



Dirigo Flyer

Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society
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July - August 2008

The lead story of this issue was in the Flyer several years ago but in a much shorter version. The St. Croix Historical Society in Calais has been collecting information concerning the Pan Am base at Calais for a number of years now and is preparing a 25-page booklet on the subject. They have given us permission to use this article and pictures for this issue of the Dirigo Flyer. It was authored by several individuals so the byline is the Society itself.

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schs@stcroixhistorical.org

Air Travel Comes to the Valley by the St. Croix Historical Society



Left to Right: C.W. Gilchrist, City Editor Evening Times Globe, St. John; R.E. McInnis, Newtonville, Mass.; Mayor W.H. Laughlin, Milltown N.B., Mayor Ned Murchie; Evan Young Vice President Pan American Airways; Mayor J.R. Polley, St. Stephen; Dr. W. Miner; G. H. Gillis Circulation Manager, Halifax Herald and Mail; G.H. Footer, Medford, Mass.; Earl MacAndrews, Calais and Boston; J. W. Bagley, International News Service, Boston

Seventy-seven years ago, in 1931, air travel was much on the minds of the residents of the St. Croix Valley. The (Calais) Advertiser reported in February that the St. Croix Airport, located on a sixty acre plot on the outskirts of Baring had been chartered with Clifford G. Chase, President, Walter L. Cobb, Treasurer; and a Board of Directors consisting of W. N. Miner, J.R. Trumble, L.J. Parant, E.A. Woodman, and Ned Murchie. The president was authorized to accept subscription to the capital stock, which consisted of one thousand shares at a par value of ten dollars per share. At the time that the charter was issued, Maine had only six airports, which were authorized by the U.S. Depart of Commerce and a two-passenger Curtiss Wright airplane could be purchased for \$1,480.00 Calais was designated as an air port of entry and remains so today.

On July 31, the Good Will Flyers stationed in Michigan and sponsored by the America Aeronautical Assoc. arrived at Miner's Field on Hinckley Hill to begin a four-day stop to promote interest in air travel. A basic short ride could be taken for a one-dollar fee with longer rides available at an increased price. In addition to their mission of raising public awareness to air travel, the group was charged with making a survey of Maine as well as twelve other states and make daily reports and a final report at the end of the visit to each of the areas to collect information which would be of value to future air craft operators. In addition to carrying passengers, the Flyers also did exhibition flying to demonstrate their skills in trick flying.

On August 1, the first regularly scheduled plane landed on the St. Croix river at Barbour's Beach. The event was documented by the following article which appeared on the front page of the Advertiser on August 5, 1931.

Hundreds of cars and approximately 2000 people were on hand Saturday at Barbour's Beach to welcome the landing of the first plane to arrive on a regular schedule. Probably no more beautiful setting could be found for a landing place than this one with its wide expanse of water, wooded hills and historic St. Croix Island in full view a short distance away.

To the throng on the hill who had come to witness this forward step in our community life, there was a great thrill when this big 12-passenger plane swooped down to perfect landing.

Mayor Murchie of Calais, Mayor Polleys of St. Stephen, Mayor Laughlin of Milltown, NB, Dr. W.Miner, Mr. Harold Haley and others were there to greet Mt. Evans Young, vice president of Pan American Airways and thank him for including us in the Boston-Halifax line.

The plane was just 45 minutes coming from Bangor where it left at 2:55 and glided into the water at Calais at 3:40. It left again about 4:25 for Halifax via St. John.

Earl MacAndrews, a Calais boy, left the plane at Calais, and J.S. Thomas, divisional traffic manager was a passenger from here. All on board speak in the highest terms at the delightful trip and beautiful scenery from Boston to Calais. Those on board when the plane landed were: R.E. McInnis of Newtonville, Mass; Mrs. S. R. Wald, Halifax, NS; G. H. Footer of Medford, Mass; Earl MacAndrews, Calais; Lieut. Samuel Singer, New York; C.W. Gilcrest, City editor of the St. John Evening Globe; J.W. Bagley of the International News Service; E. E. Young, chief of the foreign department of Pan American Airways; and G.H. Gillis representing the Halifax Herald. The crew was composed of R.O. Sullivan, pilot; W.F. Jarber, Radio Man; J. Carrero, Steward; and A. Miller, who established sea plane bases at different places.

The passengers on this initial trip were most enthusiastic about the scenery all along the route and pleased with this modern mode of travel.

Much work has already been accomplished at the landing. The runway to the float has been completed as shown in the photograph and the building is well underway.

Expectations ran high for this new joint venture of the Boston and Maine Railroad and Maine Central Railroad under the entity of Boston-Maine Airways, Inc. Pan-American Airway was the contract airway and had purchased to Sikorsky S-41-B aircraft for the experimental route. In addition to the 12 passengers, the plane carried a crew of three. Powered by two Pratt-Whitney Hornet 575 hp engines, the plane could carry 895 pounds of baggage, 500 gallons of fuel and 40 gallons of oil in addition to its human load. Passengers entered and exited the plane through a top hatch and the plane could be converted from a land-based aircraft to a flying boat in one minute and twenty seconds. It was touted as the world's largest amphibious aircraft at the time. A Calais native, John Eaton, was a official of Pan Am at the time and may have been influential in including Calais on this route. Another Calais native, Earl MacAndrews, was a passenger on the inaugural flight and wrote a detailed report of the first flight, which also appeared in the Advertiser.

On August 27, tragedy struck the fledgling air route. On the trip from Halifax to Boston on a rather uneventful trip carrying ten passengers, the flight encountered heavy fog near Marblehead and crashed into the ocean. One of the passengers was lost but the remaining passengers and crew were rescued after about an hour and half in the water. The plane was lost and the pilot's license was suspended.

The route operated for two months on an experimental basis and flights ended at the end of September. A letter of commendation from A.L. Miles, Secretary of the Calais Chamber of Commerce, expressed hopes that the flight would be resumed in 1932 but that was not to be.

The Goodwill Flyers did return again to Miner's Field in July 1932 to give local residents the opportunity to experience an airplane ride for a dollar but the Boston-Maine Airways Boston to Halifax route no longer stopped in Calais.

According to John Dudley, Miner's Field was located adjacent to the Calais Trotting Park in the area behind the present Calais Children's Project. Access was from main St. in the vicinity of where Dave Fletcher now lives. If any of you have a photograph of Miner's Field or the Calais Trotting Park, please contact us at the (St. Croix) Historical Society, as we would like to obtain a copy of both for our archives.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Through the independent initiative of member Hank Marois MAM has an opportunity to pursue placing a protective overhang across the back of the museum bays which would provide much needed protection from the elements and would make for better outside storage. Eventually this area could become additional museum floor space when required.

In order for the overhang to become a reality there are a number of hurdles to overcome, including fund raising, permits, some site work, construction, etc. At this time I am able to report that Hank has received a generous response from Hammond Lumber whereby they have stated they would provide the required building materials to MAM at a cost of \$2400, well below their retail value of approximately \$8,000, representing a substantial savings to MAM.

Such a project needs the help of several or more members and this is what you can do for starters: 1) provide us with the name(s) of organizations, and or contact persons you might know that potentially could be candidate donors. Many companies within our communities frequently provide such assistance when approached by organizations such as MAM. Better yet, you could be the contact person on behalf of MAHS & MAM where you have a personal or working relationship with a potential benefactor. 2) As a member of MAHS you may wish to make a donation to this project yourself and take the charitable donation as a tax

deduction. This option is particularly significant since there is nothing more compelling to potential outside donors to see that the membership is also willing to contribute to such a fund raising effort.

Feelers have already been extended to a couple of individuals in the community that are connected to such companies but we need a larger resource pool to draw upon if this project is going to get off the ground. It is feasible with the outside financial assistance but requires some leg work from the membership at large. So, please put your thinking caps on and come up with some sources, and if at all possible, consider volunteering to be a contact person for one or more candidate organizations. We will continue to dialog at the next MAHS meeting scheduled for October, as there will not be a September meeting. I also wish to mention that the October 11th meeting at the museum will be the end of the season “closing up” session, but we would like to make this a gathering time to socialize as well. I encourage each of you that are able to attend to bring along a favorite dish, some munchies or a dessert for what I’ll call a “Mystery Cookout.” And we will try to have a little entertainment as well. Please come and bring a guest.

Looking a little further ahead, but in need of advance planning is the November meeting which we hope to hold at Pratt & Whitney’s facility in North Berwick, the largest manufacturing building under one roof in the state. In conjunction with the meeting there will be a tour of the facility and the high tech turbine engine components made here in Maine and flown by airlines and military around the world. So Please contact me no later than the October meeting if you wish to be part of this most interesting outing. Several members are already signed up and maybe there will be opportunities to rideshare. More details will be forthcoming.

2008 Museum Wish List

It has been a couple of years since MAM has produced a “Wish List” of items that would make this season a success and beyond. Please help us out with your donation or your assistance in obtaining:

- Mannequins and/or Dress Makers Forms (many items on hand cannot be displayed at present).
 - Old style gravity feed Aviation Gas Pump.
 - General Aviation Cockpit or partial for interactive children’s display.
 - Hollow Core Doors (no lock set hole) for use as display panels.
 - Paint Supplies: New or clean brushes, roller covers, paint trays, masking tape, etc.
 - Hard Board/Poster Board for use in making new transportable (road show) displays.
 - Display cases (plexiglas face/top).
-

Buy a Brick and Support the Maine Air Museum

The Maine Air Museum is proud to announce the new Memorial Pathway Program. To successfully carry out and reach the museum vision, and to help refurbish Building 98, the Maine Air Museum needs the financial support of businesses and public community leaders and individual private citizens. To this end, the museum board has established a means for receiving your monetary donation and recognizing your gift permanently in the museum pathway and wall of honor. These donations are fully deductible.

Details available on our web site: www.maineairmuseum.org or from the museum by request.

Now available:

Memoirs: With an Angel By My Side by member Alfred Cormier.

His flying life as told by Al and available exclusively from the Maine Air Museum.

\$16.00 at the museum, \$20.00 via mail. To order, call or email the museum.

“...a great story by a member of the Greatest Generation. Exceptionally good reading, riveting to the end.” Bill Townsend
Teacher-in-Space, STS-51.

*The United States Air Force
in Maine*



Progeny of the Cold War
John C. Garbinski

The United States Air Force in Maine, Progeny of the Cold War

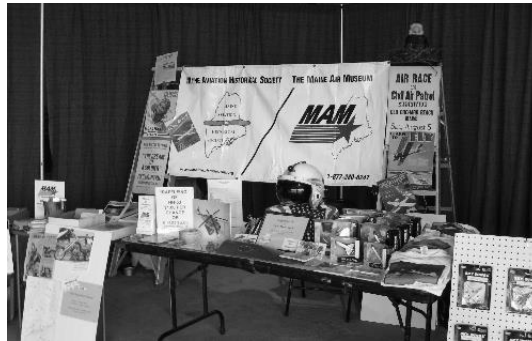
by John Garbinski.

Another exclusive book from the Maine Aviation Historical Society. Softbound, 134 pages, 151 illustrations.

\$20.00 (plus \$3.00 postage and handling). To order, call or email the museum.

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome new members Gerald Hersey, Bruce Merchant, and R. B. Montgomery to the Maine Aviation Historical Society / Maine Air Museum.



Here is a shot of the MAM/MAHS display at the Biddeford Airport Open House held on 30 August 2008.

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Association Officers

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The Maine Air Museum is located at the 98 Maine Avenue adjacent to the Bangor International Airport.

44° 48' 2.10" North 68° 48' 36.02" West



Maine Aviation Historical Society Maine Air Museum * Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Special Interests: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Dues are for one year, and membership will expire in the month you joined.

Annual membership includes six newsletters!

Mail payment to:
Maine Aviation
Historical Society
PO Box 2641
Bangor, ME 04402-2641

Membership	Dues	Benefits
Regular	\$25 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Family	\$35 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Corporate	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission
Supporting	\$100 annual	Newsletter, Museum Admission, .
Lifetime	\$500*	Newsletter, Lifetime Membership Number, Museum Admission,
	* 2 annual \$250 payments	

We need volunteers-docents, mechanics, maintenance, librarians and exhibit specialists, etc.

___ Please call me. I want to be active in the organization.

___ I cannot join now, but would like to help. I am enclosing a check for \$_____.

Contributions over \$20 are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

___ I wish to support and obtain membership by purchasing a memorial brick.

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