

# Flying Tippler History in the U.S. and Flying Records

by ROBERT B. FUNK

American Pigeon Journal, Dec. 1971

It has been suggested that I might write such an article and for certain I fully intend to try. However, it might be first pointed out that no single individual could possibly cover such a wide scope in one article nor give justice to full coverage to history and/or records. Therefore I shall only relate in part what I personally know from my memory and records. At this time it is also important to make note of the fact that no such history could possibly be written without taking into consideration the English and the Canadians.

The origin of our breed is the English Flying Tippler. It is a manufactured breed, the ingredients of which are widely speculative. Regardless, it is very safe to state that the Tippler is of the Tumbler origin, with the tumble or the roll, either bred out or culled out, breeding birds for endurance flying, rather than distance homing or acrobatics in the air.

The fever of these beautiful flyers spread from England to Canada and to the United States. The US is so vast in its Pigeon Fancy that it is impossible to just say that the birds were imported from England to Canada and then to the US, for in some cases this is true, but in many other frequent cases the breed was imported by us directly from England.

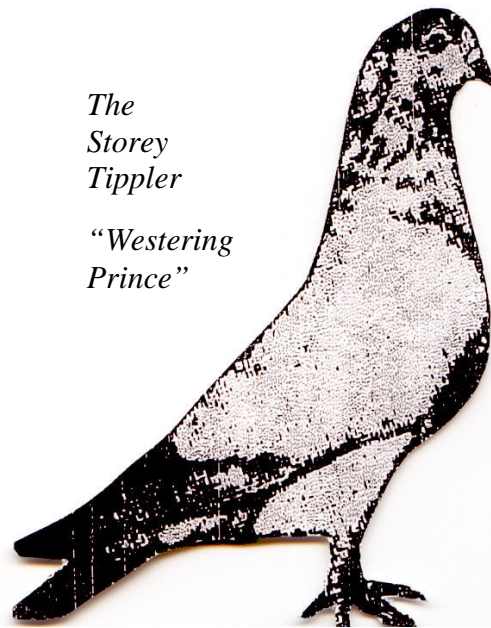
Types and breeds or strains, if you will, are also important to any history. So please let me relate to you at this time just one of the very interesting aspects of bringing the Tippler here. I have written a short story called "The Story of the Storey". The Storey is a strain of flying tippler of the Macclesfield type or variety, bred many years ago by Mr. Storey of England. His birds were both show and fly record winners. It is his prime possession, "Westering Prince" that the Flying Tippler Association of America has adopted as its trade mark, so to speak. The bird's picture was lifted from a British publication, a cut made, and it is now on the letterheads of this American Club.

Let's go back to the "Roaring Twenties" The reverend Graham of Canada imported at least one pair from Mr. Storey. This was approximately in the year 1927. William O. Harvey of Little Rock, Arkansas, a Birmingham and later Pensom Roller fancier, became interested in this Tippler that the Rev. Graham had brought to this continent. Mr. Harvey bought the pair of English Tipplers from the Rev. Graham and had them shipped to him at Little Rock. A point of interest is the fact that at this time a certain gentleman in Toronto, Canada, who later became known world-wide for his famous "Butterfly Wing Action" Canadian Flying Tippler, was also interested in this Storey strain. This gentleman was Douglas Prud'homme of Toronto.

Doug Prud'homme had one slight problem; the birds were sold to Bill Harvey. But, romance never to wane, even with pigeons, there was one faint ray of hope as Mr. Graham's Storey's were on eggs. Now in these days it was not practical to consider shipping both birds and eggs off to Arkansas from Canada, and besides, Mr. Harvey had bought the birds not eggs. So Mr. Prud'homme through gift or purchase wished the eggs off to his lofts and placed them under

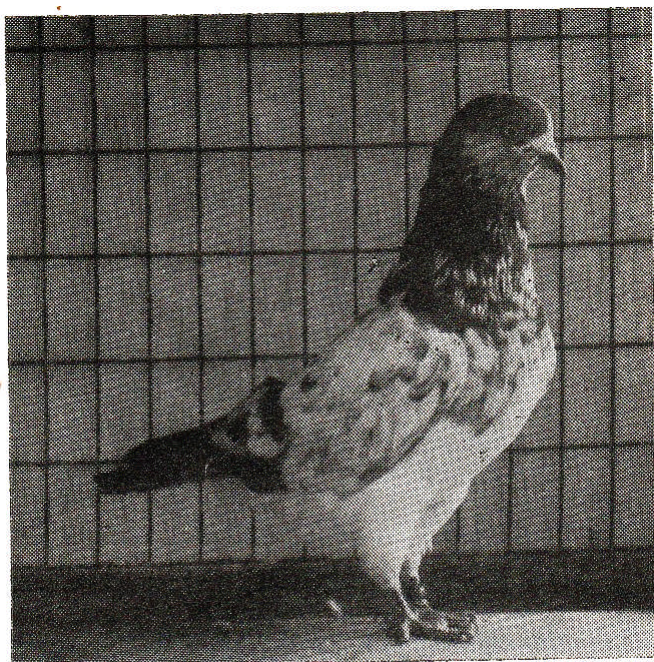
a setting pair of birds he already had, breed unknown to me, and hatched the eggs out and raised them. It was from this beautiful Storey light print that Mt. Prud'homme, at least in part, began his strain of butterflies. Personally I do not know if Mr. Prud'homme imported additional Storey strain Tipplers or not, but the birds were famed.

Nelson Balmer of Toronto took the same birds, in fact he and Mr. Prud'homme interchanged stock as need be, and Mr. Balmer became the most consistent long time flyer in the annals of Canadian Tippler flying. While Mr. Prud'homme in the final analysis of the Canadian flying records wound up with top honours in time. Mr. Balmer was nonetheless the most consistent long time flyer. They both housed the same bloodlines.



*The  
Storey  
Tippler*

*"Westering  
Prince"*



### FLYING TIPPLER COCK

**Flying Tippler Cock owned by Robert B. Funk, Hialeah, Fla.**

As an anecdote to all this, Mr. Harvey of Little Rock went off to Pharmacy school and his birds were cared for by his parents etc. and when he finished school, after timplers had been sent out in different directions, there was one Storey hen left in this loft. Now, in the year 1932, there was a boy that came along by the name of Bobby Funk. He purchased a pair of timplers from the son of a dairy farmer in Little Rock and from then on was bitten by the Tippler bug. Mr. Harvey took the Funk boy under his wing and gave him the Storey hen, and also there was acquired a light print cock from the State of Kentucky and definitely out of the original Harvey imports. The birds bred well and flew well.

Not to be daunted with one pair of Tippler breeders, I imported from Toronto in the year 1934 additional Timplers from the Burns Brothers. Soon the Macclesfield and the Sheffield types were intermingled as in most Tippler lofts in the United States. While we still have the two types you never know to this day, just what to expect in colour out of a tippler mating, unless you breed to colour only, which is a deterrent to good flying, just as is to breed to good style or appearance. You breed to flying ability only.

Fred Erbach of New York, in what year do not know, imported the Rennison strain from England. These were the Macclesfield type bird. It has been said that the Macclesfield light coloured bird was bred in the area of England to be light of colour to be able to

see in the very high sky. Further, that because of the Sheffield steel factories, the Sheffield type was bred in darker colours and to fly at lower altitudes to contrast against a hazier sky.

Fred Erbach took his birds and also took the North American Old Bird Record away from the Canadians in the year 1937, the year prior to the organization of the Flying Tippler Association of America. The New York Club was called the American Flying Club, or for short, the AFTC. Erbach's record of 17 hours and 18 minutes broke the Canadian record by ten minutes.



**FRED ERBACH and STANLEY KOZANECKI**

The late Fred Erbach (left) and Stanley Kozanecki of Maspeth, N.Y. holding the three birds that flew 17 hours and 18 minutes on May 23, 1937. — Photo from Nasser Shirakbari, Fort Smith, Ark.

It is needless for me to go into the problems that followed. Let it suffice to say that the only way the Canadians could contest Mr. Erbach's record was to break it. Regardless, to this day in this year of 1971, Mr. Erbach's record fly on May 23, 1937 of 17:18 is the long time flying record in these United States of America. His kit was released at 3:23 am and dropped at 8:43 p.m. This information in print in the American Pigeon Journal as placed there by article from the Secretary of the AFTC, the late W.A.L. Liesum.

Since the aforementioned facts were happening in the 1920s and 1930s in the United States there is also absolutely doubt in anyone's mind that such happenings were multiplied many times, by many people. Timplers were being brought from Canada and England. Later from Holland and Wales and Germany, all of which had their origin in England.



### LADY CHAMPIONS

From left to right they are: No. 20438, 20401, 20440  
 Fred Erbach's North American record holders flown 17 hours and 18 minutes on May 23, 1937

I do not wish in this article to belabour the many Tippler club aspects and related problems that evolved in the United States during the times of developing the Tippler here. It is enough to say, from my personal knowledge, that aside from the AFTC in the New York area, a Mr. Frank Hagan of Philadelphia organized at least two nation clubs, the AFTC (Associated Flying Tippler Club of America) and the NTU (National Tippler Union of America) a take from the English NTU club. I was a member of these clubs.

Let's face it, because of personal differences, a gentleman by the name of Erwin C. Grube of Fond du Lac, Winconsin, organized in the year 1938, The Flying Tippler Association of America, FTA. On this invitation I accepted the appointment as the FTA first President. This has been the only Tippler club to endure the many years as a truly national organization for our breed. To generate national flying competition and general interest, a race or fly if you will, was scheduled for September 17, 1939. While other flies possibly had happened this was to establish a club record for the FTA. There were only two contestants in this race, Mr. Grube and Virgil Schiavone of New York city. Mr. Schiavone won this race with a time of 12 hours and 35 minutes to set the first FTA club record with such gentlemen as Mr Erbach, Charles Spieser, George Miltner, Fred de Blon, Gene Scorzello, Victor Walczak and Danny Sasso in attendance and witness to the fly. It was a four bird kit, three light prints and one dark print young.

In keeping with my theory that consistent long time flying denotes a real Tippler breeder and flyer. Here is a note appearing in the American Pigeon Journal under the heading of " American Flying Tippler Club"...."The record for Tippler flying for the year 1938 is now held by Fred Erbach of Maspeth L.I. New York. His record is 14 hours and 10 minutes made on April 19, 1938" This was signed and sent in to the APJ by James Liesum, 90-61 179th St. Jamaica LI, N.Y.

As far as world records are concerned, for many, many years the time of 19 hrs, 30 mins was held in England. My latest knowledge is that time is now an even 20 hours. In Sheffield, England, a world's young bird record was set at 17 hrs, 20 mins. in the year 1960. in the year 1959 Mr. Lovatt had upped the world's old bird record from 19:30 to 19:42. July 1 1961 Mr. Lovatt the world's young bird record with a time of 17:30. George Marlow of Sheffield, England, could not be daunted and in 1960 flew an old bird record for 19:45 to take away from Mr. Lovatts' time of 19:42 record made the previous year. Mr. Lovatt countered with his 1963 world shattering record of an even 20 hours.

The extremely long summer daylight hours in England coupled with the climatic conditions at that time make it possible for these long flies. Of course, do not overlook the excellent stock, breeding, training and feeding. The British, the originators of the breed are still their masters. Others have learned quite well. A few records from the Dutch Flying club: de Haas, young birds 17:18 on July 8, 19:51. Old birds Wan der Wel, 17:27 on June 19, 1961.

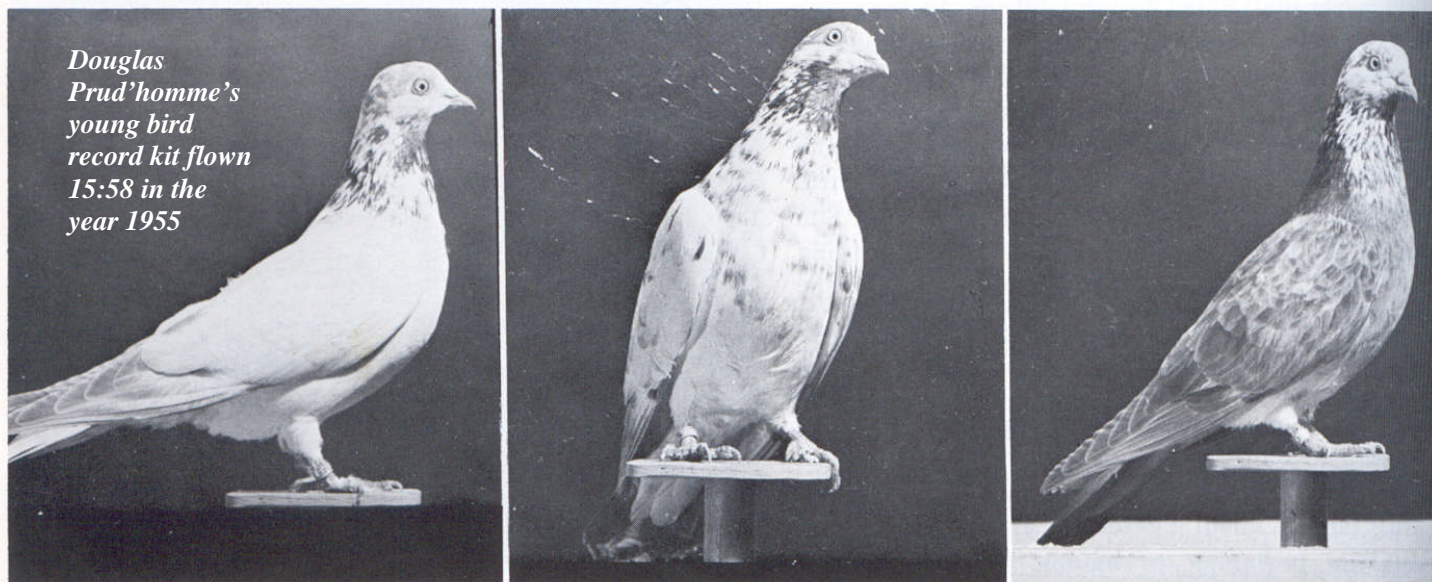


Figure 442

Photos courtesy of Douglas M. Prud'homme, York Mills (Toronto), Ontario, Canada

The Canadians: The most popular publicized old bird record was set by Arthur De Clute of Toronto in the year 1934 with a time of 17hrs. 08 mins. flying two light prints and a dark blue check. After Mr. Erbach of New York broke this record with 17:18. I think it was Combs and Jacobs that tipped the record to 17:20. Without digging for hours and hours, for the still existing North American old bird record, I think it is now, still a Canadian record of 17:28.

The North American young bird record was kicked around a bit also, Nelson Balmer held it at one time. Douglas Prud'homme flew a kit in the late 1950s for 15 hours and 58 minutes, and is still the Canadian record for young birds.

Our Red Dubuc, on May 29, 1960, brought the North American young bird record to the United States with a time of 16 hours 25 minutes. So we have split the difference, Canada hold the old bird record, the United States the young bird record, as of October in the year 1970...the field is still open gentlemen. There have been many Tippler breeders and flyers in this country that managed some wonderful times with their birds. I myself have flown 14 hours and 12 minutes with birds previously mentioned. William Hoffman of Baltimore once held the FTA club record and often flew consecutive good times. Baltimore has been a world within itself and a past that I could not even touch upon.

It might be interesting to note that on the date that Mr. Dubuc set the North American young bird record May 29, 1960, Tom Lagos flew a kit for 13 hours 45 minutes and he also won the FTA aggregate of 27 hours and 20 minutes with two flies. To emphasize what a wonderful flying year 1960 was for the FTA, on April 17, 1960 Sal Fatta flew a

kit for an even 14 hours. On that day which was prior to the Mr. Dubuc fly Mr Fatta had set a new FTA club record. The Dubuc kit went for 13:50 just behind Mr Fatta.

On May 15 1960 the Dubuc kit went for 14:50. At hand is a letter from Tom Lagos to John Curley (Central Timer) disqualifying himself in the May 15 fly. His kit was put up at 5:30am and the droppers tossed at 8:15pm, a total time of 14:45, or five minutes under the Dubuc winning kit. The Lagos kit was still up at 9pm, a total time of 15 hours 30 minutes when it was too dark to see them. Twenty homers and five helmets could not bring the kit down.

More recently, Mike Seiler, on September 27, 1969 flew a kit for 15 hours and 24 minutes, proof that Tipplers are still flying in the United States, and very well. At the time of Mr. Seiler's time the FTA did not have written into its flying rules the rights to use artificial lighting to drop the kit. Regardless it is a beautiful fly and we sincerely hope Mr. Seiler will continue his efforts.

In concluding this article, while it is long, may I please emphasize that no article per se, could give any amount of justice to history and records. It would take months of preparation and a book to relate. My sincere apologies for having missed any important persons or records in this article.

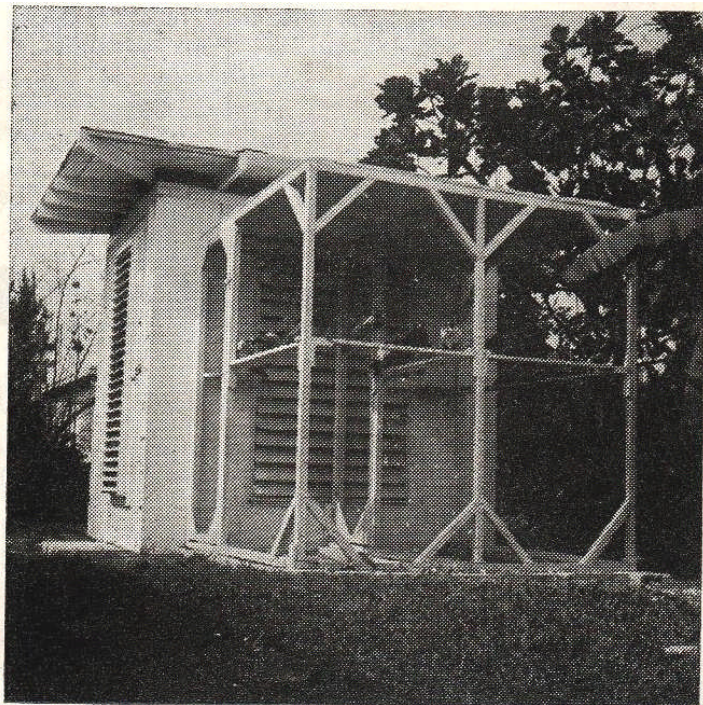
*On the next page we have a few words from Oskar Zovich on some of the details of this article.*

Actually Nelson Ballmer lived on Quebec Ave close to High Park. He was the guy who imported together with Prud'homme the Hall and Passmore birds in the early 1930s. Nelson was disqualified twice after breaking the young bird record. Once he flew 16.04 but couldn't get one bird to come off his house in time, and a second time at 16.02 he couldn't drop them in time allowed.

As for Red Dubac, yes he held the record for a short time, but then the club took it away (as official) on the account that the timers were members of his family, at the time this was allowed, but then after the complaint of other clubs they changed the rule and stripped him of the official record. However it is a USA honour record. I do remember late Syd Billinger talking about Combs and Jacob, but I'm not sure if it was mid twenties?

Also, some of the facts in this article are no exactly correct. It was Jack English who held the record before Prud'homme with 15:55 hrs I believe flown in 1933 and before that the record was 15:36 by Sam Loria in 1929....these are all young bird records

Oskar Zovich



**ROBERT FUNK'S TIPPLER LOFT**

The attractive Flying Tippler loft owned by Robert B. Funk, Hialeah, Fla., President of the Flying Tippler Association of America. — Photo from Robert B. Funk, Hialeah, Fla.

# Flying Tippler Records of North America

## Old Birds

Michael J. Beat	1992	18:05
Oskar Zovich	2005	18:00*
Oskar Zovich	2004	17:47*
Oskar Zovich	2002	17:35*
Kemo Basic	2001	17:31*
George Vertolli	1966	17:29
Bill Adams	1950	17:25
Dawson Brothers	1940	17:23
Edward Robinson	1939	17:19
Fred Erbach	1937	17:18
Arthur DeClute	1934	17:08
Gordon Feldcamp	1932	16:18

\* Canadian record. Without asterisk are North American records

## Young Birds

Nino Bugeja	2005	16:45
Nino Bugeja	2004	16:44
Bob Adams	2003	16:35*
Nino Bugeja	2003	16:33
Bob Adams	2001	16:30
Nino Bugeja	2000	16:19
Bob Adams	1999	16:15
Kemo Basic	1998	16:06
Gordon Chater	1985	16:02
Douglas Prud'homme	1955	15:58
Jack English	1933	15:55
Sam Lauria	1929	15:36
Edward Page	1927	15:03

\* US record flown in a pre arranged fly. Without asterisk are North American records.