

Adopted: May 3, 1944

File No. 4493-43

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
on the
Investigation of an Accident Involving Aircraft
During a Cross-Country Business Flight

An accident which occurred approximately one-quarter mile north of Seneca, Nebraska, about 9:00 p.m. on October 26, 1943, resulted in serious injuries to the pilot, Dr. Linville Franklin Valentine, and minor injuries to his passenger, Reinholdt John Pinneker. Valentine held a private pilot certificate and was rated to fly single-engine land planes of from 0-80 h.p. He had flown approximately 217 solo hours, all in the type aircraft involved. Pinneker held a private pilot certificate with a single-engine land, 0-80 h.p. rating, and had flown approximately 217 solo hours. The aircraft, a Taylorcraft BL12-65, NC 36442, owned by Valentine, was extensively damaged.

While in Omaha, Dr. Valentine received a message to return to North Platte, Nebraska, to perform an emergency operation. He secured proper clearance for a cross-country flight to North Platte and, accompanied by Pinneker, took off from the Omaha Municipal Airport at approximately 5:30 p.m. Weather conditions were suitable for contact flight at the time of departure, but about one hour later, ground haze and smoke reduced visibility considerably. The flight was continued and when it became apparent that he was off course and lost, the pilot circled the town of Seneca, Nebraska, 63 miles north of his intended destination, in an attempt to make a landing, if possible. While circling the town at an extremely low altitude the aircraft struck the side of a hill on the north bank of a river which, because of darkness, had not been seen by either the pilot or his passenger.

Investigation disclosed that Valentine and Pinneker had had very little, if any, cross-country night flying experience and that the aircraft carried no radio receiver or instrument flying equipment.

While the pilot's inexperience resulted in his becoming lost on a night flight during restricted visibility, the cause of the accident was collision with an unobserved obstruction during an attempted emergency landing.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary