

On September 21st the area was visited by the famed Clarence Chamberlin and his squadron of three Curtiss Condor CO's, one flown by Miss Ruth Nichols and one ferried by Mrs. Teddy Kenyon. Two of the big biplanes, one a spare, were stationed at Natick while the third was flown from Framingham. The writer experienced his second airplane ride in company with Charlie Babuka and Wesley Grant at this time in this particular craft with Colonel Chamberlin. In Chamberlin's own words, "They were 29 place but 40 is the most that ever flew at one time. It was a great short field ship. As far as load was concerned all you needed to know was, 'Can you close the door?' At Wyoming Street Airport, Detroit, I carried 2135 people in one day from a 1200 foot field and had to come in over the DeSoto Plant plus a 30 foot electric line. At Worcester (Grafton, Mass.) we carried 9985 over two weekends and the intervening week. I've forgotten the number at Framingham and Natick but we flew day and night. An average was 4000 to 5000 passengers per week - with street lights for boundry lights (at least at Natick)."

Opening at the Gorman TheateBr on September 26th for a three day run was "Air Hawks" with Ralph Bellamy and the late Wiley Post who, with Will Rogers, had been killed the previous month in a plane crash at Point Barrow, Alaska.

Aviation in Framingham during the early part of 1936 didn't make any headlines, nothing of much interest occuring except for two air movies and a model airplane contest in July. The pictures were, "Devil's Squadron" with Richard Dix and Lloyd Nolan, an epic about "thrills in the clouds with the test pilots" at the St. George and "The Sky Parade" starring a radio favorite of the day, Jimmie Allen, which played at the Gorman Theater, sponsor of the model contest in conjunction with the picture. Winners in the model competition were Richard F. Dyer who took first prize with a Fiat CR-30 and Stanley Orzeck whose Boeing P-26A gained him second place.

On July 22nd Lieutenant Warren Higgins landed his Martin B-10, a rather large and fast airplane for its day, at Framingham for a visit with relatives. Higgins was a member of the 20th Bombardment Squadron based at Langley Field, Virginia.

Resentment over the Natick Airport was coming to a boiling head with citizens appearing before the selectmen to protest activity at the filed. On August 20th the selectmen called the attention of Building Inspector Richard L. Bennett to alleged violations of regulations by the airport and advised him to take action under the building code.

August 25th, 1936 saw the visit of "America's Largest Land Passenger Plane", a Boeing 80A tri motor biplane, flown by Captain W.M. Carey, which arrived at Framingham from Northampton during the afternoon for a scheduled 3 day stay for passenger flights. Sponsoring the visit was a Framingham automobile dealer, Veino Chevrolet who promised free rides in the plane to anyone purchasing a new or used car during its stay. alighting from the Boeing upon its arrival from Northampton were a group of Framingham businessmen who had motored to the western Massachusetts community in new Chevrolets. They were; John B. Collins of Veino, Vernard G. Irvine of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank, Clerk of Court, Louis W. Farley, James A. Veino, A.J. Halloran, J. Carey Hennebry, John F. O'Neil of the Framingham News, J.E. Guertin, Peter C. Davis, George L. Stone, A.E. Svenson, W.H. Booth and J.J. Keough. The flights in the large ship proved so popular that its stay was lengthened another three days.



On October 9th the huge German airship "Hindenburg" flew directly over Framingham at an altitude of about 2000 feet and a speed of 90 miles per hour. Seizing the opportunity, Chick Andrews ascended with a passenger in the Fleet and followed the great dirigible from Framingham Center to Needham affording both a magnificent view of the monstrous craft.

"China Clipper" starring Pat O'Brien, Humphrey Bogart and Marie Wilson opened at the St. George Theater on October 15th and on November 16, 1936 John Shobe, well known in Framingham, having been chosen as one of the ground school instructors for the ill-fated program in town the previous year, was killed in a plane crash near Syracuse, New York while on a charter flight. His co-pilot, Miss Priscilla Murphy was also killed.

Bringing tragedy home to Framingham on Christmas Day was Lloyd Wallace of Speen Street, Natick who died at about 5:00 P.M. when his light Aeronca C-3 lost flying speed on takeoff and crashed on the airport. This was the first fatality at the Gould Farm site.

The early months of 1937 at Framingham Airport proved to be quiet ones but news was made on July 1st when a fishing party consisting of Bill Martin, his dog, "Brownie", Louis Simonetta, Gordon Gould, John De Marie, Harry Coddington and Chick Chickering ventured out on the briny. It was rumored that seasickness prevailed. According to Ken Fletcher's "Around The Airport" column which appeared in the Framingham News, John R. MacManus of Maple Street, Framingham, former operator of Marlboro Airport purchased the Waco YMF owned by Dr. Lawrence K. Lunt of Concord, Mass. The plane had been badly damaged during a forced landing in a small field off Bethany Road that spring.

Flying his secondary glider at the field during this period was Grant Johnson of Everett, Mass. The craft had a glide ratio of 14 to 1 which meant that when towed into the air by the old Studebaker parked beside the hangar, the glider would sail forward 14 feet for every foot of altitude attained. The Studebaker itself was a 1929 vintage, usually with very soft to flat tires, nevertheless the car in which the writer had his first driving lessons supervised by John DeMarie, (good, patient John)! John, at 17, had passed his exam for a student license and was slated to be a Junior at Framingham High School in the fall. Other items of the day were; Emerson Carpenter of Ashland was chief pilot at the Dennison Airport in Quincy; On Thursday evening, July 1st, Bob Lebewohl of Old Connecticut Path and later to become a Captain for Northeast and then Delta Airlines, made his first solo flight at



Gould's in the American Eaglet. Lloyd Hazen, pilot for Air Services, passed his tests and received a transport pilot's license. Lloyd also flew for Northeast. Les Morton painted the Air Services Waco a bright orange, making the ship more visible in flight than when the former somewhat dull brown. While Les had the spray equipment out he also put a coat on Bill Bransfield's Taylor Cub.

A progressive change was made with the switch from 73 to 80 octane gas due to the higher power of planes now landing at the field. One of these was the Lockheed Vega NC 625E owned and flown by Herbert G. Fales, Vice-president of International Nickel Company. Mr. Fales, whose family resided in West Newton, Mass., had been a frequent visitor to the area, using the Musterfield and Natick Airport in addition to the Gould Farm. His first landings in Framingham were made at the Musterfield and Gould's on the same day, August 29, 1931 while flying a Stearman C3B biplane. Concerning the Vega and Gould's, Mr. Fales remarks, "The field was pretty short for the Lockheed with a load but one of the approaches was low and open". This writer recalls these takeoffs as being quite thrilling with the powerful Pratt and Whitney engine reverberating from Brush Hill.

On August 21st Captain E. Fletcher Ingals and Lieutenant Mark Hopkins of the U.S. Army Air Corps Reserve visited the airport. Captain Ingals was flying a Curtiss Falcon O1-G while Lieutenant Hopkins piloted a Consolidated "Husky". Although the Husky was still deemed suitable for training purposes, the O1-G, representing the type of equipment allocated the reserve, was a design stemming from 1922 and, with its speed of about 140 miles per hour, did not do much to prepare a pilot for duty in modern ships.

Bob Carlson and a passenger, George Taylor, finding a September heat wave hard to take, flew in an open cockpit Waco on the 11th to an altitude of 13,000 feet where the temperature was close to freezing. On the 25th of the same month, Forrest "Buzzy" Bussell of Southville, a village in Southboro, Air Services first student to solo from the Framingham Airport in 1933, dropped in for some flying time in the cub. It was also noted by Ken Fletcher in September of 1937, that the makings of a fine orchestra could be found at the Framingham Airport by anyone with patience enough to whip six aspiring musicians into a unit. John DeMarie and Eddie Paul, both guitar men, Lou Simonetta, sax, George Taylor, trombone and "the newest and perhaps the best addition to the group", young Wally Smith who harmonizes on the banjo and harmonica at the same time." Making the sextet complete was Chick Andrews who acquired a piano and, having no room at his home, installed it at the field where he could while away leisure time. Fortunately the airport was some distance from town!

Here we must speculate that a combination of factors, probably mostly economic, forced abandonment of Framingham Airport by Air Services during the 1937-38 winter. Once again Framingham found itself without an official airport however, as in the past, the Gould site was being used as and when needed. Fog at more easterly ports sent wandering aircraft a number of times to the Framingham site which had a habit of remaining clear most of the time.

Keeping Framingham in aviation news, the Air Navigation Division of the Department of Commerce installed a new rotating airways beacon atop Captain Tom's Hill. The new light, intended for guiding night flying pilots, was turned on for the first time on November 6, 1937, its 36 inch diameter lens topping off a 75 foot tower. Formerly located in Newark, New York, the new beam replaced a 24 inch lens 50 feet high.



On May 19th 1938 the first mail flown from Framingham to Boston was carried by pilot Edward J. Lynch who transported 200 pounds of airmail in a Fairchild 24 monoplane. Three other towns delivered mail to Framingham by air to join in commemorating 20 years of Air Mail Service and also in observance of the first flight of air mail from Washington to Framingham in 1921 by Lieutenant Reuben Curtiss Moffat. The flight was made from Bolling Field to the Musterfield in a DH-4. Moffat was in charge of the Musterfield as an Army Air Base during the early 20's. He was killed May 18, 1946 in the crash of a Beech C-45 near Memphis, Michigan after having attained the rank of Colonel in the Air Corps.

The advent of good weather in the late spring of 1938 brought new operators to Gould's Farm in the persons of the Jennings Brothers, Mason, Perry and Frank who were also maintaining flying businesses at Fitchburgh and Grafton Airports. Fate dealt the brothers a crushing blow in the form of the notorious hurricane of 1938 which, on September 28th, lashed the eastern coast with savage fury. In the tangled wreckage of the collapsed hangar were four airplanes, practically demolished. Included were a Waco F and a Taylorcraft both owned by the Jennings', a cabin Waco owned by E. Fletcher Ingals, and an itinerant Ranger powered Fairchild 24 owned by Henry Smith of Rosewell, New Jersey which had landed because of bad weather. With a damage bill of \$25,000 Framingham aviation once again became a memory.

During Christmas week the Gorman Theater ran two flying pictures, "Flight To Fame" with Charles Farrell and Jacqueline Wells, in which Charlie, "for the glory of the service, faced death at 10,000 feet", and "Hell Divers" starring Clark Gable, Myrna Loy and Wallace Beery.

Succeeding the Jennings Brothers combine as tenant at the field was the Bay State Flying Service (no connection with the 1929 company), owned jointly by George LaCroix and Harold Gruchy. Their business established during the spring of 1939, these men had what appeared to be a going operation by July. Two members of the Privateers Flying Club, W. Gordon Gould and Louis Simonetta, along with Manager LaCroix of the air service, were instrumental in affiliating the Framingham Pilots Association with the Chamber of Commerce at this time. Stan Orzeck, a graduate of Framingham High School the previous month, landed a job with Bay State Flying Service as a member of the ground crew and, to create interest in flying, George LaCroix climbed to a height of 7500 feet while onlookers attempted to guess the correct altitude at which he was cruising. A free flying lesson was awarded to Earl Blank of Natick, the winner. During the contest an interview with Harold Gruchy revealed that an increasing interest in aviation had been noted and that there were 25 students actively engaged in instruction with more ready to sign up. Gruchy said that he saw a great future and that plans were going ahead for re-erection of the hangar blown down by the hurricane of the previous year. No sooner had these words been uttered than the same unkind fate which had ruined the Jennings' plans decided to test Bay State's mettle. A severe thunderstorm complete with golf-sized hail proceeded to do a complete fabric shredding job on two Cubs and the Waco UIC. Damage to the three ships was estimated at \$1200, still a princely sum in 1939! Repairs were made in any event and the hangar was re-built although left with tell-tale gaps in the lettering which had proclaimed, "AIR SERVICES". Things once again looked rosy and aviation was prospering.

The Labor Day weekend of 1939 saw Framingham Airport playing host to two Naval airplanes, a Vought SBU-1, piloted by Lieutenant Noon and reportedly carrying as a passenger the President's son James Roosevelt, a resident of the town at the time. (This was denied by Mr. Roosevelt's office when queried about the matter by the writer many years later.) The second aircraft was a Grumman SC-1 piloted by Lieutenant Commander Don Smith. Both ships had arrived from Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn.



October 1st marked the opening of Air Progress Week and, although rainy weather marred most of the celebration, events were run off as scheduled with fliers from Bayside Airport in Hingham winning most of the competitive contests. During the week, on the 4th, a survey of Framingham water areas was made by Captain Robert Fogg of the CAA in conjunction with proposed seaplane bases. Fogg did not land on any of the town's lakes or ponds, finding them somewhat small for the purpose. Also during October Charlie Post of the Waushakum district replaced Stan Orzeck in the service department for Bay State Flying Service. Stan held the distinction of being Bay State's first student to solo and was wasting no time in getting into the flying end of aviation.

In 1940 on June 30th a demonstration of things to come was presented to the public at the airport when a 3" anti-aircraft gun was set up, its objective to "destroy" a North American BC-1A piloted by Lieutenant Cannon of the 26th Aviation Division. The assemblage was treated to some fancy maneuvers by the BC-1A which was late in arriving, and also by field-based J-3 Cubs, piloted by George LaCroix, Lou Gaetani and Spud Connick, which acted as targets in the meantime. Shortly after this display of firepower Framingham became the first municipality in the state with a Civilian Pilot Training Program.

A total of 10 scholarships for 72 hours of ground school and 35 to 50 hours were awarded in the first class. The winners were: Gilbert S. Portmore, Albert L. McManus, Jr., Mary Ann Decker, Richard D. Furbush, William C. Daisley, Jr., Mitchell Camille, Norman L. McDonald, (destined to become a fighter ace with 11 1/2 enemy aircraft to his credit during WWII), Carl A. Roseland, George W. Hamilton and Ronald Furbush. In the background as alternates, waiting to replace any drop-outs, were five hopefuls: Blake Palmer, Christopher J. Karas, Patrick E. Cooney, Clarence A. Hakell and Vincent C. Thorpe. Bay State Flying Service had been selected to do the instructing with Ken Fletcher directing the program. Instrumental in securing the training school for Framingham was the Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee, consisting of William R. Byrnes, Chairman, John F. O'Neil and Kenneth Fletcher.

Framingham suffered its second and final fatality on the warm evening of July 26th, 1940. Patrolman Joseph Kelly of the Natick Police Department was giving acquaintances rides in his 11 year old airplane, an Alliance Argo biplane, and had taken William Hendon aloft at about 8:00 P.M. The unfortunate craft went into a spin from 700 feet in the air and crashed about a mile east of Leland Street opposite the gas works. Hendon died from injuries incurred in the crash however Kelly, extricated from the plane by Mrs. Elsie Chipman, assisted by her son, Gilbert, survived although seriously hurt.

Late in September Edward Anderson, a member of the Privateers Flying Club, in company with Caesar Tamagno, spent a week flying over Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont in the club's new Taylorcraft.