

(This is part of an article that originally appeared in the *New York Times* on April 12, 1925.)

*It is in the month of April, said "learned Chaucer" in The Canterbury Tales, that folk long to go on pilgrimages and to seek strange strands: for the weather begins to invite even the most torpid out of doors. ("Its showres swoote the droughte of March hath perced to the roote.")*

*The pilgrimages I propose do not, however, require the pilgrims actually to set out for any distant land or strange strand. They may walk their thousand miles without going a hundred miles from their homes. If, for example, President Coolidge were to join this company of pilgrims, walking three miles a day about Washington, he would in the four years of his new administration walk in distance across the*

## HOW TO WALK A

# THOUSAND MILES A YEAR

BY JOHN H. FINLEY

*United States with side journeys along the way. Or a youth or young man or woman might in the course of a lifetime (which such daily walks should lengthen) walk across all the lands in one zone around the globe.*

*The crusaders in the Middle Ages used to call every road which led "a la Sainte Terre" (to the Holy Land) the Via Dei, the way of God. It is often difficult for a pedestrian in this age to think of a city street or even a country highway in this definition, for in the one he is in daily peril of the taxis and in the other he is pushed off into the gutter or roadside by the automobiles. It is a great injury to public health (and also to spiritual welfare)*

*that is done through the monopolizing of streets and roads by cars that discourage walking. It isn't merely that men and women, even youth, are tempted to softness by the comfort of the automobile. There is the incidental discouraging menace of the "machine" and the driver who regards contemptuously the person on foot.*

*But in spite of all this, walking is to be persistently practiced as a way to our better selves in health. Even the city street and the country road, requiring alertness of the walker, may become, in spite of their perils and inconveniences, every one of them a Via Dei, and we must do our best to make and keep them not only highways of democracy, where even the humblest pedestrian has an equality of right with the single paunchy passenger in a high-powered motor car, but also highways to health.*

### **Walking in City Streets**

*And there is something to be said even for city streets. They are walkable nearly every day in the year, for one thing, if the walker is prop-*

*erly clothed and shod. Then, as the author of "Shanks' Mare" says, there are joys on the pavements which even the loneliest of roads cannot offer. "The kaleidoscope changes so often that even one's beaten paths never become monotonous. . . . No dream of Arabian Nights ever imagined a more dazzling array of jewels than the mazes of streets with their myriad lights afford (by night). And a stroll by day along the busy waterfront, where great ships from every clime lie at anchor, will give a more intimate idea of the world's commerce than all the books and market reports ever written."*

*Three miles a day—a thousand miles a year in the open and on foot! These foot-miles will save many gallons of gasoline, lengthen the life of tires (and incidentally that of the walker), save streetcar fare (incidentally relieve subway congestion), and, best of all, promote the health of him or her who takes this free fresh-air medicine for mind and body. Who would not walk a thousand miles for such a God-given preventive or remedy? ■*

There you are: stalled on the highway, stranded in a bus station, stuck on Amtrak. You wonder, Isn't there a better way? Well, there is. You can fly. Not on the commercial airlines, with their vast terminals, tiny cabin windows and sluggish baggage-claim service. You can *really* fly—pilot your own airplane. Consider these facts:

▶ Flying is easy to learn. Some instructors estimate that only one person out of a hundred flubs flight school.

▶ It's safe. Statistically speaking, by far the most dangerous part of a flight is the drive to the airport.

▶ It's fast. Planes travel from 120 to 180 miles per hour, depending on wind speed and engine size. And they go in a straight line.

▶ It's convenient. There are suitable airports within thirty miles, on the average, of anywhere you'd want to go.

▶ Small private planes aren't all that expensive, depending on how you look at it. A single-engine Cessna two seater is yours for eighteen thousand dollars—only a little more

than the price of a Jaguar XJ6L. (Of course, a Beechcraft Bonanza, the Cadillac of small planes, goes for ninety thousand.) However, although three hundred thousand people hold private licenses in the United States, only a few actually own planes. The rest are put off by the high operating expenses: eighty-five cents a gallon for gas (fifteen miles to the gallon is average); four hundred and fifty dollars in yearly airport parking charges; a four hundred dollar annual inspection fee; at least five hundred dollars a year in regular maintenance; and anywhere from six to twelve hundred dollars in yearly insurance payments where required.

So, unless they plan to fly a lot, most pilots rent their planes. Prices vary depending on the aircraft, but twenty-five dollars an hour (gas included) is about average. (Membership in a flying club reduces that fee somewhat.) Traveling at a speed upwards of 120 mph, that works out to twenty cents a mile. Here's the kicker: Rental companies usually require that the airplane be used at least three hours if kept overnight,

which means that on a three-day weekend trip from San Francisco to Lake Tahoe, you'll be charged for nine hours of flight time even though it only takes about three hours round trip. Instead of paying about \$75, you pay \$225. Car rental companies, by contrast, generally charge about twenty cents a mile and twenty dollars a day, so for this kind of trip (about four hundred miles total) it would be cheaper to drive.

But for a short journey, renting a plane can be *cheaper* than renting a car. Say you want to go from the Novato, California airport north of San Francisco to the Nut Tree Restaurant (which has its own pri-

flights at Hanscom Field outside Concord, Massachusetts. I took one. A stocky, black-haired flight instructor named Kurt Charpentier was my pilot in a dual-control Piper Cherokee about the size of a Volkswagen Beetle.

The panel in front of me contained such a vast array of dials, meters, gauges, switches and levers that the dashboard had to extend about a foot higher than a VW's to fit everything in. But as Charpentier explained what it all did—that this showed altitude and that the rpm's

the radio informed him about general weather conditions and gave him clearance to taxi to the runway. He stopped to go through the "run-up," a quick check of the plane's back-up systems, the second ignition and fuel pump. Then another squawk over the radio and our plane was cleared for takeoff. Charpentier revved the engine, the propeller turned so fast it disappeared and we zoomed down the runway.

Suddenly I felt myself floating and I realized we were airborne. "That was quick," I said. "Yup," he said. "In a small plane like this it only takes six hundred feet of runway. Those big jets, it takes over a thousand." He peered out over the

## U-FLY:



vate landing strip) in Vacaville. By auto, the round trip is about ninety miles (or an hour and forty-five minutes) and would cost thirty-eight dollars (mileage plus twenty-dollar-a-day car rental). The plane ride, on the other hand, takes a bit more than half an hour each way. Total cost: approximately thirty dollars.

Of course, before you go flying off you have to learn how. That means flight school. Pilot training is basically an elaborate version of driver's ed. By federal law, students are required to spend at least thirty-five hours in the classroom learning about weather patterns, Federal Aviation Administration regulations and airplane mechanics, and another thirty-five hours in the aircraft learning how to handle a plane. The course costs between eighteen hundred and two thousand dollars. Students have to pass a physical exam and several hours of written, oral and in-flight tests before they get their F. A. A. licenses.

A flight school named Tech Aero-service conducts brief introductory

## RENTING AND PILOTING YOUR OWN PLANE

BY JOHN SEDGWICK

—the whole collection seemed much less imposing.

Then he showed me how to fly. It was pretty much like driving a car. A lever on the front panel was the throttle. Another, longer lever between the seats worked as the brake by adjusting a pair of wing flaps. Taxiing on the ground, the pilot steers with pedals at his feet that turn the front wheel and the horizontal tail flap simultaneously. Once in the air, he turns the steering wheel to go left or right, and pulls or pushes it to go up or down. All very simple.

Charpentier turned a key and started the engine. As he steered past the other planes, a squawk over

nose of the plane. I asked him what he was looking for. "Planes," he said. "Always got to watch out for other planes."

I asked if I could steer and took the wheel. It was much looser than a car wheel. Just for fun I turned it a bit to the left. Sure enough, we tipped a little and I could see the nose shifting to the left against the horizon. The speedometer registered over 100 mph, but it didn't seem as if we were moving at all. Instead it was as if the plane hung down from the sky on a long wire, like a toy figure in a mobile.

Charpentier took the controls again. Time to turn back. He banked the plane so steeply that the wing outside my window seemed to point straight down. My sense of equilibrium was totally bamboozled and I felt sick. Charpentier told me to lift my legs. I tried but I couldn't. He said something about centrifugal force and righted the plane again, chuckling. I saw Boston's skyscrapers rising up in the gray-blue distance.