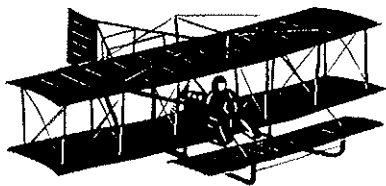


THE WRIGHT BROTHERS in the HALL OF FAME



By Rev. Ralph W. Sockman

FROM MY DECK CHAIR just off the coast of France, Ohio looks better than ever. Distance does not destroy boyhood roots. The work of Ohioana is most praiseworthy in its efforts to combine local loyalties with large outlooks. In that combination is one secret of America's strength.

Some day I hope to write for you a brief article about Ohioans in the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, of which I have been the Director since the death of President James Rowland Angell in 1948. Let me here tell you of one situation immediately before us at the Hall of Fame.

According to the By-Laws of the Hall, no candidate is eligible for election until he has been dead twenty-five years. This lapse of time allows the dust of controversy to settle and true fame to be attested. The elections are held every

DR. SOCKMAN, *nationally known Methodist clergyman, writer and radio preacher, is a native of Marion. He received an Ohioana Career Medal in 1954. So that we might have a message for this Anniversary Issue of the magazine, he was kind enough to break into his vacation mood and write the following.*

five years, and the choice is made by a College of Electors, composed of 150 very distinguished persons.

In 1955, Wilbur Wright had been dead a quarter of a century and was therefore eligible. He was elected by a large vote. But when we came to install his bust, the aviation leaders almost unanimously agreed that Wilbur should not be placed without Orville. The brothers were so intertwined in their work that they should be immortalized together. Suggestion was even made that the two figures should be sculptured in the same bronze.

Changed the By-Laws

Hence New York University, which is the custodian of the Hall of Fame, changed the By-Laws, permitting the Electors to vote on Orville in 1960, instead of 1970, at which time he would have been eligible. This is an incident of which very few Ohioans know.

While I, as the Director, have no influence in the elections, I would predict that Orville Wright will be elected in 1960. Also Thomas A. Edison, another Ohioan, will have been dead twenty-five years by that date and is almost sure to

(Concluded on page 124)

THE WRIGHT BROTHERS

(continued from page 119)

be elected. He was put in nomination by Herbert Hoover, one of the Electors.

Some states have been very active in promoting native sons for the Hall of Fame. Ohioans might get busy if your library would care to suggest it. Nominations are open until April 1, 1960, and the balloting is conducted between April 1 and November 1, 1960, at which time the announcement will be made of those elected to America's highest niche of fame. Only 83 have been elected so far in our whole history. Not more than seven can be chosen at any one election.