



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of JAMES G. SMITH

Born October 11, 1923 AMA #357094



Written & Submitted by JGS (01/1997); Updated (01/2003); Formatted & Edited by SS (08/2002), Reformatted by JS (02/2010)

Mr. Smith wrote the following in January 1997 to AMA museum director, Gary Prater, in response to a letter sent by Mr. Prater in November of 1996.

I am a current member with AMA, James G. Smith, number 357094, open. I was in 1967 I had number 30825. I am not sure of how many years that I was in and out.

I met Mr. Hanson and another gentleman at your booth at our TOC in Las Vegas back in October 1996. I enjoyed talking to them and looking at the pictures they had on display. Again, I will say nice people.

I have heard of your museum and how wonderful it is. Maybe sometime I can come to the Nationals and to see the museum.

I have built model airplanes since I was a little boy. I lived in Boulder City, Nevada, in 1937 and at about 14 I built a Rearwin Speedster and also Curtis Robin gas models and flew them Free Flight on the Eldorado Bay Lake. This lake now has the quarter scale every year and a great turn out every year.

My purpose at your AMA Booth at the Sahara T.O.C, which I do not participate in any way. I am just a great admirer. I talked to Mr. Hanson and others so I brought a few things from my display to show them.

I cannot donate my display for several reasons. I see no goal only to let your fine organization and museum know there is a 79-year-old senior who has compatible interests. I build my models a little too big. I am now completing a scratch built 16 foot six cubic inch powered Radio Controlled (RC) model – five years in the making. Labor of love and of course some bucks.

My display is a salute to my brother in law Jack Frye, past president and founder of TWA. He received the Medal of Merit from past president Harry Truman.

I have donated some material to our McCarran Aviation Heritage Exhibit at our Las Vegas airport – now number 10 busiest in the U.S. I have been to many air shows and aviation programs. My display is shown free to the public. I have not made 10-cents off it. I have many complimentary letters. It is rewarding to me that people enjoyed it, but hard work and expensive going and coming.

In the lower left hand corner is the Red Book Number 23 Model Airplane Design and Theory of Flight by Charles Hampson Grant. On the first page it says, "To Jack Frye With Regard and Best Wishes in all Aviation Under Takings, Signed by Mr. Grant, March 15th, 1955." (*NOTE: As of January 2003, I no longer have this book.*)

Now the Blue and White Book Model Airplane Contests an air youth guide with official rules published for air youth of America forward by Winthrop Rockefeller.

I have a medallion with wings for Junior Achievement that was presented to Jack Frye for Loyal, faithful and unselfish services to the youth of America.

*(signed) James G. Smith
January 14, 1997*

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