



**JOHN WILLIAM GREENE JR.** John W. Greene Jr., a native of Atlanta, Georgia, was born on Christmas Day in 1900. He left Georgia in 1920 to attend Hampton Institute. He did not receive his degree, however, until 1960. After studying aviation at Boston Trade School, he received his Commercial Pilot's license and Transport Pilot's License in the 1930s. He was only the second African American to do so. Greene was the first black to receive an Aircraft and Engine Mechanic's License, also in the 1930s. John Greene moved to Washington, D.C. in 1940 where he taught at Phelps Vocational High School and Armstrong High School until his retirement in the 1950s. When the Cloud Club was organized, it began flying out of Beacon AirField in Alexandria, Virginia. Racism, according to Greene, forced them to leave Beacon and find their own airport. They leased a stretch of land along the Patuxent River in Maryland from Rebecca Fischer. Originally called Riverside, the airstrip was later named the Columbia Air Center, which was located in Croom, Maryland and was the first black-owned and operated airport in the country. John Greene Jr. managed the field from 1941 to 1956. During that time, the Cloud Club owned six planes, which flew on eight runways that could accommodate 150 arrivals and departures an hour. During World War II, John Greene Jr. was appointed aircraft mechanic at Camp Springs Army AirField, now Andrews Air Force Base. After the war, he became an instructor at the University of Colorado's National Aviation Education Workshop. Other achievements in the life of John Greene include membership in many flying clubs, the establishment of the Boston School of Aeronautics (1930s), the organization of the Air Scouts of America (1942), and the formation of the first black Civil Air Patrol Squadron (Columbia). Mr. Greene was a lifetime member of Negro Airmen International. The D.C. Chapter of NAI was renamed the John W. Greene Jr. Chapter because of his many achievements in the field of aviation. John William Greene Jr. died on March 25, 1988. His wife, the former Eunice Daniels, had preceded him in death in 1954. They had no children. (Photo courtesy of Pat and Paul Sluby Collection.)