

Curator's Corner . . . *By* CLAUDE R. COOK

In bringing to the pages of this issue of THE ANNALS something of the history of aviation in Iowa, an effort has been made to record incidents while many of the participants are still present, making it possible to secure some data first hand. More writing of this kind will be undertaken in the future.

But back to aviation, and my first ride in an airplane. It was shortly after World War I. A young Tabor, Iowa, business man, Raymond Laird, bought a small two seater and hired a pilot. They flew it to Randolph and landed in a pasture on the banks of the Nishnabotna river, just west of town. Many of us went down. It was there to take riders, and I was invited to go on the second trip. It was a revealing sight to see alfalfa and corn fields with corners coming together as though sawed out and laid in. I remember telling one skeptically inclined individual that he had never seen his wonderful farm, laying there in that remarkable valley in Fremont county, but that I had.

Well, the next trip was taken, and in landing, the pilot wrecked the plane. High tension wires were ahead, and rather than risk those, the flier intentionally threw one wing over on the ground and snapped it almost off. That ended the flying for several days. We "tied" the aircraft down to driven stakes, and all went home.

My next experience was with the *Register-Tribune* "Good News". It was a Stinson eight-passenger creation with a landing speed of about eighty miles an hour. I had pinned a medal on a Boston bulldog at a band concert in Osceola, where we lived at the time. The dog had saved the family of his master from asphyxiation from a refrigerator leaking carbon dioxide fumes. It was a project of the *Register* at the time to reward some animal for heroic action each year.

When the offer was made to me for this "heroic" act of mine, (this dog did not know me, and I did not know him, so I spent a week getting "acquainted" with him, but I did not know to what extent I had succeeded, nor how he would react on the bandstand) I replied I would like a ride in the "Good News" when it was going some place. So one day in October a registered letter from the *Register* requested me to be in Des Moines at 8:00 a.m. the next day.

It was a very windy day. Leo Brennan was the pilot, and they were flying to Burlington where Charley Gaschet, regular pilot, was on a good will tour with the Auto-giro, just recently acquired by the newspaper. Charley was taking carrier boys on short rides, and "Good News" was to fly to Davenport to select a landing field. With me were two or three passengers. It was a very rough ride, and I later accused Leo of adding a few touches to an already rugged flight.

At any rate, Knoxville was the last town I saw, for I took permanent possession of the washroom where I emitted breakfast and several previous meals orally. When we landed at Burlington, Leo looked in and said to me, "How do you feel?" "Rotten," I replied. He said, "Just sit there for a while." My retort was, "Sit here! I could not get out if I wanted to," for I was stretched out on a bundle of papers in a semi-reclining position. I had, without knowing it, made an interesting discovery which was that reclining I was not sick or, at least, could prevent the final ascent of my abdomen wrong side out. He then told me it was diaphragmatic action that produced the nausea and that reclining one did not experience that.

Returning I removed all the seat cushions and made a bed on the floor and came through splendidly. Only one thing worried me. He brought a pup home with him, which insisted snuggling right up to me. I prayed for that pup all the way home—that he would not get sick.

Later trips to San Francisco, Los Angeles, and return, were without incident.

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