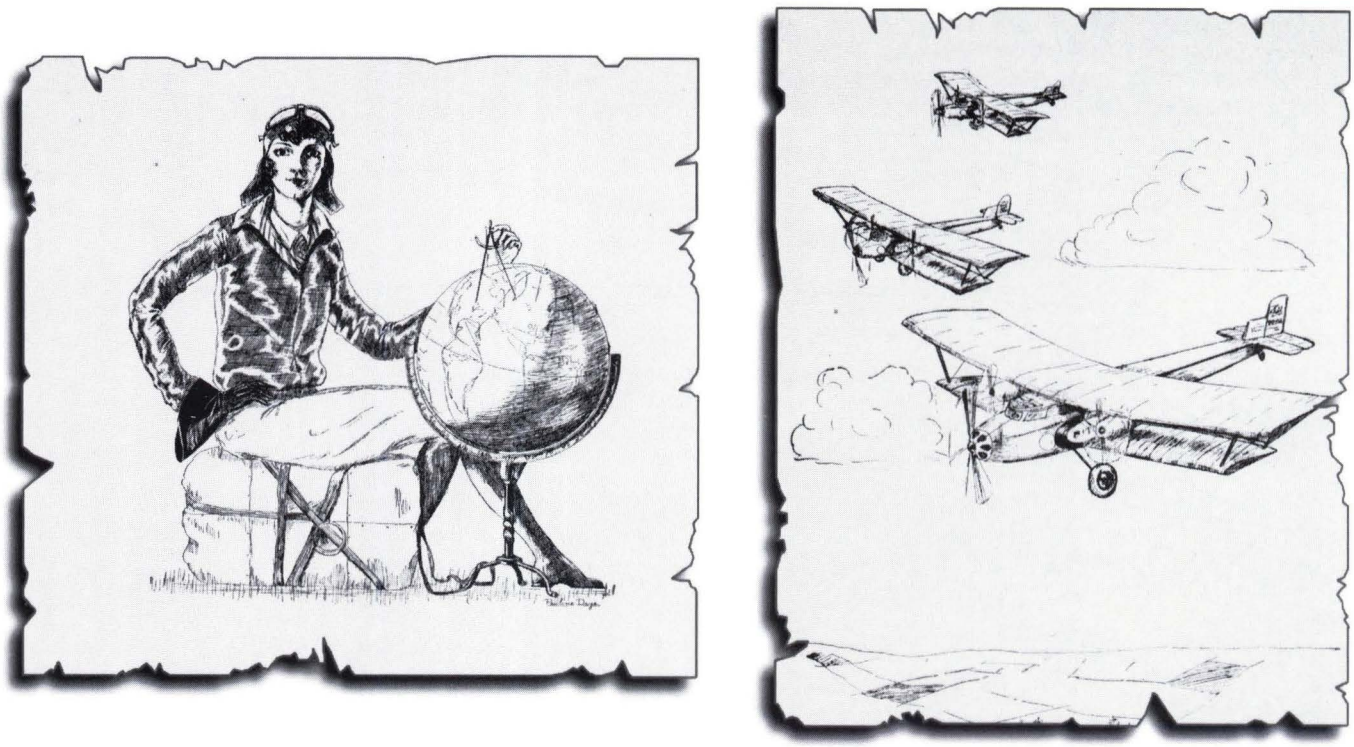
BROWARD LEGACY

2004 - 2005 VOLUME 25 - NUMBER 2

Mrs. Mahan and Allie Wilson pose with an aviator at Merle Fogg's landing strip in 1933.

Broward Takes to the Sky

Early Aviation In Broward County



Drawings by Pauline Drye from the 1930 Dade County Agricultural High School annual.

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Table of Contents

Broward Legacy is published semi-annually by the Broward County Historical Commission.
Location and mailing address: *Broward County Historical Museum*
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Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
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Annual subscriptions and back issues are available.

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EARLY BROWARD COUNTY AIRPORTS

by Patrick S. Scott

1925 view, looking north toward the newly-extended Andrews Avenue, of the South Side Golf Course, future site of Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.
Photo courtesy of the City of Hollywood Records and Archives Division

Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport

Merle Fogg Field was laid out on the site of the former South Side Golf Course, the city's first course, which closed in December 1928. The nine-hole golf course was originally well south of town, on Miami Road before the government laid out Federal Highway in 1927.

Business fell off after the end of the land boom and the opening of an 18-hole course west of the city. Even before the course closed, the Junior Chamber of Commerce proposed that it would make an ideal location for an airfield. The other choice of Sunset Boulevard, present-date Southeast 5th St., was rejected because planes would have had to share the road with automobile traffic. The clearing of trees began as soon as the golf course closed. By January, a government beacon had been obtained, and the first 60 acres cleared became the base for two Ford tri-motored planes and the Goodyear blimp Defender.[1]

The original field had a clearance of 2,000 feet by 1,750 feet. When formally dedicated on May 2, 1929, the field featured a large circle cleared in the weeds of the former course, visible by airplanes from miles away. "FT. LAUDERDALE" was spelled out beneath the circle, the work of the Fort Lauderdale Aeronautical Association headed by H.W. "Bill" Langmead. Later an aerial directional was painted on the roof of the gymnasium at Fort Lauderdale Central School.


Miami Herald

'LORIDA'S MOST IMPORTANT NEWSPAPER

URSDAY MORNING, MAY 2, 1929. TWENTY PAGES TODAY.

NEW FORT LAUDERDALE AIRPORT AS IT LOOKS FROM THE AIR

A large circle indicated the location of Fogg Field to aviators.

Photo courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society

More than 5,000 people attended the Fogg Field dedication. Three planes showered the crowd with flowers. A Curtiss Robin monoplane No. 3 was the first to land on the day of the official opening.[2]

Long-time Fort Lauderdale resident Max Daughtrey recalls the ride that he and his mother took in a small plane from Fogg Field in 1933 or 1934, when Daughtrey was six. The weeds were so high that the pilot first taxied a couple of times down the field, using the propeller to clear the weeds from wing height, before Daughtrey and his mother climbed aboard.[3]

Bill Langmead was the city's unpaid "director of aviation" for years, but he was unable to convince officials to build a regular hangar or spend monies on any fixed base operation for aircraft maintenance at the field. Although two runways were cleared

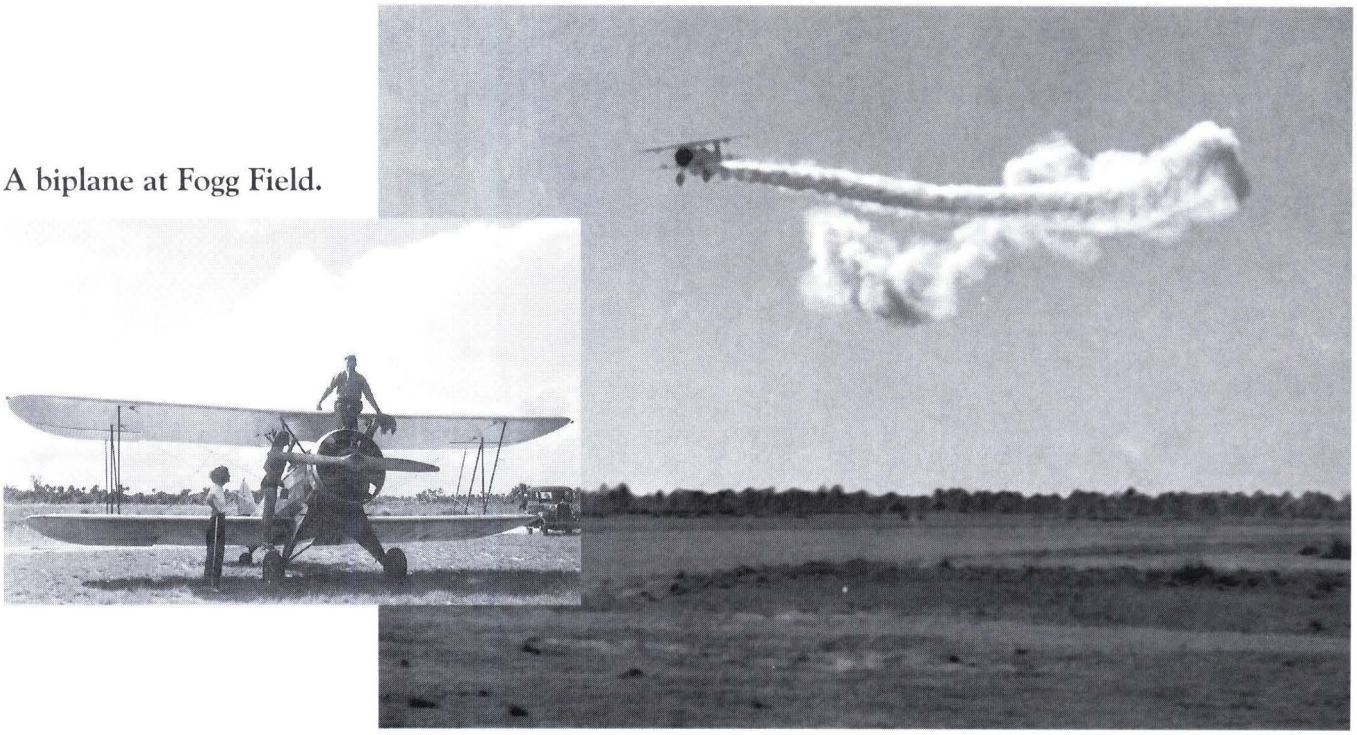
The Fort Lauderdale Central School gymnasium roof can be seen in the bottom right-hand side of this 1958 image.

Photo courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society Hyde Collection

Opening day crowd at Fogg Field, May 2, 1929

Kelcy Photo & Book Shop image courtesy of Maxwell B. Daughtrey.

A biplane at Fogg Field.

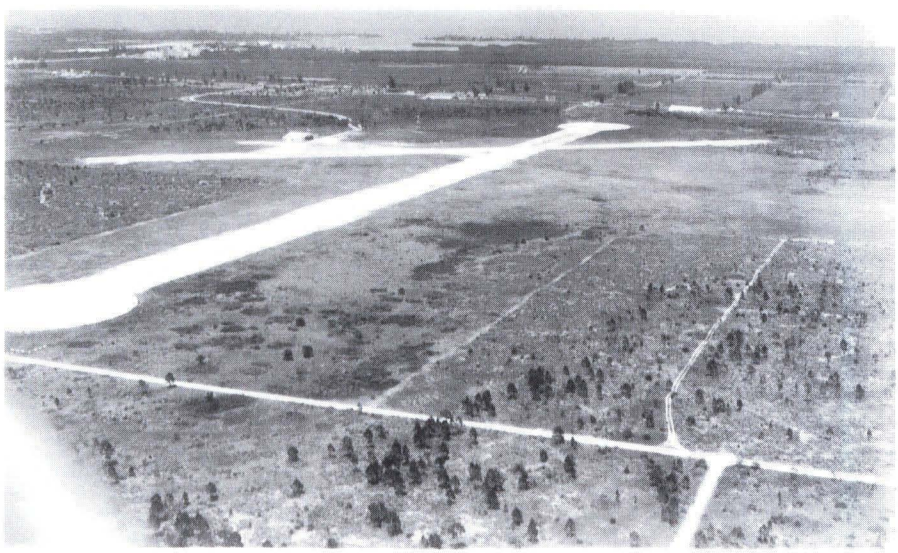


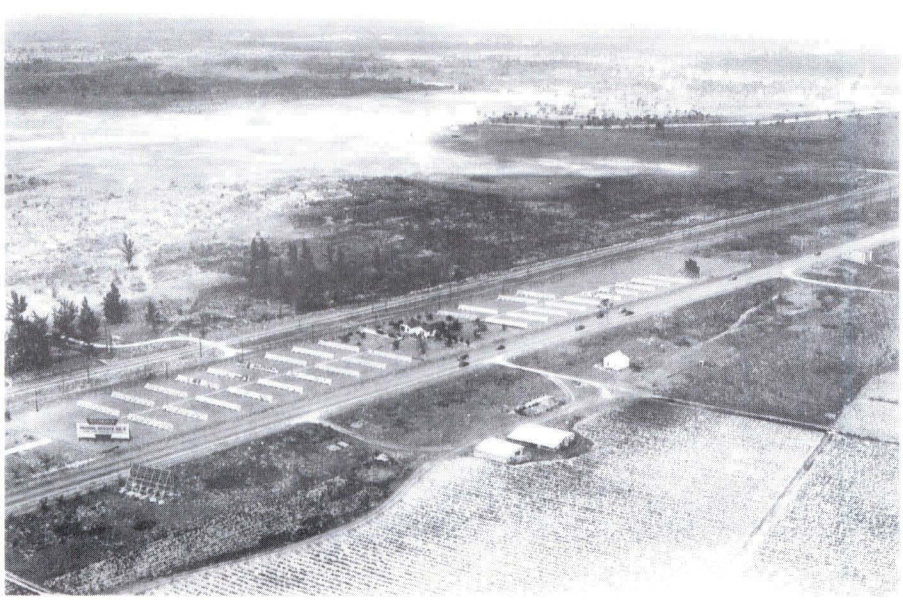
Fogg Field, around 1939.

in the weeds around 1934, palmettoes, holes, and other obstacles presented a daunting view from the air.

In 1936, Theodore H. "Ted" Thompson, a flying instructor, moved to Fort Lauderdale and married local swimming star Katherine Rawls. Ted Thompson was an energetic entrepreneur, opening the Thompson School of Aviation around 1936, and Thompson Aero Corporation in 1938. The hangar, large enough to hold scores of small planes at the same time, was completed in 1940. Additional hangars, runways, and lights were added by the U.S. Navy before and during World War II, when the airport served as a naval air station. The thunder of World War II brought big changes to the sleepy little airport. The Navy purchased it, and quickly began improving the airfield and constructing military barracks. The field was designed to train pilots of aircraft-carrier based torpedo attack planes. At the peak of the effort, 3,600 naval personnel were stationed at the airport.[4]

After the war, in August 1946, the Navy closed the airport. Weeds grew around the runways and a 1947 hurricane damaged the buildings. The U.S. Government leased the airport to the city of Fort Lauderdale from 1948 to 1956, as a general aviation facility, and renamed it Broward Airport. The aerial photo on page 6 shows the airport in 1949, north of the Dania cut-off canal. The main entrance to the airport for many years was in the



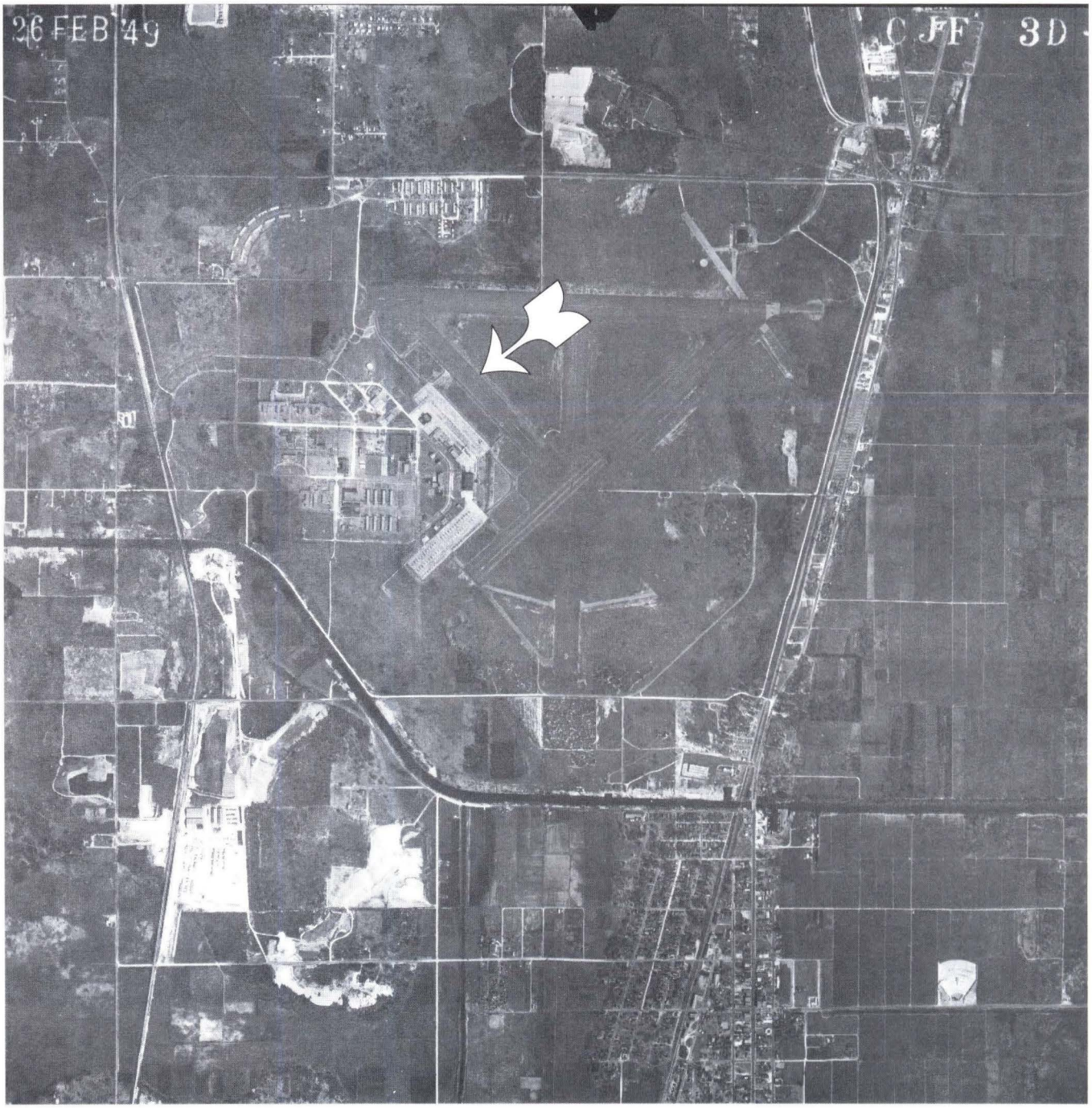


These two images show Fogg Field after the runways were laid out. The bottom view, taken before 1936, is looking southeast and the top view, taken after 1936, is looking northeast. The bottom image shows the proving ground for the Pittsburg Paint Company. Paint samples were exposed to the intense South Florida sun to test their durability.

Kelcy images courtesy of Max Daughtrey

northwest corner. In the 1980s, Federal Highway was relocated farther to the east to provide room for airport expansion.

Joseph Mackey began the first scheduled passenger air service from the airport in 1953, but development prospects were limited by the revocable nature of the government's lease. The City finally acquired the airport by deed from the federal government on October 4, 1956. The original air terminal building was completed in March 1959, and the airport began scheduled trunk line service under the name "Broward International Airport." Within five years, Northeast Airlines, Eastern Air Lines, and Northwest Airlines, along with Mackey, would serve the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, so named on October 5, 1963. By 1966, heavy use by private aircraft made it the nation's fifth busiest airport in non-airline traffic.[5]



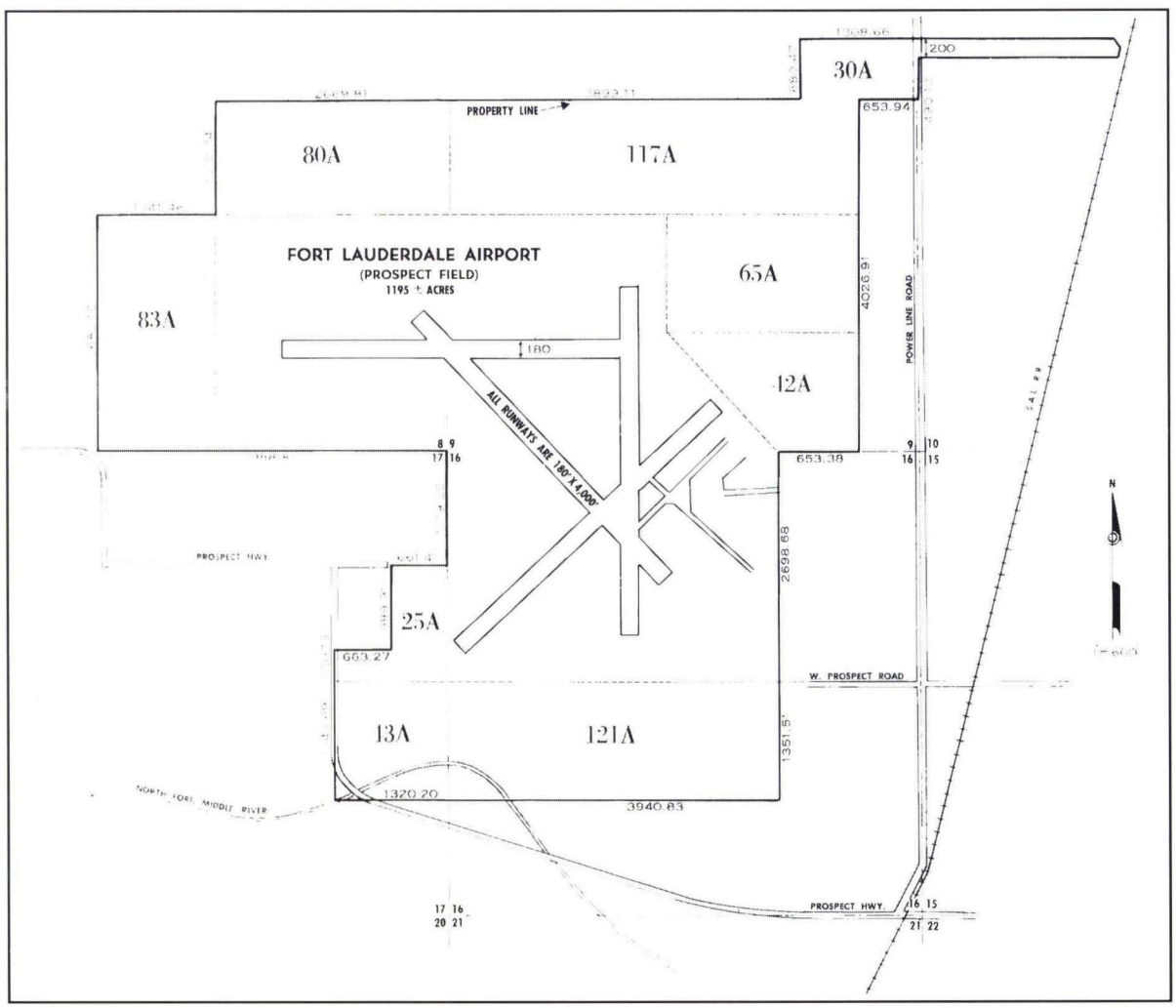
Naval Air Station, 1949.

Executive Airport

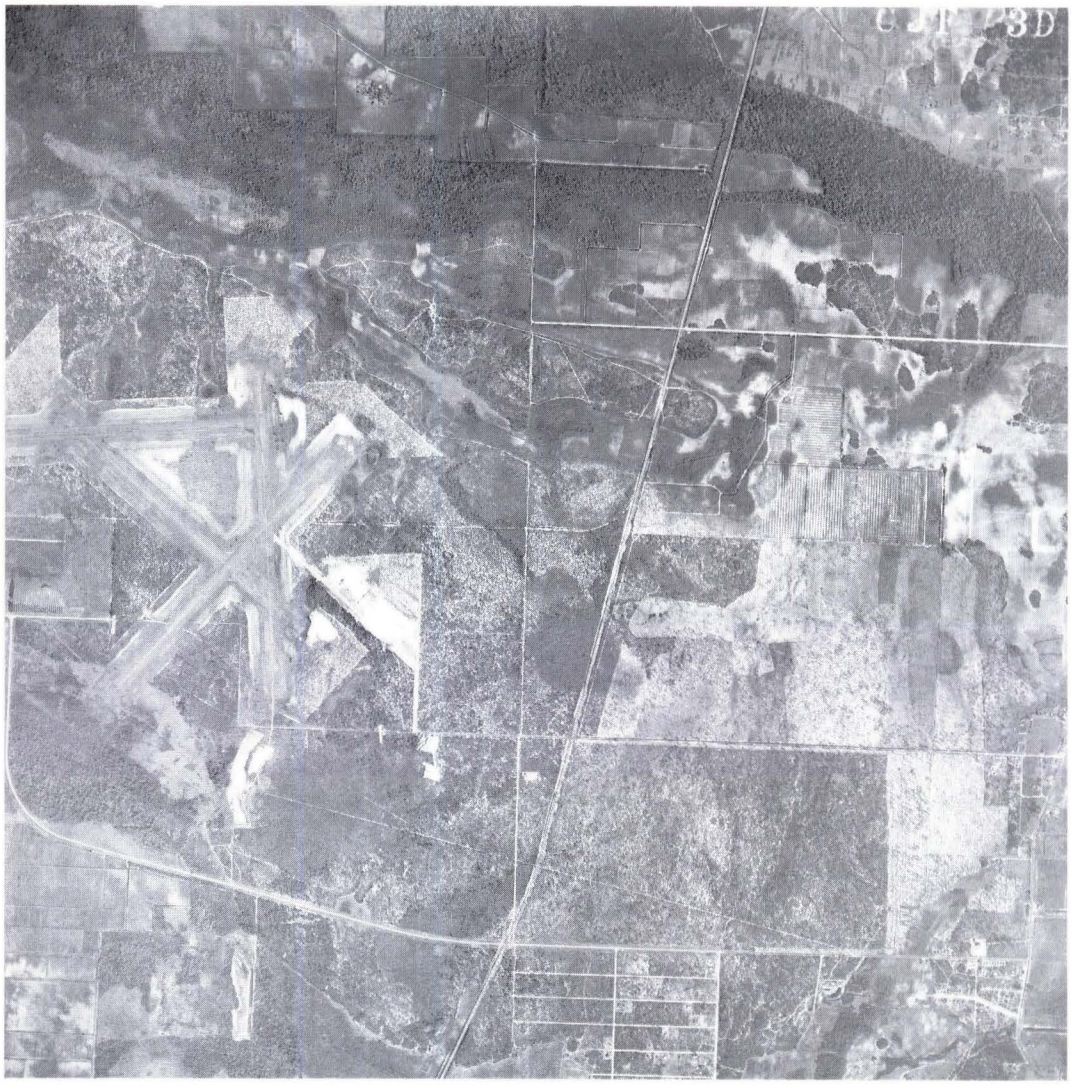
Today's Executive Airport was originally laid out by the United States Navy as an auxiliary training and emergency landing field for pilots on duty at the Naval Air Station and at Opa Locka Air Base in northwest Miami. Commissioned in 1942 as West Prospect Satellite Field, or simply "Prospect Field," it was a pilot and crew training station for the Torpedo Bomber, as well as the F3F and the F8F fighter planes. One of 59 air fields in the nation declared surplus by the War Assets Administration, it was deeded to the city of Fort Lauderdale on March 11, 1947. Although it retained the name Prospect Field, it also was called Fort Lauderdale Municipal Airport until 1959, when the city commission renamed it Executive Airport. [6]

When, in 1954, the city published a magazine-style brochure "to acquaint industrialists with the tremendous possibilities which Fort Lauderdale in general and Prospect Field in particular offer," the former Navy buildings housed light industry manufacturing "everything from bamboo furniture to electronic equipment."[7]

Today, Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, with more than 1,000 acres, is one of the most active facilities in the nation for private jets and other aircraft.



Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, 1954. *From the collections of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society*



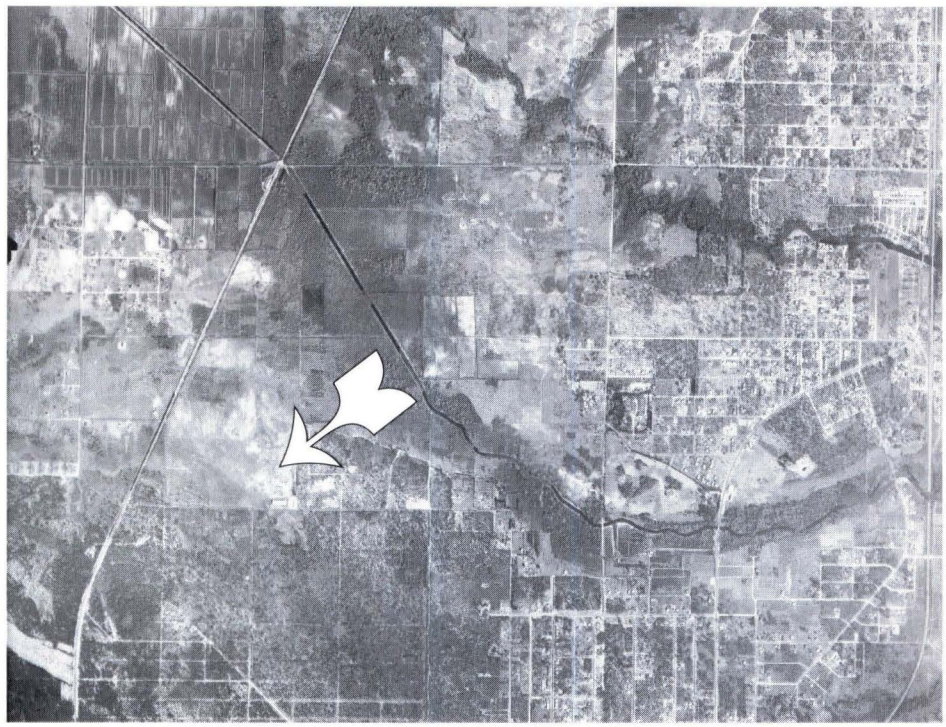
This 1949 view of Prospect Satellite Field, also known as the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, shows the airport bounded by Commercial Boulevard on the south and the Seaboard Railway tracks to the east.

Bradley Field

In 1945, Ben R. Bradley leased a 95-acre bean field on Northwest 19th Street a half mile west of 9th Avenue, just north of the Fort Lauderdale city limits, and opened a private air field there that December with his own three planes. Bradley developed an airport officially called Broward Field, but locals always called it "Bradley Field" or "Bradley Airport." It would eventually have three runways -- two grass strips and one paved strip, which eventually was lengthened to 2,800 feet.

Mr. Bradley later operated a flying school there, and as many as 35 planes including crop dusters, an aerial photographer, and other private planes, were based there. But without lights, longer runways, or aviation-support facilities, it could not compete with the improvements at Prospect Field, just three miles to the north. Housing development began filling the Lauderdale Manors subdivision north of Sunrise Boulevard toward the airport. The area along 19th Street was rezoned to light industrial use in the 1950s. In June 1965, the landowner, J.N. McJunkin, declined to renew Bradley's lease and the airport closed. Bradley moved his operation to a 10-acre site at Executive Airport. McJunkin offered the land at Bradley Field for $10,000 per acre, and it was eventually developed into an industrial center. [8]

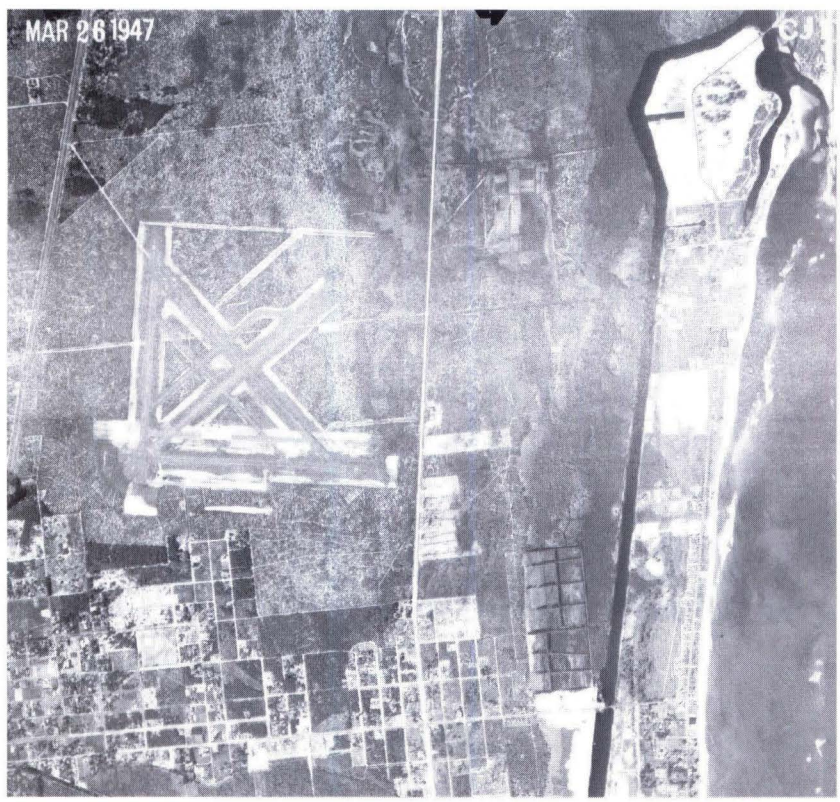
The site of the airport is just south of Mills Pond Park on the east side of I-95.



The Broward Airport was also known as Bradley Field. In this 1949 view, two planes are visible in the lower left corner, next to the hangar which Bradley had built in 1947.

Pompano Municipal Airport

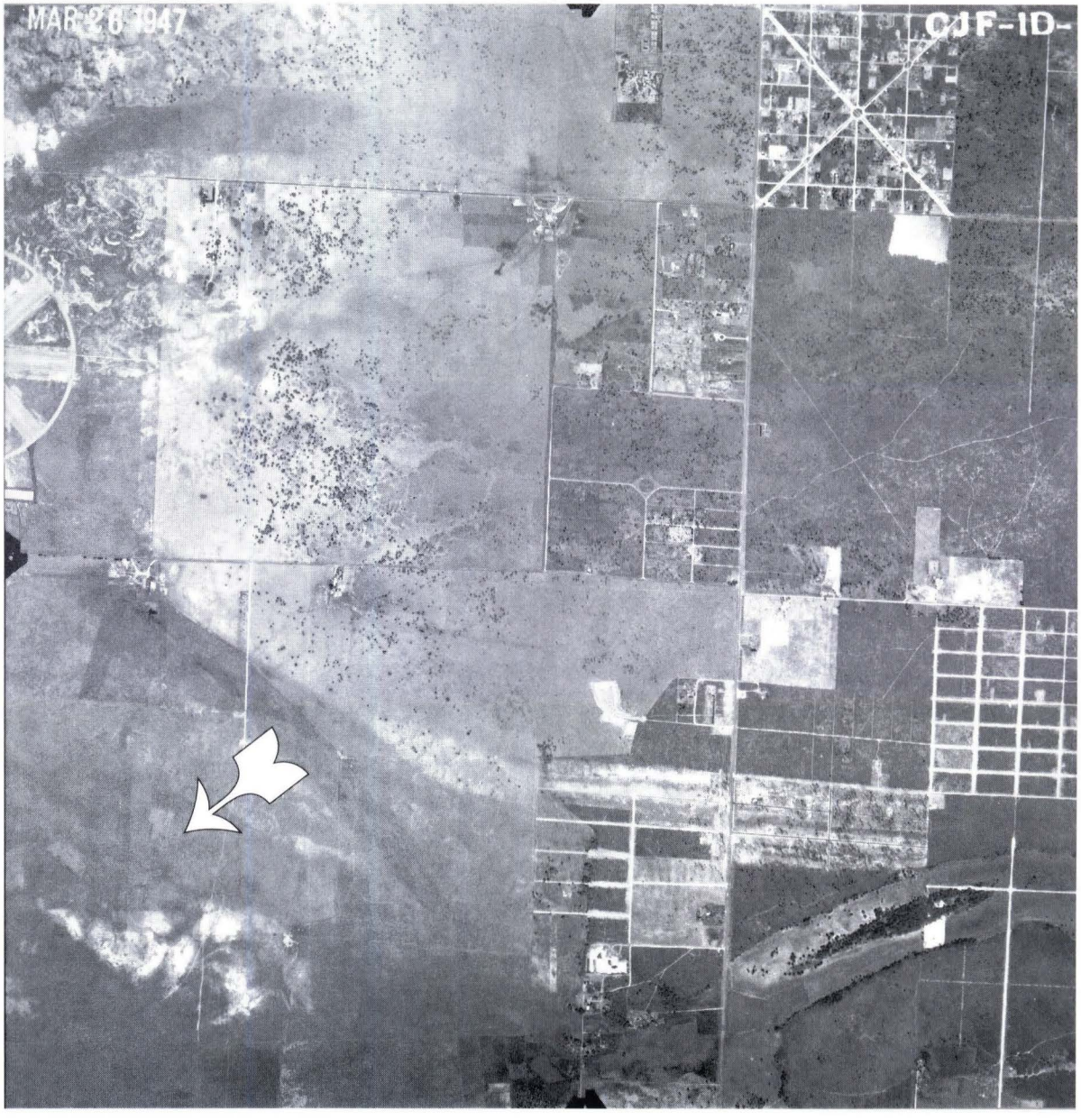
Shown in this aerial view from 1947, the Pompano Municipal Airport, also known as the Pompano Airport, Pompano Field and Pompano Airpark, was built around 1943. After World War II, it was deeded to the city by the Navy. Located west of Federal Highway and north of Tenth Street it is still in use as an airport today.



Shown in this aerial view from 1947, the Pompano Municipal Airport, also known as the Pompano Airport and Pompano Airpark.

South Perry Field

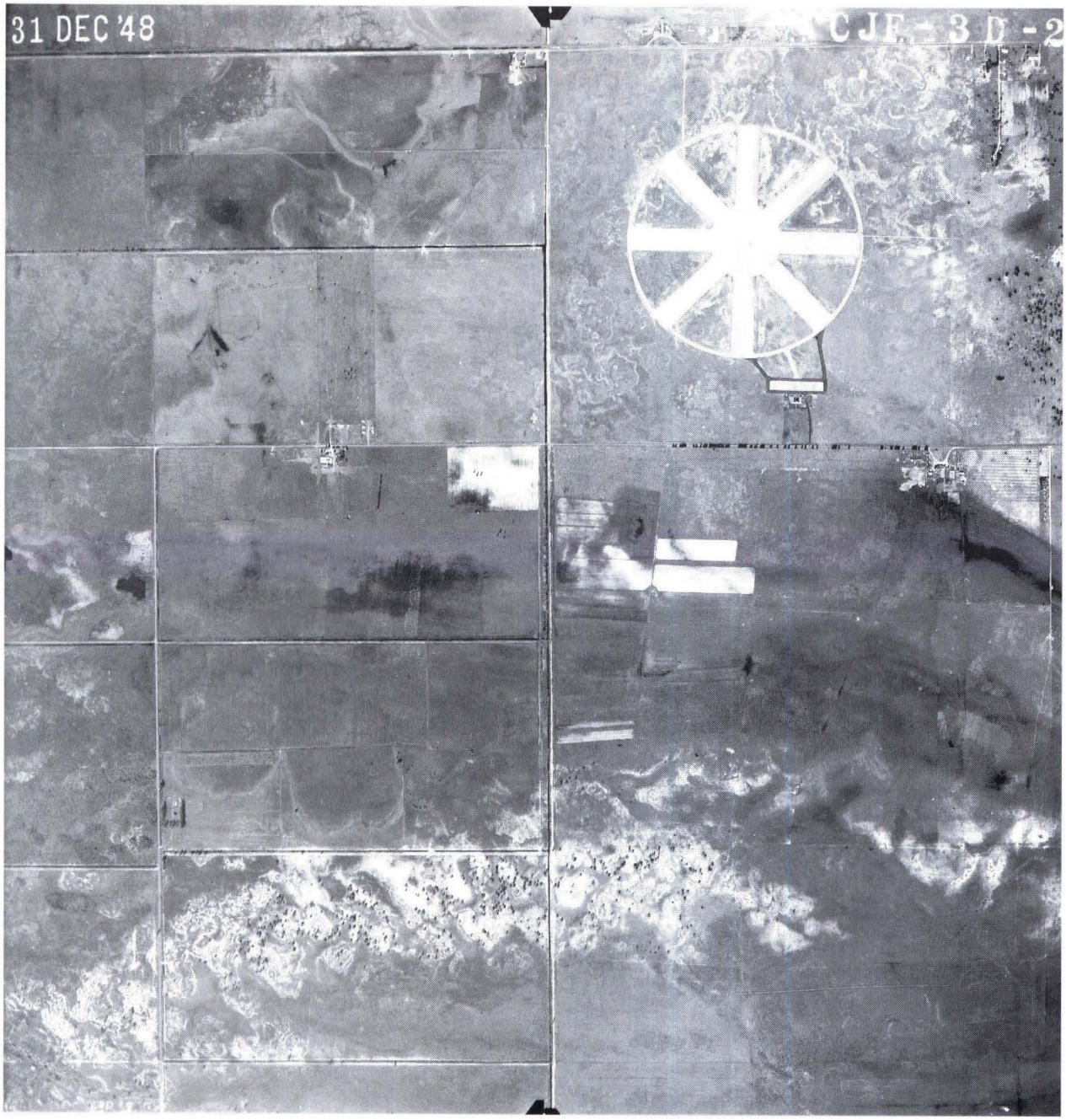
South Perry Field was simply a grass field which is difficult to pinpoint, east of University Drive and south of Pembroke Road on this 1947 image. Also located on the Perry property, it was used to take the overflow from North Perry Airfield.



South Perry Field in 1947.

North Perry Airport

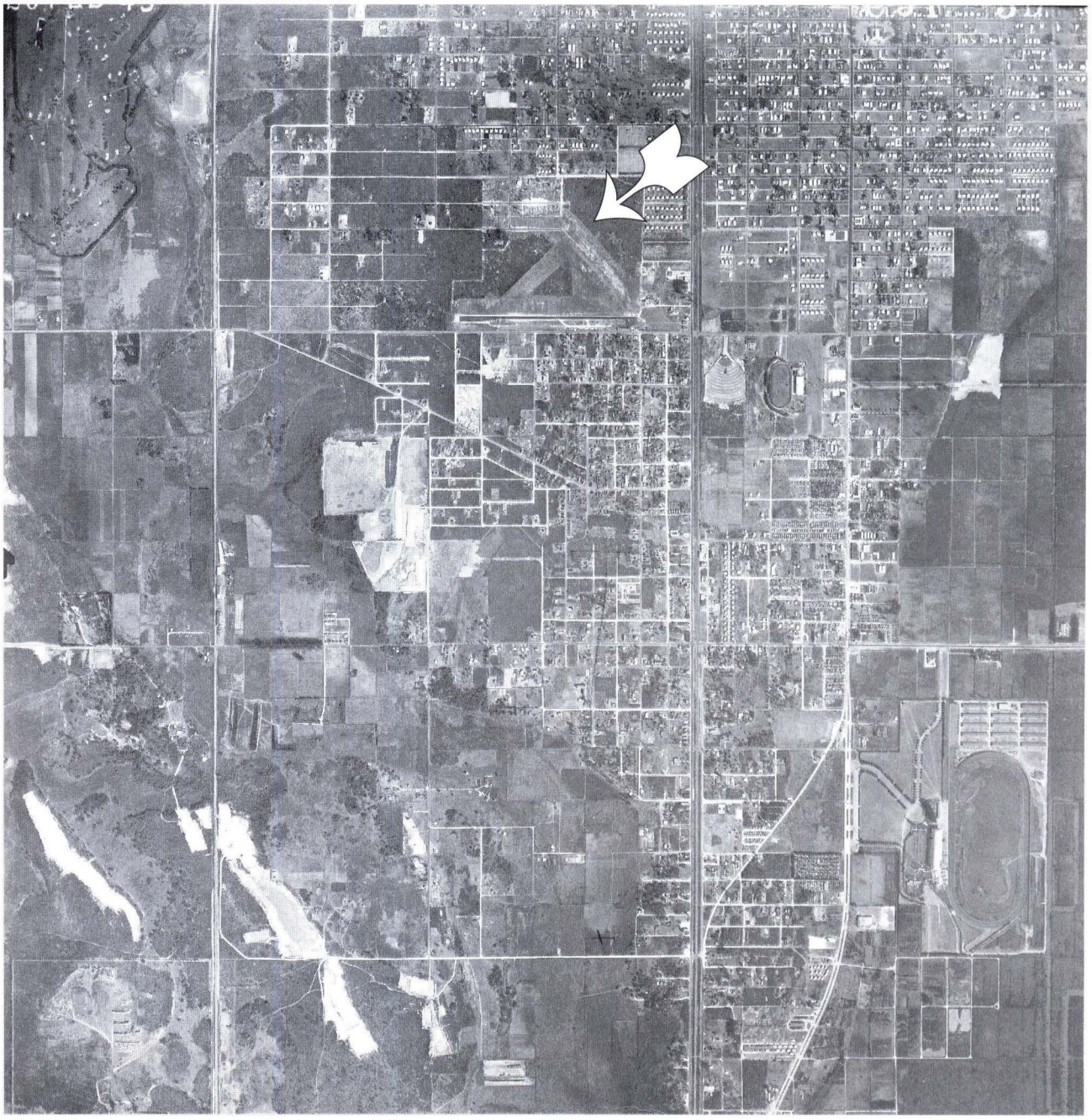
North Perry Airport, also known as Davie Airport or North Perry Field, was built by the Navy on land owned by early farmers Henry and Annabel Perry. The one-square-mile property north of Pembroke Road was used as a training field, and the partly-drained area across Palm Avenue to the west was used for a bombing range.



North Perry Airport (also known as Davie Airport or North Perry Field) in 1948.

Hollywood Airport

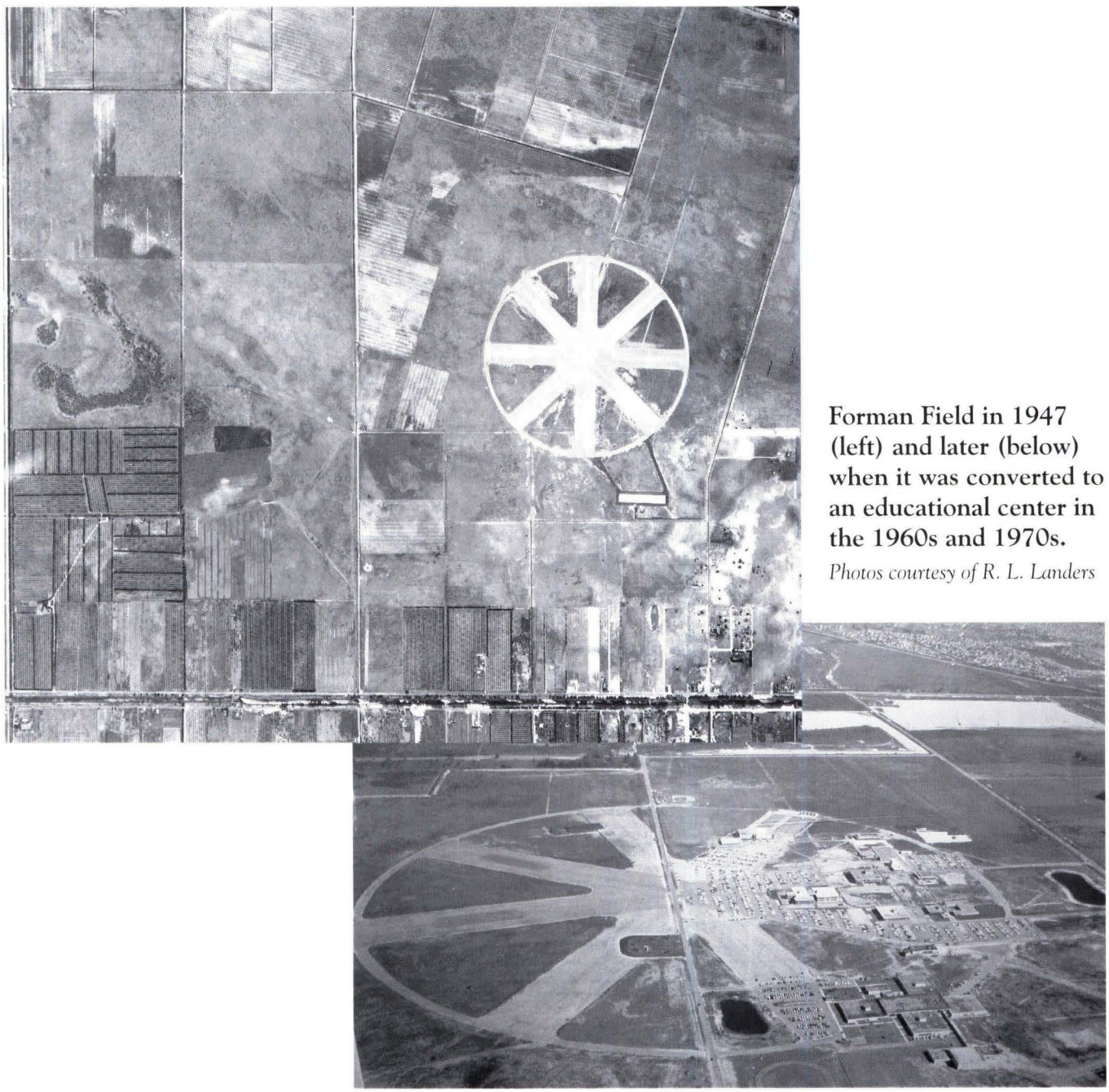
Land for the Hollywood Airport, also known as the Hollywood Airpark and MacArthur Field, was acquired by the city of Hollywood in 1941. The tract of land was bordered by Moffat Street on the south and Dixie Highway on the east and extended nearly to Washington Street. During World War II, it was the only airport in Broward County open to private planes. The city sold it to a private concern. By 1952, due to rising property values and neighbors' complaints about the noise and danger, the Airpark was closed and subdivided into lots. It is now a residential section of Hollywood.



Hollywood Airport, also known as the Hollywood Airpark and MacArthur Field, in 1949.

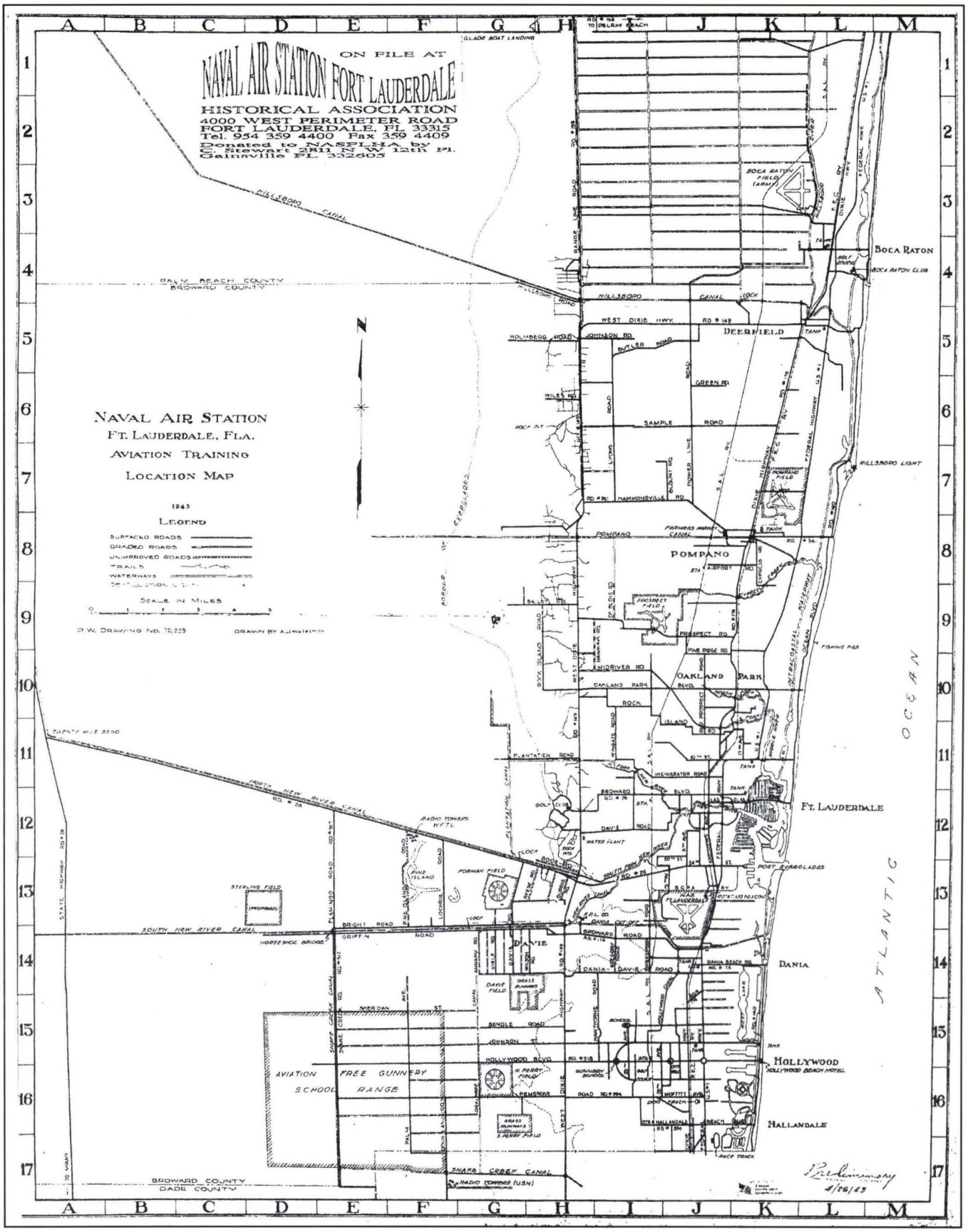
Forman Field

Forman Field was built on early pioneers Blanche and Hamilton Forman's cow pastures. The land was purchased by the Navy at the beginning of World War II. Eventually, the government-held property would become the site of Nova High School and McFatter Vocational Technical Center and High School, Broward Community College, Nova Southeastern University and other educational facilities. The wagon-wheel design of the former airfield can still be seen in the oblique aerial photograph from the 1970s. A small portion of one of the original paved runways and permeter road still exists today on a portion of the University of Florida Branch Campus on the northwest quadrant of the former airfield.



Forman Field in 1947 (left) and later (below) when it was converted to an educational center in the 1960s and 1970s.

Photos courtesy of R. L. Landers



Airfields and Stations in Broward County in 1943. *From the collections of the Fort Lauderdale Naval Air Station Historical Association*

Notes

[1] Goodyear built the nonrigid airship *Defender* in 1929. At least five blimps, and two rigid zeppelins, barnstormed around the nation for six years, visiting Miami and Fort Lauderdale, in Goodyear's perennial promotions. The *Defender* was sold to the U.S. Navy in 1935, and crashed, with a loss of 12 lives, in 1942. A succession of Goodyear blimps made Opa Locka's airport their winter base until 1980 when the base was relocated to the northwest corner of the Pompano Beach Municipal Airport., [*Fort Lauderdale Times*, October 30, 1941. FLHS Simpson Collection, vertical files, "Aviation: Fogg Field"] The City of Fort Lauderdale acquired the property some years earlier. The boundaries of the city were enlarged, effective December 31, 1929. The newly annexed lands southwest of the city generally included all of the land east of West Dixie Highway (today's State Road 7) and north of the Dania Cut-off Canal, but excluding portions of the future airport and Port Everglades lands that had already been incorporated into the City of Hollywood. Laws of Florida 1929, ch. 14044 (June 7, 1929). This portion of the city was later reduced in size.

The city was given the power to use, occupy and maintain the tract of land owned by the city and previously used at the "South Side Golf Course" as "a landing place or field for aeroplanes and for airport purposes." Laws of Florida 1929, ch. 14045 (May 25, 1929). Whether the land was already within the city limits, prior to the December 31, 1929 expansion of the city, or was merely treated informally as being within the city limits, does not appear in the special legislation.

[2] *Fort Lauderdale Times*, October 30, 1941; *Miami Herald*, May 2, 1929, p. 1A. FLHS vertical files, "Aviation: Fogg Field"

[3] Broward County Historian Helen Landers interview of Max Daughtrey, January 3, 2005

[4] Broward County Aviation Department, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, Airport History, *www.broward.org/airport* and click on *History*.

Fort Lauderdale Times, October 30, 1941; *Miami Herald*, May 2, 1929, p. 1A. FLHS vertical files, "Aviation: Fogg Field." The most dramatic story of the naval air station's history was that of the famed Lost Squadron of 1945. It has been the subject of several books, and an article in *Broward Legacy*, vol. 18, no. 1 & 2, (1995). Tape-recorded interviews of many of those involved with the naval air station can be found in the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society's oral histories collection. Substantial historical materials have been collected by the Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale Historical Museum.

[5] History of Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, February 23, 1965, author unknown; "The Moving History of One of Our Airports," *Fort Lauderdale Magazine*, 1966. FLHS vertical files, "Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood Airport"

[6] "Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport," *Fort Lauderdale Magazine*, 1967. FLHS vertical files, "Aviation."

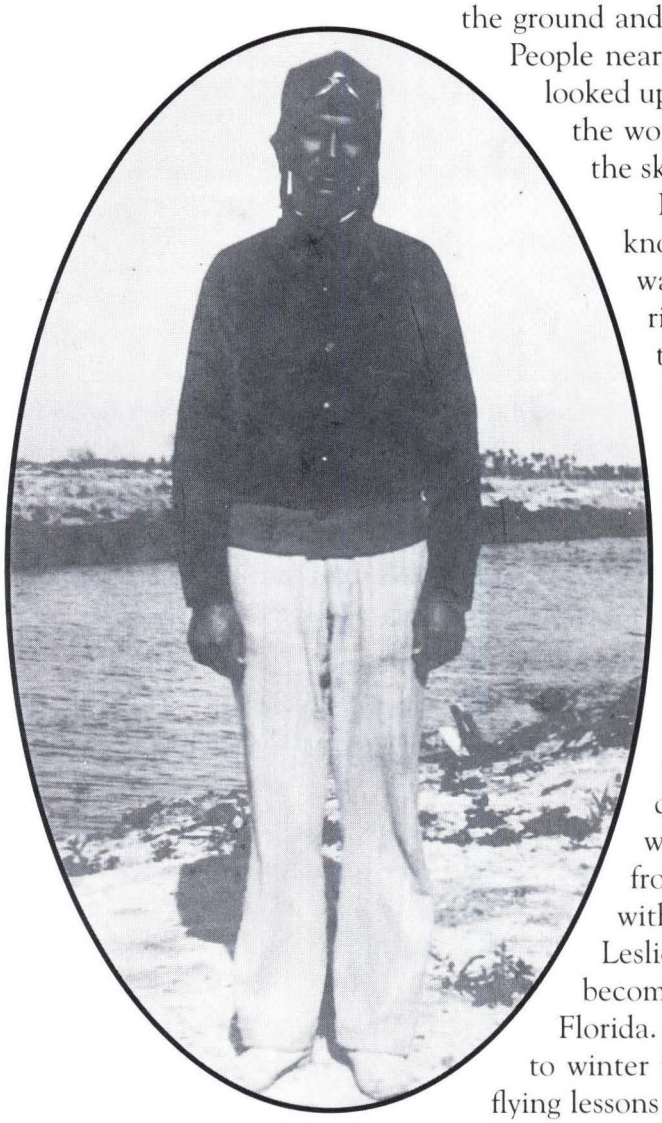
[7] Brochure, "Fort Lauderdale Invites You to Consider Prospect Field." FLHS vertical files, "Aviation."

[8] *Miami Herald*, August 9, 1964, September 7, 1964, and May 3, 1965. FLHS vertical files, "Aviation: Bradley Field"

THE MAN WHO GAVE BROWARD WINGS

by Jim Reynolds

Merle Fogg eased the control stick back in his little biplane. It rose from the ground and soared over the bay towards Fort Lauderdale beach. People near Las Olas Boulevard heard the engine chugging and looked up. They saw sun sparking from the wings, marveled at the wonder of flight and the daring young man who braved the sky.



Merle Fogg around 1927

By 1928 Merle Fogg had become one of the best known and best liked residents in Fort Lauderdale. He was the operator of the city's first flying service. The rides he gave thrilled residents and gave them their first taste of flight. Time and time again he demonstrated the utility of his primitive craft by performing aerial surveys, taking photographs of the city, transporting passengers around the state and teaching residents to fly.

Fogg was a visionary who believed in a bright future for aviation, and although he would not live to see it happen, he would begin a series of events that would take aviation in Broward County from the era of the barnstormer into the jet age.

Fogg was born on May 26, 1898 in Enfield, Maine to Leslie and Alberta Fogg. He served in the Army during WW I, although he never saw combat. After he was discharged, he studied engineering and graduated from the University of Maine.[1] But Fogg was smitten with aviation, an avocation not endorsed by his father. Leslie Fogg did everything he could to deter his son from becoming a pilot. In 1922, Merle traveled to Okeechobee, Florida. He reportedly told his parents that he merely wanted to winter in a warmer climate, but he was really there to take flying lessons from Ralph De Vore of Clearwater. His parents were made aware of his activities when he shipped an aircraft engine back home.

After learning to fly, Fogg barnstormed around Florida for about a year before flying his biplane

to Maine, to barnstorm in his home state. It was a glamorous, dangerous way to make a living. An account in the Lewiston, Maine newspaper[2] relates that both Fogg and his wing walker, George "Daredevil" Sparks, were nearly killed when at an altitude of nearly 1,000 feet, Sparks walked out to the wing tip, lost his grip and nearly fell from the plane. As he tumbled over, Sparks wedged his ankle to a lift strut and hung suspended from the biplane. Although he didn't have much altitude, Fogg dove toward the ground and made a sharp turn, flipping Sparks towards the wing. Sparks grabbed a flying wire and pulled himself aboard. Fogg finessed the controls to end the dive before crashing into the ground.

Fogg returned to Florida around 1925, this time to Fort Lauderdale. The city was in the middle of a land boom and he was hired to fly a seaplane owned by land developer Tom Bryan. Bryan was also a state representative, and with Fogg as his pilot he was possibly the first lawmaker to commute to Tallahassee by air.

Fogg also opened a base for his land plane. His tiny airfield was tucked into a spit of land just north of Las Olas Boulevard, were it meets the Intracostal Waterway. Its primitive wood hangar was visible from the road. Big bold letters over the door proclaimed, "Merle Fogg Flying Service." When he was on the ground working on his plane, motorists tooted horns and waved as they went by. Merle must have liked the attention because he always waved back.

One of his young admirers was Dwight L. Rogers, Jr. Rogers, who is now 85 years old and is still an attorney in Fort Lauderdale, remembers, "I saw him land a few times and it was great, really great!" Rogers said that Fogg's landing strip was only about a block long. "It was surprising that he could take off in that distance, but he could. . . he was certainly a well-liked person." Fogg's friends in Fort Lauderdale knew he could be counted on when there was trouble. After the devastation of the 1926 hurricane, he flew a hasty trip back from Maine and presented himself to the City Commission offering his services and his plane for whatever emergency service or relief work that might be needed. He told the commission, "Gentlemen, I can move anywhere, anytime. I will count it an honor for you to call on me." An aerial survey and photographs taken from his plane helped to detail the extent of the storm's damage.

The 1926 hurricane destroyed Tom Bryan's seaplane which Merle Fogg flew in his early days in Broward County

Fogg learned to fly from Ralph Devore

Photo courtesy of the Children of the Manhattan Project

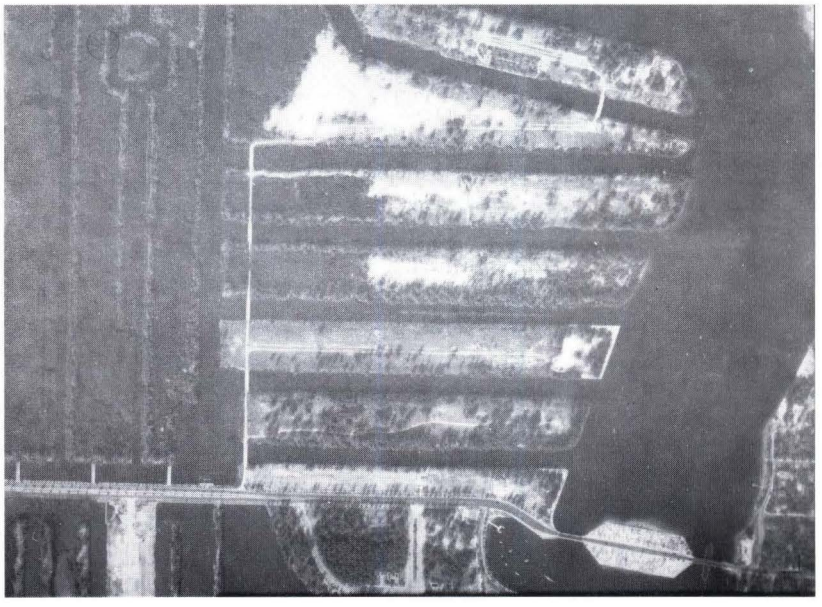
Fogg wasn't the first aviator to fly from Fort Lauderdale. As early as February 13, 1920, a newspaper report told of preparations to open a landing field the following week in the northern part of the city.[3] While he wasn't first, Fogg's name would become the one most remembered as Broward's pioneer aviator. One of his best friends and roommate was August Burghard, a reporter for the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*. Later in life Burghard would coauthor "Checkered Sunshine,"

a history of the city. In it he wrote, "Fogg was locally loved as the operator of a flying service, a unique vocation, and because he was a personable, outgoing young man. Among his exploits were the flying of the first airplane from Maine to Florida and setting down the first land plane on Andros Island and the island of New Providence (Nassau)."[4]

Merle L. Fogg standing by his WACO 10 Biplane. The engine was a 90 horsepower Curtiss 0X5, water-cooled World War I engine that was used in the old Curtiss Jenny plane.

What Burghard fails to mention in the book, is that the landing in the Bahamas was totally unplanned and nearly ended Fogg's life. A February 7, 1927 front page story in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* and *Evening Sentinel* relates that Fogg and his passenger R.G. Mills made a forced landing, coming to a stop in the mud flats at Andros. Mills had enlisted Fogg's help in an aerial search for a missing barge that was owned by a company Mills represented. Far at sea and with night fast approaching, they made the decision to land on Andros and go back to Fort Lauderdale the next day. It did not go well. The nose of the plane flipped into the mud and for four days Mills and Fogg tried unsuccessfully to free it. With no provisions, they nearly starved, subsisting on a little water drained from the planes radiator, strained through their shirts. They were rescued by a sponge fisherman passing the island in a boat. The fisherman gave them water and food and helped right the plane. Fogg straightened the propeller and flew to Nassau for gas before heading back to Fort Lauderdale.

Fogg's aerial antics earned him a nearly legendary reputation. It was said that he once lassoed a deer from his plane, but how he did it was never explained.[5] He used his biplane to flush birds in the Everglades and herd them to waiting hunters on the ground,[6] and when his friend Burghard was sick, Fogg flew over the hotel were he was staying, cut the engine, and yelled down to ask what he wanted to eat. Fogg landed, got his friend's selection, and drove to



Fogg's original landing strip ran along the north side of Las Olas Boulevard from 23rd Avenue to the Intracoastal Waterway. The strip was tiny and it was not very safe.

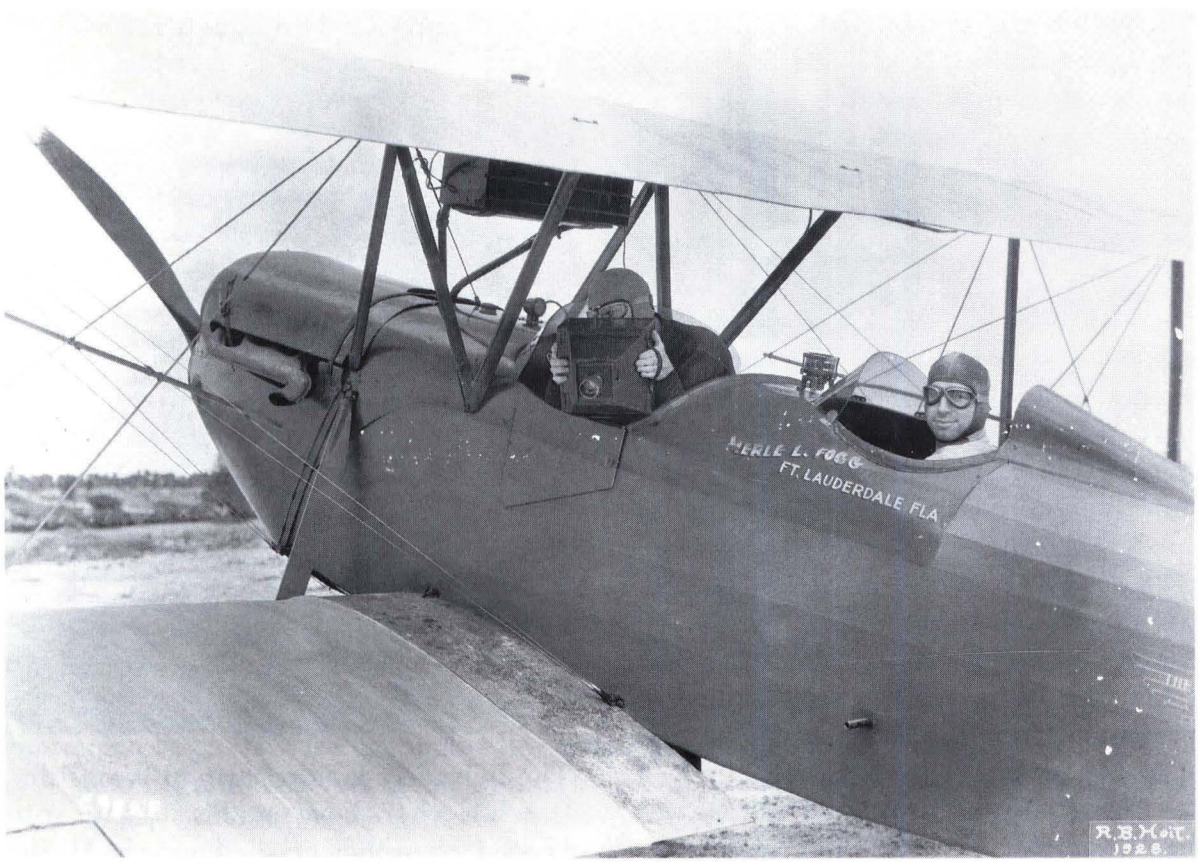
the hotel to deliver the meal. His name was so tied to aviation that any plane that flew over Fort Lauderdale usually produced the comment, "There goes Merle."

When he wasn't flying, he drove around town in a top-down Reo roadster with his Collie puppy named "Oscar" in the back. One resident remembered that children "worshipped" the young aviator.

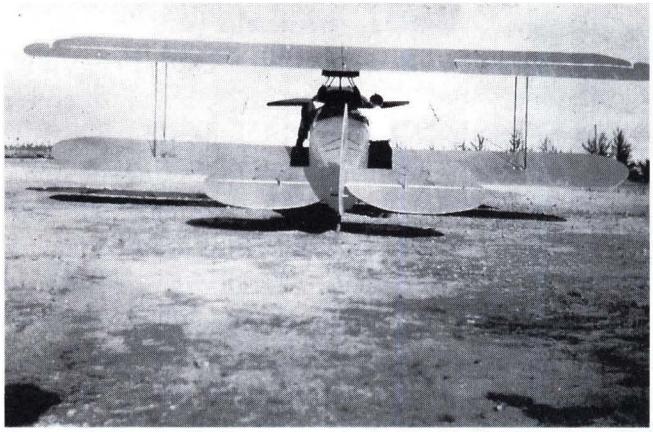
Ticket from the 1930s

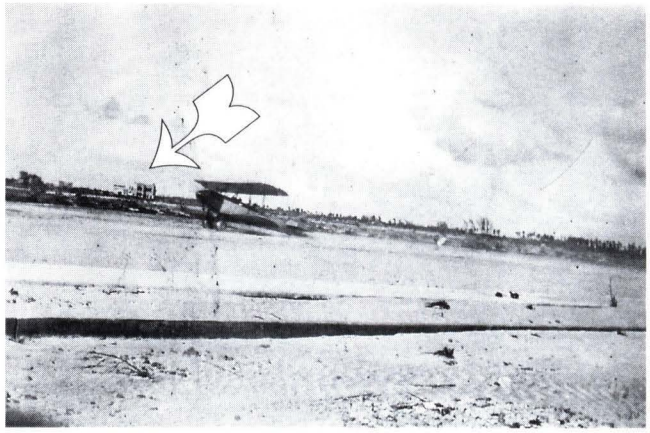
On May 20, 1927, the world held its breath and waited for news on the fate of another young pilot by the name of Charles Augustus Lindbergh. When he landed in Paris the following day, his transatlantic solo flight made him an instant hero and convinced many that the airplane was no longer just a novelty, but could be used to travel quickly to distant places. Lindbergh's celebrity rubbed off of on Fogg. Some of the children in Fort Lauderdale no longer called him "Merle." Instead, they greeted him with, "Hi, Lindy."

By 1928, Fogg had a lot to look forward to. He owned land in Dade, Broward and Okeechobee counties. He had the tidy sum of $1,600 in the Broward Bank and Trust,[7] and his reputation as a dashing, young aviator made him a sought after bachelor. (In a hand written letter to Miss Mildred Hyle in Gainesville, Georgia, he quipped about the attention, "Ha! Ha! Almost had to spank another girl the other night. Guess had better get an assistant - too strenuous work for a slim joker.")[8]



Merle L. Fogg and cameraman R. B. Hoit, took aerial photographs for real estate developers and surveyed the damage to South Florida after the 1926 hurricane. *Photo courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society*





At left, a Waco Biplane sits at Merle Fogg's landing strip in Fort Lauderdale. A single home in what is now the Lauderdale Isles neighborhood can be seen in the distance in the image on the right.

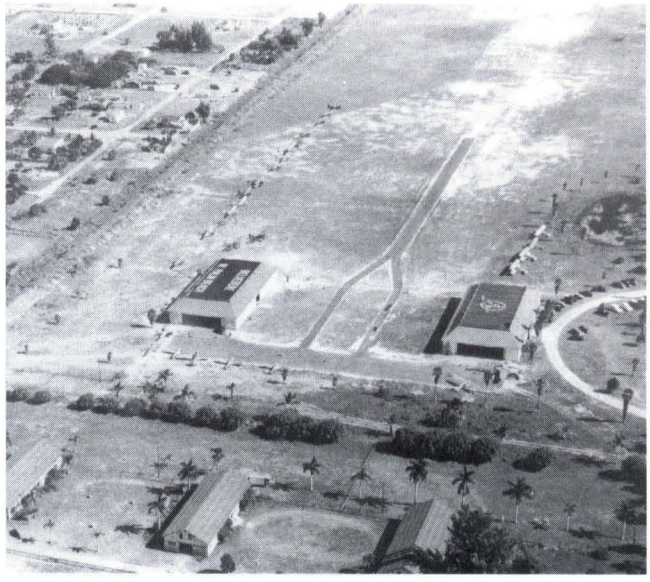
Burghard was to be married in June, and Fogg was to be the best man.

On May 1, 1928, Fogg made several flights, and in the afternoon flew A.W. Erkins to Miami to film a movie of the Shriners Parade. As they passed over Fort Lauderdale beach, bathers waved their towels, and Fogg raised an arm out of the cockpit and waved back. Erkins related that on the way to Miami the plane's engine sputtered, but Fogg got it running again and they "had a fine trip." Later in the day, two student pilots showed up at Fogg's hangar to use his Waco biplane for a trip to West Palm Beach. At first Fogg declined an invitation to join them, but after getting a flying jacket for one of them, he impulsively jumped into the front cockpit with 22-year-old Thomas Lochrie. The other student, C.S. Nelson, was in the rear cockpit, and would be at the controls during the flight. The trio lifted from the ground at 4:30 p.m., planning to be back in Fort Lauderdale a short time later.

As they approached the landing strip in West Palm, something went terribly wrong. The plane went into a spin and crashed in the Huffman orange grove about 100 yards east of Military Trail. Nelson would survive his injuries, but Fogg and Lochrie were crushed by the plane's engine and died in a matter of hours after being rushed to Good Samaritan Hospital.[9] Fort Lauderdale was stunned by the news. At just 29 years of age, a cherished friend and the man some called their "city's hero" was gone.

His body was returned to Fort Lauderdale's Griffith Funeral Home. Two thousand people from every walk of life passed by his casket. After the service, his body was taken to the Florida East Coast train station for a final trip back to Maine, where he was to be buried. Nearly 1,200 mourners joined in the procession. As the funeral cortege left the chapel, seven aviators flew overhead in their biplanes, dipped wings in a final salute and showered the procession with hundreds of roses.[10]

Three days after his death, the Junior Chamber of Commerce discussed plans to redouble its efforts to establish an airport in Fort Lauderdale. Fogg had been a member of the Junior Chamber and



The Belvedere landing strip in West Palm Beach is where Fogg and his students were headed when they crashed into the Huffman orange grove about a hundred yards east of Military Trail. Photo courtesy of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County

was among those calling for a permanent airport to replace his make-shift field. A report on the meeting said, "No more fitting and lasting tribute could be paid Fogg than the creation of a local flying field, bearing his name."[11] On May 1, 1929, exactly one year to the day after his death, 5,000 people attended the dedication of Merle L. Fogg Airport. It was located on the site of the Southside Municipal Golf course, which had closed in December, 1928. Only a minimal amount of work was needed to convert it into an airport. Trees and bushes were cleared from the perimeter of the course and its bunkers were leveled. Its unpaved runways were the former fairways, suitable for the planes of the day. It was hoped that Fogg Airport would attract an airplane manufacturer to the city, but that never materialized. In the tough economic times of the 1930s, there was little flight activity and the untended airfield grew high in weeds. During WWII, Fogg Field (as some called it) was acquired by the federal government, and was greatly expanded as Naval Air Station, Fort Lauderdale. It was used to train aircrews in the Avenger torpedo bomber. After the war, it was acquired by Broward County and in 1953 Mackey Airlines began the first scheduled passenger flights. Last year 17 million passengers hurried through the airport first created to honor Merle Fogg. It is now known as Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.

At the 1929 dedication ceremony of the Merle Fogg Airport (left to right), Judge Edward Heimburger, Fogg's best friend August Burghard, Albert Erkins and Fogg's parents, Leslie and Alberta Fogg, laid flowers at one of the two memorials to Fogg. The other memorial is in his hometown of West Enfield, Maine.

The Merle Fogg memorial marker was erected on the No. 2 putting green at the closed South Side Golf Course, site of the newly dedicated "Fogg Field." The marker was moved by the Himmarshee Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution from its airport site, to the site of the Las Olas landing strip around 1958.

A condensed version of this article appeared in a supplement to the South Florida Business Journal, May 2004.

Since 1988, Jim Reynolds has served as the Public Information Officer of the Broward County Aviation Department.

Prior to that, he had a 25 year career in broadcast news, including 13 years as a reporter for Channel 10 in Miami, assigned to cover events in the Greater Fort Lauderdale area. He is the recipient of two Florida Emmy Awards for excellence in journalism.

He is a commercial pilot and has written for a number of aviation trade publications.

Jim has a long association with Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. In the 1950s he took his first flying lessons in a cloth-covered Piper Tripacer. On one of his solo flights, he was told to be very careful because an airliner was expected to land that afternoon.

Notes

1 "Airplanes Can Land Here Next Wednesday," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 13 February 1920, clipping file at Fort Lauderdale Historical Society Archives.

2 "Fogg's Quick Wit Saves Friend in Stunt Flying Over Lewiston, ME," Lewiston Maine Paper, article reprinted in *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, 22 April 1929.

3 "Airplanes Can Land Here Wednesday," *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*, 13 February 1920, clipping file at archives of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society.

4 Weidling, Philip, Checkered Sunshine, (Tallahassee, University of Florida Press, 1966), 163.

5 Hutchinson, Scott, "What's In A Name," *Miami Herald*, 14 May 1989.

6 "Plaque Marks First Airfield of Merle Fogg, Barnstormer," *Fort Lauderdale News*, 6 November 1978.

7 Letter in the Archive of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society

8 Broward County Court Record, Fred B. Shippy, County Judge, Application for Letter of Administration, 21 May 1928, Recorded in Book 3 Administration Record, 265. *Collections of the Broward County Historical Commission.*

9 "Merle Fogg and Tom Lochrie Die in Plane Crash; C. S. Nelson Injured," *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, 2 May 1928.

10 "Last Tribute is Paid to Flyer by Entire City," *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, 5 May 1928.

11 "Jay-Cees Pass Resolution in Death of Fogg," *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, 7 May 1928.

CROP DUSTING BY AIRPLANE

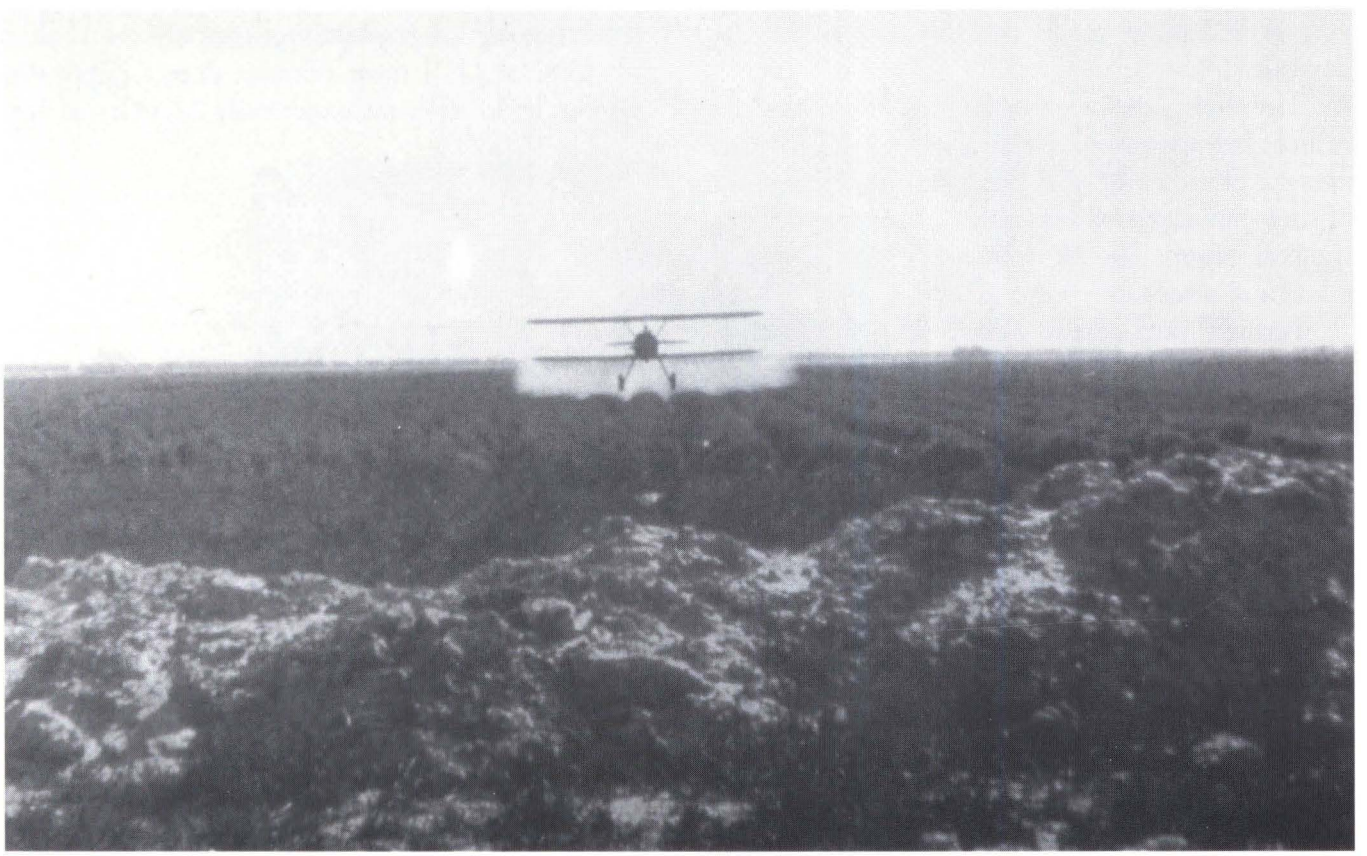
POMPANO, FLORIDA 1930-1940

by Leroy Brown as told to Bud Garner

E. L. "Bud" Garner moved to Pompano in 1927, when he was nine months old, and graduated from Pompano High School in 1948. He served in the Navy in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Mediterranean during World War II, farmed, and was employed by the W. R. Grace Company for 30 years. Now retired, he has been the recording secretary of the Pompano Beach Historical Association.

Leroy H. Brown was born in 1921 and came to Pompano as a child. He graduated from Pompano High School in 1942. A retired captain for Pan American and National Airlines, Mr. Brown now resides in Zellwood, Florida. He was interviewed by Mr. Garner around 2000.

A version of this story first appeared in the online newspaper, The Sentry, Inc. and is reproduced here with their permission.



Crop Dusting in Plantation. *Photo courtesy of the Plantation Historical Society*

Applying insecticides on crops by airplane was first attempted as early as 1921. One of the earliest such experiments was in Mississippi. Although crude equipment was installed in World War I surplus airplanes, the experiments were generally successful. Things began improving with better airplanes, engines, and farm chemicals.

One of the earliest companies was Delta Dusting Company, the forerunner of Delta Airlines. Delta Dusters operated in the Pompano area in the 1930s and used a landing strip located in Hammondsville. It was owned by the Hammond Development Company. Delta operated off the Pompano Navy field immediately following WWII.

The airplanes they used were Huff-Dalands[1] (a product of the 1920s). They were quite successful dusting vegetable crops in the Pompano area. The dust was loaded in a compartment located in front of the pilot. It came out of a chute in the bottom of the airplane in great clouds and was more or less evenly dispersed over the crops as they flew about three feet above the ground dodging trees, poles, birds and anything else that might be sticking up in the air. Dusting was a hazardous job and required very skilled pilots to do this day day-in and day day-out.

These airplanes were soon called "Puffers" for rather obvious reasons. Delta also operated in other areas of Florida as well as other states. Perhaps one of their mainstays was dusting cotton and fighting the boll weevil. The pilots were soon called duster pilots and sometimes various other names.

Perhaps one of the better known "dusting" companies was J.L. Schroeder, Inc. J.L., as we shall call him, was in Pompano as early as 1935 and continued through the 1940s. J.L. was a friend of mine and lived next door to me in Pompano. J.L. Schroeder was from Houston, Texas. He had started in this business in 1924 and was certainly among the first in the duster field. J.L. eventually retired in Delray Beach and lived out his life there.

J.L. operated several airplanes, usually four to seven, and began in the Pompano area with airplanes called "Commandairs." These planes were built in the late 1920s and early 1930s in Arkansas. They had 185 horsepower Curtiss Challenger engines. The Commandairs were very good dusting airplanes with a normal load of dust weighing 400-900 pounds. J.L. also operated Travelairs[2], another fine duster powered by a Wright Whirlwind engine -a model J-5 of 220 horsepower-- the same type of engine used by Charles Lindbergh on his flight across the Atlantic. These engines were made in 1927. Keeping in mind that at the end of World War I, airplanes were little more than wood and fabric using rotary engines. They were used as a gun and bombing platform and for surveillance. In just nine years, Lindbergh in 1927, had a plane with a metal cowling (the rest was fabric), with a radial engine and many features never thought possible at the end of hostilities.

In the fall of 1937, J.L. used a landing strip that had been used by another dusting company earlier. It was the entrance of a defunct harness harness-racing track and was easily identified by two small distinct buildings located on the Old Dixie Highway. It was, and is still called "The Dusting Field" by those who still remember these operations. Today, this is the entrance to John Knox Village and the road is named "Airport Road." There were sidewalks left over from the "building boom of the 1920s bordering the rock road that served as a landing strip.

One of J.L.'s most popular duster pilots was Bill Longino who, although only 21 years of age,

In the late 1930s William A. Longino, worked as a pilot flying a crop duster, a much needed service in the mostly agricultural county. *Photo courtesy of Bud Garner*

was an excellent pilot and duster and well liked by everyone. It has been said that farmers had their fields dusted just to watch Bill fly.

Bill loved to fish on his time off and usually went with one of Pompano's finest fisherman, John Whitmer. Longino later left to fly for Braniff Airlines, where he stayed until retirement at age 60. Bill was a good friend of mine, who lived in Texas. We kept in touch on a regular basis. His experiences would have filled many books. Captain Longino, of Carrolton, Texas, died July 8, 2004 at the age of 87. His career at Braniff spanned 1940 – 1976.

The other crop dusting company was Faulkner Air Service, operated by Jack Faulkner. Jack used the previously mentioned entrance to the race track, prior to J. L. Schroeder. He was there in 1936 and the spring of 1937.

Jack operated several airplanes, including a Waco 10, Pitcairn Mailwing, Curtiss Robin, and a Stinson. Even though I was only 14 years old, Jack let me hang around and get in the way, until I began to learn the ropes.

Jack had a pilot named Jim Crawford who hailed from Martin, Georgia. Jack and Jim were also excellent duster pilots. I learned to fly from both of them, but that is another story. Unfortunately, Jack was killed in his automobile, when it rolled off the Old Dixie Highway bridge and into Cypress Creek Canal in the fall of 1937. After Jack's death, Faulkner Air Service operated on a landing strip parallel to the FEC railroad just east of the harness track entrance. It was operated by Jack's widow after his death. She and I also keep in touch. She and her daughter, Lenore, went to New Jersey in the summer to dust cranberries, etc. and never returned to Pompano.

J.L. Schroeder's was the only operation left after Jack Faulkner's death. Jim Crawford flew for J.L. in 1938. In February, 1939, Jim went to work for Eastern Airlines and flew until the mandatory retirement age of 60. He still lives in the Atlanta area, and we have stayed in touch form more than 60 years.

During World War II, J.L. had many pilots and airplanes. He finally switched to J-3 Piper Cubs, which made for more economical dusters, carrying as much as 500 pounds with only a 65 h.p. Continental engine.

Assistant Jim Crawford (standing) and pilot Jack Faulkner prepare a crop duster for flight in 1936. John Knox Village is located on this site today. *Photo courtesy of Bud Garner*

The men named here were the pioneers of the crop dusting business. They were preceded by the "barnstormers," who flew into Pompano landing their "planes" in the weed field where the city nursery is now (located south and north of Northeast 10th St. and east of Northeast 5th Avenue) selling rides for a dollar or two to anyone brave enough to get in their plane.

I worked and flew for J.L. from 1941 through 1950. I also flew for three other companies in the crop dusting business until 1975. Then, like Bill and Jim before me, I went to work for the airlines. I flew for National Airlines and Pan American World Airways for 30 years, still crop dusting on days off.

There were many rumors of so-called "flying rum running" to the Bahama Islands. Most of these stories were probably true. Some of the duster pilots I knew were more than likely involved. I have been told the airplanes could carry 15 or 20 cases more or less of liquor and that a profit of $20 a case or more apparently made it worthwhile. It seems like the Curtiss Robins held the most cases. It took less than 45 minutes to fly each way, so it was pretty good money.

There is another interesting aspect of airplane crop dusting. This is the use of insecticides and fungicides, etc. In the early days, a duster pilot lived in the environment daily without any protection and without any apparent negative health problems. Most duster pilots I have known have lived into their 80s and 90s and enjoyed good health. So much for the environmentalists and their scare tactics about DDT and other chemicals.

I am 78 years "young" and still enjoy good health in spite of all the published articles about the dangers of these insecticides.

Most of the areas in Broward County that were farms are now cities and towns. So much for the era of "Good Pilots, Old Airplanes, Dusting, and Farming" in Pompano. For me, it was a great time to be in Pompano and I am proud to say that I am a real "Beanpicker"!

Notes

[1] Huff-Daland Dusters, Inc. was the forerunner of Delta Airlines. Huff-Daland Dusters was based in Monroe, Louisiana. The company was sold in 1928 and the new owner began passenger service between Dallas, Texas and Jackson, Mississippi under the name Delta Air Service. For more on the history of early crop dusters see the web site of the National Agricultural Aviation Association. Photos of early Huff-Daland crop dusters and crop dusting are available at deltamuseum.org (the company's museum site).

[2] The Travel Air Manufacturing Company was established in 1924 in Wichita, Kansas and sold to the Curtiss-Wright Corporation in 1930.

MR. X. BOOTLEGGER

by an anonymous informant as told to interviewer, the late Philip J. Weidling

Prohibition came to Broward County even before the Volstead Act of 1919. In 1913, the county, then part of Dade County, had voted to be "dry." Despite best intentions, the restrictions on alcohol actually lead to an increase in consumption. Otherwise law abiding citizens either made alcohol at home, or purchased it from bootleggers or rum runners. Liquor was openly sold from an automobile parked nightly on the corner of Andrews and Wall Street in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

The vast shorelines of the state of Florida became an easy outlet for smuggling by both air and sea. South Florida's close proximity to the bursting warehouses of liquor in the Bahama Islands, as well as to Cuban distilleries, made it a prime place for smuggling. Here, in an interview with historian Philip J. Weidling, from the oral history collections of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, an anonymous bootlegger, who wished to be referred to as "Mr. X" in the interview, discusses rum running by airplane.

Weidling: Ladies and gentlemen, this is Mr. X.

The Fort Lauderdale Golf and Country Club grounds in the early 1930s was located far from most developed areas. Bootlegger pilot "Mr. X" landed his plane filled with illegal liquor on the grounds of the club. At that time the city had leased the club to wealthy alleged bootlegger Roy Quayle for $100 a year.

Mr. X was one of the men, one of the importers, who operated during that long, dry, period of Prohibition. Mr. X was never a boatman, he was an aviator, and I am going to let him tell you his story about how he operated during that period of Prohibition, Mr. X.

Mr. X: Well, there really isn't much story to tell. Things were pretty rough in those times of 1930 and 1931, and a fellow had to make a living somehow.

So, I happened to land here in Fort Lauderdale and I had a tapered wing, a straight winged G-5 Waco. A man approached me and asked if I would go over to the islands and fly some liquor over for him. He would come here and unload me and he had a nice place picked out for me to land, where nobody would see me, and he would give me ten dollars a case.

Well, I flew over to West End[1], this was in a seaplane, and I found out that there were about six or seven other seaplanes over there engaged in the same business. The warehouses were there. That's the only place I knew in the world, at that time, where a pilot could go over and get room and board and everything you wanted to drink for nothing. The thing was that these warehouses were in competition with one another and they figured if the pilots stayed over there with them, they would naturally buy the whiskey from them, so everybody tried to get me to stay with them. I picked out what I thought was the best place and I stayed there and ordered my whiskey, whatever the man in Fort Lauderdale wanted me to bring over. So I ordered up and we had an agreement made that I was to meet him about ten o'clock at a Fort Lauderdale golf course[2] and he would be there with a car to unload me.

With a seaplane, I went and landed in [inaudible] in back of Stuart (the town of Stuart in Palm Beach County), Florida and landed in the water there, taxied up to the shore, turned the airplane around, kept the motor running, and in order to not let the airplane taxi away from the shore, we tied the tail with a light wash line to a [inaudible]. So, in case I had to make a quick get-a-way, I could get in the water and there would be enough power there to break a little line and I would be off and on my way before anyone could catch me.

This went on for about a year or so until one time I had come over again. . . practically in the middle of the Gulf Stream, my motor started acting up and finally quit. The sea was very rough, I went down in the ocean and there was no chance to land the airplane half way decently and, of course, it busted off the floats and it looked very bad there for a little while.

I looked around and there happened to be a boat sticking barely out of the water, with one man steering and a colored boy pumping, and he was loaded to where the boat only stuck out about six inches above the water. He hollered at me to hold on that he would be over there as soon as he could. He came over and since he was heavily loaded and he was shipping water, he told me he would take me aboard if I would pay for ten cases of champagne that he had to throw overboard, which he did. I got aboard that boat and I don't think I was ever that scared in my life. It wasn't the sea alone, but getting ashore and afraid of getting caught because a boat can't take off like a seaplane can take off.

So, of course, that put me out of business for awhile, and then I got to thinking that what good is a seaplane, as long as you can't land it anyway if the sea is rough and nine times out of ten, it was rough.

So, I went back over on a supply boat to West End and I found a farmer there who had about a ten acre corn field and the only bad part was there was a little pine tree right square in the middle of the cornfield. I asked him if I could buy that cornfield from him for the corn he might reap from it. He said that he was agreeable, that he would let me have the field and cut the tree out, so I could land there with a land plane for $50.

I gave him the $50, then I went back to the states and the straight wing Waco I was telling about first. I went over to the West End, I had just enough money to buy gasoline to get there and I thought I'd get some over there because everybody over there was doing the best they could to serve you things. I saw that little pine tree was still right square in the middle of that field. Of course, I couldn't go back so I did the best I could to land it and I didn't quite stop before I hit the tree and it damaged the [inaudible] slightly and I repaired it there with their facilities. There weren't many seaplanes flying.

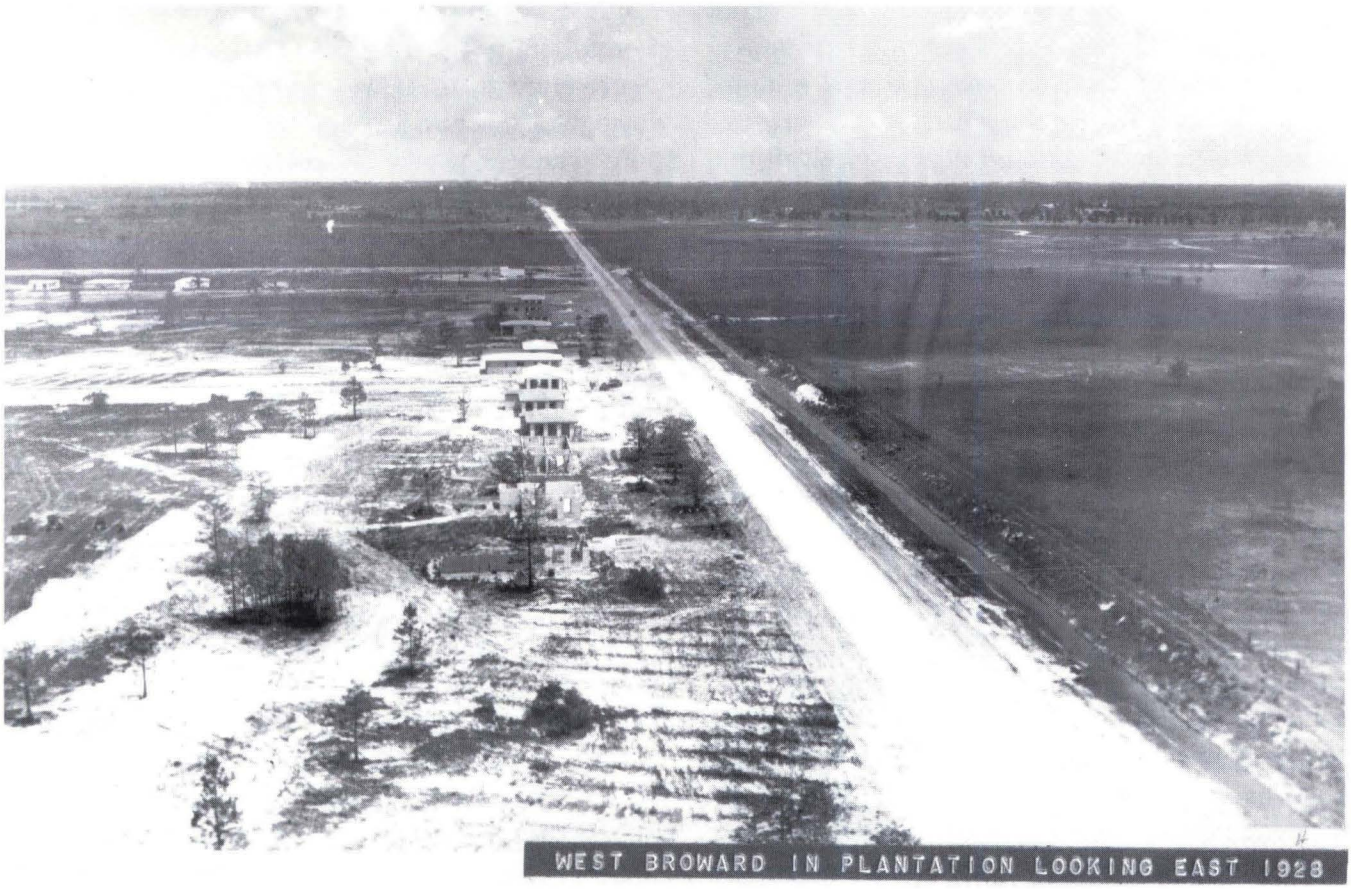
Then in about a day or two I sent a wire back to Fort Lauderdale and told the man that I would meet him at the agreed place, which was the Municipal Golf Course in Fort Lauderdale. I took off with my load. I carried 20 cases, and it was 40 sacks weighing about 800 pounds. This overloaded the airplane, but there was no CIA over there to watch you. I got into Fort Lauderdale and there were several people playing golf and I landed on a fairway. A car backed up to me – of course everybody knew what was going on. They started swinging their golf clubs saying, 'Hey, give me a jar of that, a pint of that, a quart of that.' Of course, we unloaded it all and in five minutes I was gone back toward the islands.

When I got back over to the islands I made the biggest mistake I ever made in my life. I got back there and one of the warehouse operators asked me why did I want to pay for the field, he said that he would give me the $50 back and he'd increase the field and level it off and make it a little larger and get things fixed up right and supply transportation from warehouses to the field and make it easier for everybody around. There might be some more airplanes landing later on. Of course, I took the $50 back. It wasn't six months that there were about 20 land planes flying over out of there, each one making about three trips a day, with an average of 25 cases a load, so that was pretty bad for business. The man that owned the field charged everybody a dollar a case for flying them off his field, I know that sometimes there must have been at least 2,000 cases a day going out of there. . .

Weidling: Now Mr. X, you didn't have to land your airplane on the golf course. When the season was dry here you could land anywhere out in the Everglades, it was all flat ground, out there, for instance, where the city of Plantation is. Is that true?

Mr. X: Well, at first, the first month or so we landed at an airport even in Stephen's Point and deserted streets in the City of Fort Lauderdale, and so on and so forth, because there wasn't much

In the early 1930s remote western areas, such as Plantation, were often used by rum runners to land their planes.



danger of anybody being there because all the Border Patrol and the prohibition agents and the Sheriff's Department and whoever was there, they were still watching the lake beds, the lakes and so on and so forth and still didn't know the land planes were flying, so it was easy. Of course, it didn't take long before they found out there were land planes on the way and we had to use dried out lake beds in back of Boca Raton, back in Palm Beach and around there. Sometime they stretched as much as 2,000 feet and they were just as hard and just as good as airports.

There was one spot in back of Boca Raton where at one time we must have pulled in at least 50 loads without anybody bothering us; however, when the place did get hot, the closest I ever came to getting caught was right there. I landed and I expected the Ford V-8 to be there on the edge of the field to unload me, and as I came over the field I saw the V-8 sitting there, which looked like the car to unload me, so naturally I landed. However, I never did shut the engine off and had enough room in front of me to take off again, even though I was loaded. As I stopped, I wondered why the car didn't come up to the plane and I kept waving to them to tell them to come over and nobody did. So finally I saw a man jump out of the car and hollered at me and said, 'Wait a minute.' Then I knew it wasn't the car that was supposed to unload me and I took off again. Now all that custom man, whoever it was, had to do was just drive out and meet us and drive in front of the airplane so I couldn't take off and that would have been it. However, at that time, I guess the bureau was still getting smarter every day and they were still learning, so it was quite easy.

Weidling: Mr. X, they never managed to stop the flow of liquor into Fort Lauderdale, did they?

Mr. X: Well, as far as the local law was concerned and the prohibition agents and everybody else, we weren't much afraid of them because, well, let's put it this way, they could be bought off. But as much as the Border Patrol was concerned, at least in those days, there was nothing doing. If you ever got caught by the Border Patrol, mister, you were caught and that was it. However, all I know is that this one pilot was caught and this happened in back of Hollywood. There was a great big field there, a cattle ranch and you landed right in the middle. You could see for at least two or three miles around, so it was a pretty safe place. If anybody came that didn't belong, the airplane just took off and the car could go in any direction. The ground was good, and impossible, we thought, for anybody to get caught there. We must have pulled in over 100 loads there and of course the law and Boarder Patrol knew we were landing there, but there was nothing they could do. The minute one of their cars showed, the airplane took off and the car took off.

However, at one time a man landed there with a [inaudible] and a car came over to unload him and he had a mechanic along who was supposed to go back to the islands to service the islands. He had been over here for a small vacation and he had this man standing about two or three feet away from the airplane watching for cars arriving and the car that was supposed to unload him, backed up to the airplane and started to unload the airplane. All of a sudden somebody held a gun on the man who was unloading the airplane and said, 'All right, you're under arrest.' Well, the man didn't believe so he looked around - the watchman was still watching there - looking in all directions and it was impossible for him to be coming from anywhere in the flat field. He looked around and sure enough, there was a Border Patrol man. So the pilot saw him first and he started to jump back into the seat to take off and then the Border Patrol man let the unloader go and held his gun on the pilot and held the airplane. That was the only airplane that ever got caught in operation. Others were caught before that when they had to be left in the field overnight on account of motor trouble, or some of them maybe had a slight accident while they were landing. Then they were left there and of course the government caught those airplanes, but that was the only pilot who was ever caught.

We finally asked the Border Patrol, 'How did you ever catch him?' He said, 'Well, I'll tell you, we went out on the field where we saw all these tail skid marks and we knew about where the airplane was landing. So I dug holes in the ground and carried the dirt off in bushel baskets and lay down on the ground, covered ourselves with grass and waited for the airplane to come in.' And, as the Border Patrol man told me, he said, 'If that airplane had got another 10 feet closer, we'd of

jumped up and run like a rabbit.' She just about missed running over him. It so happened that he was so close to the airplane that when he got up out of the ground, that he was between the man who was watching and the airplane and that was it. The only one that was ever got caught in actual operation.

Weidling: Mr. X, did you know if any of the other pilots who were carrying liquor were also carrying any other contraband drugs?

Mr. X: I definitely know that none of the airplane pilots did. It was whiskey and nothing else. We were approached a lot of times to maybe haul aliens, or haul worse things than that, like narcotics, but nobody to my knowledge did and I could personally swear to that. Of course, the immigration officers knew we were landing and didn't bother us because they figured it was none of their business because a lot of those boys talked to us and said, 'Now look, we haven't anything to do with the whiskey business or with whiskey. If ever you should haul anything else but that, look out for us because we are going to get on your tail, too.' But we never did, not to the best of my knowledge.

Weidling: Mr. X, the people who were bootlegging was accepted by society the same as everyone else. It was more or less considered to be an honorable profession in those days, was it not?

Mr. X: Well, of course, in those days everybody knew what I was doing and everybody knew what everybody else was doing. As much as the social life in Fort Lauderdale was concerned, it didn't much hurt me at all. In fact, they knew whenever I was invited to a party there would be some good drinking liquor instead of some shine there.

Weidling: I suppose people would let you buy them a drink anytime that you wanted to.

Mr. X: That they did. That they did.

Weidling: Well, Mr. X how did you get started in that business?

Mr. X: That's a long story. I used to be over in Detroit, I say Wayne, Michigan. I was a test pilot for Stinson Aircraft Company[3] and I was standing in the office one time with the sales manager, and in walked a man with a pair of overalls on and it looked like he didn't have much money. He asked the sales manager if he could build him an airplane that would carry a big load – Stinson, Jr. – that they built at that time, a 215 horsepower engine, and wanted to put a foreign horsepower into it because he had a lot of overseas flying to do, at least a D-69. The sales manager said, 'We have a six place job that has a big engine in it.' 'No,' he said, 'I want the small air plane with a big motor in it.' The sales manager said that they would have to build that airplane special for him. It takes a long time. We will have to run a proof test on it and all that and has to be approved by the C. A. [Civil Aeronautics Board] and it will take a lot of money.

The man said, 'I didn't ask you how much money it takes. I just asked you if you could build the airplane.' He said, 'We can build anything.' So he said, 'All right, build me one that is just the size of the Junior and put the big engine in it. How much of a deposit you want?' The manager said, '$5,000. It'll take $5,000 deposit, the airplane will probably cost you about $17,000 or $20,000.'

Commission in those days was pretty high as the regular price of the Stinson Junior was only $6,000. So he said that he would be back in about 30 minutes with the money. Of course, the manager thought it was just another guy dreaming.

We sat around a little while and by gosh in about a half an hour the man came back, peeled off $5,000 and threw it on the desk.

He looked at me and he said, 'What are you doing here?' And I said, 'Well, gee, I'm working here.' He said, 'What kind of work do you do?' I said, 'I'm a test pilot.' He said, 'You want to go to work for me?' And I said, 'Well, it depends.' And he said, 'How much money you making here?' I replied that I was making a living and he said that he would give me $75 a week, starting right now and when you start flying I'll give you $150 a week. In those days that was a pretty good basis for a private pilot, that was in 1930.

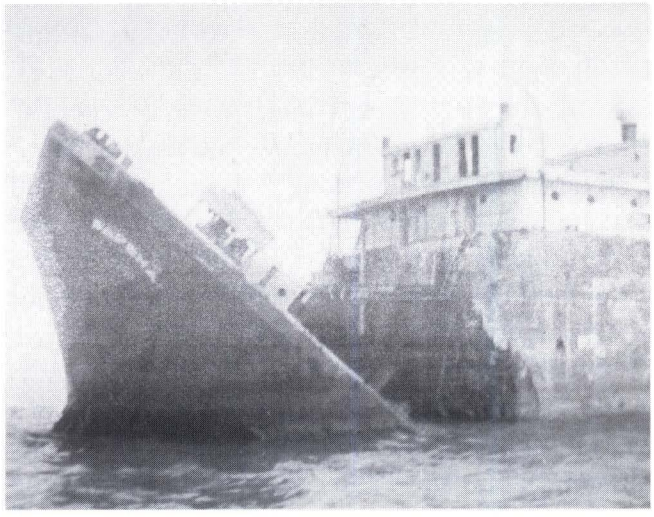
I said, 'Starting right now, it will be months before the airplane will be ready, at least a month to six weeks.' He said, 'It doesn't make any difference, you stay right there in the factory and see those guys build the airplane right because you are going to be flying it. When it is all done, you call me up in Daytona Beach and I'll meet you up in New York because you'll have to go up to New York to put floats on the airplane.'

I sat around the factory over there doing

nothing, you might say, just going up to town once in a while and playing pool, got my $75 a week and when the airplane was ready, I test flew it for the CA for my certificate, took it to New York, put floats on it, test flew it over there for the CA where [inaudible] certificates, then called the man and said the airplane was ready to be taken delivery on.

So, he came up to New York and we flew the airplane back to Daytona Beach. When I got to Daytona Beach I found out that the man was one of the largest bootleggers in that territory, that he had a [boat] in the West End that had three liberty engines in it, that's a thousand 200 horsepower, which would carry several thousand cases of whiskey. He ran it into Daytona Beach and then he was also loading a schooner out of Nassau going up to New York. The first thing he told me, 'Now look, I am in the whiskey business, you won't have anything to do with the whiskey business, if you want any liquor you can come to my house and get all the liquor you want. But I don't want you to ever carry a single pint in that airplane, you absolutely got to be clean.'

'So, all I want you to do is fly it over there and fly my associates over there to buy this liquor. We might go down to Central America, but never at any time have much as a half a pint with you on board the airplane.' So at that time the port of entry for seaplanes was in Palm Beach and we always cleared back in. Of course, the Border Patrol man knew who the man was. The first three trips we came back from Nassau where we had bought liquor, he never inspected the airplane until finally the fourth time I think it was. One of the Custom men came to me and asked, while I was going through the [inaudible] control, if I minded if he looked at the airplane and I told him no, go ahead and look at it. So, by the time I got through with all the paper work, about 15 minutes, I went back to the airplane and they just had it torn apart. Of course, there was nothing in it, so they apologized and I guess that was the end of that.



The concrete ship, Sapona, in Bimini served as a floating liquor warehouse that sold to rum-runners. The Sapona was completely twisted by the 1926 hurricane and later used for target practice for WW II bombers.

At one time I think I must have had at least a million dollars in cash aboard going over to Nassau, travelers' checks. Bank checks didn't work over there, only good old American cash. I lived in Fort Lauderdale. I came to Palm Beach to pick up the airplane and the man came down from Daytona Beach. He called me and said he had about three more men to go down with him and they wanted to go to Nassau, regardless of the weather. The weather wasn't good, but you could fly through a few little thunderheads and he came over and I never saw that much cash money in a pocket in all my life. They had it in their coat pockets, they were just bulging, they had it in little grips, and they must have had at least a million dollars in cash because they went over there and loaded the [inaudible], which was the power boat that had the three liberty engines with 10,000 cases. They bought at least 100,000 cases in Nassau at the average of $10 a case – that's quite a bit of money and it all had to be paid for in cash.

I flew for him for awhile and [inaudible] like everybody, he was sitting next to me and I asked him why he didn't learn to fly. There's nothing to it, all you have to do is just sit there and look wise and hold the airplane straight, if the weather's nice. No, he didn't want to do that and I finally succeeded into talking him into doing it and by doing so, I talked myself right off of a job. He finally learned to fly. He never did get a license, and he got so he could fly around a little bit and take off by himself. One day he took up somebody else with him and he had a few shots of liquor in him to give him a little extra courage and he took

off and then he cracked the airplane up and the airplane sank in Lake Worth. That was the end of my job.

And like I told you, things were still tough – I just had enough money saved up to buy this airplane I was telling you about and there was nothing else to do, so I started flying liquor.

Weidling: Then you bought your own airplane and came down here, is that right?

Mr. X: That's right.

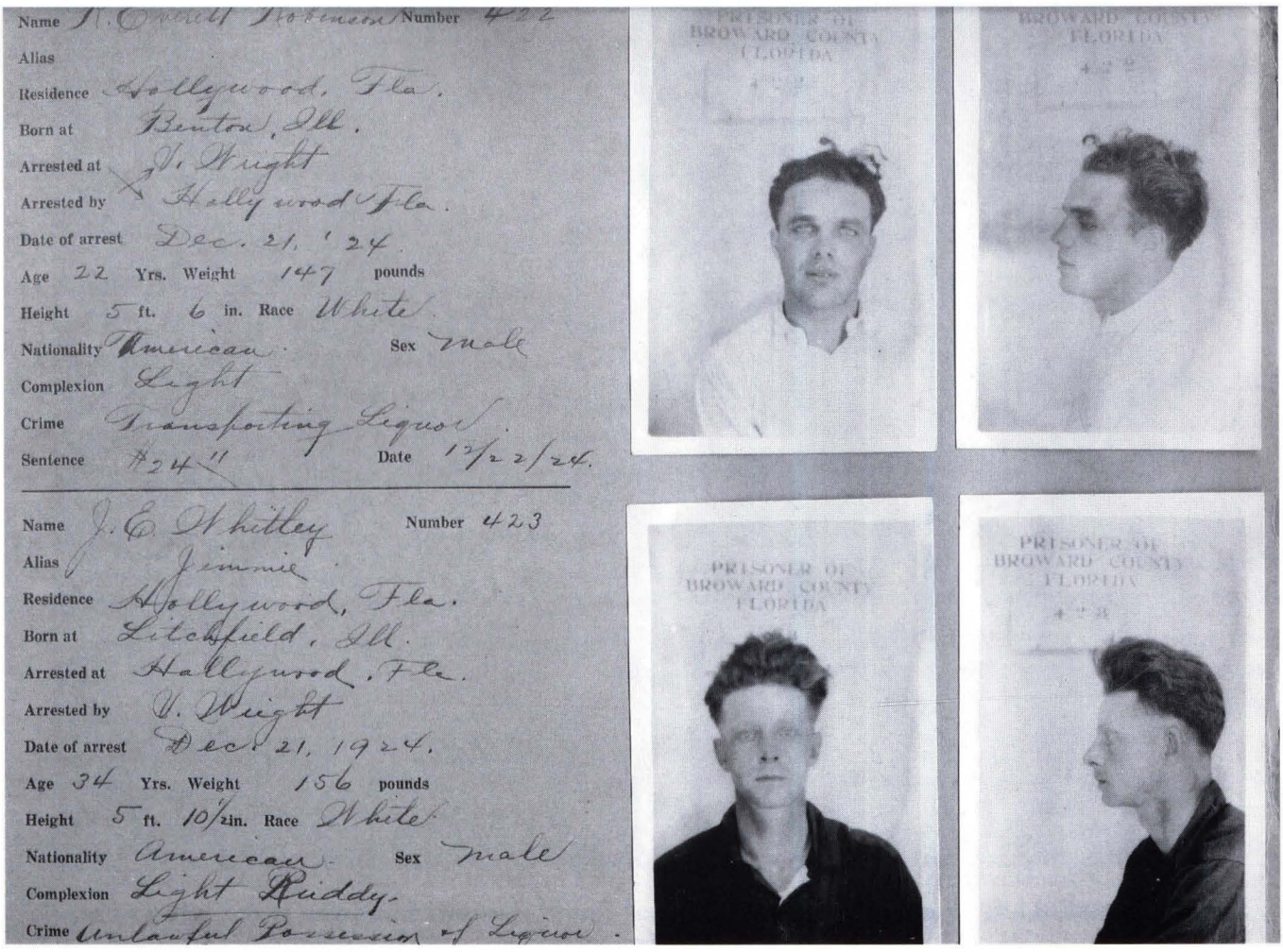
Weidling: Mr. X, you didn't identify this man who hired you. Could you give me any clue as to who that might have been?

Mr. X: Well, I don't know at that time, just was his nickname was, but I heard later on that, I think after he died, which was not too long after that, he was called the Real McCoy[4].

Weidling: But you don't know whether that was his name or not?

Mr. X: No, I don't.

Concluding remarks by Phillip Weidling: You've heard Mr. X state that pilots who flew the airplanes were, like himself, very experienced. This, however, was not true in the case of the men who ran boats, or whatever, before the airplanes started. Many of these men were distinct landlubbers. They had to be taught how to start the engines and how to stop them. Instructions from there went, "Go to Baker's Haulover[5] and cut East and you will come to Bimini." Needless to say, very often the seas were rough and a lot of these men were lost at sea never to be heard from again. Among those who were lost were Bill Ashley, a brother of John and Robert Ashley who formed the nucleus of the notorious Ashley-Mobley gang[6]. Others whose boat broke down at sea were picked up off the coast of North Carolina after hardships that were too terrible to describe. These men made good profits, but as time went on, the Coast Guard got more efficient. Finally, many



Mug shots of people arrested for transporting and possessing liquor.

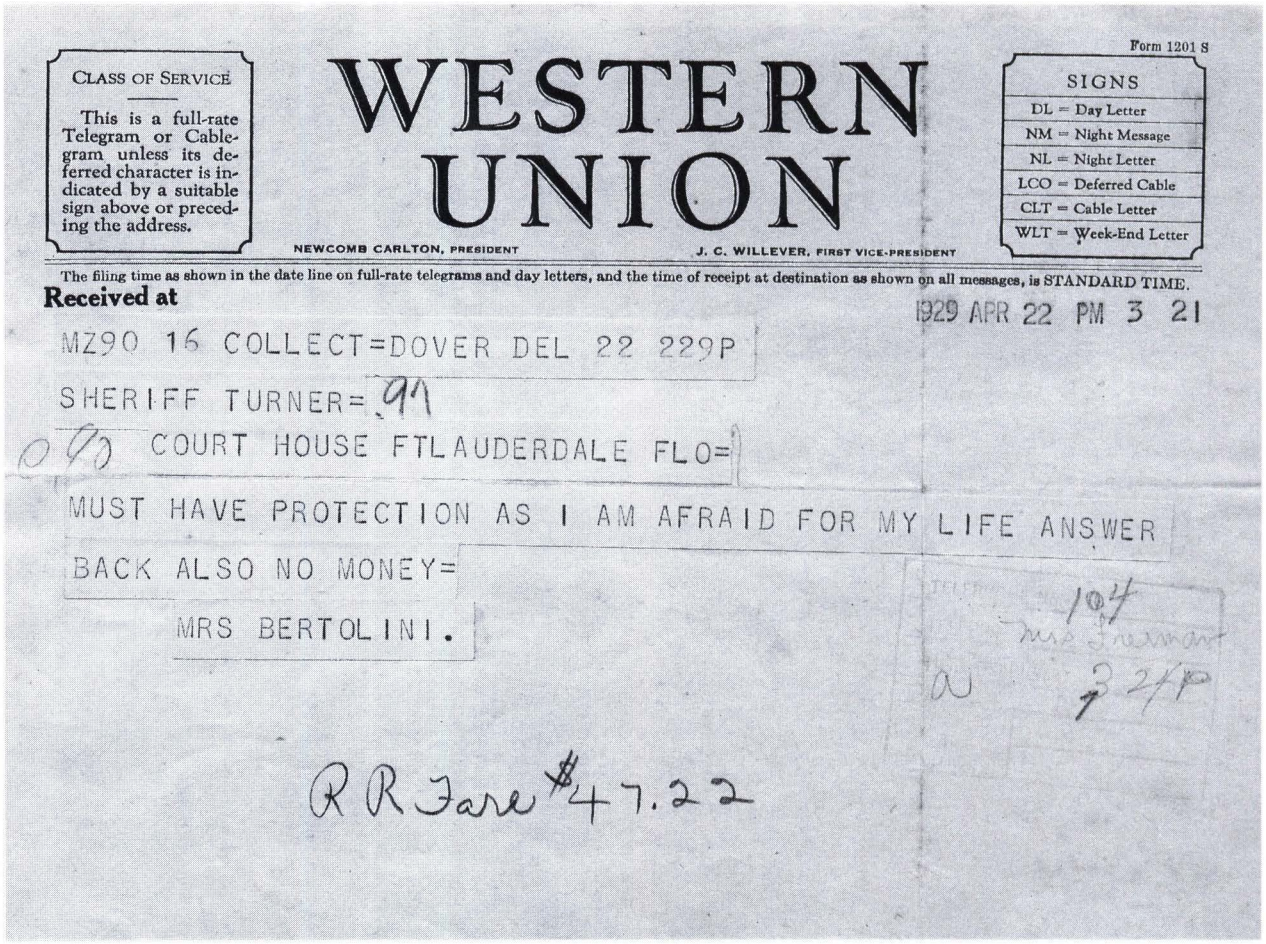
of them were caught, many of them were lost at sea and most of them have disappeared, gone from here to the extent of the actual men who ran boats it is almost impossible to get first hand experiences. For that reason, I Phil Weidling, am filling this in of my own knowledge. I was just a boy during that time and didn't participate in any of the crossings, but I knew all about them and did go to Bimini a few times and saw the bootleggers in action there.

Another phase of the bootlegging was the squabbles they had among each other. These included, of course, several murders. One of the most distinctive was the society bootlegger, as they called him, Bill Bertolini[7], whose body was found just north of Oakland Park Beach Boulevard. It had been laying there about four or five days – he had been shot in the back and everyone in town thought they knew who did it. Names were mentioned back and forth, but nobody was ever arrested for it.

There were other murders, a great many people who simply disappeared and some who apparently took a nice trip out west or some other part of the country or even some other country.

The only way that liquor could be bought in the islands was with cash. This meant that the persons who employed the men who ran the booze had to entrust him with the money to buy it. Now, sometimes, as Mr. X stated, this amounted to a great deal of money indeed and of course it was always a temptation for the actual boat operator to go elsewhere and use the money for whatever purpose he might see fit. Some of the men suspected of doing this, simply disappeared. We don't know whether they went elsewhere or whether they were caught up with. Their bodies were not found, so we assume they got away.

You also heard Mr. X state there was pretty good money bootlegging. During the long period of the Depression about the only two classes of



Form 1201 S

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable sign above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

SIGNS

DL = Day Letter
NM = Night Message
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The filing time as shown in the date line on full-rate telegrams and day letters, and the time of receipt at destination as shown on all messages, is STANDARD TIME.

Received at 1929 APR 22 PM 3 21

MZ90 16 COLLECT=DOVER DEL 22 229P

SHERIFF TURNER= 91

COURT HOUSE FTLAUDERDALE FLO=

MUST HAVE PROTECTION AS I AM AFRAID FOR MY LIFE ANSWER BACK ALSO NO MONEY=

MRS BERTOLINI.

104 Mrs Freeman

R R Fare $47.22

Isabella Bettolini left town after her husband was found murdered and she swore out a warrant for the man she believed killed him. She later agreed to return to Fort Lauderdale to testify if the Sheriff guaranteed her protection and paid for the train ticket.

people who had any money here, particularly in the summer time, were the farmers and the bootleggers. The farmers continued to make pretty good money throughout the Depression and in winter time we had tourists who came down here and some of whom were pretty good spenders. The residents of the town who were not engaged in these activities were hard pressed to pay their taxes, which were very burdensome in those days. They had no money what so ever for luxuries, and barely enough to skimp by with necessities. In those days, journeymen carpenters were lucky to get a dollar a day and that was only when they worked, which was not, by any means, every day. A good job in the bank might pay as much as $20 a week and the people who earned it spent most of it on taxes; of course groceries were much cheaper then. Fishing was a little bit better and they could support themselves somewhat by eating fish, "grits and grunts," whatever came to hand. In many ways, we had a lot of fun during the Depression, but in retrospect it was miraculous that as many people as there were were able to save their property, finally saved it.

Notes

[1] West End is the oldest city in Grand Bahamas Island and is the closest landfall to Broward and Palm Beach Counties, being within 60 miles. During the United States' Prohibition, warehouses, distilleries, bars and supply stores sprang up in the sleepy fishing village. Rum-running became a cottage industry out of the islands of Nassau, Bimini, and West End

[2] The Fort Lauderdale Golf Course was built on land given to the city by a land development company. It is located about three and a half miles west of the city on West Broward Boulevard. It consisted of approximately three hundred acres of land. It was opened in December 1926, two months after the disastrous 1926 hurricane. The clubhouse, opened in 1927, was designed by locally renowned architect Francis Abreu in a Mediterranean Revival style. The City of Fort Lauderdale, facing financial troubles, leased the property to a Chicago syndicate of twenty-five businessmen in 1928. The lease was later taken on for $100 a month by a reputed bootlegger from Chicago, Roy Quayle, who ran it until the city took it over again in 1936.

[3] Stinson Aircraft Company was founded by aviator Edward Stinson in 1920 in Dayton, Ohio. They moved the base of their operations to Detroit in 1925.

[4] Mr. X could have possibly been referring to the rum runner Capt. Bill McCoy. Reputably, unlike other smugglers, McCoy never watered down his booze and always purchased quality liquor giving rise to the term "the real McCoy." He is said to have retired to Florida in the mid-1920s. Whether he really did retire can be open to speculation but he was at the time very well known and operated on a very large scale. See Sandra Henderson Thurlow's *Stuart on the St. Lucie*, 2001 Sewell's Point Company, Stuart, FL. "Capt. Bill McCoy – *The Real McCoy*", page 57.

[5] Baker's Haulover is located north of Bal Harbour in Dade County.

[6] See *Broward Legacy*, Volume 24, Number 2, "The First Sheriffs of Broward County, Florida: 1915 – 1933."

[7] According to the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 10, 1929, Bill Bertolini's decomposed body was found that morning "tossed on a lonely stretch of the Floranada Beach" (around Lauderdale-By-The-Sea), "Deputy Sheriff Wright's party discovered a number of well beaten paths on the Floranada beach which were thought to have been made by parties unloading contraband goods from liquor boats." Bertolini was born in Massachusetts and his family lived in Delaware. He was about 28 years of age when he was murdered, supposedly because of an ongoing battle between rum runners and hijackers. *The Daily News* of April 26, 1929 devotes an entire paragraph to describing his widow's clothing in the article "Widow of Murdered Man To Tell All, Comely Little Wife of William Bertolini To Face Alleged Slayer": "Dressed in black, her entire ensemble was of funeral black. The only bits of color were the gold of the wedding band on her finger and the metal clasps on her black pocket book."

AVIATION NEWS ARTICLES

Well known aviators visited the Fort Lauderdale Airport. Amelia Earhart (on right) toured Florida in 1935 and Annette Gipson (on left) visited in 1936, and set an unofficial altitude record while at Fogg Field.

Constance Murphy Brunger and Marilyn Burch posed in front of a plane taking part in the International Air Race in 1975. Ms. Brunger, a registered nurse and business owner, began flying in 1960. She died in 1999.

Here are some of the earliest newspaper accounts regarding aviation in Broward County from the files of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society and the Broward County Historical Commission. They describe the perils, excitement and fascination that gripped the nation regarding the budding field of aviation.

Fort Lauderdale Sentinel
May, 10, 1918

An airship became disabled last Sunday and lit on the ocean out about 8 miles and was brought to shore at Las Olas beach by the men from the Coast Guard who towed it in by boat. It was quite an attraction during the day, large crowds going out to see it. It was pulled onto the beach between the Coast Guard station[1] and the bath house[2].

Fort Lauderdale Sentinel
October 11, 1918

FIVE HYDROPLANES ENTERTAIN AT PARK

After the Relic Train left this city last Friday noon, our people from all over the county went to Las Olas beach where the rest of the day was spent in pleasure and listening to a patriotic program in support of the Fourth Liberty Loan[3].

Five hydroplanes from Dinner Key[4] arrived at Las Olas about 2 o'clock, and after a half hour of maneuvers in the air, they landed on the bay, opposite the park where the crowds were given ample opportunity to examine the planes. At about 4:30 in the evening, the planes again took to the air and spent another half hour in maneuvers, which the crowd greatly enjoyed. One plane before leaving the water damaged its pontoon so that it had to remain here until the next day when a crew of mechanics from Dinner Key made the needed repairs and the plane returned to its own power.

Fort Lauderdale Sentinel
January 17, 1919

AIRPLANE DIGS IN TOMATO FIELD

An airplane from Curtiss Field about 30 miles southwest of this city while flying over Dania last Monday met with bad luck and his [sic] engine died while flying at a height of about 5,000 feet.

The aviator was a cool headed chap and circled around and looking for a good place to land, picked out Johnson's tomato field in the East Marsh. But the ground was a little softer than he anticipated and when he landed, one of the propeller blades stuck into the ground and the plane turned completely over. The aviator had his nose broken and received some minor injuries in the accident.

Fort Lauderdale Sentinel
Friday, February 13, 1920

AIRPLANES CAN LAND HERE NEXT WEDNESDAY

The banquet of the chamber of commerce, held in the Hotel Broward Wednesday night of this week, was one of the most successful of the season. There was a representative gathering and a great deal of business transacted. E.N. Sperry, chairman of the committee on aviation, reported that the aviation field in North Lauderdale is practically completed and will be ready for use in a few days and the first airplane landing there will be made Wednesday.

Fort Lauderdale Sentinel
Friday, February 27, 1920

SEEK HIGH IDEAL IN AERIAL FLIGHT

Fort Lauderdale's aviation field was dedicated last

Saturday by Lieut. L. W. Neber and his assistant, Lieutenant L. C. Stoutt, both of La Harpe, Ill. The aviators arrived on the Fort Lauderdale field at about 11:30 a.m. The day was windy and the wind unsteady, which made flying risky. The first local passenger to make a trip was Mrs. E. N. Sperry. Mr. and Mrs. Sperry[5] have both been very active in arranging to have a landing station here, and Mr. Sperry was the chairman of the committee which actually arranged for and built the grounds.

Mrs. Sperry said she greatly enjoyed the trip, and came back feeling like a real "sky pilot." (No, she will not preach in the first church next Sunday.)

Mrs. Sperry said the bird's eye view of our city is beautiful, all the imperfections dropped away as she ascended and the river became a silver cord winding across the green background.

The second trip of the day was by Miss De Yoe, of the Sentinel force. Miss De Yoe made a much longer flight than did Mrs. Sperry and obtained a beautiful view of the ocean, the sound, Lake Mabel and all the winding waterways and magical islands near the mouth of the New River. Then, after mounting into the clouds, the pilot turned his plane nose down and Miss De Yoe enjoyed (?) all the thrills of a "tail spin". The plane was then put through all the stunts of the trade, and she performed perfectly, and after landing Miss De Yoe stepped from the plane without any sign of nervous shock and said the trip was delightful.

Mrs. Thos. Stillwell was the third local passenger to be "carried to the skies." The Stillwells are from Anderson, Ind., and are guests at the Broward. Mrs. Stillwell's flight was not so long nor to so great an altitude as that taken by Miss De Yoe, but she got the experience of air travel and a beautiful view not only of the city, but of all the surrounding country.

In the afternoon Broward County's only Japanese citizen went up to spy out the best aerial roads where the Jap air navy can slip in without being seen when Japan decides to invade this country and annex Fort Lauderdale and Carsonville to the flowery kingdom.

Following this flight, Pilot Neber made a flight alone and probably a little careless in his landing for when nearing the ground he came a little too close to some trees at the side of the aviation field and a sudden gust of wind threw his plane far enough for one of the wings to strike the tree top. This landed it in a second tree, where it turned completely over and the nose struck the ground, with the propeller hooked over a stump and the tail sill up in a tree.

Machinist Stoutt estimated that the damage was about $2,000.00, and that the plane would be out of commission for several weeks. The plane is number 34000, and belongs to the Bradshaw air line.

Fort Lauderdale Daily News
January 1, 1933

GIANT AIRSHIP DRAWS CROWDS

Hundreds of Local Citizens Line Beach to See Akron In Flight to Miami

Citizens of Fort Lauderdale had an excellent view of the giant airship Akron yesterday afternoon as she leisurely made her way down the coast to Miami for the All-American Air meet.

Hundreds lined Las Olas beach and cars of spectators were parked from one end of the city section of the beach to the other. The silvered torpedo-

Akron landing in Miami, 1933.

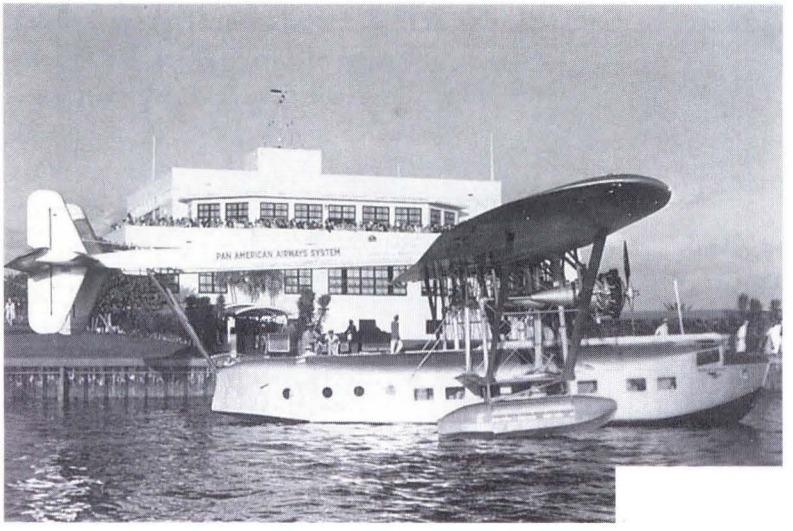
shaped body of the Akron could be seen far up the beach above Pompano, apparently stationary.

Slowly and majestically it came closer. Three airplanes flew as an escort and a smaller plane, evidently attached to the Akron flew around and under it. All work ceased in downtown sections and taller buildings were mounted to gain better views of the big ship.

Between the time of the passage of the Akron in the late afternoon and dark more than 50 airplanes, flying singly, in two and threes and one big squadron of 24, went roaring south to Miami[6].

Schools will close at noon tomorrow so that children may attend the air meet, it was announced by U. J. Bennett, superintendent of schools.

Pan American Airways terminal building at Dinner Key opened in the early 1930s and was a major tourist attraction. The activities of the Clipper ships could be watched from the promenade deck.



Notes

[1] In 1917 the United States Coast Guard took over the House of Refuge on Fort Lauderdale beach for the duration of World War I. House of Refuges had been constructed along the coastline as a place for shipwrecked sailors to seek shelter. This site is currently occupied by the Bahia Mar Marina at 801 Seabreeze Boulevard.

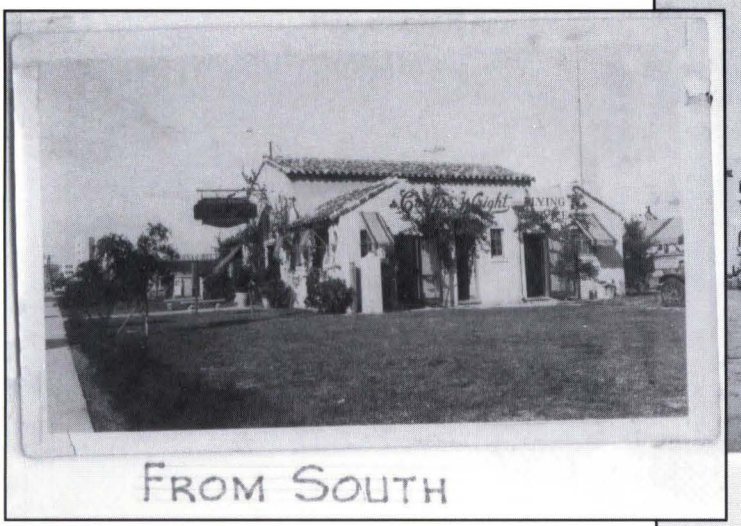
[2] The "bathing pavilion" was opened on Labor Day 1914, and was a popular gathering spot for bathers and picnickers who came on excursion boats from the mainland on Sunday. A bridge to the beach was opened in March of 1917.

[3] Liberty Loan drives were national efforts to raise funds to prosecute World War I by selling Liberty Loans. Liberty Loans were treasury bonds which would increase in value the longer they were kept. They financed the bulk of the war effort. Broward County residents enthusiastically participated in the program.

[4] In 1917 the Navy began to operate an aviation school at Dinner Key south where the Miami City Hall is today in Coconut Grove, south of Miami.

[5] Ellie Newton Sperry and his wife Olive M. Sperry lived on Rio Vista Boulevard and Bridgeport, Connecticut according to the 1924-1925 *Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, Dania and Broward County Gazetteer*, Volume 3, Florida-Piedmont Directory Company, Publishers, Asheville, N. C., page 169. Their voter registration cards list Mr. Sperry as retired and Mrs. Sperry is listed as a as a housewife in 1924. He served on the first Fort Lauderdale Planning and Zoning Board in 1925, according to Philip J. Weidling and August Burghard's *Checkered Sunshine*, University of Florida Press, Gainsville, 1966. Mr. Sperry's obituary from the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* November 10, 1937, states he was a retired manufacturer and banker who came to Fort Lauderdale in 1918. He was one of Fort Lauderdale's oldest and most prominent citizens. "Taking an active and prominent part in Fort Lauderdale affairs, Mr. Sperry was a member of the board of directors of the Broward Bank and Trust Co., President of the Lauderdale Abstract Co., a member of the Chamber of Commerce and honorary member of the Rotary Club."

[6] Akron crashed during a storm off Beach Haven, NJ on April 4, 1933 - three months after visiting South Florida - with a loss of 78 lives.



FROM SOUTH

2 - CURTISS "SEAGULLS"
1 - LOENING AMPHIBIAN
PHOTO TAKEN LATE 1920's.

Miami's Curtiss-Wright Flying Station was founded by Glenn Curtiss in 1927 it is the Opa-Locka Airport today. The father of Fort Lauderdale architect Paul Bradley was the station manager there in the early 1930s.

Photos courtesy of Paul Bradley

PAUL BRADLEY JR.
IN CABIN OF "IRELAND" AMPHIBIAN.

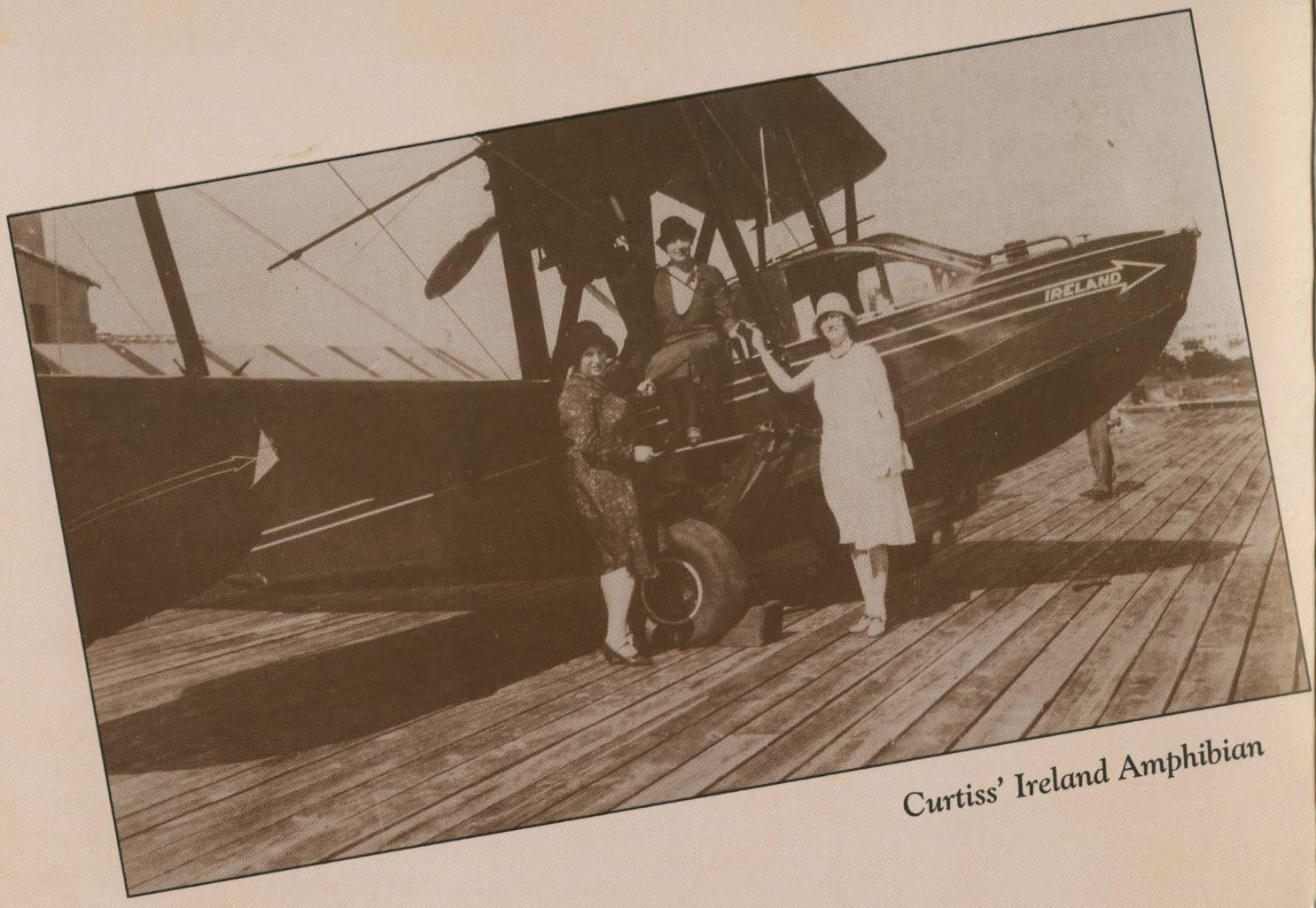
BOB MOORE
PILOT

GEORGE HAND
PILOT

PAUL BRADLEY
STATION MANAGER

SIKORSKY AMPH

EDDIE STAFFORD
PILOT



Curtiss' Ireland Amphibian

VIEW FROM S.W., SHOWING "IRELANDS" SITTING ON RAMP, LOOKING TOWARD STEAMSHIP DOCKS, SEVERAL BLOCKS BEYOND.

Photos courtesy of Paul Bradley