

Noel Wien

4 reels

Conversational interview
by Bob and Neville Jacobs
at Jacobs' home, Fairbanks
July, 1974

Noel Wien, as Alaska's first major commercial airline pilot and founder of Wien Airlines, has been taped and written about extensively. This series of reels may bring some fresh insights into Wien's life and personality. Bob Jacobs helped me to carry out the interview--I should add, my husband--and he has flown Alaska's bush since the 1940's. This tape records a conversation which Noel was enjoying not because he was being interviewed but because he was talking about his subject to someone who also knew the technical details of aviation. There is an element of shop talk as well as reminiscences of mutual friends, certain airplanes, the skills of flying, which would not emerge in an interview by someone outside of the this particularly unique profession.

Conversation opens with questions about his early interest in flying; this leads to Noel's telling about his Minnesota flying days.

From there he narrates the major events of his life, and while originally some idea of a chronological sequence had been in mind, there was no real sequence as stories emerged. Noel tells about his first flight from Anchorage to Fairbanks on Reel Four; on Reel Three continuing to Four he tells about a flight with Russell Merrill and two Fox Film photographers to Barrow in which they became lost on the Arctic Slope.

Elsewhere he tells about meeting and marrying Ada; business with the airline; the flight and loss of Carl Ben Eielson; of Will Rogers and Wiley Post; about various trips on which

he was forced down and made his way back to some village;
unusual flights; etc.

Tape Four ends with general conversation and talk about
the Wien biography which was at press and due on the bookstands
in 1974.