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## **Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Cessna, Clyde V.**

Extracted on Mar-28-2024 09:44:49

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Jones Motor Company in Wichita, and that winter he built the first two airplanes ever made in that city. Called the Clyde V. Cessna Aeroplane Factory, he employed five men. Both planes were monoplanes embodying some of his new ideas; the second one, called the "Comet," was his favorite. It incorporated his first attempt to cover the cockpit with a type of extended coupe-like enclosure. Completed during the spring of 1917, this plane was his pride and joy. It performed exceedingly well, with a speed of 124 mph. On July 5th he flew the "Comet" from Blackwell, Oklahoma, to Wichita, Kansas, 76 miles in thirty-six minutes. Early in 1917 Cessna was booked for an active exhibition season but the entry of America into World War I brought exhibition work to a standstill, so all of his planes were returned to Rago, Kansas, where he operated his farm during the war.

Aviation went through a period of distinct change after the war. There was an excess of aviators who wanted to continue flying and had to find some way to make a living. Flying equipment could be purchased from military disposal at giveaway prices. Then, so-called barnstorming put an end to the exhibition game, airplanes appeared everywhere, and plane rides were available at nominal prices. Throughout this period, air-minded Cessna bided his time and continued farming. He never lost interest, but the kind of aviation game he had practiced was over. In Wichita a company was formed to do barnstorming, carry passengers and make charter flights.

In 1920, E.M. Laird formed the Wichita Aeroplane Company to build planes. In 1923 it became the Swallow Aeroplane Company. Cessna revived his flying to some extent during this period and was at the Bartlesville, Oklahoma, air meet September 1st and 2nd, flying an OX-powered Swallow biplane.

Toward the end of 1924, Walter Beech and Lloyd Stearman resigned from the Swallow Company and planned to start another firm. Early in 1925 they approached Cessna and offered him the presidency of their new venture if he would join them. As a result, the Travel Air Company was formed in Wichita on February 5th,

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