

OH-3060, Joe and Pauline Bookout, 6-16-2014, Wheatland, WY In

Flight

BARBARA: [00:00:00] OK, today is June 16, 2014. This is Barbara Bogart. I'm interviewing Pauline and Joe Bookout at their home in Wheatland, and we're going to be talking about their involvement in aviation over the years. So, I'm going to do ladies first. I'm going to ask you, Pauline, where are you from originally?

PAULINE: I am from Wheatland, Wyoming. Yes, I was born in Platte County. Raised on a ranch west of town and that's about all the story there is to that.

BARBARA: And Joe, how about you?

JOE: I was born here. Lived here all of my life except two years, I was in the Army, but --

BARBARA: OK. Where were you in the army?

JOE: Fort Campbell.

BARBARA: Down in Kentucky, right?

JOE: Mm-hmm.

BARBARA: Yeah. OK. Well, one of the first questions that I like to ask people I'm talking with, is how did you get interested in aviation? And I'll start with you, Pauline.

[00:01:00]

PAULINE: Joe has always been interested since he was born, and when I started running around with him, I knew he was really aspiring to be a pilot. He already was, but -- and through the years, things got in the way of him pursuing his pilot license, but eventually, he got it and he'd fly off with his buddies to Canada and his brother went with him several times but we wives were left behind and we decided, "Well, if those guys can fly, why can't we?" And we started taking lessons while they were gone. By the time they got back, we had an hour or two of flying time.

[00:02:00]

BARBARA: Now, about what year was that?

PAULINE: You'll have to help me.

JOE: Oh, about '74, I think.

PAULINE: I think it was. Yeah. Around then. Yeah.

BARBARA: And who was teaching flying lessons?

PAULINE: His name was John Booth. He came here with the power plant, I think, didn't he?

JOE: I don't really know.

PAULINE: I don't recall that part, but he was here for -- I don't recall that, either. A year or two, anyway, and we started with him. And then our very main instruction was Ed Snell who is just now retiring from the airlines and he was just north of town a little ways.

BARBARA: So you took lessons from him as well?

PAULINE: Yes. Yes.

BARBARA: Now, how many women were there in this wives flying club?

PAULINE: Two. Betty and I. Betty Bookout. I think there was another woman that started, but she didn't ever [00:03:00] pursue it.

BARBARA: OK. Well, I'm going to switch over to Joe now. How did you get interested in aviation?

JOE: I wanted to know how a machine could fly and studied it all my life. Didn't start flying -- I think I took my first lesson when I was 15. And then due to financial problems, I didn't until I was 17. And finally took enough to get my license, but didn't have time to get an inspector to ride with me, so I got interrupted by the Army and this girl and it was several years before -- I would just fly now and then with somebody. [00:04:00] I had a machine, but then when we bought a business and finally acquired all the stock in it and it was a three-way partnership to start with, but I got all the stock in it eventually. The customers ranged out about 400 miles.

BARBARA: What was the business?

JOE: Machine shop. It's down here in Wheatland. And we used the airplane heavily in that. I've logged about 600 hours for the shop.

BARBARA: Who were your customers?

JOE: Ranchers.

BARBARA: OK, that makes sense.

JOE: Well, they were trying to diversify. One of [00:05:00] the biggest [funds was Peter Kiewit?]. Then the power plant came in and that compounded the problems. I flew more and more, service calls and so on, you know. When you had a customer in Jackson or Sheridan or Granby, Colorado, North Platte, Nebraska, somewhere like that, you can't afford to drive. And a slow airplane wasn't any good to me, so we bought a fast one.

BARBARA: What did you buy?

JOE: A turbocharged Bonanza. And it was. It was quick. And her instructor, Ed Snell, an old friend of mine, anyway, checked me out bi-annual inspection forms a while and one day, he was [00:06:00] checking me out on short field take-offs and so on and I -- he said, "You know, it looks kind of funny," he says, "You know, I've never checked out in this airplane." So I checked Ed out in it.

BARBARA: Now about what year did you buy that plane? Any idea?

JOE: Mm-hmm. It was -- the price was --

PAULINE: She asked what year did you buy it.

JOE: Seventy-four, I think.

BARBARA: Oh, OK. About the time you started as well.

PAULINE: Well, he'd had it for a while.

JOE: Little bit before.

BARBARA: What kind of plane did you have before that?

JOE: I had a Stinson 108 and it was a highly modified one. It wasn't a good airplane, really. [00:07:00] And I had a Taylorcraft and I flew whatever. Oh, people around here would let me fly their Super Cubs. Didn't own the airplane, but I flew them just hit and miss.

BARBARA: So, you flew a lot for business, but did you fly for pleasure also?

JOE: Yeah, always took -- I took six trips into northern Canada, almost to the Arctic Circle. We drove once, and that was the last. Fourteen hundred miles straight north. We took a few pleasure trips. We took one to Branson. Both sides of my family came from Branson and [00:08:00] so we went down there to visit a couple friends and so on. But mostly it was -- then I flew some for the county, transporting prisoners.

BARBARA: Oh, OK. So, where -- transporting them from where to where?

JOE: Oh, from places like Jackson Hole to -- or just south, a little town just south of Sioux Falls. But you see, they could do it so much cheaper that way, and I only charged them half of what it cost me. But from here to eastern Nebraska, almost to the line, picked up a prisoner and back, I was only four hours. And [00:09:00] if you sent somebody in a car, there's always the chance of escape. But there was no chance in an airplane. And no trouble with the prisoners. I'd just tell them I didn't fly very well if I was nervous. Model passengers.

BARBARA: That's great. So, were you on a contract or just on a --

JOE: No. The sheriff was a friend of ours, so I did it mostly just as accommodation. But he'd either go himself or send a deputy with a gun. So --

BARBARA: So you weren't by yourself. There was someone else with you.

JOE: No, I wasn't by myself. Well, I couldn't be. [00:10:00] I'd have to be deputized to do it.

BARBARA: Of course. Of course.

JOE: One of them was very interesting. He's now in prison as a habitual criminal. Very intelligent young man, I'm telling you. Just what a waste.

BARBARA: OK. I'm going to give you a break and go back to you.

OK, so he's flying, as you said, all around, up to Canada and so forth. So, you've got your -- you took flying lessons and you got your license. Tell me about that process because I don't know anything about it.

PAULINE: It probably took me longer than it takes some people.

I think at that time, the criteria was 15 hours.

[00:11:00]

JOE: You've got to have 40 hours to get a --

PAULINE: No -- OK. Forty hours, and I think I probably took --

I don't recall now, but a few over forty.

JOE: Well, most people do.

PAULINE: And then you have to pass a written test. You have ground school along with your flight instruction. And the written test was administered in Cheyenne, as I recall.

And so, I flew down there and took the test and --

JOE: Fifty questions, four hours.

PAULINE: It takes -- it's daunting, a daunting effort, that ground school part. So, I think the passing score was 70.

70, was it? [00:12:00]

JOE: Seventy.

PAULINE: And I had very few points above that. First time, which I felt proud of because I know a lawyer that used to

practice here, and he took his test three times before he passed it, so I felt fortunate.

BARBARA: So, the -- are you licensed by the state or by the FAA?

PAULINE: The FAA. Yes. And I never did pursue my night flying permit, so I was restricted to daylight hours.

BARBARA: So, tell me about the flying that you did. Did you have your own plane?

PAULINE: Yes. Betty and I bought a plane. We had to establish our own credit rating. The guys, you know, weren't going to do that for us. They wanted us to do it, so we did. And we [00:13:00] bought a Piper Cherokee and it was a very, very easy airplane to fly. And it was very forgiving of a lot of discrepancies on my part. And we used to -- oh, just fly around the country a lot. I took a few people for a ride and that sort of thing, but we also took a trip to Rifle, Colorado to a family reunion. Joe took one plane load of, I suppose our kids and I don't remember who all.

JOE: No, I think my mother and my brother.

PAULINE: Anyway, Betty and I took our plane load and we went over to Rifle and attended the family reunion. I -- that was, I think, probably my longest [00:14:00] pleasure trip. When I had to do my three-point cross-country, it was from here to Gillette, I think it was.

JOE: Rapid City, wasn't it?

PAULINE: Well, I got to Rapid City, yes, but I think first I had to stop somewhere else. At any rate --

BARBARA: Was that part of your qualifying?

PAULINE: Yes. Mm-hmm. You have to do this solo, and you have to do -- you have to land in each of these places and get your log book signed and returned. That was -- maybe one of my longest days, or it seemed long to me. Yes.

BARBARA: Now let me back up for a moment and ask you, how did you find a plane to buy? Where did you get it?

PAULINE: We read all articles here and there and yon and at that time, you know, way back in the dark ages, we didn't have [00:15:00] computers and all that stuff. I don't recall. I think just maybe through the -- there was a publication called *Trade a Plane* and how did we get a hold of the Cherokee?

JOE: I don't know.

PAULINE: Word of mouth, of course.

JOE: Yeah, and I brought it up from Cheyenne, I think. It had been used as an instructor.

PAULINE: Maybe that was it. Yeah.

JOE: And we flew several of them and decided on this one. It was a very nice little airplane, very easy to handle.

PAULINE: It was a very nice airplane. We had tried out another one or two, but they were pretty -- not to our liking. So this one was just perfect. (inaudible)

BARBARA: So, how did the partnership with you and Betty work out with the plane?

PAULINE: Oh, it was no problem at all because, you know, we [00:16:00] could go and fly at our own discretion when we wanted to. I was working for Joe, keeping books at the shop, but he was kind of lenient with the help about -- I'd go usually in the morning, early, and still be at work before 9:00, so it worked out.

BARBARA: So just go out like, people would go out for a jog now, you would go out for a ride.

PAULINE: Yes, exactly. Yeah. So that worked out very well. We -- Joe had his own hangar for his plane, but Betty and I rented a space from another fellow at the airport who had a hangar and that worked out fine, too.

BARBARA: So, all of these operations were out of the airport.

PAULINE: Oh, yes. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

BARBARA: How long has the Wheatland Airport been here? Do you know?

JOE: This started, [00:17:00] private partnership, in about 1945, I think, '46. Wheatland Municipal Airport was five

miles northwest, was too far from town. And failed miserably.

BARBARA: Oh, so there had been another airport before?

JOE: Oh, there've been several. And several locations. All of them failed because they were too far from town. Laramie did that. Airports were planned by people that didn't know anything about it. Laramie did one 15 miles from town and no provision for surface transportation, and that -- it was a struggle for years. I used to go in there quite a lot, but it was -- that's been the biggest [00:18:00] failing in the design of airports: location.

BARBARA: That's interesting because that's another aspect of my interviews. As I'm going around communities, I'm talking about the local airports, too. When they were founded and that kind of thing, so yours is -- I noticed on the map. It's Piper?

JOE: Piper Field.

PAULINE: Piper Field. It's about a mile up there.

JOE: The land was originally donated by three guys: John Piper, Mel Short, and Bob -- you know, used the run the drugstore down there?

PAULINE: Oh. Straw.

JOE: Straw. Donated it to the city with the stipulation that the land never be used for anything else. And it was used

-- I [soloed out of?] that field out there August the 11th, [00:19:00] 1946. And I served the airport board here for 10 years and finally got an extension on the runway of 2,000 feet. Now they've determined that it isn't enough and needs to be done again, but we have one council member that wants that land. They farmed it illegally. This man even opened my mail from an agency of the federal government. They wanted me to prosecute him. If I -- he did it right in an open council meeting.

BARBARA: Oh my gosh. So, that's in dispute right now, the length of the runway. How long is the runway now?

JOE: It's 5,900 feet. [00:20:00] And they say it isn't enough for the kind of traffic that's coming in here now. We have a lot of jet traffic.

BARBARA: Really? And where is that coming from? Who's flying in?

JOE: Oh, the industry. Industry's buying into ranches in Wyoming, you see, and they're -- and the power plant flies at least one a day in here.

BARBARA: When you say industry, are we talking oil and gas, or what?

JOE: No, for some idiotic reason, everybody wants a ranch in Wyoming. That's it. Raytheon bought the Dodge ranch. Union Pacific buys -- everybody, every bit of heavy

industry -- anything is better than paying your stockholders. [00:21:00] (laughter)

BARBARA: That seems so odd to me. I can understand individuals, maybe wealthy people, wanting to buy a ranch, but corporations? That seems odd to me.

JOE: Oh, no. They -- that's where it comes from. It's -- they need more runway. It has to be relocated to do that. They had -- they counted -- the master plan now is to [count?] the runway three degrees to the east from where it is now to get enough land, and also, it would benefit the wind circle study. But that money comes from a trust fund paid by users.

BARBARA: So that's what supports the airport, then? That's where the funding comes from?

JOE: Yes, uh-huh. And, [00:22:00] see, 90% I think comes from trust fund, 10% from state, and 2% from municipalities. Usually municipalities make a little money on it. But it's expensive to do, but the airlines are all for it because it frees up the bigger airports. But at the time I was on it, on the board, as many passenger miles were flown by general aviation as there were by the scheduled airlines.

BARBARA: Did you have scheduled airlines in here?

JOE: No.

BARBARA: OK. You're just talking about in general.

JOE: In general. Nationwide. But, there's [00:23:00] people that don't want anything to happen around here. I don't know where this guy gets all his power.

BARBARA: Well, let me go back to you again, Pauline, about -- so you had your plane, both of you had your planes out here at the airport, right? And you said you got interested in aviation because he was.

PAULINE: Yes, and I thought, "It's really pretty dumb of me not to know anything about flying if I'm going to ride around with him. I think somebody'd better be paying attention here."

BARBARA: Did the two of you take trips together? Fun trips?

PAULINE: Yes.

BARBARA: Where did you go?

PAULINE: Well, as Joe mentioned, we went to Branson one time. We, sometimes in the evening after we got off work during summertime, we'd take off and go fly around the Black Hills area, [00:24:00] 'round the faces and back home again before dark. Oh, just little pleasure side trips.

JOE: We didn't have time to do much else.

PAULINE: We flew into South Dakota several times for more family reunions, and we flew into Colorado quite a few times. And here in Wyoming, several places.

BARBARA: What did you enjoy about it? I mean, you were doing it because of his interest --

PAULINE: Initially, yes, but it was just a feeling that "I really have accomplished something just simply for me." And it did give me quite a good feeling. Yes. Yes.

JOE: She sold her airplane before I sold mine. [00:25:00] She wouldn't touch mine.

PAULINE: Well, I could fly it in the air, but I really didn't want to land it. Or take off, even. I could've taken off, I think, easier than land.

JOE: Oh, yeah. Probably. And that's the dangerous part.

BARBARA: So, when did you -- you got your plane in what year?

PAULINE: Um --

JOE: Seventy-five, '76, I'm not sure.

PAULINE: Yes, I think it was '75.

BARBARA: So, shortly after you got yours, then.

PAULINE: His main plane. He'd had these others previously, yes.

BARBARA: And then when did you give it up?

PAULINE: Um, when did you sell yours? I think Betty and I sold ours --

JOE: Sold mine in '96, wasn't it?

PAULINE: And so it probably was the early '90s when I sold ours. I had bought my [00:26:00] -- Betty's share

previously, and so, yeah, I think it probably was maybe '91 or so.

BARBARA: And what was the reason for --

PAULINE: Oh, you know, everything, as you know, has gotten more expensive as time goes on. And without any valid reason of any sort, other than just because we wanted to, there was not the qualification to keep up the airplane. Because you not only have to keep up the airplane, you have to keep up your own license, and all of that, and do your yearly engine over-or, go through, and it just -- it was just a little more expense than I felt able to keep up with.

BARBARA: Oh, OK. That makes sense. That's what I've been hearing [00:27:00] from other people that flying has just gotten too expensive.

JOE: It has.

PAULINE: Oh, my, I don't know how anyone can even afford to start now.

JOE: People did not understand when they wanted you to take them someplace that it was costing you, at the bottom end, it was costing you \$200 an hour. And my airplane would burn 15 gallons an hour in cruise. Twenty-two gallons an hour on take-off and climb. And that's the cheapest cost of ownership.

BARBARA: Is the gas-- is the fuel?

JOE: Mm-hmm. Maintenance. I had the propeller overhauled on mine. New bearing and new hub, new seals, [00:28:00] and the blades rebalanced and refinished, and it was over \$4,000, and I had one radio put in that was \$4,400.

PAULINE: Anything that says "Airplane" on it is quite expensive, including the insurance, of course.

JOE: I put 1,600 hours on that engine and it was ready for an overhaul. An overhaul back then was -- just a major overhaul -- would be \$33,000.

BARBARA: My gosh. And what did the plane cost you to begin with?

JOE: Only paid \$35,000 for it. But they don't make it anymore. But if you got [00:29:00] -- let's see -- don't know who owns Beechcraft now, but if you got them to make one, it'd be three-quarters of a million dollars.

BARBARA: Now, who would work on it? Were there airplane mechanics here, or did you have to --

JOE: No, I had mine done in Douglas. And hers, too.

PAULINE: Yes. Friends, you know. Well, Joe --

JOE: Good friends with his father.

PAULINE: -- established friendship with this man's father when he was in the business, then after Morris died, well, we just went on over to Steve. It's been natural to us to do that.

JOE: Good mechanic for that machine, and he liked it. And he had one. Not quite like it. His -- there was only 120 of those made that [00:30:00] were factory turbocharged. They gave you sea-leveled horsepower out of that engine at 21,000 feet. And that sort of ceiling was 30 -- or, was 29,000. But his best performance came at 24,000 feet and it would do 240 miles an hour up there.

BARBARA: And you used it primarily for business, right?

JOE: Mm-hmm.

BARBARA: You had customers all over. You must have a big business.

JOE: We build hay machinery of our own design and we -- what'd you tell me? We had 58 contractors on this power plant alone, out here, on our books. We work for people like Boeing and Martin Marietta. We did machine work [00:31:00] for people as far north as Billings, south to Albuquerque, west to Ogden, and east to London, Ohio. I had a pipeline contract for maintenance on a pipeline, (inaudible), and machine work. I made motor bearings for the big motors that they had. And besides building these machines --

PAULINE: Besides just general machine work.

BARBARA: Well, I can see where if you're delivering parts, then the plane would be --

JOE: Or just going to see a customer. If Peter Kiewit wanted to see you --

BARBARA: You went.

JOE: You went. If -- well, he was a partner of A.D. Davis, Winn-Dixie Food Stores. Another guy was [00:32:00] a CEO, major stockholder of Ralston Purina. People like that, you know?

BARBARA: Well, if you were delivering, let's say -- you weren't delivering, like, out in the country, then, where you had to land on a dirt strip? You were flying into towns that had --

JOE: Oh, no, we did that, too.

BARBARA: Oh, did you? Tell me about that.

JOE: Well, no problem. A lot of dirt strip. And the airplane did dirt strip pretty well. They were rugged. And then I flew five years for the CAP searches. Only found one airplane -- located one, but I found one. And you tried to figure out what a pilot would do. One mistake wasn't going to get you, but more than one will. [00:33:00] I found one where I had to put it [down a peak?] in a boulder field. It was a normally-aspirated Bonanza. He had no business up there. They lost four airplanes up in that -- in the Wind Rivers last year. Well, they were all normally-aspirated airplanes. They get to flying up a canyon, sightseeing,

and right up the middle of it where they didn't have room to turn either way, and then the terrain would outfly their airplane. They lose power pretty fast at higher altitude.

BARBARA: So these are inexperienced pilots, do you think, or --

JOE: Only one of them was a single engine airplane, and only one of them was a private pilot. [00:34:00] The rest were either commercial or ATRs in twin-engine airplane.

BARBARA: What's an ATR?

JOE: Airline transport.

PAULINE: People know that are not familiar with mountain flying particularly, high-altitude flying particularly, then everything enters into those types of decisions where you should really know what you're doing.

JOE: When I had a supercharger and I had oxygen on board at one time, I could handle the mountains. And they started calling me to go to Nevada and to Idaho and so on. I couldn't afford to do it. You didn't get paid for it.

BARBARA: Right. It was volunteer.

JOE: Volunteer. You got insurance while you're on the job and [00:35:00] you got gasoline. But -- it's changed a lot now, I guess.

BARBARA: OK, so back to here. I keep hearing about an organization called the Flying Farmers, but I haven't been able to find out much about it.

PAULINE: Joe can fill you in on that.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

JOE: Well, that has kind of died out. Around here, it was really strong at one time. Everybody was -- we were members of it for a while. Flying Farmers. But it was a fun organization, a club.

BARBARA: OK. And the members were --

PAULINE: Farmers. Ranchers.

JOE: Farmers are associated with agriculture in some way.

BARBARA: OK. Did they all have their own planes?

JOE: Most of them, yes. [00:36:00]

BARBARA: OK. And what would they do, as an organization?

JOE: Oh, they'd have dinners and tours and --

PAULINE: They had a yearly convention which we used to enjoy.

BARBARA: That everybody would fly into, I assume?

PAULINE: Yes, uh-huh. Yeah. Fly in and generally spend the night. Have a banquet and a meeting, actually. And spend breakfast the next morning and everybody takes off for home. It was fun. We met --

JOE: Great friendships.

PAULINE: We met lots and lots of really nice people that way.

BARBARA: And was it organized by state or by region or --

PAULINE: Yes. State. Yeah.

BARBARA: So there would've been a state -- Wyoming Flying Farmers and Nebraska --

PAULINE: Right. Yes. And occasionally -- I don't recall.
[00:37:00] They had some type of regional, didn't they, convention for the different --

JOE: Yeah, they did. They had a national, too.

PAULINE: Yeah, they did. Yeah.

JOE: And send representatives. Anybody who was willing to go, you know? But we didn't have time to do much in it.

BARBARA: So, was it primarily social/recreational, or did they use their planes for different --

PAULINE: Most of those people used their planes to -- one or several of them would --

JOE: Ranchers use them heavily.

PAULINE: -- fly their fences. They'd go look for their cows. They'd -- you know, that type of thing.

JOE: I did a lot of looking for cattle.

PAULINE: And then at the convention, we'd elect a queen and a princess. Our daughter was the princess one year.

[00:38:00] Oh, it was just a very nice organization. Lots of friendly people and --

BARBARA: So, and you belonged. What was your agricultural connection, then?

PAULINE: [Druby's?] Machine Shop, basically.

JOE: That machine shop was a nightmare. It really was.

PAULINE: His agricultural machinery shop that he built.

BARBARA: Of course. Of course. Yeah.

JOE: Deliver a machine somewhere, get back here at 4:00 in the morning and a phone would ring. Somebody -- don't know who -- I had one guy that would call at 9:00. He was from Saratoga, and he would call at 9:00 at night because he thought I would be home, and wanting me to come to Saratoga. [00:39:00] He was a good customer, so I'd go, and I'd ride around all day with him. I might be counting calves or might be looking at a ranch or something and either get in the plane or the pickup and come home and never find out what he wanted. Three days later, and 9:00 at night, he'd call and tell me what he wanted all the time. That's what you have to deal with.

BARBARA: Now, you mentioned that ranchers use their planes a lot, just in running their ranch --

JOE: You bet they did.

BARBARA: -- looking for cows, checking fences, bringing in supplies?

JOE: Yes, mm-hmm.

BARBARA: Where would they keep their planes? Did they have a strip on their --

JOE: Oh, yeah.

PAULINE: Lots of them did. Of course, some of them were close enough to town, to an airport, but really, lots and lots of them had [00:40:00] their own strip.

JOE: Douglas is still heavy in it. There's some big ranchers up there and they do use a lot of them. One man has one airplane. He bought a ranch down here now, but he had three helicopters and one airplane. Now, ranchers like one up at -- on the Tongue River. Bunker Hunt. A.D. Hunt's oldest son. Despised the man, really, but they flew jets into theirs all the time. Charlie Gates, the A Bar A Ranch over in south Saratoga, that's -- they have their own airstrip that'll handle four engine stuff. [00:41:00]

BARBARA: That's what I've heard. I was interviewing over there.

JOE: They were customers. And it just -- a lot of interesting people.

BARBARA: Now, Pauline, I'm going to ask you. You have a daughter. Do you have other children?

PAULINE: Yes. We have two daughters. Yes.

BARBARA: Now, did they fly with you?

PAULINE: Yes, but they -- we -- I sold my airplane, I guess one daughter was married and the other daughter was still in college. And by the time Joe sold his, they were all off and gone, carrying on with their own lives. And so they --

neither one learned to fly, but they did fly with us when they were home.

BARBARA: OK, so they enjoyed that part, but it wasn't something they wanted to --

JOE: Nope. [00:42:00]

PAULINE: They'd bring kids home from college and they'd all have to go for a ride. You know. That sort of thing.

BARBARA: Do you miss having your own plane?

PAULINE: Oh, sometimes. I don't miss it, I'm sure, as much as Joe did because I didn't fly nearly as long and I wasn't as wrapped up in it wholeheartedly as he has always been. But yes, I've missed it.

JOE: I wish we'd have gotten some pictures of yours in the air.

PAULINE: I guess we don't have any in the air.

JOE: We have some of mine.

BARBARA: What about you? Do you miss flying?

JOE: Oh, yeah.

PAULINE: Every day.

JOE: It's the only thing I ever wanted to do.

PAULINE: That was his outlet. His stress reliever.

JOE: Once in a while, in the shop, when the pressure got so bad, I would take a half a day a month to just go fly. I'd go to 15, 16,000 feet and just stay there [00:43:00] all afternoon.

BARBARA: Huh. By yourself. Yeah. What did you enjoy about it?

JOE: The freedom. The freedom. Nobody's going to telephone you up there unless -- I thought, you know?

PAULINE: Now that they have cell phones --

JOE: I come out of Jackson Hole one time, the weather was bad, and I couldn't get out over the hills, so I went down the canyon, down (inaudible). It started to snow. And I got crowded down over the highway and the turns get pretty short.

PAULINE: Here's a picture of Joe.

BARBARA: OK. Cool. So, what happened on that trip?

JOE: I got in to Rawlins. Landed. Went to the restroom. And come out [00:44:00] and took off. The flight service called and said, "Your wife just called." (laughter)

PAULINE: He has never let me forget that, either.

BARBARA: She was just worried about you, right?

PAULINE: Yes, I was.

BARBARA: I understand. Oh, that's cool.

JOE: Depending on the wind, the airplane would make good time or not-so-good time. I'd come back over to the airport. There was a (inaudible) at one time at 8,000. Wind was blowing pretty good on the ground, about 55 miles per hour on the indicator when we took off. And I wanted to see

just how fast the wind was, how hard the wind was, so I dropped the landing gear, pulled the nose up, throttled back, [00:45:00] and let it start slowing up. When it started to go backwards, then it was indicating 98 miles an hour at 8,000 feet. That would make it true airspeed of about 118.

PAULINE: The wind blows in Wyoming. You may have noticed that

BARBARA: Yes, I have. I've been in Wyoming since '91, so I have noticed that.

PAULINE: That was one aspect of our training. If you didn't learn to fly in the wind, you didn't learned. And if you didn't learn to land in a crosswind, you'd probably kill yourself, so those things were stressed.

BARBARA: Did you ever have any close calls when you were flying?

PAULINE: I scared myself one time. It wasn't a really significant [00:46:00] thing either, except it really shook me up a little bit. I was practicing stalls in the air, and you have to be up a long way to do that, and I must not have done it quite right, and it didn't turn out exactly as it should have, and it did scare me. Like I say, it wasn't dangerous, but --

BARBARA: Unnerving.

PAULINE: Very. Yes. Yeah.

JOE: It used to be, to get a license, before you got a license, you had to do right and left spins and recoveries.

PAULINE: And I have never been required to spin.

JOE: No.

PAULINE: I let Ed spin my airplane one day. He asked me if I'd even spun it and I said, "Heavens, no." And he said, "You want to?" And I said, "Sure." (laughter) So, he did. He was [00:47:00] fun. And -- that's not my cup of tea. Joe liked it a lot.

BARBARA: So, a spin is when you go nose down?

PAULINE: You're going down and it goes around like this and -- yeah. No, that's not --

JOE: You don't have to do it anymore to get a license. You have to do a lot of other things. We had some good pilots come out of this little town. One of them, Major Robert E. [Sudman?], Betty's brother, went to Europe in P-47s in 1942. Got into combat in '43. Shot down three German fighters. Left one burning straight down. [00:48:00] Never saw it crash and that was a probable. Never got that confirmed. But he ended up being the third commander of the 374th Fighter Squadron, 361st Group, and served two tours. Came back here, went to the University of Wyoming, and he was appointed the First Commander of the Wyoming Air Guard. I was flying with him one day, and he loved my

airplane. It was so much like a fighter, he said. And he wanted to roll it, but I didn't know what it would do to my gyros. I didn't know how to reset them. And so I didn't let him do it. But a little later on that year, I was taking some guys to Canada, fishing. Got up, oh, about 40 miles east of Casper and got into wake [00:49:00] turbulence of a jet and rolled us on our back. So I went and completed the roll and Bonanza rolls very nicely.

PAULINE: In this little publication, there are several pilots from this area that are mentioned in it.

BARBARA: Right, and I didn't get a chance to look at that before I got here. I meant to and I ran out of time, but -
-

PAULINE: Well, and so the men that Joe is talking about is featured in there.

BARBARA: Well, can we talk about the airport a little bit? You said it was established in 1946, is that right? And who was using it then, do you think?

JOE: There was an instructor out here that had a school going, and taking GIs. He had 100 students. [00:50:00] I had to pay for all of mine, but I was one of those students.

BARBARA: And what was his name?

JOE: John [Fryback?]. His daughter visited us last summer. But he -- they moved from here to Rawlins, and they started

sheep ranching over there and doing all his work with the airplane. He fed with the airplane, he hunted coyotes with it, and -- Super Cub. And he had a gun mounted on top of it, a shotgun mounted on top of it, and he could point the airplane straighter than you could shoot the shotgun anyway. And he accounted for more than one coyote per hour over there. And the surrounding ranchers paid him well.

[00:51:00] But he also instructed over there, and finally he quit instructing, but I was flying a Taylorcraft and that time and they were a beast. They really were. They were a good airplane, but they just took a little more doing than most light airplanes. But I needed somebody to sign my logbook so I could legally solo it, and so I got in it one day, and I flew it over there. Landed. And he said, "You bring your logbook?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Let's go get a cup of coffee." So we did. And we -- there was a bunch of other guys in there and John said, "How you like the Taylorcraft?" And I said, "I'd rather have [another?] Cub, but it outperforms a Cub," and he said, "It's a lot more airplane." [00:52:00] And he says, "Where's your logbook?" He says, "I'll sign it." And I said, "Well, John, don't you want to ride with me, even?" He said, "Oh, hell, no. I'm smarter than that."

BARBARA: Well, it sounds to me if he had a flying school here and flight instruction school with 100 students, where were they all from?

JOE: Right here.

BARBARA: Really?

JOE: Yeah, everybody here in Wheatland. Most of them were on the GI Bill, but a lot of them weren't. And then there was -- he taught a lot of the ranchers and farmers around here to fly, too. And -- but --

BARBARA: So was it, then, mostly just private planes and people flying themselves at the airport to begin with?

JOE: Mm-hmm, and at that time, you could buy [00:53:00] old military airplanes for almost nothing. And good airplanes. Expensive to operate, but they were good airplanes.

BARBARA: Would they have been like the trainers?

JOE: Mm-hmm. Trainers, but they were -- if you could handle them, you could handle anything. But he's a good aerobatic pilot.

PAULINE: He showed me one day, in his Super Cub. He asked me if I wanted to and I said "Um, I -- yeah." (laughter) And so, we did spins and loops and barrel rolls and --

BARBARA: You're talking about John Fryback now?

PAULINE: John Fryback, yes. Yes. That was years and years and years later.

JOE: Come back here and spray wheat for the farmers around here for several years. And we'd -- had an extra lot down at the shop [00:54:00] and I'd -- you know, with all the utilities, and I'd put his trailer house in there and then he could have his shower in the shop and it was fenced so people would leave him alone, you know? He wanted me to go in with him on a couple of big old higher-powered sprayers one time, but I said, "John, have you looked in the mirror lately?" He says, "Yeah, I've been noticing that."
(laughter)

BARBARA: Well, was there -- were there, here in Wheatland, then, were there people who had commercial outfits like that, doing spraying and other kinds of agriculture work?

JOE: Oh, yes. A lot of it. And they'd use the old sprayers like Stearmans and N3Ns and so on and -- tough, [00:55:00] strong airplanes. And I flew chase flight for a group of sprayers one year.

BARBARA: And what does that mean?

JOE: It means you get right behind and right on top of the lead sprayer and direct him, one degree at a time, to stay on course and keep the other two airplanes to space right. And I had an observer that would keep the ground crew straightened out. They would direct you with either lights or mirrors, depending on what time of day it was. And ten-

mile runs is what they were, but I flew somebody else's airplane all the time.

BARBARA: Now, would they -- [00:56:00] what time of day would they spray?

JOE: Start just before daylight and me and an observer would start out before daylight and go to [initial?] point, turn around, turn the landing lights on, give the sprayer something to target on, and that would get them started on the first one. As soon as they got lined up, I could see it, I'd do a wing-over and come back on top of the lead airplane. About three hours. That was all I could stand.

BARBARA: Well, I would think it would be early morning, before the wind really got up.

JOE: Well, if the wind got over eight knots, you couldn't do it. But this was all about 50 feet off the ground. And (inaudible) on diesel fuel. [00:57:00] But it was fun. It wasn't very smart, but it was fun.

BARBARA: OK, so you had those kinds of outfits at the airport. Who else was using it?

JOE: There's one sprayer out there now. That's about all outside of the -- he's also instructing some, and the traffic coming in and out. There's only about 8,000 movements a year now on Wheatland's Airport. At the time I was on the board, there was over 13,500.

BARBARA: And what do you think is the cause of the decline?

JOE: A lot of it, people won't come in here because the town won't set up a fuel system. [00:58:00] No. They won't. It's our city government, is what's wrong. It's our city government.

BARBARA: So, you can't -- you can land at the airport, but you can't buy fuel there?

PAULINE: That's right.

JOE: Can't buy fuel there. Not anymore. He got rid of that. Now, Guernsey makes a pretty good profit off of fuel.

BARBARA: I understand that's what most FBOs do. They're basically to sell fuel.

JOE: Well, and if you get -- the things that they've done illegally out there, they've misused trust funds and also, they -- one of the stipulations is that the airport show a profit or they don't qualify for trust funds.

BARBARA: And the trust funds are -- is that federal funds?

JOE: No. It is -- well, it's [00:59:00] federal, but it goes into a federal program, and it's paid for by users. Airlines pay into it, private pilots pay into it. Fuel prices. I think -- what did Dave say he was paying for?

PAULINE: I didn't hear him say.

JOE: I think he was paying \$5.60 for -- a gallon for aviation fuel. And they quit making 130 octane that my airplane

took. I had to burn 100. And her airplane took 85 octane, and it didn't burn 100 very well.

PAULINE: No, it didn't.

JOE: It burned too much of it. It doesn't have as much heat in it as 100. [01:00:00]

BARBARA: Well, even though you don't have your own plane, do you fly at all anymore?

JOE: No, I quit cold. Cold turkey. (laughter)

BARBARA: And you didn't fly his plane much?

PAULINE: Just in the air.

BARBARA: Just in the air. That's right.

PAULINE: I could sort of manage that.

JOE: It was the easiest airplane to fly, I thought, that was ever built. One local man here that comes in once in a while -- he doesn't fly anymore, he had a heart attack -- but he retired as the senior line pilot, senior captain, OTWA. And one man from Wheatland headed up Frontier Airlines.

BARBARA: This is quite the little aviation hub here, isn't it?
[01:01:00]

JOE: Every kid around here wanted to. Wanted to fly. And they do. There was a lot of bicycles made into flying machines.

BARBARA: Now, I'd like to see a picture of that. I have a couple of other questions and I'll let you go. I've been

curious about pipeline inspections. Don't they do that by air?

JOE: Oh, yeah.

BARBARA: Do they do that out of here, too? Are there any pipelines in this --

JOE: They can do that anywhere. Any light airplane'll do it. They wanted me to do it for a while. I didn't have a suitable machine for it.

BARBARA: You have to fly pretty low, I would think.

JOE: Well, yeah.

BARBARA: To be able to see it. And then I talked to a fellow who was based in -- he ran the FBO in Rawlins for a while, and he said he used to get contracts with the BLM and Fish and Game to do wildlife surveys. I thought that was cool.
[01:02:00] Do they do that here, too?

JOE: They do it here, but they got one guy badly injured from here. The guy, I don't know the pilot. He just didn't understand that an airplane will not turn with an animal. But he tried. Stalled. Spun right [into the ground?]. But there was a lot of coyote hunting around here, too.

BARBARA: By plane?

JOE: Mm-hmm.

BARBARA: Do people do that on contract, too, or it was just ranchers doing it themselves?

JOE: No, just ranchers and farmers and sport. But there was a lot of it done around here. And some bad injuries.

[01:03:00] People trying to do it -- 200-hour pilots trying to do 2,000-hour stuff. And that's the first airplane I ever flew in.

BARBARA: Oh, really? Now, what's that called?

JOE: It was a WACO. RNF. But --

BARBARA: Did you learn -- you said it was one of the first you flew in. When you were learning, or just --

JOE: Yeah. Just my first lesson.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

JOE: It got into a storm and was destroyed someplace down -- I think Fort Collins.

BARBARA: Well, I'm going to stop picking on you and ask Pauline one last question. Were you and Betty the only women in the area who had licenses?

PAULINE: Yes.

BARBARA: OK. What kind of distinction did that give you in the community? [01:04:00]

PAULINE: Very little. Very little.

BARBARA: What did people think of it?

PAULINE: Oh, I guess our children had the most comments to make of it. "Oh, my word. Mom's got an airplane. Dad's got an

airplane. What a --" and they'd go on and on. But mostly,
I don't think folks --

JOE: Didn't pay any attention.

PAULINE: They -- yes, they just thought, "Well, yeah, there's
the Bookouts." You know.

BARBARA: They fly.

PAULINE: Yeah, they fly.

BARBARA: Did you have requests for rides or favors or errands
or anything like that?

PAULINE: Well, you know, a fellow that worked for us at the
shop asked me if I'd take him for a ride one time, and of
course, I did. I took him several times. But --

JOE: Betty did, too.

PAULINE: And Betty did, too. But just things like that. Not
the public would come require [01:05:00] us, no.

BARBARA: Well, I'm enjoying this so much. This has just been
great.

PAULINE: Well, it's really nice to meet you, Barbara.

BARBARA: Well, this is just such a pleasure.

JOE: I would like to know who you interview and -- I mean, from
now on.

BARBARA: Oh, OK. OK.

JOE: I would really like to stay informed.

BARBARA: Well, the next person I'm going to talk to is Jim Parker over in Pinedale. He's the airport manager in Pinedale, and I thought that would be a really interesting story with the development over the last twenty years there. And I'm going to talk to Gary Valentine who was the manager at the Rock Springs Airport for a long time. I'm talking to him in July. So, what I'm trying to do in every community is find somebody on the ground who knows a little bit about the airport or about the aviation in the area, [01:06:00] and then find somebody who was either a private pilot or someone who was associated with the airport. So that's kind of my strategy for these interviews. But I will. I'll let you know. Now, I don't think I have an email address for you. Do you guys use email?

PAULINE: No, we don't.

BARBARA: OK. But I can send you a letter if you want me to.

Well, anything else you want to add to what we've said?

JOE: I just don't want to get involved in another thing like this here.

BARBARA: OK. Well, it ends here. OK?

PAULINE: Joe will be very gratified to know that.

JOE: There are so many errors in this, but I had her print a disclaimer in there first.

BARBARA: That makes sense.

JOE: Because there was one -- an old friend of mine, too, that gave her a lot of [01:07:00] misinformation. He thought it was right, but it was not. John Bailey was an engineer for Boeing. But (inaudible)

BARBARA: Well, when you're talking to that many people, there's always --

PAULINE: Oh, yeah. Everyone eyed you as a bit different, you know?

JOE: Everybody has another idea of it, and --

BARBARA: Well now, of course, I have paperwork.

PAULINE: Oh. OK.

BARBARA: I have a form that releases the information that releases the information in the recording to the state archives for use by researchers. They had talked, at one point, about maybe doing some broadcasts on -- I don't know if that's going to happen or not, but the release, and you're welcome to read it, simply releases the information in the recording to the archives for non-commercial use. So no one's going to make any money from what we have said.

[01:08:00]

PAULINE: Well, I can't imagine that anyone would find this interesting enough to try and publish it.

BARBARA: Oh, you never know.

JOE: I haven't done anything that 100 [dumb?] people didn't do.

BARBARA: Yeah, but you have your own take on it.

PAULINE: Well, sure.

BARBARA: I'm going to shut this --

END OF AUDIO FILE