The Jensen Trainer Model 2
A Depression-Era Private Venture

By Dan Hagedorn

"She could have been a contender."

Although there is no record of him actually saying so, Martin "Marty" Jensen, who described himself as an "aircraft designer – pilot," very probably must have held such sentiments by the time the astonishing trek of his little-known Trainer Model 2 finally came to an end.

Readers familiar with the work of this writer may be surprised to see the by-line associated with this story, as the history of aviation in Latin America has been – and remains – his forte.

However, believe it or not, the Jensen Trainer Model 2 had a Latin American connection, and it was this phase of its existence that first caught my attention. It was, from that point on, very much a case of "the more I learned, the more intrigued I became."

In many ways, it is a peculiarly American story, and as the story unfolds, this may become obvious to even the most skeptical reader.

But before we get to this very interesting little biplane, we really need to know a bit more about the man behind it all.

When asked, Martin Jensen described himself simply as an "aircraft designer and pilot." (Peter M. Bowers Collection, The Museum of Flight)

Not Exactly a Household Name

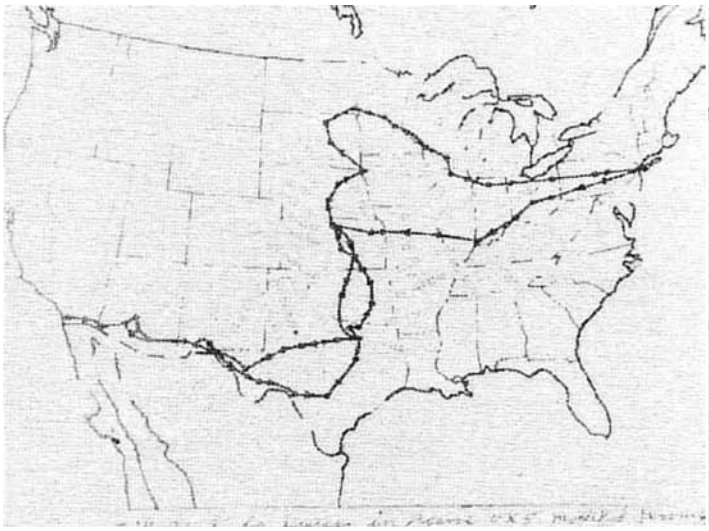
Marty Jensen may fairly be said to have grown up alongside aviation.

Born just before Christmas on December 20, 1900 in a cold and wind-swept Jamestown, Kansas, to Nils and Marin Jensen, the family moved to South Sioux City, Nebraska, by the time he was a teenager, where he graduated from high school – just in time for the entry of the U.S. into WWI.

Although he often said that he had learned to fly in the Navy in 1917-1918 at Great Lakes Naval Aviation School in Illinois, in fact he was an enlisted aviation rating (Second Class Aviation Rigger) on a two-year, short-term enlistment. He spent six months at Great Lakes before being transferred to San Diego, where he flew frequently from the former Dutch Flats Field, and where he was attached to the Torpedo Plane Squadron of the *USS Aroostock,* and gained a commission as an Ensign in the Naval Reserve, at San Diego in 1925, only after he had gained an FAI civil license, rather belatedly, in 1921, having learned to fly in 1919 in San Diego. He claimed about 40 hours in Curtiss R-6s there, so this must have been when he qualified for his FAI license.

By the end of 1924, like so many WWI-era veterans who had been well-and-thoroughly bitten by flying, he had organized a rather *ad hoc* flying school, conducted during the winter months at Dutch Flats near San Diego, where his modest "Jensen School of Flying" logo was emblazoned across the top of what were apparently Curtiss JN-4 shipping crates, and barnstormed during the summers throughout the West.

Apparently, he soon came to realize that there were, after all, things in life besides airplanes and, on April 24, 1925, he married Miss Marguerite (invariable known in later years, affectionately, as simply "Peg," although when they were first married, she went by "Doris") Hannighan of Richmond, Va., in, of all places, Yuma, Arizona. He had met her while in California and, as the saying goes – and as their adventures together were to prove – it was a match made in Heaven. They apparently celebrated their nuptials by flying a Curtiss JN-4, via a rather leisurely and circuitous route from San Diego to Long Island in the summer of 1925. After they returned to San Diego, Jensen carried out a radical modification to a standard JN-4 (it is not clear if it was the same one they flew to Long Island) and fitted it with a 200-hp Wright J4 engine, and which was promptly dubbed the *Jenny Pursuit!*



Via a rather circuitous route, the newly-weds flew an OX-5 powered JN-4 from San Diego to Long Island, New York – and return – during the summer of 1925 – apparently stopping along the way to barnstorm and earn enough money for the next leg! (Dr. David Hatfield Collection, The Museum of Flight)

After returning to San Diego, Jensen carried out a radical modification of a standard JN-4, fitting it with a Wright J4 engine, a modified undercarriage and rounded forward fuselage, becoming the Jenny Pursuit. (Dr. David Hatfield Collection, The Museum of Flight)

The young couple settled in again at San Diego and, in 1926, he was appointed Commander of the First Aviation Division, San Diego Naval Reserves, having apparently been promoted rapidly from Ensign in order to assume these duties.

Sometime late in 1926, the newlyweds traveled to Hawaii, where Jensen soon found work with the newly opened Lewis Hawaiian Air Tours, organized by legendary Hawaiian businessman Edwin Lewis. Flying a highly modified Standard aircraft (Jensen later said it was actually a five-place Ryan Standard airline biplane named *Malolo)* - he came to know the islands well and, indeed, it had been a *defacto* honeymoon for the couple.

One of his lesser known flights in the islands took place in 1927, when he transported two physicians to the dreaded leper colony on Molokai.

The Dole Derby

His sojourn in the islands resulted in advance notice of one of the major civilian aviation events of the 1920s, the so-called Dole Derby.

By now regarded as a seasoned and very experienced over-water aviator, Jensen sensed an opportunity for both fame and a big payday. Returning to the mainland in June 1927, he somehow managed to attract sponsorship, an aircraft – the rather ungainly looking Breese-Wilde 5 monoplane (NX-914, Manufacturers Serial Number 3) named *Aloha,* and a navigator, Paul Schluter. Painted bright yellow – undoubtedly to improve chances of being spotted if forced down somewhere in the vast Pacific -with her name in red.

The prize being offered - $25,000 for first place and $10,000 for second – attracted dozens of "wannabe"

Certainly a candidate for "ugliest aircraft of all time," the Breese-Wild Model 5, NX-914 Aloha proved reliable and remarkably long-lived, and enjoyed a post-Dole Derby career that has seldom been reported. (Hagedorn Collection)

Certainly one of the most bizarre modifications every visited upon an otherwise beautiful aircraft series, the Ryan-Mahoney B.1 MGM Special, registration number 1550, msn 42, had a very abbreviated service life. Jensen crashed in Arizona on the first leg of a promotional trip cross-country, and both he and Leo survived. Parts of the cage and fuselage were recovered from the remote crash site decades later. (Gordon S. Williams Collection, The Museum of Flight)

entrants – very few of whom had any long-distance or even over-water flying experience whatsoever.

Eventually, 15 truly diverse aircraft were formally entered in the event that, thanks to the press of the day, was being billed as a "race." Set to start from the airport at Oakland, six of the entrants were formally disqualified the day before the race but, even with this last-minute gesture of prudence, the entire affair soon devolved into an aerial disaster.

Seven of the qualifying entrants either crashed or just disappeared enroute, with 11 lives being lost in the process. Art Goebel's modified Travel Air 5000, *Woolaroc,* sponsored by Oklahoma oilman Frank Phillips, was the first to land at Wheeler Field on Oahu, followed by Jensen and Schluter in *Aloha.* Jensen never missed an opportunity, in subsequent years, to proclaim that yes, he had finished in second place – and last!

Jensen's bride is said to have greeted him at Wheeler Field upon his safe arrival with a screamed, "Martin! Where the Hell have you been?!"

The ungainly *Aloha* had served Jensen well, but few appreciate that, after reaching Hawaii, she stayed there. Her long-range tanks were removed, and she was flown for some time by Hawaiian Air Tours, who called her the "Breese Air Express," leading to speculation that Jensen's former employer had actually put up the money for her purchase in the first place.

In May 1928, she was sold to him outright by the original consortium who had financed the aircraft for $6,000 for a private tour of 33 of the U.S. states, attempting to capitalize on her fame, accompanied, as usual, by his sweetheart, as well as Fred Bowerman Jr. and C. M. Schoening, who actually sponsored the flight.

By August 1928, the couple took *Aloha* to remote Fargo, N.D., and reportedly gathered data on flying fields between there and various destinations in the mid-west, but for whom and why is unknown. By this time, the intrepid Mrs. Jensen was also a licensed pilot. By December, the couple had moved on to Curtiss Field, N.Y., where the aircraft was overhauled in the Wies hangar.

In November 1929, the well-traveled aircraft was converted back to five-place configuration, fitted with a Wright J-6 and put into service as a photo plane for the *New York Daily News,* subsequently being destroyed ignominiously in a hangar fire in Garden City in 1933.

The Era of Aviation Spectaculars

Having learned the value of keeping his name in the press, and undoubtedly capitalizing on Charles Lindbergh's success earlier the same year, by September 18, 1927, Jensen was back in California and had somehow been enlisted by M.G.M. to fly a specially modified Ryan-Mahoney B.1 *MGM Special (*U.S. Identified aircraft No.1550, MSN 42) – essentially a flying cage – containing none other than Leo the Lion, symbol of the movie magnates, from San Diego's Kearny Field to Mitchel Field on Long Island in a non-stop attempt.

Certainly, one of the most bizarre aircraft modifications to that time, the aircraft had been leased to the movie conglomerate. Unfortunately, Jensen became lost, his engine overheated and, having apparently turned up a blind canyon while trying to clear the Mogollon Rim in Eastern Arizona, was obliged to stall into trees when he could not power the aircraft out of its dilemma near the desolate Tonto basin. He walked for

Bellanca J, registration number 5315 (msn 106), named The Green Flash, undoubtedly because of its dominant overall coloring, was used for several attempts at an endurance record, which was finally achieved March 28, 1929, beating the solo endurance time to that date by a scant eight minutes, 22 seconds. He was aloft for 35 hours, 33 minutes. (Hagedorn Collection)

three days, leaving his sandwiches and water for the lion, who survived the crash still in his cage. Jensen told one newsman that his flight to Hawaii was "…*a tame stunt compared with carrying a lion by air."*

Not missing a beat, the Ryan-Mahoney Co. launched Jensen's bride in a conventional B.1 to "search" for her husband, but concentrated mainly over the deserts of southeastern California. She was transported to Yuma to join him once he had been found. The aircraft was a total loss, but an aviation archaeology buff reportedly located the frame some years ago and retrieved it.

Having survived this potentially deadly incident, by February 1928, Jensen had moved on and become affiliated in some obscure way with one of the hundreds of start-up aviation enterprises around the country. In this instance, the Gold State Aircraft Co. at Mills Field (now San Francisco International Airport), where he worked as an instructor in their rapidly expanding flight school. By March 17, 1928, he was giving radio lectures over Oakland's KTAB twice each week on how to fly.

Jensen apparently became restless once again with the comparatively sedate life of a flight instructor and by January 21, 1929, had been engaged by owner A.H. Martine (doing business as Tidewater Test) to attempt a new solo, long-distance endurance flight. Using a Bellanca J, registration number 5315, MSN 106, named *The Green Flash,* he planned to take off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, fly a race-track route from Boston to Washington, DC during the day, and over Long Island at night. The Bellanca J was the same aircraft flown by Emil Burgin the previous fall in coast-to-coast races. His aircraft should have received a special category aircraft "Restricted" prefix for this attempt under the Department of Commerce regulations of the period, but photos of the aircraft taken during the attempt reveal that it retained its registration (un-prefixed) number, 5315.

High winds aloft and a clogged fuel line forced him to abandon the attempt on January 30 after only two hours aloft. Much to his chagrin, he landed on the beach at Eaton's Neck, Asharoken Beach near Northport, Long Island, with one cylinder of his engine smoking – causing Jensen to think he was facing an in-flight fire as well.

Undaunted, he made a second attempt on February 7, by which time the news media of the day had labeled him as "The Flying Viking," taking off at 9:04am. Once again, however, he experienced icing and fuel line problems, and reluctantly landed back at Roosevelt Field.

His third and, finally successful attempt, ended at 5:34pm on March 28, 1929, and he had broken the existing solo endurance record by a scant eight minutes, 22 seconds.

Other spectacular flights followed but, like so many made during this Golden Age of aviation they were either very quickly overtaken – or very quickly forgotten, as even more spectacular feats competed for front-page headlines. Indeed, while the reading public viewed these individual accomplishments with, often, curiosity at best, they were in the meantime consumed with struggling to feed themselves and their families, and rightly or wrongly, viewed some of these aviation exploits as wasteful and lacking in purpose at a time when so many were hurting.

Jensen went on to break the world's altitude record for commercial-category aircraft on June 2, 1929, reaching 26,600 feet.

Making use of another Bellanca, CH 300 NC-26E (msn 133) dubbed 3 Musketeers, Jensen, his wife Peg and another pilot made yet another endurance flight in July 1929 that ended in a forced-landing . Here, a dashing Marty Jensen poses for the newsreels of the day with the CH 300, which appeared rather scruffy. (Hagedorn Collection)

The Jensen Trainer

THE JENSEN "JUMPING JUNE BUG"

Martin Jensen set about building a highly modified Curtiss JN-4 around September 1925 after returning from a flight to New York, as he wanted to barnstorm in the high country and, especially, in Utah, where oil field speculators had fields above 5,000 feet.

A man from Utah was looking for someone to undertake exhibition flights at night, with flares in what was then a remote state, seldom visited by aviators. He was offering $500 for one flight on July 4, and Jensen had to post a $200 bond – to ensure that he would be there to make the flight and collect the money!

He knew that in order to operate at that altitude, a tired, 90-hp OX-5 engine wasn't going to do it. He had some fuselage fittings and unfinished wing panels, and visited several surplus yards in search of an operable Hisso engine. After some thought, however, he concluded that, although they had the power, a Hisso would be too heavy. So he bought parts from Wright J1, J2, J3 and J4 radial engines from the Solomon junk yard – and built a hybrid engine from these diverse parts, that he calculated provided 200hp. He covered the rear fuselage with plywood (salvaged from Victrola record player packaging!). Jensen wanted the engine low in the nose, so that he could reach the prop and, because this would require a longer landing gear, he located an assembly from a surplus U.S. Navy Blackburn *Swift* and 36-inch wheels from a deHavilland DH.4.

He painted "Vico Motor Oil" under the rear cockpit because this local firm provided him with free fuel and oil.

Jensen flew the *Jumping June Bug*, so named he claimed because the first time he took off with it in California, it fairly "jumped into the air," to a small town in Utah named Nephila. He flew the aircraft from the front cockpit and carried two passengers in the rear pit. Jensen claimed a top speed of 150mph and a stall at 40mph. He often repeated the claim that it was the first aircraft built in the United States that could climb over 3,000 feet per minute!

'NEVER AGAIN"

Jensen turned 30 during the year of his great series of aerial exploits and, although no written record survives, he apparently became in touch with his mortality – probably via gentle reminders from his clearly patient, tolerant and aviatrix partner. His solitary public pronouncement suggesting a course-change was contained in a single, two-word quote headlined in the *Newark Ledger* for July 1, 1929. Posing with a rather disheveled Marguerite, also in flying togs – having accompanied him – the caption quoted him as saying, "no more endurance flights for me," posing in front of their forced-landed Bellanca CH 300, probably NC26E (MSN 133), dubbed "*3 Musketeers."*

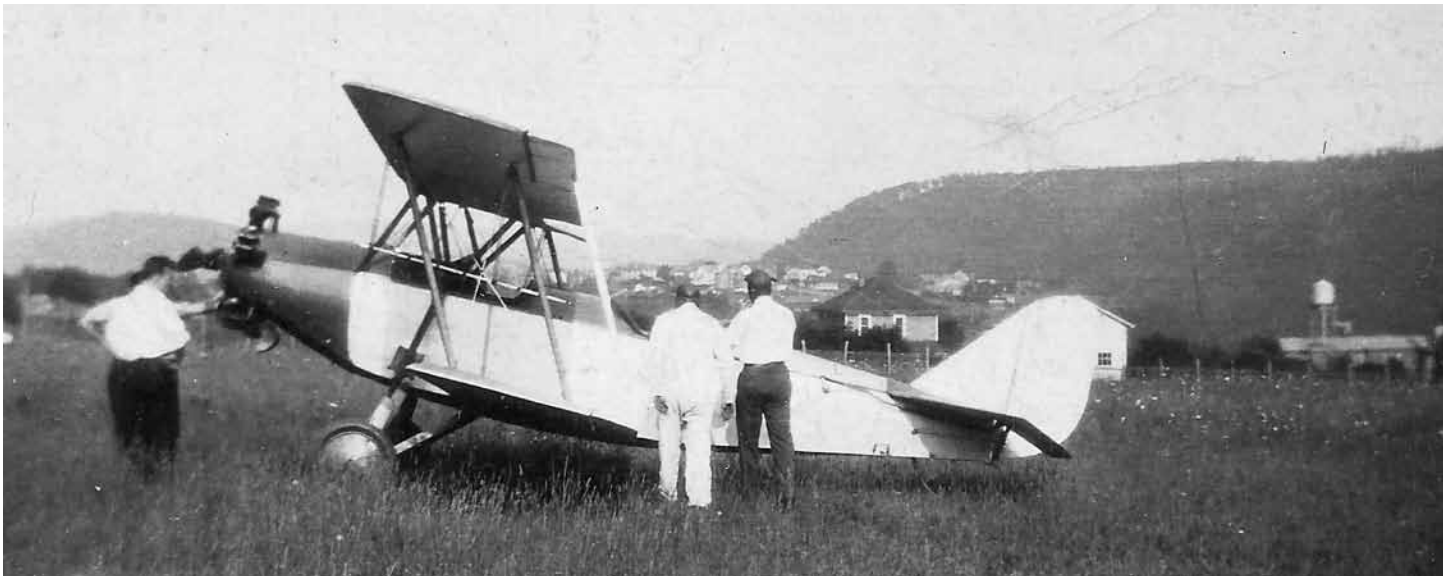
There is then an eight-month hiatus in the couple's whereabouts but a brief news item in *The Evening News* of Harrisburg, Penn., for Saturday, March 29, 1930, announced that Jensen had been appointed to the faculty of Beckley College of Harrisburg, where he was to serve in the aeronautical division as Supervisor of Flight and Design.

Jensen had apparently attracted the attention of Mrs. Charles R. Beckley, President of the college, who introduced him to the entire student body on Friday evening, the March 28, in Fahnestock Hall. At the same time, and for the first time, he announced that he proposed to make *"...further improvements to the Jensen plane in the aviation laboratory of the college."*

This was the very first public mention of the subject of this narrative, but he went on to say that "…*the plane has already passed rigid tests at Roosevelt Field"* and that after further development "…*he may attempt a non-stop flight from Harrisburg to San Francisco and return, and a trans-Atlantic flight."*

Beckley College was clearly on-board with all of this, and went so far as to acquire the 110 acre Shavely Farm at Camp Hill, situated between Carlisle and Gettysburg for a dedicated training field. By March 1931, the Beckley program had formed an association with the Penn School of Aviation and Jensen, along with Lt. B.A. Glover, former director of the Ground School program at the Penn School of Aviation facility in Pittsburgh, had full charge of not only the Beckley shops, but also were conducting 10 hours of dual instruction for more than 100 students. An unusual feature of the combined course was that all aeronautical engineering students, whether they intended to qualify as pilots or not, received the 10 hours of dual.

One account states that the flying field carved out at the former Shavely Farm was also called, at one point, the Martin Jensen Flying Field and that it was there that Marty formed the Jensen Aviation Corp., which allegedly completed the Trainer Model 2. But if this was so, it was probably on paper only, as no incorporation papers have been located, and the claim that the corporation had laid down two more Trainers and that "…*they were nearly finished when the stock market crashed"* appears to be apocryphal. Indeed, the only appellation even close to this name was the name Peg and Marty gave to their enterprise in South Carolina years later, the Jensen Aircraft Corp., which actually described what amounted to an FBO operation.



If the Jensen Trainer Model 2 was obscure, its immediate progenitor – and, to a point, inspiration – was the Jensen J.T., sometimes cited erroneously as the "JT-1." X-281V was msn 1, and is almost certainly pictured here at Lehighton, Penn., during its brief existence. Jensen said it performed "beautifully." Note that it sported ailerons on both wings. (John Underwood)

THE JENSEN TRAINER MODEL 2, OR MODEL 1?

As noted above, Jensen apparently arrived at Beckley College as early as April 1, 1930, with an aircraft of rather mysterious provenance, which had been claimed to have delivered "spectacular" flight characteristics sometime before that date at Roosevelt Field.

This aircraft was, unquestionably, the short-lived Jensen J.T. (sometimes cited, without benefit of official recordation, as the "JT-1"). This aircraft was cited by the Department of Commerce (DoC) as having been built by the Jensen Aviation Corp. of Lehighton, Penn., in January 1930. Jensen applied for a special category license and was issued X-281V for MSN 1, with a 90hp Kinner K-5 on January 8, 1930.

Only one photo of this aircraft has been located, and her experimental license was cancelled by the DoC on June 6, 1931, Jensen having reported that it had been *"...dismantled and cut up."* He had reported that the J.T. had RAF airfoil design and that she had been a "…*real performer."*

Barely 77 days later, Jensen applied for another experimental license for an aircraft that he described as having been completed on August 22, 1931 – more than 17 months after having reported testing the elusive J.T. at Roosevelt Field. He listed the "Manufacturer" as himself, and gave the address of the "manufacturer" as 1400 North 2nd Street, Harrisburg, Penn., which just happened to be the main address of Beckley College.

The DoC issued Special Category License, Experimental number X-11680 for what was described as the Jensen Trainer Model 2, MSN 2 (but see below), on August 30, 1931, powered by a 120hp Martin-Chevolair 333 engine, serial number 118. It was described as a two-place, open, land biplane. Despite the numerous reports of the aircraft having flown at Roosevelt Field in 1930, Jensen claimed it was "completed" using student labor at Beckley College, although noted aero-historian John Underwood reported a slightly different version, writing that "…*it was constructed at the Eastern School of Aviation, Beckley College, as a class-room exercise by student labor."* If so, it proved to be a handsome aircraft, if not largely conventional in design, and as events would prove, remarkably durable for a one-off design.

By November 3, 1931, Jensen had applied for a restricted license for the aircraft, and the DoC issued NR-11680 shortly thereafter, and she was restricted specifically "…*for the purpose of conducting a Goodwill Tour of South America, sponsored by the Capitalists of York, Pennsylvania."* And thus, we arrive at the connection that first attracted your scribe to this elusive little aircraft.

With wings of equal span (an even 30 feet), and of rectangular plan form, these were built with solid spruce spars, built-up wood ribs, fairly standard drag-wire bracing and all covered with linen. Full-length ailerons were installed on the lower wings only and, initially, the aircraft was fitted with rather unconventional "I" type interplane struts, completing the wing configuration.

The fuselage, on the other hand, was a completely different story – and a challenging undertaking for "student labor." Constructed with 17 ST aluminum alloy skin, frames and bulkheads, with extruded aluminum alloy longerons, these were all riveted together with rather large diameter, round-head rivets. Apparently, Jensen took the view that the larger rivet heads would instill confidence in any subsequent potential customers by making the aircraft appear stronger to them.

The undercarriage consisted of a split-type main gear and a tail skid, with the main gear's "V" struts hinged to the lower

The Jensen Trainer Model 2 as NR-11680, as it appeared in its initial configuration for the extremely ambitious Latin American "Good Will" flight, set to commence from York, Pennsylvania. Here, it bears the used 110-hp Warner Scarab engine. The full-span ailerons on the lower wings and easily accessible cockpits are interesting, but the aircraft still sports just a tail-skid. (via David W. Ostrowski)

portion of the fuselage and with hydraulic struts on each side to the upper portion of the fuselage

Both cockpits were equipped with stick and rudder pedals, with the rudder pedals, rather oddly, being suspended from above rather than hinged to the floor.

A 20-gallon fuel tank was installed just aft of the firewall, and standard primary instruments were placed in both cockpits. This was clearly intended to be a dedicated training aircraft, capable of being operated from rough airfields – such as those found throughout Latin America.

Lending further credence to the intended purpose of the aircraft, it had no flaps, no brakes, no baggage compartment and no radio.

The story goes that Jensen became bored with the life of an instructor with a seemingly never-ending stream of enthusiastic but over-confident teenagers. He described the aircraft as "… *easy to fly, smooth and quiet for an open cockpit biplane, with good stall characteristics, low landing speed* [a scant 30mph] *and no faults."* He wasn't happy with the rate of climb, and the ceiling was apparently never established that, given the projected flight to Latin America, would have certainly not only have been a concern, but a missing selling point.

'THE GREATEST FLIGHT THAT NEVER WAS"

The announced "Good Will" flight to Latin America was, of course, nothing of the sort.

Not long after finishing the aircraft, and apparently in payment for his service at Beckley, Jensen flew "his" Trainer Model 2 to the Glenn L. Martin Company factory at Middle River, Md., and demonstrated it to company officials. Although the Martin Museum could locate no records substantiating Jensen's claim, he said that they liked the aircraft, and contemplated building it for the Latin American market that, as of 1931-1934, abounded with demand for simple, robust, all-round utility aircraft. Unfortunately, at almost precisely the same time, the problematic Martin 333 engine – which the Glenn L. Martin Company had been promoting – started to evidence cracks in the crankcase, and the company quickly lost interest in the venture, while distancing itself from the 333 engine as well.

Indeed, by November 5, Jensen had managed to replace the failing Martin-Chevolair 333 engine with a used 110hp Warner Scarab (s/n 553) and had mounted a Hamilton Standard steel prop on the new powerplant (s/n 5008). Somewhere in the midst of all of this, he had deleted the 20-gallon fuselage tank and replaced it with two 75-gallon tanks, although how these were situated isn't clear. This certainly represented a massive quantity of fuel for such an aircraft, however, and the added weight would have been very significant.

Nonetheless, so equipped, Jensen flew the aircraft to Bolling Field, D.C., to give Air Corps officers there a chance to look it over as a potential Primary Trainer. The Air Corps officer in charge told him "…*not a chance,"* as it was simply too easy to fly!

It was at this point that strange things started happening in the DoC records for NR-11680.

On inspection with the Warner engine, the CAA Inspector noted that the Manufacturers Serial Number for the aircraft

was initially shown, for reasons unknown, as Number 2, which Jensen was hard-pressed to explain. Thus, by November 20, this had been changed in pencil to read Number 1. When queried by CAA staff about this discrepancy, Inspector Agerter replied that, in fact, the aircraft was properly identified as the Jensen Trainer Model 1, Serial Number 2. However, Jensen contested this, for reasons unknown and, by January 4, 1932, the official record was changed – again – to read Jensen Trainer Model 2, Serial Number 1! Someone had clearly reminded Marty that his first attempt, the J.T., X-281V, had been assigned Serial Number 1 as well

Having failed to solicit support from the Air Corps or Martin, the owner and his itinerant aircraft somehow gained the notice of a group of leading business men in nearby York, Penn., who had concluded that one way out of the depression miasma was to make use of the tremendous interest in aviation to promote their own interests.

Perhaps inevitably, a committee was formed, that included local York luminaries P.H. Glatfelter, S. Forry Laucks, Harry Read, William Shipley and George Hummel, who served as chairman. It was these worthies that devised the Latin American Goodwill Flight, with which they realized they could solicit world-wide attention to York and its industrial potential, perhaps get into the aircraft manufacturing business or, at the very least, sell the aircraft to some *Caudillo* for a cash-on-the-barrelhead sum. It was a win-win situation for the industrialists.

Committee member Harry Read sent a formal letter to the U.S. State Department on October 23, 1931, on behalf of Jensen and one C.W.D. Ardussey, who claimed to be multi-lingual, as copilot/navigator.

The flight was, for the time, ambitious in the extreme. Planned to start from York on November 2, 1931, in order to take advantage of spring weather in the Southern Hemisphere, the two were expected to be able to fly non-stop to Miami. From there, they were to cross to Camaguey, Cuba, then on to Port-au-Prince, Haiti the same day, weather permitting.

Oddly, they somehow scheduled a refueling stop at Cap Haitien, Haiti – although exactly how advance arrangements for this were to be achieved were not noted, possibly assuming that the small U.S. Marine detachment remaining in Haiti might be able to facilitate the necessary fuel – and from there, fly over the entirety of the Dominican Republic and then over-water to San Juan, Puerto Rico, for their first night stop.

On November 4, they wanted to continue on via St. Croix, Montserrat and Martinique to Trinidad, where they hoped to refuel once again.

From British Trinidad, they then planned to fly to the tightly controlled dictatorship of Venezuela and, conditions permitting, "…*a possible stop at Maturin Field,"* and then across absolutely trackless jungles and swamps to British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, stopping at Paramaribo for the night.

Their itinerary for November 5, which was very ambitious, would have seen them cross French Guiana and enter Brazilian territory, where revolutionary activity was rampant at the time. They rather optimistically scheduled stops at Maranhão, Natal, Bahia and then overnight at Vitoria. Then it was on to Rio de Janeiro on November 6, where they expected to stay "…*perhaps a week,"* unquestionably with a view towards demonstrating their aircraft to both the Brazilian Army and Navy, both of whom, according to information they had acquired via the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce Attache there, were in the market for primary trainers.

An interesting study of the Trainer Model 2 some time after July 1, 1932, by which time she had reverted to a simple Identification Mark, -11680. Obviously, the former color scheme had been scrubbed off the aircraft, and her all-metal fuselage is gleaming. The colors on the wings and tail surfaces can only be guessed at but are believed to have been green and red separated by a thin yellow stripe. Note also that the "I" interplane struts have been replaced by a pair of conventional struts on either side. The location is unknown. (Hagedorn Collection)

Had they not closed a deal in Rio, they then proposed flying on to Santos and Porto Alegre, where they "hoped" they could refuel. Then it was on to Montevideo, Uruguay, and then across the Rio Platte to Buenos Aires where, again, they planned to stop for "…*a week or 10 days,"* undoubtedly with a view to marketing the aircraft to a growing sport aviation community in Argentina, not to mention the Argentine Army and Navy.

Had they still possessed an aircraft, they then told the State Department they planned to fly on from Buenos Aires to Mendoza and from there, cross the Andes to Santiago, Chile. The State Department wisely questioned them about the altitude capability of their aircraft on a scant 110hp, with 150 gallons of fuel and two adults aboard, but received no satisfactory response.

Provided they could have somehow transited the Andes – perhaps further south – they then stated they would head north in Chile to Coquimbo, Iquique and Arica across the Atacama Desert, and thence into Peru, where "…*we might stop in Lima for several days."*

The flight was then on to Payta, Peru, then somehow to high Quito, Ecuador, followed by a major leg on to Cali, Colombia, and finally, probably thankfully, to the Army Air Corps' France Field in the Panama Canal Zone.

France Field was an oasis for U.S. fliers experiencing Latin American conditions and challenges, and they undoubtedly expected to be warmly received and serviced there, courtesy of the U.S. Army.

From Panama, they then planned to head up the isthmus to San Jose, Costa Rica; Managua, Nicaragua; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Belize; British Honduras; then into Mexico via Veracruz, Tampico and then re-entering the U.S. at Brownsville, Texas.

They advised the State Department that their aircraft, NR-11680, would sport "…*wings painted orange for high visibility if forced down in the jungles, a white fuselage with the word "York, PA" in black on both sides."*

This proposal was going to require considerable diplomatic clearances, enroute support – which the State Department, quite rightly, viewed with skepticism - and not a little cash-on-hand to grease local custom clearances.

Clearly, neither the York Committee nor the crew had a clear understanding of exactly how taxing this undertaking would actually have been, and to its credit, the State Department did its level-best to put them in touch with reality, while at the same time commencing the necessary arrangements, should they actually get underway.

Perhaps to the relief of all concerned, on October 29, 1931, the State Department received a letter from, of all people, copilot/navigator Ardussey, who advised them, rather casually, that "…*the flight will be delayed a few days on account of motor trouble."* He added that the announced purpose of the proposed flight had also been changed and that they were "…*making the flight for a record time,"* adding, oddly, that as often as possible, they would like to land and refuel at French Latécoère airline flying fields, suggesting that some sort of arrangements might have been reached with the French pioneer airline.

The "huge" dedication ceremony planned for their departure on November 1 was actually carried out, and a crowd of some 1,000 assembled to see them off, including Pathé newsreel camera men and microphones for speeches. But as the morning wore on, it became clear that something was awry. Word soon filtered through the crowd that something was wrong with the airplane. The "Greatest Flight that Never Was," after exhausting preparations and extensive coordination with the State Department, had all come to naught.

OWNERSHIP QUESTION

Marty must have had a "Plan B" in place, and apparently just a few steps ahead of the local authorities, Jensen and Peg headed south with the Trainer during the deep winter to the Fourth Annual All-American Air Races in Miami, where, using his by now repaired Trainer, still in the Restricted Category, he wrangled a brief contract to perform stunt flying.

His performance at Miami was, by all accounts, memorable. He even managed to nearly duplicate the performance of a Pitcairn autogiro being demonstrated there, taking off and landing the Trainer in as short a distance and climbing as rapidly as the Pitcairn, much to the chagrin of its pilot and backers. He also teamed up with a pilot flying a Wright Whirlwind powered Travel Air 4000 and an unknown aviatrix flying a Whirlwind powered Waco ATO and, together, they put on a completely *ad hoc* demonstration of a three-ship precision flying team – not bad on 110hp!

After the dust settled back in York, the very embarrassed local officials finally tried to sort it all out, someone apparently slapped a lien on the hapless Trainer Model 2 when she returned from Miami. By March 23, 1932, she was reported to the CAA as "stored" at York, although Jensen, at about the same time, sent a lengthy letter to the Feds stating that he was planning to submit a complete stress analysis package to them, in order to gain a coveted Approved Type Certificate (ATC) for the aircraft.

By this time, the Jensens gave their address as 622 Third Street, New Cumberland, Penn., not far from Harrisburg but by May 11, 1932, they had moved to Evansville, Ind., where the couple apparently stayed with his sister. While there, he attempted to regroup and start a flying school, but the depression had, by this time, hit hard. They eventually set up an operation in a farmer's field about 50 miles from Evansville, having somehow in the meantime regained possession of his one-and-only asset – the Trainer Model 2.

On July 1, 1932, the CAA suspended the former restricted license and issued a simple registration number (-11680) for the, by-now, non-airworthy plane. A rough note around the same date to the CAA advised that he was "…*dismantling the plane for static tests."* How he proposed doing this in a remote rural farming area remains a mystery.

It appears that, notwithstanding his representations to the CAA, Jensen was in fact flying his little aircraft, and had discovered that the local farmers, who had scant outlets for their hard-earned dollars, got a kick out of seeing their farms from the air – often taking payment in the form of chickens, sorghum molasses and at least one live pig!

With the brief glitter of Miami quickly over, the novelty

The Trainer Model 2 was transformed with the addition of the inline engine and wheel pants as X-11680 with the 85-hp Ford V-8 installed in a tidy cowling. The date of this image is uncertain but must have been after December 16, 1937. (via David W. Ostrowski)

of their offerings amongst the farming community apparently soon were exhausted, and they moved on to Stockbridge, Ga., around July 13, 1933. He found that the locals there had a rather low opinion of itinerant Yankee airmen, so he teamed up temporarily with a local flyer, Gorden Bella, son of a former Georgia Senator. Jensen flew his Trainer and Bella a Bird BK, and with Peg handling the logistics and sales, they barnstormed Georgia and neighboring states until October.

The Jensens next moved on to Folly Beach, South Carolina. There, the registration for -11680 was cancelled on July 1, 1934, upon normal expiration. Peg and Marty in the meantime somehow pulled enough finances together to open an airport on James Island, near Charleston. While there, he purchased a U.S.-assembled deHavilland DH.60GM Gypsy Moth to rent to the locals, while still holding on to his Trainer for personal use.

After tinkering with the airplane for nearly three years, he once again applied for an experimental category license for her, and X-11680 was duly issued to him on December 16, 1937. Incredibly, and probably at least somewhat accurately, he gave the total time of the aircraft as of that date as 800 hours – and, by then, powered with an 85-hp Ford V-8 engine! The experimental license had been issued, specifically, to test the Ford engine and "…*a belt reduction drive."* The Trainer had been refitted with Goodyear Air Wheels by then. After flying the aircraft to Wright Field again to demonstrate her as a low-cost *ab initio* trainer, where he reportedly made a "favorable impression," he reported by July 23, 1938, that the little biplane had accumulated more than 1,600 hours total time (800 hours in roughly six months)!

The Jensen Trainer Model 2 was cancelled from the U.S. Civil Register on January 1, 1939, upon expiration of her airworthiness certificate and, unfortunately, the ultimate fate of this well-traveled, one-of-a-kind aircraft is completely unknown.

EPILOGUE

Martin Jensen's love of aircraft and flying did not end with the demise of his beloved Trainer.

He went on, from age 39, after literally growing up with aviation, to design (in company with Arthur Draper), build and fly one of the most beautiful and exotic aircraft of the interwar period, the twin-engine, twin-tailed, molded mahogany veneers, Langley Aircraft Corp. 2-4-65 and 2-4-90 *Twin Four*. Named in honor of Samuel Pierpont Langley, the aircraft was designed to make exclusive use of non-strategic building materials. Two were in fact completed, one with twin Franklin 4AC 65-hp engines (NX-29099) and the other with twin 90-hp engines (NX-51706), and the latter was actually purchased and evaluated by the U.S. Navy as the XNL-1 (BuNo 39056). Ironically, the very materials it was built with turned out to be more difficult to obtain than the strategic metals it was designed to replace, and from a practical standpoint, repairs to the molded airframe would have proven exceptionally challenging in the event of an accident.

Then, with the obvious approach of another conflict, he designed the two-place Jensen 3-LW Sport, completed November 1, 1939, hoping to see it adopted for the growing Civil Pilot Training Program (CPTP), but it lost out to aircraft fielded by the "big time" manufacturers and only one was built, MSN 1, as NX-18157. Fitted with a 60-hp franklin 4AC-171, the diminutive, low-wing monoplane was a semi-monocoque type of wood construction, with full cantilevered wings, stabilizer and all control surfaces. He gained authorization to

Seldom connected with Martin Jensen, the elegant Langley 2-4-90 Twin Four, NX-51706, was built using molded mahogany veneers, and was tested by the U.S. Navy as the XNL-1, BuNo 39046. (Peter M. Bowers Collection, The Museum of Flight)

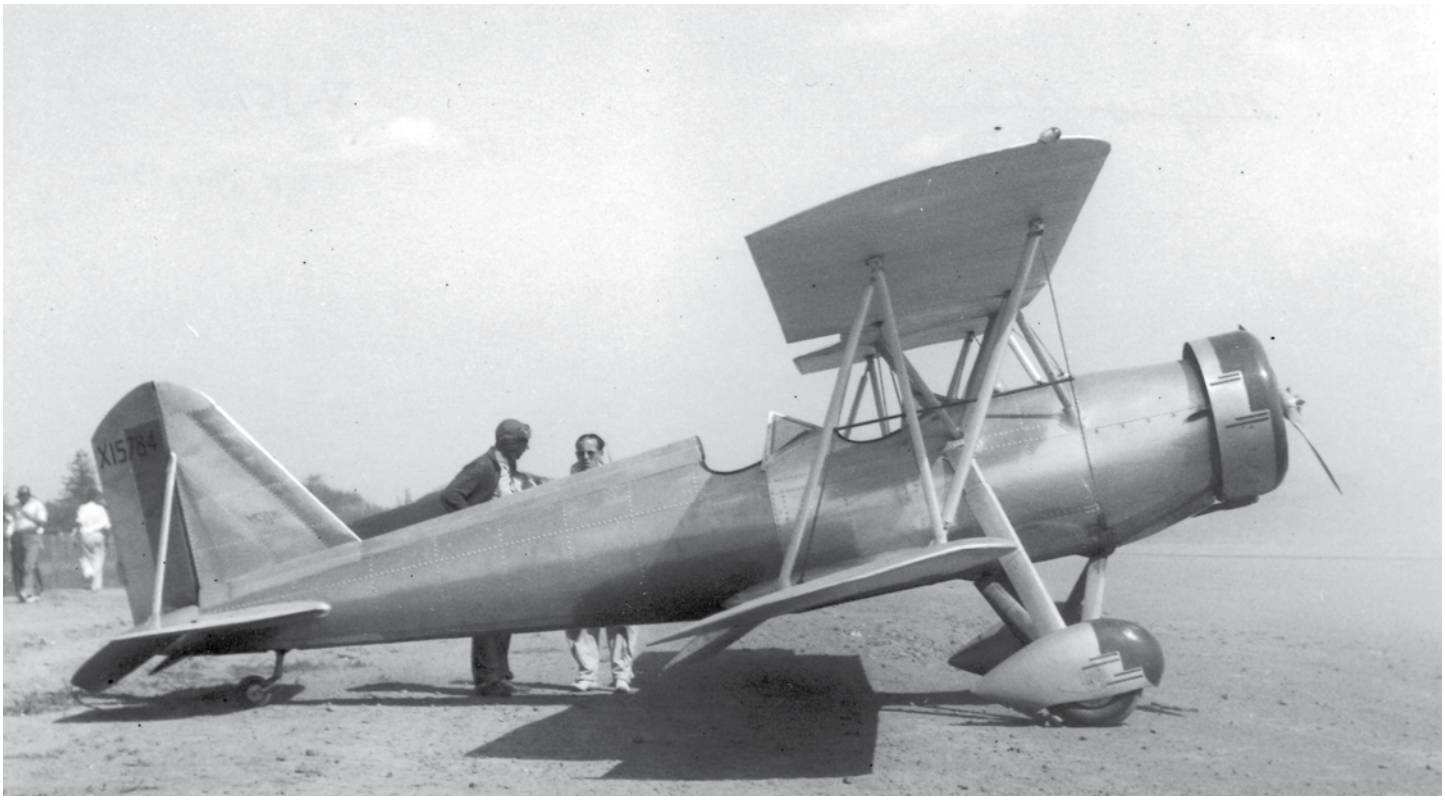
fly the aircraft from his base at Charleston, S.C., to Washington, D.C., on February 1, 1940, to demonstrate it to CPTP officials. The experimental license was cancelled June 1, 1940, and, by September 9, 1946, the aircraft still existed, but was noted as owned by that time by none other than the Langley Aviation Corp., the builders of the 2-4-90 *Twin Four* noted above.

Finally, if well-read aviation enthusiasts of this *Journal* felt a sneaking suspicion that they had somehow seen the Jensen Trainer Model 2 "somewhere else," they need look no further than the classic Meyers OTW-125 trainer series of 1940.

Two young pilots, named Allen H. Meyers and Martin Jensen, spent a few summers barnstorming together in the South in the Trainer Model 2, and there can be little doubt that Meyers had been greatly influenced by the very capable aircraft.

Prompted by the same CPTP requirement that led Marty Jensen to his one-off Sport, Al Meyers and some friends began building an aircraft that ultimately bore a striking resemblance to the Jensen Trainer Model 2. Meyers flew the first one on May 10, 1936, while Marty Jensen was still puttering around in Georgia and South Carolina, but it did not finally achieve an Approved Type Certificate until 1939. By then designated as the Model OTW ("Out-To-Win"), production and sales were offered to CPTP operators by May 1940, and subsequently received production orders from, amongst others, the Spartan School of Aeronautics and the Lincoln School of Aviation. With an uprated 125hp Warner Scarab, and later a 145hp Super Scarab, a total of 102 were eventually built – every one of which unquestionably bore the DNA of the one-and-only Jensen Trainer Model 2. ✈

Intended as a potential ab initio trainer for the rapidly expanding Civilian Pilot Training Program, the all-but-forgotten Jensen 3-LW, NX-18157 (msn 1) was completed in November 1939, but her side-by-side, low-wing configuration apparently did not find favor with CPTP officials. (Peter M. Bowers Collection, The Museum of Flight)



The very first Meyers OTW-125, X15784 msn 1, looking very smart with wheel pants and special paint on the cowling and spats, and clearly exhibiting inherited Jensen Trainer Model 2 DNA. (Peter M. Bowers Collection, The Museum of Flight)

AAHS Photo Archive CDs Series

The Society has recently started development of a series of photo CDs. These CDs contain high-resolution scans of negative, slides and prints from the AAHS Image Library. The resolution of these scanned images is sufficient to make an 8”x10” photographic quality print. Each CD focuses on a particular aspect of American aviation history - be that a particular manufacturer, type or class of aircraft.

As of this date, five CDs are available. Each CD contains between 120 and 140 images. The CDs that are available are:

1001	Douglas Propeller-Driven Commercial Transports
1006	Lockheed Constellations, Part I
1007	Lockheed Constellations, Connies in Color
1009	Lockheed P-38/F-5 Lightnings
1011	Curtiss Transports
1021	Boeing Propeller-Driven Commercial Transports
1031	Golden Age Commercial Flying Boats

These CDs are available to members for a donation of $19.95 each plus shipping ($2.50 U.S., $5.00 International - add $1.00 for each additional CD). Donation forms are available on-line and on request, but a note along with your donation specifying your particular interest is sufficient. Proceeds go to support the preservation of the photo archives. Do you have a particular interest or suggestion for a CD in this series? Drop us a line or email the webmaster (webmaster@aahs-online.org). We are currently researching the possibilities of offerings covering the following areas: XP-55, XP-56, Northrop X-4, Bell Aircraft, and Early Lockheeds.