

## **HOW BILL WEEDMARK SURVIVED ONE MORE SMALL PLANE CRASH 7/25/95**

It's October 31, 1949, nearly eight months after Bill Weedmark's escapade with the plane on Honnedaga Lake.

Chuck Windhausen and Charlie Bird dropped into Old Forge Pond in the Waco to get a haircut. Bill drove them uptown and they killed some time after their trip to the barbershop. They then decided to take a spin in the Waco.

They had just banked up off the water and were climbing up over the ridge in back of the health center when Chuck shouted, "Look at that weather!"

They were heading right into a real bad front. Chuck immediately pulled the plane into a chandelle and headed back for the pond.

The seats were out of the plane to accommodate hunters and their gear. Bill was kneeling on the floor to Chuck's right and Charlie was in the back. As you may well imagine, it all happened in seconds.

Bill said the last thing he saw was Mark's boathouse below and everything went black. He came to underwater and at that time he did not realize they were upside down.

He held his breath as long as he could, trying to get oriented when he saw some light and surfaced.

Chuck and Charlie were kicking at the right door trying to get it open. They later learned it was jammed shut with the float and wing. They were successful with the other door and scrambled out of the plane.

Bill was hanging back searching for his camera when Charlie Bird told him in no uncertain terms to get out.

Boats were coming in all directions as they swam and clung to the plane. The first boat carried Rock Carlin and Sadie Baker. As soon as Sadie saw Charlie Bird she shouted, "Hello Charlie, how nice to see you." Ray Burke pulled up at the same time and they were soon hauled aboard.

Bill was injured more seriously than the others and was attended by Dr. Lindsay and Mrs. Lindsay at his office. After initial first aid, he dispatched Bill to the hospital in Utica.

Jim Ehrensbeck and his father, Earl, had been hunting near the old town quarry and upon hearing the plane go down, headed for town. Jim rode to Utica with Bill and began to admonish him about flying and how it would catch up with him if he didn't quit.

Bill recalls that when he replied that it hadn't happened yet, Jim's retort was that he wasn't through with it yet.

Well, Bill survived with a fractured upper jaw, fractured wrist, numerous cuts, contusions and abrasions.

He admits that the next time he flew he was a little apprehensive. It was with Bud Windhausen on a fairly rough day and as they were coming in to land, he was a little tense. They slid right in as smooth as silk.

Bill's philosophy is a little like the old drunk Charlie Stevens told me about: He would be heaving and throwing up, hanging onto nearby objects to keep from falling off the earth and gasp, "If I live, I'll try her again."