

My First Airplane Ride

Have you ever tried to figure out why people who fly in modern airplanes are so enthusiastic about the business, or, perhaps you might more properly say the pleasure?

Doubtless you have thought about or tried to figure it out. Certainly you have observed that every flier is a flying enthusiast.

If you would find the answer to the riddle, just take a ride in one of the things and you will understand.

I had my first trip in an airplane Monday afternoon. With my two boys in the forward pit of Dr. Gragg's Bird, we made the trip from Clanton to Montevallo and return, with pilot-instructor, J. W. Allen doing the steering.

We took off from the Clanton Airport about five o'clock, and in seventeen minutes we were on the ground at Montevallo Airport cool as a cucumber and talking with friends about the wonderful adventure.

Returning we came down over Wilton to the vicinity of Maplesville, and then across the beautiful country back to Clanton.

There is no use in trying to describe the experience. Everyone who has had that first experience in the air knows how helpless words are in attempting to describe the wonderful thrills and beauties that attend one on such a trip.

There were some surprises that should be recorded, I think. First, I was surprised that we did not seem to be going fast, although we were making about ninety. There was a noticeable absence of traffic dangers. Only one other plane was in sight. Leo Thompson was our escort, or body guard, or maybe just curious to observe how we

took it. But his plane was miles away from us.

One can never know what a beautiful world we have until he looks at it from an airplane. The people who laid out our fields and towns, trimmed our forests, built our roads and highways, will never perceive what a perfectly beautiful landscape they have made until they go up high enough to see the picture as it really is.

The setting sun was behind us as we turned toward Clanton from Maplesville. The plane was headed directly into a rain cloud of small consequence. A perfect rainbow danced in front of us. Aviation, I thought, is just another of the efforts of man to reach the end of the rainbow.

We know the story of the rainbow's end is only a myth. Yet, men have ever sought to reach it, and will continue the effort. If it were not so, what a dull, lifeless and uninteresting world this would be.

Upon the field from which we started this trip, in that very soil was germinated all my youthful dreams and ambitions. As I chopped cotton in the springtime, tooted watermelons from the patch in the summer, picked the fleecy staple in the fall, I gazed at the rainbow of promise.

I am glad I saw the rainbow Monday afternoon as we soared in the mist of the clouds. I am glad Pat and Jim saw it. After I am gone, they will, I hope, have many long years to seek the end of the rainbow.

I am satisfied they will make their conquest in an airplane, and I wish I might be permitted to be with them to enjoy the beauties, the thrills, the splendors of a world that will continue to grow more beautiful with every passing year.

— *W. M. Wyatt*
