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Spencer-Larsen
SL-12C*

Historical Resume of
Spencer-Larsen Aircraft Corporation

The Spencer-Larsen Aircraft Corporation of Amityville, Long Island, New York, was organized and founded by P. H. Spencer in January 1937 to design and develop the model SL-12C cabin amphibian airplane.

The finance for the Corporation was procured by P. H. Spencer from about fifteen people who purchased stock in the Corporation to the extent of \$35,000.00. The principal stockholders were P. H. Spencer, President, Victor Larsen, Vice President and Chief Engineer, Richard du Pont, Roger Wolf Kahn, Gilbert Colgate, Bernard L. Whelan, etc., representing top echelon aviation enthusiasts.

The Company started operation in a factory in Farmingdale, Long Island, formerly used by such aircraft manufacturing companies as the Laurence Sperry Company, the Fairchild Company and Kirkham Engineering Company. The SL-12C amphibian was completed in May 1938 and test flights were begun from the water at Port Washington, Long Island, in June, piloted by P. H. Spencer. Initial trials disclosed many inherent problems, such as violent vibration of the propeller drive strut, the hull operation on water due to step location and form, the aerodynamic characteristics of the wing due to premature violent tip stall condition, inadequate engine cooling, and the lack of lateral buoyancy of wing floats to prevent the wing tip from dragging in the water under light cross wind taxi conditions.

Some of the above problems were corrected and about ten hours of flying were accomplished in all before the plane was dismantled. It was evident from the many difficulties that the amphibian would have to be redesigned completely, largely because of incorporating in the original design so many radical features.

Mr. du Pont decided not to invest further funds as a result of the problems encountered and I agreed with him. However, Mr. Colgate decided to take over and finance a redesign, which was carried forward to the point of near completion when the whole airplane project was dropped in favor of obtaining sub-contract parts orders from major government airplane suppliers. An estimated \$150,000.00 was spent on the redesign. The Company was reorganized and became the Colgate-Larsen Company. I resigned in August 1940 prior to the reorganization and started detail design of the "Spencer Amphibian Air Car" which was in model form before I met Mr. Larsen. Time has proven that the Spencer Air Car, which was the forerunner of the Republic Seabee, was the aircraft which Spencer-Larsen Corporation should have based its future on, rather than Mr. Larsen's SL-12C model. So ends the story of an amphibian design, aerodynamically clean, but so complicated otherwise that it defeated itself.

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Mr. Larsen left the Company about a year after the reorganization and the name was changed to Colgate Aircraft Corporation.

This report has been compiled by P. H. Spencer from his records.

September 19, 1963

The Spencer-Larsen Aircraft Corporation of Antisyllville, Long Island, New York, was organized and founded by P. H. Spencer in January 1957 to design and develop the model SL-13C single engine airplane.

The finance for the Corporation was procured by P. H. Spencer from about fifteen people who purchased stock in the Corporation to the extent of \$25,000.00. The principal stockholders were P. H. Spencer, President, Victor Larsen, Vice President and Chief Engineer, Richard de Pauw, Roger Wolf Kahn, Gilbert Colgate, Bernard J. Weisler, etc., representing top echelon aviation enthusiasts.

The Company started operation in a factory in Farmingdale, Long Island, formerly used by such aircraft manufacturing companies as the Lawrence Sporty Company, the Patchell Company and Kirtland Engineering Company. The SL-13C airplane was completed in May 1958 and test flights were begun from the water at Port Washington, Long Island, in June, piloted by P. H. Spencer. Initial trials disclosed many inherent problems, such as violent vibration of the propeller drive shaft, the ball operation on water due to trap location and form, the aerodynamic characteristics of the wing due to premature violent stall condition, inadequate engine cooling, and the lack of lateral buoyancy of wing floats to prevent the wing tip from dragging in the water under light cross wind and conditions.

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