

yesterday's wings



■ ■ Some classic airplane designs seem to go on forever. Would you believe that a basic model worked out over half a century ago is still available today? Well, it is, although there have been some detail and name changes along the way.

Back in 1923, S. S. Swanson developed a little all-wood, single-seat sport-plane and powered it with a 28-hp WW-I surplus ground trainer engine. When Swanson became chief engineer of the Lincoln-Standard Aircraft Corp., of Lincoln, Neb., the firm marketed his little SS-3 as the Lincoln "Sport."

The Sport did not sell because there were still plenty of cheap war-surplus airplanes around for those who wanted low-cost flying. However, plans for the Sport were published in late-1920s mechanical magazines, and several were built by capable amateurs.

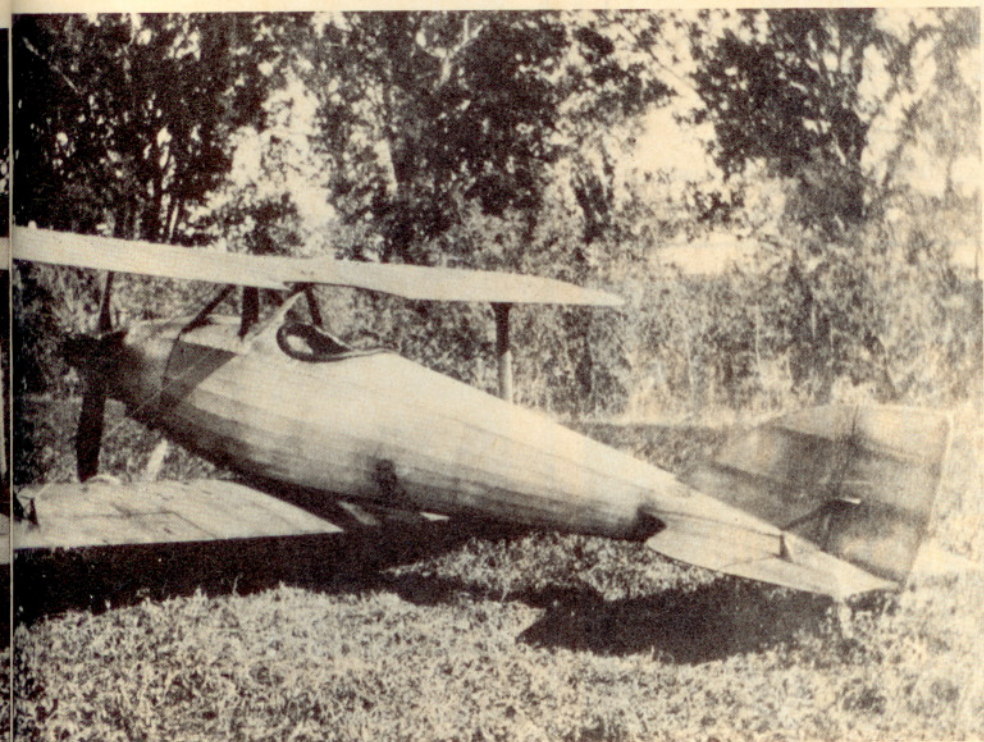
In the early 1930s, Jack W. Rose of Chicago used the planform proportions of the Sport to work out what was essentially a new design that he called the "Parrakeet." He replaced the wood-and-wire fuselage truss with welded steel tubing, adopted a later airfoil, raised the lower wing to the lower longerons, replaced the flying and landing wires with a single diagonal steel-tube strut, and installed a modern divided-axle landing gear. A converted 25-hp Henderson motorcycle engine was the original powerplant. The new Parra-

keet differed greatly from the old Sport from any viewing angle except directly above or below.

The Parrakeet proved to be a good little airplane in spite of its marginal powerplant. A later version of the aircraft, powered by the new 37-hp Continental A.40 engine, easily qualified for a Category 2 type certificate, 2-514, which was issued in August 1935.

The plane was so rugged that no limiting airspeed was required by the government paperwork. Actually, the Parrakeet didn't even have an airspeed indicator; it was not required equipment for production aircraft until 1937, and models certificated before then did not have to retrofit them. The little biplane was marketed by the Rose Airplane Co., of Chicago, as the Rose A-1 Parrakeet. Incidentally, the name is seen with two spellings. The airplane nameplates and company literature say "Parrakeet," but many aviation publica-

The Rose



S. S. Swanson's SS-3 biplane of 1923 was later produced as the Lincoln Sport, and some were built from magazine plans. Its planform proportions were the starting point of the later Rose Parrakeet. Photo courtesy E.J. Bulban.

Parrakeet

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SPECIFICATIONS AND PERFORMANCE

	Rose A-1	Rose A-4	Rhinehart-Rose A-4C
Span	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft
Length	16 ft 4 in	16 ft 4 in	16 ft 4 in
Wing area	116 sq ft	116 sq ft	116 sq ft
Powerplant	Continental A.40, 37 hp @ 2,550 rpm	Continental A.65, 65 hp @ 2,350 rpm	Continental O-200, 100 hp @ 2,750 rpm
Empty weight	456 lb	490 lb	555 lb
Gross weight	716 lb	780 lb	860 lb
High speed	100 mph	127 mph	141 mph *
Cruise speed	85 mph	110 mph	130 mph
Initial climb	700 fpm	1,500 fpm	1,500 fpm **
Service ceiling	12,000 ft	16,000 ft	22,000 ft
Range	340 mi (10 gal)	—	325 mi (14 gal)
Price	\$975	\$1,495	\$15,000

* Redline speed 225 mph

** From airport at 5,520 feet elevation



The production Rose A-1 Parrakeet of 1934. Since the Parrakeets were not delivered with airspeed indicators, the owner of this one installed an old-fashioned vane-type instrument on the diagonal strut. A.U. Schmidt photo.

THE ROSE PARRAKEET continued

tions and writers go along with Webster's preferred "Parakeet."

The original 1934 selling price was \$975 complete, held to that low level by Rose's factory-direct sales policy. Unfortunately, the price was not sufficiently below that of contemporary two-seat monoplanes using the same engine and accessories. The slightly smaller biplane benefitted only slightly from reduced material costs and not at all in the field of equipment costs or man-hours for assembly—the cost bugaboos of all production general aviation single-seaters competing with more utilitarian two-seaters. As a result, only seven production Parrakeets were built in spite of big performance improvements offered by an advertised A-2 version with a 50-hp Franklin engine, and an A-4 with the new 65-hp Continental.

Most of the original Parrakeets survived World War II, and some, fitted with bigger engines, were used for post-war airshow work. In 1948, Rose granted a manufacturing license and sold some existing parts to Hannaford Aircraft Co., of Mundelein, Ill. Hannaford did not sell any planes, but he did make the plans available to the new crop of amateur builders in the 1950s, for \$85 a set. A few Hannaford "Bees" are believed to have been created in this way.

The final phase of this half-century story was brought about by long-time Parrakeet buff Douglas Rhinehart, of Farmington, N.M., who once owned six

of the eight originals. He obtained a manufacturing license from Rose in the mid-1960s. While he cherishes the third production A-1 model as a "pure" antique, he has updated the classic design to use the modern 100-hp Continental O-200 engine and restressed the frame to meet aerobatic category requirements. In a nostalgic move, his 1969 prototype was registered N12084, the same as Rose's own prototype. The number went out of circulation when the dismantled airplane was stolen from its storage area, and was not reissued until Rhinehart requested it from the FAA.

The new Rhinehart-Rose A-4C Parrakeet received a supplemental type certificate (STC) to cover the modifications, which Doug worked out with Jack Rose's help. This version is now available from Rhinehart as a factory-built aerobatic single-seater. The significance here is the STC—a certificated design can be used by schools and FBOs for rental, whereas one on an experimental/exhibition ticket cannot. Rhinehart has completed two A-4Cs and has five more under construction.

Seven Parrakeets are currently registered; five are Rose originals and two are Rhinehart-Rose A-4Cs. No Hannafords appear on the FAA list. □