

## Interview with Raymond Haberman (Part 2)

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### Central Minnesota Historical Oral History Collection

#### Interview by Daniel Ryan

**Haberman** ([00:01](#)):

And we had just got-- We were across the golf course at Stillwater, plus-- Which is Holton Hill. There was a great big flat strip in there. So we went, decided we'd go for the strip at Holton Hill. We sit down at Holton Hill, and it was an alfalfa patch, which was quite tall. But no problem. We tatted over the fence, got out and took a look. We were running on four cylinders, which was a blessing. At least we had some power, but it was vibrating quite a bit, but we sit down and what are we going to do? So we were about a good mile away from Stillwater, Minnesota, so we decided well, here we're going to have to hoof it to Stillwater. Went to Stillwater, went to a filling station, and scrounged through his bin of spark plugs and got a gasket. The only thing missing-- The porcelain stayed on to the spark plug wire, but we missed-- The gasket got blown out. Lord only knows where. And we put the gasket in, and the only thing I had was pliers, and I took the pliers and we tightened it up the best we could, took off, flew to Somerset, Wisconsin, and we never did meet the guy.

**Haberman** ([01:25](#)):

We landed by a gravel pit down there, which was close to the church, and the guy never did show up that was going to buy Ben's airplane. So Ben of course, we said, "Well, we'll fly back." We flew back down in the airport, and he finally did sell the airplane, and that had a Zicklin-- or not a Zicklin. No, it was a German make of engine on it, and it was a 90 horsepower, so he

finally did sell it, and Ben of course after a good many years, was in the automotive body business, but then he went into World War II, and he was in the aircraft end of it.

**Haberman (02:12):**

When he retired, when he came back or was discharged, he started an air service down at Fleming Field South Saint Paul, rebuilding Lodestars, Lockheed Lodestars, which was the twin engine, and rebuilt their-- It was an airline aircraft at that time. I can't remember exactly the passengers that were in it, but anyhow he made executive aircraft out of it. And he did a lot of that, and they put in great big picture windows and did a lot of conversion work on it. And he had a tremendous business going, and he finally decided he made enough money, so he bought himself a Cessna 180, and of course Ben was always interested in flying floats, and he brought a set of Ito floats, which had electric mechanism on it for retracting and leaving the gear down, which was a source of problems because they would get corroded from the water. It would get in there. So Ben designed a hydraulic system, with hydraulic cylinders, and that way he could use the engine pump and everything else to drive the one setup.

**Haberman (03:33):**

So Ben designed and built quite a few of those aircraft, which got him into the float business. Then he designed a set of floats for a 180, which was a straight set of floats, and he called me up and he says, "Ray, I'm going to test fly this airplane from down at the St. Paul Airport if you want to come down and look at it. Come on down. So I went to-- Left the shop. I had the machine shop at that time. I left the shop and went down. It got quite late, and before you know it, old Ben was just supposed to do taxi tests with it. That's what the FAA gave him permission.

**Haberman (04:10):**

And he went on and got on the Mississippi River, and him and his son got in the airplane, and off-- He took off, and he flew down Fleming Field South St. Paul, came back, went over the field where everybody was working so that they could see that the airplane was flying, sit down, and that put Ben into the float business. He built a lot of floats, and went to Canada. Some down to New Orleans in the oil industry's deals and that, and finally he ended out designing a hydraulic system and the floats for an amphibious job. And he built the all the way up for the Beaver, and the Hamlin Beaver, and the Nomad, and the last set of floats that I'd seen Ben have was, they were 29 foot long. They were for the twin engine [inaudible 00:05:11] And he's got a tremendous-- Had a tremendous business. And they also have a great big air service deal at Fleming Field, but I was real-- Ben and I were supposed to get together before last winter, and we talked on the phone, and he had a knee operation the same time that I did. So we were comparing notes, and he says, "I'll see you down in Florida."

**Haberman (05:39):**

He says, "I made up my mind this year." He said he was semi-retired, and I went to Florida. We were supposed to get together to go out to dinner, but with the storm we had here, the snowstorm, I was glad to get out of here, and finally I get a clipping cut out of the St. Paul paper that Ben passed away, had got a heart attack on an afternoon, and the funny part of it is, Ben was out. He had a Super Cub, which was-- He had it on skis, and had been flying in the morning, and that afternoon they found him down in the hangar. He had a heart attack and passed away.

**Haberman (06:16):**

So you never know. You could have a physical today, and tomorrow you may be gone. You don't know it. But that's the last I'd ever seen Ben, but he was a very good friend of ours. In fact, he went to school with my wife, Marge, so it was really-- We were for years-- And the funny part of it is that Ben, when he built those floats, he had extrusions made, and he spinned it with an epoxy type of deal that 3M makes, that they put them in these grooves, and they have wedges they put in there. And he would bake this whole float so it actually was [inaudible 00:07:02] together. Very few rivets in it. And it has proven out so good that the only thing that-- He had made tests of them, and would squeeze them until they completely disintegrated, and then the glue joints would never leave. I can't believe it. But the funny part of it is, and when I had the machine shop, I used to manufacture plates for 3M company, out of aluminum, mill the edges so that they could test this material, and he never told me for years until years afterwards, that's where he got the idea of making these floats, mending them together.

**Haberman (07:45):**

And I could never believe it. He never said anything until just a few years before he passed away. But it has proven out successful, and now his son is running it, and they call it Wipaire. So if you ever see floats that are on the Cessnas and the Beavers and that, they all be built at South St. Paul or Inver Grove Heights, which are built by Wipaire, and they have a big factory down there. In fact, that would be something for you to see, because it's very very interesting. I haven't been there since his dad passed away, but I'm more than sure I could go down there any time and get in, because we were very good friends.

**Haberman (08:29):**

So between a bunch of us, we had about oh, 10 or 12 different fellows that flew together. We had three different airplanes down at St. Paul Park, where there's a great big supermarket complex in there now. Well, we used to fly every Sunday afternoon, go down there and fly, and take our lunch down there and have a regular gad fest, fly around for a while, and then we'd all fly back to Lincoln Park down to the airport. And I have pictures where three of us were sitting in a row with all our Pietsenpol airplanes. So we really-- There was a lot of us fellows got together. Some have passed away. Some have disappeared, never did hear where they pulled out of the state and went some other places, but Bert Neiman, one of the guys that gave me instruction is still here, but he has lost his license also. He don't have a license anymore. Johnny Alman who had a Ford Model A airplane, the same as we did, but it was his own design also. And one of his engines is now located at Oshkosh in the EAAA building. It's what they call a Haulman, and it's an air cooled Ford. It was designed using Ford crankshaft, pistons, rods, valves, and stuff like that. And as many parts as they could use for the automotive. But them days were tough days, so I think he only sold about two or three engines, and he had to go out of business. It wasn't just enough to keep him going, see? But I was one of the last. Ben and I were one of the last to really keep a flying [inaudible 00:10:20] Ben flew longer than I did, because he didn't lose a medical, and I of course quit I don't know how many years ago. And as I say, I miss it, but I guess when you get to be 80 years old, you've got to give up some things.

**Haberman (10:34):**

I would sure like to be able to fly a little bit. I was fortunate when I went to Florida, I could sit in the right hand seat with a fellow that was hauling people all the time from our park. In fact, he hauled 169-- The last count I knew was 169 people out of our park, that when a newcomer would

come into the park, he'd go to them and ask them if they would like to take an aerial view of where they were situated at, of North Fort Meyers, and I was very fortunate that 90% of the time, he would have me sit in the right hand seat just in case one of us passed away.

**Haberman (11:14):**

And I said, "Hey, I don't know why you're asking me. I'm 10 years older than you are." I said, "You've got a better chance than I've got." He said, "Oh." He let me fly it all the way down onto the ground. He said, "Hey, that's good enough for me." He said that. So I got quite a few hours in until the last year. He finally gave it up, because the insurance just didn't want it anymore, and he wasn't making any money at it. He did it as a lark, and he said it was too costly for him. So in renting the airplane, plus putting the gasoline and everything in it, he finally gave it up. But I was getting in sometimes one and two times a week. So it was a real nice thing for me. I gave him a few dollars every once in a while, and he didn't want it. He said, "No, I'm glad you [inaudible 00:12:01] sit in the right hand seat," he said, "Just in case something happens." I says, "Well, if you trust me that much, I'll go with you." So I got a few hours in down there, and that was the last flying I did, so-

**Ryan (12:12):**

Is it a lot more busy around that area? Or is it-

**Haberman (12:14):**

Well.

**Ryan (12:16):**

[crosstalk 00:12:16]

**Haberman (12:16):**

Well, I wouldn't say it's busy. It's such big territory that there's an awful lot of airports down there, a lot of individual places. They call them air ranches. It'll be a strip, and they'll have homes built along these, and everybody will have a hangar, and they have this one common strip, and a lot of the are lighted. Some of them are with asphalt, and some are just grass strips. But there's an awful lot of-- If you take a Florida map and look at the designations of airports, and you will never believe how many airports [inaudible 00:12:57] But like a Fort-- The only thing, we'd fly out of Fort Meyers. The only thing I hated about that airport, it was directly right against Highway 41 on the west side, and coming in for a landing onto the strip, you had to come over this row of building, and this highway, and I'm telling you, you had to come low because it was-- I don't think that the actual strip was 200, 300 feet from the highway, so it made it-- I was never very happy with it, flying out of there. I did it, and it was very seldom that you ever get a crosswind down there. It's usually one direction. So you've always got to come in the same way, come in from Sanibel Island, come all over all these buildings and these mobile home parks. And boy, I tell you, the few times I flew it, I kept the altitude as high as I could, and then slipped as much as I could. And I'm not used to slipping a Cessna. With my airplane that I have now, and ones we had before, I could slip in right within a couple hundred feet of the ground and straighten them out, so you could lose a lot of altitude in very short notice, but that's kind of a no no down there.

**Haberman (14:22):**

But it's a nice strip. And their main airport of course is located about five miles out of Fort Meyers, and it's a beautiful strip. And of course, it's all out in open [inaudible 00:14:35] swamp land around there. You have to fill in when they build an airport there, you know? It isn't like it

is up here. You can't take no hill down. There's no hills to be taken down. But I got a lot of flying in, and I enjoyed it.

**Haberman (14:48):**

There was a few times I couldn't go. I had to refuse him because I had other things to do, but he finally came and told me, he said, "I have to give it up," because it was too costly for him. And the funny part of it is, I was surprised that nobody would ever offer him anything for gasoline or anything. That's the funny part of it. They'd go for the ride, and that was it. They'd say thank you, and that was it, you know?

**Ryan (15:14):**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Haberman (15:15):**

I had a few come up to me. He said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, it's up to you what you want to do." I said, "You want to give him a 10 dollar bill, fine." I said, "That's cheap flying. You can get a sightseeing trip." So a few people did, but I doubt if out of the 169 people, that I doubt if you could say 50, 60 people gave him anything. So it was a costly proposition.

**Ryan (15:37):**

Yeah.

**Haberman (15:38):**

And now, his hobby is-- He does a lot of stained glass. He was a glassworker years ago, put glass in big buildings, high rises and stuff like that. So he does beautiful glass work. Oh, god. Buy a piece of stained glass from him. The workmanship is tremendous, and you never have to worry about one falling apart either, because he knows how to do it, so-



**Ryan (16:05):**

Did you ever know any [inaudible 00:16:06] stones or anything like that?

**Haberman (16:07):**

Oh, sure. The funny part of it is, being in Oshkosh, I've met more famous people than-- Jimmy Doolittle for instance. Oh, he just got killed here not too-- About a year and a half ago. Art Scholl. Him and his dog. He had a little dog, and he always-- That little dog always flew with him. He was an acrobatic pilot. And he was out doing some movie work out over the Pacific Ocean, and I don't remember what airplane it was in, but anything-- Something happened, and he went in the drink, and I don't think they ever found him or the airplane to tell the truth about it. I've met a lot of tremendous people, like Dick Brutan and Jedi Edgar. Geesh, I almost class them as brother and sister I've known them so many years, and they never fail to come up and see us at the interview circle or the announcer's stand, which I've been on. This is my 22nd year up there, so in amongst that time, I've really really-- Just off the top of head, I've got some of the autographs from some of the people, and acrobatic pilots of every description, some good and some bad.

**Haberman (17:37):**

But we see [inaudible 00:17:40] Maybe about twice a year. But they're lifelong friends, and like I say, I've met a lot of famous people. At one time, we had a bunch of the old timers there, years back, and they had a special reviewing stand for them to sit at. I even met old Pietenpol. It was one-- It was the last year that BH Pietenpol was there, and he was-- I can't really tell you what the years was, but he always kept us in. You would talk to him. He said, "Well, if they'd hoist me up in the airplane, I still could fly one," he'd say. But he lost his medicals, and he had gotten very sick.

**Haberman (18:21):**

But I met a lot of people, like-- Like the Gee Bee was there this year. Now, that was built by a fellow, by Delmar Benjamin, and Gee Bees were listed as killers. There never was one that didn't go into a crack out. This year, they built a replica of that, and you have to see that thing fly, and you have to see the fella that flies it. I don't believe it can even stay in the air, and it is so short, and such a big engine, a big Pratt and Whitney in it. And such short wings, and he'll come-- Now, the field down there is over 6,000 feet long, and he'll come on its side, the full length of that field, and to this day I can't believe how it can stay in the air when he's going on the side of that airplane. He's just flying on the fuselage. I can't believe it. And the rudder is so narrow. It's tall but narrow. I look at it and think, it can't fly. It just can't, but it does. And I've seen him-- Well, he flew about four or five times this last Oshkosh. Also at Sun 'n Fun down in Florida. That was the first time I'd ever seen it fly, and it's awesome. It really is. And he does a super job. And he's just a super guy to talk to. He isn't stuck up or anything. He'll answer any questions you have. So I've met a lot of nice wonderful people. The Kohld Brothers, which had the flying circus for years and years, and Dwayne just lost his license through a heart attack here, and he was the pilot that flew more upside downs than anybody, and he had a T-Craft with a-- When he first started out, it was a 90 horse, and I think he had 145 in it now, and it used to be a wheel airplane, and he made a stick control out of it, and he sit in the middle of it.

**Haberman (20:30):**

And Dwayne lost his license I think about two years ago. And now he still performs, and has somebody sit in the back seat with him so he can take over. So we still just see Dwayne, and he's a dead stick champion. He'll go up until he's almost out of sight, shut the engine off, and he'll prove to you that an airplane can fly without an engine. And from the place that he starts, he'll do

all his performance, loops, spins, rolls, inverted, everything you could ask for, falling leaves, everything, and when he's done, engine is stopped, he'll come onto the runway, and he'll taxi right up to where he started without starting that engine.

**Ryan (21:19):**

All right.

**Haberman (21:19):**

And he never fails. And now I just seen in the Aviator, the book I get, that he's-- Being that he has lost his license, he has bought himself an ultralight, and now he's going to be performing in the ultralight, because I shouldn't say this, but him and FAA don't get along because-

**Ryan (21:44):**

[inaudible 00:21:44]

**Haberman (21:46):**

He's told them off more times. I can't believe it. But he's just a super guy, and his brother-- I can't remember his first name now. He does his-- In a decathlon, he does a performance that Dwayne used to do in the T-Craft. Now, the T-Craft, his airplane believe it or not, has flown all around the United States. All he has a compass in it, air speed, an altimeter, oil pressure gauge and a switch to shut it off. He has no radio gear. He don't believe in radios. He says you fly by the seat of your pants, and he says you've got to see where you're going. So he uses a roadmap, or airline map, and he flies all over the United States. And that's the way he bought the new airplane, the new-- It's an SR-2 or something like that. Anyway, it has the bare amount of instruments in it, and he's flown that sucker all over the United States from place to place. He says see and be seen. That's the best way to fly, which of course, a lot of people don't believe in, but I guess he's right. He's still alive. And he of course is one of the announcers, helps us announce at Oshkosh,

so we really have a good go with him. And when he gets excited, I'll tell you, you can hear him screech over that microphone. He really puts performance in it.

**Haberman (23:30):**

So we have a real bunch of nice fellows up there, and like I say, I've met an awful lot of beautiful people. Yeah. One year, I missed-- I missed in it once in about 23 years at Oshkosh, but they're all, most of them-- 90% of them, you can sit down and really have a good talk. And now, Curtis Pitts, who's the designer of the Pitts, which dominated the acrobatic field for years, he visits us every year, and you couldn't talk to a nicer fella. And when you see him now, compared to the first years that he built the Pitts Special, he was a small slim guy. Now he's a great big heavysset guy. He'd never get in a Pitt Special anymore. But he's just a super guy to talk to. And we have different fellas there. Willy Ropp, who has gotten me in at Oshkosh on the announcer's stand, was a C plane pilot of last year. Was C plane pilot of the year, and he has one of the only-- There's two biplanes in the United States that are on floats. Willy has the Travel Air, a 1920 Travel Air, and I think his friend of his that helped him put the floats on the [inaudible] has a Weagle that's on floats. So they're the two only aircraft that are commercial built aircraft that they know are on floats, and he's had it both at Sun 'n Fun and Oshkosh these last two years. And he flies it up to Drummond Island in the summertime, and there he has an Aeronca Chief on floats also, and he's flown that to 300, about almost 400 with an 85 horse in it to Oshkosh how many times, because we have Bernard's Airfield there, where-- Or C plane base, where I think we had a hundred and some C planes there this year alone, so they had-- It was a record this year. It was super.

**Haberman (25:50):**

They've had them come from Canada, Alaska, and they have-- They've had Cubs fly from Alaska, Super Cubs fly from Alaska down here on floats. The only float job that I know of that was came from Alaska, and it had retractable gear on it. It's the only Super Cub that I know of. So we really have a variety there. So I actually, talking to those people from Alaska, I guess there's almost as many airplanes up there as there is automobiles, because hopping from spot to spot, hell, they don't take nothing getting in an airplane and hopping there.

**Ryan (26:25):**

Yeah.

**Haberman (26:26):**

But it's float country. It really is. It really is.

**Ryan (26:31):**

Is there a lot of people that go to the Oshkosh floats, to Sun 'n Fun?

**Haberman (26:34):**

Oh yeah. We have them. See, it's a good getaway in the wintertime, because it's usually nice weather, and of course, the first years I went down there at Sun n' Fun, the very first year they had it was a freebie. You just went in there and signed up, and you went around the airfield. Of course, they didn't have air shows and stuff like they have now. But now, it's second to Oshkosh, believe it or not, and it's growing by leaps and bounds each year. And they've moved it from-- I think the first one was in January-- Last part of January or first part of February. Then they moved it to March. Now it's into April already. So they'll have it this year just before I start coming home, and that's good weather time. It's starting to get good weather down there. This year, we had super weather. We only had one little storm go through there, so we actually only

had one rain day. And we lucked out also at Oshkosh this year, but it's never-- I don't think it'll ever get as big as Oshkosh. There's not question about it, because I don't think they had the field [inaudible 00:27:47]

**Haberman (27:47):**

Although they do have-- Piper had the plant down there. They used to build aircraft down there, and of course that's shut down now. They talk along the lines of trying to get that building, but that's going to be a lot of money. But it's possible. It's very possible. They have a museum down there too. Anybody has-- Oh yeah. They just started that. They've got a new building there, and anybody that has an aircraft they want to donate to a museum can write it off, as an income tax deal. And so it's-- See, they've got three or four down there now that are permanent there now. And a lot of guys store them there for over the winter time, and so they have them on display. And of course, they do the same thing at Oshkosh. Oshkosh, if you have an airplane you want to display, you can display it for six months if you want, if it's a display-able piece. And then they'll take it out in spring and fly it. But that isn't as common now as it was years ago up there, because Oshkosh has got also a strip up there which is built like a 1930 airstrip. In fact, the Pietenpol hangar is up there, and they've got an old style gas pump, and the old rotary type beacon up there, so it's just--

**Haberman (29:08):**

Every Sunday, they fly. Every weekend, they fly until-- I think it's in October, I think they quit. So you can go out there and see the Ford Trimotor fly. You can see the Stinson. You can see a Beach fly. You can see a Fleet fly. Oh, just go down the line, the type of aircraft they got, and they take people out for rides also, and-- I don't know if they-- I've never heard if they charge or

what they do, but they've got a lot of pilots that donate their time there, because that's a wonderful deal. It's free flying for them, you know?

**Ryan (29:47):**

Yeah.

**Haberman (29:48):**

So they had a twin Lockheed there, which mis-fortunately, they lost it here a few years ago. Two years ago. I guess the crankshaft broke in it, and it was just on the way in to the field, and they were just right on the turn at a low altitude, and they had to ditch it, and it hit a tree, and I don't know if they're going to rebuild it or if it's rebuild-able or not. The Ford Trimotor was one that was blown over at Burlington, which it was the site of EAA's hangars years ago, and they completely rebuilt that. That's flying now. In fact, I have a piece of the original aluminum from that airplane down in my basement, the little piece of it. I'm going to put it on a little plaque, and put the number on it. But it's quite a thing. I think it's-- If anybody can get there, has interest in aviation, it's really an educational feature, and plus the fact is, they have so many forms, if you have the time and watch these forms where they construct the airplanes, they'll build a whole airplane in one week there. Zenair from out of Canada, each-- Almost every year, he's built a complete airplane, and somebody has bought the airplane before he left there. And so you can actually put your hands in on a job if you want. You can register for it. So it's already a learning experience. You can do fabric work. You can do wood work. They'll show you how to carve propellers, and how to do welding. They'll build a whole fuselage up there for an airplane, that somebody will furnish the material, and they'll furnish-- Gas companies will furnish the [inaudible 00:45:52] and the oxygen, and you'll get your hand at welding. It's really a learning experience. It really is. So--

**Ryan (31:54):**

Okay. Well, I'm going to ask you if you have anything else that you want to share, [inaudible 00:32:05] to get your take on it.

**Haberman (32:08):**

Well, I don't know. Really, I suppose things will come to my mind after I gone, but like I say-- Or after you're gone. And I'll think of them, and if I do, I'll just put them down on a little note of paper, and I'll send them up to your mother, or up to school, and like I say, I wished you had time sometime. You could really go through some of my older books here, and you'd be surprised some of the airplanes that were built, and never got an ATC on, and they never-- They were good air-- They were brought up in times when they were tough, so they never made it off. They would fly them, one or two models, and that was it. And there was a lot of good airplanes went down the tube because-- Like the Stinson. The Stinson was really the Cadillac of light aircraft. To me, the Stinson Voyager, or the Stinson Gull-wing, that's a beautiful airplane. There you had the wing at one point taper from about six inches to-- It was 18 inch thick to practically nothing. You had to have an 18 inch ripcord needle to be able to sew through the fabric. That's the type of wing it was. In fact, it was just a super airplane.

**Haberman (33:31):**

And like I say, I've been fortunate. I made a lot of brakes for the Staggerwing Beeches. Last year, I made nine sets. I never believed there would be that many-- Use that many, but it was used on a lot more aircraft. The Bendix Brake at one time was the brake, but it was a leaker from day one. I don't know why they ever really got approved. I suppose they were all right when they put them out, but after they used them for a while, the cup in there would get weak, and they were always leaking.



**Haberman (34:05):**

So the guys when they'd have to go out with the airplane, would actually have to bleed them or pump them up so that they were ready to go, and some guys got the idea of putting a little valve in between so they could shut the valve off, so that it wouldn't leak from the master cylinder down to the brake. And that didn't prove out to be successful, because some of the guys would forget to put the valve on, and they'd take off, and when they'd come down, ah, there wasn't enough runway anymore. So they ditched them. So that wasn't an approved deal, but I designed that brake, and that ring for the inside of it. And like I say, last year I did nine sets. This year, I got inquiries back, guys that had bought them, and they couldn't remember how they were put together, so over the telephone, I'd have to tell them how to do it, and they must have done it all right, because I never heard anymore after.

**Ryan (34:58):**

No more ringing after that.

**Haberman (34:59):**

But they were used on many more aircraft than just the Staggerwing Beech. They were used on the Spartan Executive, the Spartan School of Aeronautics. See, they used to build an airplane at one time, and they were used on there. They were used on the WACOs. Gosh, I got-- The Howard, which was Bennie Howard. He used to build, I think it was a four place or five place. I can't remember if it was a five place or a four place, big Howard, and in fact, the Howard was an executive type aircraft, and it was used in air races it was so fast. And [inaudible 00:35:37] and his wife got killed in one. They really never did find out what happened to them.

**Haberman (35:43):**

So that type of brake was used on a very lot of aircraft, because it was a [inaudible 00:35:49] brakes. They were built by Goodyear, you know? But I still have samples of them outside here, and I'm glad I didn't get any sets to make this year, because I just didn't have that much time to do it. It wasn't a lucrative deal. It was more of a, help somebody out than-- I didn't make too much money on it, although the last set I had, I had fixtures and everything made, and I was very fortunate to be able to get some aluminum at a fairly good price, so I could make a few dollars on them. But it's a learning experience, and like I say, I've helped on a lot of aircraft material. That J5, I did so much rebuild on the artwork, and the Staggerwing Beech. Helped on a Waco UPF. That was when I was first going with Marge. It had 82 hours on it, and I come to find out, it was a biplane. It had a Jacobs on it, and that Jacobs had one mag, and one distributor. It was both batteries and mag needle ignition. And a very good friend of mine had bought this airplane from this woman. It had caught fire, and when Marge and I were going together, we built ribs down in her dad's basement, hauled them out to [inaudible 00:37:14] Chamberlain, and we helped rebuild that airplane out there. And I finally found out that Bill Shaw sold it, and it went around the country, and it finally ended out in Florida as a basket case, and they say it was a basket's case. And some guy in Minneapolis bought it, who has historical aviation books. He's got it, and I would of-- Boy, I'd love to be able to get ahold of that thing and rebuild that one, because that was a beautiful airplane. Oh god. With that Jacobs in it. It had a sliding canopy on it, one of the first ones I ever seen. The pilot was in the canopy, but the two passengers in the front seats sat out in the open.

**Haberman (37:59):**

And Bill Shaw had it for quite a few years, and he sold it. And he ended out to be captain for Northwest Airways. And he finally retired from there, and he went to California and started a C plane base there, and he had the C planes until he retired from that, and his son was here in Minneapolis, and he got killed oh, a few years back through a foolish-- They overloaded. I can't remember. It was one of the Piper aircraft anyhow, and it was way way overloaded, and they took off in the field, and couldn't get altitude. It was just a fool-- And he was an instructor. I couldn't believe that he would pull such a stupid stunt, you know. But he got killed, so that's the last of-- His name was-- The fella that had the airplane was Bill Shaw, and it was Bill Shaw Jr. That got killed. I'd seen him. I'd met him. In fact, I talked to him and told him how I knew his dad so well, in fact, worked on his airplane. And that's where I got to fly a biplane job with an OX-5 engine in it, which it was a water cooled OX-5. It was a 90 horse engine. That's all they developed. But it had an eight foot prop on it. You can't believe it. Slow turning. And that's where we got flying. Marge and I both flew in it. I got to do a little stick work in that, so I got a little time in a biplane, which was a slow airplane. It wasn't great, but they're fun to fly. They come in so-- We were landing so slow, that you can almost run as fast as they go, but it was fun. Yeah. Okay. I don't know how much more I can tell you. If I think of anything more Dan, I'll sure gladly send it to you.

**Haberman (40:02):**

Just off the top of [inaudible 00:40:06] I gave you enough BS so far, maybe we can come up with some more. I'll think of it, and I'll write it down and give it to you.

**Ryan (40:12):**

Okay. Well I thank you very much.

**Haberman (40:14):**

Well, you're welcome. I hope you can use it anyhow, and if there's any question, just write me a little-- Don't you have to call and telephone, just write me a little note, and tell me you'd like to know something about this or that, and like I say, we had a lot of aircraft fields around throughout. There's one at Whitebeard. There was one out by Lavender, which was out by the state fairgrounds. Where I learned to fly out of was down at St. Paul Park, which is a great big shopping center there. In fact, it was a great big farm field. The Beldon Boys had that, and one of the Beldon Boys ended out to be a captain at Northwest Airlines. And that field was so long that we used to be able to take off with the Pietenpol, get some altitude, old Bert would cut the engine, and make a landing. Crack the [inaudible 00:41:10] takeoff, fly again a little bit, make another landing. And we'd make a circle of the field, and that's when we'd make three or four landings right in a row.

**Ryan (41:18):**

Geesh.

**Haberman (41:19):**

So, but we had a forced landing there, and ended up into a cornfield. And boy, when that corn hit that fabric airplane, it sounded like shrapnel.

**Ryan (41:29):**

I'm sure it did.

**Haberman (41:30):**

We never smashed it up, but-- And he got in that damned thing and flew it back to St. Paul up here. I couldn't believe it. I would have left it there. I would have tied it up to a tree or something. Not Bert. He wasn't afraid of it. He said, "I'll get a lot of altitude, and I'll glide the

rest of the way," and he did. He climbed it up until he was a little speck in the sky, and my god he flew it up to Beaver Lake, and so that's when I put a new mag on it. I said, "No more of this crap." But I flew for a good many years, and it was fun to fly.

**Haberman (42:04):**

It's surprising. It wasn't fast, but it was reliable. It was a beautiful airplane to slip. Oh, you could slip that sucker right down until the last minute, straighten it out, and that was it. So you could land it in a real small field. And I think that's really what saves our neck some of the times, you know.

**Ryan (42:22):**

Yeah.

**Haberman (42:24):**

But it was a fun piece of equipment. In fact, I had all intentions, if everything would have been alright, I would have liked to build another one just for the heck of it, because it's really fun building them. It's really-- It's a learning factor, huh?

**Ryan (42:44):**

It's got to become just a big part of you.

**Haberman (42:45):**

It is. That's right. And after you fly to-- I don't think-- I like flying, but I mean, to me building something like that with your own fingers, and seeing it take off, and everybody says, "Gee, how nice it flies," and so it was a great thing. It really was. And when you hear a Ford Model A with a little four cylinders, pop pop pop pop pop pop pop, you think it'd never get off the ground, and it hauls two people off. It really is a nice little airplane. And some of the versions of them have been built, and they modified them, put [inaudible 00:43:20] type, not square wingtips and

rounded wingtips, and different tail surfaces, and of course the later ones all had split gears on and all of that, and put Continentals in them and everything like that.

**Haberman (43:31):**

But the old Ford Model A, it was just part of the airplane, that's all. It was just like, go out there, and there were only [inaudible 00:43:39] I think it was 1,800 RPMs. That's all they ever turned. You could almost count [inaudible 00:43:45] the RPMs [inaudible 00:43:47]

**Ryan (43:48):**

[inaudible 00:43:48]

**Haberman (43:47):**

And it was cheap to fly. That was the best part of it, you know? I had four hours and 20 minutes behind the sucker, and he says, "You're ready to solo." So that was it. So went down and sit down in the field down there. He says, "I'm going to get out of it." He weight 226 pounds, and when he got in that front cockpit, I don't know how he ever got in that thing. In fact, he was so big, and he had such big feet, he had to take his shoes off, because he couldn't get them through past the seat in the back seat. He got out of the airplane, and he says, "Well, you're ready to go now." He said, "It's going to be a lot lighter," and you know, pulling 226 pounds out of an airplane that weighed 640 pounds, yeah, you couldn't believe it. I don't think I went 150 feet, and it was off. So just took my time and made two landings, and sat down, and come back, and he says, "You're on your own." Went back, flew back. The two of us flew back, and the next morning believe it or not, on the Monday morning, [inaudible 00:44:47] name of Roy Hope and I who worked at Northwest Airways in later years, we got in the airplane, and we flew down to practice a few landings down there. So I was hauling passengers after four hours and 20 minutes.

**Haberman (45:01):**

That's a no no now, but--

**Ryan (45:03):**

Yeah.

**Haberman (45:03):**

It wasn't then. But that's a good many years ago. That's 1932. But it was fun, and I had a lot of good times, and we used to go from airport to air [inaudible 00:45:17] From here, Beaver field, and fly to a place they call Oxboro, and on a Sunday afternoon. We skirted around. It was known as [inaudible 00:45:26] Chamberlain then. Still known. I think it's [inaudible 00:45:28] International Airport now. We would fly around the airport, go to South St. Paul, and fly out there. Fly out there, and we'd sit down by this strip by the road. You couldn't believe the amount of airplanes, home builds that would come there. And all kinds of [inaudible 00:45:43]

**Haberman (45:42):**

And of course, factory jobs too, you know. [inaudible 00:45:45] five engines in it. There was one with a V8 in there.