Around 9 am I checked weather on Foreflight for the flight home from New Orleans to Georgetown. Weather in Georgetown was forecast to be heavy precip with thunderstorms around the time of our arrival. Decided to file to College Station instead since that was forecast to be West of the precip at the time of our arrival. From CLL we could again check weather and make a go/no go decision. We have previously flown to College Station, and I knew there was a crew car available and we could use it to go to town to wait out the weather. Checked DUATS weather to make sure it matched with what the radar looked like to me.

Filed IFR routing NEW-RQR-LFT-LCH-DAS-CLL for 10:30 Central time departure. I called the FBO and asked them to pull the plane around for a 10:30 departure. Upon arrival at Flightline First FBO, there was a line of people waiting to pay charges, and the attendant at the counter joked that everyone was trying to depart at 10:30. I commented that we were all probably trying to beat the bad weather into Texas. The lady in front of me said she and her husband were headed to Huntsville, TX, and we were welcome to visit that town. We paid our tie down fee, and paid with a credit card for 50.0 gallons of 100LL fuel.

I left the family inside and went to preflight the plane. Before I preflight, I turn on the battery switch, I identify the flap handle, verify, then extend the flaps, then switch the battery switch off. I started the preflight with the passenger static air port, and worked my way counterclockwise around the plane. I removed each chock as I got to it. The right main fuel tank was filled totally to the top. I sumped the left tank, and the fuel was light blue in color, with no water present. I dumped the fuel back into the tank. The prop showed no nicks, oil was 11 qts. The right main tank was also filled almost to overflowing. I sumped the right tank, and the fuel was light blue in color with no water present. I dumped this fuel back into the right tank. The pitot tube was clear, stall horn was free moving, both static air ports were clear, and the flaps were locked in place, ailerons moved freely, and correctly with the yoke.

I went inside to get my wife and children. We loaded the plane in the same configuration with full fuel as we had on the flight Friday afternoon from Georgetown to New Orleans. Prior to closing the door to the rear of the plane where the children were seated I listened to ATIS Sierra on a handheld radio. With the children in the back, my wife and I got in the front seats leaving the door open. Upon turning on the battery switch, both main tanks registered full fuel, which matched my preflight observance. I started the plane, then requested clearance with New Orleans Lakefront clearance delivery. We received clearance as filed. I don't have the sheet of paper on which I copied the clearance. It was left in the left hand pocket by the pilot's left leg in the damaged plane. Lakefront ground then gave us clearance to taxi to runway 18R for takeoff. I performed a regular run up prior to takeoff including cycling the prop several times to get warm air flowing through the prop control. Part of the run up was magneto checks on both mags. Both registered a drop of between 80 and 100 rpm.

We were cleared to fly runway heading and maintain 2 thousand feet if I remember correctly. We were given radar vectors, and eventually cleared to 8 thousand feet, direct Lafayette VOR. I entered the waypoint in the GPS unit, and we were then vectored a little south for spacing around a Bellanca Super Viking flying VFR 8500 feet to Austin Executive. Before reaching Lake Charles VOR waypoint, I was given revised routing, direct CREDO, victor 254 College Station. At this point, we were above a broken layer, and it looked like there were higher altitude clouds along our path of flight. I turned on the Stratus, which is linked to my Ipad with Foreflight to check radar in the College Station area. It appeared to me that storms with heavy to severe precipitation were beginning to form around the College Station area. There was a heavy band of precipitation that looked to be 40 miles wide slowly moving across the Austin area. I checked for airports near the path of V254, and saw Huntsville, then remembered that the wife of a pilot in the Lakeshore FBO had mentioned it. It had fuel and IFR procedures, so I decided that could be a safe alternate in the event of weather continuing to develop poorly in College Station. Looking at V254, I decided that by the time I reached EAKES intersection, I would make the decision to go to Huntsville or College Station. Prior to arriving at EAKES, Houston approach called asking if I had radar on board. The controller asking me the question made me decide that if the weather was poor enough at destination to ask the question, I would do better diverting North away from the storm to get on the ground to wait it out. I asked for a deviation to Huntsville, TX (UTS) for weather reasons, and was cleared direct Huntsville, and cleared to descend to 6000. While turning direct Huntsville, and descending, my path of flight took us through several clouds. The air inside the clouds was mildly turbulent, and my wife grabbed the handholds in the plane and commented that she didn't like that rocking and moving feeling in IMC. We established at 6000 ft, and were on a course for Huntsville. In the distance we were approaching another cloud that looked to be the same density and color of the previous cloud we had entered. I asked for 15 to 20 degrees deviation to the Left to avoid entering IMC for her comfort. As we passed to the West of the cloud, there was an area of clearing where the ground was clearly visibly with a width I would estimate at 3 miles around. I requested a cancellation of IFR clearance so that we could descend through the opening, and fly VFR the remainder of the flight. I requested to remain on flight following. We were approximately 40 miles from Huntsville at this time. I had picked up current weather at UTS, and ceilings were reported 2200 AGL. TDZE was 338 ft, so that gave us plenty of space to be clear of the ground and below the ceiling. I executed a descending left 360 which left us clear of the clouds at 1900 ft.

Houston approach asked if I was aware of the area and towers in the vicinity. I was not, and switched over to VFR chart on Foreflight to maintain safe distance from the towers near Cleveland, TX and Huntsville, TX.

We entered a left downwind to runway 18, and made an uneventful landing in Huntsville. I then radioed back on the CTAF to the the Ballanca 5 miles behind me that although ATIS stated winds variable at 6, upon landing, I estimated winds out of 120 at 12-15 knots.

As a way of keeping track of fuel burned during flight, I make notations on the scratchpad tab of foreflight. When checking ATIS, I write the letter identifier on the top of the page, and write either L or R along the right edge of the pad. I switch tanks each 30 minutes throughout the flight, and if for some reason, I don't switch tanks within a couple minutes of 30, I notate the time flown on that tank in total minutes, then fly off the other tank the same amount. I then reset my flight timer to zero so that I am once again changing tanks at the 30 minute and 60 minute interval on my timer. The timer for the Bonanza is on the yoke. The record I have of the flight to Huntsville is: L R L48 R. I took a picture of this with my cell phone. The flight to Huntsville took 2 hours, so at the time of landing, I had 20 minutes more fuel to burn out of the Right tank on takeoff to keep the right and left tanks at the same level of fuel.

We landed at Huntsville just as it was starting to sprinkle, and the 4 of us went into the FBO for a break and to check the weather. The wide line of thunderstorms was solidly over the Austin area, extending all the way now to College Station. We asked if we could use the courtesy car, and drove into town to find lunch. By this time, it was about 1:45.

We had lunch, and came back to the airport to check weather. The Georgetown airport was no on the other side of the weather system, and was showing ceilings at 8000 ft. College station was still receiving moderate precipitation. Ceilings were low from College Station East, but the system was moving East. The pilot of the Bellanca that landed behind us was in the FBO checking weather as well, and we talked about whether there was a safe path to fly through the precipitation since we were both headed to Austin. By 3:15 we decided it would be better to wait for the whole system to clear, and we decided to go to a movie. Another pilot on the field had left a Suburban at the FBO for the Bellanca pilot to use, so the Bellanca pilot, his two passengers, and me, my wife, and kids went to the 3:30 movie in Huntsville.

Upon returning to the FBO, approximately 5:40 it was clear from radar that the storm had moved past, and although light rain was still falling, there was a visible area to the Northwest with higher ceilings and sunny bright skies. I stated that we would fly home VFR, heading Northwest, then West, and went out to preflight the plane. I removed the chocks, and sumped the left tank. There was no visible water, and the fuel was light blue in color. I checked the prop for nicks, and opened the left cowling to check oil. We had just under 11 qts registered on the dipstick. I sumped the right tank, and the color was light blue with no water visible in the tester. I dumped both of the sumped samples on the ground since I didn't want to open the filler covers for fear of introducing water into the tank.

The kids got in the plane, I closed the back door, then I and my wife entered the plane. We put on our seatbelts, and started the plane. Upon activating the battery and alternator switch, the main fuel tank gauges showed just over ½ tank on both gauges. I chose to listen to AWOS with the plane running rather than check the weather on the handset because that would give a few more minutes time for the

engine to warm up since it was much cooler in Huntsville than it had been in New Orleans.

We declared our taxi on CTAF, and taxied to the run up area short of runway 18 for Northwest departure. I performed a normal runup, cycling the prop, and checking both mags. Both mags produced a drop of 80-100 rpm individually. The prop at first didn't register any drop in RPM when I pushed it forward. I let it sit full forward for several seconds, then pulled it back. I did this again, and the second time, I could not see or detect a change in RPM, but the gauge did register a change in oil pressure. I cycled it 2 more times, and by the 4th time, the RPM was dropping several hundred RPM as I would expect, with a corresponding change in oil pressure. We declared on CTAF, took the active runway, and departed to the South, with a righthand downwind for departure from the airport to the Northwest. At 600 feet AGL, I pulled the throttle back to 25", and reduced the prop to 2500 RPM. 3 miles away from the airport, I advised CTAF we were clear of Huntsville airspace, and attempted to contact Houston Center to request flight following. We were either too low for radio transmission, or they were busy, so I tried again several miles later. Climbing through 3000 ft MSL, I began to lean the mixture. At 12 miles West of Huntsville, Houston reported radar contact and assigned a squawk code. We climbed VFR to 4500 on a heading of 268 direct GTU. For several miles, there were clouds approximately 3000 feet above us, with light precipitation on the plane. Center advised that light precipitation should be with us for 5 miles. I acknowledged, and that number was accurate. We were above a layer of few clouds at approximately 1000 feet, and below an overcast level at approximately 9000 feet. At the 5 mile mark, where we had been advised by center, the clouds both above an below us ended. Clouds looked to be at 25000 feet, and the ground was clearly visible. At this point I looked at the engine monitor and realized that Exhaust Gas Temperatures were a little lower than I had been taught to fly at. This told me the mixture was too rich, and needed to be leaned out. Over the next 10 miles or so, I slowly leaned the mixture down to about 15 gph. This produced EGT's of around 1400 degrees. We commented that up ahead by Georgetown we could see sunlight shining on the ground. This confirmed my opinion from radar that we were now on the back side of the storm. At some point around this point, Center gave me a new squawk code and asked me to ident. He then did the same for the Bellanca that had taken off after me, and advised him of my position, and me of his. We were both flying at 4500 VFR.

I looked at estimated time enroute on the Garmin GPS unit in the plane and said to the kids "We'll be on the ground in 20 minutes in Georgetown". My daughter said she looked at her phone, and it was 6:30, she thought to herself, "we'll be home at 6:50". As I finished saying that, Center called with a handoff to Austin on 127.22. I was reaching for the radio to change frequency when the engine made an abrupt change in sound and the plane felt like it lurched backwards. I don't think it moved that much, but the lack of power from the prop gave the illusion of that feeling. My wife asked if something was wrong because the change in tone and power was definite. We had been in the air approximately 20 minutes. Our groundspeed had

been averaging around 160 kts. I looked at the engine monitor and the EGT monitor was completely illuminated, which meant EGT's were above 1500. All cylinders showed this. I pushed mixture full rich because in my experience with this plane, a small change in mixture would have an immediate effect on EGT. I do not recall where the CHT's were on the gauge. I was so startled to see them all the way hot. I then switched tanks to the left tank. I left the selector in that position approximately 2 seconds. No change was noticeable in the engine or power. I then thought that if this had not helped, and I had earlier had fuel and power on the right tank, I would return to that tank. I changed the fuel selector back to right tank and we got about a 1 second surge in power, then back to either nothing or reduced power. At this point, I pushed mixture, throttle, and prop to full forward. I have been working on my Multi engine rating recently, and in the event of a loss of power, the procedure is to go full forward for the maximum available power. I cycled the magneto, and there was no effect on the engine. At this point I began to look for nearby airports. I saw HH Coffield (RCK) on my VFR map, and began to turn toward that heading. I radioed Houston and said we had lost power, were in a descent, and needed the closest airport. I think the controller was taken aback that I was on with him since had given me a handoff frequency 1-2 minutes earlier. I asked for a heading to the nearest airport and he gave me a vector to a field that turned me away from RCK. As I made the turn, I determined that his vector was not the closest airport, so I turned back to RCK. At this time we were descending 1200 fpm as I attempted to keep airspeed up to avoid a stall. As I glanced at the instruments to make sure airspeed was up, I saw the engine monitor registering barely any EGT, maybe 200. Houston Center then told me he could see me turning, and that the airfield was at my 12 oclock, 4 miles. I asked if it was paved in an attempt to differentiate it from the grass pastures. He said he was trying to find that information. At approximately 1000 ft AGL my wife asked where we were going to land. This helped force me to make a decision rather than consider several options. I stated to Houston Center that I was declaring an emergency, and we would be landing off airport. I attempted to maintain airspeed, but didn't believe we were going to make the field I had chosen. We were approximately 100-200 ft agl when I moved the gear handle to the down position. I had wanted as little drag as possible to try to make the field before deploying the gear. Our point where the plane first touched the ground was approximately 200 feet short of the field I had intended to land in.

I tried to straighten the plane with a line that would not impact anything on the ground on rollout, and flared for landing. As I flared, I heard the stall horn. We landed, and rolled, then hit a small rise, and the plane lurched forward. The nose was then on the ground, and it began to move to the right. The right wing clipped a small bush, and we spun about 180 degrees to the right. The plane came to rest, and I flipped off the battery and alternator switch, opened the front door, and told everyone to get out. We opened the back door to get the kids out of the plane, and we ran about 100 feet away and stood there. I called Pilots Choice and received no answer. I called 911, and was put in contact with the local sheriffs office.