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Beryl Markham's Transatlantic Flight, 1936 | September 1986 is the 50th anniversary of Beryl Markham's solo flight across the Atlantic, a flight which ended in a bog at Baleine, Cape Breton. Born in East Africa in 1902, she was raised by her father, who left her on her own in her teens when he went bankrupt and headed for Peru to start over. Ms. Markham hunted with native Africans as a child, and became in her teens a proficient horse trainer. She then turned to aviation, spotting elephants and guiding hunters, and carrying mail, supplies, and people across untracked East Africa. And in 1947 she wrote her only book, *West with the Night* • an autobiography through the time of her 1936 flight. Beryl Markham's time in Cape Breton was only a matter of hours, and admittedly of little consequence. But we must be grateful for that barest of connections, because otherwise few of us would feel any call to seek out and read her entire book • and that would be our loss. Because the book is good reading • a rarely seen world via an extraordinary person • and without her brief touching down here we might have missed the book altogether. Readers should be warned that the following excerpt from *West with the Night* is all there is in the book specifically about Cape Breton Island. But if you want the context • Beryl Markham's life-route to that bog in Cape Breton • her beautifully written book is worth seeking out. From *WEST WITH THE NIGHT* I have seldom dreamed a dream worth dreaming again, or at least none worth recording. Mine are not enigmatic dreams; they are peopled with characters who are plausible and who do plausible things, and I am the most plausible amongst them. All the characters in my dreams have quiet voices like the voice of the man who telephoned me at Elstree one morning in September of nineteen-thirty-six and told me that there was rain and strong head winds over the west of England and over the Irish Sea, and that there were variable winds and clear skies in mid-Atlantic and fog off the coast of Newfoundland. 'If you are still determined to fly the Atlantic this late in the year,' the voice said, 'the Air Ministry suggests that the weather it is able to forecast for tonight, and for tomorrow morning, will be about the best you can expect.' The voice had a few other things to say, but not many, and then it was gone, and I lay in bed half-suspecting that the telephone call and the man who made it were only parts of the mediocre dream I had been dreaming. I felt that if I closed my eyes the unreal quality of the message would be re-established, and that, when I opened them again, this would be another ordinary day with its usual beginning and its usual routine. But of course I could not close my eyes, nor my mind, nor my memory. I could lie there for a few moments--remembering how it had begun, and telling myself, with senseless repetition, that by tomorrow morning I should either have flown the Atlan- CONTINUED NEXT PAGE (47);