

Financial and other help was solicited from anyone and everyone possible. A local resident relates how he can recall Mr. Schneider offering his dad, Lewis Krushel a 10 cent ticket on a radio which was being raffled off to help raise funds. Vernon Spangelo tells of how on a Saturday night when it was customary for most rural citizens to come to Morden to shop and visit, Fitz Powers made the rounds up and down Main Street asking merchants and shoppers alike to contribute funds toward the "Air Camper". In the absence of documented records, as far as can be determined, construction of Morden's first 'home-built' aeroplane took place from 1928 to 1930 which was a relatively short time especially in a day when many parts had to be 'scrounged' or improvised.

Because of Mr. Walter Schneider's unusual mechanical ability he was the project manager responsible for construction of a considerable amount of the fuselage and wing. Fitz Powers built up a major part of the engine, since he had the advantage of doing it in the Clubine Garage where he worked. In a sense the engine had to be custom built since a number of modifications were required. Some of these were to increase the rear sections of the oil pan to form a 'dry sump' from which the oil was pumped by an overland car plunger pump to provide positive lubrication to the vital parts through the engine block, which had been drilled for this purpose. Special lightweight aluminum pistons were fitted to the connecting rods. Install a high compression head. Mount the propeller hub on the crankshaft in place of the flywheel and then mount the engine on the plane with the propeller hub forward.

Most of the construction work was done in Schneider's Bicycle and Gun Shop, although there is information that some work was also done in an unused section of 'Toby' Tobias' Store. Basic construction of the fuselage and wing was Sitka spruce formers and ribs with piano wire bracing. Ewald Witt persuaded his employer, Mr. B.L. Martens to supply, at cost, approximately 200 square yards of Wabasso cotton sheeting to be used as aircraft fabric.

The fact that the builders' enthusiasm rubbed off onto others is illustrated by the fact that Ewald Witt's mother cut and sewed all the cotton used to cover their aeroplane, despite the fact that the use of all that good sheeting on an aeroplane seemed like a 'waste' to her. Since this project was of considerable, general interest many local residents would often stop in at Schneider's to see how the work was going during the 2½ years it took to complete the shiny, yellow Pietenpol 'Air Camper'.

In the absence of authentic records the sequence of events indicates that engine and taxiing tests were begun in 1931 on a field to the south of Morden. Walter Schneider reports that they all took turns at taxiing their new aeroplane. Tests soon showed that the engine could not develop enough power to enable the aircraft to fly. Information exists that a Mr. Hildebrand, a local cabinet-maker, despite his inability to communicate fluently with the builder did make it known that in his opinion the propeller being used had too coarse a 'pitch' and offered his services to correct the fault, since he had some knowledge of this from his work in Europe.