

It took three cushions to raise me up so I could see and two more to help me reach the rudder pedals. That first flying lesson was a humbling experience, I couldn't fly the airplane like Mr Tyndall wanted me to. When I tried to do one thing something else would go off. I guess thats why Iremember the day so well. As humbling as it was it was the first step of a wonderful journey.

I look back and admire the patience of of my instructors. John Tyndall in paticular, never lost his composure even when I made 90 degree banks when he wanted 90 degree turns. Some difference but in those days degrees were on a thermometer.

I never got an allowance to spend on flying but every once and a while Dad or Mom would make a contribution to my quest and there were others that helped too. Matty the owner of the Airdrome tried by lettng me sell hamburgers at an out door stand next to the airport. I was more intrested in what was going on at the airport than I was in staying behind the counter so I got fired.

I pumped gas, washed airplanes and did all sorts of odd jobs in exchange for flying time. Even though the time was never logged I learned alot just riding with the GI bill students after they could carry passengers. I begged rides with every pilot at that airport and in every type of airplane. I even swapped one of Mom's home cooked meals for a ride in a brand new Vagabond being ferried from the Piper factory.

Bob Lansing a welder that worked with my Dad even helped too. Bob owned a PT-19 that we used for my first aerobatic flight. The parachute was so big that I would have fallen out if it had been used. Bob explained that I should start the recovery from a snap roll while inverted. I did and thats where it stopped---inverted.

I still marvel at the brave souls that let me fly their planes. I won't deny that I had accumulated alot more than the normal amount of flying time befor I was old enough to solo and I think I learned something from every pilot I flew with so it wasn't as bad as it may seem.

There were some that didn't let me do any of the flying too. One BT-13 owner allowed me to strip the underside of the wings in exchange for some flying time. It turned out to be one ride and no stick time. It didn't take long to figure out that BT's cost too much to fly.

These were the best of times to be around an airport, there was so much to learn, so many opinions, oldtimers stories, war stories, hanger flying and of course the practical jokes. One of the older jokers had aquired a Navy surplus Timm trainer. It was a sleek all plywood low wing open cockpit craft with a 220 hp radial engine on the nose. This fellow would go among the weekend spectators extolling the skills of the pilot that had trained his termites to hold hands so the wings of his airplane wouldn't fall