

EAA's Attic



Barnstorming Beauties

EAA's library is full of treasures, like this thick leather photo album.

Donated in 2001 by Bob Rosenbloom (EAA 246771), it documents America's barnstorming era. Looking through the 100 or so neatly mounted sepia photos, I realized that it belonged to Ivan R. Gates of Gates Flying Circus fame. Gates and his partner, barnstormer Clyde Pangborn (frequently featured in the album), started the famous barnstorming troupe sometime in 1921-22, and photo captions say the images were captured around the country between 1922 and 1924.

Shortly after discovering this treasure, the EAA AirVenture Museum acquired a 1929 New Standard D-25. Conceived by New Standard Aircraft Co. partners Charles H. Day and Gates, the four-passenger aircraft was developed to increase barnstorming revenues. Unfortunately, the stock market crash of 1929 signaled the end of the barnstorming era. But people can experience those early aviation days as passengers of the Museum's restored Standard at Pioneer Airport, beginning in May 2003.

—Kathleen L. Witman