To Keith Kasbohn—thanks for your help.

THEY WANTED WINGS

A History of Door County Aviation

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Wallace Bud Felhofer
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Chan Harris, long time editor of the Door County Advocate, who gave his enthusiastic support for its writing. Much of the information came from the Door County Advocate and the Door County News, which was purchased by the Advocate in 1939.
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INTRODUCTION

We might ask ourselves, why did these people want to fly? Why did they want wings?

Bob Warner once asked Jack Draeb how he felt about flying. Jack answered, “It scares the hell out of me, but it’s something not everybody else does.”

Flying is not something everybody wants to do, not even as a passenger. Some people, even famous people, just simply will not fly. They feel that, if they travel on the ground, they at least have some control of their destiny. That’s not necessarily true; road conditions, vehicle failure, the weather, driver fatigue and error may enter in. Flying, at least in commercial aircraft, according to statistics, is the safest way to travel, with the possible exception of bus travel.

But it takes an out-of-the-ordinary person to fly a plane. It takes self-confidence, as was demonstrated in the narratives of the lives of the people told about in this story. It took confidence and courage to fly in the service of this country and we must remember it took confidence and courage on the part of those who trained pilots, for they put their lives in the hands of the people they trained. We must remember the people who used flying to release Washington Island from its “Splendid Isolation.”

These people wanted wings, but not just for themselves, but to help the people of Door County, and in many cases, to help preserve this country.
THEY WANTED WINGS
CHAPTER ONE
1910-1919

WHO WERE THE FIRST TO FLY IN DOOR COUNTY?

Many of our visitors to Door County fly here. For at least 70 years, they’ve flown into such airfields and airstrips as the ones at Ephraim, Chambers Island, Washington Island, Egg Harbor, Valmy, as well as the Cherryland Airport when it was located on Highway 57 and after it moved to County Highway C. But when did this interest in aviation in Door County get started?

As far as can be determined, the first time an airplane took off and flew in Door County, Wisconsin, was on Thursday, September 19, 1912. The flight was made by the famous barnstorming pilot, Lincoln Beachey. This was just nine years after the first powered flight by the Wright brothers; at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

Beachey and his flimsy, paper-covered biplane were brought to Door County as a promotional stunt for the Door County Fair. The late Art Moeller remembered when the crated parts of Beachey’s plane were unloaded at the railroad station and hauled by horses and wagon out to the fairgrounds, past his father’s business, Moeller’s Garage.

“Airship Saves the Fair” read the headline in one of the local newspapers, the Advocate, a week after the demonstration. Despite the rain that fell in torrents, the grandstand was filled and the audience was thrilled by Beachey’s daring air show.

The weather was better the next day, and the show was even better, as Beachey swooped down in front of the grandstand, then pulled up just in time to clear the ground. He ended his show early on Friday. The parts of the biplane were crated up again and taken back to the train depot to be shipped to Chicago for a Saturday show. Beachey himself was driven to Green Bay by automobile, which was quite a feat in 1912. In Green Bay, he caught a passenger train to Chicago.

The state of the art of airplane building wasn’t quite up to the strain Beachey put on them; in 1914, his plane broke up over San Francisco Bay and he was killed.

In 1913, the Door County Fair Association hired another famous stunt pilot, Louis Gerston, to put on an air show at the Door County Fair. The show was a success, but the Fair Association decided the airplane flights were getting to be “old hat” and they’d try something different the next year.
Meanwhile, World War I started, in 1914, and the airplane began to be improved rapidly. Even the Russian czar built up an air force before he was deposed by the communists in 1917. The major countries developed an air force that was an individual branch of the military; but the United States kept its military aviation as part of the army until end of World War II.

BARNSTORMING SHOWS, WORLD WAR I SPURRED INTEREST IN FLYING

No doubt the flying shows at the Door County Fair of Lincoln Beachey in 1912 and Louis Gerston in 1913 inspired some Door County people to learn to fly. Among them probably was Karl S. Reynolds, who was very instrumental in developing aviation in Door County. He was 12 years old when Beachey put on his air show.

Another may have been a young man who grew up in Gardner township, Victor T. Dewarzegger, who later attended medical school and became the first flying doctor from Door County. He shortened his name to Dewar, and did most of his flying in Colorado, so you probably haven’t heard of him unless you knew him. Dr. Dewar was ten years old when Beachey put on his stunt show at the Door County Fair.

Dr. Dan Dorchester, of course, was Door County’s best known flying doctor, and he was another one of Door County pioneers in flight. “Dr. Dan” might have been inspired to learn to fly by seeing one of those early flights, for he was at a very impressionable age, almost seven years old, when Beachey flew at the Door County Fair.

We can only speculate about who was inspired to learn to fly by these early air shows, the first put on only nine years after the first flight of the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk. One might wonder, “Was anyone from Door County inspired to be a pilot in the first World War?”

Formerly, that information could be found by checking the military discharge records in the courthouse. But with the institution of privacy of information acts, that can no longer be done. So the best sources of information are the files of the Door County Advocate, which can be best found in the Laurie Room at the Door County library. The Advocate published not only stories about those serving in the military, but also short stories about their discharge telling when, where and in what branch they served.

Most Door County soldiers served in the army, in the infantry, many of them initially in Company F, organized in Sturgeon Bay by
Captain Edward Reynolds. But several found their way into the American Aviation Corps.

Two of them were Joseph Zivney and Ernest Jackson, both well-known residents of Sturgeon Bay. They became mechanics in the American Aviation Corps. After being discharged, Zivney became a Standard Oil employee and delivered gasoline throughout Door County. Ernie Jackson became the owner of an automobile dealership, along with Clarence Kostka, another flying enthusiast. Jackson and Zivney were stationed at Elliston Field and came home for a furlough in January of 1919, and expected to be discharged soon afterward.

Raymond Houle of Sturgeon Bay did become a flier in World War I. Born at the turn of the century, Houle tried to enlist in the American Aviation Corps, but was unable to meet the requirements. Undaunted by the turndown, he traveled to Duluth, Minnesota, represented himself as a Canadian citizen, and enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps.

"Bud" Houle was accepted and sent to the University of Toronto to take a course in aviation. His training in flight began with an instructor, and he did well enough to be able to solo and fly on his own.

Houle was a daring, devil-may-care young man, and he liked to do air stunts, most of which would have put him in good form to have "dog fights" with the Germans overseas. But one day he met with an accident in training that almost cost him his life.

Bud was flying almost 3,000 feet in the air when his plane got out of control and his plane plunged to the ground and broke up. He suffered a broken right ankle, an injured hip and breastbone and a blow alongside his left temple that caused an injury to his eyesight.

Houle was taken to the hospital, where it was discovered he wasn't even a Canadian citizen. He was promptly discharged and he returned to Sturgeon Bay, unsure if he'd ever get any recognition for volunteering. At last reports, on October 25, 1918, he still walked with a limp and had difficulty seeing with his left eye, but his injuries were getting better slowly.

No trace has been found of what happened to Raymond Houle; evidently, he left Door County. There is no obituary for him in the Advocate files. Maybe that's because he's still living, somewhere, at the age of 96 or 97, after being spared death after plunging from the skies.

Two World War I pilots could have been born in Door County. They were Rolland and Merrill Riddick, sons of the Carl Riddicks, who moved from Sturgeon Bay around 1900. Their mother was born in the Town of Egg Harbor in 1873. Research indicates they were born
elsewhere. Rolland C. Riddick wrote a letter to his parents concerning his wartime aviation antics and it was sent to the Advocate by B. J. Keith, an uncle who was president of the Sawyer Branch of the Bank of Sturgeon Bay:

"Yesterday, we worked all day and night, using the headlights of cars and lanterns, to assemble airplanes for the front. (There were no trans-Atlantic flights until 1927, so airplane parts were shipped overseas by boat and the planes were assembled in France.) One of my men worked at the job all night, until he fell asleep. When I woke him up, he was shivering and blue with cold. "I never realized until recently what a wonderful way to travel the airship offers," continued Riddick, and then he goes on to tell how he made use of flying for his own pleasure, even though it was while the war was going on.

Riddick then tells about hearing a rumor that his brother was stationed at another airfield. Despite the foggy weather, and lack of any air to ground communication, he took off and landed at the field where his brother was reported to be stationed.

Sneaking up to a bunk which he thought was his brother's, he swatted the rear of the covered-up figure with a board and jumped on the person. A red-headed man got up and asked, "What the hell is all this rough-house about?" It wasn't his brother, but his brother soon walked in and they had a joyous reunion.

Whether the Riddicks returned to Sturgeon Bay to visit their relatives, the Keiths, we don't know.

Another possibility of a World War I Door County aviator was Lt. Col. Thomas Cassidy, born in the Town of Egg Harbor on August 3, 1896. He was a descendant of Owen Cassidy, and in his later years, owned a home on the shoreline between Egg Harbor and Horseshoe Bay. But research proves that, although he was in the United States Air Force during World War II, and even flew jets, he had been in the coast guard in World War I.

The question remains, "Were there any other aviators in Door County before or during World War I?" Perhaps someone reading this knows the answer.

INTEREST IN AVIATION INCREASED AFTER WORLD WAR I

World War I ended on November 11, 1918, with the signing of the Armistice with Germany. The veterans were returning home to Door County. But the financial indebtedness of the war still had to be paid. Therefore, in April of 1919, a Victory Loan drive found its way
to Sturgeon Bay, by way of the railroad, which had only been established 26 years before.

The War Relic train sent out by the Seventh Federal Reserve District arrived in Sturgeon Bay on April 15, 1919, accompanied by veterans of the war, a naval band, politicians and all sorts of war souvenirs from both sides of the conflict. A large group of spectators from all over the county gathered to see the war relics and listen to speakers who urged them to “Finish the job,” and buy Victory bonds to help pay the cost of winning the war. One of the relics on display was the fuselage of a German Fokker fighter plane that had been shot down.

It should be noted that nearly all of the American flyers in World War I flew either British or French airplanes. The only American plane used was the Curtiss JN-4 Jenny, and it was a training plane, deemed the best of its kind at the time. But the Jenny wasn’t a fighting plane. American pilots flew the French Nieuport-27, the British Sopwith Camel, the French Spad and the French Nieuport-28.

The Germans flew Fokker fighters like the one brought in on the War Relic train in 1919, developed by a Hollander, Tony Fokker. It was Fokker into whose hands fell a French plane in 1915 that had a shielding device that enabled the pilot to fire his machine gun through his propeller blades. Fokker further improved the device by linking the oil pump of the Fokker E.1 to its machine gun. Thus, the machine gun fired when the propeller was not in the line of fire.

By 1917, the British had developed the Vickers machine gun, patterned after one found in a captured German plane. The Sopwith Camel then became a more than worthy opponent of the Fokker planes, and the one in the Sturgeon Bay parade was an example of one of many shot down by British and American pilots.

A week later, on April 26, 1919, another landmark in Door County aviation occurred; the first seaplane, or hydroplane as it was called then, landed in the bay of Sturgeon Bay. Again, this was part of the Victory Loan Drive. A big celebration, which included the launching of a tug at the Leathem and Smith yards, was planned by Chairman Bill Wagener.

But the seaplane didn’t arrive on Friday as scheduled. Scheduled to fly up from Milwaukee, it experienced engine trouble. But about 1000 people at least enjoyed the ship launching.

Wagener received a message at noon Saturday that the plane would arrive about 4 p.m. on Saturday, but by that time the committee was skeptical as to whether the Milwaukee office would keep its promise. The seaplane did arrive, and word quickly spread around town about its arrival. Mistakenly, Lt. Applegate landed the plane on
the Sawyer side, and a big group rushed to the Fourth ward to see the plane. The “Peace”, as the hydroplane was named, had a wingspan of about 50 feet and used a Liberty engine of 100 horsepower. It was equipped with pontoons which enabled it to land on water.

After taking on gasoline and oil, Lt. Applegate and his mechanic took off for Green Bay, where they put on their next exhibition, leaving Sturgeon Bay at 5:10 p.m. and arriving in Green Bay at 5:45. They flew straight down the bay at an altitude of 200 feet, giving many Door, Kewaunee and Brown county residents what may have been their first view of an airplane.

The August 8, 1919, Advocate, told about a revival on the part of the Door County Fair Association of an interest in aviation. On the last day of the fair, September 11, an airplane owned by the Milwaukee Journal was scheduled to put on an air circus. The Journal was to furnish movies of the plane in action to publicize the event. Each person entering the fairgrounds was to be given a ballot on which they would nominate a man and a woman to receive a free ride in the airplane. The plane would also race a car for several laps around the track.

“Brownie,” the automobile editor of the Milwaukee Journal, came to Sturgeon Bay the week before the fair to select a landing place at the fairgrounds for the “Flying Squirrel” to land. A spot just south of the grandstand was chosen. The pilot had just returned from a tour of duty with the aviation section of the U. S. Army in World War I.

Plans were made to cover the Door County Fair by the Milwaukee Journal, with moving pictures being taken, and reports being sent back to Milwaukee from the airplane by wireless (radio) back to Milwaukee. This, of course, was several years before the Journal station, WTMJ, went on the air, and the same year the first station in the nation, WHA in Madison, started broadcasting as a service of the University of Wisconsin. There were no commercial stations on the air, and no home broadcast receivers around. The radio communications were simply a source of information for the newspaper.

The Advocate reporter wrote: “With the present day interest in things pertaining to aviation, no plan could be devised for a fair exhibition that would be of greater interest than exhibition flying in charge of a pilot capable of demonstrating all that an airplane can be made to do. The plane will demonstrate the wonderful control that science has made possible in the handling of an air machine, showing the tricks taught army pilots that they might outwit enemy airmen.”
Now, remember that statement was made just 16 years after the Wright brothers made their first flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. What a tremendous advance had been made in aviation because of World War I!

A committee consisting of William Jess of Washington Island, Ralph Jenquin of Gardner, William Bastar of Forestville, Charles Mathiason of Clay Banks and William Moore of Nasewaupee had been appointed to take charge of the election of the man and woman to receive free airplane rides. Nominations were to be made at either of the two newspaper offices in the city (the Advocate and the News). At the fair on September 11, fair goers could vote for the persons of their choice.

There was plenty of publicity in the Door County Advocate, both in news articles and paid advertisements for that first post-war fair in 1919. A carnival was signed up less than two weeks before the fair opened; today, carnivals are signed up many months in advance. The big ad placed by Fair President Henry Hahn and Fair Secretary Earl M. “Mitch” LaPlant included a plug for the air show: “See the airplane race the auto; watch the dare devil feats performed in the air. One of the most spectacular ‘stunts’ of the fair is the flying exhibition demonstrating the wonderful control that science has made possible in the handling of an airplane and showing tricks taught army pilots that might outwit enemy airplanes.”

A week before the fair, Door County got a glimpse of another “hydroplane.” The Isle of Luzon, the largest seaplane on the Great Lakes, flew over Sturgeon Bay en route from Milwaukee to Green Bay, where it took on passengers. The plane was the property of Triangle Airways Corporation, and it was considering stationing a flying boat at Green Bay to take passengers to various points on the lake and bay. For publicity purposes very likely, they made a pass over Sturgeon Bay and Oconto.

The Advocate of Friday, September 12, reported on the three day fair, held Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of that week: “High winds interfered with the performance of the airplane and the race between the automobile and airplane was not as interesting as it might have been, due to the fact that the plane could not hug the earth, being forced to fly several hundred feet above the track. The aviator’s stunt flying was confined to a couple of loops and banking.”

But the winners of the contest did get their ride in the airplane. Allison Hilton, son of Dr. G. F. Hilton, made flights of 20 minutes and after the wind died down, the female winner, Katherine Boyd, was given her ride. Katherine, by the way, lived to see many things in her
life; another World War, space exploration, television; she lived until just a few years ago.
THEY WANTED WINGS
CHAPTER TWO
1920-1929

TWENTIES SAW BUILDING OF AIRSTRIPS, AIRPORTS

Just three months before the beginning of the “Roaring Twenties,” on October 3, 1919, the Door County Democrat reported what could well have become the county’s first air tragedy.

“Bo” Andersen from the Idaho Inn on Washington Island reported the story.

“Washington Island was treated to a regular thriller and not a movie thriller either,” wrote Andersen, a correspondent for the Advocate. “Saturday, September 27th, at 10:30 a.m., the steamer Search of Detroit Harbor (Washington Island) picked up a balloon and two men in Death’s Door and brought them safe into Detroit Harbor, basket, balloon, instruments and all.”

Three army and three navy balloons were engaged in a race to see how far they could get from St. Louis and no. 51, based at Langley Field, VA, had been blown off course. They had dumped all but six bags of ballast to stay aloft over Marinette and the crew of two army men and their balloon suddenly dropped into the water.

Fearing the deflated balloon would drag them beneath the waters, the men were glad to see the Search hove into view, with Captain Pat Chambers at the helm.

Chambers had been lifting his fish nets, but he stopped immediately and headed for the balloon. The army men motioned the Search to go on the weather side, so the sparks from the steamer would not ignite the explosive hydrogen gas escaping from the balloon.

The balloonists were pulled aboard the Search and the balloon dragged to Detroit Harbor. Captain Chambers dried the men out at his home, and they telegraphed back to St. Louis to tell what had happened.

Said reporter Andersen, “Many people went out to see the air ship and the captain and lieutenant were kept busy explaining aeronautics to the visitors. To say they were both grateful for the help as well as the good treatment received from the Chambers family is putting it mildly. They were profuse in their thanks.”

As if to make the pilots feel better about the downing of their air ship, Andersen added, “It is believed the no. 51 won the race from St. Louis as its descent to earth was the farthest from St. Louis of any of the balloons entered in the race.”
An article in the July 30, 1920, Door County Advocate tells how the "Roaring Twenties" era of aviation was ushered into Door County. Within months of the beginning of the "Lawless Decade," while Al Capone was discovering that the nation's thirst for alcohol had not dried up with the passing of the Volstead Act, Door County was beginning to enter the "Air Age."

For probably the second time since Lincoln Beachey and other aviators landed at the Door County fair airstrip, a landing was planned for an airstrip at what was then the Borchert Farm, across from what is now Zahn's Green Thumb.

Plans were being made for the airplane owned by the Green Bay Aero Club, established in 1919, to land at the Borchert Farm on a Saturday, stay through Monday and Tuesday of the next week and take up passengers for a fee and drop advertising literature.

The owner of the nearby Motor Inn, T.F. Caffee, took reservations for the flight, with Wilfred G. Moore, a two-year veteran of the British Flying Corps in World War I, as pilot. Moore had also been acting flight commander of the 29th Squadron, one of the most famous fighting squadrons of the British army.

Also, in late August of 1920, a seaplane from the Great Lakes Naval Station in northern Illinois came as far north as the canal on a photographing and survey trip. Then, the first week in September, Lt. Col. Farwell flew up from Great Lakes with a big HS1 seaplane to get photos of the lighthouses, suitable landing places and to find out where gasoline and oil might be obtained for airplanes.

This seaplane boasted a 400-horsepower Liberty engine, a speed of 80 m.p.h. and the capability of reaching Washington Island in a little over three hours from Great Lakes. The seaplane could reach Gills Rock in ten minutes from Sturgeon Bay.

Lt. Farwell had intended to land at Washington Island on Friday night, but darkness prevented that, so he decided to land at Gills Rock but he had difficulty landing.

Said the Advocate writer, "Commander Farwell stated that they were greatly indebted to Jacob Johnson of Gills Rock. After they had taxied as near shore as was safe because of rocks, Mr. Johnson came to their rescue in a boat, towed the machine to shore, took care of them overnight and refused all pay the next morning. Further, during the night there was a storm and Mr. Johnson undertook to awaken the men every two hours in order that they might see how the plane was weathering it."

Jake Johnson, by the way, was one of the brave men, along with Marvin Daubner, who, in 1935, walked out to Death's Door on the ice,
to find out where the six Washington Island young men had gone through the ice with their car and drowned.

Early Saturday morning, the plane flew across to Washington Island and, after making the necessary survey, the crew visited Camp Pan Hellanic, the girl’s camp conducted by matrons from Great Lakes. All the girls were from the naval station.

A head wind bucked the seaplane on its trip back to Sturgeon Bay on Saturday afternoon, where they landed at 3 p.m. The pilot had called ahead for the Standard Oil truck to deliver oil and gasoline. The truck was waiting for them on their arrival, and they took on 80 gallons of gasoline.

The pilot had planned to make a quick flight back to Great Lakes, but he was hampered in getting going, because on Friday night at Gills Rock, the pontoons had scraped bottom on the rocks, causing a leak that let in water. That made the plane so heavy they had trouble lifting off. Also, the engine bucked so badly, the ship had to land on the bay after takeoff on Washington Island and be towed back to shore by a fishing tug. The pilot finally took off for Great Lakes at 5 p.m.

The same weekend, the airplane from the Green Bay Aero club made a flight up to North Bay to look for the remains of the steamer O’Conner, which had sunk the year before. There being no place in that swampy area to land, they abandoned the project, expecting that the search would be resumed by a seaplane from Great Lakes.

We get an insight into where some of the first landing strips in Door County were, from a May 13, 1921, Advocate article. Harry G. Smith, a former army pilot from Menominee, Michigan, had bought an airplane and started taking passengers up for $10 for a fifteen minute ride. In the spring of 1921, he had landed at Algoma, Kewaunee, Maplewood and Forestville and plied his trade. All that was needed to land was a level cow pasture with the stones cleared off.

The May 21, 1921, Door County Advocate told of a Belgian aviator who visited in the Brussels and Union area. He had enlisted in the Belgian infantry in 1914, at the beginning of World War I, and within a year had become the pilot of Belgian airplane no. 8 and was given a commission. On August 29, 1916, he shot down two German planes and a German dirigible with a crew of 23 German officers. Six weeks later, he made another attack.

“Surrounded by seven German machines,” said the Advocate writer, “he was seriously wounded, receiving three bullets in his head, a bullet in each arm and another in his hip. His machine fell from a distance of 2,000 feet and although he escaped death, he fell into enemy lines and was a prisoner for 12 months.”
His body bore the marks of seven wounds, three shrapnel wounds and marks caused by poison gas. He was decorated by both the Belgian and French governments. The reasons for his visit to Southern Door County remains a mystery. He may have had relatives there.

Two well-known air heros, John Miller and Ed LaParle passed over Sturgeon Bay in June of 1923. A few months before, they had flown to Fox Island, (probably the one in Alaska), where many islanders, isolated from the mainland, were running out of food and supplies. This time, they had been chartered by Alvin Ross, auditor of the Economy Fuse Company of Chicago to look for the drowned bodies of two resort owner relatives of Ross’s at Trout Lake, Wisconsin.

Already, Chicago’s Edgewater Beach Hotel had a hotel air service where people could charter a plane. Later, as we will see, a well-known Door County resort owner would get the idea of setting up an air strip, but that idea was thwarted by the Great Depression.

An airplane flight over Door County was still big enough news to be printed in the Door County News in September of 1924. “An airplane believed to be bound for points in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan passed over this town on Tuesday,” said the writer in the Advocates’s competitor. “It passed so high, however, that we were unable to get a good view of it.”

WOODRUFF PLANNED TO FLY GUESTS TO RESORT

In 1925, according to a May 1 issue of the Advocate, a resort owner conceived the idea of building an airport at Ephraim. J. V. Woodruff, a former stunt pilot, was in the process of building a resort in the town, and he expressed his reason for building an airport in this way: “My aim is to advertise the town, and not only my hotel. The chief thing is to get people here. It is for the benefit of all that they go to the hotel they like the best.”

Woodruff planned to carry passengers to Ephraim, and hoped to get permission to land at Peninsula State Park, on the golf course. Failing that, he said he’d buy a sea plane that could land on the beach in front of his hotel.

Mr. Woodruff had a great deal of experience in the field of flying, according to the Advocate article. He’d done stunt flying and advertising throughout the East as “Jimmy Woodruff’s Flying Circus”. His wife had recently sold her interest in a hotel in Springfield, Illinois, in order to invest in her husband’s new enterprise, the Lakeshore Resort.
The hotel was being built on his wife’s family’s, the Zachariasons’, property, near the head of the bay. It and several cottages were lighted by a Kohler light plant, while many resorts still were lit by kerosene lamps. Woodruff was up with and ahead of the times; he even planned to build a service station for automobiles.

By July, Woodruff had expanded his plans to build his airport between Ephraim and Sister Bay, on the Fichtner property on Highway 17 (now Highway 42). Fichtner’s field was directly north across Highway 42 from Fieldcrest Road in Sister Bay. In the late 1920s or early 1930s, LaReine Logerquist saw Howard Hughes, with his leather puttees and leather aviator’s cap, spin the propeller of his plane and take off. He missed getting a ride with the future builder of the Spruce Goose by a few minutes. An exhibition of flying was set for July 19, a Sunday, with Dan Morgan of Green Bay demonstrating parachute jumping from the plane at a height of 3000 feet over Ephraim. Since the chances of landing in the water were great, boats would be ready to rescue him. Other stunts would include the whiplash and tailspin. The plane was to be a Curtiss Wright, piloted by K. Hughes, an ace flier from Wyoming.

The plane had been flown up from St. Louis to the Borchert field across from the present-day Zahn’s Green Thumb north of Sturgeon Bay on Highways 17-78 (42-57 today). While there, the pilot took Mayor Jim Martin, David Nebel and Herb Reynolds for a ride.

The next week a five passenger Hisco Standard was to be flown up to take care of summer passengers. The Woodruff field was to be run in conjunction with Ebert’s Flying Circus field, formerly Hamilton Flying Field in Milwaukee. Woodruff’s plan was to fly passengers up on a regular daily schedule. Big ideas for the times!

But when the 19th rolled around, the parachutist, Dan Morgan of Green Bay, decided not to jump, due a high wind. K. Hughes, the pilot, agreed with Morgan’s decision, saying that a jump was extremely dangerous, given the rough waters of the bay and stands of heavy timber under the jump site.

Said Hughes, “It was raining at 1800 feet and there was also a 45 m.p.h. wind. In that wind, it is doubtful if the parachute would open.” The thousands of people gathered to see the parachute jump were disappointed, but Woodruff said the jump would be attempted again the following Sunday.

Omar Goserud of Sturgeon Bay held the lucky ticket entitling him either to an airplane ride or the price of it; but instead of seeing Door County from the clouds, as the Advocate writer put it, he chose the five-dollar bill. Several other people paid to get an airplane ride.
Edward Smith’s farm, east of Ephraim, had been chosen as the landing field, instead of the Fichtner farm southwest of Sister Bay as originally planned. Woodruff said he was still looking for a better field of at least 100 acres.

The following Sunday, the parachute jump was attempted again, but this time with a new pilot, Christen Setvate, and Dan Morgan again attempting the jump. This time, the plane took off from the Borchert farm field, south of Forest Road, across from today’s Zahn’s Green Thumb and the Bert Stephenson home.

Tragedy almost struck this time, for as Morgan exited the plane for the jump, the plane dipped and broke into a tail spin. Morgan was able to pull himself back into the plane after it dropped from 1600 feet to 600 feet. After that, Woodruff announced he’d dropped the idea of a parachute jump, but continued the raffle in which the winner could get an airplane ride, or a $5.00 bill.

Next time, the plane was to land and take off from the airstrip at Murphy Farm no.1, which bordered the shoreline. In 1940, Frank Cowles, a Murphy heir and descendant, was to build an airstrip there, shortly before he worked for the Army Air Corps in World War II, where he served as an instructor.

The winner of the free ride from the Borchert field was Bill Stephenson, who later become a pilot himself and a member of the Civil Air Patrol. But he, like Goserud, declined the ride in 1926 and chose to take the five-dollar bill. Many passengers paid to take the ride from the Borchert farm airstrip, including Door County’s most famous photographer, Herbert Reynolds. He requested the extra thrill of a tailspin.

The postscript to the Woodruff saga was aired in the December 30, 1927, Door County Advocate. “Woodruff Bound Over Yesterday,” read the headline. “Charged with having obtained property under false pretenses, James Woodruff, former proprietor of the new Lakeshore summer resort at Ephraim, was arraigned in justice court by District Attorney Grover M. Stapleton here yesterday.”

Woodruff had left a diamond ring, valued at $1200, with the operator of the Union Hotel in Sturgeon Bay as security for a debt he had incurred there. Then, he asked for the ring to be returned so he could sell it and pay the bill. He sold the ring, but didn’t pay the bill, so he landed in court. Incidentally, no record could be found regarding a flight from the airstrip at the Murphy farm.

The September 11, 1925, Door County Advocate told about another aviation event in 1925, sponsored by the Door County Fair Association. This was not part of the Door County Fair, but a special
event put on by the Fair Association, presumably to show that the
fairgrounds could be used for other events than the fair.

A performance group called the Federated Flyers was scheduled
for September 17, in which a girl, Miss Babe Kalishek, would walk the
wing of an airplane. A few weeks before she had been injured in a
parachute jump, so her brother was scheduled to do the parachute jump
at the demonstration.

One of the performers of the group was in a New London
hospital, having dropped 4200 feet after losing control of his plane. He
suffered a broken leg and body bruises. Babe was scheduled to fly the
plane in a standing up position in his place.

The event came off beautifully, to the satisfaction of the
audience. Because of his heavy leather pants, the parachutist was
spared injury when he landed on a fence.

The old met the new in September of 1925, when Job Tong, a
pioneer, one of the first presidents of the Door County Fair
Association, got his first airplane ride.

"From oxcart to airplane is the experience of an 80-year old
man," read the article in the Advocate.

"Last week Mr. Tong accepted the invitation of one of the pilots of the
Federated Flyers, who performed at the fairgrounds from the Tong
farm, and had a thrill of a lifetime. The weather was ideal and Mr.
Tong thoroughly enjoyed seeing the county from the air.

"Friday, after taking any passengers up who had waited for the
wind to subside, the flyers left for Milwaukee where they were
scheduled for stunts Sunday. Since they had room, they offered to take
two local people to Milwaukee for $10. Mr. Fred "Fritz" Reynolds and
Dan Gould took up the opportunity and in less than two hours they
were at their destination."

In February of 1927, plans were being made to make use of the
airplane for crop dusting. The representative of the Niagara Spray
Company, which is still in business today in Door County, and Leslie
Smith of the Decatur Air Dusting Company were laying plans to dust
orchards.

Smith had successfully dusted Peninsula State Park in 1926. He
had used deadly calcium arsenate to dust for worms in the park's trees,
apparently without harm to any human beings who happened to be in
the area. Harold Wilson of Ephraim was to conduct an investigation to
see if the dead worms did any harm to the birds that ate them. It was
truly a cut and try project, which the Department of Natural Resources
and Environmental Protection Agency would frown upon today.
KARL REYNOLDS BUILDS THE FIRST CHERRYLAND AIRPORT

“Move Progresses for Airport Here,” read a headline in the March 30, 1928, Door County Advocate. “New Menominee Terminal To Serve Chambers Island, Plan. Although no definite plans have been formulated, considerable investigation has been going on here in regard to establishing a Door County airport near Sturgeon Bay.”

Karl M. Haugen, president and general manager of the North American Airways company in Appleton, had written to the Door County Chamber of Commerce regarding the possibility of building an airport at Sturgeon Bay. Also, the Stinson Aircraft company of Detroit had been negotiating with a group for the purchase of a Stinson passenger plane. (This plane is described in the Advocate as a six passenger, but probably was a five passenger Stinson Detroiter, one of the first small passenger planes.) Plans for the Stinson included carrying mail from Washington Island to Green Bay where it would connect with the proposed American Airways Chicago to Menominee, Michigan, route.

Karl S. Reynolds, of the Reynolds Preserving Company and chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee, was appointed by C. D. Brower, former president of the Chamber of Commerce to investigate the proposal. Reynolds also was appointed by American Legion commander John H. Miles to study the recommendation that the Legionaires foster marking cities for airplane pilots.

The article said that Karl Reynolds had investigated several potential landing fields near Sturgeon Bay and a few locations where land could be rented temporarily as landing strips for the summer of 1928. Reynolds expressed the belief that the only feasible way to handle air traffic was for the city or county to establish an airport and then sell it to airway interests when regular service had been established.

The Wednesday before, Menominee, Michigan authorities had held a meeting at which they discussed the idea of building an airfield close to the water from which seaplanes could take off for Chambers Island.

The Advocate writer expressed the idea that unless an airport was built near Sturgeon Bay, tourists coming to Door County by airplane would fly to the Menominee airport via American Airways, and fly to Door County by seaplanes which needed no airport.

American Airways, the article stated, was pressing the issue of building airports along the lakeshore. Two Rivers was planning to
build an airport that would be on the airline route. Newspaper stories had told of plans to provide special passenger plane service from Chicago to Northern Wisconsin and Door County, but to do that, an airport had to be built.

Karl Reynolds is quoted as saying, "There are many persons who will knock a proposition of this kind because they believe it will never prove practical, but there were also knockers when the railroads began pushing to the front as transportation aids. No one can conscientiously say that there is no future for the airplane." Karl S. Reynolds not only foresaw the future, but he took a giant step towards making the idea of an airport for Door County a reality.

The May 24, 1928, issue of the Door County News revealed the long-forgotten event that caused the building of the first real airport in Door County. The impetus for building the first Cherryland Airport, remembered by most people as the Reynolds Airport, was the 1928 Cherry Blossom Festival. The airport was built on land owned by the Reynolds Preserving Company, and the land was used for a cherry orchard after the airport was moved out to County Trunk C on the Dewitt farm. It was located along Highway 78 (now Highway 57) across from the old Sevastopol town hall, which is still standing. The 1928 Cherry Blossom Festival seems to have been a joint effort of the Chamber of Commerce, the American Legion and the Reynolds Preserving Company at bringing tourists to Door County to see the cherry blossoms.

By 1928, Felhofer Brothers had sold enough Ford Model Ts and Chevrolets, Hembels had sold enough Graham Paiges and Moeller’s Garage had sold enough Ford and other cars to create a demand for better roads in Door County. That made it possible for tourists to travel here by automobile instead of by train and the Goodrich and Hart boats.

The Van Camp condensing plant had begun to plow the roads in the winter so their milk trucks could get through. Later, they ordered a big SNOGO snowblower so they could open roads that had been closed for weeks, and when the County Highway Department saw there was a demand for open roads in the winter, they bought the machine. It still sits in the county barn, and in recent years it’s been taken to the annual Thresheree of the Northeastern Wisconsin Antique Power Association.

All this background is given to illustrate that Door County was moving into the modern age of transportation and tourism. For the Cherry Blossom festival of Sunday, May 27, 1928, 20,000 people were expected to visit Door County. (Newspaper accounts indicate that festival activities also took place on Saturday, May 26.)
The summer resorts were ready for these motorists. Private people were asked to take in tourists if need be. The American Legion had plans to serve meals at the Reynolds Preserving Company picker’s camp at 50 cents a plate. The routes through the cherry orchards were marked; one route covered ten miles, another 14 miles. Free maps and folders were handed out to tourists as they crossed the toll bridge. The Chamber of Commerce arranged to transport tourists and guide tourists around the cherry blossom routes.

The big attraction of the day besides the cherry blossoms was the new airport. Several big monoplanes were scheduled to land there. George Apitz, the student pilot engineer from the Appleton airport, had arrived early in the week to supervise the grading of the runways. The monoplanes were to take up passengers on Saturday and Sunday at a rate of $5.00 a passenger for a 20 minute flight covering a distance of thirty miles. No stunt flying was to be permitted and anyone not satisfied was to be refunded his money. The smaller planes were to be of the same type as a female aviation pioneer, Ruth Elder, and a companion had used to fly across the Atlantic. The type of airplane wasn’t listed.

Although we couldn’t find Ruth Elder’s name in any aviation history book to find out which kind of plane she flew, the June 1, 1928, Advocate tells us that the small plane (apparently just one plane came up) was a Waco three seater, piloted by a Mr. West. The Wests were great friends with Karl Reynolds and of great help in promoting aviation in Door County. The big plane a Stinson Detroiter five seater, the “Pride of Appleton,” flown by Eddie Merritt, had flown a trial run up from Appleton the week before the Cherry Blossom weekend, along with Karl Haugen, president of North American Airways and Peter Keller, chief mechanic of the airline.

The big plane had no problem landing or taking off, even though the landing strips at the Reynolds Airport hadn’t been completed and it had rained hard the day before.

Felix DeBroux of Sawyer and Garrett Moore of Sevastopol were on hand that Saturday to buy tickets numbers one and two for the airplane rides to be offered for the Cherry Blossom festival on May 26 and 27.

Several Door County women were brave enough to take one of those $5.00 flights. Several years ago, the late Alvina Goserud called to say that she’d flown that weekend, along with William Egan, whose mother had worked for the Chamber of Commerce.

“I wanted to loop the loop,” she said, “but the pilot wouldn’t do it. In later years, I flew many times, including in a seaplane and to
Europe many times.” And she got her start at the Cherry Blossom event of 1928.

Mabel Busch Anschutz, who was about 16 years old in 1928, also flew that weekend. “My parents told me, ‘Don’t go up in that airplane,’ but my girlfriend and I paid our $5.00 and went up anyway. “The pilot sat up in front behind a windshield, and told us to keep our arms inside the cockpit. I remember the plane made a lot of noise and it was awfully windy.”

In later years, after Mabel married Paul Anschutz, she recalls that Dr. Dan Dorchester, another Door County aviation pioneer, would fly up to their farm near West Jacksonport to treat their son, Roger. He landed on a level strip near the farmhouse.

Arnold Geitner, who lives almost across from the present Cherryland Airport on County Trunk C, has the distinction of having flown with both Karl Reynolds and Dr. Dan Dorchester. “I flew with Karl Reynolds from an airstrip near the factory,” he says, “and from the Reynolds airport out on Highway 57. At that time, I lived with my parents in Sevastopol township not far from the Reynolds orchard. The plane was a two-seater, like a relative of mine flew over in from Menominee, Michigan.” Dr. Dorchester was Arnold’s doctor, and when Arnold and his wife took over the farm on County Trunk C, a walk across the highway gave Arnie a chance to fly with Dr. Dan.

The Wall Street Crash of October 1929, put a crimp in a lot of plans for progress, and it was to have its effect in the growth of Door County aviation, but the Reynolds airport created an interest in flying that even the Great Depression couldn’t quench.

‘1930s INTEREST IN AVIATION USHERED IN BY 1928 EVENT

“10,000 Here Over Weekend to View Cherry Blossoms,” read the Advocate headline of June 1, 1928. The big publicity stunt engineered by the Door County Chamber of Commerce, the American Legion and most notably, Karl Reynolds of the Reynolds Preserving Company, had been a great success. Indeed, droves of people saw the cherry blossoms either by auto or by airplane on the weekend of May 26 and 27. Luckily, according to the paper, the cherries were at the peak of their bloom, and were the best in the Reynolds orchard. Most tourists traveled past this orchard.

At the Reynolds picker’s camp, over 1500 people were served free cherry pie. The Legion Women’s Auxiliary served meals to 300 people at the same place. Memorial Day fell in the middle of the week, and thousands visited the county on that day, too.
North American Airways of Appleton received high praise from the Advocate for its weekend flights with the Stinson, "City of Appleton," which took many tourists for flights over the orchards. Eddie Merritt was the pilot. One of the West brothers from Appleton took passengers up in a three-place Waco not only on the weekend, but on Monday, and he came back for Memorial Day. The new Cherryland Airport across from the Sevastopol town hall was mobbed by people who wanted to fly, some people reserving the plane for a flight to Washington Island.

Aviation in Door County got a big boost that day. Plans were discussed by the owners of one company for buying a three-passenger plane, since the county now had an airport. The Milwaukee Journal was on the scene on Saturday, May 26, taking photos of the cherry blossoms for the Sunday paper. Bertha Mae and Helen Behringer, daughters of the William Behringers, got their picture in the Journal, with a backdrop of cherry blossoms. Elmer Christiansen won the Advocate's praise for the Cherry Blossom route map he made, which was distributed to large numbers of tourists.

"The fact that none of these maps were thrown away by the roadside," said the Advocate writer, "points to the fact they were probably being kept for future use on return trips here or for friends who will also wish to visit the peninsula."

The promotion was considered a big success, with a count of out of state cars indicating visitors from as far away as Pennsylvania, New York and Iowa, as well as numerous visitors from Illinois and Michigan. Washington Island was the turn around point for the Stinson, and, since the pilot thought there was no airport to land there, notes were dropped asking the Island residents to build an airport if they wanted passenger and air mail service. Actually, the pilot might have been able to land. Already, in January of 1928, the Washington Island Airport Company had been organized and capitalized in Madison at $5000. George O. Mann, Island storekeeper, was president of the group, Bill Jess was secretary, and Dr. Charles Colebaugh was vice president. Tom Goodman and Ted Gudmundsen were directors.

According to a January 2, 1928 Advocate article, a 55-acre plot of land had been purchased by the group in the north-central part of the Island. Tractors and graders had prepared two 2600 foot runways. Four planes had landed and taken off from the Island airport in 1927.

"The purpose is to protect the Islanders from isolation from storms and from shifting ice floes which have frequently delayed mail and prevented sick from getting to hospitals for needed medical or surgical attention," the Advocate writer said.
Incidentally, news of the Cherry Blossom promotion prompted two fliers from Valders, near Manitowoc, to fly up in their Standard biplane, with the object of taking up passengers to see the cherry blossoms.

However, because of the arrangement with North American Airways, they were not permitted to do so, except to take Laurie Robertson and Albert Conjurske for a 20 minute flight over Sturgeon Bay. The plane had landed somewhere in Sawyer (the West Side of Sturgeon Bay) and the fliers were met by Karl Reynolds and Allan Mac Millin. MacMillin flew with the pilots so he could point out the location of the Cherryland Airport on Highway 78 (57). Although their passenger plan was turned down, the pilots were assured they could carry passengers at a later date, if they were properly licensed and insured.

A sign of the times was seen when the speaker for the Memorial Day services at Bayside Cemetery was flown here from Manitowoc, where he had given a speech earlier in the morning. Fearing that he might be late for the speech at Bayside, a plane was chartered at Manitowoc, and he was flown to Cherryland Airport.

"On arriving," the Advocate writer said, "the plane, in spite of the well-marked runways, was unable at first to locate the new airport and had to spend considerable time before landing."

As a final touch, the plane flew over the grave of Archie Lackshire, a local army company F member who died in France in World War I. Mr. West, the pilot, flew out over the bay and dropped another wreath to honor those who lost their lives at sea in service of their country.

The Advocate's Bert Sanderson wrote an editorial entitled, "Airplanes Are Coming," in the May 25, 1928, paper. He wrote, "Traveling by airplanes has developed so rapidly that the need of landing fields has become a most important factor in counties such as Door, where millions of dollars are being invested by outside people for summer homes, and the tourist business runs into millions. Airplanes are of no more use where there are no landing fields than automobiles without roads."

The Thursday, June 2, 1928, Door County News told of an event in Green Bay to which all Door County fliers were invited. 25 planes from the Cudworth Legion Post in Milwaukee were to fly to Green Bay on June 11 to attend a banquet at the Northland Hotel. A man from Green Bay, Milton Smith, had come to Sturgeon Bay to see Karl Reynolds and had left him tickets to sell for the $1.50 per plate banquet. Reynolds said he would extend an invitation for the fliers to
land at the Cherryland Airport on June 12 to try out the field on the Reynolds property.

The value of the airplane for business purposes was becoming evident, and it led to the purchase of the first airplane by a group of Door County businessmen, as reported in the June 8, 1928 Advocate.

The group was headed up by E. G. Bailey, who had left his position as Door County’s first county agriculture agent to take over the Ford garage in Sturgeon Bay. (Moulton Goff had served as a war emergency food agent during World War I, but Bailey was the first to hold the title as county agent, to be succeeded by the fabled Ben Rysy.)

E. G. Bailey had driven to Chicago to pick up a new Model A Ford for his Sturgeon Bay Motors Ford agency. While in Chicago, he met with officials of the Chambers Island Association regarding possible air service between Cherryland Airport and Chambers Island. They had already arranged for air service from Menominee, Michigan to the island.

On the way back from Chicago, Bailey stopped in Appleton to order a new four passenger Stinson Detroiter, after officials from North American Airways had assured him they would help him get a pilot for the Chambers Island run.

The Stinson Detroiter was the same type plane as the Pride of Appleton, which had flown to the Cherry blossom event at Cherryland Airport, located on the Reynolds property. The cost was $6500, it was powered by a 125 horsepower Warner engine, and it could carry three passengers and the pilot as well as 300 to 500 pounds of baggage or freight.

An important aviation meeting of the Door County Chamber of Commerce was held at the Carmen Hotel, which was located roughly where My Sister’s Café is today, on June 19, 1928. A report in the Door County News said that federal aviation inspector John E. Sommers gave a talk regarding what would be needed to establish an adequate airport. He pointed out that a field a half mile wide and a half mile long was barely large enough, and 50’ by 60’ hangars were a bare minimum, keeping the expected rapid growth in aviation in mind. He also stressed the necessity for clearing away obstructions and trees from around the airfield. He also stressed the need for a workshop where planes could be repaired, something the present day airport has set up just recently.

The names of those attending the meeting are still remembered today, seventy years later, for they were people with foresight, a view of the future.
Frank Moeller, founder of Moeller’s Garage, president of the Chamber of Commerce, chaired the meeting. He turned the meeting over to Karl Reynolds, and Reynolds called on Mayor Jim Martin of Martin Orchards for a short talk. Orchard owner Murray Bingham gave a talk about his impressions of Door County from the air, for he was one of those who took the airplane ride during the cherry blossom celebration a few weeks before.

Then John Bertschinger, co-owner with his brother Paul of the Alpine Resort in Egg Harbor, spoke. He said that he’d already purchased property for and started to build an airport that guests could use to fly to the Alpine. He said he’d been reluctant to talk about this before, fearing that people would think he was too far ahead of the times. He pointed out that by air, the Alpine was only 2 hours away from Chicago.

A mystery about Door County aviation was created by a visit to Bruce Oram’s barber shop. A customer of his that had worked at the Advocate brought in several boxes of photographs that he had been told to throw away many years before. Instead of discarding them, he took them home.

Most of the photos were of unidentified wedding couples, long forgotten social and political events and scenes of Door County. But one, showing a man in a military uniform, was labeled “Lt. Lester Maitland, Egg Harbor, Wisconsin, 1928.”

Now, many people will remember hearing of Maitland Field in Milwaukee. The name rang a bell, and an aviation history book revealed that Lt. Maitland and his partner were the first aviators to fly from Oakland, California, to Honolulu, in 1927. That was the year Lindbergh flew the Atlantic alone.

The question arose, where could Lt. Maitland have landed an airplane in Egg Harbor in 1928? Frank Cowles was asked if he could have landed at Horseshoe Bay (Murphy) Farms, which his uncle owned at the time. Frank Cowles replied, “I don’t know of an airstrip at Horseshoe Bay Farms in 1928. I built an airstrip there in 1940, before I worked for the Army Air Corps, where I was an instructor.”

Bill Bertschinger, who managed the Alpine Resort in Egg Harbor, was asked if the Alpine records for the 1928 season were still available, so they could be checked to see if Maitland had stayed there during his Egg Harbor visit. He said those records had been destroyed.

His sister, Dorothy Hoslet, was asked if she knew of an airstrip at Egg Harbor in 1928. She said she remembered airplanes flying over the Bauldry farm while she was there taking music lessons around that time. She thought there might have been an airstrip at the Murphy
Farms. Her uncle, John Bertschinger, had talked about building an airstrip for Alpine guests to use about this time, but that never materialized, according to Bill and Dorothy.

So where did this famous aviator land? Very likely at the Murphy Farm, for the Woodruff article in the previous chapter says that Woodruff planned to put on an aircraft demonstration at the Murphy Farm. Other information unearthed the fact that Lt. Maitland in 1948 was the state aeronautics commissioner.

What happened to Maitland? The Internet Social Security file turned up the name of only one Lester Maitland, born February 8, 1899, whose Social Security number, 380-38-4755, was issued in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where Maitland Field was located. He died on March 27, 1990, and his last zip code was 96080, Red Bluff, California. He lived almost long enough for us to interview him and find out what he was doing in Egg Harbor in 1928.

We do know he also visited Door County in 1948, because an Advocate article says that he attended the Frigid Fun Flight on February 14, 1948, along with Capt. Joe Foss, a famous U.S. Marine Corps ace of World War II. Dr. Dan Dorchester arranged for these big name aviators to take part in the affair.

At the June 19, 1928 Chamber of Commerce meeting, aviation committee member E. G. Bailey announced that he’d advanced the down payment on a Stinson Detroiter and hoped to pay for it by selling stock.

Karl Reynolds said that choosing one central airport was a necessity and he felt it should be owned by the county or city. The Door County News writer mentioned the airport built by Reynolds on Highway 78 across from the old Sevastopol town hall. (In 1930, the highway number was changed to 57.)

“At the present time, Washington Island is ready to build an airport,” said the Advocate writer, “and they have several choice locations in view. Sister Bay is planning an airport, which makes four in the county with the local airport (Reynolds Cherryland) and the field at Egg Harbor.” The writer doesn’t say whether he means the Murphy field at Egg Harbor, or the proposed Alpine field.

“Things are coming to a head,” as an Advocate writer put it in a editorial in June 1928, and it was expected that plans for the maintenance of Cherryland Airport would be forthcoming. Also, a group of Washington Island people had met recently to plan for a landing field, and it was expected that the Chambers Island landing field would be ready by the end of the summer of 1928.
The July 6, 1928, Advocate announced that the new Stinson Detroiter would arrive at Cherryland Airport the next day. The pilot would be none other than the brother of the famed advocate of military air power, Col. Billy Mitchell. Tom Mitchell would fly the new four passenger plane from Detroit to Sturgeon Bay, accompanied by E. G. Bailey.

Tom Mitchell was described as being a former member of Britain’s Royal Air Force with ten years flying experience in all types of planes, and never having had an accident. E. G. Bailey was to fly with Mitchell from Detroit to Sturgeon Bay when the plane was delivered.

The Cherryland Airways Company, headed by E. G. Bailey, had been capitalized at $8500. $6500 was being allowed for the airplane and the rest was going for insurance and incidentals. The company planned to sell bonds at $5.00 each, which would guarantee the holder a fifteen minute ride any time of the year. The purchase of two bonds would allow the purchaser two trips, or a ride around the peninsula.

Plans were for the Airways to build a portable hangar 25 by 50 feet, with work on it to start within a week. On July 13, 1928, Advocate announced that the plane would arrive that day. Bailey and John Draeb Jr. would accompany Mitchell and the plane from Appleton to Cherryland Airport, which was owned by the Reynolds Preserving Company and located on Highway 78 (now Highway 57) just north of the intersection with Highway 17 (now 42.) The plane was to be towed to Cedar Street in Sturgeon Bay and a booth set up for taking suggestions for a name for the plane, with the prize being a $10 trip around the county.

A Ryan Brougham, built by the company that built Lindbergh’s Spirit of St. Louis, and owned by Midwest Airways out of Milwaukee County Airport, delivered the first paid air passenger to Door County, according to the July 20, 1928, Advocate.

“Door County history was made last week,” said the Advocate article, “by E. H. Muehlmeier, who was the first summer resident to use an airplane for paid transportation to this peninsula. He came here from Milwaukee to visit his wife and her parents, Sir Fredrick Style and his wife on Bay Shore Drive.”

The Ryan was a four-passenger monoplane and it made the trip from Milwaukee in 1½ hours, using 11 gallons of gasoline an hour. Muehlmeier was so “sold” on air travel that he said he intended to use the plane regularly on his trips to Sturgeon Bay.

The same Advocate announced there was another delay in delivery of the new Stinson Detroiter. The propeller broke at Appleton
and it was not expected to arrive until the day the paper came out. Mel Peterson, a World War I veteran of Company F and an employee of Sturgeon Bay Motors, was listed as an incorporator of the new Cherryland Airways Company, along with E. G. Bailey and John Draeb Jr.

By June 22 of 1928, a committee of five on Washington Island had prices on four tracts of land available as airfield sites. Farms owned by Rob Gunnerson, Peder Hansen, George 0. Mann and Hans Hansen were available in acreages from 60 to 98, with asking prices of $4500 to $10,000. The Advocate article of July 22, 1928, doesn’t say which farm was bought, but by then work had been started removing fences to transform it into an airfield. Meanwhile, in Sister Bay, the Fichtner landing field, the site of Woodruff’s airplane demonstration in 1925, was dedicated. A Waco plane from Chicago landed there on July 24. Also, the Upper Peninsula Airways Corporation from Escanaba, Michigan brought over a biplane, “The Swallow,” and it used the partially completed runway to take up passengers.

And the Stinson Detroiter purchased by E. G. Bailey and company had finally arrived and landed at the Sister Bay field. It was a beautiful ship, painted cherry red with green wings. “Door County’s own airplane,” so described by an Advocate writer, arrived at Cherryland Airport on July 21, 1928. It was flown up from Appleton, where the damaged propeller was replaced, by Tom Mitchell, accompanied by Charles Towne, a pilot from the Stinson factory at Detroit. It had missed the “pavement celebration” planned for July 14 by a week.

The first people to have a ride in the new plane were Alric Erickson, manager of the Horseshoe Bay orchards (his son, Alric, would later choose a career in the U.S. Air Force); Sam Erickson, Sister Bay contractor; and Herman W. Ullsperger, manager of the Fruit Growers Union. The first paid county tour was enjoyed by David Nebel, Miss Helen Hall and John Draeb.

Mrs. Albert Kalmbach won the airplane naming contest with the suggestion, “Miss Door County.” That airplane, as far as can be determined, was the first Miss Door County.

The Chamber of Commerce had great plans for the Stinson purchased by Cherryland Airways. It was decided to send a case of Montmorency cherries to President Coolidge at the summer White House at Brule. Tom Mitchell would be the pilot, and it was to be decided who would accompany him on the August trip.
Many people took county tours in the plane, including Clayton Cardy, a lad of 13 then. He recalls, “What a beautiful view of the county we got!”

A hangar with a shop was soon to be built, and flying lessons were being given. The first student was Kenneth W. Greaves. Ken was just the kind of person to try something new; he later became an early television actor in Milwaukee, where he owned a large landscaping business.

The August 10, 1928 Advocate reported further adventures with the Stinson. It landed on Washington Island’s new airfield, still under construction, with E. G. Bailey, Oscar Hansen and pilot Tom Mitchell aboard. On the Island, Dr. and Mrs. Colebaugh and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hanson and tavern keeper Tom Nelson were taken up for rides.

The Islanders were so interested in this new link with the rest of the world that pilot Mitchell and John Draeb made plans to land on the Island again the next Sunday. Bailey also planned to take the plane to the Island for the annual picnic of the Holstein Breeder’s Association on August 21.

A late news bulletin published by the Advocate relayed the news that Chamber of Commerce representatives were scheduled to meet President Coolidge at Brule the next Tuesday morning. “Frank N. Graass and Karl S. Reynolds will fly to Superior Monday afternoon in the Cherryland Airways plane and present the nation’s chief executive with a crate of choice Door County cherries,” the article read.

It turned out that Reynolds was unable to go, but fruit industry representative Moulton Goff went in his place, along with Graass and the pilot Mitchell. The party left Cherryland Airport a little after two on Monday afternoon, August 13, and arrived in Superior about three hours later. They were met by one of Door County’s favorite sons, attorney John Curtis Fritchler, a relative of Graass who had already established himself in a practice in Superior, and who was destined to rise to the rank of colonel in the army during World War II. Fritchler remained with the party, and Tuesday morning the group took the cherries to a gift shop and had them beautifully wrapped.

The group, Graass, Goff and Fritchler, then went to President Coolidge’s executive offices, where they were ushered in ahead of others waiting to see the President. During a five minute visit, Graass gave a short speech complimenting the government for not controlling the cherry industry or fixing the price of cherries, a statement that must have pleased the Republican chief executive. On the way back to Sturgeon Bay, the group dropped 2500 leaflets, touting the charms of Door County.
The flying days of the Miss Door County, the Stinson Detroiter owned by E. G. Bailey and John Draeb and Cherryland Airways were soon to end. The October 19, 1928, Advocate headlines read, "Plane Wrecked On Island." Cherryland Airways pilot Tom Mitchell had conceived an idea that it might be possible to get some additional passenger service business from Menominee, Michigan. Bailey and Draeb agreed, so Mitchell and his wife with their German shepherd "Teddy" took off from the Reynolds Cherryland Airport on Wednesday afternoon at 3:15 p.m., on October 17, 1928, for Menominee.

Earl Volk, the manager of the Parkinson Farm near Monument Point, saw the plane fly over, and watched it until it disappeared in the direction of Green Island and Menominee, which lay northwest of the Reynolds Airport. About three miles from Green Island, the engine started hammering and stopped. Pilot Mitchell coasted for three miles until he reached the narrow beach of Green Island, the dozen foot width of which was bordered by a steep bluff and the waters of Green Bay. It was a miracle that he landed safely, but in doing so, the undercarriage and a wing of the plane were severely damaged.

The Mitchells had seen a car-ferry running to Menominee on the way to their rough landing, but the people on the carferry didn't see them. Fortunately, Lighthouse Keeper Drew found the couple and their dog, none of them being harmed by the crash. The trip to Menominee should only have taken 15 minutes, so when someone called the Menominee airport and found the Mitchells hadn't arrived, there was cause for alarm. The coast guard was summoned at 2 a.m., heavy seas having prevented the lighthouse keeper from taking the rescued group to the mainland in his boat. The couple was taken to Menominee to report the crash, and then taken to Sturgeon Bay in the coast guard power boat.

A week later, the remains of the Miss Door County were still on the shores of Green Island. Finally, a large enough ship with a crane aboard had been secured from Art Weber of Washington Island in order to lift and remove the plane. Otis Kimber and George Rankin, mechanics at Sturgeon Bay Motors, as well as Bailey and Draeb, had been taken to Green Island by the coast guard, and they had succeeded in removing one of the wings, but bad weather forced them to leave before they could remove the other one.

Plans were, according to the October 26, 1928, Door County Advocate, to haul the plane to the Fruit Growers Union dock in Sturgeon Bay, from which it would be shipped back to Detroit for repairs or if it couldn't be repaired the group would buy a new one.
However, E. G. Bailey’s son, Fritz, who retired to the West Side of Sturgeon Bay, said he thought the project for an airline for Door County was abandoned, from what he remembered as a 15-year old boy at the time.

There was a piece of good news in Door County aviation to round out the year of 1928. The November 2, 1928, Advocate reported that incorporation papers had been filed in Madison for the Washington Island Airport Company. It was capitalized at $5000, with George 0. Mann, former teacher and now storekeeper as president, William Jess as secretary and treasurer, and Dr. Charles Colebaugh as vice president. Tom Goodman and Ted Gudmundsen were directors.

The company had purchased a 55-acre tract and created two 2600 foot runways by leveling the land with tractors and graders. Now the Island would have an almost instant link with the mainland. This airport was to create a bond with summer residents like Dr. “Pike” Imig, among whose accomplishments was to initiate the purchase of a well-equipped fire truck in the late 1940s. Also, because of having the airport, Dr. Dan Dorchester was able to fly to the Island in the 1940s and save the life of Dick Bjarnarson, who was severely injured in a hunting accident.

1929 CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL BRINGS FURTHER AVIATION INTEREST

Capitalizing on the success of the 1928 Cherry Blossom Festival, big plans were made for a 1929 event, which involved aviation. According to the May 24, 1929, Door County Advocate, this year ther would be a parade with a dozen floats featuring industry, costumed groups, covered wagons, Indians, oxen and saddle horses, all of the participants also being part of an historical pagent to be performed on three nights at the city playground, which was probably Market Square. A mammoth float would carry Cherry Blossom Queen Marie Henkel and her court.

The Sturgeon Bay High School band and the Algoma High School band would march, and the parade would march over the bridge to Sawyer and back. (This was the old toll bridge, which both of these writers remember.)

Governor Walter J. Kohler and his wife were scheduled to arrive by airplane at the Reynolds Cherryland airport on Sunday morning to enjoy the last day of the festival, along with Chairman Mauthe of the Conservation Commission, who would dedicate the new Potawatomi State Park. Mauthe would drop a wreath on the park from an airplane.
The event was a big success. The Scofield float won first place, Frank Knuth and Co., second, in the industrial division; L. D. Smith first in the humorous division; and Miss Doris Draeb was the winner of the children’s parade. Doris portrayed George Washington as he cut down the cherry tree. Mayor Jim Martin crowned the blossom queen, Marie Henkel.

Marie Henkel and her court were treated to a tour of the Fox Valley in what appears to be a Ford Trimotor. The Milwaukee Journal carried a photograph of the group, which was reprinted in the May 29, 1929, Door County News.

Airplane rides were given from Cherryland Airport on Saturday, Decoration Day. Unfortunately, Karl Reynolds was ill during the 1929 Cherry Blossom festival, and wasn’t able to participate in all of the events, even though he had done much of the planning.

A monoplane was used to take the people for rides. An excellent photograph taken that day shows the large crowd and the plane, which appears to be a Ryan, similar to that used by Charles A. Lindbergh to fly the Atlantic two years before.

Door County News editor Earl M. “Mitch” LaPlante had this comment in his editorial column of June 6, 1929:

“There remains no doubt.....that there is a place for a plane in this county. Aviation is upon us and Door County should get in on the ground floor.

“During the cherry bloom hundreds of people took rides over the orchards. This is but one of the many uses a plane can be put to here. County tours were popular last summer and would become more so as people become accustomed to the plane. Door County has an ideal airport. It needs only the plane. We hope in the near future some plan can be worked out for a Door County plane.”

LaPlante praised Karl Reynolds for his efforts, and said the publicity did a lot of good for the county. He suggested planning begin immediately for such events in upcoming years, with “the responsibility not falling just on the shoulders of a few.”

Finally, to end the 1920s period in Door County aviation, the March 11, 1929, Advocate announced that the Reynolds Cherryland Airport had been officially recognized by the Aeronautics branch of the U. S. Department of Commerce, in a publication received by Karl Reynolds.

The bulletin contained a map showing the location of Sturgeon Bay, the airport and the surrounding waters, with information about the airport on the back of the map. Door County now was an air
destination for anyone who wanted to fly here in a private or small commercial plane.
THIRTY'S SAW RAPID GROWTH OF DOOR COUNTY AVIATION

The stock market crash of October 29, 1929, probably slowed down the advance of aviation in Door County, but nationwide aviation was moving ahead. On November 28-29, 1929, Commander Richard E. Byrd was flown over the South Pole by his pilot, Berndt Batchen. The newsreel of that flight was probably the first sound movie both seen and heard by many Door County residents. It was one of Frank Borchert’s first sound movies shown at the old Door Theater.

Anyone who saw the movie will never forget the roar of the Ford Trimotor as it flew over the spot where, in 1910, the Norwegian explorer, Roald Amundsen, planted the flag of his country. A few weeks afterward, the Englishman, Robert Falcon Scott, and his men, disheartened by the failure of their prototype snowmobiles and the ponies they’d used instead of sled dogs, arrived and began their fatal trip back to their base camp. Commander Byrd had made the same trip in comfort with a Ford Trimotor, a number which have landed in Door County, most recently in 1998.

To many, the beginning of the 1930s were the “Hard Times.” But people such as Karl S. Reynolds did not lose faith in America, and continued in promoting business, which in his case was the cherry industry.

In January 1930, Reynolds sent a letter to another promoter of Door County, Earl “Mitch” LaPlant. He said, “I have just spent a very wonderful and profitable day in San Francisco in conference with the president of the California Packing Corporation, the secretary and manager of the Canner’s League of California and a few others interested in our line of business. Right now I am comfortable in a chair of a 12-passenger tri-motor (could have been a Ford or Stinson) plane of the Western Air Express en-route to Los Angeles.”

Reynolds went on to laud the advantages of air travel. He told of the beauties of flying over the foreign vessels in the bay, and over the orchards. He praised the dinners served in flight, and the beautiful sky with its stars and the moon as night fell. “I guess I am sold on air travel from now on,” he said.

The airplane was praised as a tool in fighting insects in a statement issued by Professor A. A. Granovsky printed in the Door County News on May 8, 1930. He praised the 1925 experiment in
Peninsula State Park, in which airplanes were used to dust for a pesky hemlock leaf eating caterpillar. Deadly calcium arsenate was used; presumably, no campers or tourists were destroyed, or the professor would have heard of it in the ensuing five years.

On May 14, 1930, the same newspaper reported that Karl Reynolds had again used the airplane for business purposes, this time both as president of the Door County Chamber of Commerce, and as a part of his duties as business manager of the Reynolds Preserving Company. Reynolds drove to Milwaukee to begin his trip, then with a Kohler Aviation Company plane to Grand Rapids, Michigan. He then boarded a fast train to New York. The entire trip took a little more than 24 hours. Later on that same month, the paper announced that Karl Reynolds had received word that a group of seaplanes from Detroit was considering a stop in Sturgeon Bay while on a cruise of the Great Lakes. One of the pilots was to be the famous Gar Wood, champion motorboat racer.

Also, the paper noted, the state conservation commission had announced it wouldn’t permit an airport to be built in Peninsula State Park, saying that an airport would be incompatible with the park’s purpose. It may be that air travel enthusiasts thought that the nice area cleared for a golf course should be able to provide at least a little space for an airstrip. The article said, “With the exception of the landing fields on Washington Island and Chambers Island, Door County will probably be without an airport on the mainland during the present season, unless the county board or some other body takes action to provide such a field.”

Meanwhile, the chamber of commerce had no problem with welcoming the group of seaplanes from the Detroit Flying Club. A group of movers and shakers met at the Carmen Hotel for a dinner with the planning group from Detroit. Among the Sturgeon Bay people were Karl S. Reynolds, Leathem D. Smith, H. R. Jones, George Pitinger, F. A. “Banty” Shimmel, Emil J. Hoslett, C. D. Brower, Walter Lee, Sumner Harris, Fred Peterson, Donald W. Reynolds, A. B. Minor, C. E. Thayer, and Palmer Johnson. Among the Detroit fliers were Lt. Richard Halliburton, the famous explorer, and H. F. Johnson, president of the Johnson Wax Company in Racine. Plans were made for 250 flyers to arrive on August 18 and dock their seaplanes near the Door County Country Club, which was located where Leathem Smith Lodge is today. (An August 13 Door County News article describes the anchorage as that of the Hotel Commodore.)

A photograph shows one of the planes at the dock, with spectators lined up along the shore to look at it. To date the photo, a
1929 Chevrolet and a 1930 Model A Ford as well as others, none later than a 1930 model, are parked along the shoreline.

A map in the May 22, 1930, Advocate showed the proposed route of the Detroit airplanes. Leaving Detroit, the seaplanes were to fly south along Lake Michigan’s east side to Benton Harbor and then to Chicago. From Chicago, the route led north along the west side of Lake Michigan to Sturgeon Bay, and then on to Menominee and Marinette. Then, all along the way making stops at various cities, the route led along the Lake Michigan shore to St. Ignace, then across to Saulte Ste. Marie and along Lake Huron’s south shore to Duluth. From there, the seaplanes flew along the north shore of Lake Superior and on to Port Hope on Lake Huron, then west along the south shore of Lake Erie and back to Detroit.

The Great Lakes Air Cruise was a bright spot in the Great Depression that was already deepening, and it showed that some people were looking to the future of air travel, which plays such a large part in our economy today. The cruise organizers offered to take passengers along for all or part of the 2600 mile trip for 15 cents a mile. Karl Reynolds was in charge of taking reservations from Door County residents. The fare for the entire trip was $250.

In August of 1930, it was announced by Door County’s chapter of the National Aeronautical Association that real progress was being made toward establishing an airport. The club received its charter on August 4, 1930, but apparently was discontinued for a new charter was issued on April 3, 1939. The location selected was the Frank Borchert farm, which was across the road from the present day Zahn’s Green Thumb fruit stand. Backers of the planned temporary airstrip included Sanford “Duke” Hanson, L. D. Smith, C. D. Brower, Bill Paul, Minor Dagnew, E. G. Bailey, the Scofield Company, Henry Fetzer, Jack Weitemann, Clark Bassett, Harry M. Jones, Ross F. Wright, A. B. Minor, Clyde M. Stephenson, F. A. “Banty” Shimmel, John M. Lawrence, Earl M. “Mitch” LaPlant, Cully B. Thayer, Art Moeller, W. E. Wagener, Frank Borchert, Allen MacMillin, A.W. Miller, Harry C. Lau, and George Paul.

The above list is given to show that there was wide support among the prominent business people of Sturgeon Bay for an airport. Since this proposal was made 71 years ago, all of the principals are deceased, Art Moeller having lived until just recently, well past his 90th year.

The March 17, 1933, Advocate carried a front page photo of a group of Door County airplane promoters; Karl S. Reynolds, Emil J. Hoslett, pilot Ed Hedeen from Racine, E. M. Valentine and John
Bertschinger. The occasion was the donation of the use of a plane for the use of Reynolds as president of the Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce by H. F. Johnson, president of the Johnson Wax Company. Reynolds was heading up the "On, Wisconsin" promotional drive. The plane landed at the Reynolds Cherryland private airport on Highway 78 (57.)

There was no Cherry Blossom Festival planned for 1933, but the Door County Chamber of Commerce didn't let Old Man Depression get it down. The group had printed 5000 maps of the peninsula to be distributed during the cherry bloom period. And Karl Reynolds had arranged for the Reynolds Orchard Tower to be open to the public, and cherry pie huts to be open in Garland Park (today the site of the Peterson Pool), and along the roadside.

Also, a three-place Curtiss Robin cabin ship with a 185 horsepower Challenger engine was scheduled to offer airplane rides over the cherry blossom area from the Reynolds Cherryland airport from Saturday through Memorial Day. The pilot was Arnold H. Peik, an aeronautical instructor at the Sheboygan vocational school.

The June 16, 1933, Advocate announced a milestone in Door County aviation history. In an editorial, the editor said, "To Claude Cornell, Washington Island, goes the honor of owning the first privately owned airplane in Door County. Several years ago a company was formed in Sturgeon Bay and purchased a plane for commercial purposes, but the venture did not prove a successful one and was short lived." (That was the one previously mentioned, the Miss Door County, purchased by E. G. Bailey and company, and broken up while trying to make an emergency landing on Green Island.)

The editorial went on to say that Claude Cornell had recently become a licensed pilot and had purchased a Stinson Jr. four place monoplane, which was the first small multi-passenger plane produced in the United States. It was equipped with a 125 horsepower air cooled, dual ignition Kinner engine, which enabled the plane to travel at speeds up to 125 miles per hour. It was painted black and gold.

The editor said, "Mr. Cornell has most appropriately named his plane, 'Washington Island.' Washington Island has developed more interest in airplane navigation than any other part of Door County and more planes visit it than all the rest of the county combined." He said pilots from Escanaba and other cities along the shoreline frequently landed at the good field on the Island.

Cornell was scheduled to enter the American Legion Upper Peninsula Air Classic to be held at the Menominee airport on July 2, 1933. The editor further praised Claude Cornell by saying, "He comes
from that hardy race of people who have made Washington Island known to almost every part of the United States, and who no doubt his name will be known among the noted fliers of the country.”

An Art Cermak photo shows Claude Cornell’s plane. But probably unknown to Cornell was that another Door County native had purchased the same model airplane, a Stinson Jr., and was to die tragically about a week after Cornell had purchased his.

The other purchaser of a Stinson Jr. was Dr. Victor Dewar (Dewarzegar), a native of the town of Gardner. He was born to the Alex Dewarzegars, who also were the parents of Mrs. H. V. (Pearl) Foshion and Mrs. LaBelle Arthur (later Van Beck.) Dr. Dewar (he changed his name for business purposes) was born on March 9, 1902, and he had attended Sturgeon Bay High School. He then attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and went on to earn his medical degree from Rush Medical College in Chicago in 1925. He completed his internship at a Denver hospital, where he fell in love with the West and the mountains.

But he also fell in love with a home town girl, Lucille Garot of Green Bay, the town to which his parents had moved. In 1925, Victor and Lucille were married, and Victor started a practice in Grand Junction, Colorado. They would fly back to Green Bay for visits with Victor’s new airplane, and sometimes to Door County to visit relatives, who included the Dewarzegars, DeBrouxes and Foshions.

The June 2, 1933, Advocate carried the tragic news of the Dewar’s sudden death. Flying in the mountains near East Portal, Colorado with another couple, their plane crashed into a mountainside and all were killed. The bodies of Victor and Lucille were transported to Green Bay for burial, where they will remain forever together in a Catholic cemetery in the outskirts of the city. The tombstone is easy to identify, for besides the traditional Christian crosses, it carries the symbol of a medical doctor as well as the wings of an aviator above their last name.

One of his relatives still has Dr. Dewar’s aviation helmet. His mother for years preached at the Spiritualist church in Gardner. She was never able to contact the spirit of her son, as members of what is now called the Church of Psychic Science attempt to do, by means of seances or “sittings,” as the members of the church call them.

Rose Dewarzegar told many people that on the same day, and perhaps at the same time, that Dr. Dewar died, the picture of him that had been hanging on her wall fell to the floor. She is said to have said, “What happened, my son, did you fall?” Shortly afterward, she was informed of the crash.
At any rate, Dr. Dewar was a true pioneer of Door County aviation, our first flying doctor, to be followed by a number of notable other flying doctors, including at least one veterinarian, Dr. William O. Wright.

An aviation event that no one that lived in Door County at the time can forget is the flight of the world's largest dirigible over the county in June of 1933.

The occasion was the test flight of the Macon. It was the sister ship of the ill-fated Akron, which had gone down over New Jersey. A member of the Door County Amateur Radio club, Arden Nelson, who now lives in Peshtigo, saw the Macon as it was being built in Akron, Ohio. Upon completion, it left for a 48 hour test cruise to Gary, Indiana, and Chicago, where WGN announcer Quinn Ryan described its flight. Listeners in Sturgeon Bay learned that it was headed up towards the Fox River Valley and Door County.

The coast guard sighted the Macon at the Canal Station at 10:30 on Tuesday morning, June 14. They watched her float gracefully northeasterward over the lake side of Door County for over an hour. It was at that point that many parents pointed out the dirigible to their children; they could see her well over to the east, a majestic envelope of gas floating through the sky. The next day, the Macon returned heading south.

In December of 1933, the Sturgeon Bay city council brought up the idea of building a municipal airport. Mayor Jim Martin appointed Henry Hanson, Chris Nelson and Ray Marshall to see what could be done about the purchase or rental of land for an airport. They were to find out what the cost of paving would be and what would have to be done to get the field ready for inspection.

Another article in the issue of the Advocate from which this story came told of an award given to Frank Martin, the World War I aviation observer mentioned before, for his promotion of Red Cross lifesaving work he'd done while a swimming coach in Sturgeon Bay.

Nothing was found of aviation progress in 1934, but in March of 1935, Wally Arntzen, a pilot from Escanaba, aided in the search for the six Washington Island young men who went down in Death's Door. They were returning from a basketball game and went through the ice and all drowned.

Evidently the Cherryland airport on the Reynolds property continued to be used, for a big Sikorsky amphibian landed there in June of 1935. H. F. Johnson of Racine's Johnson Wax Company landed there, flown in by two of his pilots. They were invited by Karl S. Reynolds. This plane burned 40 gallons of gas an hour, but Johnson
could afford it, at ten cents a gallon. Johnson Wax was selling well, thanks to a good product, and the promotions by Marion and Jim Jordan on the Fibber McGee and Molly radio show.

In August of 1935, a big air show was put on at the Reynolds Cherryland airport. A stunt flying show was put on by a group of fliers from Curtiss Wright Field in Milwaukee. On the program was Henry Salmon, a stunt pilot from Detroit. He did parachute jumps in which he fell 8000 feet before pulling the rip cord to open the parachute. Other stunts performed were dog fights and flying upside down. Six or seven planes participated.

Airplane rides were offered in a 12-passenger Ford Trimotor, the only type of plane President Calvin Coolidge ever flew in, and of course, Henry Ford’s favorite. The plane weighed 17,000 pounds, and the trip consisted of rides to the tip of the peninsula along the Green Bay shoreline. The pilot was Col. E. H. “Buck” Leighton, a veteran air mail pilot. He was commander of the Mexican federal air forces in the Mexican revolution in 1912. The opposing general was Pancho Villa.

Another group of airplanes visited the county before the air show was put on, on August 12. Six navy planes flew in circles over the coast guard canal station. They were said to be taking part in naval maneuvers in the vicinity of Milwaukee and the Great Lakes. It’s good they were getting some practice. The aerial bombardment of Pearl Harbor was only six years away.

The stunt flying show on August 12, 1935, was a big success. “Buck” Leighton did loops, flew upside down, and glided with his motor shut off. Henry Salmon stepped off the wing of his plane at 2,800 feet and although he was blown by high winds, he landed at the north edge of the field, landing roughly but only scratching his face.

Once again, as reported in the May 5, 1936 Advocate, Washington Island scored a first in Door County aviation. “Air Service for Island Started,” read the caption of the story.

The Island Lions Club had sold 300 fares to help pilot Wally Arntzen from Escanaba get an air service from the Island to Green Bay started. The flights were scheduled for Saturdays, to bring passengers to and from Green Bay for business and pleasure purposes. The Islanders again were seeking relief from their “splendid isolation.”

As mentioned earlier, Wally Arntzen had previously endeared himself to Washington Island. He had flown several mercy missions. He had flown a patient with pneumonia to a Green Bay hospital, rushed a boy to an Escanaba hospital when he was shot in the stomach and helped in the search for the six young men who had gone through the ice coming home across the ice after a basketball game.
From the article we learn more about Arntzen's life. He'd learned to fly at Brooks Field in San Antonio, Texas, in 1926. He returned to Escanaba with a Canuck training ship in which he did stunt flying at county fairs. He'd purchased a Stinson four-passenger plane for his flying service, probably a Stinson Jr. Arntzen had promoted the Upper Peninsula Airways, Inc., a company which built a private field at Escanaba, and conducted a flying school and air transportation service of which he was the chief pilot and instructor.

1937 began with the news that Earl F. Spencer of Chicago, president of the Stromberg Electric Company of Chicago and an Ephraim summer resident had died in a plane crash. He had died in a California mishap along with the famous explorer, Martin Johnson. Martin Johnson's widow later wrote a book, "I married Adventure," a narrative about their explorations in Africa. The Spencers were related to a guest they shared quarters with at the Anderson Hotel, Wallis Warfield Simpson. She later married the Duke of Windsor, the former King Edward VIII, who gave up his throne to marry "The woman I love."

During 1937, times were getting better, and the interest in aviation in Door County was to see a rebirth.

**1939 SAW BEGINNING OF NEW CHERRYLAND AIRPORT**

By March of 1939, 16 possible sites for a new airport had been examined by the airport committee of the county board, which included Arthur H. Anderson, S. Telfer and Cyril Virlee. Dr. Dan Dorchester, president of the local National Aeronautical Association club, took these men, along with county board chairman Harry Schuyler, on a tour of the sites. At a meeting of the club on the evening of March 27, 1939, the county board members and club members narrowed the sites down to three. One of the sites was to be surveyed and the results turned over to the Civil Aeronautics Association. The C.A.A. would turn in specifications to the county board for consideration in May.

Back on November 18, 1938, county board records show that a group of citizens had petitioned the board to purchase a site for a county airport; get an option on additional property for the expansion of such airport; and authorize by resolution the sponsorship of a WPA project for the development of such an airport. Suggestions for the airport at that time were: the Reynolds tract on Highway 57, Town of Sevastopol; the Sidney R. Brown estate farm on Highway 42, Town of Sevastopol; and the Frank Conrad farm in the Town of Nasewaupee,
on County Trunk C. Later the DeWitt farm on County Trunk C was also considered.

During the last weekend of March 1939, the local aviation club met at the Oriole restaurant with the county board aviation committee. As an outcome of the meeting, Bob Krauss started a model airplane club. Bob was then the head of the local N.A.A. chapter junior activities committee. The Scofield hardware company, located where the Harmann photograph studio is today, offered the use of one of its rear rooms for a model airplane club meeting.

“All persons from 10 to 60 who are interested in building model planes from the rubber band to gas motor type are invited to go to the Scofield Company workshop (rear entrance) this evening to discuss forming a model airplane club,” the Advocate article read. “Scofields has offered the use of its shop to the organization on alternate Friday and Saturday nights.”

The article continued to say that an aim of the club was to hold a model airplane meet in June. Such meets had already become popular in other parts of the country; and many Door County boys and girls had already gotten into the hobby of building model airplanes.

Building them probably gave some good background to those who would be enlisting in the army air corps in a couple of years, to fight the Axis powers in World War II. Some of the young model builders enjoyed building a plane, then taking a match to it and seeing it go down in flames. Soon they would see the real thing, only it would be a German or Japanese plane, or one of their own, going down in flames.

On April 3, 1939, the local chapter of the National Aeronautical Association received its new charter, presented at the Palm Garden to Dr. Dan Dorchester by Archie Towle of Wausau. Towle was the state governor of the N.A.A. In his remarks to the group, Towle said that no town could afford to not have an airport, especially an area like Door County. In accepting the charter, Dr. Dorchester said the club had a responsibility in carrying out its part in developing aviation and securing an airport in Door County.

Thirty-three men became charter members that night, and it is important to list their names to show the wide support the aviation project had, they were: Dr. Dan Dorchester, Edwin L. Allie, Francis R. Stradling, William H. Edwards, Dr. R. J. Gordon, C. E. Teske, Eugene Larsen, George R. Hislop, Robert T. Krauss, Frank Kellner Jr., Stanton Greisen, Donald R. McLaughlin, Jules Parmentier, William J. Feuerstein Jr., Elmer Bohn, Hugh Maclean (British World War I pilot), Walter J. Thenell, Harvey Arveson, John J. Draeb, Dr. E. C. Farmer,

If one knows anything about the history of Door County, they would recognize that these were leaders, people who got things done. Edwards and Farmer had already recruited 35 additional club members, bringing the total to 68.

Dr. Dorchester was the toastmaster at that meeting, and he urged all to promote the airport idea, hoping the county board would vote to establish one at their May meeting. At the end of the meeting, Mayor Donald W. Reynolds made a few remarks favoring the promotion of aviation. He said he hoped the time would come when Sturgeon Bay could have air mail which he said was most essential to the business interests of the community.

But before the county board could meet, Washington Island got one up on the mainland. At the annual town meeting on April 4, 1939, the Island voted to buy the airport that had been in operation since 1928 from the locally owned stock company, to prevent it from being plowed up into crop land. The Islanders were not about to give up this marvelous new connection to the rest of the world.

Dr. Dan Dorchester, president of the local N.A.A. club, Chester Teske, the secretary, and William Feuerstein, came back with a glowing report about the state convention of the N.A.A. in Clintonville at the end of April 1939. The state officers praised the club for having the largest membership in the state and a very active one.

The group reported on the convention at the April 24 meeting of the club at the Mill. Said the Advocate reporter, “Dr. Dan’s enthusiasm over the development of aviation is taking hold in Wisconsin, and his excellent leadership in N.A.A. work placed him in the spotlight at the Clintonville event, drawing many favorable comments. Had Door County had an approved airport, he could have landed the fall convention and had this city accepted as a stop on the coming air show.”

The club voted to work with the chamber of commerce in the handling of the air show planned for May 20-21 in connection with the Cherry Blossom Festival. Earl M. “Mitch” LaPlant was present to represent the chamber of commerce.

Rolfe Olsen flew to the meeting from Escanaba and stayed over until Wednesday night so he could give flying lessons. He now had 15 beginning students, as well as a number of advanced students he’d
trained before. Among the new students were William Feuerstein Jr. and Jules Parmentier.

The airport proponents were to be disappointed by the action of the May 1939, county board meeting. A resolution seeking the immediate purchase of the DeWitt farm near the west entrance to Potawatomi State Park was voted down by a vote of 11 to 8. The N.A.A. committee said the farm met all the qualifications for a good airport; it was level in all directions, had good drainage and was large enough to accommodate large aircraft. The committee also pointed out that matching federal money at a ratio of 10-1 was available. It could be purchased for $7500, with $1500 down and payments of $500 a year. County board members who opposed the purchase said that such a deal should be reserved for the November meeting, since the county still had a financial problem in the collection of delinquent taxes.

The Washington Island airport backers also were disappointed. The board declined to act on a request for $1500 to make its airport jointly county and town owned.

The backers of the Cherryland Airport decided they would wait no longer. The N.A.A. club, after hearing the county board decision, decided to go ahead and sign a lease for the DeWitt farm and put it in shape for an airport using the funds of members. They made plans to get it into shape for use in the summer of 1939.

These people had faith in Door County and realized that times were getting better. After all, the Smith shipyard was beginning to get contracts for defense work; the Door County Museum was to be dedicated in that month and Governor Heil would be here for the festivities. Then, too, there’d be a big Cherry Blossom festival.

May 1939, also brought the news that Ted Bellak of the Soaring Association of Frankfort, Michigan, would attempt a glider flight across Lake Michigan from the new Cherryland Airport. The Door County Chamber of Commerce, Earl “Mitch” LaPlant, president, had received an inquiry from the association to see if the chamber would take care of local arrangements. “Mitch” replied in the affirmative with enthusiasm. The date of the event was set for either July 17 or 18.

The glider was to be towed to a height of 15,000 feet and then cut loose from the German Minimosa plane. The gliding hobby was growing in the U. S. and was extremely popular in Europe. A few years later, in 1944, gliders were used in the Normandy invasion, (with a minimum amount of success, and great loss of life and equipment).

The chamber of commerce and the N.A.A. looked on this gliding feat as a great opportunity to publicize the new airport and gain support for its eventual absorption by the county.
Preceding this stunt, the N.A.A. made arrangements to have a man buried alive at the new airport from Blossom Sunday, May 21, until Memorial Day, 10 days later. On Saturday and Sunday, May 20-21, it was arranged for the American Air Shows Association to put on an air show, and offer rides for a “reasonable rate” during the ten days while “Dare Devil McCann” was underground. The public, for a small fee, would be able to view McCann underground by means of a pipe leading to his casket.

The burial was to be supervised by the Stoneman Funeral Home, then McCann would be dug up at the end of the ten days, and the casket taken to the Nautical Inn, where it would be opened. N.A.A. members worked day and night to get the field ready for these promotional events.

McCann consented to an interview with the Advocate prior to being buried, and said that he’d like to recruit a few boys to stand in for him in some of the many shows he’d scheduled. The tent covering his “grave” at the airport was open day and night for viewers, and on the last day, Saturday, youngsters were allowed to view him at half price.

The N.A.A., meanwhile, had launched a fund drive in which the club sold $1.00 a square foot certificates toward the purchase of the DeWitt property. The Sawyer Commercial Club offered to pay for the survey to be sent to the government aeronautical officials to get approval for the contemplated airport improvements. Dr. E. J. Konop, president, alderman John Severson and Felix DeBroux were spearheading this action.

Bad weather limited the number of planes that came to Cherryland Airport for the May 20-21 event. But the breakfast planned for the 21st for the fifty fliers of the Wisconsin Civil Air Corps was rescheduled as a luncheon on Memorial Day, the following weekend, Dr. Dan Dorchester announced. An air show lasting two and a half hours was planned by the N.A.A. chapter, with three parachute jumps a featured event. Passenger flights had taken place for the past week, giving the public a chance to view the cherry blossoms from the air.

During that eventful month of May, 1939, the eighth grade rural school graduating classes of Door County received their diplomas at Sturgeon Bay High School and were treated to a movie, Jane Eyre, in the school auditorium. And Door County’s last hermit, George Bergerson, left his Monument Point cabin to live with the Daubner family, where, as Aaron Daubner says, “He died because the pancakes were too rich.”

News reached Sturgeon Bay that Ted Bellak, the young man from Newark, New Jersey, who intended to fly his glider across Lake
Michigan from Cherryland airport, would arrive a week earlier than expected. On Saturday, June 10, 1939, Bellak would arrive by car ferry in either Kewaunee or Manitowoc, with his glider packed in boxes. Charles Wood of Eau Claire would help him assemble the machine, along with members of the local N.A.A. club.

Cass Szmmagha from the Wayne County airport would tow the glider to a height of 18,000 feet with a specially equipped plane. Then, the glider would be cut loose, and if the wind currents were right, it would be carried westerly to Frankfort, Michigan. Bellak would carry instruments to measure air pressure, humidity and temperature. He'd carry oxygen to use in the rarified atmosphere.

Reporters from the big papers and from radio stations were expected to cover the flight, which was sponsored by the Frankfort Glider Club, the Soaring Society of America and the Blue Hill Observatory of Harvard University. In 1997, Bellak wrote a book about his experiences in flying and sent a copy to former Door County Advocate editor, Chan Harris, who witnessed the glider flight as an 11-year old boy. Art Cermak, as well as Herb Reynolds and Wilmer Schroeder, took a number of photos of the glider. The news reel cameras rolled as well, to provide the movie—going public with what television provides today.

The war in Europe had already begun in September, 1939, and work had begun on the first of many P.C. (patrol craft) boats at the L. D. Smith shipyard. But in October 1939, the thoughts of the N.A.A. members were directed to an important local event, the erection of the first hangar at the new Cherryland Airport.

Bill Feuerstein, secretary of the club, and flying instructor and airport manager Rolfe Olsen went to Kewaunee to buy a large metal building that could house three airplanes. During the week of October 27, the club drove four trucks to Kewaunee, took the building apart, and transported the pieces back to Cherryland Airport. On Sunday, October 29, all the members converged on the airport and put the building back together.

This first hangar on the airport grounds was 42 x 44 feet, and had four sliding doors 15 feet high. Attached to it was the airport service office, which was heated and equipped with a telephone and living conveniences for the caretaker.

The Advocate quotes the records of the N.A.A. (which at this point, have not yet been uncovered) as listing these people and companies as donating trucks and services to make the erection of the hangar possible: Lester Nebel, the Roen Steamship Company, Martin Orchards, Inc., Matt Propsom, John Conlon, Dr. T. C. West, Rolfe
Olsen, Seraphin DeWitt, Henry Overbeck, Walter Thenell, John Purves, Chester Teske, Bill Feuerstein and Bob Krauss.

At this point, the airport had a lighted wind cone, lighted runways, and a few aerial markings. More improvements were planned if the airport was purchased by either the city or county; Federal aid at a rate of 10-1 was available, but only if the airport was publicly owned, according to the Civil Aeronautics Authority.

On October 17, 1939, the Sturgeon Bay city council voted unanimously to urge the county board to buy the airport property. The council members felt that, since the city paid over 31% of the county taxes, it should be the county that would buy the airport. The proposal was to buy the airport, plus a little more land to lengthen the east-west and diagonal runway to Class A specifications. Also, $1500 was asked for toward purchase of the Washington Island airport, and $500 toward miscellaneous expenses incurred in federal development of both sites. The proposal was presented by Dr. Dan Dorchester, and supported on the floor by Mayor D. W. Reynolds and Walter Thenell. The matter was voted on by secret ballot by the county board, and the vote was deadlocked by a 10-10 vote.

The vote was a disappointment to the supporters of the airport, but they reasoned that it would be only a matter of time before they would be successful in reaching their goal. The Advocate editor wrote as follows: “The most important issue in which the board seemed to be deadlocked was financing the proposed airport. Many of the members did not believe that the county was financially able to enter into such an obligation at the present time, although sentiment was evenly divided according to the test vote taken.

“Members of the N.A.A. made a gallant fight to secure an appropriation sufficient to purchase the land for the airport which they have developed the past year, but it appeared future cost of development was greater than the board cared to enter into at the present time.

“Air service is almost in its infancy, and the fact that Door County will have to wait until sometime in the future to secure its airport is not a severe blow to the county’s development, and when it is established it will be at a time when the county is better able to finance it.”

It is not known who wrote that editorial; it doesn’t sound like Sumner Harris, because he was always forward-looking. Certainly, the editorial must have raised the hackles of the airport supporters, like young Jules “Bud” Parmentier who traveled to Escanaba to take his pilot’s license examination in October of 1939. He trained under the
watchful eye of Rolfe Olsen, who was of much help in getting the new Cherryland Airport into operation. Later, Bud and Frank “Sonny” Cowles would run the airport in Green Bay.

1939 was, all in all, a big year in aviation for Door County, thanks to the leadership of the N. A. A. and those who could see into the future of aviation.
Wreckage of Wally Arntzen’s Canuck OX5
after it crashed in 1926 or 1927.
*Photo: Courtesy of Henry Olsen*

A Ryan Brougham was used to take up passengers at the Reynolds Cherryland Airport during the Cherry Blossom Festival of 1929.
*Photo: Courtesy of Door County Historical Museum*

(Gov. Kohler came in alone with the Ryan. Roger Schroeder shook hands with him at LaSalle Park.)
A Canuck OX5 (Canadian Version of the Curtiss-Wright JN4). The airplane was owned by Escanaba native Wally Arntzen, who trained many Door County pilots.

Photo: Courtesy of Henry Olsen

World War I veterans being entertained at the Reynolds Cherryland Airport during the 1929 Cherry Blossom Festival.

Photo: Courtesy of Door County Historical Museum
Lt. Lester Maitland in Egg Harbor in 1928.
Photo: Courtesy of Bruce Oram

Dr. Victor Dewar and his wife Lucille with Victor's Stinson Jr. 1933
Photo: Courtesy of Glennie DeBroux
CHARTER OF THE
STURGEON BAY CHAPTER, STURGEON BAY, WISCONSIN

Whereas the City of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, on this day has twenty-five members, and
Whereas the following patriotic citizens, members in good standing of the
National Aeronautic Association of U.S.A.

C.E. Baikie
Clark R. Bassett
Frank Borcherdt
C.D. Brower, Jr.
Minor Daggiano
Henry Felger
Sanford Hanson
Harry R. Jones

Earl M. LaPlant
Harry C. Law
John M. Lawrence
A.B. Minor
A.W. Miller
Allen MacMullen
Arthur R. Moeller
George F. Paul
William Paul

Seaford Co.
E.A. Schmitt
J.L. Smith
C.M. Stokbom
Clyde C. Thayer
W.H. Wagner
J.C. Weidemann
Ross F. Wright

realizing the importance of furthering Aeronautics both locally and nationally
have made application for, and assumed the duty of forming a chapter.

This Charter Witnesseth that on the fourth day of August
in the year 1930, the above-named members are authorized to form the
Sturgeon Bay Chapter of the Association.

Issued at Washington, D.C.

National Aeronautic Association of U.S.A.

A charter was issued on August 4, 1930,
for a Sturgeon Bay Charter of the National Aeronautics Association,
but not much aviation activity took place in Door County
until a new charter was issued in 1937.

Photo: Courtesy of Door County Historical Museum
August 18, 1930
The Great Lakes Air Cruise stops at the Door County Country Club.
(The Door County News called it the Hotel Commodore.)
*Photo: Courtesy of the Door County Historical Museum*
Stinson Jr., owned by Claude Cornell.
In 1933 he was the first private individual
in Door County to buy an airplane.

Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak

Hangar and plane at Reynolds Cherryland Airport.
-About 1937-

Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak
Badger Flying School attracts World War I veterans at the Reynolds Cherryland Airport in the 1930s.

Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder (Wilmer Schroeder photo)
Wally Arntzen and the Stinson Jr.
he used for charter service to
Washington Island and Sturgeon Bay in 1936.
Photo: Courtesy of Henry Olsen
Loading a ton of lake trout into Hadden's fish plane which would head for St. Louis, Missouri. Chester Ostram Sr. is on the left.

Photo: Courtesy of Chester Ostram Jr.
Ted Bellak’s glider at the Cherryland Airport.
He flew this glider across Lake Michigan in June, 1939.

Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak

The Waco that lifted Ted Bellak’s glider
into the air June 1939.

Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak
Rolfe Olsen and his Taylorcraft

Photo: Courtesy Roger Schroeder (Wilmer Schroeder photo)
Bob Krauss, who started a model airplane club in Sturgeon Bay in 1939 was a key person in getting the new Cherryland Airport started.

*Photo: Courtesy of John Enigl, this 1996 photo*
Badger Flying School attracts World War I veterans at the Reynolds Cherryland Airport in the 1930s.

Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder (Wilmer Schroeder photo)
Wally Arntzen and the Stinson Jr.
he used for charter service to
Washington Island and Sturgeon Bay in 1936.

Photo: Courtesy of Henry Olsen
Loading a ton of lake trout into Hadden's fish plane which would head for St. Louis, Missouri. Chester Ostram Sr. is on the left.

*Photo: Courtesy of Chester Ostram Jr.*
Ted Bellak’s glider at the Cherryland Airport.
He flew this glider across Lake Michigan in June, 1939.

*Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak*

The Waco that lifted Ted Bellak’s glider into the air June 1939.

*Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak*
Rolfe Olsen lowers the hood on Ted Bellak’s "Dove of Peace" glider, with cherry packer Mike Miller behind him. June 1939

*Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder (Wilmer Schroeder photo)*

Karl Reynolds’ first airplane, a Piper J4, 1939

*Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak*
Local N. A. A. chapter meeting at the Mill in the fall of 1939.

*Photo: Courtesy of the Door County Historical Museum*

"Seadrome" seaplane from the Milwaukee Marine Terminal at the Peterson Boat Works dock in 1939.

*Photo: Courtesy of Col. Ben Logerquist (Clarence Kostka photo)*
Clarence Kostka, Sturgeon Bay, learned to fly in this Waco 10.

Photo: Courtesy of Col. Ben Logerquist

A Waco 10 trainer, owner unknown and persons not identified.

Photo: Courtesy of Colleen Eicher
“Bow” Augustine helps load a shipment of cherries into Jack Hadden’s airplane, in May 1940. Inside plane: Chester Ostram Sr.

Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder (Wilmer Schroeder photo)
Cherryland Airport in 1940, shortly after hangar was put up.

Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder (Wilmer Schroeder photo)
John J. Draeb with his three passenger Fairchild cabin monoplane in June 1940. Purchased in August 1938, it was the first new airplane to be purchased by a local party in several years. The jeweler had been a part owner of the "Miss Door County" in 1928.  

Photo: Courtesy of Jay Draeb Bass
Jack Hadden lands at St. Louis
with a load of cherries. June 24, 1940

Photo: Courtesy of Door County Historical Museum
(St. Louis Post Dispatch Photo)
The Stinson Trimotor which took passengers up from the new Cherryland Airport to celebrate the Cherry Blossom Festival of May 24-26, 1940.

*Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak*

Capt. Howard Logerquist landed this Martin B10 bomber at Cherryland Airport on an inspection tour in May 1941.

*Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak*
Present at the reopening of Cherryland Airport on June 2, 1942.
Left to right:
Chester Teske, assistant manager and clearance officer;
Dorothy Cretney, airport manager and clearance officer;
J. P. Hughes, aeronautical inspector, Milwaukee office, C.A.A.;
Dr. D. E. Dorchester, flight commander of Sturgeon Bay Wing of C.A.P.
Photo: Courtesy of Door County Historical Museum (Wilmer Schroeder photo)
Capt. Bob Ferguson and Dr. Dan Dorchester at Cherryland Airport on September 28, 1943 with a P-47 Thunderbolt. He'd recently won the Distinguished Flying Cross for action against the Japanese at bomb-ridden Henderson Field on Guadalcanal.

Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder (Wilmer Schroeder photo)
Lt. Harold Kraus, who landed an Army Air Corps plane at Cherryland Airport in 1943, on a side trip to Door County.

Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder (Wilton Schroeder photo)
Rolfe Olsen’s Taylorcraft, in which Art Cermak took flying lessons. 1943

Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak

Vernon Delair leaving his B-17 while in the Army Air Corps in 1944.

Photo: Courtesy of Vernon Delair
A group of French soldiers, who were taught to fly by Jules "Bud" Parmentier during World War II.

Photo: Courtesy of Jules "Bud" Parmentier
Russell Austad, chairman of
Door County Boards Aviation Committee.

Photo: Courtesy of Dan Austad (Austad family photo)
George Meredith, manager of Door County Airport. 1944-1971

Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder
Frigid Fun Flight in one of first years-1946, 1947 or 1948.

*Photo: Courtesy of Tom Reynolds* (Herb Reynolds photo)

Art MacMillin, member of U.S. Air Force Reserve. WW II pilot trainer. Active in running the Frigid Fun Flight.

*Photo: Courtesy of John Enigl* (February 2001 photo)
Four-Place Piper Pacer sold to Felix DeBroux after WW II by Jules "Bud" Parmentier of Green Bay Aviation.

*Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder*
Frank Harden, Martin Orchard employee, left, supervises a pilot in the art of cherry picking.

Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder (Wilmer Schroeder photo)
Wisconsin Central Airlines demonstration ride on October 17, 1947. Left to right: Howard "Gabby" Shaw, Charles O. Hansen, Dan Austad, Felix DeBroux, Mrs. Enar Ahstrom and son, Dr. Dan Dorchester, Cyril Virlee, Russell Austad, Bill Austad, Leo Stoneman and Karl S. Reynolds. Photo: Courtesy of Dan Austad (Door County Advocate photo by Chuck Krause)
Art Cermak, right, with H. O. Wright, pilot for
Clarence Maedke, who sold Luscombe airplanes.
Wright gave demonstrations in back of where
Evenson's Laundry is now. Plane crashed about 1947
*Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak*

Felix DeBroux and Art Cermak go through the ice
at Idlewild. Both men only got a good dunking,
and Fritz Reynolds managed to get the plane ashore.
Plane is a four-place Piper Pacer. December 22, 1947
*Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak*
Karl S. Reynolds wearing his Civil Air Patrol uniform.

Photo: Courtesy of Tom Reynolds (Herb Reynolds photo)

Frigid Fun Flight 1946

Photo: Courtesy of Tom Reynolds (Herb Reynolds photo)
Cherryland Airport, about 1948.
Note additional hangars.
*Photo: Courtesy of Art Cermak*

Lougee Stedman, manager of the
Fruit Growers Cooperative, 1946-1948.
Died in plane crash December 4, 1948,
along with Karls S. Reynolds and
Ervin L. Kossow.
*Photo: Courtesy of Door County Historical Museum*
Dr. Dan Dorchester and his
Aeronca Pacer 125.
*Photo: Courtesy of Tom Reynolds (Herb Reynolds photo)*

Karl S. Reynolds and family
with his Beechcraft Bonanza in 1946.
*Photo: Courtesy of Tom Reynolds (Herb Reynolds photo)*
The snowshoeing nurse takes to the air.
Ruth Brye, county nurse and Dr. Dan E. Dorchester, the flying doctor.

Photo: Courtesy of Roger Schroeder (Wilmer Schroeder photo)
Jeff Norland, Einar Evenson and Larry Huber with Einar's latest radio controlled model airplane in Einar's basement in 1987. 
*Photo: Courtesy of John Enigl*

Larry Huber with his electric airplane model in a display at Cherry Point Mall by the Bay Flyers Model Club. 
*Photo: Courtesy of John Enigl*
THEY WANTED WINGS
CHAPTER FOUR
1940-1945

COUNTY AIRPORT BECAME REALITY IN 1940s

On February 16, 1940, Door County saw the use of an airplane in a lifesaving situation. Aussie Oleson and his brother, Henry, were cutting down trees on Henry’s farm on Washington Island when a tree fell on Aussie, breaking two of his vertebrae, a rib and his ankle. Aided by his brother, he walked over a half mile to his home. Pilot Wally Arntzen from Escanaba was called, and Oleson was transported to the hospital there, where he was expected to stay for three months to recover.

The Advocate carried a front page story which sounds as if it came from the pen of Sumner Harris: “Thus again the need of airplane service between Washington Island and the mainland was demonstrated. The actual flying time between Washington Island and Escanaba is between 15 and 25 minutes, contrasted with the usual long time required to get a patient to Sturgeon Bay via boat and ambulance.

“In this case, perhaps the difference in time did not necessarily mean the saving of a life, but time often counts when a person is suffering with a broken back.” The story went on to say that in the winter, a plane could land on Detroit Harbor with skis, but Islanders were worrying about what would happen if the airport was plowed up, because of the lack of funds to maintain it.

In March 1940, it was announced that Jack Hadden, the “Flying Fish Peddler,” who concocted a plan to fly fish from Door County to St. Louis, was going to replace the plane he cracked up in Decatur, Illinois, with a new one. Hard luck seemed to pursue Hadden; in November, 1939, the plane he had just completed for the fish flights burned up in a hangar in St. Louis. Then, evidently, he’d cracked up another plane intended for the venture.

Records have yet to be found to prove Hadden actually shipped some fish by the first plane. The only evidence uncovered so far is a photograph brought in by Chester Ostram Jr. which shows Chester Ostram Sr. loading fish boxes into what seems like an older plane which looks like a Stinson Jr. or other corrugated metal sided plane.

In April 1940, Dr. Dan Dorchester arrived home from St. Louis where he had visited relatives and brought further news. Hadden would christen a new plane, the “City of Sturgeon Bay,” to carry fish to St. Louis and it would be the largest single engine plane to land in Door County.
The big, new yellow plane had attracted about 4000 spectators at the St. Louis airport, Dr. Dorchester said. It was fitted with a 575 horsepower engine, and the only reason it had not become a TWA airliner was that the federal authorities had ruled that new airliners had to be two-engine jobs. Because of that new rule, Hadden got a very good deal on the ship. Also, he was repairing the plane he’d used on his initial fish run from Cherryland Airport.

The new plane could carry 3300 pounds of fish, the previous one 1700 pounds. Dorchester was given a ride in Hadden’s new plane while in St. Louis. It would require a longer runway, which Hadden had contracted with the Door County Highway Department to construct. The new runway would extend the runway to 4000 feet. Hadden had planned to take an option on the airport property, since the county board turned down its purchase, but his recent crash had put those plans on hold.

The new plane arrived at Cherryland Airport on Sunday, April 21, 1940, and it impressed many people with its size. One could reach only half way up its side. The christening of the “City of Sturgeon Bay” was scheduled for Sunday, April 28, at 2 p.m., with Mayor D. W. Reynolds doing the honors and Mrs. Dan Dorchester breaking the bottle. The christening went off as planned, and an Advocate photo showed Hadden along with Dr. Dan Dorchester, in front of the new plane.

The shipping of the first load of fish had to wait for the runway to be lengthened, the work being contracted out to Russell Bieri and the county highway department.

For the Cherry Blossom Festival of May 24-26, another airplane promotional event was planned. A big Stinson Trimotor, the largest plane to land at Cherryland Airport up to that time, was scheduled to give rides, under the auspices of Don Nicholas and Lloyd Beach of the West Brothers of Appleton. Elwynn West was scheduled to be the pilot. He was Wisconsin’s oldest commercial pilot, having been licensed for 22 years.

The Stinson, with its three Lycoming engines, and a gross weight of four and a half tons, could carry 12 passengers. It was equipped for blind and night flying, hydraulic brakes and other safety equipment. It is said that it was built for Henry Ford (whose famous trimotors were getting outdated) and purchased by the Wests in 1937. Many other planes were expected for the celebration, and a fleet of planes from the Glenview, Illinois naval base was to come.

Dr. Dorchester, Chester Teske, Earlin Smith and Bob Krauss had promoted the event at the Wausau meeting of the N. A. A. Meanwhile,
there was encouraging news in the matter of the county taking over the airport. The federal government had announced a plan to train 10,000 pilots and initiate a program to improve local airfields to aid in the training. Martin Torkelson, the state planning engineer, said at the Wausau meeting that 190 new airports would be created in Wisconsin, in addition to the 36 that existed at the time.

The Advocate article said, “Under county ownership, the field here would gain first consideration for governmental aid and possible establishment of an enlarged flying school, the local N.A.A. group learned. Rolfe Olsen, the local flying instructor, has taken an examination for renewal of his certificate in anticipation of greater demand for his services.”

Unfortunately, the festivities didn’t take place on the weekend planned because of bad weather. Only a half dozen planes showed up. But Dr. Dorchester announced that plans had been made for the following weekend to have a breakfast at Hanson’s Bay Shore Inn for the N.A.A. fliers.

Even though the navy planes didn’t show up, the West Brothers brought up their big Stinson Trimotor and two Wacos, and took many people for a flight over Door County. The passengers could only get a glimpse now and then through the clouds, of the cherry orchards in bloom, but they enjoyed what for many of them was their first airplane flight.

The Cherry Blossom Festival went on as planned, with Joanne Volquarts being crowned queen by Mayor Carl F. Zeidler of Milwaukee. Zeidler later entered the military service in World War II, was killed in action, and his brother Frank, who is still living, in the year 2000, replaced him as mayor.

Airport enthusiast Karl S. Reynolds was tied up that weekend; he and his wife were hosting Judge William M. Rutzen of Chicago, the man who judged the Cherry Blossom Queen contest.

That week, Wilmer C. Schroeder took a photograph of another first in Door County in which Mr. Hadden, the “Flying Fish Peddler” was involved. He took a load of crates of cherries for Fruit Growers Cooperative plant superintendent Charles “Bow” Augustine to St. Louis. Hadden had the name of the company printed on the side of his plane.

The same week that the Episcopal parsonage in Jacksonport burned, and Oscar Wagner’s brother, Arnold, and Peter Poh, died in separate car accidents, the Advocate carried a story about the thrilling air show the navy put on at the Cherryland airport.
“With their 450 horsepower engines roaring as they zoomed earthward to look things over,” said the Advocate writer, two fast planes of the U. S. Naval air force base in Glenview, Illinois, made a blossom time visit to Cherryland Airport Sunday morning.” The writer, probably Sumner Harris, said their exhibition showed the navy should be well prepared for defense if there were enough of them. 18 months later Harris would break the news that Jacksonport’s George Loritz, of the army air corps, had been killed in an attack on Clark Field at Manila on the first day of World War II. The commander at Clark Field, by the way, was the daring aviator, Lester Maitland, who landed at Egg Harbor in 1928, the year after he piloted the first plane to fly from San Francisco to Honolulu.

The navy flight leader expressed surprise that Door County had such a well-prepared field, and all built by the N.A.A. club members at that. Don Nichols, pilot of the West Brothers plane, which had taken more than 1300 passengers up during the past two weeks from Cherryland Airport, added gloomily that he couldn’t see how an airport of such size could be continued privately.

With war already going on in Europe, the United States was already bolstering its defense effort in the middle of 1940. The personnel officer at Chanute Field in Rantoul, Illinois, sent a letter to the Advocate appealing to young unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 35 to join the Army Air Corps or enroll in private citizens flying courses. The Army Air Corps offered free training in many other aspects of aviation to those who enlisted for a three-year period.

The Cherryland Airport already was conducting free flying courses under the tutelage of Rolfe Olsen and auspices of the Civilian Aeronautics Authority, but, because it didn’t have runways running in eight directions for a minimum of 2500 feet, it didn’t fit the federal specifications. One runway was 4000 feet long; it was speculated that federal requirements might be relaxed as the need for more fliers developed.

The Advocate editor expressed interest in a request by Adj. General Ralph Immel in Washington for communities to form National Guard Air Squadrons. The editor said that these units gave people a chance to join without leaving their jobs, and help build up the national defense efforts.

At this time, June of 1940, Rolfe Olsen was training people to “Travel by Air,” in Advocate advertisements. He offered charter trips and student instruction. (Olsen’s first name is spelled “Rolfe” and “Rolf” in various places in the paper. The ad reads “Rolfe Olsen.”)
Apparently Olsen went to Marquette, Michigan, to give flying courses during the winter of 1941, for a March 7, 1941, Advocate article announced that he had returned to Cherryland Airport the week before. He was splitting his time between Marquette and Sturgeon Bay, giving lessons two days a week here and the rest of the week at Marquette. He was flying, not from Cherryland Airport, but from Sawyer with skis replacing the wheels on his plane. Some of his students were William Edwards, Paul Dexheimer, Orson May, and Art Cermak, who lives on the north end of the runway at Cherryland Airport. Art has been of inestimable help in writing this history, and has supplied many of the photographs.

Dr. Dan Dorchester had begun using his plane in his medical journeys soon after getting his pilot’s license four years before, and the March 21, 1941 Advocate reported how he happened to add a new mode of transportation to the record of county nurse, Ruth Brye.

Of Norwegian heritage, Miss Brye had used snowshoes to perform her duties after a big blizzard. This time, she had to travel to Washington Island for an immunization and inoculation program. To complicate matters, the Island doctor, Dr. Little, had been called into military service, so Dr. Dorchester volunteered to help Ruth on his regular weekly visit to the Island. Dr. Dorchester told Ruth that she could fly along with him to the Island, and she wouldn’t even have to drive out to the airport. He picked her up on the ice near her home on Cedar Street. Later that month, Wally Arntzen from Escanaba used his plane to help an Islander, Maynard Olson. He was due to be sworn into the army in Sheboygan, so he left early on the mail boat to catch a ride at Gills Rock, but the mail boat couldn’t make it through the ice.

Wally was called, and, although he was busy with government inspectors at the Escanaba airport, he took time off at lunch to fly Maynard and Mrs. Sorenson across the Door and then fly Harvey Jess, John Jessen and Alvin Koyen back to the Island.

In May of 1941, the Cherryland Airport faced a big crisis. Jack Hadden (his name is sometimes spelled “Haddon” in the news articles) had abandoned the fish peddling idea and become a T.W.A. pilot. He’d taken a purchase option on the DeWitt property on which the airport was located, and now there remained the 1941 payment on the property. So that the property wouldn’t be lost, Dr. Dorchester and a group banded together and arranged with attorney Thorval Toft to buy the property. Hadden was to retain a small interest in the airport, but stock was to be sold. So in that way, the airport was saved by private interests, who still hoped the county would take it over.
In May of 1941, Capt. Howard Logerquist and several other members of the army air corps inspected Cherryland Airport. (Apparently, he was not a Door County Logerquist. Local people by that name haven’t heard of him. He owned a summer place on Glidden Drive, and he visited his family there, according to the Advocate.)

Capt. Logerquist and the other airmen inspected the airport to see if it had military potential. He’d come in a B10 Martin bomber and flew up from Chicago in an hour. No further mention is made of whether the field was deemed adequate for military use, but a military plane did land there unexpectedly during World War II, as we shall see.

This was the last summer before the “Good War.” The cherries blossomed early that year; Cherry Blossom Sunday was on May 11, 1941. Radio station WTMJ Milwaukee’s Heinie and the Grenadiers (still in vogue, but banned from performing all during World War II because of his allegedly pro-German sentiments and accent) were part of the celebration. But the public was disappointed because the West’s planes from Appleton didn’t arrive to take passengers up... they’d planned on a normal bloom on May 25, then moved the date up to the 18th. But they couldn’t re-schedule for the 11th. However, the Wests did manage to come up on July 2 and offered a schedule of rides.

The war clouds were darkening, and a U.S. magazine even predicted that if Japan attacked the U.S., a likely spot would be Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Jack Howard beat the draft, which was already taking many Door County men, by enlisting in the army air corps. An Advocate report said that he’d already completed two-thirds of his training toward his “wings” at Randolph Field, Texas, the “West Point of the Air.” His pay was to be raised to $205 a month. That was a second lieutenant’s pay for one of the most daring and dangerous jobs in the world.

The airport completed its incorporation in September of 1941. Dr. Dan Dorchester was named president; John Purves, vice president; Tom Pinney Sr., secretary treasurer; and Wally Thenell and Felix Debroux were members of the board. Chester Teske was engaged as executive secretary. The airport was leased to the Cherryland Flying Service, of which Dr. Dorchester was operator, and he in turn leased some of the land to Seraphin DeWitt, the farmer who had owned the land. Jack Hadden retained some of the stock in the airport. In two months, the airport would be closed, due to the country going to war and the airport not having the required methods of security for a nation at war.
WORLD WAR II LED TO PURCHASE OF AIRPORT BY COUNTY

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and on December 8, the United States declared war on Japan.

The declaration of war had immediate effects here at home; all radio amateurs, like Clayton Cardy, W9OVO, were told to get off the air. He remembers that day well, for he was on the air that day, when the message came through for all radio amateurs to cease operating. The amateur radio bands were used for military operations from then on until the war ended. The federal government also did not want to take a chance that amateur radio equipment could be used to furnish information for the enemy, or serve as a signal for enemy planes to home in on.

Also, all airports that did not have 24 hour security and a manager were closed. The government did not want unsupervised landing spots where enemy planes could land with a commando or invasion force. Cherryland Airport was closed; it did not have the requirements for wartime operation.

Naturally, this closing caused great concern for all those interested in operating Cherryland Airport. Dr. Dorchester moved his own plane to the Green Bay Airport (not Austin Straubel, because Lt. Col. Austin Straubel from Green Bay was still alive and flying in late 1941 and early 1942. He was killed while flying in New Guinea against the Japanese a few months later, and the present airport is named for him.)

The Green Bay airport stayed open until early May of 1942, when both its managers were called into military pilot instructor positions. The lack of managers meant that the Green Bay airport had to be closed, and Dr. Dorchester’s and all the other planes at Green Bay either removed or dismantled. And there were no other airports in operation this side of Manitowoc and Appleton.

By late May of 1942, Dr. Dan and the others interested in his flying service, had taken steps to open Cherryland Airport. They had hired a young Sturgeon Bay High School home economics teacher, Dorothy Cretney, to be the airport manager at Cherryland Airport.

Dorothy Cretney was not the first female airport manager in Wisconsin. Ruth Harmon was the first one, being the manager of the Kenosha facility. Dorothy Cretney was a remarkable woman, as those who remember her will tell you. Born on June 12, 1916, she had graduated from Dodgeville High School in 1933. Later, she studied at the University of Wisconsin, where she received a bachelor of science degree in 1941.

Dorothy Cretney worked at several jobs to finance her education; she spent six months as a 4-H leader at Gaylord, Minnesota, was
assistant manager for a time at a Y.W.C.A. cafeteria at Minneapolis and was later employed as assistant bookkeeper for the Western Iron stores of Milwaukee. She had been the "flying reporter" for her home town paper in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, the Chronicle. Dorothy became an expert in "cow pasture" landings and in covering news for the Chronicle. She hoped to start a federally sponsored civilian pilot's course at Cherryland Airport. Indeed, she was an ambitious young lady, and, at age 26, she had worked hard to get a college education and had taken hold of her life and given it direction.

All during the winter of 1941-1942, she had been the instructor of the local Civil Air Patrol (of which Karl S. Reynolds was a member), giving classroom lessons that now could be followed by actual flying, now that the airport was to be re-opened on June 2, 1942. Miss Cretney learned to fly in Milwaukee and learned advanced flying with aerobatics while she was attending the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Her school term at Sturgeon Bay High School ending in May of 1942, Dorothy Cretney was looking forward to spending the whole year at Cherryland Airport, if there was need enough for her services.

It was through Dr. Dan Dorchester's efforts and financial backing that Cherryland Airport was re-opened, said the Advocate writer. This resulted not only from his desire to continue use of his plane in his services as a physician, but to keep Sturgeon Bay and Door County open to the flying public. He already has numerous letters of inquiry about whether or not the airport will meet the wartime requirements. Most of them are from summer residents who are busy in war industries and wish to fly here for weekend vacations with their families. Others are fliers whose use of planes is curtailed by the closing of so many airports.

The article from which this information came was published in the Advocate on May 29, 1942, the same issue that carried the information that Dr. Charles Leasum, Edward Vertz and Howard "Hub" Lauscher had been taken prisoner by the Japanese, that Edmund Babler was missing in action in the Manila Bay area, and that Emery Weber was missing in the sinking of the cruiser Houston at Java. All eventually returned home safely to live long lives, except for Emery Weber, who died in action.

With the airport open again, under the management of Dorothy Cretney, two students, Joseph Fontaine of Egg Harbor and Frank Ullsperger of Sturgeon Bay had made their solo flights by the first week of August. Also, six girls were rapidly approaching their solo stage, which would lead to the 36 hours they would need to join the Women's Ferry Command that delivered military planes from the
factory to army air corps bases. (These women were not considered members of the military services, and received no benefits such as members of the armed forces did. Over 50 years later, those who have survived were granted full military recognition and benefits.)

Dorothy Cretney also aspired to qualify herself for the Women's Ferry Command, and, unfortunately, that aspiration led to her untimely death. On Monday, September 21, 1942, she and Royal Goettelman took off from Cherryland Airport, headed for Curtiss-Wright Field (renamed Timmerman Field) near Milwaukee in Dr. Dorchester's plane. Goettelman went on to Milwaukee on business. Dorothy Cretney took the ground test for a commercial pilot's license. Completion of this test would have been a big step in her qualifying for the Women's Ferry Command. Just before she was to take her flight test, Dorothy took off for a warm-up flight, when suddenly, when 600 feet in the air, the plane exploded and burst into flames and dived almost vertically to earth. Immediately, a telephone call went out to Dr. Dorchester in Sturgeon Bay, and he and Chester Teske, an official of Dr. Dorchester's aviation company, took off from Cherryland Airport for Curtiss-Wright Field.

They arrived just as Dorothy Cretney's mutilated body was being removed from the plane, according to an Advocate report. The plane's engine had driven itself two feet into the ground, according to Dr. Dan and Teske. Fire had reduced the plane to its bare framework. It was little consolation that loss of the plane had been covered by insurance. The Civil Aeronautic Authority investigated the crash, and no attempt has been made at this point to see if the results of its investigation can still be obtained all these years later.

Several conjectures as to the cause of the crash have been put forth by people who were around at the time. Art Cermak says that in those days, the plane had to be tipped tail up to store it in the hangar. This may have caused gasoline to drain from one tank into the fuselage. An exhaust pipe may have ignited the gasoline and caused the explosion.

The death of Dorothy Cretney was a tragic loss of a young person that had a great future in aviation. She is buried in Dodgeville. Today, if fate had determined differently, she would be over 80 years old, and full of stories about her adventures in aviation. As it is, she will forever be 26.

No further news about Cherryland Airport was found in the Door County Advocate files in 1942 until December 13. Then, an article appeared entitled "Local Airport Projects and Planes Leap Into Prominence as Rationing Curtails Other Travel." Gasoline rationing
for automobile and truck use had begun in 1942, not because there was any shortage of petroleum products, but because the United States supply of rubber for tires had been cut off. Japanese forces had captured the Far Eastern countries from which we had obtained our natural rubber for making tires. Our stockpile of natural rubber was only large enough to make tires for our military equipment, and synthetic rubber factories were just in their infancy. So there was only rubber enough to make tires for war workers, doctors and other necessary uses. The writer of the article suggested that, since there was no rationing of airplane gasoline, since airplanes used tires only for takeoffs and landings, people could travel by air instead of by automobile.

The sale of small airplanes (such as were available), the article said, was brisk. Also, many small cities, such as Escanaba, Marinette, Green Bay, Clintonville, Manitowoc, and many others, were fast building airports, funded in a major part by the government. The article, based on a Chicago Tribune article, apparently gave Dr. Dan Dorchester, president of the Cherryland Airport Company, the impetus to call a meeting at city hall to further the cause of the city or county taking over the airport.

At the meeting, he explained that the private parties who kept the airport going had gone to considerable expense in providing a 24 hour a day guard for the airport, hiring clearing officers and other personnel. Unless the airport got more support, he said, the facility might be forced to close in that month, December of 1942. Said Dorchester, “Our county, with no (passenger) railroad and no passenger lake service, is throwing itself entirely upon tire-borne transportation at the most inopportune moment. We should get together now and settle upon a plan to meet this emergency.” This warning may have led to the people of Door County to finally accept the idea of a government-owned airport, but it was not to happen in 1942.

WARTIME YEARS LED TO COUNTY PURCHASE OF CHERRYLAND AIRPORT

Unlike World War I, when only a few Door County boys had any connection with the Aviation Service, the notable exceptions being Joe Zivney and Ernie Jackson, who were airplane mechanics, many local men and women entered the U. S. Army Air Corps and other flying services during World War II.

One of them was Harold Krauss, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Krauss of Sawyer (the West Side of Sturgeon Bay) who graduated as a first
lieutenant in the air corps in March of 1943. After leaving the University of Wisconsin, he'd entered pilot training schools in Arcadia, Florida, Bainbridge, Georgia, and finished his training at the new Columbus Flying School in Mississippi. His wife and Mrs. Bob Krauss went to his graduation, to be joined by Bob Krauss, who had taught the early model airplane classes. Bob had left for the Kewaunee Shipbuilding Company in 1942, and he was in nearby New Orleans on company business. During World War II, Lt. Krauss made the front pages in the Advocate when he convinced his superiors to take a side trip to Cherryland Airport while on other U. S. Army Air Corps business. Capt. Bob Ferguson, after being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions in Guadalcanal, also landed at Cherryland Airport in 1943, with a P-47 Thunderbolt.

Meanwhile, the Airport Committee of the Door County Board of Supervisors, Russell Austad, chairman, and members Oscar Miller and Frank Nelson, were working hard to convince the County Board to take over Cherryland Airport.

The text of Austad's plea was recorded in the May 4, 1943, Proceedings of the County Board of Supervisors, which was obtained from City Hall in Sturgeon Bay for use in this book.

"The Door County Civilian Defense Council through its Citizens Service Corps has among other activities and responsibilities an obligation to attend to the aviation needs of its community both in relationship to National Defense and Security and as it may pertain to post-war planning," said Austad.

Austad said pilot training and acquisition of an airport was an important part of the defense effort, and the Airport Committee had investigated the availability of federal and state grants to build an airport, and, although none were presently available, it seemed as if the federal government would establish a post-war program to alleviate unemployment. Also, he said, it appeared the State of Wisconsin would soon pass a bill to finance planning of airports. To get the financing for planning, the county would have to own the airport, however.

The upshot was that Austad's committee recommended that the County Board take an option to buy Cherryland Airport at a $100 option cost on the 137 acres and all buildings and improvements. The $100 option was to apply to the purchase price of $7500.

That day, the Door County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously in favor of the Airport Committee's proposal. Also that day, the Board voted to buy a police radio system, Door County and Kewaunee County being the last two counties in the state to do so.
Thus, on May 5, 1943, Door County took two giant steps to catch up with the modern world.

**DOOR COUNTY PEOPLE HELPED WIN WWII’S AIR WAR**

While a group of private individuals, and then the county board, worked at setting up the new Cherryland Airport, many of its citizens were fighting the air war in Europe and the Pacific. This book on the early history of aviation in Door County will be followed by a book about the personalities involved, but it is important to briefly mention some of these people now.

Whereas no aviators from Door County that participated in World War I have been identified, there were several that were connected with the Aviation Service, as it was called then. As mentioned earlier, Joe Zivney and Ernie Jackson were aviation mechanics. Frank Martin was in the balloon service. The Riddick boys’ connection was that their mother lived for a time in Egg Harbor township, and she is buried in Bayside Cemetery. Their story is intriguing enough, though, for it to be told in the book on personalities. They were related to and well known by Grace Samuelson, who frequently wrote for the Door County Advocate.

Hugh Maclean, organist for the Moravian church in Sturgeon Bay, flew in World War I, but for the British Air Force. Dr. John Muehlhauser did, too, but for the Kaiser’s air force. Raymond Houle flew for the Canadian Air Force, but was mustered out when he cracked a plane up and it was found out he was under age and had lied about being a Canadian citizen.

Before the U.S. entered World War II, George Loritz from Jacksonport had joined the U. S. Army Air Corps. He was the first Door County resident to lose his life, at Clark Field near Manila, on the same day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

Vernon DeLair, according to the November 29, 1943, Door County Advocate, had just been transferred to Tydall Field, Florida, where he was to attend gunnery school. He would become one of the few people to see band leader Glenn Miller take off on his last flight. DeLair would have the most harrowing experience of his life when he was almost dropped out the bomb bay doors of a B-29.

Here at home, the Civil Air Patrol had organized a group, which included such fliers as Karl Reynolds, Frank Ullsperger and Bill Stephenson.

Stephenson, who had grown up on Highway 42 almost across the road from the site of one of the county’s first air strips on the Borchert
farm, arranged for the Aviation Cadet Board to come here in November of 1943. They were looking for recruits for the Army Air Corps, age 17, or age 18-26 who hadn’t received their induction papers yet.

The recruiter said, in an Advocate interview, “The army values the course at $27,000. The five months college education, special training program and the period of intensive flight training provide a flying career that will put youths on top in the post-war world.”

In some cases, the young men didn’t get a chance to enlist, that is, if they already knew how to fly. Jules “Bud” Parmentier took his first flying lesson from Rolfe Olsen when the new Cherryland Airport first opened in 1939. By December of 1941, he was flying all over the country selling airplanes. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, he was recruited immediately to train pilots at a field in Arkansas, along with Frank M. “Sonny” Cowles, who now owns Horseshoe Bay Farms.

In a recent interview, Parmentier said, “They recruited every crop duster, everybody that knew how to fly, to train pilots, because they needed pilots in a hurry.”

Lt. Wilmer Gartman was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross according to the October 1, 1943 Advocate. He joined Capt. Bob Ferguson and Capt. Jack Howard in receiving the award.

There was war work here for the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II also. In November of 1943, the Peterson Boat Works received an order for eight 85 foot aircraft rescue boats, which were similar to p.t. (patrol torpedo) boats in size but not purpose, according to the November 26, 1943, Advocate. As the German submarine fleet was cut down in size and effectiveness, contracts for submarine chasers at the Boat Works were cut, and this new work was welcomed by owner Fred J. Peterson.

Cherryland Airport had a surprise visitor in December of 1943, according to the Advocate. Major General C. P. Gross, the U.S. Army chief of transportation, flew in on a big C-47 army transport to inspect the war work at the shipyards. This was the biggest plane to land there, even bigger than the Douglas transport that Lt. Harold Krauss had landed there during the summer. (Krauss was from Door County.)

The same edition carried the news that Staff Sgt. Elton Schulties of Nasewaupee was missing in action from a mission over Germany. He was a tail gunner in a B-24 Liberator bomber. Also in that issue was an article stating that 12 men that had been recruited during the visit of the Aviation Board had passed the mental test for aviation cadets. They included Joseph Garland Peterson, George Arthur Schubert, Joseph Leo LaFontaine, Robert James Buschmann and
Frederick Erickson. Passing the test qualified them for aviation cadet air crew training. Alric Erickson, Frederick’s brother, had become a captain in the air corps a month before, a step that led to a long career in military aviation.

The December 12, 1943, Advocate told of the death of Lt. Donald Lavassor from Sturgeon Bay. The young pilot had been killed in a B-24 Liberator training accident at a field in California. He had entered the army on April 15, 1941, but was mustered out so he could re-enlist as an aviation cadet.

He had just been transferred to California from Wendover, Utah, the field where, later on, the crew of the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the first atomic bomb, was trained. That field, incidentally is still there, dominated by the crumbling huge hangar that housed the Enola Gay.

Another casualty, reported in the last Advocate of 1943, was the apparent loss of S/Sgt. Hugo Wanke of Sturgeon Bay on a flight that left from England. He had cable his parents and his fiancee, Miss Rose Pichette, just before he left England on a B-17 Flying Fortress.

In the February 4, 1944 Door County Advocate that told of the installation of a new minister, Rev. Theophil Baganz, at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Sturgeon Bay, there was also an article about Sgt. William Weber being awarded the Legion of Merit for bravery in the Sicilian campaign, in which it is also told that his brother, Leonard, was serving in the aviation medical corps in England, and his brother, Arnold, was in on maneuvers in the aviation ground service in Louisiana. Once again the Advocate provides us with information that couldn’t be obtained from any other source unless you knew the individuals involved.

The same issue also told of a plan initiated by Bill Stephenson, Civil Air Patrol flight commander, and his group to recruit new prospective air cadets and WACs for the army air corps. Free airplane rides were to be offered on Sunday, February 13 at Cherryland Airport in an Aeronca training plane. (The plane was being shared with the Manitowoc airport for the same purpose.) The CAP pilots had to have at least 150 hours of air time in order to take the prospects up.

The Aeronca was also to be used by the CAP for emergency flights of any nature, for the purpose of civil defense, as well as for recruiting men between the ages of 17 and 26, and women between the ages of 20-49 seeking to join the WACs (Women’s Army Corps.)

Fortunately, as was discussed with Bud Parmentier, even though the Great Depression was just ending, many people were able to learn to fly in the United States and a good number were buying private
planes like the Piper Cubs that Bud sold, as well as Taylorcraft planes and the old Stinson Juniors.

We had a backlog of private fliers that could train and recruit military pilots; whereas, Japan probably didn’t have as many private pilots. The Japanese did have ten years of military aviation experience in their war against China, though, and there were many flying enthusiasts in Germany, including balloonists, before World War II. With the downsizing of our military forces prior to the war, it’s fortunate we had many people with private flying experience over here who could train the military pilots.

If you saw the movie “Tora, Tora, Tora,” about the Pearl Harbor attack, you probably remember the lady who was giving flying lessons on that fateful Sunday morning, when she looked overhead and saw all those planes with the Rising Sun on their wings, and she wheeled it back to her landing field. She knew these people weren’t out sport flying.

The February 11, 1944, Advocate brought the news from Russell Austad, chairman of the airport committee of the county board, that a geological survey had been completed by the volunteer work of Eugene Odbert Jr. (City engineer), C. G. Knoblock, Elmer Albert, Bill Stephenson, Ervin Kranik (airport manager), Norman Lenius and Aaron Millebrandt. The survey included test borings of the soil at the new airport to be presented to the state airport planning committee for consideration. Austad’s committee took out a new option for the purchase of the DeWitt property for a year starting on January 26, 1944, thus firming up a decision to purchase Cherryland Airport.

In early March of 1944, the Advocate printed the news that it might be possible that Sgt. Wanke and his fellow crew members had parachuted to safety. In a letter to the parents of the bombardier of the plane, squadron commanding officer Major Ray Armstrong said, “The crews that returned from that mission reported having seen the plane leave formation with an engine afire. However, the ship was under control. A number of parachutes were seen, and it is my opinion that these conditions have room for a good deal of optimism and hope.”

That month the vocational school began a course in aviation, which was held in the basement of the new Door County Historical Society museum. Director L. A. Ferguson had engaged the services of Edwin Wickman, who was teaching a course in aviation meteorology, navigation flight rules and mechanics at Oshkosh State Teacher’s College and the Appleton vocational school. Wickman was a veteran flier.
By this time, the Air Cadet Board had the plans for their army aviation cadet program well organized and set to start at East High School in Green Bay on March 27.

17 year olds who passed the entry tests would be transported to Truax Field in Madison for their final physical exam and those who passed would be sworn into the Air Corps Enlisted Reserves and awarded a pair of silver wings to identify them as members of the army air corps. These “Aces”, as they were called, would remain on inactive duty until they reached their 18th birthday, at which time their aviation cadet training would begin.

Women were also being recruited for the Air Waes to do 86 different types of jobs to “keep ‘em flying.” Evidently, there were no intentions to make fliers out of them, although hundreds of women were flying planes in the Ferry Command.

The fliers here at home in Door County participated in several other ways to help win World War II. Since the recycling of metal was very important, airplanes were used to map the location of scrap piles throughout the county. John Purves was active in heading up the reclamation of scrap metal, and once the location of the scrap piles was pinpointed, visits to their owners were made and the scrap was transported to the recyclers.

In addition, an inventory of orchard spraying rigs was made, so they might be used in fighting fires set by incendiary bombs. Airplanes would be used in pinpointing the location of the fires. As a Door County Amateur Club member who was stationed at an airfield in the West recalls, Japanese submarines launched incendiary balloons which started a few fires. Due to the prevailing westerly winds, it was possible that some of these balloons might reach our area.

The April 7, 1944, Advocate carried the news that the neighboring villages of Fish Creek and Ephraim had approved the purchase of the former Lincoln Malmer farm for an airport. The 160 acre plot lay near County Trunk A, and was bought for $4000, the cost to be shared equally by the incorporated village of Ephraim and the town of Gibraltar.

“Men’s clubs at Fish Creek and Ephraim backed the airport as a result of indications that there will be a lot of flying after the war by people going on vacations to resorts in their vicinity,” said the Advocate reporter.

That was something that still hasn’t materialized to any great degree over fifty years later, because the roads have been improved, and are still being improved, and people like to bring their automobiles so they can get around the county.
In the May 21, 1944 Advocate, the news came that Lt. Clayton Carlson from Sister Bay, a bombardier-navigator on a B-26 Marauder was missing in action. His flight had left from an English airfield, headed over France toward Germany.

During the first week of May 1944, Reynolds Brothers took part in an experiment in which cherry trees were dusted instead of sprayed with orchard sprayers.

For the experimental demonstration, lime, a fertilizer, was dusted from an airplane to show how quickly a plot of orchard could be covered. Two orchard workers are shown under the low-flying plane in the Advocate photo; the lime would do them no harm, except give them a coating of white. The observers noted that the lime swirled around and under the leaves, giving them a good coating of lime.

The experiment was promoted by the Tennessee Copper Co., producer of a new tri-metallic copper dust; the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture, with supervision by Duane “Dewey” Moore; and Fliteways, a crop dusting concern for which Bob Schrock, a Cherryland Airways instructor, worked.

Said Karl Reynolds, “By dusting, it will be possible to cover our entire tract in a day with three planes. It takes a large crew six days to spray the same area.”

Evidently, Eli Solway, who superintended the spraying crew at Reynolds, said to himself, “I’ll believe it when I see it.” Many years later, until his death in 1958, he still led the tractors and sprayers on their almost continuous rounds. He probably never flew, either, contrary to a mistaken notion that will be detailed later in this narrative.

On May 12, 1944, the Advocate carried the news of the confirmation of the death of Staff Sgt. Elton Schulties in an air raid over Bremen, Germany. The total loss of life in World War II in Door County was now 11, three who were members of the Army Air Corps.

By the 26th of May 1944, the Advocate was carrying the news of a much subdued celebration of Cherry Blossom Sunday.

Due to wartime restrictions, gasoline was rationed, not due to a shortage of gasoline, but a shortage of rubber for civilian automobile tires. There was enough rubber for military uses, thanks to stockpiling of rubber supplies, and, Harvey Firestone had enough foresight to experiment with synthetic rubber long before World War II. In fact, he had sent his companion on the Glidden road tours, Henry Ford, a set of synthetic rubber tires for Ford’s personal 1929 Model A sedan. But civilians, except doctors, couldn’t get new tires, so enquiries to the Door County Chamber of Commerce about motoring to see the cherry blossoms were very few in 1944.
But the Civil Air Patrol, under the direction of its flight commander, Bill Stephenson, cooked up a plan. It was to invite those who had airplanes (aviation gas was not rationed, probably because airplanes only took off and landed on rubber tires) to fly here to see the blossoms. He also arranged to have an army plane come here to give rides to all boys who might be interested in becoming aviation cadets, and women who were interested in becoming WACs.

Again, there was no talk of the military service training women as combat pilots, but not every male would be a pilot either. For every bomber crew, there were a vast number of support people on the ground, both men and women.

For the cherry blossom event, there was a plane to take spectators to view the blossoms, but no road signs were put up in 1944 to direct tourists on the ground. The Alpine Resort solved their patrons’ transportation problems by running busses to the popular resort.

Master Sgt. Leo Hopp from Sturgeon Bay made the front page in the June 2, 1944 Advocate. He was a technical advisor with the 3rd AAF Fighter Command, and it was his job to keep the P-39 Aircobras in flying shape on the island of Guadalcanal, after it was taken from the Japanese. (Capt. Bob Ferguson from Sturgeon Bay flew one of those P-39s.)

In a letter to his parents, he told of a plane they called “Old 66” which he maintained, which had made 200 missions, worn out four engines, one pair of wings, a tail section and two propellers. It once dropped a special life raft designed by Leo for fighter planes, resulting in rescuing two pilots downed at sea.

Then came D Day, June 6, 1944, the day that the invasion of France by American troops began. Just three days later, the Advocate carried the news that Lt. Harold Krauss and Lt. Bill Tong were deeply involved in the invasion.

Krauss piloted a glider “tug” plane, the article said. The gliders landed near Cherbourg, France, near the Normandy peninsula. It was not known for certain what Tong was doing, but it was correctly presumed that he was involved in navigating a C-47 transport. He had already won a medal for taking part in the first U. S. paratrooper invasion of the war in Sicily and England.

Meanwhile Tony Schmelzer, a young lad then, was making model airplanes. He’d spent $30 on a motorized model. After spending three winters on the model, he decided to see how far it would fly. Usually, the model enthusiasts would use a guiding string to keep their planes in sight and put in a limited amount of gasoline. But, flying free and with
a good amount of gas, it flew out of sight. His father, George, offered a
reward for its return.

40 model airplanes had been made by Tony Schmelzer by this
time, but this was his first gasoline model. Some of his others had been
powered by compressed air but most were powered by rubber bands.

You could learn to be a pilot for $99.50, according to the June
23, 1944 Door County Advocate. The ad doesn’t say who the instructor
is, but it was probably Rolfe Olsen, who flew over from Escanaba to
give lessons to those such as Bud Parmentier.

A man from Clintonville, Francis M. Higgins, even while World
War II was raging, decided to form a company to establish an airline
which would include Sturgeon Bay as a stop. According to the June 30,
1944, Advocate three routes were in the planning stage, pending
approval from Washington. One route would take on passengers at
Marquette, Michigan, go on to Iron Mountain, Menominee, Michigan,
Sturgeon Bay, Green Bay, Clintonville, Stevens Point, LaCrosse,
Rochester, Minneapolis and St. Paul. The firm was named North
Central Airlines. According to the article, the county would have to
complete its survey in order to be included as a stop for the airline.

The death of a former Washington Island young man, 2nd. Lt.
Joseph A. Gudmundsen, was reported in the July 28, 1944, paper. He
was piloting a plane into a canyon in California when he struck a high
tension power line.

Lt. Harold Krauss made the news again on September 9, 1944.
He was awarded the air medal for “meritorious achievement” while
participating in the D-Day combat flights over France. He had piloted
a C-47 transport during the invasion.

The same issue carried the news of the loss of the 18th Door
County boy in WWII. He was T/Sgt. Jack Hollings, who was a radio
operator and gunner in the 8th Air Force. He recently had completed
100 missions including one during the invasion of France. He had
worked at the Smith shipyard before going into the service, and his
father was a welding foreman there.

By September 22, 1944, the Advocate could report that the
airport committee chaired by Russell Austad had made much progress
in making the plans for development of the airport.

Test borings had been made to see if the airport fit state standards
for expanding the field to a Class 3, mile-square size airport. City
engineer Eugene W. Odbert Jr., Karl S. Reynolds, G. I. Mullendore,
county agent, Dr. T. C. West and Emmett Sutliff, and the airport
committee, newly joined by Tom Pinney sr. and Ewald Schmock,
replacing Oscar Miller and Frank Nelson, felt that the soil depth on the DeWitt farm was enough to allow grading of the airstrip.

A crew from the C.A.P. had recently painted the roof of the hangar with a large checkered arrow pattern and the arrow pointed north with paint donated by the Sturgeon Bay Shipbuilding and Drydock. Plans were being made to convert the observation cabin on the grounds, a former steamship pilot house, into a depot for air passengers.

By the middle of October 1944, a fund raiser for a new airport depot had been put into motion. Free airplane rides were given to those who donated $3.00 or more. Those wishing to donate money were asked to contact Frank Ullsperger, Karl Reynolds or Bill Stephenson.

That month, the loss of Lt. Clayton Carlson was listed in the paper; he went down on a B-26 bombing mission from England. He was a navigator.

The October 20, 1944, issue also carried a photo of 1st Lt. John Polich, who had won the Distinguished Flying Cross as a bombardier who had survived 35 dangerous missions over Europe. He had taught agriculture for a little over a year before entering the army air corps.

By October 27, 1944, the C.A.P. had almost reached its goal of collecting $2000 toward building the depot at the airport. The ground work for the building had been completed, and plans were to erect it that fall.

In Europe, in December, the last German offensive, the Battle of the Bulge, began, and Rev. Baganz lost his brother Reuben when an army air corps bomber was shot down.

The March 5, 1945, Advocate said that T/5 Herbert Wehausen from Maplewood and Sgt. Arthur Leimbach, as well as Sgt. Richard Griffin, of Sevastopol, had been captured by the Germans.

A week later, the news came that a bomber crash had killed Cpl. Lester Smejkal in Louisiana. The war was taking its toll both in the air and on the ground.

A Door County hero’s story appeared in the same issue. Lt. Harley Hanson from Washington Island was credited with saving his crew in a “No Man’s Land” crash in Burma.

Hanson and his crew were flying the “Hump”, the supply road over the Himalaya Mountains in Burma, supplying the Chinese troops who were fighting the Japanese. While dropping a supply case, it hit a stabilizer on his C-47 transport and broke it off. Circling the mountainous area, he spotted a rice paddy and crashed the plane into it. He made a hay stack his target.
The crew found itself in a no man’s land between the Japanese and American combatants. To prevent the enemy from seizing the plane, the crew set it on fire.

15 minutes later, an American infantry patrol found them, and led them to safety. Hanson had already shown bravery in combat, for he had been awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster in addition to a Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal. He had completed 126 missions in 11 months previous to this mission--not bad for a graduate of Washington Island High School, one of the tiniest schools in the state.

The end of World War II was near, and the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 8, 1945, and Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, convinced the Japanese to surrender. Major Richard V. “Dick” Ramstack, an Elm Grove, WI, native, later to become a mainstay of the Door County cherry industry, was a bomber pilot, and he got a close look at the beginning of the “atomic age.”

Said Ramstack in a 1985 interview, “We were actually on a mission over Kumamoto and Kyushu when the second atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. We were about 200 miles away from the drop point and we could see the mushroom cloud all the way back to Okinawa, which was about 450 miles. We knew something was going on because a big red circle had been drawn on our maps and we were warned that under no circumstances, even emergencies, were we to go within that circle.

“The next day they called us back from a mission when we were half way to Japan. All of a sudden they were sending us back to the island of Moratai because they wanted to use Okinawa as a staging point for the occupation of Japan.”

Commenting on his harrowing experiences as a bomber pilot in Pacific theater of action, Ramstack said, “I never let anything make my blood pressure go up.”

Dr. Weldon Sheets flew the Hump during World War II, and he not only survived, but encouraged his sons to go into flying.

And so it was with the returning soldiers and airmen from Door County. After their war experiences, everything else was easy, that is, if they lived through the war.

END OF WAR SAW NEW INTEREST IN LOCAL AIRPORTS

With the war almost over, work was proceeding on the Ephraim-Fish Creek airport. The August 10, 1945 Advocate told of the delay in allowing light planes to land until a stone fence was removed to allow
runways to extend across 40 acres. John Matter of Ephraim was chairman of the airport committee.

An additional eight acres had been purchased to add to the north end of the airport to lengthen the SE and NW runway and the NS runway.

The August 27, 1945 Advocate reported that an army transport, a C-47, like the one that Lt. Harold Krauss had flown in two years before, had landed at Cherryland Airport.

The pilot was Capt. Bernard Gordon of Glencoe, Illinois. His reason for coming was that his daughter had been stricken with appendicitis while at Camp Pearse on Washington Island, and George Meredith, the new local airport manager, had flown her to Door County Memorial Hospital. She returned to the camp, after being released from the hospital, and Lt. Bill Tong and Sgt. Nic Weber, an aviation ground force instructor, flew back as far as Chicago with Gordon to return to their respective camps.

Lt. Tong had been on leave while the plane he had been navigating was being repaired after it caught fire.

By September 14 of 1945, Karl S. Reynolds had been chosen to be one of five members of Governor Goodland’s new state aeronautics commission. Reynolds said the commission was to be promotional, not regulatory.

By the middle of September 1945, the Japanese surrender agreement having been signed and with the county returning to a peacetime status, two items of aviation news dominated the local newspaper.

First, a plan for a mile-square Cherryland Airport was received by the airport committee of the county board, chaired by Russell Austad.

The plan called for the acquisition of the William Moore farm to the west of the airport, and other land to the northwest, north and southeast of the original tract. Engineers Eugene W. Odbert Jr. and C. G. Knoblock submitted the topological survey in a way to make the best use of the land for runways. The longest runway on the plan was to be 5800 feet long.

The other aviation news was the movement to establish an airline service at Cherryland Airport. Again, the airport committee and its chairman, Russell Austad, the chamber of commerce, the C. A. P., plus the Office of Civil Defense and other groups were involved. Data was being gathered to prove that the city and county would be a good stop for the proposed North Central Airlines. Francis M. Higgins of the Four Wheel Drive Corporation of Clintonville was promoting the plan.
By September 28, 1945, chances looked good that the Ephraim-Fish Creek airport would be completed in time for the tourist season of 1946. So wrote the Advocate reporter: “Gibraltar township road commissioner Gardner Orsted had removed most of the stone fences on the runway route, and the field was expected to be plowed the next week. The stones removed had been used to fill hollows along the three runways so the property could be more easily entered from County Trunk A. Aviation enthusiasts were already buying home sites nearby so they could be close to the airport.”

A fly-in meeting of the Civil Air Patrol was held at the Carmen Hotel and reported by the October 19, 1945 Advocate. An Ercoupe, a Piper Cub Cruiser, a Fairchild PT-19 and a Taylorcraft transported those coming in from outside the county. 12 of the party flew to Washington Island, including Dr. Dan Dorchester, in his Ryan; he was accompanied by Lt. Cdr. Rolfe Olsen, who had entered the naval air corps during World War II and was on leave.

The group discussed the C. A. P. cadet training program for boys and girls under 18.

A front page photograph in the December 16, 1945, Advocate showed George Resch, commander of the Archie Lackshire Legion Post along with pilot Dr. Dan Dorchester at Cherryland Airport. The pair was about to leave for Milwaukee to report that the post had signed 130 of its old members from World War I and 75 new ones from World War II. The group was making a big effort to get new blood and keep the unit going.

One of the active members of the American Legion was Karl S. Reynolds, who often promoted aviation in connection with Legion events. Reynolds, it was just recently discovered, was a World War I veteran, having joined the Army Training Corps shortly after he became 18, while he was at the University of Wisconsin as a student. He entered on October 7, 1918, and was discharged on December 14, 1918. The war was over, and there was no need for his services. He became a charter member of the Madison Legion post, and was entitled to full World War I veterans’ benefits, although he apparently never used them.

The local chapter of the Wisconsin Civil Air Corps met at the Sturgeon Bay High School Auditorium on Monday, December 11, 1945. 350 letters had been sent out to young men and women inviting them to attend. A film, “Ceiling Unlimited,” was shown, and the speakers were R. M. Lee, president of the Milwaukee chapter, and Charles F. Higgins, the corp’s attorney. The purpose of the meeting
was to recruit members who could help play host to the state fliers on January 20 or 27.

35 people signed the charter agreement that night, out of the 100 people that attended.

According to the January 11, 1946, Advocate, the event mentioned initiated the first Frigid Fun Flight. Enar Ahlstrom, executive secretary of the local Civil Air Corps, said that about 50 planes were expected to fly in, landing either at the airport or on the ice near the Sawyer bathing beach, where George Meredith, chairman of the reception and airport manager, would stake off the runways with Christmas trees.

Karl Reynolds of the state aeronautical board would make the arrangements for the hotel accommodations for the visitors and for the banquet at the Hotel Swoboda. Attendance prizes would be obtained by Chuck Ferguson.

Officers elected that night were Frank Ullsperger, president; Henry Overbeck, vice president; Imogene DeWitt, secretary treasurer; Edward Ropson, sergeant-at-arms; Dr. Dan Dorchester, Frank Ullsperger and Dr. T. C. West, directors for two years; and Karl S. Reynolds and George Meredith, directors for one year.

The event was set for January 19-20, 1946, with a choice of flying up the peninsula or participating in winter sports, weather permitting. A banquet and business meeting was to be held at the Hotel Swoboda on Saturday night.

After a breakfast at the Carmen Hotel Sunday morning, D. C. Pisha would be in charge of a “1:30 boiled trout feed” which probably would be at Remy’s resort at Idlewild. Dick Stearn was to head the winter sports program.

This brings up the question, “When was the first trout boil held?” Was it the one for the first Frigid Fun Flight in 1946? Or, does its history go back a long time before that, because this was probably not the first one for insurance agent Pisha.

On January 18, 1946, came the news of the death of Lt. Arden Daoust, Sevastopol High School acquaintance of both compilers of this history of Door County aviation.

Daoust had graduated from Sevastopol as valedictorian in May 1941. After attending the University of Wisconsin for two years, he was inducted into the U. S. Army Air Corps in May of 1943. He received training as a gunner and navigator and then volunteered for radar training.

While transporting British war prisoners from Okinawa to Manila on September 10, 1946, he was killed when his plane crashed. George
Loritz was the first Door County boy to be killed in World War II at Clark Field near Manila, and Lt. Arden Daoust was the 61st and last, both members of the U. S. Army Air Corps.

Meanwhile, at home, preparations were being made for the first Frigid Fun Flight, a winter event in a county when the tourist season in previous times had begun in June and ended in August.

The war was over. It had taken its toll of Door County men and women, including several airmen, and, quite directly, at least one woman involved in Door County aviation, Dorothy Cretney. She would now have been considered a World War II veteran, assuming she’d qualified for the Women’s Ferry Command. Only in recent years have they, as well as the members of the U. S. Merchant Marines, been included as military veterans.

During the week that the plans for the new St. Peter Lutheran Church, lights for the winter sports hill at Potawatomi Park and new night classes for the vocational school were announced, post-war plans entered into the upcoming Frigid Fun Flight program.

Enar Ahlstrom, executive secretary of the local Civil Air Corps, editor of the wartime Smith shipyard Portlight, by now editor of Badger Flying, said Life Magazine might cover the Frigid Fun Flight. He also said new post-war airplanes would be displayed such as the Aeronca purchased by George Meredith, as well as the Ercoupe. Display space for literature would be offered at the Swoboda Hotel, where the Saturday night banquet would be held. Karl S. Reynolds was to be master of ceremonies, being introduced by the local air corps president, Frank Ullsperger. Afterward, a skating party would be held at what we now call Market Square, and, later, there would be dancing at the Swoboda.

Wally Arntzen also served in World War II. For two years, according to a copy of an interview with Wally done in 1975 and provided by Henry Olsen, he flew four engine bombers over the Atlantic, and then became a Ferry Pilot for another two years. Then he flew in transports back and forth. One report says that Rolfe Olsen was killed while serving as a test pilot.
 THEY WANTED WINGS
CHAPTER FIVE
1946-1947

END OF WORLD WAR II SAW FIRST FRIGID FUN FLIGHT

A very successful first Frigid Fun Flight was reported in the January 25, 1946, Door County Advocate.

One letter to accommodations chairman Karl S. Reynolds read in part, “Having been a member of the Civil Air Corps and having attended many of their banquets and breakfast flights, it’s a pleasure to tell that you and your associates have exceeded all previous records.”

About 150 state fliers had attended. The press coverage by outside newspapers and magazines was extensive. The Monday after the event the Milwaukee Sentinel published several photos, and on Tuesday a full page of pictures. The Milwaukee Journal, then a separate paper from the Sentinel, had an editorial about the possibility of combining winter pleasure flying with winter sports. In this way, the Frigid Fun Flight was a harbinger of the future.

It was thought that Life Magazine might carry a story about the event. This could be researched, since antique stores often carry old Life magazines, and it would be easy to look through the issues of January 1946, the first peacetime January in a long time, to see if they did carry a story.

The press carried photos of Karl Reynolds singing with a group of the fliers, and Frank Ullsperger receiving the club’s Civil Air Corps charter. Also, an historic picture was taken of Frank and Cyril Lauscher, along with D. C. Pisha, cooking the boiled trout dinner, which, although it might not have been the first trout boil in Door County, would have predated others that claim to be the first.

A classic Advocate photo, worthy of locating if it still exists, is one showing Leo Stoneman, president of the local winter sports club, welcoming Steve Wittman, later to found the Experimental Aircraft Association, as he landed in Sawyer Harbor.

The airplanes that landed were representative of the late pre-war planes that began to emerge as times got better and more people could afford to fly; Taylor Crafts, Piper Cubs; and new post-war, 1946 model Aeroncas (including one purchased by airport manager George Meredith) Ercoupes, Fairchilds, Luscombes, Cessnas, and a Beechcraft Bonanza like the one Karl Reynolds was to purchase. A sign of the future for Steve Wittman was the experimental four-seater which he flew to the gathering.
VALUE OF AVIATION SHOWN IN ISLAND ACCIDENT

On March 3, 1946, an event that had tragic potentials occurred on Washington Island, once again proved the tremendous values of having an airport.

Dick Bjarnarson, the 13-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Bjarnarson, was hunting in a woods across from his home that Sunday afternoon, accompanied by David Foss and John Gunnlaugson. Dick put his gun against a stump, but it fell down and the shotgun discharged. Most of the shot pierced his right elbow, one grazed his ear, and another scratched his chest.

John, who was standing nearby, called to David and the two walked Dick back to his home a quarter mile away. Oliver Bjarnarson had intended to deliver a fish (he was a commercial fisherman) to another Islander, but had a premonition he should go home, where he found his severely injured son.

Dick fainted from the shock and had to be carried into the house. Oliver called Dr. Farmer, the resident doctor, and Dr. Farmer called George Meredith in Sturgeon Bay, asking him to deliver blood plasma immediately. The plan was to take Dick to an Escanaba hospital for treatment. Wally Arntzen was also called over from Escanaba.

The airport being not far from the Bjarnarson home, Dick was loaded into George Meredith’s three place Aeronca, along with Dr. Farmer. Oliver Bjarnarson boarded Wally Arntzen’s plane for the flight to the Escanaba hospital.

However, Meredith’s carburetor began to ice up 2000 feet over Rock Island, and he had to turn back and land on the ice at Jackson Harbor, which lies between Rock Island and the northeast corner of Washington Island.

Meanwhile, according to the March 8, 1946, Door County Advocate, another plane flew over from Escanaba and brought Dick’s mother, Esther, back to the Escanaba hospital.

Due to the icing problem with Meredith’s plane, Wally Arntzen crowded Dick and Dr. Farmer into his plane, but, as he taxied on the ice to take off, his plane sank through thin ice into shallow water where fishermen had been cutting ice.

The only alternative was to call Dr. Dorchester up from Sturgeon Bay. Esther Bjarnarson was frantically waiting at the Escanaba hospital, not knowing what had become of her son and husband. She was called and she was flown back to the Island.

Dr. Dorchester flew his plane up to the Island, and he and Dick were transported to Dr. Farmer’s office near the shores of Detroit
Harbor on the south side of the Island. (Dr. Farmer was not licensed to perform surgery.) Dr. Dorchester used the plasma Meredith had brought up, but additionally called on Dr. Farmer’s sister-in-law to give a blood transfusion.

Dick had lost his right arm below the elbow, but he was fitted with a metal prosthesis when he recovered. The plucky youth could even don a boxing glove on the metal claw and do a creditable job of boxing. Fortunately, he was left-handed and so he wasn’t handicapped in writing, either.

Once again, aviation had almost certainly saved the life of an Islander, and it still serves that function today. No wonder Washington Island was the first place in Door County to establish a municipality-owned airport.

**AIRLINE PROPOSAL, EPHRAIM AIRPORT CAME IN 1946**

In April 1946, according to an Advocate report, Cherryland Airport was struck by what could have been a fatal blow. A wind reported to have been of “hurricane force,” possibly an undetected tornado, took the roof off the hangar and smashed it into the airport office. Only Karl Reynolds plane suffered damage to a wing, and no one was hurt.

In the middle of April 1946, Harold Dole moved his radio shop to Moeller’s Garage, and Dr. Dan Dorchester received word that an air service based in Stevens Point planned to start a summertime charter air between Land O’ Lakes and Milwaukee, via Sturgeon Bay.

DC-3s were to provide the transport, to make rail connections in Milwaukee and return the same day on a reverse of the route. Five or six passengers a day would be the required pick-up at Cherryland Airport to achieve a stop on the route. The price was attractive; $6.00 one-way, but even with twice a day service and the great savings in time versus bus or car, there remained a doubt that enough traffic from Sturgeon Bay could be generated.

Also, in April 1946, the new Ephraim-Fish Creek airport was nearing completion. This was an interesting development, because the county highway department did much of the construction work, and the airport committee, headed by historian H. R. Holand in the absence of committee chairman, John Matter, planned to sell some of the property for homes.

A 160-acre tract had been purchased for $4500, a wooded forty portion had been sold for $1500, and an additional eight acres on the north end had been bought.
Two runways had been laid out, and the county was leveling the land, removing stone piles and wire fences in the process. The farmhouse on the property was being restored to use as an airport manager’s home or to rent out. Lots for those who wanted to build homes on the edge of the airport had been laid out and some sold. (There’s a community in Wisconsin where all the homes are owned by people who not only don’t mind a little noise from airplanes, but want to be there, so they can hangar their airplane nearby.) A 7½ acre wooded plot was available for sale for someone that wanted seclusion, but a place to keep his airplane.

It was hoped that by selling land for homes, enough money would be generated to pay for the airport land as well as the improvements to the field.

Karl Reynolds, in Stevens Point, at one of the largest gathering of planes ever held in the state, invited the 350 fliers and their families to fly up to see the cherry blossoms. But 1946 was to be a year when no gathering of aviators for such a flight was held. For some reason, no one had a good guess when the cherries would bloom, so a date for a formal gathering couldn’t be set. As it turned out, Michigan, the state that still controls the cherry price, had a poor crop, Door County had a fairly good crop that brought the best price in years, and as a result Felhofer Brothers sold a lot of new trucks, some of which are still in use today. Cherry growers were happy to say that the load of cherries they hauled in to the factory was worth more than the new truck they were hauling them with.

A sign of the coming times was seen in May of 1946 when an Idlewild turkey grower had 500 chicks shipped in by air to Cherryland Airport. It was claimed that the chicks suffered far fewer losses due to chilling in transport than if they had been shipped by train or truck.

That month the Advocate also reported that airline service might begin from Cherryland Airport on May, a couple of weeks earlier than Al Padags of North Central Airlines had said. Plans now were to start at Stevens Point, and fly to Land O’ Lakes by way of Madison, Milwaukee and Sturgeon Bay. The plan now was to make one flight a day, eliminating the ability of Door County residents to fly to Milwaukee and return the same day. Landings were to be made at Maitland Field, named for the flier who had been the first, in 1927, to fly from San Francisco to Hawaii (along with his co-pilot.) As you recall, he had landed in Egg Harbor in 1928, and later became the head of the state aviation agency.

The Advocate editor expressed some doubt that the one trip a day plan would be of much use, and also suggested that it would be ideal if
two trips a day would be made to and from Madison. The airline’s plans presented would allow only a small amount of business to be conducted in either city, about two hours, even if two flights were scheduled.

IDEA FOR SEAPLANE BASE, TRAGEDY, CAME IN JUNE, 1946

Another plan put forward in early May 1946, was one to set up a base for seaplanes in Door County.

This plan, according to the May 10, 1946 Advocate, came up at a meeting of the Sturgeon Bay Yacht Club. Dr. Dorchester and Karl Reynolds had already ordered a new Republic Seabee amphibian, a plane that could land on both water and land. They envisioned choosing an appropriate seaplane landing dock. Commodore Dick Stearn appointed Dorchester and Reynolds, as well as Dick Bosman, to survey the bay for possible landing sites.

Since Dorchester and Reynolds were members of the Civil Air Patrol, they fostered the seaplane idea which would assist in both air and land searches. Their plane was purchased from Cherryland Aircraft Sales, which had ordered five of the Republic Seabees. The article said that a total of 11 of these planes was to be delivered to this area.

Cabot’s Lodge at Riley’s Point had requested the committee for information about building a seaplane ramp, and Leatham Smith had also requested similar information for his Snug Harbor subdivision that he planned to build near his Leatham Smith Lodge.

Evidently the North Central Airlines plan to start services on May 15, 1946, did not materialize, because the May 24 issue of the Advocate told of the landing of the first DC-3 of the company. “Daily Service to Start June 1, Plan,” read the headline.

That was a trial run, and the Advocate of May 31, 1946, gave its regular schedule, which was to start on Memorial Day. That date, then always May 30, fell on a Saturday.

The schedule now called for an 8 a.m. departure from Stevens Point, with stops at Madison and Milwaukee, and arrival in Sturgeon Bay at 1:25 p.m. The flight then would go to Land O’ Lakes and get back to Sturgeon Bay at 4:10 p.m. From there it would go to Milwaukee, Madison and Stevens Point. The fare from Sturgeon Bay to Milwaukee or Land O’ Lakes was to be $6.73, and $10.35 to Madison. This would allow an overnight stay in either Milwaukee or Madison, which would work out well for an evening meeting. A person could fly from Sturgeon Bay to either city, stay overnight, do a day’s business, stay overnight and fly back the next morning. In 1946, when
there was no I-43 and Highway 41 wasn’t a four lane, flying by North Central Airlines was a better deal than driving.

On June 7, 1946, the Advocate reported the arrival of the first North Central airline passenger, Mrs. Julius Rudolf, from Milwaukee. (Apparently, this was a trial run.) She had come to visit her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Clem Kerscher of Maplewood. Her husband had offered to pay her air fare to Sturgeon Bay if a flight could be found. To her surprise, after calling Mitchell field, she found that there indeed was such a flight. No one was there at Cherryland to meet her, but a couple going to Algoma gave her a ride.

In the June 6, 1946, Advocate column, “With Our Boys and Girls in The Service,” we were told that Col. Thomas Gillespie, who was born in Sturgeon Bay, had received his third Legion of Merit for establishing telephone and radio communications with China during World War II. His duty in China had started when he flew over the Hump, as the path over Burma to China was called.

Col. Gillespie was married to Lillian Matzke from Southern Door. Her sister, Laura, had married Arthur Bertschinger from Egg Harbor. Gillespie had entered the army in 1917, and when WWII came along, he was sent to North Africa to be an aide to Eisenhower. But after his jeep hit a land mine, the army decided he was too brilliant and talented to risk on the battlefield, so they sent him back to the states to head all the U. S. Signal Corps training, under Gen. Ingalls. So he had much to do with providing expert radio operators for the ground forces and Army Air Corps.

In June 1946, Karl Reynolds almost lost his plane in a windstorm at the Wausau airport while attending a Civil Air Patrol fly-in. His plane was blown into the side of Dr. Dorchester’s plane when a sudden squall came up. Dr. Dan’s plane suffered a hole in the fuselage, and another plane was completely demolished.

Also in June of 1946, Door County lost the great shipbuilder, L. D. Smith, in a boating accident in the bay of Green Bay. His daughter Patsy was able to swim to shore and report the capsizing of the boat that had once been owned by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. According to the late C. Raymond Christianson, superintendent of the Smith shipyard during World War II, the cabin, which was intended to be entered only by a door in the top that could be closed to keep out water, had been modified to accommodate the president’s wheel chair. A hole had been cut in the side of the cabin, and, according to Christianson, he had said to Smith, “I suppose the first thing you’ll want me to do is close up that opening in the side of the cabin.” He said, “Smith replied, ‘No, leave it as it is. It makes it easier to get into
the cabin and I like it that way.’ I think that’s why it filled up so fast with water when the squall hit.”

Be that as it may, planes were called out to search for the three bodies of those aboard, which was to be done whenever there was a dead calm, at which time life preservers were to be dropped when a body was found. Smith’s body and that of another victim were quickly found, but the body of Mary Loomis was not found until days later.

NEW PROPOSALS FOR AIRLINE, AIRPORT CAME IN 1946

While the search for Mary Loomis’s body was going on, in the first week of July 1946, a meeting was held at the city hall to discuss the possibility of getting a federal appropriation to improve Cherryland Airport. M. W. Torkelson, head of the state planning board, and T. J. Jordan, executive secretary of the state aeronautics commission, came from Madison to explain how the funds might be obtained. Members of the county airport committee, the Civil Air Patrol, the Air Power League and an official of North Central Airlines were expected to attend.

Jordan also was expected to explain the provisions of a G. I. Bill pilot training program for which at least 25 local veterans had already applied. The airport already had a qualified instructor, George Meredith, and he owned qualified student planes. Classroom space could be arranged in the airport office building, the Advocate article of July 5, 1946, said.

A week later, after the meeting was held, the Advocate reported that chairman Harry Schuyler, head of the county board, was planning a special meeting of the board to discuss the forming of a master plan for the airport.

In order to keep up with the Air Age, the article said, the airport needed a repair shop and heating equipment and a few other improvements in order to qualify for a G. I. Flying school. By this time, 35 veterans had signed up for a flying course, with a top enrollment of 50 expected.

Karl S. Reynolds, by now the vice-chairman of the state aeronautical commission and president of the newly-formed Wisconsin Flying Farmers Association, spoke at the meeting and said he wanted to build his own hangar at the airport. Russell Austad, chairman of the county board’s airport committee, said the lack of a plan was delaying the drilling of a water well on the property. Austad was a major promoter and facilitator of the airport improvement, and Tom Pinney, Sid Telfer Sr., Dr. T. C. West, Frank Ullsperger, Henry Overbeck, Art
Mac Millin, George Meredith, Enar Ahlstrom, Dr. D. E. Dorchester, John Matter, Ivan Thorp, Leland Thorp and E. M. Valentine, Dr. Victor Foshion and Malcolm Empey were some of the key proponents of the airport improvement.

AVIATION PROMOTION, AIR TRAGEDY NEWS IN 1946

Gypsy Rose Lee, the famous actress, made a visit to Door County in August of 1946. She happened to be putting on a show in Milwaukee, and her agent there, having done business with the owner of Fernwood Gardens (now Mr. G’s), Elmer Gabler, called to see if he would book the show and make arrangements for her troupe to spend the weekend in Door County.

Now, many entertainers, and other famous people like Bob Hope, Dick Cheney, who ran for the Presidency with George W. Bush, and Ted Olson, Ronald Reagan’s and George W. Bush’s attorney, like to come to Door County, but usually they don’t want any publicity. But Gypsy Rose Lee wanted to combine business with pleasure.

Gabler arranged for the troupe to stay at Smith Lodge, which Art and Laura Bertschinger had run as the Lucerne a few years before. George Meredith was asked to give Gypsy an airplane tour of Door County while she was here.

The Advocate of July 26, 1946, gave a little biography of Gypsy. Born in 1914 of Norwegian parents, her real name was Louise Hovick, the name under which she had performed in movies such as “Belle of the Yukon.” She also was a writer, having published her first book called “The G-String Murder,” a detective story, the title of which gives an idea of the kind of dancing she did. The troupe put on a show at Fernwood Gardens on Saturday night and Sunday.

She stayed over several days afterward. When Mr. and Mrs Russell Austad came from dinner at Smith Lodge where Gypsy was staying, they told their young son, Dan, that Gypsy had imbibed a little too much of the grape, in relaxing after her show.

Anyway, Gypsy turned out to be a good all-around girl, taking time to go fishing with George Buck, a cottage owner who lived near Smith Lodge. She landed two northern pike, and a string of perch which she cleaned herself and had fried up for breakfast. Then she went out fishing for bass on Bill Johnson’s 39 foot cruiser, along with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, Bucky Corbisier, Elmer Gabler and his wife, the Chester Walkers, Mrs. Hugo Born and a girl from Gypsy’s dance troupe. She also went for a sail on Dick Stearn’s yacht, Bonny.
That week, it was announced that Julie Bishop and David Bruce, who were already famous Hollywood stars, would be acting at Peninsula Players that summer. Also, John Hutter announced that Chateau Hutter, in the southwest corner of the Town of Egg Harbor, once the site of the village of Graceport, would be open for guests, with dinners for the public available from 6 to 8 p.m. However, the resort never did develop into anything permanent, despite its ideal location.

October 1946, was the month the first peacetime aviation tragedy involving a Door County person occurred.

The Advocate reported that John W. Marston, a flying student of Paul Anderson, had been killed while practicing a landing.

Anderson, 22, son of Mr. and Mrs Clarence Anderson of Washington Island, was employed by Pioneer Aviation Company's Menominee, Michigan, branch and Wally Arntzen, the Escanaba pilot who helped so many Door County people learn to fly.

Landing upside down on a farm west of Birch Creek, near Menominee, owned by Jacob Bayerl, Anderson told Bayerl the plane had gone into a spin, and when he tried to get the controls away from Marston, something jammed and the plane crashed. He had to be sawed out of the plane.

Anderson was taken to St. Joseph's hospital in Menominee; he was soon joined by parents and friends who were flown over from the Island.

"Don't worry about me, Dad, I'll pull through," he said before he lapsed into a coma.

A shortage of nurses in the area led to a call going out over radio station WMAM in Marinette, the only radio station in the area at the time, which was responded to by Mrs. George (Imogene) Meredith, who flew over to help.

Anderson had been a B-24 pilot during World War II. His father had also served in the coast guard during the war, and his grandfather had served during World War I along with Paul's father. Paul had accomplished quite a lot for a 22 year old; he'd joined the Island Lion's Club, the American Legion, and had taken the first degree in the Masonic lodge.

He trained for his Civil Aeronautics Association examination in Escanaba, passed the exam, and joined the staff of Pioneer Aviation the month before the crash.

Arntzen said Anderson was one of the best instructors he employed at the two schools he ran.

John Marston was trying to qualify for his pilot's license before returning to Venezuela, where he had hoped to use a plane in
connection with his work as manager of the Seismograph Service Corporation of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The next Advocate carried the sad news that Clarence Paul Anderson had died of his injuries in the plane crash. His body was brought to the Legion post clubhouse on the Island, where mourners paid their respects. Then it was taken to the new Trinity Lutheran Church, where Rev. Edwin Svendsen conducted the funeral. It was one of the biggest funerals held on the Island since the six Washington Island boys went through the ice in Death's Door in 1935. The Saturday before he was buried, he was to have served as an usher at the wedding of Marilyn Magnusson and John Djuplin.

Marilyn Djuplin recently recalled, "What should have been the happiest day in my life, my wedding day, turned out to be my saddest. Everyone was crying about Paul's death. I remember the last thing I said to Paul before he flew off to Menominee: 'You won't disappoint me, will you Paul? You'll be here in time for the wedding, won't you?' Paul said, 'No, I'll be there.'"

“Our wedding was on Saturday, and Paul’s funeral was on Monday.”

Color bearers were Tess Gudmundsen and Doris Larson Hettiger, and pallbearers were Leonard Ward, Merrill Cornell, Wally Arntzen, Emery Oleson, Murray Cornell and Jerry Legrand, all of whom served in the military during World War II.

In a recent interview, Emery Oleson said, “I knew Paul Anderson very well. He was a very good pilot. I think what happened was the man Paul was training froze at the stick. That happens when you’re doing something like that, diving. I think Paul tried to get the stick out of his hand but couldn’t do it.”

Oleson knows. He served in the U. S. Army Air Corps for three years himself.

PLANS ARE MADE FOR ADDITIONAL AIR SERVICES
AND FIRST LOCAL AIR CASUALTY OCCURS

In November of 1946, George Meredith announced that he was starting a regular air service to Washington Island. Previously, flights to the Island were charter flights. (Unless you owned your own plane, like Claude Cornell, as was mentioned earlier. Emery Oleson explained that Claude bought the Stinson Jr. because his father, John W. Cornell, owned three fish tugs, and Claude would fly over the lake to see if weather conditions were good enough to take the boats out.)
George Meredith planned to have flights to and from the Island on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, with the charge being $5.00, tax included. A minimum of $12.00 would be charged for a special flight.

Meredith had purchased a new Stinson four-place plane for the service. It was equipped with two-way radio with both standard broadcast and short wave band capability, and a speaker for the passengers to hear radio programs.

The Advocate article said, “The cabin is upholstered as luxuriously as the finest automobile, has landing lights, navigation lights and electric starter. Its six-cylinder Franklin air cooled engine gives the ship a cruising speed of 120 miles per hour.”

That was Sumner Harris writing. He kept up with the times. His son, Chandler F. Harris, was in his last year of high school that year, then would go into the U.S. Air Force, and later do some civilian flying, in the process of which he would have a very close call.

By the middle of December, plans were well under way for the second Frigid Fun Flight, under the chairmanship of Karl S. Reynolds.

Poor flying conditions had limited attendance at the event the previous January, but that didn’t dampen the enthusiasm of many people who had already signed up for the January 25-26, 1947 festivities. Another fish boil was planned, as well as a dance and winter sports events.

In on the planning were George Meredith, Dr. Dan Dorchester, Dr. T. C. West, Frank Ullsperger, Ed Fischer, Art Mac Millin and Enar Ahlstrom. Efforts were being made to get Life Magazine to do a feature about the gathering in a February issue.

The news in the Advocate on January 24, 1947, told of the use of an airplane in recovering commercial fishermen’s nets. A thaw had broken up the ice in the bay, and many fishermen had set nets through the ice and were about to lose these expensive items because they couldn’t get out to retrieve them.

So George Meredith and other fliers were recruited to land on the ice floes to allow fishermen to pull up their nets, the loss of which might have caused them to go out of business. Wartime prices for fish had been good, but, now, with much lower prices, they couldn’t afford the loss of their nets.

300 fliers had registered for the Frigid Fun Flight of 1947, according to Advocate reporter Chuck Krause. The event was scheduled to begin on Saturday, with fellowship at the airport and winter sports at Potawatomi State Park. Breakfasts were scheduled for Sunday morning at the Carmen and Swoboda hotels.
George Meredith was assigned as safety officer for the gathering, a light type traffic gun had been borrowed to direct the planes in landing, and the city had allowed a fire truck to be stationed at the airport.

The trout boil was to be described over radio station WMAM in Marinette, and both WMAM and radio station WTMJ in Milwaukee were to broadcast weather and flying condition reports from Friday night through Sunday night.

Recently, through the courtesy of John and Margot Goode, summer residents of Ephraim, a long forgotten Door County aviation tragedy was brought to light. The details are as follows:

On July 27, 1947, Dr. Gordon Stover, a Milwaukee dentist, who still has relatives in Door County, was killed in an airplane crash shortly after taking off from the Ephraim airport. Dr. Stover, age 43, who had flown for 12 years, flew up to spend his weekends in Door County, where his family spent the entire summer. It had rained heavily on Saturday night, while the plane stood outside.

When Dr. Stover came to start the engine for his trip back, it sputtered for a while, as if there was water in the lines, then caught and ran.

To quote the Advocate writer, “Mrs. Stover, always apprehensive about the doctor’s flying, had asked him just before he took off, if he wouldn’t take the car this weekend because of the storm the night before. However, the doctor was convinced that the plane was all right, and with a wave of his hand, ran the north-south runway once and then took off."

The plane reached an altitude of about a hundred feet when the engine quit. Dr. Stover tried to start it, without success, and the plane dropped down and hit a tree and burst into flames. His body was burned beyond recognition before any rescue could be attempted. Don Swenson, a veteran flier, had seen Dr. Stover take off, and was nearby, but couldn’t help. He intercepted the wife and family before they could witness the blazing inferno. Adrian and Adolph Gustafson Jr. were first on the scene but they couldn’t help either.

This was the first aviation death on the Peninsula, and it was to be followed the next year by three more. Tragic as this was, a person was still safer in an airplane than in an automobile.
AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT, FRIGID FUN FLIGHT, MORE AIRLINE DISCUSSIONS OCCUR IN 1947

During the first week in August 1947, Russell Austad and his county aviation committee, which included Tom Pinney sr. and Charles O. Hansen, got the word from the state aeronautical commission that they could go ahead with making a master plan for airport improvement in Door County. The committee immediately authorized Kenneth Green and associates to prepare the plan. T. K. Jordan, secretary of the Wisconsin Aeronautics commission, and F. E. Wolf, operations consultant for the state agency flew to Cherryland Airport to look at Green’s preliminary plans, then flew on to Washington Island to meet with the Island’s airport committee.

All the preliminary plans were approved for the Cherryland Airport improvement, which included the necessary runways and the water supply.

The August 15, 1947, Advocate reported that Ole Rolkvam, an early Norwegian resident of Sand Bay, and a man who had sailed on the clipper ships and schooners, had been given his first airplane ride by airport manager George Meredith. He had climbed to the top of the tower at Potawatomi State park and thought he’d like to even go a little higher.

The on-going saga of the Wisconsin Central Airlines plans again appeared on the front page of the Advocate on August 29, 1947. (The name had been changed from North Central to Wisconsin Central some months before.) Now the airline said it planned to begin flights in October, but the single runway would limit landings to when there were north-south winds. There were plans to build an east-west runway, the article said, but the county still hadn’t purchased the land. At least 3000 feet would be needed for that runway, the article said.

An airline spokesman also said that a fence in front of the administration building would be necessary to keep spectators back of the loading zone. The company would hire a station agent after all the requirements for the airport were fulfilled.

When the schedule was to be initiated, one of the nine Lockheed Electra twin-engine planes would land at Cherryland Airport. Communications would be by VHF radio, and reservations could be made by teletype.

Early in September 1947, the Wisconsin Aeronautics Board held a meeting on Washington Island, and the group was told that Door County’s four airports, Cherryland, Ephraim, Ellison Bay and Washington Island, were included in the state’s airport system.

The state’s master plan called for allocating what today would be a very small amount of money for a total of 181 airports: $500,000.
The money was to help ensure that every one of the state’s counties would have an airport.

Wisconsin Central Airlines made Advocate headlines again on October 17, 1947. Its president, Francis Higgins, flew in from Stevens Point to try to sell stock in the new airlines. He said all he wanted was a token show of interest in the project to have the airline stop at Cherryland Airport on a regular basis.

Leonard Stoneman, the mayor at the time, helped Higgins launch his bond drive at a breakfast meeting. Karl S. Reynolds, anxious to see the project proceed, pledged $2500. C. Raymond Christianson, Virgil Starr, Larry Schumacher, Jack Stoneman Jr., Nic Haines, Felix DeBroux, Richard Allen and Karl S. Reynolds were to handle the sales, with Mayor Stoneman as chairman. The Bank of Sturgeon Bay was to handle the details of the registered securities.

Col. A. Irvine Platt, vice-president and operations executive of the airline, landed the new Lockheed at Cherryland Airport on Wednesday, October 15, 1947, and took up a group of people for a ride, including Mayor Leonard Stoneman, Howard Shaw, Russ Austad and his two sons, Dan and Bill, Charles Hanson, Cyril Virlee, Felix DeBroux, Karl S. Reynolds, Dr. D. E. Dorchester, Mrs. Enar Ahlstrom and Chuck Krause of the Advocate staff.

Again, a delay in starting service in Sturgeon Bay was announced. It was to be postponed because the new airfield in Green Bay, a stop on the way to Sturgeon Bay, was not completed. The Green Bay Field, to be named after Lt. Col. Austin Straubel, who was killed in U. S. Army Air Corps combat in New Guinea in early World War II, was to be administered by Jules “Bud” Parmentier and Frank “Sonny” Cowles, air crops instructors mentioned earlier in this story. Both still have homes in Door County.

In the same Advocate that told of the Wisconsin Central stock drive, we learned that 50 planes of the Wisconsin Aviation Association were expected to tour Door County. A dinner at Smith Lodge was planned, to which local fliers were invited.

The November 28, 1947, Advocate told of plans being made for the 1948 Frigid Fun Flight. The Wisconsin Civil Air Corps was sponsoring the event. Karl S. Reynolds was general chairman of the event. The meeting was held at the American Legion Club.

Incidentally, even the Reynolds family did not know until recently that Karl Reynolds was a World War I veteran. Mark Foster, the new Veteran’s Service Officer in Sturgeon Bay, found in his records that Reynolds had enlisted while a student at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1918, then was honorably discharged when the war ended
suddenly and his services were not needed. His period of service during wartime made him eligible to join the American Legion.

The Civil Air Corps had elected new officers; Dr. T. C. West had replaced Frank Ullsperger, whose other obligations precluded his remaining as president. Henry Overbeck stayed on as vice president and Art Mac Millin remained as secretary and treasurer; he was in charge of reservations for the 1948 Frigid Fun Flight. Art Cermak was to handle transportation between the airport and town; Frank Ullsperger was to be in charge of the dinner and dance, Dr. Dorchester would take care of the entertainment, and Enar Ahlstrom, the publicity.

The third fish boil to be held at the Frigid Fun Flight was in charge of Henry Overbeck and D. C. Pisha, and Ed Robinson was to take care of the concession stand at the airport. The wives and girlfriends of the members would assist as hostesses and supply coffee and doughnuts.

Again, on December 18, 1947, Wisconsin Central got some ink in the Advocate by saying they would handle air express when they started service to Cherryland Airport. Again, this was announced to start February 1, 1948, but only if Austin Straubel Field was finished, and Cherryland Airport had completed its east-west runway.

The last news of 1947 in the Advocate came the day after Christmas, telling about what could have been a tragic event the Sunday before, December 21, 1947.

Art Cermak still laughs about it, but he and Felix DeBroux could have lost their lives that day. Felix DeBroux owned a Piper Cruiser, and he and Art, who at the time was parts manager at DeBroux Auto Sales, knew that planes had been landing on the ice at Idlewild without any problem, although this was early in the winter season.

But the ice was thin where Art and Felix landed, and the plane went partially down into the water below. Both jumped out, getting a good dunking. The plane stayed partially afloat, due to its buoyancy and wide wing expanse.

By late afternoon, Fritz Reynolds, the mechanical wizard of the Reynolds brothers, had figured out a way to salvage the plane. There was a minimum of damage; some of the cowling was bent, and some of the fabric was torn getting it out of the ice, but the prop wasn’t damaged and neither were the skis. Both men and plane lived to fly again, and Art and his wife still go to Florida every year, still live where they always have, on the north end of Cherryland Airport.
THEM WANTED WINGS
CHAPTER SIX
1948-1967

DRAMATIC RESCUE, AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT,
REYNOLDS LOSS IN 1948

The first Advocate of 1948, published on January 2, carried the news of another lifesaving event in the history of Door County aviation.

On the morning of December 29, commercial fisherman Roy Claflin and his sons, Aaron and Keith, had walked out on the ice off Sugar Creek west of White Star Road in Gardner township to set their nets. Finished with the job by 10 a.m., they started walking back to shore, to find they were adrift on an ice floe.

Walking all around the ice floe, they soon found out they were completely cut off from the shore. Today, they probably would have carried a cellular telephone, as did someone who in recent years was adrift on the ice, and would have been able to call back home for help. But it would be 30 years before even members of the Door County Amateur Radio Club could make telephone calls from a hand-held unit, and 45 years before the establishment of cellular telephone service.

It was nearly dark when the Claflins did the only thing they could do to attract attention from the shore, build a fire.

Someone called the coast guard at the canal station. They got as close as they could, but the waters were not navigable. They had radio communications equipment, so they could keep in touch with the shore, and the Door County Traffic Police officers M. W. Millard, Eldon W. Carmody and sheriff Hallie Rowe were able to communicate back to the sheriff’s department with the police radio that had been installed in their vehicles just three years before.

Dr. Dan Dorchester was contacted to see if planes could be used in aiding the rescue of the Claflins, and he immediately organized a large group of volunteers. Headquarters were set up at Cherryland Airport, where manager George Meredith made the facilities available for the group, which included Karl Reynolds, Lougee Stedman, Chuck Ferguson and the city and county police and traffic officers.

Bill Wolter of the Sturgeon Bay Shipbuilding and Drydock company recruited a crew for a tug he was readying, to try to rescue the Claflins, with Capt. Norman Fairchild as the commander. The crew consisted of Emil Luedtke, Jules Corbisier, Bill Wanke and Clifford
Haen. John Purves was to provide life rafts and a larger ship from the Roen Steamship company if the smaller tug could not reach the men.

The coast guard reached the shipyard where the tug was being readied. By midnight, Dr. Dorchester and Karl Reynolds were flying their first trip over the area where the Claflins were trapped. When they had found the spot, they flew back and dropped bundles of emergency supplies into the rear cockpit of a small AT-6 trainer, and Reynolds dropped them out as Dorchester flew the plane.

They knew they had hit their target when the Claflins pulled out the flashlights that had been dropped inside blanket rolls and flashed them up at the plane.

Chuck Krause, the Advocate writer covering the rescue attempt, wrote, "Flying was particularly dangerous, for there was no moon and the only lights available for the snow-covered runway were those thrown from the police vehicles that lined the north and south ends of the field."

Even telephone operators cooperated in the rescue. They broke into circuits and kept lines open to aid in communications. Then, Door County did not have dial telephones, and local operators could do that.

By means of the patchwork of coast guard and police vehicle radios, the rescuers were able to keep in contact with each other, and also convey the news back to the Advocate office. Today, of course, communications would be much more sophisticated, with the Door County Emergency Government radio equipment, cellular and radio equipment of the Door County Sheriff's Department, coast guard radio and global positioning satellite equipment, and a vast number of mobile and hand held radio equipment operated by members of the Door County Amateur Radio Club.

But the rescuers of the Claflins did pretty well with the equipment they had, and organized the rescue attempt efficiently. The third airplane pass supplied the Claflins with life rafts, notes and additional blankets and comforters. Aaron Claflin said after he was rescued, "I was almost hit by one of the life rafts."

At 3:30 a.m., the rescue efforts were suspended and begun again at daybreak, and the Claflins were rescued.

The Claflin boys stopped in at the Advocate office and expressed their undying gratitude for those that were concerned and assisted them in their twelve hour ordeal stranded on the ice.

Something good came out of this harrowing experience. It was the beginning of an effort to coordinate the efforts of all rescue groups in Door County. Unfortunately, that coordination still hadn’t been
achieved less than a year after the Claflins were rescued, when one of Door County’s greatest tragedies occurred.

In the January 9, 1948, Karl S. Reynolds announced that Col. Lester J. Maitland, who had been recently appointed director of the Wisconsin State Aeronautics commission, would be attending the third annual Frigid Fun Flight.

The first time Maitland had visited Door County was in 1928, when he landed in Egg Harbor, probably at Horseshoe Bay Farms, which already had an airstrip. The year before, Maitland and another pilot had made the first flight from Oakland, California to Hawaii.

Art Mac Millin, the reservations chairman of this year’s flight, had ambitiously limited the reservations to 400 guests. Planes were expected to arrive as early as Friday night, February 13. Most fliers would come on Saturday and be able to join the delegate’s luncheon at the Nautical Inn.

On Saturday afternoon, winter sports activities were planned at Potawatomi State Park, and the Lumberjack banquet and dance would be held at the Nightingale in the evening. Sunday morning breakfasts were scheduled for the Swoboda and Carmen hotels. As usual, D. C. Pisha was in charge of the trout boil to be held at the airport hangar.

More than 400 people attended that event. 119 small planes landed, the number reduced by hazardous flying conditions elsewhere, but not in Door County. Saturday was a beautiful winter day here; some fliers who couldn’t make it here on Saturday came in Sunday. By 10:30 a.m., the airport was full of planes. Planes came in from all over the state and some even came in from other states, including Minnesota and Texas, as well as nearby Michigan. Visitors even got in some ice fishing.

Karl Reynolds and his wife were in Rome, Italy, and they sent their greetings. Lt. Chuck Ferguson sent his message from Goose Bay, Labrador, where he was stationed.

Among the well-known people who attended were Col. Maitland and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. T. K. Jordan (he was the executive secretary of the state aeronautics commission), and Mr. and Mrs. Steve Wittman. Wittman was a founder of the Experimental Aeronautics Association, the EEA.

While in Door County, according to the February 20, 1948, Advocate, members of the Wisconsin Civil Air Corps held a meeting at the Nautical Inn, during which Col. Maitland spoke about development of facilities for furthering private flying in the state. Among those attending were Dr. Dan Dorchester, Dr. T. C. West, and Chuck Krause of the Advocate staff.
The March 5, 1948, Advocate reported that the county had purchased land for additions to Cherryland Airport. Russell Austad, chairman of the county board airport committee, announced that the 180-acre Andrew Buechner farm was scheduled to be purchased, along with his home and farm buildings, while allowing him to occupy the place for a limited time until the deal was finalized and development of the field was commenced.

Austad also said a deal to purchase the John Soukup property to the east of the present airport had been made.

The Green Engineering Company of Madison was interested in bidding on the airport improvements. That project would enable Cherryland Airport to accommodate the planes of Wisconsin Central Airlines, which had promised to schedule flights when the east-west runway was completed. That was contingent on the completion of the new Austin Straubel field in Green Bay, which was expected in May or June 1948.

Washington Island, which the Advocate writer on April 9, 1948, said was “One of the most air-minded communities in the state,” voted for a $6,375 project at their town airport. The measure passed at the spring election 116 to 29. To the Island, the airplane was the key to the rest of the world.

On April 30, 1948, an Advocate article announced that the John Soukup property had been purchased at $2800 for the forty acre tract. Russell Austad, chairman of the county airport committee, said that the papers were being readied for the county board meeting on May 10. The property would fulfill the requirement from Wisconsin Central Airlines to provide an east-west runway so its planes could land no matter what direction the wind was blowing from.

Airline officials had told Austad that plans to stop at Sturgeon Bay were going forward, but it would be late summer before service could be started. Again, Austad was told service to Sturgeon Bay couldn’t be started until the new airport at Green Bay was completed.

In May of 1948, Glen Sohns of Ephraim, who had graduated from the Wold-Chamberlain Aeronautics school at Minneapolis, had purchased a Piper cruiser with floats. He was planning to furnish sightseeing or charter flights from the Eagle Inn or the Williams Sohns store. He could carry two passengers besides himself.

That announcement was in the May 5, 1948 Advocate, along with a notice that the Advocate, for the first time, would be published twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

In July of 1948, the Flight “D” headquarters of 227th Composite Squadron of the U. S. Army Air Corps Reserve was formed in
Sturgeon Bay. Air corps reservists in the area were eligible to join. They included Lt. Harold Krauss, flight commander, Lt. Richard Bosman, Lt. Art Mac Millin and Lt. Dan O’Hern of Sturgeon Bay and Lt. Anthony Schilse of Forestville, as well as Lt. Don Fagerstrom of Sister Bay, and 22 other officers in this area. (The name of the group was soon changed to the Air Force Reserve, in line with the official military change from Army Air Corps, which was used until the end of WWII, to the U. S. Air Force, a department now separate from the U. S. Army.)

On July 29, 1948, T. K. Jordan, executive secretary of the Wisconsin State Aeronautical commission, stopped at Cherryland airport on his way to Washington Island. He reported that the plans for the airport improvements had cleared the Chicago office of the Civil Aeronautics Administration, and that he thought Washington would soon give the go-ahead for construction.

A few days later, the announcement came that bids could be submitted for the work. Russell Austad, chairman of the county airport committee, said that the project should cost about $43,000, exclusive of the price of the land.

During this summer of 1948, last minute preparations were being made for the “Peninsula Cavalcade,” Door County’s celebration of Wisconsin’s 100th birthday. The stage extravaganza was held at the Door County Fair, with Laverne Reince of Maplewood starring as Miss Door County. 1948 was also the year that Sadie Cody was burned alive in her furnace by someone who wanted her to give him money.

The September 14 Advocate brought the news that a Milwaukee firm, the A. B. Lynch company, was the low bidder, at $36,706, for the airport work. Chairman Russell Austad and his committee, consisting of Tom Pinney sr., and Charles O. Hanson, were to study the proposal and make recommendations to the county board. The work was to be completed in 90 days.

Included in the work was clearing and grubbing of the land and removing stumps, stone fences and debris, excavating and grading, installing fencing and boundary markers and seeding.

Russell Austad gave a news release on September 30 that Washington had approved the Lynch bid for the new east-west runway, and all that was needed was the signature of the county officials. The Lynch company had left their equipment in Green Bay, where they had done another job, in anticipation of getting the Cherryland Airport job.

A week later, the Lynch company arrived in Sturgeon Bay with its equipment. Work was begun immediately, with a crew of 20 men.
The fencerows and stone piles were removed and bulldozers were set to uprooting the trees. Thirty ton earthmovers transported a gravel knoll a half mile west to help level the terrain so the 3200 foot runway could be built. That would enable planes to land east and west, as well as north and south.

The November 16, 1948, Advocate carried a front page photo of four American Legion members from Door County who had just received their membership cards, Don Reynolds, Karl S. Reynolds, Henry Overbeck and Frank Ullsperger, along with that of Frank Marek, local post service officer.

The occasion being commemorated was the flying to Milwaukee of 226 Door County enrollments in the Legion. Naturally, with about 2500 local men and women from the county serving in the armed forces in World War II, there were a huge number eligible to join the Legion. The Archie Lackshire post alone hoped to enroll as many as 500. (Actually, most veterans never join a veteran’s organization, just being glad to get out of a war alive and get on with their lives.)

Karl Reynolds flew the group to Milwaukee with his new Beechcraft Bonanza, and they were greeted at Mitchell Field by the state officers. They then attended a buffet lunch at the Blatz auditorium.

Another article in that issue discussed the never-ending battle to get Wisconsin Central to begin airline service to Sturgeon Bay. Several Upper Michigan cities had joined with Sturgeon Bay to institute federal action. Promises had been followed by more promises, but there seemed to be no action by the airlines.

The cities concerned held a meeting in Iron Mountain, to which Wisconsin Central president Francis Higgins was invited, but he sent a letter instead.

Higgins said in the letter that before service could begin, all federal improvements to airports must be completed; that he was having trouble securing suitable aircraft for the venture; that he was having trouble with financing. (Remember the bond drive? Art Cermak said recently he bought stock in the company.)

Interest in improving air transportation to and from Door County was growing by leaps and bounds, when, on December 4, 1948, one of Door County’s greatest tragedies occurred. In the book, “The Story of Wisconsin’s Great Canning Industry,” we find this bulletin from the Wisconsin Canner’s Association:

“Three of the leading figures in the Wisconsin cherry industry were killed Saturday evening, December 4, when their plane crashed nine miles north of Sturgeon Bay in fog and bad weather. They were
Karl S. Reynolds, vice-president and treasurer of Reynolds Brothers, Inc.; Lougee Stedman, general manager and secretary-treasurer of Fruit Growers Cooperative; and E. L. Kossow, secretary of Reynolds Brothers, Inc.

"The three men were returning from a conference on labor supply matters at Beaver Dam and took off from the Fond du Lac airport about 4:45 p.m. in the private plane piloted by Karl Reynolds. The crash occurred about 6:00 p.m. Saturday evening but the bodies were not found until Sunday morning.

"Karl S. Reynolds, who was 49, had long been active in industry and civic affairs. The son of a pioneer canner, William S. Reynolds, Karl was a member of the Old Guard Society and had served in various offices and on various committees of the state and national canners associations, the National Red Cherry Institute and the Wisconsin Horticultural Society. He had also served as executive vice-president of the Wisconsin State Chamber of Commerce and had been a director of the organization since 1929. He was active in aviation circles having been appointed by the Governor to the State Aeronautics Commission and having headed the Wisconsin Flying Farmers and the Wisconsin Civil Air Patrol.

"He is survived by his wife and four children, and by three brothers, including Don, who is president of Reynolds Brothers, Inc.

"Lougee Stedman, who was 41, had been general manager of Fruit Growers Cooperative since 1946 and had been a practicing attorney in Sturgeon Bay prior to that time. He is survived by his wife and three children.

"Ervin L. Kossow, who was 47, had been with the Reynolds firm for 29 years and was office manager in addition to being secretary. He is survived by his wife and one child."

The loss of these men was a great blow to the cherry industry, and Reynolds loss was also a great blow to the advancement of Door County aviation. The load had to be taken up by others.

Speculation as to the cause of the crash continues to this day, but probably the best explanation was given by the late Frank Ullsperger, a World War II air corps veteran flyer, cherry industry keystone and friend of all three men who were lost.

In a 1970s interview, Frank Ullsperger said, "Karl probably adjusted the altimeter at Fond du Lac, but because of the lower air pressure in the bad weather up here, the altimeter didn't read right, and, with the fog, he didn't realize he was flying in the tree tops."

Sumner Harris, editor of the Advocate, whose son, Chandler, was a pilot, wrote this editorial: "The triple tragedy of last Saturday night
when a plane crash caused the death of Karl S. Reynolds, Lougee Stedman and Ervin Kossow was tragic in more ways than one.

"Besides being a severe blow to the respective families and companies represented, the loss was also a loss to community, state and nation. Seldom has any single tragedy been so widespread in effect.

"News of the accident had scarcely spread before telegrams poured in from all parts of the United States, containing words of high tribute. On every hand one heard nothing but praise.

"The answer to it all is public and professional service. All three men gave unselfishly of the time to their community and the advancement of the industries in which they were engaged. Theirs will be an example never to be forgotten in the history of Door County and the nation."

Certainly it was true that the story traveled throughout the nation, because a Reynolds employee, Gust Notz, even heard about it in the little town of Ely, Nevada, where he was vacationing.

The complete story of the crash was told in the December 6, 1948, Door County Advocate, and anyone who lived here at the time remembers the tragic event. Suffice it to say here that one legacy of Karl Reynolds is that he laid the foundation for the future of Door County aviation.

At this time, Cherryland Airport did not have any radio communications equipment. That is not surprising, considering all radio equipment manufacturers only a short time before had been geared up for producing military radio equipment. Most of the companies were making plans to build television equipment, with television stations hustling to get on the air. Also, there was a matter of finances, with the bills for a war just completed still having to be paid.

A December 9, 1948, Advocate, highlighted the fact that even the big airports didn’t have radio communications equipment. Austin Straubel field, newly constructed, was said to taken steps to install two-way radio and a radio system for guiding planes to the field by the spring of 1949. The Green Bay weather station was about to move to the field and provide weather information for aircraft.

The article said, "Officials explained that the new equipment would be available for the use by all properly equipped planes flying in northeastern Wisconsin. Aviators from nearby fields who are unable to land at their home fields due to weather conditions may make use of the Green Bay radio equipment to land there. The radio guidance equipment will be connected with the one now in operation at Oneida."

Regarding airport safety devices, someone started a rumor after the Reynolds’ crash that the beacon at Cherryland Airport had not been
on the night of the crash. Airport manager George Meredith, as well as county police officer Joe Antonissen and others present at the airport that night stated that the beacon was on. In fact, it was turned on at 3:30 that afternoon because of the early darkness caused by fog and rain.

"The Civil Aeronautics Board authorized its use beginning on November 27, and it has been turned on daily since then," said Meredith.

1948 ENDS WITH LOCAL MAN, LT. CHARLES FERGUSON, IN WORLD NEWS

The final aviation news of 1948 was reported on December 21 by the Door County Advocate.

"Ferguson Marooned on Ice Cap in Greenland," read the Advocate headline. Air Force pilot Charles Ferguson, a son of attorney and Mrs. H. M. Ferguson had joined what was then called the U. S. Army Air Corps shortly after graduating from Sturgeon Bay High School in 1943. He became a second lieutenant and was assigned to fly B-29 bombers. World War II was over before he could get into any action.

After the war, Ferguson entered the reserves, and enrolled at Lawrence College in Appleton. He studied business administration, but still had his eye on getting a permanent commission in the air force by taking a one year assignment in Greenland. By taking an assignment in such a God-forsaken place, he could gain the equivalent of 2 ½ years of foreign service.

On November 3, 1948, Ferguson was sent to Greenland from the relatively tropical digs of Goose Bay, Labrador. Flying out of Bluie West One on Greenland, Ferguson found out what it was to fly in "The Land of the Midnight Sun," where it was dark almost 24 hours a day during the winter. On a flight to Iceland, he had to land by moonlight.

Trouble was the daily routine of the air force men on Iceland. Ferguson himself had to circle the field at Bluie West One for an hour and a half before he could even find it. The seven man crew of a C-47 transport plane had worse luck. When Charles had only five days left to serve in the icebox of the world, the C-47 had to set down on the ice, 110 miles from their headquarters.

Ferguson was sent out to rescue the men with his B-17 bomber, but the plane became bogged down in the snow on takeoff. Now there were nine marooned men instead of seven.
Bad luck also followed the two men who were dropped down in gliders that were supposed be towed up with the marooned men. The tow line broke, stranding the men and the gliders.

Meanwhile, they were basking in 40 degree below temperatures, but they were fairly comfortable in snow block houses equipped with stoves. Extra clothing, food and even mail were dropped on the site. And they had communications, the likes of which are very common today, in the age of the cellular telephone. Mountain climbers take them along today, as do those who travel on the sea, the desert and in the woods. In recent years, an ice fisherman who had drifted out on an ice floe in Green Bay was rescued with ease when he made a cell phone call. Contrast this to the plight of the Claflins fifty years ago.

By 1949, military radio communications were developed well enough so that the men marooned on Greenland were able to talk to their folks back home by what the Advocate story called a radio phone. This probably involved amateur radio, and amateur radio operators had been allowed to go back on the air as soon as World War II ended.

Door County radio amateurs, including Clayton Cardy, W9OVO, had already put into use a device that had seen its beginning before the war, the auto patch. They could receive a message from another radio amateur who had someone on the telephone in their city, which might be thousands of miles away, and connect the caller to a telephone in another city. Thus, someone in San Francisco could call a person in New York, with amateur radio making the connection.

This is the way the men marooned in Greenland may have communicated with home. Around this time, the MARS network, in which amateur radio operators used a portion of the radio band not normally permitted for amateur use to pass messages along between people in the military service and their friends and relatives at home. For their efforts the radio amateurs received pieces of surplus WWII radio equipment, which they converted to amateur use. Members of the Door County Amateur Radio Club, which was formed a year after Ferguson was marooned on Greenland, often relayed messages from service men and women to their relatives in Door County.

Four days before Christmas, the Advocate speculated that Lt. Ferguson would have a white Christmas. That was a sure bet, because it was winter in Greenland, and, even in the summer about all you saw was snow. The air force was expected to drop Christmas dinner, with turkey and all, for the men.

Three days after Christmas, the news came that the 13 men had been rescued. Two more glider men had been added to the group when another rescue attempt failed.
The news that the group had been rescued got to Sturgeon Bay via a call from the Chicago Herald and Examiner newspaper to Attorney Ferguson and his wife. Naturally, the media was tuned in to what had become the biggest news event of the week.

Rescue equipment was rushed to the area. The carrier Saipan was on its way from Norfolk, Virginia, with helicopters and other rescue equipment, but it ran into 100 mile an hour winds. Other rescue equipment had gathered at Goose Bay, Labrador, including more gliders, big C-82 "Flying Boxcars" and ski-equipped civilian aircraft.

Finally, a C-47 transport was able to land near the men, load them up, and take off in the limited space with the aid of jets and skis instead of wheels. Their ordeal was finally over.

As reported by the January 6, 1949, Advocate, Attorney Ferguson and his wife had a happy surprise shortly thereafter. Their son Charles was given a leave to come home.

Describing his adventure to the Advocate reporter he said, "It was much like a deer hunting camp--without the deer, just one polar bear. But it was kind of cool the first few days."

Ferguson said he had been asked by several organizations to talk at their meetings, during his 13 day leave. But he said he wanted to save enough time to go to Biloxi, Mississippi, to visit his brother Major Robert Ferguson, who was also an air force pilot.

Speaking of his being marooned on Greenland he said, "Morale was high, because we knew we were in no danger." He said that the men slept from 10 to 14 hours each night and spent the short daylight time communicating with their radio equipment and building their ice houses. A lone 300-400 polar bear roamed near the camp, seeming to have become separated from his fellows, since polar bears had never before been seen in that area.

Plenty of supplies had been dropped into the area, including portable generators, which were used to recharge the batteries powering the light system they had set up.

When Ferguson went out to attempt to rescue the men who had originally crashed, he only had an hour of daylight in which to search. On the fourth day, he located the plane, and dropped a walkie-talkie down so the men could communicate with him, since their plane’s radio had been damaged in the crash.

Ferguson landed his plane near the disabled one, but damaged the landing gear in the snow-covered ice, and thus his crew joined the marooned men.

The story of how Ferguson and the others made the best of their situation is a thrilling one, and well worth while looking up at the Door
County library in the microfilm of the Advocate. Ferguson let the marooned men talk on the radio to their wives back at the Greenland base.

After the ski plane arrived and everyone was rescued, it was back to the Greenland base for Ferguson, and then back to Goose Bay. Then on to New York, where he was kept busy by press conferences, radio show and television shows and newspaper interviews. Then, back to the place that meant most to him, Sturgeon Bay.

**WISCONSIN CENTRAL SPARRING, FRIGID FUN FLIGHT NEWS IN EARLY 1949**

The January 27 Advocate carried the first aviation news of 1949. It was the same old song and dance with Wisconsin Central Airlines. We used to say, “You sound like a broken record,” but most young people today don’t know what that means, because phonograph records aren’t made any more, and the ones that are left don’t break and repeat the same line over and over again.

But that’s the case with Wisconsin Central. Again, in response to Chamber of Commerce president Duncan Thorp’s query, President Francis Higgins of Wisconsin Central assured him that the company still intended to start daily service to and from Sturgeon Bay.

Higgins asked if the east-west runway had been completed. He said, as if to reassure Thorp, that the airline was really coming in, whether the seeding of that runway had taken root well enough so it wouldn’t be damaged by his planes landing. Otherwise he suggested waiting for service until the sod was well rooted.

Russell Austad informed Higgins, through Thorp, that seeding of the east-west landing strip was planned for the spring of 1949. The north-south runway was in good shape, but Higgins had earlier said that he had to be assured both runways would be available so landings could be made regardless of wind direction.

That January 27 paper also told of the plans for the 1949 Frigid Fun Flight. Major Bob Ferguson, who was stationed at the Keesler Field, Mississippi, air force base, had offered to bring about 20 planes and pilots to the February 12-13 event, if accommodations for the men could be provided. Dr. Dan Dorchester, program chairman for the flight accepted the offer. Maj. Ferguson and possibly his brother, Lt. Charles Ferguson, were expected to fly in.

The public was asked to offer the use of fish shanties on the bay so the visitors, expected to total as many as 500, could try their hands at the sport.
The February 1 Advocate told of a blinding snow storm that had hit the county, along with extremely cold weather. George Meredith was called upon to fly to Washington Island to take several seriously ill people to the hospital. The temperature had dropped to -10 degrees and blowing and drifting snow had closed many of the roads; ferry trips across Death’s Door couldn’t be counted upon.

"On his first attempt to the Island," said the Advocate writer, "Meredith made an emergency landing near Carlsville when he developed an oil problem. He was able to land safely and no one was injured."

A week later the news came that Art Mac Millin, who was in charge of reservations for the Frigid Fun Flight, had a lot of big names signed up for the Frigid Fun Flight.

Among them was Col. Lester Maitland, director of the Wisconsin Aeronautics commission and also the man who held the same position in Minnesota, L. L. Schroeder. Also coming was Gordon Leonard, who replaced Karl Reynolds on the state commission, and T. K. Jordan, the commission’s executive secretary.

The Milwaukee Journal was sending up writer James C. Spalding, and Gordon Thomas from radio station WTMJ was expected to fly in with his "Red Bird." The "Flying Farmers" and Wisconsin Civil Air Corps were expected to send contingents. The Civil Air Patrol would be represented by Major Roger Lathrope of Waukesha.

Meanwhile, on Washington Island, the snow was still a problem. When high school student Bobby Foss broke his leg, the Island airfield had to be plowed so George Meredith could land and take Foss off to Door County Memorial Hospital.

In the February 10 article that told of that emergency flight, it was announced that the army would send two big air rescue planes to the Frigid Fun Flight. One would come from Selfridge Field, Michigan, and the other would fly in from Shreveport, Louisiana. One plane would be a B-17, and the other would be a PBY. This event had been suggested by Lt. Charles Ferguson; he probably wouldn’t be coming, because he was winding up his work in Greenland.

The report on the 4th Frigid Fun Flight was published on February 15. The weather prediction for the weekend was so bad that many of the 300 people attending came by car instead of plane, but they had a good time. 35 planes had arrived at the airport by Saturday afternoon.

The Saturday night "lumberjack" banquet at the Nightingale was so well attended that the supper club ran out of chicken, but the chef fried up ham for the overflow crowd.
The crowd observed a minute of silence in memory of Karl Reynolds. D. W. Reynolds, President of Reynolds Brothers, sent some of the company’s products to the banquet to be given out as door prizes. He said in a letter accompanying the gifts:

“This weekend will be a big event, but it won’t be quite the same for many with Karl out of the picture...Naturally our spirits are a little low, but we do know that he would want all of us to carry on in the same fine spirit that was so much a part of him. Please convey our very best wishes to all of Karl’s friends.”

On Sunday, planes flew over Bayside Cemetery in a further tribute to Karl.

Dr. Dan Dorchester was the master of ceremonies for the event. Among the prominent people attending was Col. Lester Maitland. The story doesn’t say if Gordon Thomas from WTMJ flew up from Milwaukee, but perhaps he can be contacted to find out, because in recent years he was still an announcer at the station.

A big draw was the Catalina Flying Boat (PBY), a plane that was used for air rescues, based at Selfridge Air Force Base in Michigan. Also the B-25 bomber was flown up from the Barksdale Air Force Base at Shreveport, Louisiana.

Sunday’s weather report was so bad that most of the planes left too early for their pilots and passengers to stay for the fish boil. Some of the planes that left later had to come back to Cherryland Airport because of sleet.

Among the stranded planes was the B-25. When the crew decided to leave, they had difficulty starting the big engines. They were ready to summon help from Barksdale, when contractor Vernon Olson suggested that booster batteries might be obtained right here in Door County. Russ Bieri from the Door County Highway Department and Capt. Roen from the Dry Dock were contacted and they rushed batteries to the airport. With the help of the batteries and George Meredith’s heater, the engines were started and the B-25 took off. On Tuesday noon, the bomber soared over the city with clear skies in all directions.

Air rescue equipment, the likes of which Lt. Charles Ferguson had become very familiar with and grateful for, was displayed at Prange’s to illustrate part of what the PBY carried. Monday evening, the PBY had to leave quickly to help look for a light plane that was lost near Hammond, Michigan. The Flying Fortress was unable to come because it was sent on a mission to Bermuda.
ISLAND AIRPORT AID, BIG AIR EVENT, WISCONSIN CENTRAL IN 1949 NEWS

To place these events in proper perspective, 1949 was the year that Sheriff Jack Pivonka was having a big argument with the Door County Board over the management of the Safety Building, and the year Elmer Bohn built his new drug store.

It was also the year of Fred Peterson’s first cruise with the Utopia, which also was Ellsworth Peterson’s wedding trip. Movies taken on the trip created a sensation at the boat show in Chicago. Also shown at that February event were films made of Egg Harbor and Fish Creek in 1938. Those movies are still in existence.

About a week after the Frigid Fun Flight of 1949, the Advocate announced that Col. Lester Maitland, who had first flown to Egg Harbor in 1928, had been named to direct the aeronautics commission in Michigan on March 1. The article said he had joined the army aviation branch in 1917. He’d been at Clark Field in Manila when the Japanese attacked in 1941, and was named director of the Wisconsin Aeronautics Commission on December 13, 1947. This week was also noted for the placement of a fire truck on Sturgeon Bay’s West Side, due to pressure from residents for fire protection not dependent on the bridge.

The Advocate headlines of February 24, 1949 read, “Federal Aid Granted to Washington Island Airport.” Washington news releases said the grant was for $72,000, but Island town chairman Charles O. Hansen said the town had only asked for $7,200. No doubt Washington took off the extra zero, but there’s no place that would have deserved the additional amount more.

Due to its isolation, no other place in Wisconsin appreciated an airport as much. The Island had its own town airport since 1928. Often emergency flights were made, but there was only one north-south runway. The grant would allow for two new runways, one northeast-southwest and another northwest-southeast.

Already in 1949, some people were flying to their Island second homes. Dr. “Pike” Imig from Sheboygan left a 1937 Buick sedan at the Island airport so he could fly up and have transportation to his home on the Island.

The St. Patrick’s Day Advocate of 1949 carried another bit of blarney from Mr. Higgins of Wisconsin Central Airlines. He still assured the Chamber of Commerce and airport committee chairman Russell Austad that service to Sturgeon Bay was contemplated.
To make a long story short, his problem again was finances. He
did indeed have some flights and 10 planes going, with an annual
payroll of $500,000, but the airline was operating in areas in which a
large volume of traffic was assured.

The latest carrot Higgins held out was the likelihood that air
service to Sturgeon Bay would start in June.

The Advocate predicted in its April 7 issue that no local people
would attend a meeting regarding Wisconsin Central facilities to be
discussed at an April 12 meeting in Iron Mountain. Word was that it
would concern only Upper Michigan service.

Felix DeBroux and Enar Ahlstrom, being Wisconsin Central
stockholders along with Art Cermak and others, had attended the
annual meeting of the company in Clintonville earlier in the week.
They were told that the airline’s requirement for the east-west runway
had been raised to 3500 feet; the airport committee had just completed
a 3400 feet runway, and now the bar was raised another 100 feet.
DeBroux and Ahlstrom must have felt as if they were just being strung
along.

Russell Austad, chairman of the county board’s airport
committee, said he had just met with the state aeronautical commission,
and they had not said anything about the extra hundred foot
requirement.

The May 12 Advocate told of an aviation promotion sponsored
by the local chapter of the Civil Air Corps in which airport manager
George Meredith played an important role.

Statewide, the occasion was Aviation Promotion Day. The local
celebration was held at Cherryland Airport, and for $1.00, one could
take an airplane ride. In addition, George Meredith was to put on a
flying demonstration in which he would climb to 3500 feet and do
spins from steep climbing turns, loops and stalls, and go back to 3500
feet and make a “dead stick” landing while using the approach
normally used under power.

Also, there was to be a speed and economy race between a light
plane and an automobile on a run to the Algoma airport and back, both
observing all road or flying rules. There was also to be a spot landing
contest, and a chance for anyone age 16, 30 and 60, to take off and
land a dual control plane (accompanied by instructor George Meredith)
after only one lesson.

This was a good example of the courage and inventiveness of
George Meredith in the promotion of aviation of Door County. One
only needs to look at his photograph to see that this was a young man
of courage and daring. But, after all, George, as well as Bud
Parmentier and Frank Cowles, had taken the dangerous job of training novice pilots during World War II.

In addition to those activities, the club had planned a dance at the Nightingale, at which two airplane rides to Washington Island were offered as door prizes.

The next week, the Advocate told of three people who were able to fly a plane after just one lesson from George Meredith. They were Emergl Chaudoir, age 16; William Wanke, age 29; and Charles Knudson, age 62.

Meredith explained the instruments to each one, then gave them instructions for each step of take off and landing. Interviewed over the airport public address system, each expressed a desire to fly again.

In the plane-auto race, of course the auto won. Bill Edwards, accompanied by Cleo Hatch, flew one of Meredith’s Aeroncas, and Bob Peterson drove the Peterson Builders station wagon, accompanied by his children and Charles Leasum Jr.

The one dollar flights to see the cherry blossoms tied up Meredith, so young Bob Warner volunteered to do the stunt flying. Hugo McLaughlin accompanied him, both wearing parachutes as Warner climbed to 3500 feet and looped the loop and followed that by several tail spins.

Warner also entered the “spot” contest, in which the contestant had to land as close as he could to a spot marked on the runway. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Marx won first place in that contest, and Warner won second. Maurice Shaffer won third, and Lloyd Anderson, police officer Danny O’Hern and William Edwards also entered.

By the way, Bob Warner now admits, that yes, the stories that he once flew under the Sturgeon Bay bridge are true. It’s kind of an urban legend that just about everyone in Door County has heard, and it’s true.

For this event, Lt. Charles Ferguson was able to fly in, with an amphibious navy bomber based at Selfridge Field, Michigan. He and his crew had been on a search mission for a plane missing near Chicago.

The promotion was a big success, with more people lining up for the $1.00 rides than George Meredith could handle with his Stinson.

The news on July 12 was that 22 people from Chicago had flown to the Fish Creek-Ephraim airport in a DC-3. The Maun and Lund company had selected the Thorp Hotel for a combined company meeting and fishing outing. The enthusiastic group predicted that such vacations by air would become commonplace in the coming years. Actually, this hasn’t become that common, with the advent of better roads, such as I-43 making it easier to drive to Door County and having
the convenience of having personal transportation available while in Door County. The transformation of Highway 57 to four lanes will probably make it even more desirable to drive to Door County than fly. But there is still going to be a great increase in air travel for business and recreational travelers as tourist and business enterprises grow.

News came on July 12 that Capt. W. J. Hadden, the ex-fish pilot, had been killed in a plane crash.

"Jack" Hadden, as narrated earlier, had started a business on August 11, 1939, in which he transported fish from Door County to St. Louis, thus earning the title of "The Flying Fish Peddler." The business was discontinued after it become apparent that it was too costly to ship fish that way that far.

Hadden had been hired by the Chicago based Fairbanks-Morse company, manufacturers of engines and radios, to fly vice president C. H. Morse III for a business trip. The twin engine plane crashed about 30 miles east of Peoria, killing Hadden, the co-pilot and Morse.

Two days after this news, the Wisconsin Central Airplanes saga surfaced again. This time, there was a rumor that the airline wanted to drop the idea of stopping at Cherryland Airport to take on passengers.

Duncan Thorp, executive secretary of the Door County Chamber of Commerce wrote the company asking for a confirmation or denial. Several days later, airline executive Higgins wrote to Dr. Dorchester as Thorp had requested.

He denied that cancellation of the stop at Cherryland Airport was planned. He said that the misunderstanding probably came from a story in which it was said the company was not planning new stops at Waukesha, Watertown, Baraboo and Appleton, since the company already had stops close to those cities.

Higgin’s reasoning for that decision is a little hard to understand, but it seems that those cities were all expanding their airports to handle larger planes, which would probably cut down on the need for the kind of service Higgins could offer. He said in the letter to Dr. Dorchester that he didn’t feel these cities could justify the building of these expensive expansions.

Yet, the handwriting was on the wall. Chicago O’Hare and Milwaukee’s Mitchell Field, as well as expansion of the Waukesha airport soon developed to meet the needs of these cities after World War II. Air service to Sturgeon Bay was to eventually come in a different way.
REYNOLDS MEMORIALS, WISCONSIN CENTRAL
STALEMATE IN MID 1949

The August 11 Advocate told of two memorials to Karl Reynolds and Ervin Kossow. One was a massive rock, to which was attached a plaque with the names of these two faithful Reynolds employees who were killed in the airplane crash of December 4, 1948. The other was an oxygen tent to be donated to Door County Memorial Hospital.

It was ironic that Karl Reynolds himself had conferred with his brother Don on the idea of building a little park on Reynolds land about a mile south of the Reynolds plant on Reynolds Road. (This is the site where a number of radio station antennas are now located.) Karl had wanted a plaque giving a history of the company.

The rock originally came from the old Reynolds airport property on Highway 57 located about a mile east of the junction of Highways 42 and 57 in Sevastopol township.

A week later the newspaper carried a story about the dedication of the monument. Several hundred people attended the ceremony. Attorney William Wagener made the dedicatory speech:

“This memorial testifies to the fact that these boys will not be forgotten by those who lived and worked with them. We should praise those who made the memorial possible so that those to come will also not forget.”

In the earlier 1990s, with the Reynolds property on which the monument was located was sold to other interests, with the Reynolds Preserving Company long a thing of the past, by about thirty years, the county parks commission decided to move the monument out to the airport.

There, its history seemed to be misinterpreted. By this time, a little bronze tablet with the name of Eli Solway, who some say never flew in an airplane, had been added to the rock.

Then some people said, “Why is Eli Solway’s name on the monument? He never flew in an airplane. He didn’t die in the crash; he died of natural causes about ten years after the crash. Lougee Stedman’s name should be on there; he died in the crash.”

The controversy hinged around the fact that it had been forgotten that the memorial was not for the crash, but for three faithful Reynolds employees. Stedman, community icon that he was, was employee of Fruit Growers Cooperative.

A solution was worked out in the law office of Tom Reynolds, who was only four years old when his father was killed. A plaque is to be placed on one side of the monument at the airport, giving a brief
history of Reynolds Brothers. Another plaque will be placed on the other side of the monument, telling about the crash and including the name of Lougee Stedman.

At the same time and at the same park where the monument was dedicated, the Reynolds Cherryland Growers presented a gift to Door County Memorial Hospital. It was an oxygen tent and the equipment that went with it, also dedicated to the memory of Karl Reynolds and Irvin Kossow. Ray Lensmeyer, chairman of Reynolds Cherryland Growers and a Reynolds executive, Cedric Dreutzer, presented the machine to Tom Pinney Sr., chairman of the hospital board of trustees and board member A. J. Noren.

The September 22 issue of the Advocate told of another memorial to Karl Reynolds and Irvin Kossow by the Reynolds corporation. Both men belonged to Hope Congregational Church (now Hope United Church of Christ.) This gift consisted of audio visual equipment, a sound movie projector, and a sound film strip projector. The gifts were accepted at a Sunday evening dedication service by pastor Emerson W. Harris. Both machines were then demonstrated by using a film strip and movie with religious themes. A fellowship hour was held afterward at which home-church cooperation in the religious growth of the congregation’s children was discussed.

The never-ending saga of Wisconsin Central Airlines was continued in the October 18 issue of the Advocate. News came that Wisconsin Central was battling another airline, Nationwide, for Upper Peninsula of Michigan air trade. Whether or not this involved getting exclusive rights to serve the area from the federal Civil Aeronautics board is not explained in the article, but Duncan Thorp and Dr. Dan Dorchester wanted to know if new airport regulations would further delay Wisconsin Central from providing service to Cherryland Airport. They wrote a letter to Mr. Higgins of Wisconsin Central asking if there was still something they must do to meet the airline’s requirements.

The Door County Board had already voted a good deal of federal and county money toward providing a longer east and west runway, and Russell Austad, chairman of the airport committee had received a letter from Tom Jordan, secretary of the state aeronautics board, asking when he could come up for a final inspection.

“All we have to complete the project is to put up some line fences and markers,” Austad had replied.

Two days later came the news that Wisconsin Central would soon begin service to Menominee, Marquette, Ironwood and Houghton-Hancock, Michigan. “Within 30 days,” the article said. No word had
yet come from Higgins in reply to Thorp, Dorchester and Austad’s query about service to Sturgeon Bay.

By November 15, 1949, much work had been done to improve the Gibraltar-Ephraim airport. The Door County Highway Department had been doing the grading, paid for by federal, state and local funds. A new 2200 foot main runway would be seeded in the spring, and a new road in to the airport from County A had been built. The highway department men would work on makers for the airport during the winter, the article said.

In the same paper, the plans for the 1950 Frigid Fun Flight, the fifth annual flight, was announced. Incidentally, at this writing at least three of the people involved in that celebration still live near the airport, Mr. and Mrs. Art Cermak and Mrs. Imogene (George) Meredith. They always have, and always will be, interested in Door County aviation. The 1950 event was scheduled for February 11-12.

The week before the Frigid Fun Flight of 1950, a photo in the Advocate showed a war surplus Link Trainer that was being used to train high school students in the basics of flying, on the ground. Hugo McLaughlin, who had been a Link instructor and maintenance man in the service, led the instruction of students such as Dan Nielson and Emergl Chaudoir. Optometrist Dr. T. C. West was in charge of the classes, and Jim Hyskey, a radio amateur, taught the group the International code and communications techniques.

In the same issue of the paper, it was told that a DePere man, James J. Mulva, had plans to start an air freight line. The enterprise, North Star Incorporated, was intended to pick up mail, parcels and similar freight at cities not provided with similar air services.

"Don’t get me wrong," cautioned Mulva in a telephone interview. "It isn’t mine or my partner’s intention to cause any truck lines any trouble. We simply plan to give air service to some communities that don’t now have it."

Mulva hadn’t yet approached Russell Austad or others in the Sturgeon Bay community with an offer of the service. Advocate editor Sumner Harris included a parenthetical comment in the article, saying that Mulva’s plans didn’t seem to infringe on Wisconsin Central Airline’s franchise.

FRIGID FUN FLIGHTS GONE, WISCONSIN CENTRAL GONE, AIRPORT THRIVES

Final plans for the 1950 Frigid Fun flight were announced in the February 9 Advocate. Gordon Thomas from WTMJ in Milwaukee was
scheduled to fly in with his Red Bird. Arthur Godfrey had sent his regrets because of his radio and t.v. commitments, but he encouraged everyone to "have fun."

This was a month after the Door County Amateur Radio Club was formed, and of its members, Clayton Cardy, W9OVO, had offered the services of an organization to which many club members belonged, the Badger Emergency Net, to help out by providing weather reports. He had sent a test message a few days before, the article said.

This issue of the paper, incidentally, was the one in which it was announced that Jane Livingston (who later married Stanley Greene) had been named head of the Door-Kewaunee regional library system. This was the year that the Bookmobile was put on the road to serve the rural areas.

The 1950 Frigid Fun Flight was another big success, but Dr. Dorchester could not attend. He was at Wesley Memorial Hospital in Chicago having knee surgery, according to his daughter Janet (Dorchester) Nicholson.

And what of Wisconsin Central's plans? The April 6 Advocate told of a new brainstorm on WCA's part. Felix DeBroux flew to Clintonville to meet with Mr. Higgins, who proposed that he run a station wagon from Cherryland airport to Austin Straubel in Green Bay to carry passengers and mail until Cherryland Airport had built a hard-surfaced runway.

By this time Russell Austad and Dr. Dorchester and the airport committee were probably waiting with baited breath for the expiration date of WCA's franchise, which was coming up that fall. The August 31 Advocate told of a meeting at the Beaumont Hotel in Green Bay with Mr. Higgins of the airline which Felix DeBroux and Duncan Thorp flew down to attend.

The CAB (Civilian Aviation Board) was getting a little tired of waiting for Wisconsin Central to act on its franchise and therefore questioning whether to give the airline an extension on its franchise. Higgins said the airline might have to wait a year or more for the CAB to decide on the extension.

Said the Advocate writer, "As for scheduled service to Sturgeon Bay, it appears several years away. Door County is unlikely to invest any vast amount in airport improvements until Wisconsin Central is granted either a permanent franchise or a long term temporary extension. Meanwhile, Wisconsin Central plans to add DC-3s which would require runways at least 3,750 feet long--longer than any runway now at Cherryland Airport."
Thus, the dream of Cherryland Airport becoming a stop on the schedule of even a mid-sized airline seemed further away than ever for its enthusiastic supporters, Russell Austad, Dr. Dan Dorchester, George Meredith and Duncan Thorp and all the others who supported and worked for the plan.

Meanwhile, Cherryland Airport was becoming more and more popular with the pilots of small planes. The November 24 Advocate told of its use by Gordon Thomas of WTMJ, Tommy Bartlett of water show fame, Gov. Adlai Stevenson of Illinois, and a famous woman flier, Mrs. William McGraw, who had won the Powder Puff and Beaux air derby race from Columbus, Ohio to Boston during the summer of 1950. The McGraws had relatives in Door County.

George Meredith had kept a log, which was not complete because it was voluntary, of fliers who used the airport; 154 in 1949 from ten states.

The November 24 paper reported that the Wisconsin Civil Air Corps was to meet at the Carmen Hotel, and discuss plans for the 1951 Frigid Fun Flight. Dr. Dorchester was a director of that organization.

Four days later there was a report on that meeting. Attendance had been poor because of the weather but the two top officials of the WCAP drove from Milwaukee to attend. Dr. Dorchester noted that of all the activities sponsored by the organization in past years, only three had been retained as annual events. One of these was the Frigid Fun Flight; the other two were Wings Over Wisconsin and the annual convention in October.

While the sparring match with Wisconsin Central, and plans for the Frigid Fun Flight were being made in 1950, the major news that caught the public eye was the fight between Sheriff John Pivonka and the county board. Pivonka had refused to take any prisoners into the county jail, because he said he had reason to believe the jail wasn’t safe or adequately staffed.

The Korean War had started in June of that year, and, although there was not much danger of being invaded by anyone, let alone the North Koreans, (maybe the Russians) there was a rejuvenated interest in civil defense. That’s about the time when radios started coming out with the frequencies “640” and “1040” marked on the a.m. band. Door County didn’t have any radio stations at that time; two were to go on the air the next year, WDOR at 910 on the dial, and WOKW, the Advocate station, 1050, pretty close to the civil defense frequency.

However, once the alert came through on one of the civil defense frequencies or a local station (our closest was WMAM in Marinette at 570), all the stations were to change their transmitters to broadcast at
WGN in Chicago’s frequency, 720. After that, the stations would take
turns broadcasting defense information on 720, so the invaders
couldn’t beam their planes or missiles in a radio station signal like they
did at Pearl Harbor. They wouldn’t know where the radio station was
located.

By January 15, 1952, as reported by the Advocate, a nine-hour
air alert involving Door County had been completed. Seven states had
participated, with 179 ground observer stations tracking the flight of
airplanes.

Even so, the officer in charge said there were holes through
which Russian (or North Korean) planes could have flown through
without detection. He said that radar could not be relied upon as
protection, and that more observers were needed “to protect our homes
and factories.”

1952 saw the completion of the Badger and Spartan car ferries at
the Christy Corporation shipyard, which was the successor of the L. D.
Smith yard, and the start of construction of LST’s (Landing Ship,
Tank,) at Christy’s.

Not much was found in the Advocate files about progress in
improving the airport in those Korean War years. Taxes were high,
employment was hard to come by and another war was being fought.
The money wasn’t there for airport improvement. In fact, most of the
improvements were made from 1979, until the present time, and the
story of those advances are told in a little booklet to be found in the
Door County Library called, “Cherryland Airport History,” by Andrea
A. Peterson.

By December 2, 1952, the Civil Air Corps had been disbanded
but it was replaced by a new club, the Cherryland Aviation Club,
which retained the same initials.

A meeting was held at the Door County Chamber of Commerce
Building, chaired by chamber of commerce aviation committee
chairman Dr. Dan Dorchester. He was elected “pilot”, Charles Hunter,
“co-pilot” and Art Cermak “financial engineer”.

The “ground crew” (board of directors) consisted of Dr. Howard
Peters, William Stephenson and George Meredith, who was the airport
manager.

On June 23, 1953, the Advocate announced the death of Door
County’s fourth Korean War victim, Lt. Lyle Krause. He was piloting
a jet plane, and, while taking off to deliver the plane to Korea, with an
F-86 Sabrejet, it crashed, injuring him fatally.

A week later, the Advocate carried a tragic story about the
murder of its editor, Sumner Harris, and his wife, Grace. Harris had
been an avid supporter of Door County aviation; his son Chandler, had served in the U. S. Air Corps right after World War II, and was a pilot. Chan took over the Advocate editor’s job immediately after his father’s death, and he continued to fly and was a great supporter of aviation all the while he was editor. In fact, Ted Bellak, the man who flew across Lake Michigan in 1939, sent Chan a copy of his autobiography in the late 1990s. Chan had met him in 1939, for he went along with his father many times when Sumner was covering a story.

Again in January of 1956, the second issue of the Advocate in the new year announced the plans for the Frigid Fun Flight, the tenth anniversary flight, (actually the 11th flight, because one was held in 1956). (There may have been a year when no flight was held.) This was to be the last Frigid Fun Flight.

The event was planned for February 18 and 19. This time, there would be radio communications between the airport and the planes.

Jack Schaefer, the WOKW weatherman, and Bob Nelson, WBAY-TV weather caster, were asked to summon clear skies, but they said they couldn’t guarantee anything. Miss Wisconsin of 1955, Jeanne Boulay, would greet the fliers, and Miss Wisconsin Press Photographer, Beverly Larson of Sister Bay and Mary Jane Van Duyse, the nationally known baton artist from Sturgeon Bay, would share the duties.

At the Saturday night banquet at the Nightingale, a Frigid Fun Flight Fact Finding Forum would be held, presided over by Larry Lawrence, Milwaukee Journal Green Sheet editor. A ventriloquist, Bob Neller, and his dummy, Reggie, would entertain. Both Lawrence and Neller were pilots.

Some attendees were apprehensive about partaking in the fish boil the Kiwanis put on Sunday, the story said, but, “sportsmen that they were, they tried a bite, and then another bite, and pretty soon the Kiwanians were scraping the bottom of the fish barrel,” according to the Advocate writer.

At the banquet, a Milwaukee pilot won the leather medal for making the biggest boo-boo of the flight. He came in with the wind and used almost all of the longest runway.

Milwaukee Journal photographer Thomas Abercrombie came in with one of the nicest of 14 different makes of planes. He flew in a new $26,500 Beechcraft Bonanza.

The new two-way radio at the airport couldn’t be used because the license still hadn’t come in from Washington.

On February 9, 2001, Art Mac Millin, who had much to do with putting on the Frigid Fun Flights, was busy in the basement of Mac’s
Sport Shop, the business he started right after finishing his work of training pilots during World War II. Art was working on a pair of skis which was sold on the first day of the shop's "Going Out of Business" sale. His sons now owned the shop, which, though very popular, was no longer profitable.

He still holds his rank as major in the Air Force Reserve. When asked when the last Frigid Fun Flight was held, he said, "I'm not good at dates. But I remember all the people who made it successful--Doc Dorchester, Art Cermak, Karl Reynolds, George and Imogene Meredith and the rest. It's amazing how the memories come back when you mention the names. I remember all those planes landing out on the ice, and how popular the fish boils were."

It took a lot of work to put on the Frigid Fun Flight, and perhaps after ten years, it became hard to get it all together. At least, we don't find any Advocate articles about the event after those in 1956. Perhaps someone reading this can tell us more about why it wasn't continued.

1956 was the year that the Fred Petersons and Bill Fitzgeralds started on their trip around the world in the Utopia, Fred's 65 foot auxiliary schooner. The ship was built in the Peterson Builder's shipyard. The journey was to take 3 1/2 years, not taken all at once, but in sections, leaving the ship in foreign ports and flying home, then resuming the trip later.

On the date the Peterson odyssey was announced in the Advocate, December 15, 1956, it was announced that Felix DeBroux would fly Commander Stanley Hein of the Archie Lackshire Post 72 of the American Legion, and other members, to the aerial roundup in Watertown, Wisconsin.

The use of the airplane for agricultural purposes was again highlighted in the Advocate of June 23, 1959. It seems that Door County was being plagued by an invasion of "green bugs," which infested the county's grain crops.

County Agent G. I. Mullendore said that crops such as peas bothered by aphids had been successfully sprayed with insecticides dropped by airplanes, and he suggested farmers contact Knauf and Tesch, the feed mill in Maplewood for help. For $3.15 an acre, "Mully" said, they could have their crops dusted to kill the "green bugs," which he said were not killed by rain like aphids, and caused the grain to get a virus disease called "red leaf." So, once again, as in the 1920s when Peninsula State Park was dusted by air, history repeated itself.

On August 20, 1959, the Advocate explained why Door County had been shown an air show for the past three days. Thunderstreak jets
from the Air National Guard in Springfield, Ohio, had been doing practice bomb runs over Chambers Island, unannounced by the group until editor Chan Harris started checking with Truax Field in Madison. Soon afterward, an officer from Springfield called to explain what was being done.

Chan Harris himself reported in the April 25, 1965, Advocate on an airplane accident that could have taken his life and that of Advocate employee Gene Larsen. This is the article:

A plane piloted by Advocate editor Chan Harris made a forced landing at Phillips, Wisconsin, Thursday afternoon shortly after takeoff from the Phillips airport. Neither Harris nor passenger E. B. Larsen were injured in the mishap.

"I had about 400 feet when the engine sputtered and popped," Harris said. "I pulled the carburetor heat but it didn’t have any effect and I started looking for a place to set down. My first impulse was making it back to the runway, but I realized immediately we’d never make it."

"Ahead were small lakes and woods. The town was to the right. I made a left turn and saw a soft plowed field and one that appeared to be quite rough and bordered by a stone fence. I made another left and then was headed back toward the field. In our path there was a motel and beyond that a small lake or pond."

"Off to the right and behind the motel there was a short sod field. We were losing altitude so I picked the little field, pulled full flaps, banked right and headed in."

"We hit the soft turf, broke off the nose wheel and went up on end, skidding to a stop shortly afterward. Gene and I got out and the people came running. We assured everyone that we were all right, then called home from the motel."

"We were still a little nervous from the experience when someone said ‘a fellow in a Bonanza was killed right over there, (motioning to the pond beyond the motel).’"

"Orville Pilgrim of Employers Mutual took us to Rhinelander, where we rented a car and drove home."

The Cessna 182 Harris was flying is owned by Sturgeon Bay Fliers, Inc., a group of six local pilots. The club had purchased the plane about a month ago.

Major damage appeared to be confined to the nose gear and propeller. There was some damage to the wingtips.

Harris and Larsen had flown to Phillips to confer with Park Falls publisher-printer Don McGregor about some large printing jobs. Cause of the engine failure has not been determined."
That was a close one for Larsen and Harris, but Harris displayed his usual calm and collected nature, developed during a lifetime during which he took over the newspaper at the age of 24, after the tragic death of his parents.

Later that same year, on June 8, the Advocate announced that the first jet aircraft landed at Cherryland Airport.

The plane was owned by Patrick Haggerty of Dallas Texas and Fish Creek. Haggerty was the head of Texas Instruments in Dallas, which was a pioneer developer of the new electronic device that was rapidly replacing the vacuum tube. The company also developed one of the first home computers. Haggerty had recently purchased Palmer Johnson Boats in Sturgeon Bay.

With the jet, Haggerty could fly between Dallas and Sturgeon Bay in one hour and 50 minutes. His $550,000 Learjet cruised at 575 miles an hour. It needed only half of the airport’s 3600 foot runway. When he took off, he had reached 3000 feet by the time he flew over County Trunk C, which runs in front of the airport.

The day of jet commuting had reached Cherryland Airport, making it possible for business people like Haggerty to supervise two businesses located a great distance from each other.

Finally, with the Wisconsin Central pipe dream far in the past, on April 11, 1967, came the news in the Advocate that Sturgeon Bay would finally have air service.

The service, provided by Green Bay Airways, made the most sense of any plan proposed. Mayor Bernard Lienau announced that Sturgeon Bay would have daily feeder airline service, starting on April 25, 1965. Green Bay Aviation, an extensive charter service operating out of Austin Straubel Field in Green Bay, owned Green Bay Airways, which was run by Robert L. Jubin and Phillip Roshong.

The company would have three flights per day from Cherryland Airport to Austin Straubel, using a six-passenger single engine plane. The flights would be timed to coincide with the arrivals of North Central Airlines at Austin Straubel Field, and from Green Bay, you could get connections to fly anywhere in the world.

The flight to Green Bay would cost $7.15. Freight would be charged a minimum of $3.00. Most of the time, flights would be in a Cessna 206 Super Skylane, a 385 horsepower model that would take 17 minutes to make the flight. In instrument type conditions, a twin engine Cessna 310 would be used, and for smaller passenger loads, a Cessna 172 might be used. Tickets and reservations were to be obtained through Door Travel Service.
Advocate Editor Chan Harris, Door County Chamber of Commerce Executive Secretary Barney Irwin and E. F. Buschmann of Door Travel Service were given a demonstration ride to show what a smooth and quiet ride the service would provide.

And, so, finally Sturgeon Bay was provided with a practical way of connecting with all the airports in the world. Many improvements have been made to the airport since 1967. They have been chronicled in Andrea A. Peterson’s book, Cherryland Airport History, which was printed by the History Committee of the Door County Cherryland Airport, with the help of the Door County Board of Supervisors. Copies of the book are to be found in the Door County Library.

Incidentally, although Russell Austad died at the early age of 49, his son, Dan, carried on in his tradition of public service. Dan served on the county board’s aviation committee in the 1980s.

In the post-war years, several private airstrips were set up; some of those were at Felhofer Brothers at Valmy, at Horseshoe Bay Farms, and one in Egg Harbor township by Martin Gureski, who built his own plane. The E.E.A. has a local chapter, and the Bay Fliers Model Club has many members. Among the expert model builders are Larry Huber and George Evenson. The late Einar Evenson also built some of the best airplane models in the county.

In the year 2001, it must give great satisfaction to Art Cermak, Imogene Meredith, Bob Warner, Art Mac Millin and the others that still remember the beginnings of Cherryland Airport to see the progress that has been made since the early days.

Now, on the final pages of this book, we again come to the question: Why did these men and women want wings?

For some, it was the desire to be like the birds. The lure of being able to see the world from above, the diminishment of boundaries and the feeling of being free of the world were big attractions.

For others, it was the thrill of traveling fast. But one must keep in mind the old saying, “There are old pilots and bold pilots, but no old, bold pilots,” so the joy of traveling fast must be tempered by a concern for safety.

Neither author of this book has learned to fly. Bud Felhofer’s father and uncle once owned an airstrip. David Enigl, John Enigl’s son, learned to fly by using the services of Orion Flight Services at Cherryland Airport. He sometimes flies over the Enigl farm. A couple of Enigl relatives got free flying lessons, courtesy of the U. S. Army Air Corps during World War II. We personally knew a large proportion of the people we wrote about.
Both of the authors bear Austrian names, but had Scandinavian mothers. The relatives on their fathers’ side feared that their American relatives might be dropping bombs on them, while the Scandinavian relatives looked eagerly for the days when American bombers would liberate them.

Thus it was with many Door County families who had sons and daughters who flew in wartime. Perhaps they had mixed emotions, but those who flew in defense of their country had a tremendous sense of loyalty even if it cost their lives.

Then there were those who flew in pursuit of business, and those who flew just for pleasure.

Of the danger involved in flying, a friend of Dr. Robert Brault, a Green Bay doctor who was killed in an airplane crash on May 17, 2001 quoted Dr. Brault as making this statement: “We all have to go sometime, and we might as well go in an airplane.”

That statement might also apply to Steve Wittman, the founder of the E.E.A. He died doing what he loved.

So, we could say people want wings because they are doing, as Jack Draeb said, what not everybody else does, regardless of the really small amount of risk it involved, as long as one is reasonably cautious.
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