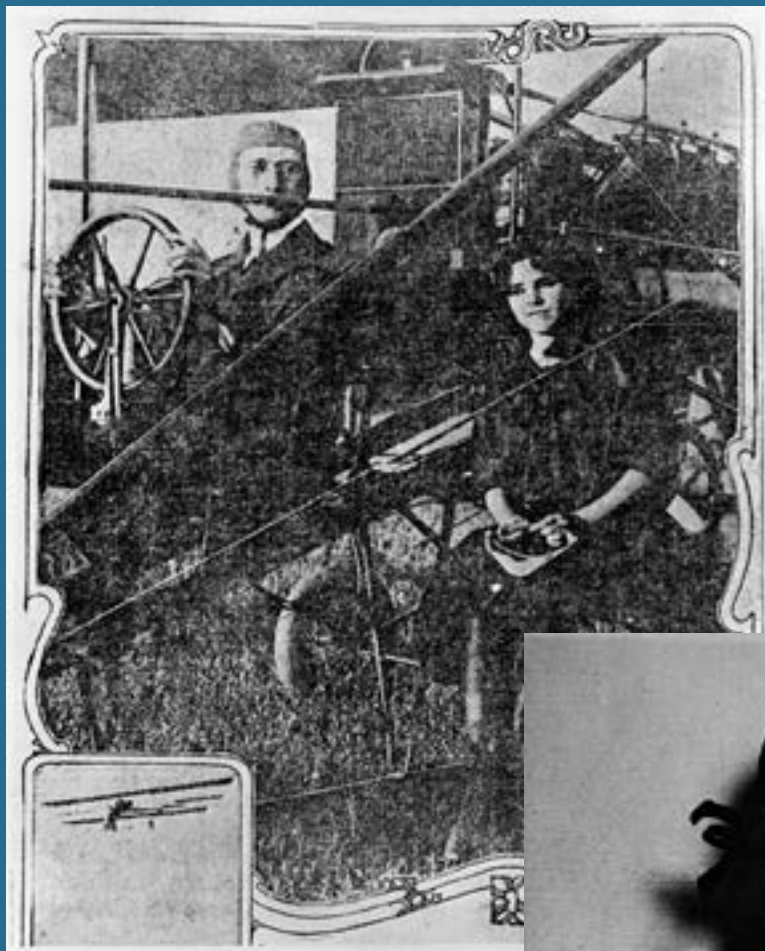


State Archives of North Carolina

Tiny Broadwick Pioneer of Aviation

Lesson Guide





This is a picture of the balloon from which Tiny made most of her jumps.

Fun facts about the “Broadwick” balloons

- ☞ No altimeter was used so she had to listen for the sound of a blank being shot out of a gun for the signal to jump.
- ☞ The balloon usually rose two thousand feet or higher.
- ☞ The heat used to inflate the balloon was coal oil which gave the ever-present possibility of it catching on fire.
- ☞ The winds were unpredictable and steering the parachute almost impossible.
- ☞ The balloon was made out of eleven hundred yards of sheeting like unbleached muslin.
- ☞ The balloon stood ninety-two feet high and fifty-six feet through the middle.
- ☞ Tiny would hang on a trapeze suspended from the balloon.
- ☞ When the air in the balloon cooled, it was at maximum height.
- ☞ The aeronaut had to jump before the balloon cooled too much since it would start to fall.
- ☞ There was no gauge to tell when the balloon was ready to rise; the aeronaut had to use his/her intuition.
- ☞ Before Charles Broadwick invented an automatic ground support, at least 15 to 20 men would have to hold the balloon down before they released it and it rose.

Make a list of things you notice about the balloon pictured here that is different from balloons used today?

While you are looking at these images of Tiny think about the type of clothing she is wearing.



1 Photograph of Tiny Broadwick in outfit worn as "Doll girl."



#2 Tiny Broadwick wearing one of her outfits she wore for airplane jumps.



#3 Tiny Broadwick and Glenn Martin dropping coupons over Los Angeles.



#4 Tiny Broadwick, Mayor George E. Cryer and Clyde Pangborn, before her last jump.

More photographs are available at [North Carolina Digital Collections](#), keyword Tiny Broadwick.

Take a look at image #1. Why do you think Tiny Broadwick disliked the outfit she had to wear when she was billed as “the Doll Girl?”

In what ways might this outfit affected her jump?

In image #2 we see Tiny and Glenn Martin in the airplane. Why do you think they are wearing the protective and warm clothing that they are? What kind of conditions did one face in early aviation? Remember the cockpit was open.

In image #3 number three compare and contrast Tiny Broadwick’s outfit with that of the lady next to her.

Image #4 shows Tiny in pants. This photograph was taken on Tiny Broadwick’s last jump in 1922. Why do you think this was the first time we saw Tiny wearing pants?

Jumping both from balloons and airplanes have risks associated with them. The following article highlights some of those risks. After reading the article discuss the dangers that Tiny faced.

DARING WOMAN AERONAUT HAD A NARROW ESCAPE

Mlle. Theresa's Perilous Position at the Florida Ostrich Farm Yesterday Afternoon.

A second time within ten days Mlle. Theresa, the daring woman aeronaut, came near losing her life in attempting to perform her hazardous feat of ascending in the skies and dropping from the balloon in a parachute. Yesterday afternoon she and Fred Ruble were scheduled to make the quadruple parachute drops at the Florida Ostrich Farm. The big balloon had just been cut loose from the ground, and had ascended to a height of two or three hundred feet, when the cloth began to tear. It was a perilous plight to be placed in, and only due to their presence of mind and quick action in switching their weight away from the torn section of the balloon are they living to relate the sensation of the experience.

The large crowd looked on with bewilderment, and when the aeronauts reached a height of 3,500 feet they dropped in parachutes. A second drop was beautifully performed, and the quadruple parachute drops were seen for the first time in Jacksonville.

Mlle. Theresa landed on a neighbor's house, and was only lowered from the roof with the assistance of ropes, after

er considerable difficulty. Although painfully bruised she showed her pluck by walking unassisted to the farm.

The quadruple parachute drops, with the tearing of the balloon to make it spicy, was the most spectacular act yet seen at the farm or in this city, and the big crowd freely applauded the aeronauts after their performance.

Bertini, captivated the crowd with his ride up a spiral tower on his unicycle.

Melville, the aerialist, was never better and his performance proved especially pleasing.

The animal show rendered its usual splendid program, while the Wild West Show and Capt. F. E. Bennett's wonderful marksmanship with a shotgun, breaking half-dozen glass balls in the air at the same time, was a feature attraction that made a hit.

"It is the greatest value of entertainment I have yet seen for twenty-five cents," said a prominent Mason yesterday, who is attending the Grand Lodge and incidentally spent the afternoon at the farm, "and I want to come back to Jacksonville and bring my family with me expressly to visit the Ostrich Farm again."

More newspaper clippings are located at [North Carolina Digital Collections](#), keyword Tiny Broadwick, clippings.

What kind of dangers were there in jumping from both balloons and airplanes?

What kinds of discrimination did Tiny Broadwick face?

What kind of reaction do you think people from her home town might have had to a young girl joining a traveling carnival?

Think about when Tiny Broadwick was living and the reaction people might have had to the kind of work she did.

Take a look at the advertising Charles Broadwick used to promote their aeronautic tricks. These letters and broadsides were typical in the early part of the 20th century.

La 1908

The Broadwicks Kata

Professionally known as Prof. Kata and Mile Theresa

Famous French Aeronauts

We are not the Cheapest but are the fastest, and we never fail. We guarantee complete ascension in fifteen minutes, or no pay. We have the latest improved method of holding and inflating balloons.

Permanent Address: Billboard, Cincinnati, Ohio

What the press and public think of the Famous French Aeronauts. We can show 5,000 more just as good.

QUINTUPLE DROP WAS DEMONSTRATED

A Remarkable Performance at the Florida Ostrich Farm.

Times-Union, Jacksonville, Fla., Jan. 26.

Gliding up into a sky bathed in the glory of a dying sun, several hundred visitors to the Florida Ostrich Farm and Zoo yesterday witnessed a beautiful demonstration of the quintuple parachute drop, as executed by the French famous team of aeronauts, Prof. Lolla and Mile Theresa.

Three unsuccessful efforts to perform the hazardous feat had been wasted, and with determination written upon their countenances the aeronauts, clinging to the swinging bar of the big balloon, shot directly up into the air to an estimated height of 2,000 feet. Then, when a pistol fired from the ground gave the signal, Mile Theresa cut loose. There was a sickening pitch downward for more than 100 feet, before the first parachute opened, steadied itself, and began slowly settling.

Onward to a greater height had traveled Prof. Lolla, still clinging to the balloon. A second signal from the ground boomed, and the form of the daring aeronaut was seen to drop as if shot from the balloon by compression, the law of gravitation being forgotten for the moment.

Downward he came to a distance of fully 200 feet before the parachute spread itself like the wings of some large bird and checked the descent.

Simultaneously with the opening of Prof. Lolla's parachute, Mile Theresa, to the astonishment of those below, cut loose another long, white, closely-folded parachute, and again came a headlong downward pitching for approximately 100 feet.

Hardly had her parachute begun to settle before the attention of spectators was directed in the direction of Prof. Lolla, whose form, like a belt of light-

ning from a pretty sky, was again taking a jaunty downward.

At a terrific speed Prof. Lolla quickly made another drop.

The wind, which had blown steadily during the early hours, had died away, and the five parachutes, each open, floated through the air, the lower two bearing the aeronauts, settling rapidly.

The gaze of the spectators following the descending aeronauts was a whirl in the waters of the St. Johns, soon followed by a second. The aeronauts had landed in the very channel of the river and the tide had hurried them onward with its flow to the ocean out of reach of protecting arms from loads.

Away the forms went down the stream, but the life preservers which had been buckled around their waists before the daring ascension served good purpose and the heads of the aeronauts protruded above the water.

Two sturdy arms tugged at the ears and with the assistance of the tide the aeronauts were reached and picked up.

The successive and quintuple parachute drop was the grandest aerial performance and aroused more genuine enthusiasm than anything of the kind ever before attempted or seen in Jacksonville. Safely at the Farm and Zoo again, Prof. Lolla talked interestingly of the wonderful feat. He had never before performed the quintuple drop, but had gone one better by performing the six-drop several times. The five-drop, however, he considers the most hazardous and hardest to perform, and was happy that he had successfully demonstrated the feat to the Jacksonville public.

Today he and Mile Theresa will attempt the double drop, and Sunday they will repeat the great quintuple drop.

TRIPLE PARACHUTE DROP AT OSTRICH FARM AND ZOO

It Was Again Successfully Demonstrated at Yesterday Afternoon Performance.

Times-Union, Jacksonville, Fla., Jan. 26.

Mile Theresa, the daring woman aeronaut, yesterday afternoon successfully demonstrated the triple parachute drop at the Florida Ostrich Farm and Zoo, and it proved one of the prettiest exhibitions seen in Jacksonville by a long while.

The balloon bearing its lone passenger

darted skyward to a height of several thousand feet, when, upon a signal from the ground Mile Theresa dropped to a sickening distance of one hundred and fifty feet.

The parachute then opened, and she slowly descended for a couple of hundred feet, when she again turned loose her hold and dropped to a distance estimated to have been nearly two hundred feet.

The second parachute opened, but hardly before she had regained her breath she made another spectacular downward shoot of two hundred feet. The third parachute, like some large umbrellas spread out, and slowly and gracefully Mile Theresa descended to the ground, perched upon the swinging bar of the parachute.

When Mile Theresa landed she was greeted by a thunderous applause, which lasted for some minutes. Then the spectators again turned their eyes skyward and watched the balloon and the two parachutes left by Mile Theresa float majestically in the air. The wind had a splendid effect on the canvas objects, and a very pretty sight was afforded.

Today Professor Lolla and Mile Theresa will attempt for the third time the performance of the quintuple parachute drop. This feat is more hazardous and difficult to perform than the triple drop, in that it requires five parachutes and five drops. Provided the weather is not inclement and no unforeseen obstacles loom up, the aeronauts will perform something that has never before been seen in Jacksonville and seldom witnessed anywhere else.

"The Fraser Pickaninnee" are pronounced by all who have seen them to be the funniest attraction they have ever seen. The back and wing dancing and the innocent negro juvenile dialect cannot be equalled, and they afford much amusement and entertainment for the visitors to the resort.

Melville, the marvellous acrobat; Quince, the daring high diver; Belmore Wild West Show; the Arion Trio; Curado's big band and all of the other big special attractions are daily pleasing big crowds of visitors to the Ostrich Farm and Zoo.

More advertisements are located at North Carolina Digital Collections, keyword Tiny Broadwick, advertising.

Why do you think Charles Broadwick used letters to advertise his act?

What advertising techniques did he employ in the letter?



This image is one of the first airplane jumps that Tiny completed. Take note of the apparatus upon which she is sitting. She suspended from a trap seat just behind the wing outside the cockpit. A funnel type apparatus was placed in front of her to prevent the backwash from the plane's propeller from taking her breath away. The parachute was folded on the shelf above her. When the airplane reached the desired altitude of two thousand feet, Tiny released a lever which would allow the seat to drop out from under her. As she fell, the parachute came off the shelf and opened allowing her to reach the ground safely. Later a parachute was designed to go into a backpack coat with cords that could be pulled manually by the sky-diver.

Describe what you think Tiny may have felt like when she was 2000 feet in the air sitting on this strap seat.



The early backpack parachute that Tiny used what was called a static line. This meant that the weight of her body when she jumped would pull a line/rope attached to the airplane taut, and automatically release the parachute. In 1914 Tiny demonstrated this parachute designed by Charles Broadwick to the United States. She made four jumps that day, three of which were complete successes. On the fourth jump the static line became tangled in the tail assembly and she was thrown against the side of the plane. She kept a level head as her body was being whipped against the side of the plane and cut all but a small portion of the line. She then pulled the line herself freeing the parachute. This would be later called a ripcord. Keeping a level head and improvising made Tiny the first person to complete a planned free dive.

Describe some ways, other than the ripcord, in which parachutes have changed since Tiny used to jump.



Around Christmas 1914 Glenn Martin and Tiny Broadwick were hired by city merchants and two newspaper companies to drop coupons for various gifts over the city of Los Angeles. The coupons were the merchants' and newspapers' way of thanking the people for their support and were for significant items, such as pairs of shoes and payments on a piece of property.

Glenn Martin made very careful calculations before his trip. The calculations showed that the envelopes would descend at a rate of six and a half feet per second and that the larger souvenir newspapers would fall five feet in the same amount of time. This meant that he would have to fly at a height of six thousand feet and that the gifts would have to be released from the plane at a point of two miles from where he wanted them to land.

When they landed, a reporter remarked to Tiny, "You look cold." Her answer, "I was cold for a while but I got warmed up. I have made many flights with Mr. Martin but never one that was more beautiful or gratifying than today's. Los Angeles looked like a dream city to us, way up there in the clouds!"

Would this be an acceptable form of advertising today?

Why or why not?

Tiny Broadwick was a pioneer in the world of aviation. Using the short biography in this lesson guide and the newspaper articles attached here, discuss her importance to the world of aviation.



Why was Tiny Broadwick considered so radical?



After 1100 jumps Tiny's ankles started to bother her. This picture was taken right before her last jump in 1922. She is pictured here with the Mayor of Los Angeles George E. Cryer and Clyde Pangborn. Clyde Pangborn was a well-known aviator who performed aerial stunts during the 1920s. He and his co-pilot were the first to fly non-stop across the Pacific Ocean.

Why do you think Tiny's ankles started to bother her?

How do you think she felt on this day?

Why do you think Mayor George E. Cryer was present for this event?



During World War II, Tiny worked at Rohr Aircraft Company making aircraft parts. She also was asked to talk with some of the paratroopers about her experiences.

How do you think it made Tiny feel to be asked to tell the young paratroopers about her experiences skydiving?

What do you think that the paratroopers during WWII thought of Tiny?



When Tiny talked to the paratroopers she would always bring one of her old chutes with her. They would always be surprised and say they would never jump with anything like that. Her response was “...it must have been OK I am still here!” On one of her trips to talk with the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg, North Carolina she was asked if she ever had a spare chute, when she was flying. Her response, “Yes, at home in the garage in case I tore the one I was wearing.”

Tiny’s parachute was six pounds and made of silk stitched together with cotton thread and hand folded into the pack she wore on her back.

How is Tiny’s parachute different from the parachutes of today?



Tiny Broadwick Honored at Ft. Bragg, 1964

Questions to consider while reviewing the video.

Why did the makers of this film choose the music that they did?

Why are the soldiers of the 82nd Airborne having such a ceremony?

What do you think Ms. Broadwick is feeling as she watches the men from the 82nd Airborne go up in preparation of their parachute jumps?

Think about the images you have seen of Tiny Broadwick; compare and contrast what the men of the 82nd Airborne wore in this video to what Tiny Broadwick wore when she made her parachute jumps.



This interview of Tiny Broadwick was conducted by WRAL news reporter, Ben Runkie in 1963.

What do you think Tiny Broadwick felt in her later years about her unusual career?

Discuss the importance of archives and museums and what they preserve.

What does a history museum preserve and why?

What does an archives preserve?

Why is it important that these agencies preserve and maintain these items?



Images of the jumpsuit, coat pack, and parachute donated by Tiny Broadwick to the Museum of History in 1963. The items are currently on display at the Museum of History in Raleigh North Carolina. Documents and photographs are part of the holding of the State Archives of North Carolina and are available to the public for research.

Parachutist Feels Jumpy

By RICK NICHOLS



Tiny Broadwick in her heyday of barnstorming

Yard after yard after yard, Tiny Broadwick pulled the pure Japanese silk into the park, carefully coiled the strands of hemp on top and now, without waiting for help, was slanting a shoulder through the straps.

"I tied this around here," she said, her 81-year-old frame wobbling a bit from the weight of the parachute she hadn't worn for half a century. "so my dreams wouldn't go astray."

More than 1,000 times, with leather-helmeted barnstormers piloting the biplanes, Tiny Broadwick ("The Doll Girl") leaped into windy skies and floated into cheering carnival crowds. "Before the war came along, then the depression."

She was the first woman to parachute from an airplane (in 1913). She became, on the posters of the day, an "ACT WITHOUT PARALLEL."

The bright lights were still in her eyes Friday at a lunch in the N. C. Museum of History where her historic chute has been resting uncomfortably, improperly packed, on the shelf for more than a decade.

"Something doesn't feel right," she said, pausing.

The luncheon plates had been cleared from the long table and Tiny's gnarled hands were running down the hemp lines. "I'm doing a sloppy job . . . I wouldn't want to jump in this."

But she wants to jump.

"I could kill her," said her daughter, Mrs. Verle Peythress, aiming a spoon at her mother's head.

"I want to jump into the ocean," said Tiny Broadwick. "Now they got these rubber suits . . ."

"I know I could do it again."

Tiny was born Georgia Thompson in Henderson in 1893 and worked 12-hour days in the cotton mills there until she was 15, when she became an acrobat dropping from hot air balloons at carnivals and fairs.

"One time the balloon busted when I was about 100 feet up and I bounced over a wire fence. I got more Coca-Colas offered to me that day."

Old Chute

The five-foot-tall First Lady of Parachuting has been visiting her daughter in Henderson and was invited to Raleigh, because, said Museum Administrator John Ellington, "she wanted to see her old chute, and, well, she's one of our favorite people."

See PARACHUTIST, Page 29



Tiny poking her old chute last week

Parachutist, 81, Feeling Jumpy

Continued from Page 27

Out in Long Beach, Calif., where she lives overlooking the ocean, Tiny has become a folk hero to hundreds of sports chutists.

In 1913, with Glenn L. Martin piloting the biplane, Tiny released herself from a trap seat in the front of the cockpit about 2,000 feet over Los Angeles to make her first airplane jump.

Later she parachuted into the cold waters of Lake Michigan and, in 1914, made the first official demonstration of her foster father's "Cowpack" parachute invention to Army officials.

Sure, she'd been afraid at first — "for about half a minute." Twenty-two-year-old Bonnie Young of Henderson confided to Tiny after her first jump last Sunday that she was, too.

"She told me she couldn't see too well over that spare chute they wear in front these days," Tiny said her great-granddaughter told her afterwards.

Did Tiny have a reserve chute?

Of course, she said. There was always an extra one back in the hangar in case the one she was wearing got wet or muddy between acts.

News & Observer newspaper clipping detailing a visit by Tiny Broadwick to Raleigh, North Carolina, November 6, 1974.



Later in life Tiny Broadwick was awarded many honors

- ☞ 1953 United States Government Pioneers of Aviation Award
- ☞ OX5 Club Member (members in this club had to have been involved in the manufacture, operation or maintenance of the OX5 powered airplanes prior to 1941)
- ☞ 1964 John Glenn Medal
- ☞ 1976 OX5 Hall of Fame
- ☞ 1972 Gold Wings, from the Adventures Club
- ☞ Early Birds of Aviation, also the only woman out of eighty men
- ☞ Listing in *Who's Who in the World of Aviation*
- ☞ *Guinness Book of World Records* for first person to perform a “premeditated free-fall” and first women to parachute from a airplane into water
- ☞ 1970 invited to watch the Apollo 13 launch
- ☞ January 20, 1961 Henderson, North Carolina, Mayor Carroll Singleton, declared Tiny Broadwick Day
- ☞ 1964 Governor Terry Sanford proclaimed Tiny Broadwick Day in the state of North Carolina.
- ☞ 1982 her memory was honored in Raleigh, North Carolina in observance of “Women’s Week” in the unveiling of a display of her memorabilia she had donated to the Museum of History.

Sources

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Our State Magazine, January 2004.

The State Magazine, January 1975.

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Images contained in this lesson guide, as well as others pertaining to Tiny Broadwick are available in the Women of North Carolina 20th Century History Collection, which is part of the [North Carolina Digital Collections](#). The physical collection is also available to the public, Tuesday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at 109 North Jones Street, Raleigh, N.C. in the Search Room of the State Archives of North Carolina.

