

DID YOU KNOW.....

A look back at early area history as found in the archives of the Enderlin Historical Society and Museum ..... by Susan Schlecht

The following news article was published in *The Enderlin Independent* **May 29, 1919.**

**Soldier Aviator Makes First Flight Over City  
In His Curtis Bi-Plane  
Hangar and Aviation Field Located in Eastern Part of City. Plane is Equipped With Engine Which  
Develops Over 90 H.P.  
Made First Flight Wednesday Night**

Last Saturday night the first airship ever in our city arrived by express from Toronto, Canada, where it was purchased by Lieut. Ed Axberg for exhibition and passenger service. It took an entire express car to ship the "brute" which is a 90 horse power Curtis bi-plane – one of the best made. Mr. Axberg had been making preparations for its arrival and had leased a fine flying field in the east part of the city, where he had erected a hangar and was all ready to assemble it. With the help of Aviator Lake Garvin and Mechanic Allan Mercier he got the plane in running order Wednesday afternoon and shortly after 6 o'clock the first aeroplane flight from an Enderlin field took place.

The first passenger to go up with the daring aviator was his friend Clarence Christianson and next came Mrs. Clarence Christianson, the first lady to have the honor of flying over Enderlin in an Enderlin flying machine, piloted by an Enderlin pilot. An even dozen of our people had the thrills and pleasures of air joy riding that evening, in the following order:

Mr. Clarence Christianson, Mrs. Clarence Christianson, Lieut. Lake Garvin, O.H. Neuenfeld, Fred Kraft, Mrs. S.N. Woodruff, Steve West, C.G. Bangert, Rex Lindemann, W.J. Loomis, Dan Aasheim, Roy Vance.

All say the experience is wonderful and are eager to try it again.

Lieut. Axberg has signed several contracts for exhibition flying and will doubtless have all he can do with his ship this summer.

**Sue's comments:** After searching for further information on Lt. Axberg, I learned that he was born Dec. 24, 1889 at Lake Park, MN, the son of Swedish immigrants and that he served in WW I. Exactly when or why he moved to Enderlin is unclear but there is some indication he worked in banking before the war. A news article in the *Hansboro News* of Towner County, ND noted on June 13, 1919 that Lt. Ed Axberg was a returned military aviator from Enderlin and was planning to "establish aerial taxi accommodations in and out of Enderlin". An article in the *Slope County, ND News* on August 29, 1919 told of a crash when an "aeroplane failed to come out of a short tail spin" at Sutton, ND and dropped 1,200 feet killing Brian Karr, age 19, of Jamestown who was the son of a prominent Chautauqua lecturer. The pilot, Lt. Axberg of Enderlin, escaped with slight injuries. On December 1, 1927 the *New York Times* and a Ritzvile, WA newspaper both reported that Captain Edward Axberg was instantly killed when his plane crashed near Corinna, Indiana on his initial run as a mail carrier. The Ritzvile article reported that Captain Axberg was recognized as one of the most efficient flyers in the country and had many hours of experience and that he had left Spokane a month earlier to take a position as an air mail pilot.

Watch for more history next week!