

All Aboard For Christmas

by Lynne Belluscio

The Woodward Airport opened in 1928. Donald Woodward was enthralled with flying and he owned over a dozen airplanes. Although he never received a pilot's license, he certainly enjoyed flying, and hired one of the best pilots of the day, Russell Holderman. Russ's license was signed by Orville Wright.

At Christmas in 1929, Russ and his wife Dot, gave Don a beautiful photograph album, of Italian hand-tooled leather. (The photos were used for Brian Duddy's book on the airport.) One of the photos shows Russ greeting Santa Clause as he stepped out of an airport. I've tried to find out when the photo was taken. I suspect that Santa arrived in LeRoy to give out

presents. He might have stopped by to pick up letters – it's not really clear. I'm sure it is one of the earliest visits by Santa by plane anywhere in the United States.

In 1929, Russ offered the ultimate Christmas Present – a \$5 ticket for a 20 mile cross country trip in an "enclosed cabin plane." Tickets were available in 16 stores in LeRoy. Russ had a huge advertisement in the *LeRoy Gazette* offering the plane ride tickets. It was an "Ideal Christmas Gift with an Everlasting Memory."

Here's hoping all of you have a Merry Christmas with an everlasting memory - - and wouldn't it be great to buy airplane tickets for \$5!!



Merry Christmas!



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