

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 road side," 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.

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.

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 O. 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 Detroitter 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.

Lowney Feuerstein, Dr. H. G. Grovogel, Max Johnson, Clarence Maede, Rolfe Olsen, Thomas J. Pinney, Edward Felhofer, R. B. Bieri, John J. Byrne, Leonard J. Stoneman, Frank Felhofer, Jack Stoneman and John Severson.

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 as advanced students he'd