

**Interview with Raymond Haberman (Part 1)**

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**Central Minnesota Historical Oral History Collection**

**Interview by Daniel Ryan**

**Ryan:** Okay. Just want to stop with, just hear your full name.

**Haberman:** My name is Raymond M. Haberman and--

**Ryan:** Like where you were born.

**Haberman:** I was born in the city of St. Paul in year of 1913, March the 23rd, which makes me 79 years old, going on 80. Grew up on a farm and, well, first in the city of St. Paul. And then went off to a truck farm, which I stayed there till I was about 21 years of age. In amongst that time, of course, I was very much interested in aviation, anything that would get off the ground. So what happened, they more or less had a contest of seeing who could keep a kite up in the air the longest, so I built a kite and put it out. Used a sort of a cross-type of a kite, which is a common make. And in order to protect it from the weather, believe it or not, we used fat, goose grease on it, on the paper, so that it wouldn't get wet. We put it up and I had it up for 48 hours and 20 minutes, until the kite string broke and the kite went. We never did know where it was--

**Ryan:** Because you didn't find it?

**Haberman:** Never did find it. But I would go out there in the middle of the night and could hear it way up in the air rippling, so I knew it was still up in the air. Finally after being up to 48 hours and 20 minutes, we came out in the morning and the kite was gone. We had a tremendously big woods close to our, which was a truck farm at that time, which my dad had. We never did find it.

**Haberman:** So it was sort of a record, but it never went down in a book or anything. But some boys had some up that were a little bit longer than that, so that was really my start as trying to get off the ground. I guess that's one way of putting it.

**Ryan:** How old were you then?

**Haberman:** I was probably about 14 years of age at that time. Then I was really [inaudible]. I used to go to all the airports that we could possibly get, course wasn't easy as you get in there as it is nowadays. But we used to go to St. Paul Airport, which was down in amongst the flats and had one little wooden hangar there. That's where Northwest Airlines started out. It started out with a mail contract, and they had a Stinson and a Laird, that speed along and used to fly the mail from Minneapolis and St. Paul to Chicago. Them days, they used to fly it by beacons. There was beacons every so many miles and that's the way. So in bad weather, they had a real, real tough problem there. Lot of times they'd have to sit down and wait the weather out before they could go. Speedy Holman, of course, was their chief pilot and was the operation managers and it was a very small operation and grew into what it is to this day and age.

**Ryan:** So they started out with the mail.

**Haberman:** Uh-huh (affirmative).

**Ryan:** They started with the mail.

**Haberman:** They started out with mail, and then they brought aircraft, a Stinson that they could haul the mail and a few passengers. I think it was about a four- or five-place airplane at that time. Then they graduated into what they called a Hamilton. A Hamilton was an all-metal aircraft, single-engine, but was corrugated and built just like the Ford tri-motors were. They flew those till into the '30s, when they started hauling passengers. That was an eight-place airplane. They

really outlawed them because they were only a single-engine. Everything had to go to a twin from then on. But that airplane served them for a good many years.

**Haberman:** The last one we knew of was used as a bush pilot uses it up in Alaska and some Northwest Airways pilots were flying the route from the Twin Cities to Alaska. They seen the remains of this airplane that had cracked up and seen it down in the woods. So they made a project to see if they could haul that aircraft out of there and they were going to rebuild it for just a static display for Northwest Airways. So a group of men got it together and they airlifted the fuselage and the engines and everything out, put it on a boat and haul it to Seattle. In Seattle, they transported to Northwest Airlines and there the fellows donated their time to start to rebuild this. Now, this was only going to be a static model, so they didn't bring it up to the aircraft standards. It was just going to be a show model. But finally by the wayside, they lost interest in it and it was put in storage for a good many years. A really good friend of mine, Jack Lysdale, who just passed away here within the last six months, he bought the airplane and completely re-stripped it and brought it down to aircraft standards again. He rebuilt it. I was very fortunate to have quite a bit of time working on it. Mine mainly was on the aircraft's wheels, because they had a very poor brake system at that time. That airplane had a-- I don't remember. It was a Pratt & Whitney and I don't remember exactly what the serial numbers or the designation was. But there was only a few of those around, so he didn't fly it more than just a few hours, because if something would've went wrong, they'd had to make the parts from scratch.

**Ryan:** Scratch.

**Haberman:** It just wasn't parts available. But anyway, it went to Oshkosh and it went also down to, in Iowa, I can't remember exactly the name. There it took Grand Champion and at Oshkosh it was beat out by a bi-plane, which he took in the second place. Jack, of course, put the airplane

away and never flew it after that, because he was afraid if something would go wrong with it, it would completely disappear, because it's the only one I know of that is in flyable condition.

**Haberman:** So it's kind of historic. I don't know what's happening to it now. His son inherited, of course. Whether he's going to donate it to a museum or if he's going to sell it or what. But I had kind of soft-hearted. I have pictures of it and it won how many different trophies, so I was kind of glad to be able to be a part of working of it. Being the last later years, I didn't even get out to see Jack anymore, because I understand that he was seriously ill. Finally, I seen it in one of the papers that he had passed away. But my experience of aircraft, I've followed it all the way through to a good many years. My biggest thing was when Charles Lindbergh flew across the ocean, I stayed awake just as long as Lindbergh did to hear reports of how far or if he had ditched or something of that. So to me it was quite a feat. And he--

**Ryan:** How old were you?

**Haberman:** That would've been in 1927. I would've been around 16, 17 years of age. So actually, from then on I was really hooked. Whenever I could get the chance to get to an airport, that was it. Of course, my first airplane ride was in a Velie Monocoupe, which a fellow owned it by the name of [Bert Niemann]. And had a Velie M-5 on it, which was a five-cylinder radial engine. Actually, that was when I got my first stick time. He let me fly it for awhile. I didn't do too good a job on it, because they were a tricky little airplane to land and fly. But we all-- In fact, he was my instructor after I built my first airplane. My first airplane I built was a Pietenpol, which was designed by BH Pietenpol at Spring Valley, Minnesota. Believe it or not, I built that. And you can't believe it, I bought it in the wintertime. I had made a fixture and took it into my mother's kitchen on our farm.

**Haberman:** It was building it just like a model, right on the floor. My mother when she'd have to cook would have to step through the fuselage opening so that she could do the cooking. I finally got the two sides assembled and believe it or not, we haul it into the living room, which them days we used to call it a parlor where you used to have the piano and all of that. There's where I assembled the airplane and left it in there. Glued it all together and left it for drying for, oh, I think it was about a week or so. I couldn't get it out fast enough to get it up in the barn so I could start in.

**Ryan:** Mom think you were crazy for what you were doing or--

**Haberman:** My mother and day, of course, couldn't see it, but I had a grandmother that says that she just thought that was the greatest thing in the world that I had that much gumption to attack something like that. Of course, them days it took me over a period of two and a half years to build it. Because working on the ice, I would make a dollar a day helping make ice and we used to put it in the icehouse. Of course, all the money I had, went, put into the airplane. Everybody else go out down there and buy themselves some ice cream and everything else. I would just lick my tongue and go back and buy another piece of wood for the airplane. The funny part of it is, and this tells you just how the times were. The complete fuselage for that airplane, I remember buying it at Berglund Lumber Company, and I think it was four dollars and sixty-some odd cents for all the material that went into that airplane. Now, you can't even buy one lounge around for that.

**Ryan:** Well, I can't even think of a thing, I mean, with not having metal on it.

**Haberman:** Well, see, them days, there was a lot of airplanes. The de Havilland, Europe, had them. There's still a lot of airplanes built in Europe. One of our best acrobatic routines are done by two Frenchmen and that's an all-wood airplane. There's nothing wrong with it. The only thing

you've got to, weather-wise is the worst. But anyway, I completed this airplane and used the Ford Model-A engine in it, which I converted. Took the flywheel and bell housing and everything off of it, and substitute a magneto on the end of the crankshaft and changed the oil system just a little bit. Now them days, I bought a propeller from BH Pietenpol in Spring Valley, who was the designer of the aircraft, for \$14. Now, doesn't sound like much now, but \$14 in them days was 14 days work. I took it out without the wings on. I had built this upstairs in my dad's barn. We got about four people and we backed the truck up and took it out of the hayloft. This wing was all one piece, 28 foot, six inches long. And took it on it by a five-foot cord. Took it out and before I put the wings on, I thought I'd try this airplane and see what the engine, what it would do. Of course, I wasn't very familiar. Not having the wing on it, she was very light on the pale. So I start the engine up, and believe it or not, I put the stick forward just a little bit to see if it would raise the tail. Rather than coming back when I pulled it back, it went right over onto its snoot. Believe it or not, I didn't even damage the propeller. It stopped it. It hit it when it was flat, pushed it down. I never tried that again, I'll tell you that.

**Haberman:** So after that, we put the wings on, got everything all trued up and a friend of mine, Gordon [Kindaline] who had quite a bit of time in Pietenpol, in fact he had bought an original 727, which was the number of the Pietenpol that they bought was one of the really first ones that Pietenpol had built. He come out one Saturday morning. It was nice weather; it was in February. And he said, "Why don't we test fly your airplane today?" He said, "I'll be back here at noon," he said, "if you want to get it raised." So actually, I was overjoyed that somebody was going to test fly it.

**Haberman:** So he took it out in my dad's field and give it a high-speed taxi down the strip and into the next farmer's field, and taxied it back. Didn't say a word and cracked the gun to it. Up

she went and I watched it go. I didn't know if it was going to hold together or not. He flew it out to White Bear Lake, which was a distance of about, oh, eight miles away from us. So I followed him out with my brother and I with a car. By gosh, when we got out there, here he was sitting on the lake waiting for us. So he had made it that far. He said, "Well, now we'll take it back. Get in the front seat," he says, "I'll haul you back to Lincoln Park," which is a suburb of St. Paul right by Beaver Lake. We had kind of an airstrip there that the boys were flying out of, which we called Onion Air Park, because they used to raise onions there for winter use. He flew it there, but there was so much snow on the field that he decided that he'd land it on the lake. So he landed it on the lake. We took it against the shore and tied it to a bunch of trees. He said, "Well, we'll see how it is in the morning. We'll go out." That afternoon, the next day afternoon, we went out and started to give me some instructions. Between two different fellows, Bert Niemann and Gordy Kindaline, I had four hours and 20 minutes and I soloed. Believe it or not, four hours and 20 minutes at that time, we thought wonders what was. Of course, them days as it was a non-licensed aircraft, we didn't have a license or anything. Flew that way for how many years. My wife and I flew to Brun [?], Minnesota after about a little over five hours' worth of time. So that sure is illegal now, but it wasn't illegal in them days. We stopped at my cousin and had a dinner there and we flew back. But in amongst that time, I had rebuilt and built a Pietenpol with a Velie M-5 on it, which belonged to a friend of mine that he had cracked the Velie up. I bought the airplane for a dollar a horsepower. It was \$65. Now you couldn't touch that same engine for how many thousand dollars if you could find one. I flew that for how many years and finally decided that after my wife and I got married, we needed a refrigerator more than we needed an airplane. So we sold the airplane to a fellow that had just inherited a farm that his dad had.

**Haberman:** My last flight, I flew it from my dad's farm up to Lincoln Park to the airstrip which we called Onion Field. After that, the airplane went from there, changed hands, and young fellows by name of Willy boys bought it. I finally understood that it went to Seattle in the Seattle area. I don't know exactly there. The two boys now that are building, they have the St. Croix Propeller Works. There was quite a history in sport aviation using that fuselage. They still had the original Velie M-5 in it, but it had a little trouble with the five-cylinder magnetos. They were Scintillas. They even wrote to Switzerland thinking maybe they could buy parts over there. They finally [inaudible] took the Velie M-5 off and put a Continental on it. I don't remember what the horsepower was. The last I heard of it, they made a bi-plane out of it.

**Ryan:** Really?

**Haberman:** So it's a bi-plane now and actually Sport Aviation had a tremendous article. In amongst that, of course, that pulled me out of aviation for awhile, because we were married and I finally decided I was going to go into the machine shop business. So my flying time in between that would be with friends of mine and I got occasional hours in it. But I finally after good many years, bought a Defender, which was a basket case. That was the Aeronca, which was used during World War II for training and scouting purposes. I rebuilt that airplane and over a period of about a year and a half, and took it out to Fleming Field in South St. Paul. I was awaiting a propeller there that I had shipped for and had the misfortune of somebody starting up a Cessna 140. It was in the middle of wintertime. He was ready to taxi and he went against a, well, a snowplow had made a windrow of snow and he got right at windrow of snow and he killed the engine. Rather than having somebody prop it for him, he had to throttle open because he had shoved the throttle forward and he had to throttle open and didn't check it. He went out there and believe it or not, the first pull he pulled through, the airplane started.



**Haberman:** Well, he against this windrow of snow, it made a 180 and it got away from him. He got as far as the door. He couldn't get the door open. It's lucky it didn't chop him in half. It made the 180 and, of course, came down the line. For awhile it was going up towards the ramp, where there was some twins sitting and it hit something else and decided to take another little turn. Mine was tied against the fence, a woven wire fence there. Believe it or not, the 140, wide-open throttle, hit my wind [inaudible] and cut my [inaudible] my dad. I went out there and, of course, it was a total loss. There was no way that they would even-- FAA checked it out and said they wouldn't even let you rebuild it because it was in such bad shape. But anyway, this fellow had decided that he was-- Funny part of it is, he was in the insurance business and didn't have any insurance on his own airplane, believe it or not. So I thought I was stuck. Finally, there was an Aeronca Champ that a friend of his had. He bought that Aeronca Champ and signed it over to me and I gave him the rest of the remains of my airplane. Anyway, I flew that Aeronca Champ for how many years. Had it out at the lake at Elmo Airport in what we called at that time stripper T-hangars. A tornado came through there and I didn't even know it. Somebody came on a Sunday morning and said to me, "Have you been out to Lake Elmo Airport?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, you better get out there and take a look." So I went out there and here's my airplane, hangars, the tie-down stakes, everything was all in a heap. One wing busted, the fuselage was cracked up. Thank God, I had the engine yet. So I decided to take it back to my shop, at the machine shop, at that time. It sit there for about two years and I thought I was going to rebuild it. But I decided later on that I was going to build and design my own aircraft using a six-strip section of the Aeronca Champ. It took me a period of over seven years because I would only work it short times in the summertime, because I was going to Florida in the wintertime after I sold my business.

**Haberman:** I finally decided the airplane was ready to fly. A very good friend of mine who was a 727 captain, which I did a lot of work for, he decided he wanted to test fly it. So he test flew it and that same day, first flight, he said, "Come on. You want to go?" I says, "Why don't you take your wife along the first time?" I said, "She's so anxious to fly in that open cockpit airplane" which I built, was designed with a side-by-side job. Anyway, she took the flight. I took a flight. He said, "The only thing is, we're not revving up with the engine as high as it should." Of course, going to Oshkosh and listening to all their forums that they have, especially on propeller carving, I found out that if I would take and cut one inch off of each of the propeller, it would increase the RPMs approximately 100 RPMs, which was the difference between making it a good airplane and not. So believe it or not, I took the prop off, went back home and made a fixture. We cut off about two inches of this prop, which really was oversized anyway. Rebalanced it, went out and that evening at 7:00 at night he was out there and we were hauling passengers with the airplane. It revved up beautifully and has been flying that way ever since. The only thing, misfortune, I've lost my license. I can't fly anymore. It kind of a heart attack, and that, of course, is I guess-- I often thought I was going to build an ultralight. Maybe I could do a little flying that way, but when you get that close to 80 years old, I think you should hang the book up and leave somebody else fly it. So now I have it sitting out the Lake Elmo Airport and I call it "in mothballs." All I do is go out there and sit in it once in awhile and that's about the size of it. But we hope someday to be able to let Dan fly it and that's in the future. When he gets his license, we'll see that he gets some tail-dragger time and see if he enjoys it. Let's clip it off now for awhile. We'll think--

**Ryan:** You built that hangar. How many guys did that? That's a big job.

**Haberman:** Well, we contracted some of it out. But we contracted some of that hangar out and the funny part of it is, we built that about 12 years ago and everything excepting the big door.

The door is 44 foot 4 opening. We had to do some work ourself. But basically, that hangar was built by a company in Wisconsin up till the door part I said I would build.

**Haberman:** I built the door and it's a one-piece assembly. It's a bi-fold door. We built the door and the winch mechanism. I built that only at Lakeland, Minnesota and hauled it out in two sections and assembled it there. I had three people to help me with the first parts and it's operated perfectly ever since. I built the winch and the whole mechanism for it. Saving ourselves around \$4,000, because that size of door, it has an opening of 44 foot 4 inches plus the fact that it has about a 16 foot high span. You could actually get a seaplane in there if you had to. Right now we have five aircraft in there, including mine, which is sitting again in the corner, of course, all covered up. But we have some very good tenants. They take care of it. I leave six months in the wintertime and when I come back, they keep it clean. They sweep it. And never have to worry about a thing. If something goes wrong, they notify us and I say, "Go ahead and fix it." We knock it off their rent and that's it. But it's been a real good, I think for me for a good many months, or I should say years, it was a nice haven for me to go out there with my airplane in it, which didn't cost me anything. It did pay our rent and we don't really make any money at it, because I feel as though flying is expensive enough the way it is. We just make enough to pay for the rent and our upkeep on it and have a few dollars off on the side so we can keep the repairs up. But we have four wonderful tenants in it. If there's something goes wrong, they actually go out and fix it or let us know that they'd done it, and we just knock it off on their rent. So it's been a good investment. In fact, after I left machine shop business, for awhile there I was going to do it all alone, but I did it with a partner of mine who supposedly had a Mooney at the time. But he never had an airplane in it, so he really doesn't go out there very much. He goes out occasionally,

flies out with somebody. He has also lost his license now too. He's at the age where he had a heart problem also.

**Haberman:** But like I say, it's been a good deal. I think my mistake was I didn't build more hangars after I retired, because it was a source of income. Hangar space was really at a premium. It really is. I didn't want to rob the boys. I just wanted to have it so that I could pay for it and make a few extra dollars on the side. But it's worked out beautiful. I don't know how long I'll keep it, because I leave here for six months and come back for six months. I've only been out there twice within the last six months. So it's been really a good outlet for me. But each year, Metropolitan Airport's commission has an inspection tour out there to see that we aren't using for anything excepting aircraft. Lot of guys had built hangars and use it for storage. And was a reasonable way of getting storage, because we only have to pay by the square foot on the property. I don't mind saying that it only amounts to right around \$90 per year, so that's not very bad. The only thing is if we make a profit, we have to pay a percentage at the end of the year and turn that over to the Metropolitan Airport's commission. But they've been very good. They plow the snow and take care of the grass. There's really nothing for us to do out there, excepting take care of our own hangar. Course they're on us all the time too. If something goes wrong, you've got to take care of it so it doesn't get run down, which I think is a wonderful deal. Since then, we must have at least, oh, I would say, if we would've made a count on it, I think we got close to 100 hangars out there now. It surprising how that's built up. At one time they were increase the size of that airport, but the people around here, natives around here are kind of against it. But they still have about 160 acres there, so if they really wanted to build it up, they could build it up, see?

**Haberman:** But in amongst that time, since I built that hangar, I was involved on rebuilding a Staggerwing Beech for a friend of mine, which I worked on two and a half years. He was a 747 captain for Northwest Airways and just recently retired. That airplane, nobody can realize it until you actually go up there and see it, the job that was done on that. Not calling me, but what little he done himself. In fact, he had about two hours of actually rubbing on the finish to give a finish on that airplane. It won Grand Champion at Oshkosh about three years ago. It was the first Staggerwing that ever got Champion in the United States. To this day, that airplane looks just like new. I understand he has a son who is in the air corps, and he says it eventually will be his, he said, after he can't fly it anymore. But his son has sure got an airplane to look at. And it is mint condition. If anybody ever gets to Oshkosh, it's in the antiques and classics, and it belongs to a fellow by the name of Bill [Halvorsen]. To this day it looks like, much better than anyone ever came out of the Beech factory. The funny part of it is, it was one of the very last airplanes that came off the assembly line before they discontinued bi-planes, Staggerwing Beeches. It's now out at Anoka airport and if anybody ever flies out there, is out there, look him up, because I know he'd be glad to show it to you, because he's real proud of it. I know when he got the championship, I said to him, "Well, now, what are you going to do? Sell it, Bill?" He says, "No. I wouldn't take a quarter of a million dollars for it right now." So and I believe it, because he really keeps it in beautiful shape and he's been in the Grand Champion circle out at Oshkosh the last three years. He brings it out there and shows it every year. They put all the Grand Champions and Reserve Grand Champions in one area, so when you get out to Oshkosh, you can actually see it. But he's been wonderful and I have a tremendously big blow-up of it. He sent me a beautiful picture of it, which was taken at Oshkosh the first year that it won Grand

Championship. I really prize that picture, because he keeps telling everybody, he says, "Whenever I wanted something done," he says, "he'd figure it out and he would do it."

**Haberman:** And I said, "We tried to keep it as original as it possibly could be." Because the only thing is, he updated all the avionics on it, with his complete set of kings gear. Studying how it into the instrument panel, it's all put in behind the back seat, which gave that airplane a perfect balance. It's all done by remote control and it's just a super job. Someday if you want to go out there and take a look at it, we would sure be able to call him up and gladly take it. I say, you can't believe the piece of equipment that is.

**Ryan:** One more and that was, have you had any really experience where you've been flying where you did something where it's like, either scared you or you just couldn't believe you just did that?

**Haberman:** Yeah, I've had some. All of my years, I've had actually three forced landings. But the one thing is it, when I fly I'll take the long way around. I never want to get myself in the position that underneath me is something I can sit down. I may crack it up, but I don't want to kill myself. Especially with the Pietenpol, when we had the Pietenpol after flying it how many years, or how many hours, I had all told about close to 200 hours on that Ford Model-A engine. And believe you me, you can't get anything that would purr any better than that Model-A Ford. The only thing is it had single ignition and there was no provisions made for dual spark plugs or dual ignition on it. We took off one evening, a friend of mine, Gordy Kindaline, and I, and we got up and we were just across Beaver Lake making a circle in a field. This thing happened, just cut back on RPMs and I mean cut back. It was pooping and going back and forth and fire coming out of the exhaust stack. I knew we had to sit down.

**Haberman:** Well, we sat down in a farmer's pasture where he had a bunch of milk cows. I don't know whether they seen us coming or not, but we cleared it in. By the time we were done, there was no brakes on this airplane. By the time we were done making a landing roll, one wing tip was over the barb wire fence. We set it down and mag petered out. It was an old DU-4 mag on there and Pietenpol had warned us that if you can buy a different type of mag, he says the deal for us would have to have it. If they overheated, they would peter out on you. And this one did. I says, "This is it." So before you know it, of course, we had the St. Paul police there and we had to taxi--we didn't taxi it. We dragged it down Stillwater Road, took it back up to Onion Airport. I says, "Park it. I'm going to get a different magneto." So I got a magneto, which was an Eisemann off of an old white truck. It was a very good mag. And put it on and I never had a moment's trouble after that. In fact, I gained almost 50 RPMs with that magneto. So the other one was definitely failing all the way through. But them days you bought whatever you could get and didn't have much money to buy. Some fellows bought mags that only weighed seven, seven and a half pounds. Mine weighed 15 pounds, so but I went the cheap way. That's the only way you-- It's either that or not fly. But anyway, I put that mag on and flew it for how many years. Then that's when I finally put the Velie M-5 on. I bought that, like I say, for \$1 a horsepower, which was I sure wish you could buy them now for that. And put that on and that really made an airplane out of it. That seemed like when I wanted to take off, instead of the tail coming up, the wheels would come up and she'd climb just like a homesick angel. The forward speed wasn't any greater, because there was a lot of resistance with those five cylinders sticking out there. But it was sure a sweet fly-away.

**Haberman:** Yeah, I've had a lot of hours behind it and I finally, as I said, I sold it, because in them days I needed a refrigerator more than I needed an airplane. Of course, them were tough

times and we were lucky to be able to put five gallons of gasoline in it too. Which was at that time was only, five gallons would probably cost you a buck or a buck and a quarter, for five gallons.

**Ryan:** Tell me some more about [inaudible].

**Haberman:** Huh?

**Ryan:** You were told one day [inaudible], but you and some other guys would fly to a carnival and pick up gas or something like that.

**Haberman:** Oh, yeah. We used to go a state fairgrounds. The Minnesota state fairgrounds at one time had a racetrack in there, which was a mile track, dirt track. They also had a half-mile track. But in between the half and the mile track, they had an airfield in there. Because at Machinery Hill was a great big building and they used to have airplanes parked in there during the summertime there. Guys used to use that racetrack in there or in between the two racetracks for a flying field. So we decided that we used to go out there on race days. They used to have about four or five race days them days in a week's run. So I knew a bunch of the fellows that were in the race car business, so Bert and [Emin] and I decided we'd take a run out there and watch the races. Well, Bert took off. He had an auto repair shop and him and I got out there. In them days, believe it or not, Texaco used to supply the gasoline and oil for the race cars. That was their advertisement. They had a big tanker truck out there and anybody need gasoline, go over there and they get five-gallon can and pour it in their race car and away they'd go. So we had a friend of mine there who he got killed up in Alaska in a DC-3 hauling supplies. He said, "Hey, Lyle, why don't you leave me and go and get you some gasoline?" I said, "Sure," and I had a 22-gallon tank in that airplane. So he went over and he got me five gallons of gasoline and he filled it up. Bert says, "Geez," he says, "I think I'll fly back to Onion Airport and we'll drain the damn thing,"



he says, "and fly back again." He says, "And get some more gasoline." So that's what Bert did. In the meantime, he picked somebody up at Onion Airport, flew them out there, dropped them off in the field, so he got in for nothing. Them were tough days to get in. Even though it was 50 cents to get in, that was rough. Anyway, we load her up with gasoline again and he made about three trips that way, so that was the cheapest flying I ever had.

**Ryan:** I'm sure that gas.

**Haberman:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** Oh. You were telling me that when you forced that down, you said you had three of them. I mean, when I go up in a practice you think, "Oh, this just glides down and no problem." But what was going through your head when--

**Haberman:** Well, it really, truthfully tell you, but it doesn't give you too much time to think. All you can think of is finding a spot that you can get at that you may wreck the airplane, but the main thing is not to kill yourself, injure yourself. As I say, I tried to and if there was a body of water, I would fly around it. I wouldn't cross it, because if something were to happen, you're going to nose over. There's no question about it. If you're in that airplane, if you were to conk you out just the least little bit, you may drown. I had a very good friend of mine, in fact, who was Roscoe Morton, who had a Pitts. He was flying at, it's in Florida and right behind his home, which is a body of water off of the ocean. He was flying kind of low and he was going to buzz his home. When he buzzed his home, something happened on to the throttle where the linkage came loose and there was no way. Didn't have any altitude, so upside he went. He rolled over, that Pitts rolled upside down and it was very fortunate that he could loosen his safety belts so he didn't get unconscious. He came swimming out, but he said that was the longest few seconds he

was ever under the water. He didn't know if he was ever-- And, of course, getting in and out of a Pitts, is quite a chore. I mean, they're not that roomy.

**Haberman:** So, as I say, I've always tried to get myself in a spot. If something were to happen-- Now, Ben Wiplinger, who made the Whip, was the founder and builder of the Whipline floats, which is it's in South St. Paul, he had an airplane for sale. I don't know why he didn't fly it down to Somerset, Wisconsin. He says, "Would you fly me down there?" He said, "I'm supposed to meet a guy." I said, "Sure, I'll fly you down there." So we got in the Velie M-5 and them days we had two-piece spark plugs. In fact, they're not built like they were. Now there's--