

Bob: When did you first become interested in Home Built Airplanes?

George: Winter of 1925 and 1926, our family moved to Portland from Cascade Locks, that winter one of the magazines had the prints for the Lincoln Sport Biplane. Also I became aware of ads of Ed Heath and Jack Irwin.

Bob: Did you build a plane that winter?

George: Yes. Friend Lew Garrison and I built a Hang Glider and coasted down some of the steep streets in Portland.

Bob: When did you first see Aerial Air Show?

George: In 1927, I hooked a ride to Spokane for the National Races. Though I could only be there for a few days, I met both Heath and Irwin with their little racers. Needless to say, this really fired me up.

Bob: When next did you become involved?

George: In 1929, Modern Mechanix Magazine came out with the first flying manual. This very shortly led to meeting Les Long of Cornelius, Roy P. Fry of Hood River and Lee Eyerly of Salem, who was a member of the Oregon State Board of Aeronautics which all led to my involvement of State Licensing of Home Built airplanes and other planes that were factory made but for various reasons were State Licensed for the owners.

Bob: So you went to State Meetings at Les Long's, Beaverton Airport, and Salem till when?

George: Yes, till 1937 when I went to California for five years to work in the aviation industry.

Bob: Was there any thing that kept up your interest at that time?

George: Yes, since I was on crop dusting, Rice seeding and barnstorming crews for over two years all over California, I looked up maybe 20 Home Builts that were hidden in the hills..

Bob: What did you do when the War started in late 1941?

George: At the time I was working for Ryan at Hemet as Maintenance Supervisor. We had 100 Ryans, 100 Stearmans and 50 Check Mechanics in my charge. At that time I sent to Beaverton, Oregon for 4 of the old gang to come down. Since they had to live with me, that is all I heard from them for 7 months. The old days at Beaverton that is. This association with these fellows got me to thinking that something should be done about Home Building, even though Les Long had thrown in the towel when he wrote his farewell article for Popular Aviation in 1937.

Bob: What are the names of those fellows, George?

George: The Buswell Brothers, Don Sunde and Murray Wick who still works for Ryan.

Bob: And then what happened?

George: Summer of 1942, my health broke from too much night work and too many airplanes. I went back to Portland and worked for Yates Geodetic Aircraft as an Engineer and Geodetic Maker.

Bob: I bet that was something to be back at Beaverton even though the planes were in War time storage.

George: Right. I spent quite a bit of time measuring planes in other hangars for my drafting work, besides helping George Yates build 2 planes and a boat. I also helped Les Long build 200 props on weekends.

Bob: When did you form an Organization?

George: It was during this period of 1942 that Roy P. Fry, Les Long and myself formed the American Airmen's Association.

Bob: I know you sent out a lot of mimeographed pamphlets and literature during the War plus advertising for interested Home Builders to come forward, when did you get the idea of attacking the Home Built problem on a national level instead of only state by state.

George: The winter of 1945 and 1946 was the period of time that the idea came to a point in my mind. I sent a telegram to the C.A.B. requesting an appointment for a discussion of possible system of certification of Home Built aircraft. They immediately made the appointment for several weeks later.

Bob: And what did you do?

George: I was surprised to say the least. The boys had been bucking the CAA so long that I had began to think of the CAA as a bunch of ogres. I sat down and wrote 2 sets of proposals. One with the least amount of restrictions and rules, the other set were like for not over 50 H.P., single place and restricted flight areas.

Bob: Did they ever see the second set of rules?

George: No. Thank Heavens I did not have to show it to them as the War flying and the prospect of a boom in aviation after the War had liberalized their thinking.

Bob: How did you get to Washington, DC?

George: Early April of 1946, I drove the '37 Chevy by way of Pietenpol Field.

Bob: Did you meet anyone on the way?

George: Yes, I had a meeting with Harry Thalman and the Club in Salt Lake, Bernhard Pietenpol, Joe Yutz of Pottsville, PA. I rewrote the proposals 3 times on the trip.

Bob: Was your meeting very long with the CAB?

George: No. It was suprisingly short. Only long enough for us to present our problem, and for them to decide if it would be legal for them to give the go ahead to such a program. Perhaps an hour.

Bob: After that was settled what did they do?

George: They turned me over to John Geise who had been head of Lightplane Development for the CAA before the War. He in turn brought in Albert Vollmecke, head of Engineering and his two Assistant Engineers, Mr. Rider and Mr. Marsh. After some discussion of engineering requirements, The Chief of Aircraft Inspection was brought in for talks on methods of inspection and certification. That was all there was to it. Just a couple of hours. They then told me to look for a notice of temporary system of certification from them in 6 to 12 months. The next November they sent me the notice.

Bob: When did you get your plane certificated, and were you the first?

George: My plane was certificated in early March of 1947. Because of a discrepancy in my carb. heat system, I was not the first. Russ Stewart had his Salmsen powered Pietenpol pass inspection first which he always made a big thing of.

Bob: Then in August you flew from Portland to Long Island, NY. How long did it take and who arranged the AP publicity in all of the Nations papers?

George: The flight took three days flying daylight only and no radio. Jack McRae, Jr. of Long Island arranged publicity at his end. Jack had been a Stress Engineer for Stinson and Republic. He has been one of the main Stress Engineers for Grumann for the past 30 years. On several occasions, Jack has let me use his home for a base of operations.

Bob: In your flight, did you have trouble and how fast did you average?

George: No trouble. Just the usual weather problems. Speed was about 96 M.P.H. Had tail wind in the west, but once past the Rockies, the Gulf winds took over. I had hoped for 110 M.P.H.

Bob: Then what did you guys do?

George: Jack and I flew to Washington, DC in formation. He in his Cessna 140. We called the CAA Engineers and the Chief and Mr. Rider came out and looked at the plane.

Bob: And were they impressed?

George: I'll say so. They thumped it. Got inside, asked questions about the structure. They were impressed because it showed some engineering. But the biggest thing that got them was that I really flew across the Rockies.

Bob: What was the direct result of this flight?

George: The change of temporary periods of certification of 6 months to a permanent 12 month period such as we now have.

Bob: Did you come back to Washington, DC?

George: I flew there again in 1948 and 1951. Also the Engineering Division asked me to meet with them in 1949 in Seattle, I drove there.

- Bob: When did it seem to you that the CAA was not concerned with the Home Built problem anymore?
- George: By 1951, the personnel had changed and the new people acted as though the certification of Home Builts was part of the system for all time.
- Bob: Were you worried at anytime?
- George: I worried about the lack of Home Builts. It took another ten years for activity to pick up. Fortunately, the CAA realized that it takes several years to build an airplane and also takes time for the public to get established after the War and think of hobbies.
- Bob: Did you have help for your trip?
- George: Yes I did. Charlie Bernard forestalled my hangar rent for all the trips. Walt Rupert filled my tank. Cliff Krum and Fred Shepard helped with the brake installation and the auxiliary fuel tank. Fred furnished a tank neck and cap from the See Bee that Tex Rankin was killed in. The Salt Lake City Club gave me their Club treasury. Harry Thanman, Utah; Leo Ray, Texas; Joe Durham, Oklahoma; Lee Spencer, Kansas; Frank Easton, Ohio; Joe Zutz, John Zug and Charles Opalack of Penna; Jack McRae, Jr., Long Island; Arthur Becker of Western New York; and John Peterson, Kermit Troyer, Sherman Edgar of Michigan all furnished room and board at various times.
- Bob: In the 10 years to 1952, how much did it cost you and your organization to accomplish what you set out to do?
- George: Very reasonable; about 10,000 1950 dollars with me contributing over 80% of the cost.
- Bob: Did you make any money as a result?
- George: No. My fault. I'm not a glory seeker and I didn't set my self up to sell plans as it was too early, and besides I had alot of planes to fix, Linotypes to repair and rocks to grind.
- Bob: Have the aviation writers treated you kindly since the flight?
- George: For the most part they have. However it is supprising how so much can be written without confering with me. For instance, one obscure writer keeps saying that my plane had a 65 H.P. Lycoming. It never did. It had either a 50 or 65 H.P. Continental engine. Also someone said the Amercan Airmen's Association ran out of steam. Such was not the case. It was planned obsolescence. The Advisory Board voted in 1952 to not go into the Social aspects of the game and to stop activities, as our goal had been accomplished. Your article in the Third Quarter, 1973 of the Unique Airplane Register was the nicest I could wish for.
- Bob: If you had not gotten the program through in 1946 and 1947, do you feel that anyone else could have done the job since?
- George: I want to impress on you that it would have been almost impossible after 1950. The period was just the right time. By 1950, the Post War aviation bubble had burst and the personnel had changed.
- Bob: Tell us a little about your plane Lil' G-B.
- George: It was an improvement of Les Longs low-wing Longster called "Whimpy" of 1934. In 1937 I did some redesign work on it such as type of fuselage structure, larger engine. (40 H.P.) and 23012 airfoil. I went to California in 1937 and Tom Story took my proposals and plans of Whimpy to Salem in 1939 and promoted Eyerly Aircraft to let him build the plane in their shops. Tom did not push it through for production and the War started which stopped such activities. I acquired the structure in 1945. The wing fittings and motor mount were altered to conform with my original proposals. I built up a 65 Continental and installed it. from 1946 to about 1957 I flew it over 1,000 hours with 450 of those hours on three trips to the east. I hope to see it in a Museum before I leave this vale of tears, but the Home Built aspect of airplanes has been very pleasant to me and I still help the boys with their problems.
- Bob: Was there anyone person who helped you to get across the word in Washington, DC?
- George: Yes. Jack McRae, Jr. accompanying me to talk to the Engineers on their own level helped tremendously.

September 5, 1986
At Blakesburg, Iowa
Antique Airplane Association, Inc.

This paper is a supplement to the article in the June 1986 issue Sport Aviation as put out by the Experimental Aircraft Association. We thought by writing this, we could correct any errors and put events into proper sequence.

We have to go back to January of 1926 to start my activity. That winter in Portland, we found ads from Ed Heath and Jack Irwin. These really set me to thinking that there were small planes to be built. This same month in one of the mechanical magazines there was plans for the Lincoln Sport biplane and a hang glider with tandem wings. Friend Lou Garrison had the tools and some clear Douglas fir. So we started. After completion, we coasted down some block long hills and discovered that we did not really have any control, and it took a long time to rig all the wires each time. And besides, being only three or four feet off the ground was not satisfying, so we stopped. After all, we were only kids.

Late summer of 1927 saw me trying to get to Spokane for the National Air Races. The 400 miles each way was done by car ride and freight train. I was there two days and the schedule was tight because I lived with relatives and they were not for my activity. The nicest thing about the trip was to have talked to both Ed Heath and Jack Irwin. The Meteor plane racer didn't fly because of a broken wheel while taxiing around. What I noticed from being around Ed and Jack was that one weighed 110 and the other 125. Now being a kid of six feet in height and still growing, bugged me for many years as to the practicability of a normal size person to fly in small homebuilt planes.

In 1929 the first Home Built Flying Manual was printed. When I brought home a copy from Hood River and read it that night, I was in pig heaven. Immediately, a plane was started, and I went down to Swan Island airport and started flight instruction with Les Meadows.

In 1930, I finally got out to Beaverton to meet George Yates. At the time, George was building a Geodetic fuselage with 1/4 inch ^{TUBE} to being brazed at the joints. This plane was being built for Elmer Stipe and later was of white color and called the Stiper. Les Long at Cornelius built the wing. This plane had a Martin engine and the landing gear was from an Auto Gyro. George was to teach most of the home built pilots at Beaverton in it. George Yates had a forced landing on Charlie Bernards south forty and soon they were friends. George was to talk Charlie into building an airport. After all, it was poor land, wasn't it? This was the start of Beaverton which became a haven of home builders from the Portland area. Most people don't realize the contribution that Yates did for our movement. He was a staunch Federal Government antagonist. Perhaps because of his Navy service. Anyway, all during the 1930's and into the 40's, he was after the boys to keep flying under our state aeronautic rules and disregard the attempted interventions of several Federal inspectors. Finally, in 1941, the Federals took the home builders to court in Portland. The judge threw the case out of court for constitutional reasons. And then World War II started. Eight months later I was to come back to Portland to stay after spending five years in California working on many airports. I had already redesigned Wimpy for Les Long in 1937, and so I started to get Les reinterested again. At the same time I went to work for Yates and was the last engineer to work on Geodetics with him. Since I was at Les' place a lot, it was only natural for Les and I to start another organization. Of course, Charlie Bernard and Yates was there to egg us on as we all thought something would have to be done for after the War. Les Long was born a sick person and in 1943 I was to take on the whole burden. Fortunately, Roy P. Fry was working at the Air Base with us. Roy was from Hood River and had worked with Les up to 1937, doing writing and flight instruction and so forth. Roy Fry was my confidant during the formation of the American Airmen's Association and in

making the decision to go to Washington, D.C. and in drawing up the proposals to the CAA.

Regards the article in the August 1950 Air Trails, ^{THIS} ~~time~~ was done at the request of William Winter. I furnished the photos and blueprints and also the words. Winter made up the article and had his name as author.

April 1946, a wire was sent to Washington, D.C. for an appointment. A return wire was received and we were off in the 1937 Chevy, we had two proposals with us that Fry and I had drawn up. These were to expand to a total of four by the time I got to Washington, D.C.

I had a passenger to Minnesota which helped on the gas. Harry Thalman had the club in Salt Lake City give me all their club funds. Alan Rudolph of Wisconsin had left money forme at Pietenpols. In New York City, William Winter, Soaring Clubs of America, and at Elmira, Paul ~~SCHWEIZER~~ all wrote letters in our behalf to the CAA. Jack Me Ray of Long Island, who was working for Republic as a stress engineer, made his home, our base.

We met with the CAB who passed judgement that such a program would be legal. We were turned over to the engineering devision, namely Geise, Rider, Marsh and Vollmecke and I thrashed out the details of our proposals. Fortunately, they accepted the most liberal of the four I had. Also the head of inspection was brought in so that we could tell him what to expect. The next March, Russ Stewart and I were the first to be certificated under this program, which was on a six month temporary basis. I knew that this would be unsatisfactory as the program could be cancelled at any time. Arrangements were made with Jack Me Rae to see Associated Press for publicity. Once again he made his home mine. The flight was made in three days with maps and compass and a cruising speed of 96 mph.

Jack Me Ray flew in formation to Washington, D.C. ^{WITH ME} to meet with the same CAA engineers. This was all a stroke of luck as the engineers were astounded to see a homebuilt that flew across the Rockies, that had some indication of being engineered, and has an engineer present that could talk to them on their terms and who also was building the Driggs Dart.

Direct result of this flight and Jack's help was the permanent system of certification that we have today. What most people don't realize is the effort of other people that helped. Besides the first flight, I also flew to Washington, D.C. in 1948 and then met with the same engineers in Seattle at their request. In 1952 the last flight East was made and at this time I felt we had the program concreted. Our organization ~~had~~ accomplished what we had set out to do. It then was decided to stop our activity at this time and ^{WE} did not run out of steam as one author was to write later. I still put out an occassional newsletter as I was testing printing presses. IN 1949

Almost 1200 hours was put on LilGB up to stop flying it in the late 50's.

I took in about \$1,000 in subscriptions. The other \$9,000 spent, came 1950 DOLLARS out of my pocket. This is way American Airmen's was so successful. Someone paid the bills even if the pants got thin in certain places.

George Yates egged me on, Roy Fry and Les Long led me along the way. Walt Rupert filled the gas tank, Charlie forgave the hangar rent while I was gone on trips. Cliff Krum and Freddy Sheppard helped with parts and work. Lee Eyerly and son Harry Eyerly let me have the parts to finish up LilGB. Tom Story built most of the structure from plans that I had furnished to Les Long.

I never regreted the time and money I spent on this though as I look back, I wonder how I got both of them as the only cash I had was what I had earned during the War.

In getting this program through, we were lucky. The old guard was out of the CAA. There were a lot of aviation people back from the War. An aviation bubble was expected after the War. The time was right and a few years later would have been too late.

I only ask of the boys to build and fly your airplanes so that I can watch you. That is what I have done most of my life.

George W. Bogardus