



The AMA History Project Presents: History of the COMET MODEL AIRPLANE AND SUPPLY COMPANY



Since 1929

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Comet Model Airplane and Supply Company

Bill Bishop founded the Comet Model Airplane and Supply Company, another Chicago-based company, in 1929. He started it to make money for purchasing a full-scale glider. Little did he know how big the company would grow. Sam Goldberg and Louis Kapp came into the business shortly afterward to help.

The first catalog came out in 1931. Bishop designed all of the models in that catalog. Goldberg cut parts for the kits while Kapp made the sales around town. The trio was ingenious, even making their own glue to sell from a mixture of old celluloid windows and acetone. Also in 1931, when the Silver Ace Company went under, Comet bought their inventory. This included a glue tube-filling machine, which came in handy with the glue-producing side of the business. Robert Reder came on to work for Comet in that year.

Over the decade, Comet's business grew. They created the American Modelcraft Company (AMCO), a line of models virtually the same as Comet models. The line was crafted so they could sell more items to the already established Comet dealers. A particular favorite kit came out in 1937, of the famous stunt biplane, the Grumman *Gulfhawk*.

The company acquired more and more workers. They placed a nurse on staff to care for injuries and personnel issues. They also provided coffee breaks and printed a monthly in-house newsletter, *The Comet News*.

In 1941, the U.S. government hired Comet to design kits and plans of warplanes for their airplane identification model-making program. American students made airplane models out of these kits for use by the military to identify friendly and enemy aircraft. Also with the war came rationing of balsa. From 1942 to 1944, use of poplar and cardboard as replacement materials made for poor kits, but it got the company by.

At the end of the war, with government contracts ending, supplies dwindling and shrinking demand, the company sold in January of 1948. As of 1983, though the company was still in

business, its name had changed to Comet Model Hobbycraft and then Comet Industries Corporation, and its level of production was never what it once had been.

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