

Adopted April 5, 1944

File No. 3616-43

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
on the
Investigation of an Accident Involving Aircraft
During a Local Pleasure Flight

An accident which occurred approximately 14 miles southeast of English Field, Amarillo, Texas, about 10:20 a.m. on August 24, 1943, resulted in fatal injuries to Pilot Lester Wilbur Clark, age 49. Clark held a commercial pilot certificate with a single-engine land, 0-80 h.p. rating. He had flown approximately 237 solo hours, around 37 of which were in the type of plane involved. The aircraft, a Culver LFA, NC 41648, owned by the Amarillo Flying Club, was demolished.

Clark took off from English field about 9:20 a.m. and proceeded to an area approximately 18 miles east of the airport. About one hour later some children in a farmyard watched Clark wave to them as he flew over an adjoining field, and circled their home at a very low altitude. As he turned again toward the open field the landing gear was lowered, and almost immediately the plane was seen to fall to the ground. Evidence indicated that the plane contacted the ground in a partially inverted position, first with the left wing, followed by the nose and right wing.

Examination of the wreckage revealed no sign of failure of any part of the aircraft prior to the accident. The manner in which the propeller was broken indicated that very little power was being developed at the time of impact. Switches were "on" and the throttle was closed. The fuel supply was ample. Weather conditions were suitable for contact flight and were not a contributing factor to the accident. Whether the pilot was attempting to land or was simulating a forced landing could not be determined. However, it appears that he stalled the plane while he was in process of lowering and locking the landing gear. This operation, which is manually performed from the cockpit, should not have been attempted at a low altitude, as it requires the pilot's attention to an extent that may cause him to neglect his flying momentarily.

This accident was apparently due to a stall at low altitude from which recovery was not effected.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary