

# Golden-Era Sky Blazers

Just look at these three sky blazers standing proudly with their flying machines. You can't help wonder what it was like to be them. Fortunately, these books from EAA's Attic are still around to share their stories.

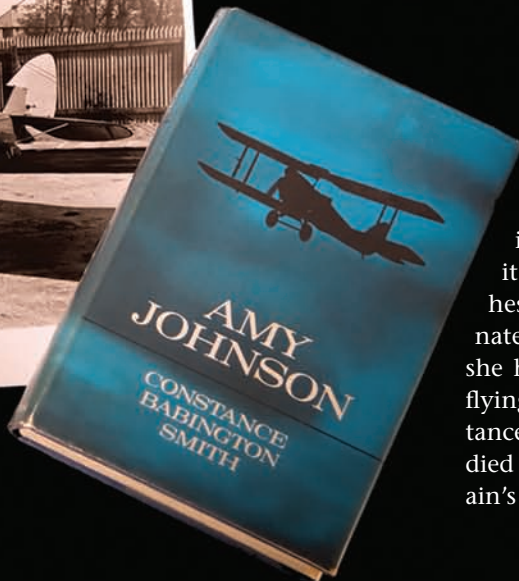


"A pilot who says he has never been frightened in an airplane is, I'm afraid, lying," said Louise Thaden in her candid 1938 autobiography (2004 reprint shown here) *High, Wide and Frightened*. In it, Louise, who tried on three majors in college before finding her niche in aviation, explains her drive to set aviation records, win air races, and still fit in a family.

One ride in 1919 was all it took for Ruth Nichols to fall in love with flying. "I was free as the air itself," she wrote in her 1957 autobiography *Wings for Life*. "I wanted to go on and up forever. But the ten minutes were over and we were back on the ground. My heart, however, remained in the sky." Indeed it did. The daughter of one of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders and a Quaker mother, Nichols survived several crashes, yet set more than 35 aviation records.



Photo illustration by Bonnie Kratz



In *Amy Johnson*, biographer Constance Babington Smith noted, "Amy's first flying lesson . . . was not a success, and when it was over Captain Matthews . . . did not hesitate to tell her she was no good." Fortunately, as the British aviatrix wrote in a letter, she had "an immense belief in the future of flying." Years later she set numerous long-distance flight records in the 1930s, though she died in 1941 while ferrying a plane for Britain's Air Transport Auxiliary.

—Kathleen L. Witman