

## August 4 & 5th, 2008 - Oklahoma's Lake Country, Grove, Dog Iron Ranch and Tulsa

Today, Aug 4th, I planned for a round robin flight of a little over a hundred miles to see some of the large lakes that abound in Eastern Oklahoma. On the way over to the airport, at about 7:30 it was actually cool on the Vespa. Early morning temperatures were in the upper 70's. However, immediately after lift off I began to see those readings increase, due to a temperature inversion. At 1,000 feet it was 86 deg. At 2,000 it was up to 90. At 3,000 feet the temperature reached 93 degrees. I leveled out at 3,500 and headed 60 degrees to my first stop, a small town on the Eastern shore of [Grand Lake](#). After landing at the [Grove Municipal airport](#), I took their old police vehicle courtesy car (sans blue lights and siren) over to [Har-ber Village](#). This is a quaint museum village which features log homes, shops, offices churches, furniture, farm equipment, toys and other memorabilia from the mid 1800's to the early 1900's. You stroll along *olde tyme* streets, stopping in to visit the various buildings and displays. The 2 1/2 hours that I enjoyed this living museum cost me \$2.50. Quite a bargain.

On the way back to the airport, I stopped to view the [Cherokee Queen](#), a side-wheeler that we had taken a lake cruise on when we were here back in 1997. That time temperatures were also oppressive, and a couple of hours spent on the cool lake was quite a treat. Somehow I

seem to remember the boat being a lot larger, and a little less "worn". In any case, I sure could have used something to help me cool off this time.



Cherokee Queen Sidewheeler & little sister

My next stop was the [Dog Iron Ranch](#), the boyhood home of Will Rogers. Its 2,600 foot grass runway is going to see a lot of activity in two weekends when there will be a fly-in to commemorate the death of Will Rogers in an Alaskan plane crash. This rather large (By 1880



My plane was the only one at the Roger's strip



Flying over Grand Lake in Eastern Oklahoma



The "Olde Tyme" streets of Har-ber Village



I almost had the grounds to myself at Har-ber village the Monday morning that I visited



Will Roger's boyhood home, the Dog Iron Ranch on Lake Oologah, just 15 miles from Claremore

standards) two story farmhouse is located on Lake Oogolah. Will's father was a very influential citizen (they named Rogers County after him) who was a successful cattle rancher, a politician, and who, with a 1/8 Cherokee bloodline, had a senior position with the Cherokee nation council. The grounds, which is a working Texas Longhorn cattle ranch, is immaculate. The house is fully furnished as it was when Will lived there with his family, and even the barn is replete with horses, goats and lots of chickens. The view of the lake from the front porch is beautiful. (By the way, the Dog Iron Ranch was named for the branding iron that they used to mark their Longhorn cattle when they were young "dogies")

On my return to Claremore airport, I ran across another interesting "airport" personality. Tom Egbert had stopped by to look over the Highlander. We got talking, and I found that his love affair with aviation greatly paralleled mine. He began his flying in 1962, also in an Aeronca tail dragger. I began in 1958, but had to stop a year later to pay for college), and then resumed in 1964. He also discontinued his flying for a 15 year time frame, while my hiatus was for 13 years. My impetus in resuming my flying was the establishment of the Light Sport Aviation rule. His was as a result of an opportunity to fly in an open cockpit Stearsman bi-plane with the Red Baron pizza aerobatics team. We both have 2500 square foot hangers to house our aircraft, but there the similarity ends. His is a work of art. It is like being home. Yes, it does contain two airplanes, a beautiful 1957 Cessna Skyhawk, (I owned a 1963 model) as well as a completely restored 1942 Aeronca L-3 tandem military observation aircraft. But it also has a complete workshop, a full kitchen, including stove, microwave, refrigerator and counters, as well as a private air conditioned living/bedroom apartment with its own bathroom, for those times when one wants to get a "real early" start on the flying day. I was so impressed with his set-up, I had both Tom and his wife, Elaine pose for a photo. I guess we can see who is in charge of keeping the place neat and clean.

I finished up my stay in the Tulsa area with a visit to [Discoveryland](#) and an attendance at its outdoor evening performance of the Rogers & Hammerstein play "Oklahoma". I first saw this musical back in 1951, when I lived in northern New Jersey, and our 7th grade class went into NYC to view the new "Todd A-O" film (precursor of the later "Cinemascope" and now the "I-Max" big screen processes). I remember sitting in that darkened theater when the film began. At first I couldn't understand what the big deal was about. As the lead cowboy Curly began singing the opening song, "Oh What a Beautiful Morning", while riding his horse through an Oklahoma corn field, it looked like any other movie screen that I had seen in the past. Then the curtains began to part and that screen began to fill up so that it appeared that the entire theater was in that gigantic cornfield. I was impressed beyond words, and even to this day I remember that feeling of awe as I was literally taken inside of that cornfield and into the lives of those "farmers and cowmen" that this play is all about. It is still my favorite of the many Broadway musicals that I have seen over the years. It was neat having the opportunity of seeing "Oklahoma" while visiting in Oklahoma.

Now its time to begin my trek further West toward Amerillo, Texas.



The main parlor at the Roger's home was used for entertaining and special occasions



The view of Lake Oogolah from the front porch



This is Tom and Elaine Egbert's hanger at the Claremore Airport. A home away from home



Outdoor stage complete with horses & wagons