

The Principle Events in the Life of Harry Beerman

(Note that Harry Beerman lived with his mom and step-dad near Niagara Creek about 2 miles off of Upper Nestucca River Road about 11 miles east of Beaver, Oregon. He attended Silver Falls School which was about 13 miles east of Beaver.) Harry typed this story in 2002 and sent it to me, Dean Bones, to add to information he had already provided for the Heritage Project at Nestucca Valley Middle School. Two-thirds of this article was typed by Robyn, a Nestucca Valley Middle School student in 2003 as part of her technology class assignments. I corrected errors and finished the typing of this in the fall of 2015. db)

The records indicate the I, Harry George Beerman, was born somewhere up on the mountain above the small town of Clatskanie, Oregon, on March 22, 1918, hence I am now 48 years of age in this year of 2002 and much that I can write this time is with the aid of an old and hazy memory.

My Mother's name was Edna Anna Beerman; my father's name was George Joseph Herman Beerman; my sister's name was Gladys Louise Beerman. They are all gone now and I am the lone family survivor. My parents were divorced when I was very small and I have no recollection of my parents living together. My earliest recollections are of my stepfather my mother chose to marry following the divorce from my father. My step father's name was Emil Gehrke, who then worked at a job as a molder in a south Seattle steel foundry. Emil was a partial invalid following an earlier bout with polio that left him with a badly deformed leg that made walking difficult for him.

When my mother and father were divorced, it was agreed that my sister and I would live alternatively live with one family and then the other. As it happened, my father did never remarry, but my mother's mother, my maternal grandmother, offered to keep house for my my father, and this she did until old age made continuing to do so impossible. And so, when my sister and I went to stay with Dad, we stayed with my dad and grandmother.

My early schooling began in Seattle while staying with my mother and stepfather and continued in Portland, Oregon, when my sister and i were with my dad and grandmother. These early years accounted for my grades 1 through 7.

And as the events now being related begin to unfold, my sister and I were living with my mother and stepfather in Seattle, WA. At some time previous to the Great Depression of 1928 my mother and stepfather acquired a smallish steam-powered laundry in the Seattle suburb of North Park, just north of Seattle and adjacent to old highway 99 that ran north to Bellingham and the Canadian border. I remember that the highway in our area was at the time brick surfaced.

It was the pressure of the Great Depression of 1928 that pushed my mother and Emil into bankruptcy, and this in turn was the impetus that found us later on a homestead in Tillamook County, Oregon.

The Principle Events in the Life of Harry Beerman

I am sure that my mother and my stepfather pondered their options at great length before they came up with a solution that involved "homesteading in Oregon" as the way out of their quandary. I was much too young to understand what was going on at the time and that was the way my parents obviously wanted it.

My stepfather found the homestead for us in Tillamook County, built a cabin on the property and then sent for us, and I found myself attending my eighth grade in the small one-room school house that was Silver Falls. It was located something like two miles further up-river from our river crossing over the Nestucca. I walked the two miles of the trail each school day to the road where I caught a family automobile that served as our school bus the rest of the way.

Our school was a one-room affair and our young female teacher, I would guess she was around 25 or 30 years of age, taught all eighth grades. I remember her as a very nice lady. She conducted class with one group while the rest studied or did his/her homework. We did not take work home, because that did not work at all well. All or most of us had chores to do when we got home, and it was often dark during the winter months when we did get home. No one had electricity in those days, and no one seemed to expect us to do homework. I guess it all worked out okay.

As a guess I, would say that our school accommodated around 20 or 25 kids. I seem to recall about four columns of desks and, perhaps, about 6 desks per row. As I think back today, I'm sure our teacher was a very busy person. She stayed with a family that lived near the school and within walking distance. She must have been the person who got to school early enough to build a fire in the old wood burning stove to get the school house warm before we arrived.

The schoolhouse was on the primitive side. We had a hand-pump for water, a privy out back for the boys and girls. Some of the kids came to school on horseback and we had a shed to the school grounds to cover the horses during the school day.

I was young, I was healthy, and I do not recall any problems at all with life style that I lived. Rather, I think, It was all very good for me. It was years later after I was older that I began to realize and appreciate the efforts of the many folk who did so much to make life easier and better. I did graduate from the eighth grade at Silvers Falls in the spring of 1932, and in the fall of 1932 I enrolled in high school at Nestucca Union in Cloverdale. A private car collected us and delivered us to Blaine, where our regular Ford model A school bus was kept that took us on to Cloverdale. A Mr. Ayers was our bus driver. He ran a small store and post office in Blaine.

I attended Nestucca Union High school until the middle of my junior year, at which time I transferred to the Canby Union High school in Canby, Oregon, where I was living again with my father and grandmother. I graduated from Canby Union High in the spring of 1936.

I visited the old homestead again in 1936 and soon after found myself working as a lumberjack in the woods around Tillamook. After a few years, I took work with the

The Principle Events in the Life of Harry Beerman

Oregonian newspaper and operated the auto-route out of Tillamook that carried the newspaper northward throughout the county. I saved enough money during this period to enable me to quit work and go to college at OSC in Corvallis, which I was able to do in the fall of 1941.

The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in the Fall of 1941 and I was able only to finish out my freshman year because my deferment from military service would end with the school year.

So it was necessary to go back to work again. I went to Seattle and got a job in war work. A year later, I read in the paper that Pan American Airways was in a hiring mode for their Alaska division. I went to see them and was hired as Aviation Machinists Mate (a mechanic in the maintenance department). Pan American was at that time operating the Alaska division for needs and pleasure of the Navy into most of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. The Navy actually owned the airplanes and were actually working for the Navy. The Navy decided that that should all be reduced into the Naval Reserve and that is just what happened.

While employed by Pan American, I was able to attend classes that enabled me to acquire both the FAA licenses required for an aircraft mechanic, the Airframe and the Power Plant licenses that have stood me in good stead ever since. During this period, a group of mechanics that included me decided to organize a flying club, and we bought and used Piper aircraft. We proceeded to learn to fly. Along the way, I bought an airplane of my own to help me get the flight ratings I wanted (needed). At one time I owned an airplane, but not a car. In due time, I had acquired the needed ratings to qualify me as a legal commercial pilot, and I was legally qualified to function as a co-pilot for business aviation. The ratings I then held put me in demand as a co-pilot even though I had relatively little flying experience at the time. Even so, I was in demand and I never lacked for a job thereafter for any extended period.

I was first to fly for a department store in Seattle, later for Morrison-Knudsen Company in Boise, Idaho, and still later for Peter Kiewit Sons in Omaha, Nebraska.

I now had both mechanic certificates and my flight tickets included everything up to and including an airline transport rating, with a type rating in DC-3-type aircraft, various smaller airplanes and a single-engine sea endorsement. I was now at the top of my class and on an even par with any and all airline pilots who had only type ratings in specific aircraft that they needed to fly their specific equipment.

I was offered a job in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1957 flying for a manufacturing company that owned five plants in the eastern states. Here I was hired as a captain. This company was for a time owned by the Aluminum Company of America, a company that most people will know quite well.

I retired completely in 1981. My career in business aviation spanned 35 years. I would call it an interesting life.

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As of this writing in the year 2002, I have celebrated my 84th birthday, and, the Lord willing, I anticipate celebrating yet a few more.