

FRANK R. GROSS (1995) (~1906-1997)

Frank Gross started life in Germany where he was associated with the Darmstadt Institute of Technology and a member of the Akaflieg Darmstadt. This Akaflieg was/is one of about 20 flying groups attached to German Universities for the purpose of designing and developing aircraft.

He emigrated to the United States in 1929 and, at the recommendation of Dr. Wolfgang Klemperer, went to work for the Baker-McMillan Aircraft Company. While there, he designed many sailplanes, the first being related to his design at the Akaflieg, the Darmstadt D-19.



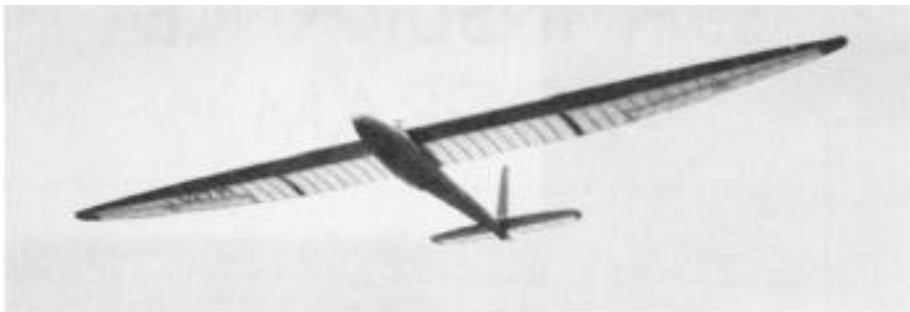
Dr. Frank Gross seated in the Akron Glider Club's 1929 Baker-McMillan Primary Glider.



Fred T. Loomis

In a very short time he turned out a number of designs, under the name of the Baker McMillan Company – the Cadet I Primary (above), the Cadet II Utility Glider (left) and especially – the sleek high performance Akron Condor. This was the first sailplane built in

this country to attain what was then considered high performance. (Photo below)



The Akron Condor reflected the high wing design utilized by the Darmstadt. It had a three piece cantilever wing with a 53 foot span and an aspect ratio of 20. The estimated glide ratio was 24 to one. Empty weight was slightly over 300 lbs. The Condor first flew in September 1929.

Baker-McMillen closed shop during the Depression giving Gross time to construct the first two-place trainer built in the United States – the Sky Ghost which was based on the Darmstadt I design. It is shown below on display at the National Soaring Museum.



Shown to the left is the Gross F-5 four-place glider which Gross designed and built and, at the time, it was the largest glider in the country. It was towed 100 miles from Akron to Cleveland June 29, 1935, an event that is commemorated by 1,600 special stamped envelopes carried on board.



Two awards are presented in Frank Gross' name – VSA: Frank Gross Restoration Award and NSM: Sky Ghost Scholarship. These awards celebrate the goals of Frank Gross to encourage glider craftsmanship and youth soaring.