

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
(BUSINESS ARCHIVES PROJECT)

NUMBER

28

Interview with
EDNA GARDNER WHYTE
February 8, 1979

Place of Interview: Aero Valley Flying School
Roanoke, Texas

Interviewer: Floyd Jenkins

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Approved:

Edna Gardner Whyte
(Signature)

Date:

9-25-79

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Business Oral History Collection

Edna Gardner Whyte

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

Place of Interview: Aero Valley Flying School

Date: February 8, 1979

Dr. Jenkins: This is Floyd Jenkins recording for the Business Archives Project, North Texas State University in Denton, Texas. Today is February 8, 1979. I am interviewing Edna Gardner Whyte who has spent a lifetime in competitive flying and teaching flying, and who is the founder, owner, operator and currently chief pilot and flight instructor for Aero Valley Airport Flight School near Roanoke, Texas. Let's start by going back and getting your recollections of family background. Give us your reminiscences of that and work up toward the time you were born. A family background.

Edna Whyte: Well, I have always kind of felt that your attitude, your performance through life, reflects many times back on to your childhood and the way you were reared and how careful you were reared and so forth. And I look back at my background, my aunts and grandparents. Several of them have gone through and researched a great deal. We have on my mother's side of the family, the Steve Brush family, back to the Minute Men in the Revolutionary War in New England.

Whyte: They also migrated to Minnesota in the eighteenth century. And then it comes all the way down to the often joke, they ran into some part of the family and they stopped looking on and so forth, like everybody claims or runs into in their past. But I am quite proud of my grandparents and the stock that they must have been to do what they did. The grandparents on my father's side were from Gardner, Massachusetts. And they, two brothers, started out in two covered wagons with all their earthly possessions across New York state and Ohio and went on through Wisconsin and over into Minnesota and homesteaded land which was available at that time.

Jenkins: About what time?

Whyte: Well, it must have been around 1823 or 1830. Of course, through my younger years I was reared around southern Minnesota. My mother was a school teacher. She graduated from Manhato Teacher's College, which they had in those years. That must have been just before the nineteenth century. And my father was an engineer and went to school in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which now, I think, is the University of Minnesota. And he was an engineer, and they married. My mother lived with me the last eight or ten years of her life down here in Fort Worth, and she had in her early years won the contest as the most beautiful girl in college. And she was a very, very pretty woman and very practical and a real good scholar. When

she would do crossword puzzles, so many times I would ask her for a certain word, and she could always recall anything. I always had to refer to the crossword puzzle directories for spelling and synonym words and so forth. But what I am trying to put over is that they were more scholars than I was. To me flying was my ambition. And my going through three years of hospital training and taking my state boards in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for my R.N. and so forth, which I wanted to do because my mother wanted so very much for me to go to college and do what I should do as a normal person. But I guess there was something in my childhood or makeup that made me rebel against what they wanted me to do. And I wanted to fly from the very first time that I read articles on Catherine and Marjorie Stinson were teaching flying for Simpson Field in San Antonio, Texas. How the president of the United States had ordered them to Dayton, Ohio, to teach pilots for World War I, and I thought that was so wonderful that a woman could do that. This was right after the women were fighting for the right to vote. When I went back to my high school classmates, several of them said to me twenty or thirty years later, "Edna, we knew you would do something unusual because you were always the one in the class that would climb the highest ridge, that would work the hardest in playing basketball and things like that."

Jenkins: You played basketball?

Whyte: Yeah, was captain of the team and very fortunate in making baskets. I enjoyed it very much. At Chatfield, Minnesota, we played all the southern part of Minnesota teams at that time. But I have often wondered why I was a little different. I realized I was different. My ambition and desire. I didn't want to marry and have a family. I wanted a career. This doesn't really fit in with what I am trying to tell you about my grandparents because my Grandmother Gardner was a very, very motherly, homeloving woman. And she had all the hardships of the pioneer women of the early days. I can remember when I was around seven or eight years old she would tell me about how the Indians would come into their little log cabin there in Blue Earth County in Minnesota. And the men would be out in the field working, and they would linger in the woods and wait for the men, to be sure they were out of sight of the house. And Grandmother Gardner would take the children and go out and hide in the cornstalks. They would do this and stay there until the Indians left the house. And they would take their salt and their sugar and their provisions which they had for the winter that they could only get by going off to some great fort or trading post to obtain. And there were many little phrases that she said to me. I have thought more of them since than I did at that time. She would often say, "If you never waste, you will never want." And I thought at the time that was so silly, but I look back at it now and it means

a lot. And she would say, "A fool and his money soon part."
If I would have two or three pennies and I would spend them
for candy, why, she would tell me that. And she had so many
phrases like that that I think impress you more than you think
they do at the time, because at that age it didn't mean much
to me.

Jenkins: Now this is your grandmother?

Whyte: Grandmother Gardner.

Jenkins: And you grew up around your grandparents.

Whyte: Yes, at the farm in southern Minnesota there. So I was about
six or seven years old, and my father was offered a position
in building a railroad between Medford, Oregon, and Grant's
Pass, the railroad bed, engineer the grades and so forth. And
so I'll never forget we were moving to Oregon, we were selling
our farm in southern Minnesota. We packed a great, big suitcase
full of sandwiches and cakes and cookies and apples and that's
all we had to eat for about a week on the train. And we moved
out. There was just my brother two years younger than I and
my father and my mother and myself. And we moved into a little
house on Cottage Avenue in Medford, Oregon. The reason I
mention that is, I went back about thirty years later trying
to find that house, and the creek at the end of the street that
I had remembered playing in had been bridged and changed so
that you just wouldn't know it. And so we were a very happy
family living out there.

Jenkins: You may have told me, but about what year was this when you moved on the train?

Whyte: This must have been in 1907 or '08, because I was born 1902, and I was only about six or seven years old,

Jenkins: Now you didn't see any Indians on that train trip, I suppose?

Whyte: No, we really didn't. It just seemed like it was all mountains, prairies, and no houses, no farms, nothing. All desolate land. At that time my father was on one railroad, and his brother who had come out later with his family was on another engine, and they came around the corner there between Medford and Grant's Pass and hit head on, and my father was killed at the age of thirty-two, which left mother with the three of us, three children. Well, she went back to school teaching and tried to make it with us, and she found out she couldn't, coming down with tuberculosis and ill-health. She was a very beautiful slender woman. And so we had to pack up and we all went back to Minnesota. And my brother was placed in my Aunt Abbey's home. I was placed in Aunt Erma's home. And my sister Vera was moved to a place in my Grandmother Gardner's home. And she was raised very, very close, religious, church, Sunday school, everything. Long dresses, I mean she couldn't even show her ankle as a little girl,

Jenkins: Is that right? Now what church was she in?

Whyte: She was a Baptist. Very strong Baptist. And my mother had raised the rest of us as Methodists. But here my sister was

raised as a Baptist, but she rebelled a great deal because it was too strenuous. She wasn't even allowed to do the things the other girls were doing.

Jenkins: Let me stop you here just a second. Now you said you were born when and where?

Whyte: November 3, 1902, in Garden City, Minnesota. And my mother and father are buried there in Garden City now. There is a little cemetery at the edge of town. So, I think, being the oldest and mother ill in a sanitarium, I assumed a responsibility for the three of them, because it seemed to me that I had to get a profession and a trade and help them through college because it was what mother wanted to do so very much. And, I think, with ambition and desire to do in this world, you can do just about anything you want to. After I finished nurses training my brother and his wife at that time, this must have been in '25 or '26 I had bought a Studebaker car, and the three of us drove to Dallas. Our objective was to go as far south as we had to so we wouldn't have to wear a heavy coat. And we were at Madison, Wisconsin at that time. I was nursing at the University Hospital. And so we started out and we got into Tulsa, and when we arrived in Tulsa it was quite cold. It was in the fall. So we decided to continue on. We came on down, we arrived in Dallas and it was a nice, warm, sunshiney day in the fall. And I immediately had a position nursing at the Parkland Hospital in Dallas.

Jenkins: Let's back up a little bit now and get you into and out of nursing school before we go back to Parkland Hospital.

Whyte: Well, when I graduated from West Salem, Wisconsin High School, I wanted to be a physical education teacher. And I wanted to be a physical education instructor. We had a very good Normal there in La Crosse where I could have taken that course, but Mother just didn't have the money for me to do it. So the family doctor suggested that I go into nursing, which was something I had never thought of. And so he took me down to the La Crosse County Hospital and introduced me to the chief nurse and wanted to put me in nurses training. And she wouldn't take me because I only weighed a hundred and five pounds. And she said I was too light for the work and that she didn't want me. Dr. Wakefield said, "Well, I will be responsible for her, if you will take her as a student nurse and train her. But I insist she drink a glass of milk with each meal and at bedtime." All right, I will never forget that. I had to have that glass of milk that was brought to me four times a day. And when I finished training I had gained over forty-five pounds. I gained fifty pounds, which I have always blamed on that milk.

Jenkins: Is that right? You must have liked milk, then.

Whyte: I didn't mind it at all. I rather enjoyed it, but I did get tired of it. Anyway I finished training and took my state boards. But something happened in training . . . My ambition and admiration for the Stinson girls and what they were doing

in flying, daring to enter into a man's field for a career. And then one day in 1923 in the hospital there, a lady came into our ward dressed in a doctor's coat and skirt, and she was an intern. And I thought that was just wonderful, that she dared to enter a man's field and become a doctor. I admired her so, and my own sex, the other nurses, would actually make light of her orders and didn't want to make sick call with her. Every chance I could I would want to help her because I thought she had done something I would like to have dared, to enter a man's field. Even the other doctors would make light and avoid her, which I thought was terrible because she deserved a lot more credit and respect than that. The combination of these things here made me dare to pursue aviation and chose it as a career. And even after I was trying to take lessons, I had men point to me and say, "You should be in the home raising children. You should be in the kitchen." And that hurt me a great deal. Why should I, in a free country, do something I didn't want to do? Why can't I chose a career and try to pursue it? And I think every time that they would try to down me like that, it would make me more determined to do it. When I took my first flight check ride for a license, went up for it, there were three of us. A Department of Commerce man took the other two men up and gave them check rides, and when it came to me I couldn't understand because I

was there first. But I let it go, and he said, "Miss Gardner, would you come outside here, please?" So I followed him and he went out around the hanger and he made the remark to me, he says, "Why do you want a pilot's license." I said, "I want to pursue aviation and I would like to get all the training I can and be a pilot." And he said, "Well, I have never given a woman a license before, and I don't know if I should start now." And I said, "Please give me a chance." I said, "Just ride with me and see if I can fly. If I can't then turn me down. Don't turn me down just because I'm a woman." And he kind of batted his eyes, and went on. But anyway, he finally agreed that he would ride with me. And it was in a Viley Mono coupe. And we went up, and I went through all the maneuvers he required, and I guess I did them fairly well. I thought I did. And he gave me my private license. But it seemed like there were stumbling stones all the way for a woman in those days. Men really didn't want to teach women to fly because, way down deep in my heart, I felt like they felt we were stealing their glory. We were entering their profession which wouldn't make them look so good to the public, as a pilot in those days was really looked upon as something quite super. And I didn't want it that way. I just wanted to be in aviation. I wanted to pursue aviation. I wanted to learn all I could about it. And I have felt that way for the last fifty-two years. I have

felt like I wanted to sell aviation to the public, I want to promote aviation, I want to promote it as a good, safe mode of transportation. And that seemed to be my ambition right from the beginning. I didn't especially want it for glory for myself, but way down deep in my heart I guess I wanted to show that women could do it, if they wanted to.

Jenkins: What was your first actual exposure to flying, when you got the feel of it?

Whyte: Well, I think the desire came when I read about the Stinsons. And then it just seemed so like it would be so thrilling to be able to fly people around. And so after we spent the winter in Dallas, Texas, we took our Studebaker and drove up the west coast to Seattle, Washington. And I was nursing at the Virginia Mason Hospital there in Seattle, and one of my patients, who was convalescing at that time from an automobile accident asked me if I had ever been in an airplane. I said, "No, they have always interested me a great deal, and I have actually never even touched an airplane. I have never been near one." And he said, "Well, I have one out at Renton Field, and I would like to have you go out and take a ride in it." I said, "I would love to." I just could hardly wait for that afternoon he was going to drive me out to the field. So we went out, and it was an OX5 Jenny plane. There were two planes sitting there on the field. One was an OX5 Oriol-BiPlane. And he put me in the front cockpit of this plane, and told me to

hold the stick. And he propped it and, he got in - you didn't have starters in those days - and we took off. And he showed me how to hold the stick and the rudder and how to follow roads and so forth until we got it going. After we got it in the air, I followed this road and I turned it and followed that road and turned it and followed that road. And I knew from that moment on that I must be a pilot. I had to learn to fly. Because I was making seventy dollars a month as a graduate registered nurse at the hospital, which was a lot of money at that time. And he was asking thirty-five dollars an hour for flying time. So it would take a half a months pay, so it left me just thirty-five dollars to pay clothes and board and room, which was plenty at that time. I found out later that he only had about eight hours from his first lesson. He was just learning. So he gave me about three or four lessons, and during that time we had some pretty rough landings, and I thought, "Oh, is it the airplane? Is it him?" And one time we bounced so high we bounced higher than the trees, and when it finally stopped bouncing, why, we got out and looked at it and wondered, "Now why did the wheels roll on the ground one time, and the next time we came in, apparently he thought the same way, and it touched the ground at such an angle it would start the spring gear to going and we would bounce fifty feet in the air again." So I decided that I had better stop this, and I looked around for another teacher, And the

pilot that owned the other airplane was Lee Butterfield. Lee it so happened, was a son of a doctor that was a thyroid specialist at my hospital. And so he had about sixty hours in his flying career. So I asked him if he would please give me some lessons, because I was actually scared of this other pilot. We were making too many rough landings. And so he did. And then my mother read about it in an article in the Seattle paper, and it went across the United States that I was taking flying lessons, a nurse in Seattle was learning to fly. So she came out from Minnesota and took me back to the University Hospital at Madison and said that she would help me if I would go back into medicine again and take pre-medics there at the University at Madison, that's what we called it in those days. We just took subjects to get started. And that she would help me. I went about a quarter of a semester, and then I found a nice airport south of town called Penecal Airport of Madison. It's not there any more, but the people that were there, Howard Murray and Louie Willamire, are still around Madison. Louie Willamire is running the big Truax Field north of Madison right now. But he is a very old man, and he has assistants there, but he still has great interest in aviation. He hangs around the airport quite a bit. I have seen him, oh, about every ten or fifteen years I manage to see him.

Jenkins: If you can remember where you are right there, I want to ask you a question about this fellow who was training you. Now

he only had eight hours and he could start training you?

Whyte: You didn't have to have a license. If you could get an airplane up and down, you could start teaching somebody else.

Jenkins: No restrictions.

Whyte: No restrictions.

Jenkins: It's a lot different from that now.

Whyte: Yes, it is. There are a lot of regulations now. Who you ride with, and who teaches you and so forth. Things have changed a great deal. In fact, in '27 after I had soloed, I got a book of rules and regulations, and I think it was about eight or nine pages, a very thin pamphlet put out by the Department of Commerce controlling aviation at that time. Just a half a dozen pages that controlled aviation.

Jenkins: And now remind us again. This was about what time?

Whyte: This was 1926.

Jenkins: Okay, before I interrupted, you were talking about the fellow who was still around Madison?

Whyte: I was back at Madison University and I was nursing at the University Hospital out there on University Avenue in Madison, and I found this airport. And I started taking lessons from Jerry Phillips, who was a pilot that had flown in Wings and Hell's Angels out in California which was a very famous aviation film at that time. During that time I was flying an OXX6 Travelair, and he was giving me lessons in it. Somebody heard about my flying down at Wichita and they sent a Mr. Joe Brown

from Wichita up to Madison, Wisconsin, and asked me if I would come down to Wichita and fly for the Travelair factory. I was a working Registered Nurse and trying to buy more hours. And I didn't think that I was good enough in fact I didn't even have a license at that time. But Mary Prents did not have licenses. And I have often wondered what they would have given me if I had gone on down to the factory and flown for them. But I liked Madison, and I wanted to stay there. In fact I was quite infatuated with my flight instructor at that time, maybe that changed my mind. So I went ahead and got my ten hours of private there and Mother stopped her helping me with going to school, she didn't want to subsidize my flying. She was trying in every way to bring me to my senses, she thought. And then in '29 I received my appointment to the Navy Nurse Corps, and I was stationed at Great Lakes Naval Hospital just north of Chicago. There was a little airport out there at Waukegan, Illinois. And I went out there and started flying again, and joined a flying club that had a OX5 Swallow TP trainer. And I flew that while I was there. I will never forget, I used to go around to Sky Harbour Airport and Pow Waukie Airport all through North Shore then, Chicago, Waukegan, Racine, Kenosha and all those little fields and make take offs and landings, take offs and landings. I went down to Sky Harbour one day, and Jean Lorene was flying there. And she had about the same number of hours I had, and I thought she was such a beautiful girl. I used to go down and talk to her quite often and have lunch with her. Then in 1941 I came

to Fort Worth and here was Jean Lorene married to Lou Foote down here at Grand Prairie, Texas. And Jean Lorene and Lou Foote had a very active flying service here in the Fort Worth area. Another experience I had there, Eddie Heath was the designer and builder of the Heath Airplane. And Eddie Heath Airport was just out northwest of Chicago a ways. And I landed there one day and he had just come down from testing a mid-wing plane he had built. And I walked up to the airplane and he said the plane did not want to come out of a spin. He said, "I have got to change the stabilizer and vertical fin a little bit." So he was changing some bolts around and sliding it over a little bit. Then he took off, and I just took my OX Swallow TP and went back to Waukegan. When I landed there they said, "Did you know that Eddie Heath was just killed?" And I said, "No, I don't think so because I was just talking to him." They said, "No, he was just up testing his airplane, and did not come out of a spin." And the news got back to Waukegan before I did.

Jenkins: This was about what time?

Whyte: This was in 1929. The first race I was in was an OX5 race that we had there at Waukegan. And I flew a OX5 Robin. And a Robin was a high wing cabin plane with an OX in it, which was a little faster than the bi-planes. It was a monoplane. And I happened to come in first, and that was my first race.

Jenkins: Won the first one.

Whyte: First one.

Jenkins: You said it had an OX in it.

Whyte: OX5 engine. It's a Curtis OX5 engine. V8 cylinder.

Jenkins: You will have to excuse my ignorance.

Whyte: That's quite understandable because of aviation terms.

Jenkins: I know absolutely nothing about planes. Let's go back and look at growing up a little bit more and see what may have been some of the things that you did or that happened to you in earlier life that may have had an impact on your career. What are some of the things you did as a kid growing up? The way you played, the way you worked, the activities you got involved in, all teach you good judgement and able to make snap decisions.

Whyte: I often feel that by being placed from one relative to another relative kept me more on the defensive than I should be. It probably made me more competitive than I should be to be a normal person. To me I always wanted to compete and prove that I could do it better, and in my childhood we would have ice skating races. We would have skiing in the hills there in Minnesota and tobogganing and I had to give everything to everything I did. I had to prove that I could do it better, because I had been set down so, living in relatives' homes where their children got things and I was just living there. I felt, and they didn't want me to feel it, everytime they would give their daughter something they would give it to me. But I think a child living like that is more apt to feel like they are more punished than they are. Which as I look back now,

they were very kind to me. But as a child I felt as an outsider.

Jenkins: Now why did you live with so many different relatives, and how often did you move from one relative to another?

Whyte: Well, I know one year I was in four different schools, because my mother would have me come and live with her again. And then she would break down with ill health and have to go back to the sanitarium. They would put me with another relative in some other town in Minnesota, and I would have to go to another school. And when you go to so many schools you are kind of stand offish . . . Well, I have never met a stranger. Maybe it helped me. I think it probably helps you more, than being around friends and people and classmates that you have known all your life, to change schools. I have had girls come back to me years later say, "Edna, we knew you were going to be something different because you always would go the highest, jump the farthest, play the hardest." So I don't know what it was. It was just the fact that I think I lost my father, and I had to support my family. I didn't have to support them, my mother did more than her share, but I tried to help.

Jenkins: I think in our earlier conversation before we turned on the tape, you had mentioned that, maybe this moving around and being with different people may have had a great deal to do with your feeling of independence and uniqueness and desire and ability to look out for yourself better than maybe a lot of people. Do you recall those feelings?

Whyte: Yes. I definitely recall those feelings. And I have experienced it a great deal in teaching people to fly. I have found that, you take a child or boy or girl that has been over watched, over mothered, over cared for, all of his or her thoughts have been directed and guided for them, they were not allowed to figure out their own channel to safety, or you can take a child that has been thrown in an orphan's home and out with families and so forth, they are more self-sufficient. They have more judgement, snap judgement, to protect themselves, and it stands out in their ability and their flying. I have to work twice as hard to make a pilot fly safe that has never been forced to do things and make decisions for themselves. You take the boy that has been orphaned and had to make his own decisions to survive, he makes a terrific pilot. He is right there with decisions and safety.

Jenkins: Do you attempt to find out some of this background before you go up with them in training?

Whyte: The first student I took up was in '29, so I say I started teaching in '29. I have many people come up to me and say, "I would like to learn to fly. Do you think I could learn to fly?" And I always make the remark that anybody can learn to fly if they want to, because it is not that difficult. And I say, "If you will tell me a little bit about your childhood I can tell you how easy it will be for you to learn to fly." And if they have had a mother that has made every decision for

them the first twenty years of their life, they are very difficult to teach, very difficult. And if they have been orphaned at a early, early age and have had to fend for themselves all the time, they make better and safer pilots.

Jenkins: About when was it and what were some of the things that caused you to not only realize that you loved flying, but that it was something that you could make a living and a career out of? How did this come about?

Whyte: Well, I think right from the very beginning I wanted to make a career out of it. But flying is such a long process of obtaining your training and your ratings. And my nursing income was the only income I had to pay for my flying time, although through the years there were many times that I would wash airplanes or help work on engines to get a few minutes flying time. I can remember one day I washed an airplane for about four hours, polishing and getting on the ground and washing the lower wing, the grease, oil and dirt off the lower wing, and they gave me fifteen minutes flying time. And I thought that was wonderful and was grateful. But nowadays if a boy washes an airplane for you, he wants about two hours flying time.

Jenkins: How did you get the chance to be working around there, anyway?

Whyte: I was at the hospital and as soon as I would get off duty . . . Of course, in 1929, '30 and '31 and through those years it was peace time Navy. We were working very short hours five days a week, and every time I would get through work at the

hospital I would dash out to the local airport, and try to get some flying in and learn as much as I could. In those days we called it hangar flying. You could learn a lot by just listening to the other pilots talk in the offices and in the hangar or the place down at the airport or even in the hangar where pilots collected and talked. And you would learn a lot that way. I was so eager to learn, and the men just weren't too eager to teach you, because, well, I always looked back at Matilda Moisant. She started flying in 1911, and she looked all over for somebody to teach her to fly. I can feel . . . I know her feelings, her desire of wanting to learn. So finally she found this man up on Long Island, and he said, "I will teach you to fly if you will come out to the airport at the crack of dawn dressed in men's clothes and have a hood over your hair so nobody can know you are a woman." And that's the way she was taught to fly. They just didn't want to teach us. And if they did ride with us or take our money for going up with us, they would tell us so little, that most of my learning and learning to fly was through trial and error and listening to other people's experiences. And when I look back at it I really must have wanted to learn to fly to take all those chances. And I know I did. As soon as I could I would get into flying clubs and fly as reasonable as I could. Then when I was transferred from Great Lakes Naval Hospital to Newport, Rhode Island Naval

Hospital I had to buy a plane. There were no clubs up there that I could join. And I paid six hundred dollars for a OXX6-Powered Travelaire, and I flew it for about three and a half years and sold it for six fifty. I could sell it for about six thousand if I had it nowadays. So then I thought, "My, I have made fifty dollars and got all that flying." And I thought, "There is money in aviation. I am just going to resign from this Navy Nurse Corps and I am going to fly all the time." I know one time I went down to Roosevelt Field there from Newport, RI, and I found a little Veely Mono-coupe in the hanger. And I wanted to fly it and it was quite a short wing Mono coupe and quite tricky, and the man wouldn't sell it to me because I was a woman. So I sent one of my students down that I had taught to fly. It was three hundred dollars for the plane. And he went down there with the three hundred dollars and bought it and flew it back to me, and I got my plane. But he would not sell it to me because it did not have an air speed, and the earlier planes did not have an air speed. You didn't know how fast you were going, and as you know if you go too slow you just don't stay in the air. So it was quite necessary to have an air speed. So I got one of these outside air speeds that has a lever on it that hangs on the strut. And that way by looking sideways every once in a while I could tell if I was getting too slow.

Jenkins: When you made your first fifty dollars, was it?

Whyte: Yes, fifty dollars from the sale of the plane.

Jenkins: And that was in about what year?

Whyte: That was in '31, '32.

Jenkins: And that's when you did decide that this could be a profitable career.

Whyte: Yes, for a woman if she would just pursue it.

Jenkins: Let's pause a little bit now and go back and have you give us a summary of things up to the time when you actually started a career of teaching flying. Give us a brief sketch of Edna Gardner up until about '29 or '30 when you actually started teaching.

Whyte: Well, when I came back from Seattle to Madison I was continuing taking lessons there and soloed. And in 1927 I got license number 4013 from the Department of Commerce. And that license allowed me to fly locally with an airplane around there. Our private license was given to us at ten hours of flying. Well I had a little bit more than that. The licenses at that time ran out every two years. So my license number ran out in '29. At that time I was in the Navy Nurse Corps at Great Lakes, and I was flying the Swallow around there. And I remember I took my brother up for a ride, and I was so thrilled to be able to fly, that I went on up and looped it. I had looped it with my instructor, but I had never done it solo. And here I had the nerve to do it with my

brother in there. Until this day at his age he will often mention how, here I was just a student with no license and took him up and looped an airplane. So I must have had more nerve than sense at that time, I guess. Anyway I would take students up and show them how to follow roads and make right and left turns and so forth. Many times I didn't get paid for it. I would do it because it would give me flying time and they would pay for the rent of the airplane. And so that was in '29 when I actually first started taking people up and showing them how to use the controls. The first five hundred hours that you teach flying you learn as much as the student, because teaching them how to do it refreshes you and teaches you, too, you know. I think my first students were in my airplane where I was pilot in '29.

Jenkins: While the recorder was off you were telling me about an early experience you had with the shipping industry, I guess, we could say.

Whyte: Well, after two years there at Great Lakes Naval Hospital I was transferred as a Navy nurse to the Newport Naval Hospital up in New England, and, of course, that let me

out of a club airplane to fly, and so I bought a OX6 Travelaire, for six hundred dollars. And the Newport Airport was just a grass field with no hangars or facilities. So I took my airplane up to New Bedford, Massachusetts which was about thirty miles up the coast there, and kept it in the hangar. I kept it in the hangar of Colonel Green's estate there. Colonel Green was the son of the famous Hedy Green, and a cripple unable to walk who at one time was the richest woman in the world. And he was very enthusiastic about flying and aviation. In fact he had the MIT Institute, splitting-of-the atom building and everything there at New Bedford, and he financed that. He was quite interested in my flying. He would come up in his limousine with a chauffeur. It was glass topped and glass sides so he could watch the airplanes and park it down by the hangar. He lived in a great big home back on the hill there. And I remember many times I would come in and if I had happened to have bounced the airplane a little bit, why, he would have the chauffeur come get me and come over and he told me what I could have done so that I wouldn't have bounced the airplane. That's how interested he was in flying, it was good advice. And during that period was when the Lindburg baby was kidnapped, and Anne Morrow had a Kinner Bird that she kept there at New Bedford Airport. And during the kidnapping, I didn't see her at that time, but prior to that I had talked to

her several times because she was interested in flying, too. They would tell him if he would go to the airport and wait for such and such a time, that he would get some information on his baby's whereabouts. And he would sit there. Oh, it was the saddest thing in the world, you know, him sitting there waiting for more information on that. This is, of course, during prohibition, and there was a lot of bootlegging going on along the east coast. And this very wealthy man came up to me one day, and he said, "Edna, if you will fly your airplane out over a certain point, island, on Martha's Vineyard and tell me what colored flag is on top of a boat, I will give you twenty dollars." And so I thought, "That's easy. I sure can use it to pay for my gasoline and hangar rent." So I went out there and came back and told him it was a green flag. And that's all I said. And every time I would go up there he would have me go out and tell him the color of the flag. And I got to making quite a few twenty dollar bills, and one of the fellows around the airport said, "Edna, don't you know what you are doing?" I said, "No, I really don't want to know. I am making money to pay my hangar bill." And he said, "You are telling him where to unload the liquor, and you better stop it because people are talking." And so I had to stop making money that way.

It was a very busy little active, up-to-date very modern airport. It was probably one of the nicer airports in the world at that time because he had built runways, runway lights and things we didn't have anywhere else in the United States. And I felt quite honored to be part of the New Bedford Airport, and Colonel Green period at that time helping me. And about that time we had so many wonderful . . . you see Newport was a famous, famous resort area for the 400, the certain class of people we had in New York at that time, very, very wealthy people. I know, Doris Duke used to come up to the airport quite a bit. And she would come out in a great big limousine, and she would drive it herself. And then right behind her a ways would be a big black limousine with four men in it and very quiet, way off to one side watching. Never took their eyes off of her. And she would be quite often there, and we would talk, and she would be waiting for Howard Hughes to come in. And he would come in in his privateer plane, which was an amphibian from Long Island. And they would land there, and he would go over to the Duke home, estate, there on the point there at Newport. They would usually have weekend parties there and quite extravaganza affairs going on. And I remember one time, Howard Hughes came out the next morning to take off for Long Island, and a big bottle compressor for his starter

was out of gas. So he asked one of the boys to take it in town and to fill it up with gas and bring it back. And they took it in, it's just a short distance there to Newport, and he gave them twenty dollars. And those boys never got through talking about it, because a twenty dollar tip was a lot of money at that time, plus what it cost to get the gas. And he was a thin, dark haired, handsome young man. He was very young in '31. He was very attractive, I thought. And there was Edith Huntington and Richard DuPont, and the different Du Ponts that would come up there to these parties. And I had a chance to meet a lot of those at that time that were coming into the airport. I have some pictures and clippings up here. Major Laurel L. Spencer and all of the famous people of the 400 that were flying at that time that would frequently come into Newport.

Jenkins: This might be a good point to mention that we're sitting here in your office at the Aero Valley Flying School, where the walls are covered with pictures of people, airplanes, newspaper clippings, trophies of many . . .

Whyte: Here, this is the Newport crowd here. This is Laurel L. Spencer, this is Penfield, this is Granville Smith and this is the Willowbys, and here I am flying that racer. They were the actual 400 of the cream of society on the

east coast at that time. It opens up a whole new world to you. Your social life, your friends are just different than you would ever meet in every other walk of life. I can go down through the years and mention I would never be associated with those in any way. I was just a plain navy nurse. Bernard McFaddin would put up money and sponsor our air races and cross country flights to Florida.

Jenkins: Tell us about that wooden prop on the wall.

Whyte: That is a OX5 prop from World War I. It's a little wider blade than we had later for the old OX-powered aircrafts. It has the beautiful copper tip on laminated wood there, which is really a beautiful piece of art work. We don't have the handiwork, we don't build props like that nowadays.

Jenkins: How did you come by that?

Whyte: Oh, I saved it down through the years. I often have people come in here, old time pilots, and say, "Well, I had many pictures, too, but they all got away from me. How did you manage to keep so many?" Well, I don't know how I did. I am inherently a packrat. I save a lot of things. But as I get things I put them in trunks, and I have two trunks full of things, and wherever I would move I would just take my trunks with me. And we managed to keep together. I have clippings and things that are so frail that when I pick them up the paper breaks in my fingers. Papers, you know, that are fifty years old or more.

Jenkins: Since we are sitting here surrounded by trophies, why don't we start now to talk about your competitive flying career, some of the people that you knew, some of the races that you flew in, won, honors that came by you, and such.

Whyte: Well, being a woman in a man's field, I think I did experience a lot of need to compete. Every time there would be a race, either a man's race or a woman's race, I would make every effort to get into it to try to prove that I could do it maybe fairly well. The first race was in Waukegan, Illinois, in a OX5 Robin. And I think the next race I entered

Jenkins: What year was that?

Whyte: That was in 1928.

Jenkins: Now you said you won that first one.

Whyte: Yes. And I have the trophy here.

Jenkins: How long a race was that?

Whyte: That was only about thirty miles. Just a short race one way up and back. I think the next race I entered of any size was after I went up to Newport Naval Hospital, at Revere Beach there at Boston. I entered the Woman's Pylon Race and I flew a Fairchild PT22 in that and happened to come in first. At that same race I entered the acrobatic part of it. There were men and women in it, and they let me in it and I didn't do too well. I tried very hard. I had an

unusual experience at that time. I got the Fairchild PT22 into a spin and was unable to get it out with the way the center of gravity was in the airplane. And I started changing my weight and trying to get it forward and it came out way too low. And when I straightened it out and landed several people came up to the airport to me and scolded me and were very cross with me because I spun it so close to the ground, and I said, "I didn't intend to do it. I was trying to get it out." What had happened, that Fairchild was built at Hagarstown, Maryland, and the report got over there that I had had this difficulty getting this plane out of the spin. So they sent a couple of their engineers over to the Newport Naval Hospital to talk to me, and see what I had actually tried to do and what I did and everything. And they found out that by putting a little knife edge about four feet out on each leading edge of the wing, that it would split the air such that it would come out of a spin better. So every Fairchild that was built after that had that knife edge, loading edge, to make it recover faster from a spin.

Jenkins: You indicated that that was a men and women race.

Whyte: Men and women.

Jenkins: Were most of the races either for men or for women?

Whyte: Yes. Then I used to take off down to Springfield, Massachusetts, quite a bit. I flew a relay race down there

And then I flew the Kate Smith trophy race up at Roosevelt Field. I flew it in the OX5 Waco 10 plane. It's a bi-plane. Jacqueline Cochran was in that race. We had about eighteen women pilots in different types of old planes. Looking back, at that time I thought they were marvelous, wonderful, modern, new planes.

Jenkins: And that was about when?

Whyte: It must have been in '34. Kate Smith trophy race. I accidentally came in first.

Jenkins: October 8, 1933.

Whyte: And she gave me that trophy, and she gave me a five hundred dollar check. And I had to be on duty the next day at the hospital at seven^{AM}. So I left the hotel early in the morning before the crack of dawn, went out and got my plane and took off. If you are familiar with Long Island, you know that early in the morning very often there is a haze over the land there. And when I took off I went up through the haze headed east to Newport. And the farther east I would go the more the clouds were piled up. And I knew I didn't have gas to go on to Boston and I couldn't get down through the clouds at Newport. So I tried to come back to Roosevelt Field. When I turned around everything was nothing but a white layer of clouds behind me. And my first thought was that I had Long Island Sound and I had the Atlantic Ocean.

I could not land there, I had to be over land. So I came on back, and the only thing I saw above the clouds was the orange and white checkered tower at Mitchell Field there just north of Roosevelt Field there at Long Island. I circled that and looked for the sun in the east.

Roosevelt Field would be south of the tower. I couldn't tell because it was all white fog. So I went down into the fog about twice to see if I could see the ground, and I was scared to do it again because Roosevelt Field had hangars on two sides of it and I was afraid I would be hitting the hangars.

Jenkins: No radio.

Whyte: No radio, no. We didn't even have radios in those days. So then to avoid getting over water, I knew all I could do was hope. They said the fog would burn off early when it comes in that way. So over north of there a ways, over northwest of the sun, there was a round silver tower sticking up out of the haze. So I thought, "There's land under that tower. So I am going to circle that tower. So when I run out of gas I will be on land instead of out over the Long Island Sound or the Atlantic Ocean." I circled that tower for about forty-five minutes, and my motor quit. And I knew whatever I hit I was going to hit slow. And all I could think of was the rock fences and things they have

up there on Long Island Sound. They build their rocks up and build fences with them. And so I came on down through the clouds as slow as I could, and the first thing I knew my left wing went off. My nose went into a rock garden, and this was a big post fence, they build fences with logs and rocks up there, you know. And so it was so foggy I could hardly see off the wing tip, of my plane. I went up on my nose and dropped back down again, and I cut my forehead a little bit here. And pretty soon I heard somebody say, "Yoo hoo." And I said, "Yoo hoo." and they said, "Are you hurt?" And I said, "No." And they said, "Well, keep yelling until we find you." And so I would keep yelling 'yoo hoo' and two big policemen walked up to the end of my wing tip.

Jenkins: It was so foggy they couldn't even see each other.

Whyte: They couldn't find me. They couldn't see me, but all they could do was hear me. And they said, "We have been down here about thirty minutes waiting for you to come down. We knew that you would be out of gas pretty soon. And they said that you went down over at Roosevelt Field and tried to get in and couldn't. That you were above the stuff." So they picked me up and took me over to Roosevelt Field. It was in all the New York papers that I had won the race and won five hundred dollars and all that. And so they wrote up that I had crashed my airplane. And the place I

landed my airplane was the Woolworth estate on Oyster Bay, and I had run into the Woolworth rock garden. I had hit along side of a fence. It was a beautiful yard, landscaped. They were very nice about it. They came out and talked to me, and was very glad I wasn't hurt and so forth. They couldn't have been any nicer although I had rearranged some of their rocks. They took me back to Roosevelt Field, and I went back on duty on the bus, the train, as quickly as I could get there. And I left my plane and left orders for them to fix it. So I came back down to get my plane in about two months when they had finished repairing the two wings, and my bill was exactly five hundred dollars. My whole check I had won in the race.

Jenkins: Have you crashed many times?

Whyte: Just that one time.

Jenkins: In your entire life.

Whyte: Yes.

Whyte: I don't know how I got into that story, but it was just the results of one race.

Jenkins: What Kate Smith is this?

Whyte: That's the singer Kate Smith. She was interested in nursing, too, you know, in her childhood.

Jenkins: No.

Whyte: She went out of high school into nursing. They discovered her

voice, and then she did a lot of singing, you recall. Anyway she is a very delightful person. I have met her on a couple of occasions besides that. One time I was there in 1933 or '34 it was. There was a poster put up at all the airports around. "Pylon Race, Baltimore, Maryland, at Two O'clock Sunday. Two Hundred Dollars and a Trophy." And I thought, "Oh, I would like to go and enter that." So I got off duty at the hospital. Went down and entered it. And the men looked at me so funny, "Are you flying this race." And I said, "I am going to try." And finally I won it. I came in first. And I have got that trophy around here somewhere.

Jenkins: Were there stated restrictions against women flying against men?

Whyte: They just hated to give me the money and the trophy, but they had to do it. There were too many people around. And then the next year, that same bulletin came out, and it said, "Pylon Race at Baltimore, Maryland, Two O'clock Sunday Afternoon, (Men Only]" And they wouldn't let me enter it next year.

Jenkins: Was that the first time they actually stated the restrictions?

Whyte: Yes. On that particular race. Because, I guess, they couldn't have a woman win it two years in a row. But when I would enter a race I would go into it with every thought and everything to win, determination to win. And you have that spirit to win. Then there was the Annette Gibson Trophy race

there at Roosevelt Field. And then there were the All American Air races down in Miami. I flew down every year. The hospital would let me off for a couple of weeks to go to Florida with my plane to enter the All American Races. And I won five of the Pylon races down there before World War II, which I feel quite proud of.

Jenkins: Do you remember the years?

Whyte: Yes. The trophies are around here. This would be one of them here.

Jenkins: This one was 1935.

Whyte: And there are some more there. It was '35, '36, '37. I know later on in '39 the K. K. Culver people put up a three thousand dollar check and a trophy at the All American Air Races at Miami. And Clara Bunch, who was the president and owner of the Monocoupe Aircraft Factory called me and asked me if I would fly one of his airplanes in the K. K. Culver Trophy Race because there was quite a feud or bitter spirit there between the two manufacturers, because Clara Bunch always felt and knew that the Dart was built off of his drawing board by a man that had drawn it when he was under his employ and had taken it and sold it to Culver, and Culver produced the airplane. So he wanted to get some of Culver's money. So he asked me to come to Florida. And the first year I went down there I flew his Lambert Monocoupe

in the women's race down there and happened to come in first. So the next year Mr. Culver put the three thousand dollars up again and a trophy. And there was Florence Boswell and the Cessna Air Master. And there was Nancy Love in a Stagger Wing Beach. Arline Davis in a Spartan Exec. They were all faster airplanes than the Lambert Monocoupe. So Clara Bunch asked me to fly his Clip Wing Monocoupe which nobody ever flew because it had a narrow gear and it was very difficult to land, and Mike Murphy used it in the acrobatic contest. And so we had, though, to get an airplane that was fast enough to beat these other planes. So I asked Mike Murphy, "Check me out in it. Show me how to fly it." And he said, "No, you can fly it. All I want you to do is to land on the tail first because the gear is so narrow together that if you land the gear you cannot keep it straight. It will get away from you." And so that's the only checkout I had. Just that advice. And so I flew the race and I did two hundred and nine miles per hour fifty feet off the ground turning pylons, and I happened to come in first. And we got K. K. Culver's money again.

Jenkins: Who financed these races and why? Who put up the prize money for them?

Whyte: Well, the different companies. Now the Annette Gibson

race at Roosevelt Field was financed by - I happened to win that one - the I.J. Fox Furrier people there in New York. And Eddie Rickenbacher financed a couple of races for us for Eastern Airlines. And the K. K. Culver furnished those two. There was always some company around that would sponsor my races. Of course, to get somebody to sponsor your race, it sure helps. I have been sponsored by many different companies. Electricoatings, Stratoflex Aircraft Tubing, and Crome Cylinder Company have sponsored my races through the years. I flew for Electricoating Corporation for thirteen years. I had on sales for Crome Cylinders three airplanes I would keep on the road all the time. And during that period I would fly from as high as eight to twelve races a year and Electricoating would sponsor my races for me. During that period I would enter the Powder Puff, and the International Air Race, and the Angel Derby, and the Fair Lady Derby, the Sky Lady, and Dallas Doll Derby, etc. And there are usually every year around ten to fifteen air races somewhere in the United States. Many of the competition events used to be like bombs dropping, spot landings, closed course racing, country racing, but now it has gone mostly to cross country racing and International Air Races from one country to another racing. And, of course, it is a bigger affair. Takes more money to do it. Some of the cross country races take two weeks to do one race. To go out to start the race, to get

your ship impounded and inspected, and fly the race for five days to the terminis or end of race and decide the winner, and get everything calculated and straightened out, and the parties and so forth and finish up a race. So it has been busy, busy time flying races for many, many years. And the other man's race that I entered was the Las Vegas to Philadelphia race.

Jenkins: What year?

Whyte: That was in 1959.

Jenkins: 1959, first place.

Whyte: That was a men's race from Las Vegas across the United States to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Jenkins: How did you get into that if it was a man's race?

Whyte: Well, I made an entry, went out there, and they asked me if I was going to fly and I said, "Yes, I would like to." And they allowed me to. And it was a handicap race. There were twins in it, Travelaire Twins, and Bonanzas, and all kinds of airplanes in it. And so at the cocktail party there in Las Vegas the night before, I was a little old greyhaired lady, and they said, "Are you flying the race?" And I said, "Yes." And they said, "What are you flying?" And I said I was flying a little Cessna 120 with an eighty-five horsepower engine, and they were all flying two and three and four hundred horsepower engines. So they had

difficulty keeping a grin off their face, but I could see it and feel it. So then we flew the race and started out, and at the end of the race I had beat my score higher than any other airplane in the race. I had made more miles per hour on the least gallons of gas to win.

Jenkins: Oh, I see.

Whyte: It was a handicap race, and I happened to come in first. It was so difficult for them to present that to me after almost belittling my airplane and everything else out there in Las Vegas, you know. And they never had that race again. The men couldn't take it.

Jenkins: You put an end to that one.

Whyte: I hated to. I wanted to continue. I just don't like to have that effect on them, because I had hopes that they would accept it, that a woman could fly it, and win it, and let her do it if she can do it better. But men?

Jenkins: What are some of the most memorable races that you remember?

Whyte: Oh, there have been so many of them. Everyone of them has a story. The weather, competition, unhappy moments, and happy moments in every race. It has all been very gratifying. In 1966 we started a women's pylon racing association, and we picked out eight of the best women in the United States that we could find that could handle the airplanes twenty-five feet off the ground at two hundred miles an hour. And

I bought an Air Commander 200 to fly in the Pylon racer at Air Shows. We flew at Cleveland Lakefront in front of thousands and thousands of people, three years in a row - 1966, 1967, 1968. We flew in Reno two years. We flew in Florida one year. We flew at Fredericks National Air Races, at the Washington National Air Races. We flew at the Texas National Air Races down here at Luck Airport. And that was a very interesting period in competition flying. I had happened to have a very good plane, and won many, many heats and came in fairly well with that. We couldn't always have the same girl in a race. And what hurt me most about that group was the fact that they would put up seven to nine thousand dollars for women Pylon races. The race committee would put up the money for the women's event. And we would put on a show twice a day in the program race and it would only last about eight to ten minutes and it would be over with. Making six turns around six pylons. We never scratched a girl or an airplane during all these years of our racing, our Women's Pylon Association.

Jenkins: Scratched?

Whyte: We never scratched an airplane or never hurt a girl.

Jenkins: You mean really physically scratched.

Whyte: That's right. And so the men decided that that was too much money for the women to be having, so they wanted to put their AT6s in racing. So they persuaded the Race Committee,

National Pylon Racing Association, and being all men they decided that they would terminate the women's races and give \$9,000.00 to the AT6 men pilots. So they got our \$9,000.00 a year purse that we had promoted for our race, and they have killed seven men since they have been racing. And they killed four up in New Jersey on one pylon. They killed two last year at Reno. 1978.

Jenkins: In one race?

Whyte: In one race. I don't know what it is. I think women fly carefully. They will fly dangerously if they are going to fly two hundred miles an hour close to the ground, but they fly carefully. The men take more chances, and by taking chances you get in trouble. I have always felt badly about their taking our spot in the program, and I have always felt badly about them having so much hard luck with it, losing so many of their pilots.

Jenkins: I see Amelia Earhart in some of these pictures. You flew against her in races?

Whyte: Amelia Earhart never did any flight instruction. She never did any racing. She flew one race in '29 that I know of. It was to Cleveland, from Santa Monica, California. But she would be the starter of our races and would drop the flag at the race horse start. And she was around at all of our Ninety-Nine meetings and was there with us a great deal especially

around Roosevelt Field, New York, on the east coast prior to the time she married George Palmer Putnam. She was really a very beautiful woman, inside and out. She was sincerely interested in promoting women and aviation. I remember her saying, and I will never forget the day we were sitting on a bench there at Roosevelt Field, and she knew that I was determined to make a career of aviation and go as far as I could. She said, "Aviation was so unfair to women." She said, "They work so hard to pay for their flying time and get their experience and rating, and when they receive that degree of proficiency and they go to get a position, they get nothing but stonewalls and heartaches because they are turned down for pilot's positions." And she said, "Men can go into the military and the taxpayers will pay for their flying time free, and then when they get through, after having it given to them they can go to the airlines and to corporate and professional jobs and get good positions." And she said, "Women just don't have a chance to do that." So she had the desire to prove that women could fly safe and careful. And I have always had that desire, too. I could name about six women in the United States that have tried very hard to promote women's ability to fly.

Jenkins: Apparently then in terms of racing and training, Amelia Earhart did very little of either.

Whyte: She did absolutely no instructing at all. She had very, very few hours of flying. And she did no racing. But she tried to improve herself every way she could. Right there (pointing) there are nine pilots that was put out by (Look Magazine in 1938,) and they are the top women pilots in the world for hours. And as you can see, I had twenty-eight hundred hours then, Pheobe Omlie, had twenty-five hundred hours, Laura Ingles had twenty-three hundred hours. They were all girls that instructed at airports and flew every day. That's what builds up your hours. All right, if you will notice that Amelia Earhart and Jaquiline Cochran, neither one had enough hours to get into that group of nine.

Jenkins: We know of her primarily for what reason then?

Whyte: She was a dedicated woman. She sincerely tried to help women in aviation and everything, but her claim to fame is her ocean hops and things like that. She married George Palmer Putman, and he was a publisher and a promoter of the worst kind. He would . . . that picture. People have often asked me what I thought of that picture, and my answer is that . . .

Jenkins: The movie of her life?

Whyte: The movie of her life. And I would say, "It did not portray George Palmer Putnam the heel that he was", because,

I have heard two other people that knew them both make the very same remark, he would promote these things and demand that she do them, way above her ability. Like flying to Hawaii, flying the ocean, flying around the world. She didn't have enough hours to do it. Paul Manse out in California made that remark in the movie that she was not qualified to do that kind of flying. And he would still push her on. Well, being a promoter, he would write her up in every paper in the world, so naturally she was well known. Now Laura Ingles made a trip to Mexico City and back, made a trip all around South America solo in a Lockheed Orion, which is the same plane that Amelia flew lots of times, and she poor-boyed it. She did not have money to hire a promoter or to publicize her flying. She barely had enough money and borrowed money to buy gasoline to do what she did. And nobody ever heard of Laura Ingles. You have to, in anything in this world, to get it in the newspapers and get it in the magazines to let people know about it and then you are the outstanding one in that profession. All it takes is money and publicity. I don't mean to sound bad by saying that. Please don't get me wrong. Amelia Earhart was a terrific person. She did a lot for women in aviation. We needed her. At that stage she was kind of a leader, helping to prove that women could do it, but she was led to

do the things she did by her promoter husband, George Palmer Putnam, because he was a publisher and a promoter. Amelia was so sincere in her conversation and in her objectives and obtaining them for good of all women pilots. Every time she would have a summer off or something she would go to some college and take a short course somewhere. And this year, this summer, she was up there in Kansas at some college taking a course, and they were in the dining room and she was sitting there with her elbows on the table answering the questions of all the girls there in the school about her flights and exploits and so forth. And I know it was all sincere and constructive and good for them. Anyway, a few weeks later the Dean walked through the dining room and two girls were sitting there with their elbows on the table like that, and she pointed to them and she said, "You take your elbows off the table immediately." And one girl said, "Amelia Earhart put her elbows on the table." And the Dean said, "Yes, but Amelia Earhart has flown two oceans." It was her sincere, truthful, honest, down to earth self doing that. She meant no harm by it.

Jenkins: Are there other women that you would like to speak of that you have known?

Whyte: Well, there are the girls that flew back forty or fifty years ago that contributed and dedicated a great deal to aviation. To me, I think the Stinson girls probably contributed the most constructive flying for the good of aviation. Katherine would go out to many of the schools and colleges and try to promote, try to ask them to teach aviation subjects in their curriculum, because she had such faith in the future of aviation, and she did that many, many years before the schools would even consider aviation worth learning. Katherine Stinson was proven so right, that now aviation has been our fastest growing industry. And we have more people employed in aviation than even in the automobile industry, which is supposed to be our largest industry. And now many of our colleges are teaching all of the aviation subjects, which is wonderful because it gives our youth an opportunity to get into the profession that they want, and they can get it in college. And, of course, Katherine Stinson saw this back in 1912 and 13, which was admirable. Then on down through the years we had Ruth Law that flew during World War I. She sold Liberty Bonds all over the United States from an airplane. And we had Tiny Broadwick, I think it was in 1911 and '12 & '13. She was a parachutist. At sixteen years old her father was taking her around to the different county

fairs and selling her act for money, and they would take her up in a balloon and she would jump out by parachute. She did this all through the teens. I've met her on several occasions the last ten or fifteen years. I had a letter from her when she was eighty-two about two years ago. She has since passed on, but was a terrific person. The last twenty or twenty-five years aviation has opened up so many opportunities for women. We find women now in aeronautical engineering, running flight schools, running instrument training schools, head of the human factors of aviation departments, Dr. Dora Daugherty at Bell Helicopter is doing a terrific job for them. People I have talked to say, "No man has ever been so sincere and done so much for Bell." She was the first woman to form the grid line to teach instruments on helicopters, because helicopters due to their motions and many axis that you have to consider with instruments are very difficult to set up for instrument flying, and she engineered that and perfected it. And I am very proud of the many, many things that our women have done down through the years. And back to Amelia again, she was needed at her time, and she did a very good job. She was a great loss to women and to all aviation, really, losing her at that time.

Jenkins: Are there other women, either individuals or activities of

women that you would like to speak to here?

Whyte: Well, we have women in all phases of aviation. A pilot is just a small part of it. We have the weather bureau, meterologists, that women are interested in and are pursuing. We have women in the controllers, tower control, center control of airlines that are doing the same work as men. The last twenty or twenty-five years there have been so many opportunities open for women. And, thank goodness, just the last five or six years we have had the airlines open up to the women.

Jenkins: As pilots?

Whyte: As pilots. Well, they are being employed as flight engineers, and then they go on in to the right seat the same as a man

He doesn't go right into the pilot seat usually. It depends on the size of the airplane. If it is a small airline he'll go into the right seat. If it is a large airline he goes as a flight engineer for a few years. Then into the right seat and then into the left seat for captain.

Jenkins: Are there women flying commercial airlines today, as far as you know?

Whyte: Yes, we do have. And I have two here from my school that have been employed on the airlines. I had five girls that flew with the WASPs that I had taught to fly in New Orleans that flew with the WASPs during World War II flying all types

of military planes. And I have had women stop in here at this airport and actually thank me for pursuing and trying to prove for many years that women do make good safe pilots. That has been my main objective, is to prove that a woman's make-up, her temperament, her judgment is equal to any man's in making a good, safe pilot.

Jenkins: Do you know of commercial airlines that are hiring women as pilots today?

Whyte: Yes. Trans-Texas has six and I think Braniff has three. United has hired at least five or six lately. There are one hundred eleven women airline pilots now that have been employed by different phases of airlines, big airlines and small airlines.

Jenkins: All over the United States? and all over the world.

Whyte: All over the United States, yes. And from what I hear they are doing a very good job. It was very gratifying here about a month ago a big, tall, very slender girl, beautiful girl walked into my office with a pilot's uniform on and two pilots behind her. And she introduced herself as Denise Blankenship. And she said, "I was in Dallas. I wanted to come out and see you." She said, "I have read about you. You have been my inspiration for getting into flying." She said, "I am with Piedmont Airlines over on the coast now, and I have been with them for four and a half years."

She said, "When I went around five years ago to try to get employment from the different airlines, the big airlines turned me down because I was a woman. I went to Piedmont and they hired me." Since then I am going right on up. I am eighth in seniority now, and I will soon be captain." I have had some of the major airlines send scouts to me asking me to leave Piedmont and come with them now, because they are forced to hire women." And now I am mostly trained. I would not do it. They would not hire me when I needed work so badly and needed training. Piedmont employed me when I wanted work. The pilots here have helped me so much to do my job well. I wouldn't leave Piedmont even if they offered me a big increase in salary because they helped and I want to stay with them."

Jenkins: What is she flying with Piedmont?

Whyte: 727. The right seat. A small airline, the seniority list goes over faster than the big airlines. Takes years in the big airlines to get on up, you know.

Jenkins: Now the right seat is the co-pilot?

- Whyte: The right seat is the co-pilot. The left seat is the chief pilot. And everybody's ambition is to get enough training to get over in the left seat. And so she has hopes of doing that, she says, in a couple of years.
- Jenkins: But there are women with some of the major airlines who are in the left seat today?
- Whyte: Yes, Emily Powell is flying in an airlines up in Denver and she is in the left seat, the captain. She is one of them. Sherry Emminger and Karen Squyre's crew is flying in Hawaii Airlines. I think all the rest of them are either flight engineers or right seat pilots.
- Jenkins: Well, is it simply a matter of time? Flying hours?
- Whyte: Time, flying hours, experience and training. Before they get into the left seat.
- Jenkins: But the time has come when they can't be just automatically kept out of that left seat.
- Whyte: No. A matter of their seniority. It's really gratifying to me to see the progress the women are doing and to hear how well they are doing in their jobs. One little thing that kind of amused me, I was flying for Electricoating down in New Orleans, and I happened to stop in New Orleans on this day and the weather was very bad and the ceiling was low and it was drizzling. And I didn't want to take

out of there across the swamp, across Lake Ponchartrain, so I taxied my airplane down to the hangar on the east side of the field and it was all closed in for bad weather and the pilots were all on the ground. And I stood in the door, and having had a school in New Orleans for seven years before the war, I taught many to fly at this airport. I thought, "I wonder if there is anybody here I taught to fly?" And I looked in the door and there was some pilot, and this was in '65 or '66, many years later. And this pilot said, "That's Edna Gardner standing in the door." They were sitting around a table, playing cards, and one pilot stood up and said, "Are you Edna Gardner?" And I said, "Yes." They said, "You taught my instructor's instructor to fly. What relation does that make us?" I said, "You are my great great grand pilot." And so it was quite interesting. That was over thirty years later, and I had gone back and found a third generation of my pilots.

Jenkins: I guess you run into them everywhere.

Whyte: Yes, they are all over the world flying.

Jenkins: Okay. Let's return to your competitive races now, and kind of bring those up to date, and even kind of guess at what there may be in the future for your competitive flying. We were somewhere around '59, I believe, last time.

Whyte: Some people like competition and some don't, and I think I have had more than my share of the competitive spirit because it has always been a thrill to me and a challenge to compete against somebody in flying, in all phases of it. Acrobatics, bomb dropping, spot landings, close course racing, cross country racing, any phase of it was really a challenge to me and I enjoyed it and I still enjoy it and I am still entering races. I hope I will be able to for many years to come. My mother lived with me the last nine years of her life. The beginning of my flying she objected to it so much, but as the years went on she enjoyed going with me across the country. And when she was eighty and eighty-five she was my co-pilot in about five races around this area and Kansas City.

Jenkins: Oh, she was a flyer?

Whyte: I had taught her to fly.

Jenkins: I see. At what age did she learn?

Whyte: I think she was fifty-five when she learned. She was still in Minnesota.

Jenkins: Did she solo a lot?

Whyte: No, very little. She never got a license. We would go on a race and she would hold the heading and altitude while I was doing the navigating and checking and keep everything straight. And we won the Dallas Doll Derby

I think she was more thrilled than I was that we won in Dallas a couple years in a row.

Jenkins: Now that was about when?

Whyte: That must have been '62 or '63. And then we went to fly the Sky Lady Derby Race at Kansas City one time. And the press over there found her at eighty-three as a co-pilot, they just followed her around. And she didn't like that. She was of a generation that publicity was a disgrace, and she couldn't understand how I would allow it. Her bringing up didn't approve of such things. But it's just part of the game. You have to kind of go along with them when they start questioning you. Anyway, they had her stand in front of the plane and hold the propeller and they took her picture. And that came out in a four column picture the full length of the front page of the Kansas City paper. And she just took it and hid it, and she said, "Oh, I hope none of my friends see it." It was so terrible, you know, to be publicized like that.

Jenkins: You have a copy of that, I suppose?

Whyte: Yes, I have it in my papers there.

Jenkins: How long did she live?

Whyte: She lived until she was eighty-five. A very, very, active, well woman. She drove her own car until she was taken ill with gallstones, a hemorrhaging gallbladder, and she

passed on in four days. And about a week before that she had driven her car from Houston from my brother's place.

Jenkins: But she had overcome her earlier illness then?

Whyte: Yes, in her teens she had tuberculosis very bad. One time she was in the sanitarium three years. They didn't have the antibiotics to treat tuberculosis. It was just rest and food, you know. And she happened to live through all of that. A lot of people didn't. Tuberculosis was quite a disease during those years. And now all you have to do is take antibiotics and you are well. But she lived to a ripe old age, and every time she would get x-rayed she would have big scars on both lungs.

Jenkins: What are some of the other memorable races?

Whyte: Well, the International Air Race from Miami to El Salvador was a very interesting race. I will never forget coming down through Minitiland and Ectopek down through Tapachula on the Pacific coast of the Peninsula going down to San Salvador. Here came a whole fleet of AT6s toward us, and it was the El Salvador army. They had come out to meet us, and every AT6 got beside each one of our little planes and escorted us in to San Salvador. And they took us around that beautiful country down there and showed us the volcanos and the falls in the mountains at the resort area . . . you could look up . . .

hundreds of feet and you could see the falls coming out of the top of the mountain, and all the green moss on the stones had orchids growing on them all the way down to the water. And there were rocks that you walked on down at the bottom of this water and looked up at the falls. They have so many beautiful places down there in that area. I never will forget the beach there is all black in one area where the volcano ash has been on it. Many, many years ago it ruptured and made the beach black. San Salvador people are so generous with their hospitality that all America should consider them as friends. And down a ways it is a snow white beach.

Jenkins: But it is sandy?

Whyte: Sandy black. And El Salvador Aviation Club is out there in that black area, and that was a beautiful building and beautiful blue water came up to this black, sparkly beach, you know, it was so pretty. They took us up into the mountains one time to Aro Club Clubhouse that they had there. They had two marimba bands playing. And they put the American woman pilots behind some of the instruments and took pictures of it and showed it all over the United States at that time. And I happened to come in first on that race and it was quite interesting. The San Salvador people were so generous and hospitable. They are lovely people. I could say the same thing about the people of Managua, Nicaragua, two times we terminated our race there, and once started it there. Each time we were entertained by the President of the country, also by the American ambassador and

his wife at a swim party or cocktail party or something like that. It just makes me sick to think of all the trouble they are having down there now, because they were such nice people to the Americans.

Jenkins: Were the races by this time open? That is men and women both?

Whyte: No, it was always an all women race. It's really not quite fair because we have been so eager to get into the men's races and we object to men coming into our races. Now we shouldn't be that way. We should let them come into our races, too. There are men who have even gone to court in the last two years to enter the Powder Puff Derby and our Women's Trans Continental Air Races because they said we are discriminating against men. And the court decision was in favor of the woman pilots keeping their races as it was and the men couldn't get in. That isn't right. They should let them in if they want to compete.

Jenkins: My question is, why do the men and why do the women want to keep the others out?

Whyte: That's right. I don't know.

Jenkins: You don't know.

Whyte: They are afraid of the competition, I guess.

Jenkins: Both are afraid?

Whyte: Yes. I think what makes them get so much publicity on the women's race, is because the women are racing airplanes wide open across the United States, and they are racing it for large purses. This year the Air Race Classic, which used to

be in the Powder Puff Derby, has over twenty thousand dollars for first prize money in the race, and the men want to get in and get in on some of that. I feel they should be allowed to.

Jenkins: Well, are the men's races still bringing more prize money than the women's?

Whyte: Yes, they always have. We used to have the Thompson Trophy Race and the Bendix Trophy Race and they would put up fifty to a hundred thousand dollars on some of those races for purses. And we had never had that much money for women's races. I am in favor of the men and women each one racing their airplanes, competing equally and just make it a friendly sporting competition.

Jenkins: Well now, some men have sued to try to get into the women's races. Have any of the women sued to get into the men's races?

Whyte: Yes, we did. On the Bendix Race which comes from California into Cleveland years ago. And finally we got Jacqueline Cochran to fly that race, Louise Sadin flew that race in a Staggerwing Beech and won it over a group of thirteen men. And then after that they would never let women in it again.

Jenkins: But as far as you know women haven't sued to get into those races like men have sued to get into the women's races. Why don't the women sue?

Whyte: Well, men don't have too many races.

Jenkins: Oh, really?

Whyte: They don't have many, they don't go to the work in planning the year round work that is necessary to put on a race.

Jenkins: Women race more than men do?

Whyte: Yes. The Reno Races are pylon races, unlimited races, formula I races, bi-plane races. They have at Reno. Now the women can enter any of those they want to. We have Judy Wagoner that is coming in way high out of probably thirty or forty men racing, she is in the first five every year. And she is excellent. She is doing a beautiful job. We are real proud of her. And she has a very good plane that is real fast, that her husband, Dr. Wagoner has built for her.

Jenkins: So women have more races for women then men have for men.

Whyte: That is true.

Jenkins: There are some mixed races.

Whyte: Oh, yes. There are many now. We have the Palms Race. There are probably three or four races on the west coast each year that's put on for men and women. They both can enter. And we still have a couple of women's races around Chicago and New England, but there are a lot of races that both men and women can enter. It's not restricted like it was forty years ago.

Jenkins: But apparently women racers today race more then men racers.

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: I didn't realize that.

Whyte: You see, this Powder Puff Race we have had since '28, and what is interesting about that, they have raced it for many years and they have never had a fatality. And we have never had a men's race that hasn't had one fatality or somebody being hurt coming to and from the race. It is very funny. I can't understand it because women aren't that much better. It's just fate, I guess. Maybe we just try harder to be safe.

Jenkins: Then almost from the beginning of organized racing, women have raced more than men?

Whyte: No. The first two races we had for women were in '29 into Cleveland, Ohio there, was a women's race. That was the very first. And then after that we had some big races for men. As I said, the Thompson Trophy and Bendix put up a great deal of money. And the men competed in that and finally women got into it and competed, too. But since then it has been all women's efforts in racing. The Thompson Trophy and the Bendix race was discontinued after the women won it two times.

Jenkins: Since about what . . . ?

Whyte: About '49.

Jenkins: Since '49 women have had more races?

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: In all of these years then, according to these 121 trophies, you obviously have won a great many races. I expect there have been some that haven't won in, too. Kind of review for us then summarize your competitive career right up until now, and kind of look to what you expect in the future from your own racing career.

Whyte:

Well, I think the fact that I did racing gives a little stimulant to the young girls through the years, which I hope it does. As you look back to the fact that I flew eight to ten to twelve races a year and only have a hundred and nineteen trophies, I flew many races that I didn't win. Each race, if you will remember, would be an effort of getting a plane, getting it ready, getting it waxed, and getting it tuned, and preparing it for the race, and then possibly taking up to two weeks plus expenses to fly a race. I would like to say that in the race I just flew in 1979, the transcontinental air race, flying a 400 Comanche from Santa Monica, California to Cleveland, Ohio cost my co-pilot and myself over \$4500.00. But there is a lot of time and money involved in every race. And there were many races I flew that I didn't win. But I do feel that I won more than my share. I think all of these goodies should be passed around to everybody and not just a few. I don't know if I should mention this, but I do know that many years, thirty years ago, when I was winning so many races, girls would be stand-offish. And the girls that I was flying against then were young girls with lots less hours than I had. And it was very easy for me to beat them and win a race. And now those same girls are so good that when I fly a race now, I can't beat them. And when you don't win so many races they are lots more friendly. It is much more fun to fly a race now because you go along to meet your old friends.

Jenkins: How often do you race now?

Whyte: Well, I only flew two races last year. I had tried to enter the third one and the weather prevented it. But I would like very much to enter some more this year, two more at least.

Jenkins: Do you have any intention of slowing down your competitive career?

Whyte: Not as long as the Lord gives me the health that I have, and I am able to do it. I would like to keep on competing. I enjoy it. I guess I enjoy it more to get out and get the young girls interested and getting them racing. I always take one of my girl students with me as a co-pilot, hoping that she will become as interested as I have always been through the many years. And I can truthfully say I don't know of any woman in the United States that every time she would fly a race she would take a new beginning pilot with her. And I always have taken a new girl, trying to teach her the racing tricks. I thought, "Well, I will take this girl this race and see if I can interest her in competition."

Jenkins: Now there are no restrictions on you as far as age is concerned, simply having to pass physical exams.

Whyte: Yes, as soon as I can pass the FAA physical I am able to fly.

Jenkins: They have no actual age restrictions.

Whyte: No.

Jenkins: In the races that you entered with men over the years, would

you care to talk about how well you did compared to how well you did in races against other women, perhaps?

Whyte: Well, we are making speeds and getting more speeds out of the airplanes. Now like the Cessna 310, the girls in the last two years have been getting well over two hundred and ten miles an hour out of them. And I have heard many men pilots say, "I never get that speed out of that airplane, how does she do it?" This girl from Illinois, Mary Jane, is getting well over two hundred and six, two hundred and eight miles an hour average across the United States out of a Comanche. Well, the Twin Comanche isn't supposed to go twice that fast. Men can't understand how a girl can get it to go that fast.

Jenkins: Well, in the races that men and women compete in then, are women winning many of the races.

Whyte: They are winning more than their share.

Jenkins: Is that right? That's what I was getting at.

Whyte: Yes, they are. I think a woman takes it very seriously, and she tries to fly very straight and smooth and that is what it takes, hour after hour on cross country racing.

Jenkins: Now you mentioned how much time that it took to get a plane ready for a race. Do you do most of that mechanical checking and fixing?

Whyte: I supervise the things that it takes to speed the plane up. In most cases I hire it done. I put over four thousand dollars getting my Mooney ready with some new radio equipment for the International Air Race this year.

And after I bought my plane I had to spend this money on it to get it suitable for a race. And it is coming up for overhaul this next year, and that means another five thousand dollars that I will have to put out before I can race it again.

Jenkins: How much mechanical work may you do on one?

Whyte: I have always been very interested in mechanics. In the very beginning oh, back in '27 and '28, I used to grind valves and wash engines parts and take the engine apart and try to put it together again. The boys would help me and show me how to do it pretty well. But I have always been interested in the mechanical part of flying. I think that's what helped me get my position with Electricoating Corporation as a salesman on aircraft and engines parts.

Jenkins: Do you still do some mechanical work?

Whyte: No, I don't now. I do know what is going wrong with the engine. I know when it needs, what it needs if it is a valve slapping or loose guide or if the mixture is too rich or what is making it detonate and all that. I know and understand all of that what a pilot should. But many pilots learn to fly airplanes and don't even know what is under the hood. It's like driving a car and never looking under the hood.

Jenkins: You probably could do a lot of this, but you have other things to do.

- Whyte: Yes, I could and would like to have the time to do it. I just don't have time to do that phase of it. I have eight airplanes, and I put them in the shop when they are up for hundred hour checks, and annual inspections and so forth, and oil changes and have it done. It's not humanly possible to do so many things.
- Jenkins: Are there other things about racing that you feel that we need to do before I ask you something else? Now your future in racing, you simply want to continue racing at your present clip as long as you can, I suppose?
- Whyte: Yes, I really do. I would love to. It's a thrill. It's good for you. I think you need an interest and stimulation when you get older. I feel sorry for people that sit in rocking chairs with no interests or hobbies.
- Jenkins: What's the oldest person you ever taught to fly from scratch?
- Whyte: Dr. Miller. He was a doctor in Flint, Michigan. He was 74, and he said all his life he had wanted to learn to fly. And I taught him to solo. He didn't go ahead and get his license, but he did solo. It just simply gave him a whole new world, learning to fly, and he took it very seriously and tried very hard. Anybody can learn to fly at any age. I have students here at Aero Valley that I am teaching now. I have log books up there for them that are eleven, twelve, and thirteen years old. At that age they absorb, and you would be surprised, they retain more than you really think they do when you are

explaining things to them. If you are interested anyone can learn to fly.

Jenkins: What do you see as the future of competitive racing? Is it growing? Is the number of events growing, a growing number of people getting into each event?

Whyte: Well, as the new generations come along they create an interest in competitive flying and different areas will have their little local races, and all of the new pilots and pilots in that area will join and enter more for fun, and for getting together, and for building up their hours and fly skills. It's growing. In fact we have more of everything because we have more people.

Jenkins: Well, is it in any way comparable to kids' day in barrel racing? Do you ever have a race out of here? Local people ever just kind of get together for a barrel race?

Whyte: Yes. But they do have more over here at Justin about seven miles west of here, because they don't have a great deal of traffic and they can have just a little pylon race around the airport. But we wouldn't dare do it here at Aero Valley. We have too many strangers coming in and out. It would be quite hazardous.

Jenkins: But that is just a local race?

Whyte: A local race, and they will put it on every year. They have a couple of them over there just for fun.

Jenkins: Is that kind of thing growing as far as you know?

Whyte: Yes, it is. Getting out and knowing and enjoying your airplane more.

Jenkins: I want to ask you about your opportunity that you had for flying a jet. Can you tell us about that?

Whyte: They called me from Carswell Air Force Base, and asked me if I would like to fly a jet. Well, I said, "I always felt that would be a great thrill, and I have never had the opportunity and I sure would enjoy it." So they thought they could arrange a flight for me in a F2, anyway, it's one of their biggest low altitude strafing jets which is one of the fastest ones they have, a two seater. And I thought that would be a great thrill, but I couldn't imagine it ever coming to pass. But then they called me and asked me to come over to Carswell Air Force Base on Sunday morning. It was the only day they could get the doctors and go through the physical. So I went over there and took their entire physical. It took the whole day. I passed everything. My blood pressure, my heart, my electrocardiogram, my altitude chamber test, everything. And I was so thrilled because I knew I was feeling well and in pretty good health, but I didn't know I could pass the same thing as twenty-eight year and twenty-five year old men were passing. So then they put in the papers about my physical and sent it out to some general in Georgia who has charge of the particular squadron or particular airplanes that I was to fly. And when he saw my age on that paper, he said, "No, we cannot be responsible for her if she has to take the ejection seat, she would not be able to take it." And that

was the report that came back. I teach acrobatics and spins and loops and rolls and snap rolls and everything practically every day if the weather is good, and I just wish he had known that, maybe he would have felt that I could have taken more. But that was his reply that they didn't want to take the responsibility. So I didn't get to fly. As much as I have contributed to the training of pilots for aviation for 52 years, this was a big disappointment to me.

Jenkins: And you couldn't communicate with him?

Whyte: No. I tried to. I called and I said, "Is there any way that I can call him on the phone and explain to him how much it really meant to me and that I am in good health and I am teaching acrobatics and what I am actually doing, to see if he wouldn't reconsider?" But they said, "No, we have to take his letter as final." So that terminated that. So I don't know if I will ever get to fly a jet. I hope so, if I don't I hope that the girls that are coming along now will get to fly them.

Jenkins: Let's go back now and have you sketch your navy career as a nurse.

Whyte: Well, as I said I received my commission into the Navy Nurse Corps in '29, and I was stationed there at Great Lakes Naval Hospital for a couple of years and at Newport Rhode Island, for a couple of years. All that time I had my own airplane and a lot of off duty hours which I was able to fly and finance with my nursing profession. And then I was transferred to the Washington D.C. Naval Hospital. And the hospital at that time was at

23rd and E, not too far from the White House. And the hours on duty were very short, very desirable nursing. I used to, just as soon as I would get off duty, I would dash out to Beacon Airport, Hibra Valley Congressional Airport. We had a sign up in front of the airport that said 'we teach you to fly for \$49.50.' All right, that meant we had to take that student and teach him as fast as we could and solo him, and then we would have our \$49.50. But we were teaching in J2 Cubs and C3 Aroncas, which were very easy to fly. It was just like a powered glider. In fact I soloed people from around forty-five minutes up to two and a half hours training and they were able to fly it alone. And so during that period there were two Japanese boys walked in the door one day. And another pilot said, "Give them to Edna. So. I took them, and I thought, "Well, I'll have a speech handicap with them, and it will be a little difficult, but I will do my best." I soloed both of them. And during that period they asked me down to the embassy there in Washington to dinner, which was a very unusual, rare occasion to have dinner at the Japanese Embassy because of their food and their ways of living and everything. This was back in 1934, when Japan was more like Japan was as we used to think of it in history. It isn't like it is now. It is modern now. Right after they finished up there, I finished them up, they went out to Chanute, Illinois, to a military field and our government paid for more of their

training. The U.S.A. put them through heavier ship training, and then they went back to Japan and started their own Air Force. They were part of the head of the Japanese Air Force in 1941 when they bombed us in Pearl Harbor. Innocently, I taught them to fly, and I have always felt guilty about that. It makes me upset about our government training them, too, giving them free training and then sending them back. Then another thing I did during that period before the war was, I had my school in New Orleans, and the Japanese were over here buying scrap iron and any dried food they could get and ship back in barrels, you know. And so this Japanese man would come out, and I flew him down to the shrimp platform down at the mouth of the river around Lake Barataria. These beautiful pink platforms were built out in the swamps, and they were built like waves where the shrimp could be put on it and drain and dry. As soon as they would dry they would barrel them up, and every so many weeks they would have a shrimp auction. Everybody would fly down there and bid on this dried shrimp. The different countries would. So I would fly this Japanese man down there. He came out every time to ask me to take him down in a Cub on floats. I would take him down and he would out bid everybody down there. I had a couple of people threaten me because I was allowing this Japanese to get down there and out bid all of the barrels of shrimp. He would take them and put them on big boats and send them back to Japan.

They were used for their food during World War II. So there were two occasions that I did things that I regret.

Jenkins: This was just sun dried?

Whyte: Sun dried shrimp. They put them on these huge platforms out in the swamps there, and as soon as they were dry put them in barrels and auction them off.

Jenkins: Back to your nursing career.

Whyte: Nursing has on several occasions worked beautifully with having a pilot's license. I was stationed there in Washington, D.C. and Senator McAdo came to the U.S. Naval Hospital with a big boil on the end of his nose, and I happened to be his nurse on the ward there taking care of him. He asked me if I had ever been in the White House. He took me, after he got well, down to the White House and let me walk through the different rooms. Then later on Elliot Roosevelt had his appendix out, and he asked me down to an egg rolling and he took me inside and that was the second time I was in the White House. The third time was when the Whirlygirls went in there and Lady Byrd Johnson was our hostess and served us tea. I have some pictures in my scrapbook over there taken with Lady Byrd and Dr. Dora Dauherthy and four girls with helicopter ratings.

Jenkins: Oh, that's the Whirlygirls?

Whyte: Yes. The Whirlygirls are girls with helicopter ratings.

Jenkins: Do you have one?

Whyte: I have the picture.

Jenkins: I mean do you have a helicopter rating?

Whyte: Yes, I do. I took my helicopter rating after I came back from World War II from the Pacific. That's another story, too. So that gave me three opportunities to visit the White House. Once through helicopters and twice through nursing. Then I had a choice of going to sea for the Navy on the hospital boat, and then I thought, "Well, I am making so much money instructing students out at the local airports after hours, that I might just as well stop and resign from the Navy and fly all the time." Which I did. I resigned from the Navy. I drove down to New Orleans, and started to fly for Hobby-Maynard Air Service down there.

Jenkins: Let me stop you now. Didn't you have South Pacific experience?

Whyte: Yes, that was after the war.

Jenkins: As a nurse.

Whyte: Yeah. Army Nurse Corps.

Jenkins: Oh, you were in the Navy. . .

Whyte: Yes, I was in the Navy six years, the Army Corps a year and a half.

Jenkins: Okay, but how about your Navy nursing?

Whyte: That terminated when I resigned at Washington, D.C.

Jenkins: So most of that career was around there.

Whyte: Yes, in the Navy at three different stations. But all that time I was flying and had my own airplane at a local airport.

Jenkins: So it was in the Army that you had your South Pacific experience?

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: Shall we go to that?

Whyte: Yes. I ran New Orleans Air College in New Orleans up until '41 and the war broke out. And so they chose to build a Naval training base there on Lake Pontchartrain in New Orleans on the lakefront there. And I had a school over at the Wadell Williams Air Port and a nice lease on the land, and two hangars and a shop that I had built, and several airplanes. So during the war if they needed other fields they were able to take them. So I had to sell my hangars and my lease on my land and my landing strips to the Navy. Then I came up to Fort Worth and I taught Army pilots on War CTP and War Training Service contracts all during the war.

Jenkins: As a civilian.

Whyte: As a civilian flight instructor, and I taught instruments.

At the end of the war I was an instrument examiner and I think that was the most difficult job I ever had in my life. In fact I have had repercussions to it until two years ago. When the boys would finish their instrument training, if they didn't pass at such and such a grade, why they would go into the walking army, and if they did pass they would go into the Air Force. They made me an examiner to make this decision for them. I am telling you I have had boys come in and break down and cry because they got lost in orientation

problems on instruments. All I could say was that I wouldn't want to be in a plane with a pilot that got lost in orientation problems. Conscientiously, and for your safety, I could not pass you. Some of those men have come to me years later and say how much it hurt them. It changed their whole life. I don't know why they made me do that dirty work, but you had to be honest and do it right. So then in February of '44 General Arnold said he had enough pilots trained. He didn't want any more pilots. So we went to work at seven in the morning and by twelve o'clock at noon we were all paid off. It was the end of the government contracts. So I put in for my commission in the Army Nurse Corps, and I went through basic down at Fort Sam Houston. Then I put in for overseas, and I went down to the South Pacific on the U.S.S. Army Comfort with the thousand nurses and doctors that went down at the end of the war for the invasion of Japan. We were preparing medical and setups for the invasion, and we knew it was going to be a bloody mess. When we got about three-fourths down there, why, Hiroshima was bombed and the war was over. But we went on into the Philippines and I stayed down there a year and a half rehabilitating prisoners of war and soldiers that came into the hospital unit down there. We would get them back to health and send them back to their country. We sent back people to Holland, and France, Australia, all over the world. Our units would

bring them back to health and send them home.

Jenkins: Did you do any flying while you were there?

Whyte: I was stationed at Camp Stassonburgh, which was seventy miles north of Manila, and it was right next to Clark Field. The Colonel that was in charge of Clark Field, his name was Colonel Alexander Peck. It was quite a coincidence because when I was at Newport, Rhode Island, I was doing an acrobatic act at an all veterans air show over at Providence, Rhode Island, and I had to get off duty an hour early to get over to put my act on with my plane. I asked another girl to relieve me, I dashed out to the airport and found the shock cord on one side of my landing gear was almost worn in two. I thought, well, there is enough rubber there to make two landings and get me back to Newport. So I went over there and there were tens of thousands of people in grandstands and all waiting along the airport there. When my turn came in about fifteen minutes after I got there I went up and did my loops and rolls and spins. It was an acrobatic act which I had been doing up and down the coast there at different air shows. When I landed, the shock cord let go and I went around in a ground loop and tore my wing tip. I was so embarrassed, after putting on a show and supposed to be so good, here I tore my wing tip. So this fellow by the name of Alex Peck came, and

two other men, they came out there in a truck and brought my airplane in and repaired it. Well, here it was fifteen or sixteen years later I was down in the South Pacific and this tall, goodlooking Colonel walked up to me and said, "Aren't you Edna Gardener the flying nurse?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "Do you remember when you ground looped at Providence, Rhode Island?" And he said, "I'm the tall, skinny kid that repaired your wing tip."

Whyte:

Here he was a Colonel in the Air Force. He finished college, went through the rank in the Air Force, and gone all the way up and he was a commanding officer at Clark Field down there in the Philippines. He had the evaluating of all the aircraft in the South Pacific. They would bring airplanes in there and he would fly them and judge them and if they were too worn out he would throw them over the big old embankment there in the trash heap, or if they were in pretty good shape he would send them back to the States.

So he would call me over at the hospital and say, "Can you come on over and we will fly several airplanes." So I flew a lot of C47s and a lot of B25s, 26s and I would fly the right seat and he would fly the left and I would help him with the gear and co-pilot stuff. So I got to fly quite a few military planes there, kind of unofficial over there. But I will never forget one day he called up and he says,

"We are going over to Mindanao for a steak cookout. Bring a couple of other nurses and doctors, we are going over in a B25." And so we went to the bakery and to the commissary and we picked up steaks and bread and all kinds of goodies. I had an old box camera, a little three inch square box camera, that I had dropped on the boat going over and broke it all to pieces. I picked up the pieces and put them together with hospital tape. It was all hospital tape holding this box together. I had a lot of film and this old broken box. I didn't know what I was getting for pictures. I crawled down under this pilot's seat and co-pilot seat on my nose and my stomach and got up in the front there. It was a big plastic ball like for the bombers to sight with and I took pictures of the debris in Manila Bay, and I took pictures of Mindanao and Corrigedor and Bataan and all through there, all points of interest. A couple of guys said, "Get out of there Edna. I've got a decent camera. Let me down there." And they had beautiful German Leica cameras, you know, real good cameras. The funniest thing happened. I got beautiful pictures. And fifteen years later they were writing me for my films, my negatives of those pictures of Manila Bay that I took with this old box camera. That was really interesting duty down there because you felt you were doing some good. Our boys, some of them, were in pretty bad shape,

especially the ones that had been taken prisoner and everything, and I enjoyed helping them get back to health. I will never forget one time it rained for two weeks down there, and during that time we had a hurricane that came across to Okinawa and it hit us pretty hard there on Luzon. We were taking care of patients in long tents with beds on both sides. I will never forget this day. We had boots on and mud and it had been raining for two weeks, and the tent blew down, and water would go between the beds of patients and get so heavy and we crawled along there on our hands and knees and got up and pushed the water off the top of the tent and off the patients and off of their tractions and off of their broken extremities and things like that. And, oh, there were some very interesting experiences down there. I will never forget how the Japanese would come down and raid our garbage cans at night, they were so hungry, from the mountains, to get something to eat. Our boys would stand there and shoot them while they were eating, kill them. I don't know, the war was over, it shouldn't have been done, but I guess war is war. Anyway, then they came around and said, "Now the war is over and most of our patients are sent back to the States and all over the world. Would you like to go back to the States or do you want to go on to Japan and Korea?" I said, "I would like

to go back to the States because the war is over and I am afraid aviation is going to boom and I have got to get back to aviation." The commanding general there told me, he said, "Edna, when your time comes up to go back to the States" . . . they post it on the Bulletin board, and you look up there and find your name that you are leaving at midnight and such and such a time, and I found my name on there and it was to go back to the States on a boat. And he said, "Let me know and I will see that you go back by plane because you should go back by plane, being a pilot." So they were only letting the high point people go back by plane and the low point people go back by boat. I only had six points. I was just down there a short time, and the rest of the nurses had come up from the islands and had high points. So I told him my name was on there, and the first thing I know an hour later my name was taken off. The next thing I knew, about four or five days later, my name was up there to go over on a C54 plane at midnight out of Manila Airport. So I went out there and was waiting in the lobby and this boy came along and he says, "Miss Gardner, what are you doing over here?" It was a boy I had taught to fly at Meacham Field here at Fort Worth, and he was down there in the Philippines as

part of the crew on that plane. So he went up and told the pilot, he said, "We got an army nurse back there that's got more time than all you pilots put together." The pilot said, "Ho, ho, ho, I'll find out about that." So we took off and we didn't have seats in the back. We just sat on the floor in this long C54 four engine plane. So I got all comfortable with my head on my suitcase. So he sent this fellow back and said, "Bring her up here. We will see if she can fly." And this was at midnight. So we were at nine thousand feet and he showed me how to keep the engines synchronized with the shadows of the wings, with the props turning this way. He said, "All right, you hold nine thousand feet and keep on going." Well this particular plane had a auto-pilot. I had never seen an auto-pilot before and I didn't know how to use it or work it or anything. So he took it off auto-pilot and let me have it manually. So I sat there and held nine thousand feet and held the compass heading. So finally he got up and just went back and kidded with the nurses and had some fun. So I flew quite a ways there between the Philippines and Guam. Then we landed at Guam and stayed there a couple of days. When we took off again they told the next crew that I had had flying time and was licensed. So they let me fly.

on into Johnson Island and Quaglon and on into Hickham Field back across the Pacific, which I was quite grateful to fly the C54.

Jenkins: Is that the biggest plane you had flown?

Whyte: The biggest plane that I had ever flown. So then I got back to the States, and I came back to Fort Worth and started to work for Roy Taylor at Meacham Field. I set up a FAA approved flight school, VA approved flight school, and hired several instructors and we got going. I married one of the instructors. George Whyte, in 1946. I got out of the army and went back to Fort Worth.

Jenkins: You were training still for someone else. You hadn't yet gone into . . .

Whyte: My own school? No, I had set up a school and I was in charge of the school for Roy Taylor at Meacham Field.

Jenkins: Was that the end of your nursing career then, when you got out of the Army?

Whyte: Well, I have always enjoyed nursing, and I would nurse at any opportunity I could, but flying is my first love. In 1948 and '49 we had quite a polio epidemic around the United States, and the Red Cross was advertising for registered nurses to take a short polio course on respirators and tracheotomies and all of the complications

that go with polio. I took that course and I was shipped to Evansville, Indiana, and an epidemic there, came back to Parkland Hospital and nursed there for a bit. Then they sent me over to Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth, and for about a year and four months there I did nothing but respirator polio nursing. That is really the last time I have done very much nursing of any degree.

Jenkins: So have we then pretty well covered your entire nursing career?

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: At least the highlights.

Whyte: Since then I have been doing all aviation. Everything has been aviation career.

Jenkins: Do you attempt to stay current with nursing? Could you get back into nursing tomorrow?

Whyte: I have never let my dues elapse on the State Board of Nurses at Austin. I pay them every year. I do it because if I lose my pilot's license I can go back to nursing.

Jenkins: Oh, I see.

Whyte: If I have an accident or anything out here, I would be licensed to put a splint or tourniquet or stop bleeding or things like that. It keeps me current. I am not current in my medicines and treatments as of today, because I

haven't been in a hospital for quite a few years.

Jenkins: Do you have reasons or many opportunities to use your nursing skills?

Whyte: I have been out here since '70 and I haven't had an opportunity to use it yet. Let's hope I never do.

Jenkins: What are some of your other work experiences that helped give you background for going into this business on your own?

Whyte: Well, my husband and I bought Aero Interprises Flight School at Meacham Field. He was a terrific manager and instructor, and we had probably one of the largest schools in the United States for twenty-four years. I worked with him in this school for quite a few years, but then I decided to get out on my own. It just seemed to be better at that time. I applied for a position with Harry Pennington Channelchrome Company out of San Antonio, and it was a job of selling aircraft engine parts. If you are familiar with chrome cylinders, it's a material electroplated under the barrel of an aircraft cylinder that is about 79 hard on a C scale of rock wall. It's a channel plateau process that is broken into a layer of chrome electrically which leaves a channel that is about a molecule of oil wide and four to six thousandths deep to hold oil in the place it should hold it on that barrel.

Always having been very interested in aircraft engines and mechanics, it just seemed quite a challenge for me.

He was quite an elderly, very wealthy man that had had this engine here. He had many, many patents in the oil fields that he had patented and was collecting royalties on, but he was also very interested in this chrome process as a bearing surface for aircraft cylinders. He had huge contracts of three and four thousand cylinders at a time with the military up until about '54 and '55. Then the military phased out their piston engines and went into jets. So therefore he lost his market for chrome cylinders. He then decided that he was going to introduce it to the civilians market, all private airplanes and engines. But we had never used chrome barrels on any of our private aircraft. So it was my job to go through the field, and I was the first salesman on the road that did this. It gave him a lot of pleasure, I think, as I look back at it, to teach me the process and many things that I had to learn to answer all the questions and so forth that I ran into in the field introducing chrome cylinders. You are introducing something for them to use on their engine that controls their life practically. You have to be so careful when you do that. So installing and breaking in chrome is a technique all of its own.

He gave me quite a bit of schooling before I started on my sales trips. When I got out into the field if I ran into any questions that I didn't understand, I would call him long distance or I would write them down for when I returned to the home plant. I would make trips sometimes a week to three weeks at a time calling on every engine overhaul shop and facility in the United States, Canada, and Central America.

Jenkins: This was about what time?

Whyte: This was from '55 to '69. At the time I resigned from that position I came out here and bought this land and started the airport. So whenever there would be a crop duster that was using engines and needed a better bearing surface on his steel barrel, I would call on them and give them the prices and what they were getting and educate them how to set up a chrome engine, how to always use cast iron rings. Never, never use chrome against chrome because the two bearing surfaces are so hard they would eat each other up. They just chew to pieces and you have a malfunction in your engine. We ran into some of that because so many mechanics did not know that, and I couldn't get to them fast enough to teach them. We have now a terrific system. All of the shops that are using chrome know it, and it took thirteen years of hard work to

get around and get that all over to them. So many things, incidents, happened. I think I must have been a little bit mechanically inclined. I know I stopped in one time up there at Rockford, Illinois, and they had just received six cylinders from our plant that was on the bench

This fellow came over to me, and he said, "We got these in several days ago, and I want you to look at this cylinder. It is all scratched around." And I said, "That did not come from our plant that way. Somebody has put a dry hone in there and turned it." And the fellow at the other end of the bench said, "Yes, the Snap-On tool man was here the other day, and he grabbed that barrel and put his hone in there to show how to use the hone." There was so much trouble shooting like that that you had to figure out and help them with. In fact after I resigned from the job and didn't do it anymore, I have so many of the old mechanics and operators come in here and ask me that say, "We sure miss you. The next man they sent around couldn't answer any of our questions."

Jenkins: Were you the only salesman at that time?

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: Now was anyone competing in this line?

Whyte: We had Vanderhorst Chrome over here at Terrell, and he didn't have a salesman on the road until after I was really

collecting most of the business. I was getting orders from every where I stopped, so then he put a Vanderhorst salesman on the road.

Jenkins: When you got into this, was this a new process never used in private aviation before? And you were a pioneer.

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: You were just about the only woman salesperson around, too, I would guess.

Whyte: Selling aircraft parts by air and flying her own airplane.

Jenkins: What kind of reception did you get?

Whyte: At first they were stand-offish. Then when they would start talking with me they would ask questions. Many times I could feel their questions were just picking my mind, and I would always have the answer for it that Mr. Pennington taught me. After the first call I had a great deal of respect, and they were eager to see me come and they had questions even written down that they were going to ask me when I got in. It was a terrific challenge, and I think it was some of the nicest times of my life.

Jenkins: How widely, how big a territory did you cover?

Whyte: I had the entire United States, Canada, and Central America. I went all the way down to Costa Rica, Managua, Nicaragua, San Salvador, all through Mexico to the engine

overhaul shops there.

Jenkins: What were you flying?

Whyte: I had a Cessna 120 that I flew. I had a Musketeer Beechcraft that I flew, and I had my Aero Commander 200. I had three airplanes, depending how far I had to go, what the trips were. Sometimes I would bring probably twelve or fifteen cylinders back in my airplane to the plant that people wanted rush orders on.

Jenkins: Flying alone all the time.

Whyte: All the time alone. All kinds of weather. I would plan my course so that I would be at the first shop at seven-thirty or eight in the morning, because most mechanics open their shops at eight, and I would be there waiting for them. I would go from that field to the next one and on to the next one, and many days I turned in eight to twelve calls a day. The next man that went on after I had resigned and built my airport, would turn in three to five calls a day. Never more, hardly ever more than four calls a day and he would be through for the day.

Jenkins: Now how long would you be gone from home on these trips?

Whyte: Well, I would make the trip out to California and go up the west coast and come back across Montana and the Dakotas and on down through the center of the United States. I

would be gone three or four weeks.

Jenkins: And to South America?

Whyte: Yes. I would be gone three or four weeks down there some-
times when I would go down that way, but we would get a lot
of cylinders down there. There are a lot of American crop
dusters down there that need barrels for their engines.

Jenkins: You opened up the territory then?

Whyte: Yes. You see we can bring the barrel out around up to about
sixteen thousand stack to standard to the new size barrel,
so you used standard pistons. We got so that we could
put any kind of a choke in there that you wanted. A tapered
choke, a combination taper, anything you want. In fact the
first few airplanes that I raced they fixed my engines up
for me, and I had choke barrels, and you can get lots more
horsepower out of a choke barrel than you can out of a
straight barrel, due to the heating process.
Heating changes the shape of the barrel.

Jenkins: Then you were in that for thirteen years.

Whyte: Thirteen years, yes.

Jenkins: And during that time, apparently, surely some competition
began?

Whyte: Yes, after a couple of years Vanderhorst put on a salesman,
and then one of our engineers in our plant in San Antonio
left us and bought a plant and started another company which

was known as Chromeplate. They are now on the east side of the International Airport there in San Antonio and are still operating and putting the same type of chrome that we had. We had a seventy-thirty plateau area verocity, and he is making that same type of chrome, which seems to be a very good serviceable chrome that lasts long. It should stand up to a couple of overhauls, sometimes three overhauls if you keep your oil clean enough.

Jenkins: But you were the pioneer salesperson in this new process.

Whyte: I was the first salesman actually put on the road to contact civilian customers.

Jenkins: Before we move beyond that, are there any other things concerning your work with that company that you want to mention?

Whyte: Well, another mistake in my life, I guess, is when Mr. Pennington died, this George Alget and I had the opportunity to buy the plant. I had the money to buy it, but I was making good money in sales and I didn't know whether I wanted all the headache of the plant. So we could have bought it and brought it up here to Fort Worth, and I happened to have an industrial building over there on Vickery Street that we could have put it in that I owned. But I just didn't see going into that much headache. It was more fun to fly around.

Jenkins: Probably a lot more money in that, but not near the fun.

Whyte: Yes, it has made fortunes for the Electricoating Corporation. So then Electricoating came along, that same one, and they bought the plant lock, stock and barrel and moved it up to Grapevine, Texas, over here. Over there on Minter Chapel's Road is the Electricoating Plant. I worked for them for quite a few years until '69. It was really quite interesting because when they bought it they had twelve plants at that time. This was the fourteenth. They had thirteen plants around Chicago, California and all over doing all kinds of chrome, decorative chrome, slick chrome. They made all of the little knobs and chrome barrels for RCA Radios and TVs and things like that. One plant did that. Then the other one did diesel liners for railroads, that type of chrome. There are all types of processes.

Jenkins: You were pioneering then just one of their products. That wasn't their entire line.

Whyte: No. You see, they had bought a new line which was aircraft cylinders. And so they said, "We have bought a plant that's got a woman salesman." And they thought, "We've got to get rid of her. No woman can do that." Then they got to investigating and talking to some of the customers. So then they decided to keep me. So I felt there for about a week that I was going to be fired because I was a woman.

So then they kept me and I stayed with them for quite a few years after they bought the plant.

Jenkins: Doing the same thing?

Whyte: Doing the same thing selling chrome cylinders for Electric-coating Corporation.

Jenkins: Covering about the same territory?

Whyte: The same territory. And then it went on and about the last year and a half they put on another man on the eastern half and gave me the western half of the United States. I could cover them more thoroughly and more often and so forth. I had too much territory.

Jenkins: When and how and why did you get out of that business?

Whyte: Well, I was on the road so much and away, it made my marriage very difficult. And so I thought I would stay home. So I stayed home. I had a house in Richland Hills, and then I started instructing locally. I decided that it was not best that I go out and instruct for my husband. So I had three airplanes and I worked them out of my house, really. If I had an appointment I would go out to the airport and instruct the students.

Jenkins: Let me check here and follow up to see if there were any other people or things, kinds of work that you did now, other than working for yourself. Have you covered all of your work experiences other than working for yourself?

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: Okay, tell us more about Mr. Pennington.

Whyte: He was a terrific person. He was in his eighties, and he had this desire to, as long as they were losing the military contract, get into civilian aviation for this process. He had developed the chrome that was really the most satisfactory chrome in the world. They didn't have it anywhere developed like he had. He had many oil field patents. He was a very, very wealthy man. He owned several shopping centers in Houston, several shopping centers in San Antonio, but his desire and pleasure was developing - as a metalurgic engineer - and I have always thought back and thought how very fortunate I was to have had him as a teacher preparing me to sell chrome and to answer all the questions that I would run into out in the field on developing and applying this chrome to aircraft cylinders. And he took many, many, hours and hours, in his eighties, explaining things to me. He said, "Now if you run into any questions on this, give me a ring, or you can answer it this way." He worked with me for about two years like that, just getting me prepared to sell chrome and aviation products with many aviation parts like rings and valves and guides and seats and so forth, the rebuilding of an aircraft cylinder, what we could do in the tolerance of the engine and cylinder parts.

I was very fortunate that he took such an interest in me and was able to teach me all of this knowledge that I needed to sell this to men that were building engines and mechanics and thought that they knew all about aircraft engines.

Jenkins: Now you lost contact with him when?

Whyte: He passed on about six months before we moved the Harry Pennington Plant on Dakota Street in San Antonio, to Grapevine, Texas. That all came about during the period that I debated buying it with one of the metalurgic engineers that worked for him, or stay on sales. Then finally the Electricoating Corporation came along and they bought it and brought it up here, and it has made them a great deal of money.

Jenkins: Tell us about your helicopter rating and how you feel about helicopters and some of your experiences with them.

Whyte: Well, when I came back from the South Pacific I just thought aviation was going to boom, with all my faith in flying.

I could see the helicopter as the transportation for the businessman, from the suburbs to his office. We used it so much around there and it was just coming in and so forth, so I felt like I just must get a helicopter rating. So I took off and went up to New England Helicopter School at Providence, Rhode Island, which was one of the better

schools in the United States at that time in '51. I got my helicopter rating, and I was the only girl of eleven students. The rest of them were men. I had, of course, many hours more than any of the men. Most of them had just been trained during the war and didn't have too many hours. So I soloed that helicopter in seven and a half hours, and the first man that soloed was eleven hours, but it was on account of my past instrument training and so forth that made it easier for me. I never did get too many hours on the helicopter. I kind of lost faith in it, in the rotary wing. I don't have too many opportunities to fly it. I think I have flown a helicopter once in the last eighteen months. There definitely is a place for it in the world. It is good, but I just feel more comfortable with a fixed wing instead of the rotary wing.

Jenkins: You never taught helicopter . . .

Whyte: No, I never did. I never had my instructors rating in helicopter. I had my commercial license for helicopter flying.

Jenkins: Did you ever do any commercial flying?

Whyte: I have done a little passenger carrying, very little. We have an organization known as the Whirlygirls, and there is around three hundred sixty-five girls that are helicopter qualified. There are several of them that are doing

it commercially every day, flying copters. We have one girl in San Francisco that is flying passenger copters from the airport to the hotel every day, flying many passengers. We have a girl in Miami, Eleanor Gilmore, copter pilot. I raced against her. I have her picture with her helicopter over my desk. She flies from the airport in Miami to hotels and is on call for charter work for helicopter work all the time. She has been doing that for about ten or twelve years. She is doing a very good job, and she has bought her own two helicopters and is working them professionally.

Jenkins: What do you expect, from your own experience, the future to be with helicopters and then what do you think their future may be?

Whyte: Helicopters have a terrific future. They are developing them and improving them all the time. But I have more faith in the fixed wing than I do the rotary wing. That's just personal. People that fly helicopters many hours have a great deal of faith in the rotary wing. (And I think that I will do most of my flying, in the training, of the fixed wing airplane.) I don't mean to be letting the helicopter down, but it is just not for me. I would rather instruct in a little training plane.

Jenkins: What kind of experience have you had with seaplanes?

Whyte: That has been the fun part of my flying, I would say. I

have a seaplane rating. I have had it since 1936.

When I was in New Orleans I used to do charter work down to Grand Isle, down to Lake Barataria, and Venice, the mouth of the Mississippi River, for customers, and I used to fly a cub J3, or something on floats that I could carry passengers in. I lived in Michigan three and a half years, we had three seaplanes. I did considerable instructing on seaplanes. And also in the winter time on planes with skids, which was a lot of fun. You would land on a lake covered with ice and snow and if the wind was blowing across my heading, you would land and drift sideways, which was rather difficult because they had so many little houses on the lake with a square hole where the man would sit in and fish in a hole in the ice. If your airplane was to skid into him you would knock him sideways which happened to some pilots, not with me, but I saw it happen. A plane drifted into a man's fishing house, which pushed the house right sideways on the ice over 500 feet. Seaplanes are a lot more fun. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I taught four of the logging superintendents from May Brothers Lumber Company down in southern Louisiana on Bayou Teche at Garden City, Louisiana just south of Franklin, Louisiana. If I were younger I would get back in seaplanes, because it is great. I really enjoyed it.

I have often thought of

getting a seaplane, and teaching seaplane ratings up in this area because we have so many beautiful lakes around here. We also have our lakes covered with boats and sailboats that object to planes, so it presents a problem. I have been up over my airport here at six thousand feet on a clear day and counted eleven lakes.

Jenkins: I didn't realize we had that many. I guess I have been to all of them, but I didn't realize we had that many.

Whyte: We have Lake Worth, Eagle Mountain, and we have Lake Ben-Brook, Lake Arlington. We have Garza-Little Elm. We have Grapevine. We have White Rock Lake, and we have all those lakes east of Dallas, Arlington, Electric Plant Lake.

Jenkins: And you can see all of those at six thousand feet?

Whyte: All of them on a clear day. Just a beautiful sight. We are very fortunate in this area.

Jenkins: What ratings do you have?

Whyte: I have, of course, a commercial, instruments, seaplane, multiengine, land, and instructor instrument, instructor multi-engine, rotor craft, and commercial rotor craft, and commercial glider rating, and Link trainers rating, plus all my ground ratings. The only ratings that I don't have would be the ATP, Airline Transport, which would require, every six months, an electrocardiogram and physical

which would be very difficult and expensive to keep up, when I don't need it. I am quite sure I could pass it.

Jenkins: How often do you have to renew your other ratings?

Whyte: My instructor's rating has to be renewed every two years, and I have to go to a three-day seminar and take a flight check with the FAA, and that keeps you updated and current, which is really good. I took my written for the A and E, airplane and power plant rating many years ago and passed the written. I took the practical and flunked on welding. He didn't like the bead I put on that weld and told me to practice some more. Well, during that period I was transferred from Newport, Rhode Island, to Washington, D.C. and I didn't go back and take my practical and I have often regretted that I didn't go ahead and pursue it at that time, because I would have had an A and E license now, which is not too common. We are getting more women interested in A and P licenses all the time.

Jenkins: Do you teach gliding here?

Whyte: Not in this area right now. We have a nice glider school over here at Caddo Mills, and we had a glider school down here at Oliver Farms for a long time. I think they have moved it down to Horseshoe Bend down at Granbury. It's a separate phase of training.

Jenkins: Have you ever taught gliding?

Whyte: Yes. But there is a lot of physical labor teaching gliding, walking your gliders out to take off area, and your wings out

behind your tow plane and getting them in position, your student in, getting your tow plane going. It's hard work. I don't think I would want to do it anymore.

Jenkins: Can you have a glider's license or rating without having a power license?

Whyte: Yes. You can have a glider's license at fourteen. They let you have it younger than they do a power plane license. You have to be sixteen before I can solo you in an airplane, but you can be soloed at fourteen in a glider.

Jenkins: Is there much gliding done around here?

Whyte: There are three gliding schools in the area. A gliding club south of Grand Prairie, one over there by Cedar Hill, that has been there for many years. They have quite a large group of gliders there, and hangars. And it's a club. They own the strip and they own the hangars, and they have their fun there, on days that it's good for gliding. I haven't used my glider's license very much.

Jenkins: Do you own a glider?

Whyte: No. I don't have one.

Jenkins: Let's go back now and sketch your training career, your training other people in flying, up to the point where you actually went into business on your own.

Whyte: I have taught flying since 1929--through 6 1/2 years I was in Navy Nurse Corps. I think the years from '35 to '41, when I had my own school

there in New Orleans, taught me a great deal about owning and operating my own flight school and setting up classes and curriculums for a training course that would give my pilots and trainees the best training I could possibly give them. It has always been interesting to me, maybe because I was unable to get on the airlines forty years ago, unable to get executive jobs in flying because I was a woman, that I have consoled myself by trying to be the best flight instructor I could possibly be, make every effort to teach each individual that I was responsible for to be a good, safe pilot in every way that my fifty years of knowledge could do it.

Jenkins: You started your first training job, the first person you trained, was back when?

Whyte: The first one I gave some rides for and let them have the controls and start trying to teach them was in '29.

Jenkins: Okay. Now this school that you are talking about is the one you owned.

Whyte: Yes, in New Orleans, Air College, Inc., from '35 to '41.

Jenkins: Well, let's go back and sketch, briefly, although I know you have mentioned most of it before, when and where you were an instructor, leading up to going into your own business.

Whyte: I taught years before I had a flight instructor rating. Well, for many years I taught with just the transport license, and you didn't have to have an instructor's rating.

If you could get an airplane up and down, you could teach somebody else to do it. And I was teaching at Congressional Airport there in Washington, D.C., while I was in Navy Nurse Corps, and I had sent a student over to Washington Hoover Airport to get his license on a Friday. And the next Tuesday I called over and asked them if they would take another student for me for a license. They had just passed one for me four days before. They said, "Edna, we can't take your students anymore." It scared me. I didn't know what had happened. And they said, "We have a new rating called a Flight Instructor's Rating. In order to put a student up you have to flight check him and recommend him and sign an application for him for his license, and it has to be signed by a flight instructor." I said, "Well, what do I do?" They said, "Well, you come over in the morning with your student." Well, I was nursing at the hospital, and I couldn't come over in the morning. I was on duty from seven until three. And so they said, "You come over in the morning and we will see what we can do about it." Well, I hardly slept that night, and I got somebody else to relieve me. I dashed out to the airport. We flew the Cahalenger Robin over to Washington Hoover Airport, and I got out and went in, and he says, "Let me see your license." I handed it to him, and typed on it "Flight Instructor." I got my flight instructor's rating.

I never took an oral, a written, I never took a check ride. And I have put many, many, many people through their instructor's rating since then. I guess they call that the Grandfather's Clause, or something like that.

Jenkins: Well, did this guy know you?

Whyte: Well, he had taken students for me before. He had just passed a student for me the last Friday.

Jenkins: He knew your reputation at that point.

Whyte: Yes. Yes. He knew how I had prepared them. He knew I had been instructing for a couple years in the D.C. area. I think I'm the first man or woman to obtain Instructors Ratings.

Jenkins: He just bestowed upon you a license.

Whyte: Yes. He gave it to me. Now when I prepare a student for an instructor check ride, I have to prepare them for a big two hour oral for picking their mind, I have to prepare them for a flight test, to talk and demonstrate. I don't know, they just told me I could do it.

Jenkins: Now, other places where you taught before you actually went into business for yourself. Just kind of work us up to your first business.

Whyte: When I resigned from the Navy in Washington, D.C., I went down to New Orleans. And as I was telling you before, I owned and operated that school which enlightened me to many, many things that you had to do.

Jenkins: Now you started that, or did you buy that from someone?

Whyte: I started it from scratch with one airplane. I bought a J2 Cub and borrowed the money on a Chrysler car I had.

Jenkins: Okay, that's what I want. How did you start that first business?

Whyte: I mortgaged my Chrysler car and borrowed money and made the down payment on my first J2Cub.

Jenkins: Do you remember how much you paid down on it?

Whyte: I think I paid three hundred down, and that was a lot of money.

Jenkins: What was the price of the Cub, do you remember?

Whyte: Nine hundred dollars.

Jenkins: So that was your first investment in the new business?

Whyte: Yes. And I built that company up there . . . When I sold it to the Navy, I had six Cubs and several other airplanes, of other makes, and I sold all my airplanes and my field to the government and to individuals before I came up to Fort Worth.

Jenkins: Now you were there how long? In that business?

Whyte: '35 to '41 with New Orleans Air College, Inc.

Jenkins: Sketch those years in terms of growing, in terms of equipment, and number of students and such. How did you grow and how did you finance it?

Whyte: I had many students there. Finally, after about a

year or so, I had to hire two instructors. And there was a time I had three and four instructors on payroll. I finally had my airplanes in '38 and '39 built up to around ten to thirteen airplanes. And it was just a fast growing school. I have often wondered what would happen if the war hadn't broke out and changed it all.

Jenkins: How were you financing this growth?

Whyte: By money made teaching students and flying.

Jenkins: You weren't having to go out and borrow?

Whyte: No, not after the first couple of airplanes.

Jenkins: So you operated strictly off of the income from flying, didn't go into debt. So you started off with one plane, you were the one instructor, you worked up to how many instructors?

Whyte: I had four instructors, on payroll, at my peak.

Jenkins: How many planes?

Whyte: I would say thirteen planes at one period.

Jenkins: And you had hangars?

Whyte: Built two large hangars, shop, an office and classroom.

Jenkins: What kind of investment do you think you had?

Whyte: I had around twelve thousand five hundred dollars in my buildings, and I sold my buildings to the government for twenty-two thousand five hundred. So they wanted it bad, they had to have it. World War II training.

Jenkins: And how about your planes and equipment? Do you have any

idea what kind of investment you had in that?

Whyte: Well, I had from seven hundred to a thousand dollars in every airplane. That is what they were running about that time. The Cubs and the Aeroncas and the Taylor Crafts and different makes of airplanes.

Jenkins: And after the first couple you didn't borrow to buy any of the rest of them.

Whyte: No.

Jenkins: And you sold out then . . .

Whyte: To the United States government.

Jenkins: In what year?

Whyte: That was in '41 when the war broke out.

Jenkins: And then what did you do?

Whyte: Then I thought, "Well, I want to get my instrument rating, so the best place to go is Fort Worth, Texas." I came up here and got my instrument rating at Meacham Field, and taught instruments all during World War II, as instrument instructor.

Jenkins: You weren't in business for yourself there?

Whyte: Not during the war.

Jenkins: And you were working for Aircraft Sales, Inc., Meacham Field.

Whyte: The government on War Training Service contracts.

Jenkins: And after the war?

Whyte: I went down to the Philippines on Luzonin, the south Pacific as an Army nurse, which was a very interesting period in my life. Then I came back and started working for Roy Taylor down

here at Meacham Field. And I started and set up a FAA a VA approved school for him, and I was sole operator of it. He didn't want to have anything to do with it. I set it up, and equipped it, and staffed it, set up the curriculums for all the training and everything necessary to be approved by FAA and VA.

Jenkins: He owned it, but you ran it.

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: And that lasted how long?

Whyte: That lasted about two years and as I said, I met my husband. He and Ed Bardmon went into school together, Aero Enterprise Flight School, and finally my husband bought him out. And I flew for him for awhile. And then I bought some ships of my own and started doing some private flying around Fort Worth here. I kept an airplane out at Oak Grove Airport, and kept airplanes at several out-laying airports and would fly students individually, until I went to work for Electricoating. And all this time I was flying two or three races a year.

Jenkins: But you didn't have a location like this?

Whyte: No.

Jenkins: You simply had planes around . . .

Whyte: Different airports.

Jenkins: And flew private parties and did some training. Okay.

Then this location we are sitting now, is when you went back into business for yourself.

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: When was that?

Whyte: I bought this land December, 1969. I had three different planes. I thought, "If I can just get a hangar and a strip that I can take my airplane on, I won't have to do so much driving around to different airports to do my school training." I found a piece of land that was around a hundred and some acres, but twenty-two acres of it was not florgey land. You know, Florgey land is along Lake Grapevine down there by Southlake? And it would make a good runway.

Jenkins: What did you call that?

Whyte: Florgey land. That's land that the Corps of Engineers will not let you build anything permanent on because the water line will come up that far. You can put mobile homes or portable buildings on it, you can put a runway on it, but you can't put anything permanent on it. But it had twenty-two acres off to one side that was out of that area that I could put permanent buildings on. So, I put in my application to the FAA for an airport there at Southlake, and too many objections came in from the different home owners around there to the fact that they would have airplanes flying over their homes, so I gave that up. And the next piece of land

that I found was out along 377. It was on the east side there, but it seemed like it was all 377 frontage there. It was very expensive land, around twenty-five hundred dollars an acre at that time, which was quite a bit more than I was paying. I was paying five hundred dollars an acre for this other piece over at Southlake. So then the new homes at the north end of that strip objected to it. They wouldn't let it be approved for an airport. So then I thought I will go out a little farther and see if I can find some land that is level and has possibilities for extension of the runway at both ends, because you can run into a road, you never can put your runway across a highway. Or you can run into land that a man will never sell and you can't extend it. And so I found this piece of land out here about two miles northwest of Roanoke, and it seemed to have a nice drainage to the southeast, and both ends could be extended. I can extend my runway eighteen hundred feet to the south, and I have extended my runway thirteen hundred feet to the north, which gives me lots of possibilities. So I went ahead and bought it in '69.

Jenkins: How many acres?

Whyte: About thirty-four acres. And since then I have added forty-seven acres to it. So it is around eighty-one, eighty-two acres now.

Jenkins: How did you finance that?

Whyte: Well, I had been buying quite a bit of stock when I was working for Electri-Coating, Inc. And I had bought, oh, all different stocks on the market, and some of them had improved quite a bit, and I sold them and paid cash for the land.

Jenkins: Okay, so you still haven't gone out and borrowed any money?

Whyte: No.

Jenkins: You were telling me earlier that apparently you did real well in the stock you bought over the years.

Whyte: Yes, I did. I was very fortunate. And I bought them all by hunch. And, of course, in the sixties was the time to buy stocks, and they were all growing. Everything you would buy, just about, you would make money on. It was hard to keep them six months so that you wouldn't have to pay taxes on capital gain. And I was lucky that I sold them in '69 right before the stock market broke, and bought the land before it started going higher.

Jenkins: So you paid cash for this land.

Whyte: Yes. And then I wanted to put up a hangar to keep my airplanes in. I had a hangar for four or five or six airplanes. So I went to Justin Bank over here, and asked them for ten thousand dollars that I could borrow to build this hangar. And they loaned it to me, but they took my house in Richland Hills for collateral, and I couldn't understand why they couldn't take the land for collateral because I thought banks did it that way. And I had to mortgage my home. So I would not go back to Justin Bank again and do that anymore. I paid them off and went down to Keller Bank, and I have been able to borrow whatever I need

down there to build whatever I want ever since.

Jenkins: How many planes did you start with here?

Whyte: I had three planes when I came out here. Three airplanes that were paid for. And the first contract on this hangar that I had and built, this hangar that you are sitting in now, was eight thousand dollars plus three thousand dollars for the concrete slab. So I put the concrete slab in and put an eighty by seventy building on top of it. And that was my start. Then I built my apartment back here on the northeast corner, where I can keep track of things night and day and keep track of the airplanes, and I wouldn't have to drive from Richland Hills out here back and forth every day for students. The first month or so I was building here I had about three thousand dollars worth of iron and metal and ladders and welding machines on the concrete out here. And one Saturday night someone came by and just took everything I had. So I had to do all that all over again, which was quite difficult.

Jenkins: Were you living here?

Whyte: No, I was living in Richland Hills. So then I decided that I would stay out here with a double barrelled shotgun and watch things.

Jenkins: And you haven't had much trouble?

Whyte: I have had no trouble since.

Jenkins: Okay, let's just kind of look at the growth from that first

beginning until now. You have already talked about the increased hangars and planes and growth of the number of students, perhaps, that you have at this time.

Whyte: Well, it so happened that the distance out has not been a handicap because I haven't instructed in this area since '41, and many of the pilots around here are my old students, and they will send me their friends most of the time. So I do no advertising at all, because I have more students than I can fly. In fact I have students right now that I say, "I can teach you to fly, but you will have to wait a month or two months before I can get to you." And the same way with the hangars. When I first came out here, the first thing I knew I had twenty-three airplanes tied down here on the airport begging for a hangar. So I went ahead and built a fourteen plane hangar, and it has just seemed like it has been necessary to build another fourteen plane hangar every year. Well, there are ten hangars on the airport now. Of course, the two at the south end down there belong to friends that I have sold land to for them to build their hangars on, but the rest of the hangars belong to me. And right now I have a waiting list for hangars. I could build more, but I am not going to build anymore because the taxes are so high that it doesn't pay to expand too much. I am in better shape to not make so much.

Jenkins: You stayed with the Keller Bank all this time in building hangars?

Whyte: Yes. They just financed me and I would pay them back and finance me and I'd pay them back. And it worked out at this rate just about right, a hangar a year.

Jenkins: You would pay them off that fast?

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: How about your planes? How many planes do you own, and how many people rent space to keep their own planes?

Whyte: Well, we have a hundred and twenty-six airplanes on the airport now. Most of them are in hangars. The last hangar I built is not completed. I am waiting for the weather to dry up so I can get the floor in it, and get the planes in. And I have it filled. What I am really doing here, and I don't know why I do it, is the fact that I have a public utility here that furnishes service to everybody in this part of the United States. I have people that fly in here from all over the United States, California, all through the middle west, north, east, and they land here, tie their airplane down. Their friends come and get them from this area and take them to their home for overnight or for a week or two, and then they come back and pick their plane up and go home. Well, it's really a public utility that Denton County needs, and I am furnishing it at no cost to Denton County or United States or the tax payers, and I don't get five cents worth

of money from the tax payers money, or no money for furnishing a public utility. In fact they tax me so much that I can hardly make a go of it because I have not had a paycheck to myself since I started this place. I have been living on my Social Security check and what little vegetables and food, etc. my students bring me in. And my overhead is very low because I live right here. But I have to do it that way to develop it and furnish this service to the people around here.

Jenkins: You are pouring everything back into the airport?

Whyte: Everything goes back in the building of the airport. Some bills have been sent to me by friends from other states stating "Any private property having a runway on it and has a landing strip being used for public use is tax free." I even have difficulty getting Denton County to grade the roads out here. My customers object about the roads being so rough and bumpy and rocky and rutted and muddy and dusty. There is nothing that I can do about it if Denton County doesn't want to do it. If I was a better politician I might could get it done. I think what totals it up is that I have had some officials down here from Denton that said, "We are extending the Denton Airport runway up there. We are going to have a nice long runway." I say, "Don't say you are doing it. I am paying taxes that are extending that runway up there, and you are not paying me five cents to extend my runway to help me with my expenses down here." And I have more airplanes on my airport than they have on Denton County Airport. A hundred and twenty-six. They do not have that many airplanes up there.

Jenkins: How many of these planes do you own?

Whyte: I only own about six of them. Six of them are mine. I have eight for training. I lease two.

Jenkins: Oh, I see. Do you do any other commercial besides training? Do you carry other passengers?

Whyte: No, I am not set up for charter Part 135. I can only take somebody on a training mission or across the country training or something like that.

Jenkins: So you have ten hangars?

Whyte: Yes, on the field. Two of them are not mine. The other eight are mine.

Jenkins: But you own eight hangars, and they are just about all paid for.

Whyte: Well, all but the last two.

Jenkins: So you build them and you pay for them.

Whyte: Yes, as quick as I can.

Jenkins: And the planes. You own six?

Whyte: Six, yes. But there is no way that anybody, no man could have ever done this, that I have done, with a family and wife and children. There is not that much money. I had bank notes coming due, I had to take my Social Security check, I had to take my rent checks from two houses in town, to pay the bank because the airport wasn't bringing it in. And if I were a man with a wife and two children that I had to keep in school, keep groceries on the table, there was not that

much money left. There was absolutely not. I have seen times when I did not have enough money to pay the bank its note, and I would have to ask some student, "If you will buy ten or twenty hours I'll see that you get flying time." And my students and my customers have helped me that way all the way through.

Jenkins: And you are supporting the airport.

Whyte: Yes, I support the airport with no salary to me at all.

Jenkins: So you are managing to keep the airport paid for, but you are not getting a salary.

Whyte: No, I am not taking care of my future at all.

Jenkins: How has the number of students grown since you have been right here?

Whyte: I have been very, very fortunate. In fact I have had the school up at Denton Airport come down here and say, "If you have students that you can't train, would you please recommend that they come to us?" Well, they won't do that, because I have been teaching out here for so many years, that will be forty years since the war, and they come out here for the type of instruction that I give. So I can't turn them over to anybody else, because I have students that come in here from McKinney, from Mesquite, southeast Dallas, they pass eight, nine or ten other flight schools to come out here to learn to fly. And I have one man from Mesquite, he said,

"Just as soon as you get me soloed, get me a little farther along, I'll go to Redbird and I will rent a plane and bring it over here and get you to give me dual and I will take it back." But, he said, "I want you to finish me up." And that's the attitude that they have. You can go count the log books in my case over there. There are over two hundred and forty eight log books there that are people who are in training here in different stages or training. And those pictures on the wall there. There are six hundred and forty or fifty pictures there now that are students I have soloed since I have been out here. Now there are many more students that I have taken through their commercial and instrument rating that I didn't solo. They came here with some flying time, and I finished them up. I don't put their pictures up here because I didn't start them from scratch. And each one that has a silver star on it has gone on to obtain their ratings. The one that has two stars will be a commercial. Three stars, instrument and multi engine. And the more FAA ratings that you have, the more stars you have on your picture. I have had students call me from all parts of the United States, "I just got a new rating. Put another star on my picture." A man called me from Florida and said, "I just got my Seaplane rating. Give me another star." And so it is getting to be quite a challenge to get these stars.

Jenkins: How many students at a time may you be working with?

- Whyte: By the week about an average of 35 to 40 students. By the day, well, you can look at my schedule book over there. I think I have six students scheduled for tomorrow. There was a day here about three weeks ago, I flew nine hours, a little over nine hours. That means an hour to each student. That would be nine students. I flew until eleven-thirty at night, and I started at seven in the morning. And that is too many hours, too much flying. It's either that or they won't fly. I can't often get another instructor that the student will be satisfied with.
- Jenkins: Do you ever have any help, another flight instructor?
- Whyte: Yes, I do. I have some part time instructors that I use, and I have a couple of instructors come out on Saturday and Sunday when I am real busy. And even then last Sunday there were three students out here that we couldn't get to. We were too busy.
- Jenkins: How many hours a week, usually, do you train?
- Whyte: I am not supposed to fly over thirty-six hours.
- Jenkins: Thirty-six. You usually fly your thirty-six, I imagine.
- Whyte: Oh, yes, I do. Weather permitting.
- Jenkins: And night?
- Whyte: Yes, you see, every student now has to have three hours of night flying before you can put them up for their private. So it requires that I have to be sure that they get 1 1/2 hours on two different nights so they can get a total of three hours in. So there are quite often several

nights a week I have to fly at night.

Jenkins: Do you have any intentions of hiring more instructors?

Whyte: Yes, I do. I am building a home on the east side of the field. I am going to take about three of my training planes and go over there, and I am going to lease out this school. It is getting too big and too busy and too much work for me. I have several people that are interested that want to take the gas concession or the school concession.

Jenkins: Oh, I see.

Whyte: Let them take that and run it. Then I can fly a few students that are recommended by some of my old students that they especially want me to teach them, and work it that way and it won't be near as hard on me. Right now if I take everybody that calls there, it is humanly impossible for me to do it. I will try to give them over to some of my part-time instructors.

Jenkins: What do you see and want for yourself in terms of the amount of flying and involvement in the school in the future?

Whyte: I don't want to ever be where I have to quit flying. I hope that I can fly until I am a hundred. But I feel right now that I would like to take some of the pressure off of me. I am flying too many hours. Even the young instructors here say, "I don't understand how you can do it. I couldn't fly that many hours. It gets under my skin." So I am trying to arrange things now so I can lease out this part of the school and the

gas concessions and so forth. I can cut my part of the flying down to just selective students, and work with them and see that they are trained into good safe pilots. I can do a better job with them if I don't have to rush so from one student to the other.

Jenkins: What kind of equipment other than the plane do you have for training students?

Whyte: I have an instrument trainer, simulator that I use for their instrument ratings. If I did this I would do my own ground school, because then I know what they know, and I know that I can cover the material and work with them. I would like to do that, and only have four or five students in the class that you can go over it and be sure each student is getting everything. You get too many in a class it is just difficult to see what you are accomplishing.

Jenkins: Well, how many might you be dealing with at any one time?

Whyte: I don't want over four or five students at a time when I get slowed up and move over to my home and start. Then when I finish up one I will take on one more.

Jenkins: I am talking about kind of classroom. How many might you have . . .

Whyte: Oh, we have had classes here with . . . well, we put through one class with twenty-three students and one class with eighteen

students in a class. I think the last class we put through we only had twelve or thirteen students.

Jenkins: Now how often do you hold that kind of class?

Whyte: They are held two nights a week, like on a Monday and a Wednesday or a Tuesday and a Thursday. It depends on the group. They will get together and they will vote on what night is the most convenient to the majority. Some of them are going to school, and some of them are working and they can't be available every night. So they set that up for themselves.

Jenkins: With your flying at least thirty-six hours a week, how many hours might you be spending in the classroom?

Whyte: That could be another three hours twice a week. That would be six hours a week.

Jenkins: I know you live here so it is a little different.

Whyte: The transportation is no problem.

Jenkins: But how many hours a week might you be engaged in running this school?

Whyte: The majority of times, I have figured that I am working fourteen to eighteen hours a day. I get up in the morning at five-thirty or six o'clock and lots of times in the summertime I have my first student at seven. Many nights I am still going either with ground school or night flying until ten or eleven. I don't see how I can stand it, but I enjoy it. I keep going. The Lord is kind enough to give me health to handle it.

Jenkins: Do you ever take a vacation?

Whyte: My only vacation is when I go and fly a race, and that's hard work, too.

Jenkins: But you don't ever just take off two weeks?

Whyte: No, I haven't for a long time.

Jenkins: As you look back at some of those opportunities, maybe for buying into this other thing and becoming an executive of a manufacturing plant, are you kind of glad that it turned out the way that it did? Do you think you are enjoying doing this more than you would have . . .

Whyte: I have been so busy all of my life that I have never had much of an opportunity to look back. To me the present, the day we are living, and the future occupies your mind more. There have been some crossroads in my life that I have often wondered when I had that choice and I took flying, would I have been better off to have gone the other way. I think we all have that. There is nobody who goes through life that doesn't have to make a decision. That's a very important decision. It means your whole future. And I have had quite a few of those. I don't know if I ever told you about my three attempts to get on the airlines.

Jenkins: Not on tape.

Whyte: I actually dreamed of flying an airline, being a pilot on an airline. I thought that would be just wonderful. But no woman

had really ever done it. I was in Washington, D.C. in 1933, and Helen Richey was flying co-pilot on an airline there at Washington Hoover Airport. I thought, "Oh, a woman on an airline. That's just what I want to be." I was so excited about it. So I went down there a couple of times when her plane came in and talked to her pilot. He said that she was doing a very good job, and he was very satisfied with her. I was still a Navy nurse. So I put my application in and I thought, "Now if they accept me I am resigning from the Navy." Joanna Bussey and I both put in applications for airline pilots jobs. We both had similar qualifications. The men pilots set up a men's pilot union and said that if anybody is hired that doesn't belong to the union they would go on strike. They wouldn't let Helen Richey or they wouldn't let Joanna or me join the union. So therefore they had to lay us off because we did not belong to the union, and everybody had to belong to the union that flew the airlines. That was their way of keeping us off the airlines. The men, the pilots themselves, did that. The company didn't do it. The company hired Helen. The men just couldn't take it that a woman could do that much. Then my second time was when I had New Orleans Air College. In New Orleans they had just started the Chicago-southern run plane from New Orleans to Chicago. They used Lockheed 10s and 12s on that run. Well, several of my pilots, boys,

that I had taught them everything they knew about flying and through their commercial license, they had between two and three hundred hours, very few hours. I had done two or three thousand hours at that time. So they were hired on the airlines so I put in my application, and when I went up for my interview they told me I was too short. I stood after that, back to back to a couple of the students that I knew that weren't too much higher than I, and I was as high as one and maybe a half inch shorter than the other. But that was their excuse not to hire me, with twice the qualifications that those men had, those boys had. Many times more. All types of airplanes. So then the third time that I had a chance to get on the airlines was when I made application to Braniff. Helen Wheeler had been flying co-pilot, but she married a Braniff son, so she flew several runs to Mexico City as co-pilot, which was national publicity at that time. So I put in my application and I called over several times. The man I was to put it in to was in the office in Houston, and I was in New Orleans. So I called over to see if I couldn't come over for a personal interview. They said, "no," that they weren't hiring right now and all of that. So finally one day I thought "there has got to be something to this." So I took off from New Orleans and drove to Houston. I sat in that office out there for about three hours, and the man, the young pilot that was next to me here, and they called everybody

else in. They would come in and sit down and they would take them into the office. So I made the remark to this party that was sitting next to me, I said, "I don't know why I get by-passed so many times. I guess I will just have to sleep here all night long before I get into this office." The girl over at the desk got up and she ran into his office. I don't know what she said to him, but I was the next person in. I was going to sleep there all night. So she opened the door and I walked in, and the man at the desk said, "I bet you are Edna Gardner." I said, "I bet I am." And he said, "Well, come on in and sit down." He started asking me about planes I had flown and how many hours I had and qualifications. Well, when he finished he said, "Miss Gardner, do you really think that passengers will get on that airplane if they saw a woman pilot up front there?" It floored me. I didn't know how to answer him, but what came to me first was, I said, "I really don't know what you mean. I have been flight instructing for many years, and men and women pilots get into my airplane all day long to take pilot instruction." He said, "No, I think it would hurt our passenger business. I don't think we better hire a woman." That was in '38. So I never tried after that. Never tried again. But such limited excuses. But now the girls are getting on. I am so grateful.

Jenkins: You are the Aero Valley Flying School. Do you have mechanics

working for you?

Whyte: I have leased the south half of the hangar and the south offices and shops to a maintenance facility, Mr. Bob Cole, and he does all the maintenance of my aircraft. They just shove them in the hangar and have them serviced and taken care of.

Jenkins: But you are the bookkeeper, you are everything.

Whyte: I can't see how I can do everything that I do. I get up in the morning, and I sweep the offices, and clean out the toilets, and get things squared away here before people arrive, the seven o'clock student arrives. Then I fly students by appointment most all day long. You can look at my schedule book. There is hardly a day there with less than five students and sometimes eight, nine, and ten when I have to get extra instructors in. I have to see that the airplanes have their oil changes and their hundred hour checks and their annuals and get each plane into the shop and see that it is taken care of.

Jenkins: You personally do that.

Whyte: I personally have to do it in the log books. I have to see that the gas pumps and services are covered out there. Lots of times I have to do it myself because maybe we are not selling enough gas to pay a man minimum wage. I would make probably twenty cents in that hour, and I would be paying him three dollars for that hour's work. It just doesn't pay, so

many times I have to pump the gas myself. Then in keeping the runway and servicing the field and keeping the chuck holes out of it and keeping the runway safe and keeping up markers for, like "low flying aircraft" or "keep on the runway when wet" and all the responsibility of keeping airplanes that land there safe. I have to keep under constant vigilance, surveillance for safety.

Jenkins: You don't actually have anyone working for you then other than instructors.

Whyte: No, I can't afford to have an employee because there is not that much money left over.

Jenkins: You do everything.

Whyte: There is no way you can build an airport with the income from an airport with the government taxes like they are. They are just too high.

Jenkins: What kinds of government regulations do you have to be most conscious of in this business?

Whyte: Well, the safety of the people and the airplane and constantly watching for any hazardous conditions in flying. I have to control the traffic and to see that it's left hand and that it's a rectangular pattern flowing at the proper altitude. And if somebody doesn't do that I have to talk to them and explain to them that we are trying to keep this as a good safe airport, and we cannot allow such things anymore. There is no way

to tell all the things that there are to do around here.

Jenkins: Do you have government inspectors?

Whyte: Yes, the FAA comes out here quite often, although they don't have a dime in this airport, but they come out here and look around and seem to be fairly well satisfied. I have been very fortunate so far keeping this a safe airport. I have to abide by all of their rules and regulations, which sometimes I don't exactly approve of, because so often they are men that have tried to run an airport and went broke or instruct and didn't like it, and so they gave up and went to work for the government. Then they come out here and tell me how to run things.

Jenkins: Well, your hope for the future than, is to be able to lease it.

Whyte: Yes.

Jenkins: And to be able to do only what you choose to do.

Whyte: Well, when you get to be seventy-six years old you have to say, "Maybe I'll have to give up and go into an old ladies' home and look at four walls," and I don't want to do that. I am going to keep on doing this as long as I can. When I do lease it I want enough money out of it to pay my nursing home expenses, and that's, I guess, all I will ever get out of it, because the government gets half of everything I make now and they get the other half when you die.

Jenkins: So you have, I am sure, a very large investment here. It is

pretty obvious with--how many acres here?

Whyte: Eighty-two.

Jenkins: Eighty-two, located especially where it is . . .

Whyte: Between Dallas, Fort Worth and Denton.

Jenkins: Eight hangars that you own, six airplanes, that you have a very sizeable investment, and that on paper you are probably a very wealthy person. In terms of how you live how do you feel?

Whyte: I surely don't live like a wealthy person. I have been driving a twelve year old car, and my truck that I use on the field is a '64 truck. As long as they run, I'm not proud. I am not the one to show off. I often look at people, other ladies that are driving Cadillacs and Continentals, and a couple of cases I know that my little airport is worth a great deal more than they have. But to me it doesn't mean that much. If I can teach people to fly and be of service to somebody, that gives me more pleasure than driving a Cadillac around.

Jenkins: Have you ever thought about just selling out and enjoying all the money that it might bring to you?

Whyte: Well, I have arrived at the stage that money doesn't bring happiness and pleasure. The fact that I have young boys and young girls here that are so thrilled to learn to fly safely and carefully and getting their ratings, to see them come back to me years later and explain the position they have and how far they have gone, that's lots more pleasure than money.

If I can teach more boys and girls to do that, I would much rather to do that than have all the money this airport would give me.

Jenkins: So what you are doing is what you want.

Whyte: I guess that's what you would call it.

Jenkins: It's working the dickens out of you, but apparently that's what you want to do.

Whyte: There is something about your body, the harder you work it the better you are. If I were to sit in a rocking chair in an old ladies' home, I don't think I would live a year, because you just don't. Your body has to be kept active to keep your veins cleaned out and well. I like it this way, and I just hope I have the health and strength to do it for sometime to come.

Jenkins: I have asked about all the questions that I had down, and we covered a lot of ground, but this is your story and we want to be sure that you get into it all the things that at least you can think of. Before we finish are there any other people, events or thoughts that you would like to record?

Whyte: Well, I really shouldn't take all the credit for this because my students have done so many jobs for me around here for flying time, like mowing, riding the tractor all day long, like filling in ditches, like putting in culverts and things like that. They would do that, and I would give them flying time in

return. And then my hangar customers have been so wonderful to me. In many different ways they have helped me, even in bringing me groceries and pies and cakes and fruits and vegetables and things like that. They have practically kept me going. So really my hangar customers and my students at Aero Valley Airport have really built this airport. It's really gratifying to see how much people will do for you to get an airport like this so they can have one where they can keep their plane on. I wish I could leave my airport to my hangar customers and students to own and run. There is so much waste and give-away in the government that I don't approve of.

Jenkins: Well, you must have a lot of friends scattered over a lot of territory and a lot of time. Do you hear from people?

Whyte: Yes, often. All over the world. I have people in the military. I have people, many students, that have retired from the airlines, and they will come back and visit with me. I had a man come in here, oh, about six months or a year ago, maybe. He said, "Edna, I have kept track of you all through these years. And I knew how badly you wanted to get on the airlines, but you were unable to because you were a woman. But I am glad to see you in this setup that you have here. I finished thirty years on the airlines. I am drawing a retirement now of thirty-two thousand a year. You could have had all of this had you been allowed to fly the airlines. Here you are, way over the retirement age, and you have no retirement, no benefits, but you do have a beautiful airport here that I am glad to see you have. You deserve it." Then I have had other

students come back to me and say, "Edna, are you still instructing? I instructed for six months, or a few months or a year, and I got so burnt out that I couldn't take it anymore. So I went to the airlines." Students come back here, it's just really, it's just like homecoming sometimes when I see students walk in here and I know their face, and I haven't seen them for thirty years or forty years and they are old and gray, but still there is a look there that you know. Somewhere in your past you have associated with them, as a student in training. And all of that is gratifying and gives me as much pleasure as some friends of mine that are enjoying their grandchildren now. I am enjoying my past students.

Jenkins: Thousands of them, I suppose.

Whyte: Thousands of them all over the world. It has been a good life, and if I had it to do over again I think I would probably do it the same way, or maybe I would be wiser in pursuing aviation. Maybe I would be wiser in trying to accomplish my objectives, that I couldn't do everything that I wanted to do.

Jenkins: But apparently it has been a very long and satisfying and gratifying work. And it appears to me like you are going as strong as you ever did.

Whyte: Yes, I am very grateful for that.

Jenkins: Let me get you to mention the organizations that you have belonged to over the years, either civic or professional and

some of the honors that have come your way over the years, whether in flying or anything else.

Whyte: Well, I belong to the professional Nursing Organization of the State Board of Nurses of Texas, Wisconsin and Louisiana. The flying organizations that I feel honored to be part of and wish I could do more for them, too, would be the OX5 Organization which is an organization of pioneer pilots that have been flying over twenty-five years. And the Ninety-Nines, which is an international organization of all licensed women pilots, of which I was past president in 1956-57. I served on the Board of Directors for four years. I served as Vice-President two years and President two years. I have been a member of the AOPA, a national pilot's association, the Professional Women's Pylon Racing Association, the American Racing Association, which is for men and women, and the National Aeronautical Association which is in Washington and controls all aviation records. I have been a member of that for over forty-five years, which is the business that controls and handles the record making of all achievements in aviation. The only honors that I had was in 1966, a Woman of the Year, which was presented to me by the Women's National Aeronautical Association. In 1967, the woman that has contributed the most, was given to me by the Pioneer Pilots Association. In 1967, the outstanding Contestant for the best sportsmanship, which was given to me at Cleveland

National Air Races on Pylon Racing. I could have won that race that time by cutting in, which would have caused probably a three ship accident. I pulled out and pulled up which made me lose the race, and they were so scared that I would hold my position, and I didn't. I pulled out to give the other two girls a chance. I lost the race, but they gave me the best sportsmanship pilot. That big trophy right up there. In 1975 I was inducted into the Hall of Fame at Hamsport, New York, The Curtis Wright Hall of Fame for all Pioneer Pilots of America. In 1975 I was honored by the Aviation Greats: The Oshkosh is a meeting of around nine thousand airplanes every year, and they pick the aviation greats, a few of the aviation greats each year to be honored up there. In 1975 I was chosen as one of those greats. And in 1976 I was Honored by the Sun Club at Winterhaven, Florida Aviation Meet as one of the Flying Eagles. They invite honored old time pilots and honor them at that meet each year. I was given that honor in '76. Then in 1978 my name was put in Bronze and concrete in the Memory Lane Memorial Park at Atchison, Kansas, which is the home of Amelia Earhart. Not too many people know about this beautiful park there. It was built up in the memory of Amelia Earhart, and they have trees there from many countries in the world and every state in the union. The great aviation greats of each state, their

names are put up by some club or organization and is put in bronze and concrete in this concrete walk that goes through all these trees. My name is in the Texas area with the Texas flag. I was quite surprised when they flew me up there and showed it to me. It was really quite an honor. I was grateful for it. I think that is about all that I have been given, which is more than I deserve, I am sure,

Jenkins: Do you have the opportunity to speak of your career before groups? Do you often get asked to do that?

Whyte: Yes, I am asked to do that many times, and the material I use for the high schools and colleges is the opportunities in aviation for boys and girls. And there are many opportunities. There are over two hundred positions in aviation for the youth of today, that they don't even know of. I try to encourage them as to their controlling their aviation courses in college so that they will be qualified for many of these positions. I am asked to talk many times to the Zonta Club. I have talked to the Zonta Club of Shreveport, Fort Hood, Mineral Wells, Dallas, Fort Worth, Longview, and at their dinner each year when they honor Amelia Earhart in February. I usually have a couple of the Zontas that I have to talk to at their banquets. I just talked to a group of women that take care of kind of, like a YMCA group where they are taking the underprivileged people that need help to get started in life in Shreveport. I talked

to about a hundred and fifty people over there not too long ago. And I just finished talking to the Shakespearian Club in Denton. I talked recently to the Airline Pilot's wives Association at the Women's Club there in Denton. Most of their interest would be in the fact of what women have contributed to aviation and opportunities in aviation for women. My material comes from the years that I have put in this and followed it and tried to pass it on to help other people. I am not a real good speaker as you have surely found out by this time, but I do like to partake and help give them some knowledge of things that I have found women can do and have done, and can do well.

Jenkins: And most importantly you know what you are talking about, and you are enthusiastic about it. That means more than any formal speaking ability.

Whyte: I talked about three weeks ago to the TCJC College down there at a banquet dinner, and they wanted to know opportunities in aviation for women and men. I have had to turn some down because it interferes with my school and flight instructing here lately.

Jenkins: I don't see how you have time to leave this place, much less do all of that.

Whyte: It does make it work kind of a hardship especially when it is an evening dinner that they make you a guest speaker.

Jenkins: For what reasons do people come out here and take flying lessons? Compare the number of men to the number of women who take lessons.

Whyte: Well, they are really all ages from eleven to seventy-four. The reasons vary a great deal. I would say that seventy or seventy-five percent would be men, and the twenty-five percent would be women. I have more women in this school, I am sure, than all the rest of the schools in the area just about, because I have over ninety women that I have soloed on the board over there, pictures. And there are many, many other women that have come out for partial training or just to get more familiar with the airplane. So often their husbands will bring them out and say, "I would like to have her have more faith in the airplane so she would make a better passenger." They would have a family plane, and she would be flying with fear and he didn't enjoy it. He would want her to be more comfortable in the airplane. Many girls that learn to fly, a few, very few, are doing it to please their husbands. Their husbands are anxious for them to obtain a license and enjoy a family plane like they do. Many times a husband will bring his wife out and say, "Teach her just enough so that she can make an unassisted take-off and landing. So if I have a heart attack or anything, she can land the airplane safely for her and the children." I do that very often. I think I have about four girls now, three I am sure, that are really interested in going through all the ratings and try to get on the airlines and fly professionally. Now that's not a great percentage of those that really want to do it.

Some of the others may want to do that later on, but right now they don't express any interest or desire. They just want to get their private license and fly. The men, so many of them that come out and learn to fly. . . . a lot of the younger ones will fly because their folks are wealthy and the child has expressed a desire to fly. Or the next is the boy that doesn't have the money and he is working, going to school, and he is getting twenty-five or thirty dollars to spare each week, and he will come out and take a flying lesson because he wants to so very badly. . . . Then there is the man, oh, when he gets into his forties or fifties will say, "I have always wanted to learn to fly, but I had my family and obligations and I couldn't. Now my family has grown and my children are in college or away, and I am going to do something I want to do." I would say that is ten or fifteen percent of men in that age that have always wanted to do it, and now they have decided they are going to. . . . They will come out and they will try real hard. They have no handicap. They are able to do it, and they learn to fly and get their license. Then there is always that group that says "I must learn to fly. My company needs an airplane, and if I can get my license I can cover my territory faster"; and there are many reasons that they learn to fly. We have, oh, I don't know how many. I have thirty-two airline pilots that have airplanes on this field. Many of them are little acrobatic planes. There are different types of planes

that they enjoy. After flying the great big ones they like a little, small plane. And there are many, many reasons they learn to fly. It's a good knowledge to have because with a pilot's license, you can go anywhere in the world and rent an airplane. With a car driver's license, you can rent a car anywhere. So why not get your license and do it, enjoy that phase of it. Talking about advantages and disadvantages of being a woman pilot. There are many more disadvantages of being a woman pilot. Men have first chance at free training in the military and government programs. Men have first chance at the well-paying pilot positions. As to the advantages, I can't really think of any except this story. I was teaching a banker to fly back in 1938. He seemed to be making no improvement at all in his take-offs and landings. Morning after morning he seemed to make the plane bump higher and higher. After a week of seemingly no progress, he looked over at me and said, "If it wasn't for the fact that you are a woman and can do it, I'd give up." Since I am a woman, he continued on until he got it. He got his license, and now forty years later he is still flying his Bonanza in New Orleans.

Jenkins: How many other people are training pilots in this area?

Whyte: We have two schools at Denton Airport. We have, I think, around twelve schools down at Meacham that are training. But they are training so many of the foreign students you can hardly get in down there.

Jenkins: These are private schools?

Whyte: Schools on Meacham Field. We have students coming in here from all over the world; South America, Asia, India, Iran, Pakistan. I have one student here now from Pakistan. I have three students from Norway. I have had one from Bangladesh that I put through his commercial instrument rating, and he just returned here about three or four months ago. I have Sergio. Sergio came up here from Brazil, South America. I got him through all his ratings. I don't know where they hear about me, or why they come here, but they will write me from other countries and ask me to send them an I20 Form so they can come over and learn to fly. And it is usually some of my students that have gone back in that area.

Jenkins: Do you have any idea how you compare with other schools in terms of how many people you train?

Whyte: Of course, I have been instructing in this area since 1941, and many of the older pilots from this area are my students. When they recommend a school they always recommend me, and I know I get more than my share of students. But what is so gratifying is the fact that when they need another pilot with certain qualifications they will call me and ask me if I have a student that is commercial and instrument rated or multi-engine rated, and I will pick one of my old students and most of the time I can place a lot of my students in good positions just through my old student.

Jenkins: Do you know, in terms of how many you may be training per day how it would compare with the different schools around here.

Whyte: I know I am training lots more per day than they are at Denton. I will go up there and shoot take-offs and landings, every two hours I will be up there, and I won't see any of their ships out. Once in a while a Piper will come out, and I haven't seen a Cessna out of there for a long time, from the Cessna school. They are either flying at other times or something.

Jenkins: So you probably are training more pilots than any one in the area.

Whyte: I am told I am, that I am the busiest school.

Jenkins: Certainly per instructor, I bet you are.

Whyte: Like the activity at the airport here. We have sometimes five and six students in a pattern shooting take-offs and landings. A fellow here today said, "Harlingen, Texas has a control tower down there, and they don't have a third the business that you have here. You have more activity here at this little airport." I have had so many people drop in and say, "I have been around making take-offs and landings at all the airports in the area, and you've got the busiest airport." It really built up into a real busy little airport, much needed airport. A public utility furnished by no taxpayer's money.

Jenkins: There is one thing that you didn't get into in that honors and all. This is something that you got just a few days ago.

Whyte: What is that?

Jenkins: I am not sure, but it says above it all "Profiles of American Aviators," and I notice that not only are you listed in what they call "The Personal Biographies," you are one of only a few with a picture in here in something called "Selected Profiles." So that is an additional listing that you have that you didn't have before.

Whyte: I am in about four different Who's Who books. You know, those books they send you from England and they want your biography? The American and the Texas and the Women's. That's four that I know of that I am written up in.

Jenkins: Who's Who in Aviation.

Whyte: No, just in the World, Business Men and Business Women.

Jenkins: Oh, I see.

Whyte: Men and women.

Jenkins: So you are in Who's Who . . .

Whyte: One from London, from Europe. And I am in the one from the United States, Who's Who in America. I am in Who's Who from Texas, the prominent people from Texas. I am in four of them. Oh, Who's Who Amongst Women in America. I don't know why a flight instructor should get all that honor. I don't condone it. I feel that you should spend more of your time doing something instead of sitting back and trying to get your picture in things.

Jenkins: Unless there are other things that you would like to add. I would like to thank you for a fascinating interview and hope that we can get you up to campus soon.