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Interviewee: Louise Butcher

Interviewer: Eloise Sagmiller

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Note: A second speaker, M. Butcher, joins the interview half way through. They may be the interviewee's sister, daughter, or mother.

Louise Butcher: ...these are the things. You don't have to remember these.

Eloise Sagmiller: Oh yes I do. And maybe I should start and say that I'm glad that you allowed me to interview you Louise. It's really nice to meet you. One of the things that I'm specifically interested in, of course, is the fact that there are so many Montana women that fly. It's really unusual considering, per capita, we have a lot of pilots. So one of the things I want to know is if you were born and raised in Montana or did you move here? Or tell me about your early life and a little bit about your family, too.

LB: My dad was a homesteader north of Lewistown. He came during homesteading days. I was born there. So I've lived here. I'm living at about three or four miles away from there now. So I have all my area now

ES: You know it like the back of your hand.

LB: Just about. In 1914 is when I was born, you see, and there were a lot of people that had come from Minnesota and other states that expected, they got 160 acres so they expected that they could really make a big farm out here. By then of course the drought and everything else had come back.

ES: What year was that? I keep hearing about that.

LB: 1919 was very bad. The thistles hardly grew. That was the only hay they had so they tried to cut them before they got the thorns on them so the cows would eat them. And that was in 1919.

ES: And there was no water, I suppose.

LB: Water was a problem, alright. In fact we hauled – we had a little dam above the house and that was – then we hauled water, our drinking water. My dad had a 500 gallon tank to put the water in. We didn't have refrigeration. And I don't know how my mother milked cows, and how she made butter, and how she ever made butter without refrigeration and getting it the right temperature to make butter. Then we had to take the cattle to water. I was quite young when

we did that, about possibly seven years old. So it was a big problem. I guess there was a spring there. I was thinking that I didn't pump water for all those cattle. I was the oldest in the family.

ES: Do you have brothers and sisters?

LB: Yes, I have one sister and two brothers living. My folks have passed on.

ES: Are your brothers and sisters still here?

LB: One is in Winifred and one is in Conner off of Hamilton. My sister is here, Lewistown. Joyce Roberts, she's really quite a pianist. We have one son. He's on the ranch. His son is on the ranch, too. He has another son, a son that, Travis is on the ranch. He has another son that's going to college down in Missoula.

ES: When did you get married?

LB: 1942.

ES: That's about war time.

LB: That was right. That was in the war time, 1942. We had, I was a teacher before that for many years.

ES: Tell me about that, where did you teach school?

LB: In those days, they could go one year to college and teach two. So I had my first school out at Flax (?) about seven miles northwest of Winifred. I don't know if I should say this or not, but I was 18 by one week and I was teaching. The only way I could get the certificate is because I couldn't have gotten a certificate had I had my 18th birthday. I went out to rural school; I had some seventh and eighth graders.

ES: I bet that was.

LB: We got along just fine.

ES: Do you remember what the name of the school superintendent of school out there?

LB: I'm not sure. I can look that up.

ES: I was just wondering if you recall. Sometimes the ancient memories are easier to remember. At such a traumatic age, I can't imagine 18 years old and taking on a one room (?) school.

LB: I can't either and I had a hard time trying to figure out what the children were supposed to be doing. I mean as far as discipline goes. I had a professor. You had to take one course in methods. That professor told us, "You treat the children like they're little angels, and they will be little angels." That's the way I started out. I had a few things to do before I got discipline.

ES: Think positive, positive.

LB: That's right because you treat them like little angels after you have your two bits with them first. I enjoyed teaching. In fact I'm still concerned with children who don't have, who can't read. I've done a lot of work. I quit teaching in '42. I did finish up school in Suffolk in '57. I have helped a lot of people, a lot of children.

ES: You went to school in Suffolk? Was it a one room or?

LB: That school was a two room school. I had the fourth/fifth. That's right for that part. I taught Suffolk twice but in '57 I had the fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth graders. So I've been helping people a lot to try to read.

ES: That's really a worthwhile thing to do. So many people would love to.

LB: Sometimes one little key they don't have. I probably, I had been out substitute teaching once in Winifred, third and fourth grade. The third grade girls were very good readers. The three boys were the worst readers I ever saw. So the teacher evidently would say, "Who wants to read today?" and they volunteered. I was standing, I marveled at this after it all turned out. The boy was standing in front of me reading. I helped him with this word and helped him with that word. Finally he said, "The deer left." I said, "The deer left its tail and went on down the road." He read to the class, "The deer left its tail and went on down the road." What amazes me is that there wasn't a single smile anywhere. Complete silence for third and fourth graders.

I said, "Left, that word doesn't start like left." It was 'wagged.' He just read the rest of the sentence. I said, "You're going to have to stay after school. I can't stand your reading." I was only there a week so I said bring a book up here. It would be about two hours or something. I said, "You read to me just like you talk to your friends outside. You don't say, "The-horse-was-in-the-barn." You say, "The horse was in the barn." You put your phrases together. That boy looked at me square in the eye and said, "Is that the way you read?" I said, "Yes that's the way you read." So there's something a little, there's something like that once in a while.

ES: Yes that's key.

LB: That's right. But I'm amazed that none of the children laughed. They didn't smile or anything. I wasn't laughing either, of course.

ES: (Unintelligible).

LB: I did enjoy it. I still enjoy teaching. I just help people here and there a little bit.

ES: Here's another thing that I'm trying to get into. So many of you flying women are schoolteachers. It goes right together, those two things. A lady coming in later today told me she was teaching school in Glasgow and went into the service to fly. It's just amazing (unintelligible) kind of goes together. I guess it is a signal of an active mind.

LB: You have to think, that's true. Of course in those days, school teaching was one of those things that is for very hard times. I started teaching in '32.

ES: It was an accepted role for women.

LB: Yes. Fortunately the school I had, Flax was that first school and the wards (?) didn't have to be registered. Otherwise they had the money to pay. I did teach at Suffolk.

ES: Where did you go to school?

LB: At Dillon. Then I went back and finished. Next year, I went back, and then I had to take practice teaching after I had two years of it. This sixth grade class was arithmetic. They had told them they were dumb bunnies from the beginning and they proved it. There were three student teachers. There were thirty in the class. So I had ten. The first day that I got all of them, I didn't know the names of ten. The supervisor was sitting in the room. Some of those children were, I was trying to write some math on the board and they were talking and whispering back and forth and I was gathering up notes. I thought, "My, what is that supervisor going to tell me now?" I knew her because her niece was in college. I went to the conference. She said, "You know if you don't smile once in a while, you'll be old before your time." That's what she told me. So then when I'm taking myself too seriously, I think of that.

ES: More teachers could use that advice.

LB: Then I taught in Winifred for four years, too.

ES: Which is your favorite grade?

LB: I was in intermediate generally. I had fourth, fifth, and sixth one time in Winifred then I had fifth and sixth so that's what I was doing, mostly.

ES: One of the teachers that I did said she kept changing her focus because after so many years, you just get tired. You get bored with it. She knew she burned out on that subject so she'd change.

LB: Well you see I had all the subjects.

ES: So you had enough to keep anybody going

LB: Yes that's right it wasn't just one subject.

ES: That's an advantage.

LB: It is, and I think there's some advantage to the rural schools too because they listen to the rest of them. When I went to Suffolk, it was the midterm because I had a lapsed certificate at that time so I couldn't teach. It was midterm and the teacher and the school board weren't getting along. She fired, they fired her and she quit at the same time. It was the first of the year. So they had a lot of things to do. They had a seventh and eighth grade; fourth, fifth, seventh and eighth. She was in the 8-25 (?) in the seventh grade grammar at the first of the year. The workbook was difficult because, I don't have any difficulty with grammar, but some of it, to say positively this part of speech or that. So then I would just put it in the book. We finished that whole book and kept chugging along.

ES: One of the advantages of the smaller school is that you're not always being interrupted by somebody to go play basketball or somebody taking half the class to go do something. In a public school, that's the way it is. Everybody, you just sort of lose them.

LB: Athletics, that must be now. In our days, everything was after school. We had certain hours.

ES: I think that's the way it ought to be so you get some continuity. Tell me about what happened after you got married. Did you stay on the farm or did you follow your husband around?

LB: No, he was a farmer. We're still on the same farm. Our son and grandson are running the farm. We aren't active anymore on the farm.

ES: You had your son. Did you have him at home?

LB: Oh no, in the hospital here.

ES: The reason I ask is because I just read in Montana history (unintelligible). It was about 1940 it switched from women having their children in their home rather than having them in the hospital.

LB: See we're 45 miles from here.

ES: Yes, you have to come to town. Is that what you did? You drove into town?

LB: Yes, we drove because it was easier. We did the farming ourselves most of the time. Then, in the beginning, our son had a little heart trouble. The doctor wanted to know how far it was to the school. I said, "Three and a half miles over there." He said, "He can't go." So I taught him the first two years at home. At that time, out of Missoula there was a course where you'd (unintelligible) for the grades, first and second grades.

ES: So how did you get into flying?

LB: Milt always wanted to fly.

MS: I was the flier. She just copied.

LB: He was in the hospital in Glenwood Springs and see them taking off for Denver and wanted to fly someday. So it started that he was flying. He flew quite awhile. As I look at the log book, he flew mostly, checked on the ranch. We only had a few acres there. He checked on cattle in the pastures and go for parts so forth.

Then of course when we went out there, there weren't gravel roads, even. No telephone. We got a telephone in 1958. We had picked up a telephone between... See, Milt's uncle and brother were in places about two miles away. So we put the telephone line on the wire fence so we could talk between those two. After a while and ring telephones. And as far as going farther, we couldn't do that. 1958. It wasn't until Triangle came in and built the phones from Havre that we were able to do it because Mountain Bell thought there wasn't enough air to make a lot of...

ES: Make a lot of calls to make it pay.

LB: That's right. We had one line into Winifred. So no one around here had phones. That's one reason I went to the hospital. And the county roads.

ES: Those roads get narrower and narrower the further you go.

LB: Yes, they're kind of, you have good road now, but it was gumbo (?) and things like that.

ES: Did you land in your fields?

LB: Milt flew about 10 years before I did. We had an airplane all right, but I wasn't, he finally convinced me to go over to Idaho Falls. I didn't like to go around the mountains very much. Anyway, we went to Idaho Falls. When we got there, of course I had been to Dillon, so we got around Butte and wanted to know which way to go. I was checking all of my maps. We used to fly by, they have big air maps. We'd draw a line and read your compass and fly that way. I said, "I sure don't know."

When I got there, they were wanting the women to fly, and it was a flying farmer convention. That was one from the divisional: Washington, Oregon, and Idaho region. They wanted women

to fly and they were enticing us with trophies and plaques and so on. There was a woman there who was 60 years old, and she was flying. So I thought, "Well if she can do it, so can I." I was 40. So I came home and took lessons. That was in September, 10th to 12th or something. Two days later I took my first plane ride here, I was going to fly with Bill Rogers up here at Lewistown Airport. Then we had, school was on. Sometimes I'd call up and say, "How's the weather down there?" It would be windy so I couldn't go.

Milt started flying in 1944. Then we joined the Flying Farmers in '49, Montana Flying Farmers. At that time it was known as National Flying Farmers. Later on they changed it to International because Canada had a lot of provinces that wanted to come in. Then this was in, we were members for 35 years until we sold our airplane in 1984.

We did a lot of going around, really more active with the Flying Farmers than we were in any other organization. I got my solo plaque at Lansing, Michigan in 1955. Then we had a private pilot trophy in New Orleans in 1956 when we flew down there. That was presented by W. T Piper, who was the only Piper aircraft company. I noticed in my note that I have my picture taken with him, and I don't know whether there's an individual picture, but everyone got probably had. And then I was chosen the Montana state Flying Farmer Queen at Glendive in 1957. The Queen's trophy was given by the Lynch Flying Service at the state. I headed the national convention in Chicago and got a plaque for that. That was given by Cessna aircraft. Then in 1972, I was chosen as Montana Flying Farmer Woman of the year. We enjoyed Flying Farmers. We got to know the people. In those days it was mostly smaller aircraft, things like that. Now the organization is still going, but I think it's more or less bigger aircraft.

ES: Now this Tri-Pacer was your last plane, but what did you start out with?

LB: No the Tri-Pacer, that was the first plane. Yes, we had Tri-Pacer. Then one time we had a 235 shortly on our place. Then we had a Cherokee 140, was our last plane. We flew that one for near 20 years. That was the last one we sold. Then we had Willy Rimby and Bill Rogers on most planes, most of the instructors.

ES: What was your first one?

LB: Willy Rimby, well Bill Rogers is actually first, John W. Rogers up here. At one time he told me, he said, "I was the first school teacher he ever taught and I was always telling him how to teach me to fly." I had to know why the plane did this and why the plane did that, otherwise I couldn't fly.

ES: That's right.

LB: In 1957, we went to Chicago O'Hare airport. (Unintelligible) said the FFA was reporting on their report, "Watch out for the Flying Farmers landing today." I don't know what that indicates, if they thought they might not be observant enough or something. Of course I told

that to my son and he said well shortly after that that they closed the Chicago airport to smaller planes. It had to be the bigger jets coming in.

ES: It's a huge airport to be landing on.

LB: Yes, O'Hare, that's where we were. In '58, we went to New York. We didn't land at the airport there, we landed at (unintelligible). That's in New Jersey. Then they bussed us in. We went through the tunnels and so on and so forth to get to the hotel, Hotel New Yorker was what that was. One thing about New York, it's certainly is a well advertised city. All you do, you hear about Queens and all those things, you just ask about where they are when you get there. They took us to Wall Street. Flying Farmers always planned something special. So we went on to Wall Street. I expected to find a great big street the same way as it was from the start, at the beginning. So it's a very small street. They showed us how some of the stock exchange works, buy and sell stock and so on.

ES: That'd be interesting. I'd love to see that.

LB: Yes, that was interesting. Then we did a lot of visiting with our plane, too. We have relatives in Virginia and Ohio. So that's how we came home, by way of Virginia and Ohio and we came on home

ES: That's a lot of territory.

LB: Yes it is, and it's kind of nice to visit that way. It doesn't take so long. Yeah Virginia, and then we stopped in Ohio too on the way back. We were at Ft. Collins in '59. Then we went to the World's Fair at Seattle in 1962. They had the convention at the same time.

ES: Yes I drove out there and went to (unintelligible). One of our group flew but they only got as far as Ellensburg. They had to land there.

LB: Exactly. We did too. You could not get over Snoqualmie Pass. You couldn't see. We took the bus and you could hardly see on the bus. The ceiling was so low. That was interesting they had the same experience we did. We left our plane there, and then we were in the harvest time. So we left at 12:30 at midnight to get the bus to go to Ellensburg. So we would pick up our plane and were combining in the afternoon.

ES: Oh isn't that something? That's really remarkable.

LB: Our son was with us too. He was chosen team President. Ed was chosen team President at Seattle. Then he served at Rapid City with us.

ES: So he was in the Flying Farmers too?

LB: Oh yes. He rode with us all the time. We never left him anywhere. If we went, he went.

ES: Does he still fly?

LB: No he's, we don't have our plane anymore actually. He doesn't. He has some hours in. He didn't get his private license yet, did he? He's about ready to get it. He's soloed.

ES: That's neat. I suppose he gets that speed of transportation. It's so fast and you have so much area to cover.

LB: That's the point right there.

Milt Butcher: This is (unintelligible).

LB: Yes, he was riding yesterday he said, "I wished I had it because I rode a long time and there's brush and truck timber (?). And he would go check the cattle and find out where they are and go get them." That's one reason we used it on our ranch. Then we went to the parts and so on and so forth.

ES: Especially when you live far from town.

LB: That's right. I still have a little note. They took the airplane, and they left me a note. We flew for parts to Fort Benton.

ES: Oh my goodness.

LB: That's good.

ES: That's a lot of time you can save.

LB: That's the point right there.

ES: Just imagine being down and trying to drive all the way to Fort Benton.

LB: That's right, if the weather's good. We once came from a connection. I don't know which one exactly it was right now. We stopped in Iowa. Iowa seemed to be such a hard state to get by with the weather. We were gassing up at Fort Dodge. It was a beautiful day like it is today. We checked the weather first. We always checked the weather first before we filled out the flight plans. There was a storm from Canada all the way to Arizona. You couldn't possibly fly through the storm, so we waited it out. We were two and a half days in Fort Dodge so sometimes you go faster by car.

ES: Oh dear. That you have no control over.

LB: That's right. Yes, it really is. We were at Rapid City where the conventions were and then at Miami Beach. Do you remember in '64 when they had that terrible hurricane come and broke out the windows from all...? We were staying at the Deville Hotel, and they had practically walls of glass in there. It broke it out. We just barely got away from it. A couple of days is all.

ES: You just missed it.

LB: That's right. The rest of the people did too.

ES: For goodness sakes.

LB: Then we were in Omaha, Nebraska in '65, the national convention in '66 at Louisville. Then they took us to some of those farms, you know, those horse, antsy (?) horses. We saw some of those, the race horses. That was an experience.

Then this wasn't, this was the, we also went to Montreal to the World's Fair there in '67. We were gone about six and a half days and visited the fair. We stopped off at Ohio overnight and came home. We stopped at Ironwood overnight before we crossed over into Canada. We got up the next morning, and it seemed kind of chilly so we wondered about... We got off and there was ice on the, not ice, but the frost, you know. So you don't fly with frost on your wings, you know because it bothers the lift. So we had no blanket there. We saw that (unintelligible). It was interesting, that Montreal World's Fair was certainly interesting. We didn't, St. John's I think is where we landed. Somebody hadn't been there to Lewistown before, and they found out St. John's was a good place to land. Then they bussed us into the fair.

ES: I guess parking-wise that was a good way to go.

LB: Oh I'm sure, yes. Montreal would have been quite a city to try to fly into.

[Break in audio]

LB: ...and I remember we went to Harry Truman's house in Independence, went by that. I don't think, I think he was still living there.

ES: Did you see the library?

LB: Yes, we did. We did see some of it.

ES: He used to come and visit (unintelligible) people that had come.

LB: It seems to me that he had died or it was right there. I'm not sure of that. In '72 I went to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and we toured the Amish country. That's interesting with all their buggies and no radios and no electricity and things like that.

ES: I think as farmers you could really appreciate, you know, the problems that would create.

LB: That's right. In '75 we went to Lafayette, Indiana. They took us to the Indianapolis Speedway. I ran a miniature one and four (?) were there. They showed us exactly how you do it and how to check on it. So that was interesting. In '76, we went to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. That was a wonderful museum and everything there. In '77, it was the last time we flew to a Flying Farmer's convention, and that was Duluth, Minnesota. We were lucky to get in the right time there. I think we took off in the morning, and I think after that you couldn't hardly get off and on account of fog or whatever. The next year was in '78 at Norfolk, Virginia. I said, "I'm not going to fly down there with all that military traffic around." So we didn't. We drove. Lucky we did because the weather was pretty serious. I know they had, at Harpersburg, Virginia, I think there were a couple of planes that took off and they lost their planes. If the weather was that bad, you know, they should've been flying.

In 1980, I think, we drove to Calgary, Alberta, Canada. They took us to some place. We had those wagon trains. They did part of the stampede for us. They had a wagon team here and a horseback rider and they were supposed to see who could beat, go fastest. The horseback rider hardly ever won. I couldn't figure out why he couldn't beat the wagons until I found out. I was talking to somebody later and the horseback rider has to throw the stoke in behind, the little box behind, before he can take off. I was glad we had driven there too because a rainstorm came through, and I guess a lot of people had a time getting their planes out of the mud. We flew to (unintelligible) a lot to Grand Junction and Glenwood Springs in the spring. I thought we should tell you one harrowing experience we had there.

MB: I was born in Aspen.

ES: That's why you were afraid to fly in the mountains.

MB: That's right. We made several trips to Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction.

LB: So at this time at Grand Junction, we were going up to Glenwood Springs and we sat around the airport for about three hours wondering if we should go or shouldn't go. At Rifle there was a woman at the airport that was supposed to report how the weather was in the mountains. We didn't hear anything, and it had clouded overhead a little bit. As we took off, I remember I felt this funny little quirk. I said, "No, let's go back." I should have said, "Milt, I'll fly back," because that's on the side because we could have flown back. But we didn't so we went in the mountains.

Thank goodness Milt had lived there otherwise I thought I was going in a canyon or something. Then there was a tunnel. A train went through this tunnel. Here we came. Actually we weren't bouncing around very much ourselves, but I was watching to see if the wings cleared the canyon. Milt was watching to see if we would fall in the river. We came to this tunnel and we were just above where the train comes in. The Lord lifted us over. So I told Milt, "Let's land at Rifle." That was on the way, you know, and not go the rest of the mileage. So we did. Then we landed at Rifle, and we had no problem landing. At no time did we have a lot of bounce (unintelligible). That wasn't it. You just couldn't go up very well.

So we went to the woman in charge of the operations, and she said, "Would you like a drink?" I said, "No thank you." She asked us three times, and she took one. She was at fault because she should have said. All of her professional pilots were sitting down. None of them were flying in the mountains. She felt bad. So then we left the plane there. We called Milt's uncle and we said, "Don't worry. Don't come." She loaned us her car to take us up there. So after that, I told Milt, "We are not flying there anymore." So we decided, because we weren't a night fliers, we would take off at daylight. It would be kind of rough by the time we got there. He said, it was taking a long time, he said, "I don't care how long it takes. I want to drive." So we did do that most of the time.

ES: The air currents in the mountains, I think, are so strange.

LB: Sometimes they're difficult. We were flying one time, and we landed in Pocatello to gas up. It was 2:30 in the afternoon. We were going to go to Idaho Falls. The woman's son, he was trying to convince us not to go on. He said, "Your wife is afraid. She doesn't want to go on." We found out later that they lost a Bonanza over at Dillon. It was too treacherous to go, that's all. We tried to watch the weather.

MB: (Unintelligible).

LB: We couldn't get to California, either. We stopped at Barstow. It was an old air base at Barstow. We stopped there, and this was the Tri-Pacer with the high wing, you see. We were going to stay there. We couldn't see anybody there. We found a place to park our plane before we looked around. So we left it and so we took a bus into Santa Ana is where we were. Took a bus from there.

ES: That's quite a ways. I think that's probably a pretty good move.

LB: That was no good over there because you had to be so high. And the high pass was bad.

ES: When you drop down in, the air traffic is terrible.

LB: It is a military base that was abandoned. They had caretakers is all that was there.

ES: I guess there's gonna be quite a few of those.

LB: Sounds like it, yes. Here's one point that I haven't brought up yet either: Milt had a severe heart attack in February 3, 1971. So then he could no longer get his physical. Then we flew 13 years longer because I was a private pilot. I moved over on the pilot side, was checked out there and moved over. We flew together all of the time. We're just combination flyers. Not all the time.

I once took the airplane down to Billings for an annual. I had gotten the name of a person from Harlowtown, but his wife flew a little, too. He was surprised that I was all by myself in the airplane. Our son was going to, was teaching at Hardin at the time. So I left the airplane there and bussed to Hardin and came back. Actually I did a lot of flying together with Milt. Milt had flown 40 years and I was had flown 30 years from the time we started flying. Of course, we went to state meetings, too, especially when I was Queen we went around for state meetings. Queens were supposed to show up each year. I had been at Casper, Wyoming, Williston, North Dakota, Pierre, Dickenson and (unintelligible) City.

ES: How big of, when you belonged?

LB: I think there were about 5,000, weren't there Milt?

MB: I think so. 5 or 6,000. See we were combined with Canada. (Unintelligible).

LB: I think the membership is quite low now. In our day, it wasn't so costly to fly. The planes didn't cost as much, and they are not small planes like we had. It's gotten so costly to fly.

ES: I've heard that. All of the women have said that. It's gotten so costly. Not only gasoline, but maintenance and the insurance and on and on.

LB: You see there were years when I flew about 8 hours or 12 hours because I was in Arizona a lot. Then you'd have to go home and get the annual. That was about \$500. You didn't know how many hours the airplane had to be gone over. That's important. So we took it and kept it up. Then you should really fly over 9 hours to keep current, too. I had a check about every two years just to keep up with the instructor. We've enjoyed it. We've certainly had a lot of nice friends and everything else. It's also something to do because you see, we were on the farm. We could be gone about a week or so.

ES: Give yourself a break when you can get it.

LB: That's right. We had the milk cow but we have a calf running with her so when we wanted milk we'd lock up the calf or let the calf take care of her when we were gone.

ES: I'm really surprised. That's a big group. 5,000 is a lot of people.

LB: Yes, all the families belonged. They had things for teens to do, too.

ES: That's interesting. How about the 99's? How did you get into that?

LB: I wanted to belong because I was a private pilot, you see. I wasn't too active. I wasn't as active as I am here. Whenever they had state meetings, I went to that, then sometimes the 99's in Alaska, a few years I was there. They had a 99 meeting in conjunction with the Flying Farmers. They were separate but they held the meeting there. I would go to that.

ES: There were other women that belonged to both organizations there.

LB: I just joined because there were people talking about the 99's in Lewistown, and there were some women here that were private pilots. They said, "How come we didn't know it?" I said, "Well, we know it now. I'm telling you because you have to belong." So some of them were quite active here in 99's. A lot of women, one of them went in the Powder Puff Derby. (Unintelligible) did that. I knew she had a little problem when the weather wasn't very good with. We had flown that area you know.

ES: So you didn't fly in it?

LB: No. I never did anything like that. I have enough to do as a farmer (unintelligible).

ES: Well that's so time-consuming.

LB: Oh yes, and sometimes you get poor weather too. I knew she had the experience because I had been watching the weather.

ES: Yes, I think they did. They all laughed about it. That's an interesting group. Do you know what year it was that you joined the 99's?

LB: No I couldn't find that anywhere. I'm not exactly sure. Of course I must have been there before '64, the picture's in '64. I had quite a time finding this material. I had to look here and there. See, I only wrote down the hours that I flew in my logbook. I had quite a few logbooks but you find it's mostly checking cattle and so on and so forth. So then it was hard to read in between times here to see what...

ES: Oh my goodness.

LB: That's my first one.

ES: Oh yes.

LB: We had the ranch strip out there.

ES: These are really interesting. You can just...

MB: It's practically a diary.

LB: Milt didn't keep his up quite as good. I think I lost one of his. I can't seem to find one.

ES: I was going to ask you what kind of a rating, what was your final rating?

LB: I was only a private pilot. I didn't go fly further than that.

ES: Did you ever get the, the instrument.

LB: No, I had to have, to be a private pilot you had to have so many hours. That required as much. When I had the checkups you see. Yes I did like that. No, I didn't go for instruments.

MB: See every two years she had to get checked off by her instructor so that she was qualified.

ES: Did you always get checked out here in Lewistown?

MB: Yes.

LB: One time, I had to go to Denton because sometimes, you see, Bill Rogers did an awful lot of spraying. So if I had to be checked off the time that the spraying was going on, I had to go somewhere else.

ES: Did you ever put a spray rig on your plane?

LB: No. I wouldn't be interested in it either. It's too close to the ground.

MB: (Unintelligible) brakes.

ES: I'm going to do it today.

LB: We're about 12 miles from the highway going into Winifred.

ES: Oh I see. You're way out there.

LB: Yes, (unintelligible). If we can't go in the wintertime to Arizona, then we will have to move to Lewistown. And we can't be 12 miles from the highway and 45 miles for a doctor.

ES: Yes that's a real problem.

MB: (unintelligible).

ES: You are?

MB: (unintelligible).

ES: Oh good heavens, well you don't look it. That's amazing.

LB: In the winter of '49 and '50, it was such a terrible winter you could hardly move at all. So Bill Rogers had his skis on his plane and he flew out hired man out to help a baby. Landed on our airstrip on skis.

ES: Could you feed by air?

LB: No, not legally. I knew somebody who did and they got balled out for it.

ES: Oh shoot, I thought you could do that.

LB: No you feed by air because this particular had one bail on this side and one bail on that side of the wing, and she'd pull it. She'd cut the cord and tip the wing off and drop the bail down. She had called (unintelligible). That sort of thing is bad because it gets the airplane out of a race. She's the same person that lives in the hail storm and the next time, it was a cloth plane she had. I think the hail hit holes all over her plane about this size. All she did was patch it up and fly it.

MB: (unintelligible).

ES: Like a piece of Swiss cheese.

LB: That's what's illegal too. Well it flew alright but that was still illegal because it had to be recovered.

ES: I want to ask you something about that. Planes...

LB: That's a Tri-Pacer.

ES: Yes, now that wasn't the cloth wing. That's got to be something like fiberglass.

MB: (unintelligible) fiber glass.

LB: I thought it was metal. I think it's before the day of fiber glass. I think.

ES: Maybe like aluminum?

LB: I really don't know.

MB: (unintelligible).

LB: The other plane we had was a low wing plane. The reason we had a low wing plane is it's a lot easier to fly. The low wing flying acts a lot better in the wind. When we were at Barstow, we had that plane. The wind was real strong and just blew us off the runway. It was lucky that it was an army base and wasn't (unintelligible). That's the reason I look for a place to look for the plane in a cubby hole somewhere or a hangar before I even look any place else because...

ES: Oh yes. You know, I was just curious about that. I can remember the plane years ago, the old bi-wing did have fabric.

MB: There's quite a lot of (unintelligible) in that airplane. The whole body is fat.

ES: They coat it with paint or whatever.

MB: They put some lacquer on it and it becomes like fiberglass.

ES: Yes.

MB: It's been so long since we had that airplane there that I forgot too much about it. We had this low wing.

LB: For 20 years, you see.

MB: The last one. What was that last one?

LB: Well, that 140 Cherokee.

MB: It was mostly fiberglass. (Unintelligible). The wind didn't bother that.

ES: I see.

MB: (unintelligible) 40 mile-an-hour wind.

LB: It was about '63 that we sold that plane. Then we had a 235, which was a great big airplane. It would go a long ways and everything, but...

MB: (Unintelligible).

LB: Yes, up the coast. I don't know how many hours we got in it. Then we got the 140 Cherokee. That was a nice plane to fly.

ES: Did you sell it locally? Is somebody flying it in this area?

LB: The 140 Cherokee?

ES: Yes.

LB: No we sold it to Willy Rimby. I think it's in Wyoming, somewhere down in Wyoming.

ES: I was just curious. Vivian had sold her plane and it's Missoula. So I was going to take a photograph of it. I neglected to take a picture. She has a little model of the plane in her house. I thought that was kind of interesting.

LB: This is going to make you want to fly isn't it?

ES: Well, I don't know if it will or not. It's just I find all of you women so interesting. I guess well maybe I can do that. I don't know. There is, no one has taken the time to write the history of the 99's in Montana. I haven't been able to find, I have found a little information here and a little information there, but no one has compiled it to me. It's too bad.

LB: Yes, well this picture will be valuable. I'll see it that you get a copy of it. How big do you want it?

ES: Oh that's fine.

LB: Just like this?

ES: Just like it is.

LB: Okay, okay. So that's a 5x7. I have it already. I'll just send it to you, to Ronan.

ES: Okay sure.

LB: All right. I found that in mine, and I'm right there. You can hardly see me, but there I am.

ES: Peeking out from behind. That's interesting.

LB: They were very active in painting on the runways and the numbers and things like that. I never did go in for that. I never did.

ES: I know some of that, some of the women that belong right now are very young women.

They look like they might be army pilots or something. I don't know. They were out painting the runways not very long ago somewhere, either here or Jordan or some place. They were painting the strips, you know. They were doing a good job. It was very worthwhile.

MB: (Unintelligible).

ES: Oh okay, good idea. Did you have an arrow or anything?

MB: Yes they put north and...

LB: Not at our place, we did. At Winifred there was.

MB: I don't think there was in Winifred.

LB: Yes (unintelligible). Then I should tell you this. I was trying to find out which city we were going to. I know we came from Sherwood, North Dakota. We were going south to a convention. We were flying only by maps and the compass. It just had come out that they wouldn't let transistor radios on the airlines. So I had a transistor radio, and it was hard to find Sherwood in the first place. We had to go down, drop down a little bit and find the name on the elevator and find the name somewhere else. We finally got to Sherwood. We were doing the same thing. Milt was doing most of the flying. He was very good by just following the compass and so on. Finally we got to a lake that was about 40 miles long, and I was at the wrong end of the lake. I said, "Turn off that radio." The radio was toying with our compass. We were getting the reading right, but the radio was pulling the compass reading.

ES: I didn't know it would do that.

LB: Oh I said, "Eddy (?) turn off that radio." The minute he turned it off, there was no problem. We had, I could understand why we had so much trouble having to read the signs all the time.

ES: Isn't that interesting?

LB: Yes that actually happened.

ES: Oh for goodness sakes. I had no idea why they had that rule. Now I'm so glad you told me.

LB: Yes, that's right. I didn't understand why we had so much trouble. There was a little wind involved and things like that, you know. When you're 40 miles away, I said, "We're supposed to be on the other side of the lake according to our line that we had drawn." I said, "Turn off the radio." That was it. Then we buzzed right in with no extra problems. I was talking to (unintelligible) about that last night. He said, "Yes that was the first transistor radios that came out." He remembered it.

ES: Do you remember what year that was? I was just sitting here trying to remember. Let's see, I can remember when they came, I remember them coming out, but I don't know what year.

LB: I think they must have been, I don't know how old he was. I can't remember either. I couldn't find anything.

MB: (unintelligible) Kansas City.

LB: Well, if we were going to Kansas City, '69. So, '69 we went to Kansas City.

ES: Oh yes, wow.

MB: (Unintelligible) in Vermont.

ES: You should make a trip just for that.

LB: Boy, I tell you, it's just uh...

MB: (unintelligible) Montreal. So I was trying to work together.

ES: That's really fun, though, to get around the country like that.

LB: That's why we were doing it.

MB: A lot of my relatives from back East, West Virginia, Washington, Ohio. So we made (unintelligible).

ES: Oh that's really nice.

LB: They were young enough to get us at the airport you see.

ES: Now, when you go out to check cattle on the plane, basically what you want to do is to check where they are and if they're all right? Or do you check calving?

LB: To see if they're lost or something. We were trying to find them some place.

MB: I would check for calving in the spring. My (unintelligible) going across the street (unintelligible).

LB: The strip was right in front of the hangar too.

ES: I see. Well that's handy.

LB: We couldn't go anywhere; it wouldn't have been any use (unintelligible) to have the airplane there.

ES: Right, to get somewhere, to get to the plane.

MB: (Unintelligible).

LB: No, we had strip right there in front.

ES: That's interesting. So actually your son can still do the same thing. He can still check cattle?

MB: Yes, he does. (Unintelligible).

LB: A different type of airplane, the one I think (unintelligible) out in California.

ES: Yes, I've seen some movies of that little job, fiberglass something with kind of a funny shape. The two tails or...

LB: It has a real long (unintelligible). I never did see it myself.

ES: Yes.

LB: The hangar is now a shop and (unintelligible). Like I said before, it's entirely too expensive for what you use it for nowadays.

ES: That's a shame isn't it?

LB: Yes it is.

ES: I would like to see it....

LB: I guess they might be making some small planes again, but generally they are making six passengers.

MB: (unintelligible) \$1500. Now they're around \$30,000.

ES: Wow.

MB: Of course they put a little radio in, that sort of thing. But you did that anyway. We did to our plane. (Unintelligible).

LB: See it was easy. We flew by (unintelligible) see those little, in the middle somewhere. It looked like a little something, they called an Omni. That was easy when you had that Omni, you

just fly to that. When we were flying, you drew a line and you figured out the compass heading yourself.

MB: We used Omnis toward the end. (Unintelligible).

ES: Oh, I see. So you just go from one...

MB: (Unintelligible).

LB: Nowadays, these small planes can't get into the big airports very well. It's too crowded and everything else.

ES: Yes, I had a friend who landed at, I think it was Dallas, in a small plane. It was a two-seater, you know. She was absolutely petrified because you've got these giant international jets coming in there. They blow you away just by the size.

MB: (Unintelligible).

LB: We've had a lot of fun doing it.

ES: I think it's so fascinating, that particular era. Flying was so available that you could do it.

MB: (Unintelligible) extra education to fly.

ES: That's right.

MB: We had an awful lot of young fellows (unintelligible).

[Break in audio]

ES: Oh, I guess quite a while, but I, they just recently at the university, they focused on Montana women.

LB: I see.

ES: And not only pioneer women but also the women that are, because we're history. Today we're history. Just like today's newspaper is tomorrow's history, right? So an ongoing historical record of what Montana women do that has taken a lot of different focuses. The one that I mention in *Montana Magazine* talked about pioneer women and that goes up through the '40s as to how they probably aborted children and the very intimate life of women. Another woman was doing schoolteachers, and I understand she did 90 schoolteachers. You would think that would be a lot, but she hasn't scratched the surface because every woman I've recorded has

been a teacher at some point. And it's fascinating to me that, as a career, they chose teaching. Of course we know that's probably one of the few things that was open to women.

LB: That's right, that you got the money for.

M. Butcher: [inaudible] little pay. We had lots of people that were schoolteachers around the country.

LB: That's why you're going to be a schoolteacher. [Laughter]

MB: No, no.

ES: [Inaudible]

MB: We [inaudible] married schoolteachers.

ES: Well I think that's true that traditionally Montana women, the single women, were teaching school. The men knew where to go and find those women. [Laughter]

MB: [inaudible]

ES: That's really neat. Anyway, that's what I've been doing, one of the women that I recorded was a pilot in the Second World War, and I went to record her for that reason because I felt that women who flew in the war were sort of underappreciated, right?

MB: That one in Colorado, she's a WAC. [Inaudible] for a few days.

ES: But anyway, then I found out that she had been a schoolteacher for 28 years, for heaven's sake. And that was her secondary, you know. Well, gee. Then I got into recording women who flew as kind of a series. It's really been fascinating for me.

LB: You see, I taught for nine years before I got married. Then I didn't teach. I taught at least that term. I've certainly done a lot of, there was one boy who was going into the sixth grade, and he was certainly a non-reader. The kids, he came from a large family, and they would say, "Steve can't read! Steve can't read!" And his brothers beat up all the kids that said "Steve can't read!" There was a remedial reading teacher in the school, and she was getting angry because I was helping these children. However, there wasn't one minute of school time I took. So for this boy Steve, his aunt and grandma wondered if I would look at him. I said, "Well you have a remedial reading teacher." They didn't answer me. So I said, "Well, I'll see about Steve." And my, that boy certainly had to have a grade somewhere.

He could not read. If he spelled he would go "B, R, X, Y, Z"—anything. He'd mix up the B's and the D's and that's before we heard about dyslexic. The term wasn't out then. I told him, "You

know what boy looks like. You know what dog looks like. Those are the only two words I want you to remember. Which way does that go, the d and the b.” But we worked. Can you imagine what his mother and I had to read to him to go into sixth grade? I would start reading a paragraph and stop at the end of the sentence and he would read on. He’d read some, too. Finally one day he said, “I don’t know where you are.” All that time he’d been sitting in class and didn’t know where anybody was. He couldn’t follow the book. So I didn’t say “Here I am,” I said, “Here’s where we start.” I read that sentence five times to him. After that, he got lined up that he could follow the work. Of course I’d been doing quite a bit of work. It wasn’t instantaneous or anything. I helped him for over two years, twice a week.

So we started with spelling. His teacher had said, “If Steve ever gets a hundred, I’ll treat this whole room.” He wasn’t helping get the hundred. So then we worked on spelling. That boy had to have a grade in something. Of course, I’m very good with phonics and families and so on and so forth. We’d make a game of right and might and all as an example. Finally Steve got a hundred. The teacher had to go down and treat the whole room. Then finally a little bit later I said, “Steve how are you coming?” He says, “Well I have to have three in a row now.”

But from then, well, it started even before Steve. I taught this girl in school. She had a sister who was an epileptic. Her parents had taken her out of school, and it was a Greek family too because they were more concerned about making a scene or something, thought she’d have a spell in school. She was in the fifth grade. Well, she had married. She had a daughter. The marriage hadn’t worked out and she was living with her daughter and her mother and father, and the grandmother was living there, too. Four generations in the household. The older sister thought that Mary ought to be doing something, you know? But she can’t read or do a thing. So I thought — there was a pastor’s wife that had tried to help her with reading and had kind of given it up — I thought, “Well I don’t know what I can do exactly.” It was right in the town of Winifred, so I said, “Well I’ll go ahead and...” I called up and we were having [inaudible] at the time. She was getting kind of heavy sitting around. I said, “Mary, how about doing [inaudible] exercises?” She took that from me so then I decided maybe I can do something with reading.

We started at second grade reading. She says, “I don’t want to color.” I says, “No, we don’t have to color.” Just trying to get that, I helped her recall all this. The family was Greek. The father could read English but not the rest of them. They would go down own and get a cake and say, “What do you put in this?” They’d go home and make the cake. This girl would go — she crocheted a lot — she would go to her friend and find out how to crochet whatever she was going to do and go home and do it and never look at the thing again.

Then the family would be embarrassed if someone came. They said, “Mary, go to the bathroom. Mary, go to the bedroom.” Afraid she’d embarrass them or something. Well finally it got so she could take a quick look and read the recipe and make cookies and things like that. She could write. She could read the paper. She didn’t read it too much, but she could read it. One time her grandmother said, “She wastes a lot of paper.” I said, “Helen, what difference

does it make if she...Let her practice. What difference does it make if she uses all that paper? Forget it.”

One time, now this sounds kind of funny, but there was a shower in town and I didn't particularly know those, I knew them but they weren't close. Somebody called me up and said, "Are you going to the shower tonight?" This is a question I asked her: "Is there some reason that I should go?" Isn't that a funny question? She said, "Mary wants to go and her mother won't let her go with me." I said, "OK, enough said." I found something around the house that I wrapped up as a present and went to town and I told Helen. I said, "I'm taking Mary to the shower." She says "Fine."

ES: You had power. [Laughter]

LB: Well, I did help her to read a lot you know and everything. So then we went to the shower. So then she got to the point where she could, before you would call her on the phone, she hadn't been practicing speaking so much and everything. She gained a lot of confidence and finally got so she could read. When the people saw how I was helping Mary then this person, that person had a little trouble with school. I think the teachers at that time were saying "Oh, those are dumb kids. We can't do a thing with them anyway." But I helped them a little bit, and they'd go ahead.

ES: And they'd just get over that bump and away they'd go.

LB: Yeah, sometimes, I know there's seventh graders I helped too, and I couldn't imagine how to do the parts of speech they didn't know, you know? But I started on diagramming. Then the teacher in seventh grade said something about diagramming: "Who knows how to diagram?" And of course the ones I'd been helping knew how to diagram. They said, "Oh yes, Mrs. Butcher showed us that." But you see that's how it spiraled, why I had so many to help. Sometimes it took just a little bit. They didn't quite have a key. They could go right ahead.

ES: There's such a place, such a need for that, that person who will take them on a one-to-one basis.

LB: Yes, that's the point.

ES: And just get them to...

MB: It's too easy to just pass them on.

ES: Oh, amen to that.

LB: Sometimes the children would read and they'd say, "The." I said, "I don't want you reading that until you read ahead." I have another little trick. I'd read along and I said, they'd be easy to

trail. They'd be reading along, and I'd put my finger right on the words. They couldn't tell me [inaudible] finger. I [inaudible] like this. If they knew the word way over here, fine. I said, "You're supposed to read ahead." And if they were older, I said, "You're supposed to be reading this and your eye is supposed to be way over here on the next one." After they learned that, they went ahead.

ES: There's so many changes that could be made in the way that they teach school now in the general public schools. They're always fishing. That reminds me of a floundering fish, you know, "We need help! We need help! We don't know what [inaudible]" I think there's a lot of ex-schoolteachers that could step in and say what they're doing wrong.

LB: Well they finally went back to, they had all these flash cards. You know, it would be a hundred flash cards and they'd give the words. You might remember that, but you don't know how to make a new one that has part of that. If you know phonics and families and little words and big words, you can read.

ES: Yeah, I don't know whatever happened to phonics. I don't think they teach phonics anymore.

LB: They're coming back to it now.

ES: My husband and I were just talking about the fact that nobody takes penmanship anymore. We got an announcement from some little girl graduating from high school and the penmanship was atrocious. I said, "Oh this poor child!" But you know that's another thing.

LB: That's right. I was helping our managers down at Mesa in the mobile home park who have two small children. The oldest boy was in the sixth grade. He was having trouble reading. His mother was trying to teach him, and she thought maybe she might put him in Special Ed. I said, "Special Ed isn't the answer to everything. I want to see that boy before you do." So we started out, and I helped him after school and so on and so forth. Finally it came to "here" and "there" and "where". I said, "Here I am. You're there. And where are you?" I kept saying that, I kept writing it on there. Finally I said, "You know, that's the same family, 'ere' at the end. Those are like the Three Musketeers: here and there and where." Ok, he can do that. Now he goes to his teacher and says, "Do you know about the Three Musketeers?" She said [inaudible]. She'd never heard of them before. And then he also told the teacher... See, the teacher told this to the mother at the conference. He said, "You know, I've got a teacher that's older than you and she's smarter too." [Laughter.] About that time I was kind of glad that he was adept enough that he didn't need my help anymore. But those Three Musketeers, at the end of the school term I guess she thought, "You know, that isn't such a bad idea to call those the Three Musketeers."

ES: [Inaudible]

LB: It's very, I had never used the term before in all my years of trying to help the children. But you see those words for six-year-olds are very abstract.

ES: Yes, concepts.

LB: That's right.

ES: And they do have trouble with that, those little ones. Rather than disappoint the teacher they'll just go on by and they never learn it, you know. Right there, 20, 30, 40 years later still a hole of where that concept should be.

LB: That's right. When I was substitute teaching, I was telling them about the deer. Of course, the third graders were in their reading classes. I was there only a week, but then they'd come over to me when I was in the fourth grade class. I said, "You can't do that." Because I know what they do, they say "Dah, dah, dah, dah," get to their seat and wouldn't know what the word was. I said, "OK, I'll tell you what we do. You go to the board, write the word you don't know. I want it spelled right. I don't want it written more than once. And I want you to do one at a time." Now that's quite a challenge for a third grader, isn't it? I didn't realize I could challenge them like that when I was teaching school. They did exactly what I told them to do, and they had all those words. They were never more than once. They were never misspelled. Then when I got through with the fourth grade, we all found out what those words were. We all found it out together what they were.

ES: That's interesting.

LB: Yes, but I didn't think I could really challenge those eight-year-old children that much: one at a time, one word. I don't want it more than once on the board and spelled right.

ES: Maybe that's what they need. Maybe that's what we're missing in the public school is the fact that we underestimate their ability, and we can't challenge them enough.

LB: You know what the trouble is? I never did feel like we should teach them reading until they were six years old. If you started before that, they couldn't comprehend it. They could learn it so much faster if they were six. I had one girl that was five, and boy she had a hard time with reading. Six-year-olds are better. I understand now that when they get to kindergarten they're supposed to know how to read by the first grade. We're just pushing too much right there and they can't cover it is what I think. And they're not doing phonics properly either.

ES: It's sort of like we hit them with everything at once. There must be an easier way.

LB: Yes, that's the trouble. Too much.

MB: [Inaudible] we were in school, we just picked up because the other kids was ahead of us in country school.

LB: That helped a lot too.

ES: My husband's that. He said he was a little devil, and his mother sent him to school when he was five just to get him out of the house. [Laughter] But what she didn't realize was that he just sat there and just absorbed that like a sponge. It wasn't what his grade was supposed to be doing, but they hear everything. So you do, you learn in a broader way.

LB: Well I thought it was always policy to read, when you had [inaudible] ten minutes to the children. That was a policy. I thought it was just a kind of busy work, but you know what it really was? They were hearing how things should be read. So it was more than that. It was a good benefit for them.

ES: When your son went to school, did he go to a one-room school?

LB: Well let's see, third grade.

MB: He did before he went to Winifred.

LB: Yeah he did before he went to Winifred.

ES: Were they bussed in or did you have to...?

LB: No, I took him back and forth. I went 22 miles every day to take him to school, back and forth, and didn't even go to the grocery store. Back and forth and back and forth. And then we went to Winifred, the school. I guess they didn't have [inaudible].

MB: She [inaudible].

LB: Well I did two years of it.

ES: To start with.

LB: Yes, because his heart was so bad that the doctors said he can't go to public school. He had a heart murmur is what he had. So he got through that about the time he was up in... Well actually, you know what I think helped a lot with that heart murmur... See that was before the, I didn't know much about chiropractors in those days, but he was a very nervous child and didn't grow like he should [inaudible] part of the time there. There's a chiropractic clinic in Lewistown here and Milt's aunt and uncle had told them about Eddie and he said, "Well if I had him, I'd fix him."

Well, you know, not knowing a chiropractor...little boy. I didn't know whether I should or not, so I talked to my regular doctor here. I said, "You have to do something for this boy." He said, "You give him digitalis." I says "You're not giving my six year old digitalis and that's that." So I said, "What about a chiropractor?" He says, "I know what you think about..." I said, "I know what you doctors think about chiropractors." Those were the days when they wouldn't work with them at all. "I know what you think about that, but what about it?" He says, "I know how desperate you are," so then he thought he would try it. So then I would go. The chiropractor did not use a stethoscope like an osteopath does to check the heart. So I'd go for treatments over there. Then I'd go to the regular doctor. I said, "Well how is he? I'm spending my money on chiropractic treatments." I'll always thank the doctor for that. He said, "He's considerably better than he was a year ago."

So then I went to an osteopath and he told me, "You know, his heart was so small in the beginning and it's growing bigger." But what happened—the vertebrates were squeezing the...They were out right in the middle of his back up by the shoulder blades. Some of the vertebrates were out. They were squeezing the supply of blood to the heart so the heart didn't get a proper blood supply, you see. If you put those vertebrates in then they'd be alright. So we worked back and forth like that. When he got to be a freshman he had outgrown it and he could play football and everything. So we had a problem there.

ES: That's really interesting.

LB: I know it is. So it's partly going to chiropractors to get that straightened out and then also [inaudible].

ES: Well, he's a lucky boy that you worked with it.

LB: Oh yes, that's right.

ES: I don't know, they sell a lot of things or think they do by pushing drugs. But you don't take pill-pushing instead of trying something more natural.

LB: That's right. If anything's pinching [inaudible] your spine [inaudible].

MB: We didn't have drugs back twenty years ago like they do now.

ES: Oh gosh no.

MB: It's a way of getting around the wall. That's why they [inaudible] the drugs.

LB: What do you mean? What kind of drugs are you talking about now?

MB: Any kind of drugs.

LB: Well the doctors, we have a lot more drugs that help people a lot more than they used to, you know.

MB: I think there's bad drugs.

LB: Oh well, we're not talking about, no, we aren't talking about those kind of drugs. We're talking about medicine.

MB: But I mean that's what gets you into it now because there's problems.

ES: Oh yeah.

LB: That part there. Thank goodness I didn't bring up the boy in that.

ES: Well, yes, that's a terrible thing for the children. I feel sorry for them. They're so inundated with information from television and they're peer group and all of the stuff that's going on anymore. It's almost like overkill. You know, they just like [inaudible]. Poor kids. And to find a nice, quiet place. We live in the woods and I enjoy my granddaughter up there. She's just a little guy, you know, but it's so quiet and we can do things like people ought to do, swing in the swing. Nice, calm things.

LB: You live at Ronan then, don't you?

ES: Yeah, we live up out of Ronan, up in the mountains. [Inaudible] seed business in Ronan.

LB: I see.

MB: See I got [inaudible].

LB: Well, between Whitefish and...

MB: [inaudible] the railroad.

LB: Ronan is between Whitefish and...

ES: Ronan is between Missoula and Polson.

LB: That's right, yeah. I've been through there many years ago.

MB: She lived in Missoula for a long time and they transferred her up to [inaudible].

LB: His niece. No, we were flying just because it was, well, it was, Milt wanted to. It was a lot better when I learned to fly too because then you have somebody looking after you. If you have someone looking after the maps and radio then you know that they know what they're doing. It takes two people to fly lots of times.

ES: I think so.

LB: Yes it does. And besides, you change off. You see, the seats they were side by side so that's...Do a control. It's no problem to change side by side. Sometimes we'd never do that here, but we were traveling around North Dakota there in the middle of the day and, my, it was rough. He'd fly 15 minutes and then I'd take 15 minutes. It was rough, you know, and then we got to Miles City that time and I told him, "I'm not going to go. I'm going to wait until I go across those brakes." We had brakes to get to our strip and we just have time to get home.

ES: Is it wind, really, that makes it so rough?

LB: Yes, and heat too. Heat does too.

MB: And air, wind.

LB: Yeah, wind and heat. And time of day.

MB: [inaudible] between here and Miles City.

ES: Between here and Miles City? Is that right? That's interesting.

LB: Oh yes, it's all that flatlands, you know, different contour of the land going up and down.

MB: [inaudible] Missouri Rive, see. And all those canyons are rough.

ES: Well what about Fort Benton and that area?

MB: That's a rough area too.

LB: I'll tell you about that. My sister lives in Conrad, so I thought I'll take mother over there. She was 75 the day before. And we went over there alright. Milt said, "Come home about four o'clock." Well it was a little rough going over. Not too bad. But the funniest, the clouds, I don't know how many thousand feet they went up, just straight and down like that. Well, by the time I got ready to go, they all disappear. But it was so rough I could hardly follow my flight plan. I had to fly over by Cut Bank, I think, or Conrad or one of those places. By the radio, you know, file. They got by Fort Benton and boy, I'll tell you, that was a very rough ride. I'd be up to six thousand, be down to five, just that kind of up and down. Then you'd climb again to six and go down to five. Those three rivers go together. It was very rough. So then I thought oh my what's

it gonna be like. I had to go across the Marias(?) River there. But fortunately it was alright till I got there. It had calmed down.

ES: Good grief. That would scare me to death.

LB: You just do something, do what you can [inaudible] didn't want to go back and land or anything. So then I was landing at Winifred to let mother off, and I was too fast and too high to land, so I go around two or three times and thank goodness mother didn't panic, you know.

MB: She's a good passenger.

LB: Well, she had confidence in my flying. So finally I got down there. There was a little crosswind. I should have practiced crosswind landing a little more before. That's a little different story, we had crosswinds you had to, but it's the rudders and so on, the wing has to go down a little bit into the wind and things like that, you know. But we made it the last time, so.

ES: Oh my goodness. I'm kind of interested in that. Now how did your mom like to fly?

LB: Oh, she liked it just fine.

ES: Were you able to take her with you more than a few times?

LB: No, I just took her over there to see my sister. But she had flown some with us. When we had that Tri-Pacer there, we flew—or was it a Super Cruiser? No, it was a Tri-Pacer—we flew over to see her Uncle in Skokie(?), her brother I mean, rather. We took her with us there. Yes, she always enjoyed it.

ES: I know you can see so much more from the air, and I would imagine she would get a kick out of that.

MB: I had both of her aunts [inaudible] showed her where they homesteaded North of Roy(?). I thought she was going up to upper side. I got the wing down so she could see when their homestead was all in the river.

ES: [Laughter] Almost did a trick [inaudible].

MB: [Inaudible] scared her so bad. [Inaudible] don't want to scare people.

LB: Yeah, go up and see how much the plane will do, how it stalls and all that stuff.

MB: [inaudible] used to scare [inaudible] scared to death [inaudible].

ES: Well, I know about wind. We fly but we only fly commercially. I don't know. It can get awfully rough. And about that time I just said, "I hope this guy knows how to fly the plane."

LB: They generally do.

ES: Oh yes, I know. I think the more that I have flown, I get more confidence in what the plane is capable of, you know.

LB: Of course, a good idea is to check the weather and see what the weather's like.

ES: They never tell you, you know.

LB: No, but listen to the radio.

ES: Right, yeah.

MB: You're supposed to stay home that day.

ES: Well nowadays you buy your ticket two weeks in advance at least [inaudible] and then you're stuck with it. You have no choice.

MB: No choice. [Inaudible] back and forth to Salt Lake City. I flew up here to a funeral and I...

LB: You mean in the airports?

MB: Yeah.

LB: Yes, if you ever get an airport, they say do not enter. You better go back and find out where it is. It's a moving sidewalk. You're going to hit it. Go into that...

MB: Salt Lake has a [inaudible]

ES: It's a moving sidewalk, yeah.

LB: Yeah, but you see we missed it, so we walked and walked and walked, and we should have gone back to get on the moving sidewalk. It was the first time we'd seen one.

ES: Oh my, well, Salt Lake is huge.

LB: I know it is. Yeah, that's when Jake Roberts died. You know Jake Roberts? You ever hear of him?

ES: No, I don't think I have.

LB: He was a musician. He was a blind musician. My sister married him and then he died, so we came up here and flew the commercial. So that's a mistake we made that we didn't go back and go back. Where it said Do Not Enter we should have gone back and found out where you do enter because it was a long ways to the end of that.

MB: Carry a bag [inaudible]

LB: Of course we carried everything with us. We just carried everything along. We were afraid that it would go on without us so we took it along.

MB: [inaudible]

ES: Yes, I went to Minneapolis one time and my luggage went to Tampa, Florida.

LB: That's right.

MB: [inaudible]

ES: It had a nice trip. [Laughter]

LB: That's right. But you earned it, though.

ES: I needed it.

LB: I think the Flying Farmers had a lot to do with a lot of people learning to fly.

ES: I think they promoted a lot of that.

LB: They definitely did promote it.

MB: A lot of women [inaudible]

LB: I'll tell you one thing about it, you can't have better insurance than having two people that can fly.

ES: That's true.

LB: Sometimes there have been instances where the husband was flying all the time and he had a heart attack, and the woman had to land it, and she didn't know a thing about it, and they talked her down. It's a lot easier to know something about it because I'll tell you, when you get up there you think you can just drop down. That's not the way it works at all. It's a lot of circling and everything to know just how to judge the speed and everything that you do.

ES: What was the difference in the speed of these airplanes? Your Tri-Pacer went at about what?

MB: About a hundred and twenty miles an hour.

ES: About a hundred and twenty miles an hour. And do you land at that speed?

MB: No [inaudible] you slow it down to about sixty.

LB: You slow it down. You have to know how many feet you're supposed to be off the ground and you land. The Tri-Pacer, we had it [inaudible] it has a nose wheel on it. I learned with a tail wheel. In the beginning, they thought that you just drove that in there like you drive a car driving on the runway. Well that's not the way you do it at all. We happened to go to Glasgow. They were supposed to be kind of mean.

MB: Yeah [inaudible]

LB: Well Darnell's (?) the one that...

MB: Oh, he straightened you out.

LB: So the Tri-Pacers were new, and we had a Tri-Pacer. So I went up with him. I found out that if you stalled out you do just like, you know, slow it down and land on the back two wheels and then you go on the front wheel and that's how you do it. So it's the same deal as the other one.

ES: Just like the space shuttle lands.

LB: Yeah, that's exactly.

MB: [inaudible]

ES: Is that right?

LB: So then when I came—

[Break in audio]

LB: Well, I noticed though before my next lesson he was over there, and he went up [inaudible] to see how to fly it. So then he learned that that's the way you do it. That was the instructions that Bill got, you know. They said that that's how you do it, and that is the way you do it. So that makes a lot of difference. So it means you, if you don't have all those wheels [inaudible] you can flip them and things like that.

ES: Oh yeah. I've heard them talking about it [inaudible].

LB: Wheel-barrowing, oh yes it could. We were landing in Glenwood Springs once. Glenwood Springs is funny. If you could see the wind sock as you go by the town, then you'd be alright. But you'd have to go up and read the wind sock, which way the wind is from, and then you could check. You would fly into the wind all the time to slow it down.

MB: [inaudible] turn around and come back down.

LB: And so one time I had heard that they—and of course you have flaps on the wings to help you, the little pieces that help slow you down too—you pull a flap and that'll help you. I guess one time—I should have told Milt—but anyway, I heard that if you put the brakes on too much you can be on the nose wheel like a wheelbarrow and you can't control it. Well we were landing there, alright, so I know the wheel was on the ground, so I dumped a flap, so to speak [inaudible] lots of flaps. It was like that, you know.

MB: Took the pressure off.

LB: Took the pressure off. It was a good thing I did because there was somebody else landing going the opposite way.

ES: Oh boy.

MB: Right beside you.

LB: [inaudible] on the airstrip [inaudible] land. But anyway, I should have told him about taking off the flaps because [inaudible] on my own.

MB: Took that pressure off and you just...

LB: Oh, it just flashed right by, yes.

ES: Uh oh. [Laughter] Well now, your next plane was a 235. Was that approximately the same speed?

LB: Well that was a fast one. Was it 180 miles an hour, something, it went?

MB: Yeah, it had an eighty gallon gasoline carrying capacity.

ES: Oh, that was a lot.

MB: You could fly clear to Miami on it.

ES: Wow. What do they get a mile anyway?

LB: About ten, twelve miles to a gallon.

ES: Is that right? Well, heck [inaudible].

MB: [Inaudible] tailwinds and cutting out those hills you go around.

LB: Did you know what happened to the 235?

ES: Now you should tell me, what did you do?

LB: This was one of the new 235s, and it didn't have toe breaks. These others all had just one break at the center like that. They would break the wheels. A toe break is you have your rudders here and then you have a break on the rudder for breaks. But the 235 didn't have that.

MB: The first one.

LB: Well, the one that we had had just the center control. Well, sometimes we'd be taxiing along there, and you'd have to stop because you couldn't control it by the rudders. You see, the rudders turned right and left and so on and so forth. You couldn't control it by the rudders, so you'd have to stop and start over again.

Well then we were, I was landing that time and at first I asked him, I said, "Don't you think we're a little fast?" Well, I guess we decided we were alright. And we had a great big propane tank, a thousand gallon propane tank. Well this deal was going in that direction. Well, it's an unwritten law that—he was the chief pilot, you see—so he said, "Take it," and I didn't like the way it was acting anyways. I says, "Just go ahead and have it" because it just wasn't acting like they should. Well, he started taking off and our telephone line was under the power line. The power line was here over the propane tank and the telephone line was under it. So it wouldn't steer right. Well, I thought, "My, I hope he doesn't try to go over the power line or we'll stall for sure," and of course we'd crash to the ground. But he didn't. The prop, the telephone hung on to a wheel of the aircraft and the prop. I have a piece this big that the prop cut out of that power line. I have it as a souvenir. So then he couldn't straighten it up, you see, and so it went off. The telephone stretched I would say an eighth of a mile and set us down like this. It was still hooked on when we landed. The Lord was looking after us.

ES: Oh my gosh. I guess.

LB: It's a little unclear. Of course I was sitting on the pilot side and there's a hole in the windshield. I had a bump on my head, so I presume I made that hole because the seatbelts didn't have the shoulder harness in those days, they just had belts. And then there was a deal

right here in my leg where this flap handle had, I saw the mark. So then I set it down. So then I told Milt, I said, "I don't see where my glasses are. Maybe you can find them." So we found those. Somebody was talking on the telephone, cut it off right now. Oh, that was close.

ES: Oh, that's too close for comfort.

LB: Well it really is. It really is.

MB: [inaudible]

LB: So then we just sold it. But you know that they didn't do, the carburetor was underneath. The only thing we had to replace was the carburetor. We just sold it as-is and they looked it over. They tried to sell it with the 230.

MB: [Inaudible]

LB: Well you see it was past those trees and stuff right over there by our gate. But that telephone wire stretched that far and set us down like we were on a carrier.

ES: Oh my gosh. I suppose it's kind of the same principle, isn't it? [Inaudible] drag [inaudible].

LB: Yes, that's right. You see, if it had broken, we would have gone...I don't know what we would have... We wouldn't have landed that good, I can tell you that much.

MB: [Inaudible] I should have landed in the first place instead of trying to trip the power wires.

LB: Yeah, we made a mistake. We should have tried to land it. It would have been over a hill or something, but we could have probably go up a little hill, try to land instead of trying to take off. And that's one mistake we made, trying to take off.

MB: [Inaudible] I should have went ahead.

LB: Yeah, that's right.

MB: [Inaudible]

LB: I think we could have battled it out, and I think we would have gotten by alright. Well of course we got by alright as it was, but that was pretty close.

MB: Until we got to the church [inaudible].

LB: So then somebody else, they said something about a 235. I said, "No more 235s on that strip." It was too big a plane for us anyway. We didn't need it that big.

ES: So you had the Cherokee then after that.

LB: Yeah, the 140.

MB: It's a 140.

LB: Yeah, that was a real nice plane. Actually, we could have had some seats in the back but we didn't. We just had the two seats in the front.

MB: Gee, that ride was pretty comfortable [inaudible] seat belts in it for baggage.

LB: We never did take a...If we did, we just probably [inaudible].

MB: [Inaudible] alright but [inaudible] I had to change the props [inaudible].

LB: It would be too much for us. It was just a nice...It was actually the trader. It was a trader plane.

ES: Oh, okay.

LB: But it was a real nice plane. We just flew about twenty years with it and enjoyed it very much.

MB: [Inaudible] to take care of it. I put a lot of radios and stuff in it.

ES: Well that's interesting.

LB: I think we had 135 hours in that 235.

MB: Yeah, that, but the rest of them had long hours.

LB: No, but I mean that was, but it was too big for our place. It wasn't two weeks before that I told Milt, I said—I was wondering why we were trying to land on top of this hill. We had landed below it—I said, "We should have that air strip out to there." Two weeks before that I said that. Started to land that [inaudible]. Then after that, we fixed the air strip and we'd take off. We'd be all taken off before we got this other part off. But that was hairy alright.

ES: Yeah, really.

MB: They made a spray plane out of it. I can't believe that.

ES: They made a spray plane out of it?

LB: It had so much gas capacity.

ES: Oh sure, it could go forever.

LB: Well they probably store some of it in gas tanks or something.

MB: Went to Havre. But that's where I learned how to fly in the first place. Havre.

LB: But they really didn't have, that was the only trouble wrong: the crank shaft [inaudible]. They took it all down to [inaudible].

MB: [Inaudible] spray plane out of it [inaudible].

ES: Yeah, carry a lot of weight.

LB: [Inaudible] [Laughter]

MB: Long story.

LB: Do you take off, do you edit these down when you put them in the...?

ES: No, they aren't edited. Isn't that terrible? [Laughter] I think, oh my, the person that listens to all of these will probably go, "Oh no." No, they copy them verbatim, and then they go in the file, and then I type it, a transcript. So eventually I do have to face the fact that I've talked for a long time. [Laughter]. But the transcript will be, well, two tapes will probably be about thirty pages or so of typing. They take the tape and they take the transcript, and they file it.

MB: [Inaudible] talking [inaudible].

ES: Well, I am going to stop us because we've about used up our time, and we're going to get shot here again. And I want to thank you very much for coming. It's a long drive, and I appreciate it.

LB: Well I wanted you to, rather than come out there, I saved you some time anyway.

ES: Someday I'm going to come out and just look just to see where you are. I mean, it's great to live out that far. I can't get out far enough. But thanks again.

[End of Interview]