The Piper Cub was conceived in bankruptcy and developed during the Great Depression. The J-3 Cub was so popular that it made a fortune for its backer, Mr. William T. Piper. The Cub's silhouette is instantly recognizable to every aviator and is universally known and loved. The Cub has touched the lives of a majority of aviators, either as a model built at home, a training aircraft, ownership or just a dream. Most pilots have either flown a Cub or wished they had. The J-3 was so successful that at one time, “Cub” became a generic term for all light airplanes. There is a saying in aviation that “if you can land a Cub smoothly, you can land anything.”

The J-3 Cub is by far the most successful of the 11 “Cub” designs. In 1929, Mr. Piper, who had made his money in Pennsylvania oil fields, invested in an aviation company headed by Mr. C.G. Taylor. Mr. Piper persuaded Mr. Taylor to design a low priced, low upkeep airplane to sell to the general public. Unfortunately, before the new design “took off,” the Taylor Aircraft Company declared bankruptcy and Mr. Piper bought all of the company assets for a total of $761.00. Now the owner, Mr. Piper reorganized the Taylor Aircraft Company. Piper gave Taylor half interest and the presidency but retained control of the finances himself. Eventually, Piper bought Taylor out in 1936 after the two had disagreements. Taylor then started another company of his own, Taylorcraft Aviation.

Mr. Piper's dream of building a lightweight, inexpensive and easy to fly aircraft took the form of the J-2 Cub (the “J” representing the last name of the plane's designer, Walter Jamouneau). While the J-2 Cub brought Piper Aircraft some success, it was Jamouneau's next project, the J-3, that ensured Piper's place in aviation history. The J-3 Cub featured a new steel tubing frame (which allowed the use of more powerful engines), bucket seats instead of boards, a steerable tail wheel and brakes (a feature seldom found on light aircraft of the day).

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[illegible] Museum, Addison Airport (KADS), Dallas, Texas

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