Carole Lombard: The Hoosier Tornado makes for a pleasant read and is also academically informed and well documented. Gehring creates an engaging image of Lombard as a person and as a star whose life and films merit the kind of careful attention his book provides.

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Wings of Their Dreams
Purdue in Flight
By John Norberg

The history of American aviation is laced with famous names and numerous firsts. But it is unlikely that the typical student of airflight history is familiar with the names James Turpin (an early airshow flyer for the Wright brothers), Trudy Johnson (one of the first women to fly a Wright-built aircraft), Fredrick Martin (commander of the first around-the-world crew), or Charles McAllister (the first man to mid-air crash into Charles Lindbergh). What do these early aviation pioneers have in common? Each one either studied at, worked for, or married a graduate of Purdue University.

While this may seem too narrow a theme for a book—most of the names are obscure until we reach the space age with Purdue graduates such as Virgil “Gus” Grissom, Neil Armstrong, and Eugene Cernan—the book, in fact, serves a dual role for the average reader. First, it tells the story of the people involved in the nuts-and-bolts of aviation, the almost-famous flyers, those who built the infrastructure of modern aviation, selected by their almost random association with Purdue. While the author emphasizes Purdue’s recognized strength in the field of aeronautical engineering (clearly, one of the book’s goals is to serve as a recruiting document), the idiosyncratic nature of the cast of Purdue aviators provides a revealing look at the “ordinary” side of American aviation. For example, Turpin might have claimed many aviation firsts but quit flying after an air show crash. Trudy Johnson, the wife of early test pilot Jimmie Johnson, might have been the first Amelia Earhart figure, but quit flying for fear of her children losing their mother. Martin was selected to command a team of four planes to attempt to be the first to fly around the world, but he crashed his plane on the first leg over Alaska and the team completed the textbook journey without him.
This book also tells the story of the twentieth-century contributions of land-grant colleges to the research and economic development of aviation. Caltech and MIT claim a high percentage of Nobel Prize winners, but public schools, such as Purdue, have been responsible for educating and training a significant fraction of the people who would go on to assemble and maintain the technological steamroller of aviation in this country. Purdue was the first university to construct its own airfield, to hire a female professor of aeronautical engineering (Amelia Earhart), and to equip her with the finest research aircraft of the time (which, unfortunately, she piloted to her death in the South Pacific). Purdue was also one of the first colleges to own an airline—one of its four jets was the infamous Playboy plane of the 1960s (apparently Earhart’s feminist message did not sink in).

There are several deficiencies in the book’s presentation. For example, early in the book the author notes that “every breakthrough in aviation and space would be captured on film” (p. 8), however, the book displays only a few pages of images to accompany its rich descriptive text. The experienced reader is probably aware of the look of early aircraft, but the novice reader (at whom the book appears to aim) would benefit from some visual images of the early days of aviation. Overall, however, the book is an excellent read and well-researched. While the accolades to Purdue wear thin after a few chapters, the reader does sense the “can-do” attitude that infected many of these Midwestern aviation pioneers.

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**Facing East from Indian Country**

*A Native History of Early America*

By Daniel K. Richter


Because Daniel K. Richter’s *Ordeal of the Longhouse* (1991) remains a standard in the field, scholars in frontier and American Indian history greatly anticipated this follow-up monograph. To be sure, Richter does many things equally well in this newer book, bringing in environmental, cultural, medical, religious, economic, and agricultural history as well as linguistics, anthropology, and archaeology. Focusing on cis-Mississippi and cis-Appalachia-America, *Facing East* begins in A.D. 1002 and ends in