



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of THAYER SYME



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Thayer Syme

I've had a big dose of aviation mixed into my blood since my earliest days. Growing up under the approach to a private mountaintop airstrip along the coast of Maine, I wondered what great adventures might be found in my neighbor's Cub as I saw him come and go.

Looking skyward at every overhead hum, I would also delight with an occasional sighting of a red Waco, Stearman, or—if I was especially lucky—a World War I SPAD or Nieuport on a summer morning. The presence of these early biplanes in the sky above our town meant just one thing: it was time for another weekend rally at the nearby Owl's Head Transportation Museum, where I would later volunteer, varnishing ribs and sweeping the floor in the restoration shop before going off to college.

A copy of Model Builder magazine mysteriously appeared in my room without explanation almost 40 years ago, beginning my discovery of flying models. I built two of the three designs featured in that issue over the next few months and haven't looked back since.

My fascination with crafting flying models from balsa sticks continues with no sign of abating. My favorite projects are unique, often one-of-a-kind creations that stand out in some way on the local flightline and may come in any size. From the lightest indoor FF models to Giant Scale RC projects, my preference is for pre-World War II scale projects, but I am at heart a sport flier, competing only rarely. I enjoy them all, building indiscriminately from kits, plans or original designs.

As a full-scale pilot, I am also passionate about the unique aircraft, colorful personalities, and inevitable ties that bind the history of full-scale aviation to modeling. I look forward to sharing that passion with my young son as well as with you, the readers of Model Aviation.

I currently live in Connecticut with my wife and son where I work as a writer and photographer.



Thayer's "Around the Patch" column appears bi-monthly in the January, March, May, July, September, and November issues of Model Aviation.

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