

Island Aviation - Then and Now

July 15, 1993

Early Chronology based on 1928 issue of the Door County Advocate

6 Jan. Editorial - "The Coming of the Airplane"

like railroads and automobiles, the airplane industry "took pioneering, courage and faith in the project"

"the conservative individual... won't ride in an airplane"

"well established air lines are handling mail, passengers and express over our whole nation. They operate on schedule up and down the Pacific Coast, in the

Rocky Mountain States through to Chicago and east. adverse conditions - vast distance of mountains

timber and dense to cover with landing fields few and far between, without guiding lights..."

a recent San Francisco to Chicago passenger "said that he felt entirely comfortable, relaxed as he would in any easy chair in his own parlor and enjoyed the varying scenery which could not be observed in any other manner." +

9 Mar. +

6 Apr. Editorial - "Something to Think About"

Question is whether Door County shall have air service or "be left in the wake of progress." North American Airways of Appleton has route between Chicago & Menominee, Michigan. Air field contemplated at Lambert Island

+ denote further aviation references

- Basic appeal is to attract weekend tourists from the cities. Aim is that "Door County will keep the pace with the best of them." +
- 13 Apr. Door Cty. Chamber of Commerce president appoints E. G. Bailey and Karl S. Reynolds to new standing committee on aviation.
- 20 Apr. Editorial - "Awake to Aviation" partial re-print of previous week's editorial published in The Milwaukee Journal. "fully alive to the new age." New airport facilities "will require willingness to make outlays that can be justified only by faith in the future."
- 27 Apr. +
- 11 May Sturgeon Bay contractor given \$100,000 contract, to include 4-way landing field & sea plane connection at Chambers Island. 50 foot macadamized road in the middle of each strip [for larger, heavier planes].
- 18 May See the cherry blossoms from the air for the first time. Five passenger Stinson Detroit of Appleton North American Airways Co. to be based at Reynolds Preserving Company. Fee to be \$5 per person. Trip of 20 minutes' duration to go as far north as Egg Harbor. "... the planes are safe and reliable and are of the very latest and improved type for passenger travel..." Time - May 26 & 27.
- 25 May Record crowd expected. Reynolds Co. Turns kitchen over to American Legion auxiliary; will as usual offer free cherry pie Sunday the 27th. Nearly 200 advance tickets sold. Eddie Merritt, pilot, flew "Spide of Appleton" here for test

sun last Saturday. Two runways of 2950 ft. each. All planes invited free of charge, but only American allowed commercial use. †

Editorial - "Aiplanes are Coming"

Rival landing fields noted at Oconto, Manitowish (approved by not yet built, Kildown City [now Wisconsin Dells].

"Millions of dollars are being invested by outside people for summer homes" but "aiplanes are of no more use when there are no landing fields than automobiles without roads." "Traveling by airplane has come much more rapidly than was expected, and this summer planes are to be used extensively by business men in reaching their summer homes where their families are spending their vacations."

1 June

On 9 a. m. flight North American Stinson Detroit (5 passengers from Sturgeon Bay Cherry Festival) flew over Washington Island. "Local people were requested in an unique way Memorial Day to get an airplane landing field ... a note asking the island to establish an airport if they desired passenger and mail service by air was dropped from the plane and promptly picked up by the large number which assembled at hearing the noise of the motor." Plane made three round trips to island during the morning but was unable to land. Much talk has resulted from the

accident and there is a possibility that a move to get a suitable field will be under way with appreciable results this summer."

• Over 10,000 here view cherry blossoms. "The outstanding feature of the annual blossom spectacle this year without a doubt was the service given by the North American Airways Co. of Appleton, under the auspices of the Door County Chamber of Commerce, which afforded for the first time trips over the orchards by airplane. The "Ride of Appleton" piloted by Eddie Merritt and a three passenger Waco" provided the transportation. +

8 June

• June 11 banquet at Green Bay for "all those interested in furthering aviation for Door County..." Sixty Bay airport ^{approved}

8 June

C. J. Bailey et al order a Stinson Detroit for Sturgeon Bay. Cost \$6,500. 125 horsepower Warner Motor.

Can carry 300 to 500 lbs. of baggage. "Washington Island people met this week to plan for a landing field there

15 June

First aerial view of Sturgeon Bay & vicinity. (M.J. May 26)

22 June

Photo of Amelia Earhart "looks like Lindbergh"

Islanders get Prices on Four Landing Fields

Mr. Shellswick reported for comm. of five:

- * 1. Peter Hanson farm - 60 acres \$6,000
2. Robert Geranesson farm - 80 acres \$5,000
3. Hans Hanson farm - 98 acres \$10,000
4. Geo. O. Mann farm - 60 acres \$4,500

consider
other tracts
Jens Hanson
Geo. Hanson
Dr. Bonsson

John E. Sommers, federal airport inspector told a dinner audience of 35 "good roads brought you tourists to Door County in the past. Good airports will bring you tourists in the future." Murray Bingham ... told of the trip by air to Washington Island. "WI airport committee members unable to attend."

16 July

Cheryl Land Airways Co. formally organized at Sturgeon Bay. Initial plane is Stinson Detroit 4 passenger; wing spread 45 feet; 120 horse power 7 cylinder Warner engine. Capacity = pilot + three passengers; 350 lbs. baggage. Pilot Tom Mitchell cousin of Col. Billy Mitchell - 10 yrs. flight experience in Europe, Asia, N. America. Portable hangar 25 x 90 feet to be erected.

Chamber Island runway to be ready by mid-July. Runway 3000 ft. long by 450 ft. wide.

18 July

Contest to name new Stinson Detroit Junior; prize-free county tour = to 1 hrs. train ride. (cash value \$10.00)
Three Sturgeon Bay site possibilities evaluated by John Sommers.

20 July

E. H. Muehlmeier of Milwaukee first paid air passenger to county. Came in Ryan Bingham, sister ship to Lindbergh's "Spirit of St. Louis". Plane owned by Midwest Airways of Milwaukee. +

27 July

Delayed "Miss Door County" finally arrives at S.B. Body a cherry red; wings leaf green. Sister Bay field dedicated.

22 July Work on Island's Airport Started. Fences removed, shade trees cut down. "In the near future, Washington Island expects to have one of the finest landing fields to be found for a place of this size."

3 Aug. Island runway s.w. to n.e. 150 rods long (2400 ft.) + one from s.e. to n.w. 2000 ft. The "Swallow" from Escanaba, a biplane sent by UP Airways, arrived last Sunday to take people up.

Cherries flown to Pres. Coolidge vacationing near Zulu. Trips about Door Cty. popular. Expected to increase when fields at Chamber Island, Washington Island and Egg Harbor ready. Aviation courses begun.

10 Aug. First Chereyland Airways trip to WI. Pleasure trips taken by Dr. & Mrs. Colebaugh, Mr. & Mrs. Harry Hanson, Tom Nelson. Plane to return in a week & to appear Aug. 21 for annual picnic of Holstein Breeders Assn. President Coolidge receives case of Door Cty. cherries & canned cherries for his wife.

17 Aug. Farmers picnic on WI Aug. 21. Two planes to use landing field. "the island's most imp. event of the season" C. B. Henschberger, summer islander, first passenger to land at airport.

24 Aug. Over 500 attend annual Holstein Breeders Assn. picnic. "of special note was the arrival of the airplane at 8:30 on schedule... while the boat ferry was held up from

one trip on account of the heavy seas from a storm the night before and telephone connections from the same cause were broken until noon. Thus the airplane for a half day was the only means of the island's communication with the outside world." Event held in grove adjoining airport. Islanders commended for their foresight in providing an airport. Will Jess took flight to Sturgeon Bay.

- 12 Oct. "Miss Door County" returns from Detroit after overhaul.
- Escanaba plane helps search for smolen fishing boat off Plum Island. "efforts proved futile."