

Adopted: May 17, 1944

File No. 3834-43

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

An accident which occurred near the Lake Providence Airport, Lake Providence, Louisiana, about 7:15 p.m. on September 12, 1943, resulted in fatal injuries to Pilot Jack Gilpin Shaffer and his passenger, A. J. Dinger. Shaffer held a student pilot certificate and had flown approximately 12 solo hours, all in the type airplane involved. Dinger was not certificated as an airman. The aircraft, a Luscombe 8B, NC 41959, owned by the pilot, was demolished.

Pilot Shaffer, accompanied by his passenger, took off toward the north and shortly after leaving the ground made a sharp 180° turn. He then dragged the field, passing within approximately 30 feet of the hangar, following which he pulled up into a steep climb and started a left turn at an altitude variously estimated to have been between 250 and 500 feet. During this turn the plane was observed to skid, then stall and fall into a left spin. It struck the ground nose-first and did not move after first impact.

Examination of the wreckage disclosed no evidence of failure of any part of the aircraft prior to impact and witnesses stated that the engine sounded as though it were developing full power during the entire flight. Weather conditions were excellent and were not a contributing factor to the accident. Dual controls were connected and operative. A student pilot, who took a ride with Shaffer just prior to the subject flight, stated that following their take-off from Lake Providence Airport, Shaffer pulled up into a very steep climb, made a sharp 180° turn at an altitude of less than 200 feet, then dived at the hangar; that as they passed the hangar Shaffer pulled up into another steep climb, during which he (the passenger) took over the controls, leveled off and cautioned the pilot about reckless flying. This student said he then requested the pilot to land, and that Shaffer made a satisfactory landing.

Investigation revealed one witness who had talked to and who had had an opportunity to closely observe Shaffer's actions just previous to the subject flight. This witness stated that Shaffer "had been drinking."

The probable cause of this accident was the pilot's recklessness, resulting in a stall and spin at a low altitude, from which recovery was not effected.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary