



Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark Historian's Office, 1863 Huguenot Schoolhouse
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#1

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Airport History

“As early as 1919, there was an interest in establishing an airport in the Port Jervis area. The U. S. Air Service Department stated a need for transporting passengers and carrying mail between New York and points west and north. A field owned by John Cuddeback, Huguenot, was frequently used.

“Another field was also used during that time. On August 2, 1920 the Port Jervis Aviation Field, on the H. G. Smith Farm, across the Neversink River from Glennette Park, was opened. A large Curtiss Canadian airplane owned by H. B. Wisner, Middletown, NY made its first flight there. Several hundred people were at the field to welcome the plane and its pilot, Carl Kennedy, a former government aviation instructor. He arrived about 11:30, circling over the city a number of times. Then he gave a short exhibition with the plane turning over, doing nose dives and other stunts. Because of recent rains, the landing field on the Smith farm was

soft; however a small white flag placed on the field was a sufficient guide to allow the plane to land.

“Mr. Wisner brought a supply of gas as well as a mechanic to assist the pilot when necessary. Frank Stremper of Tri-States was the first passenger to take a trip in the plane reaching an altitude of 3,000 feet. Gordon McCathie was to be the next passenger however the wind died out and the plane could not lift before reaching the soft field and the trip had to be scrubbed.

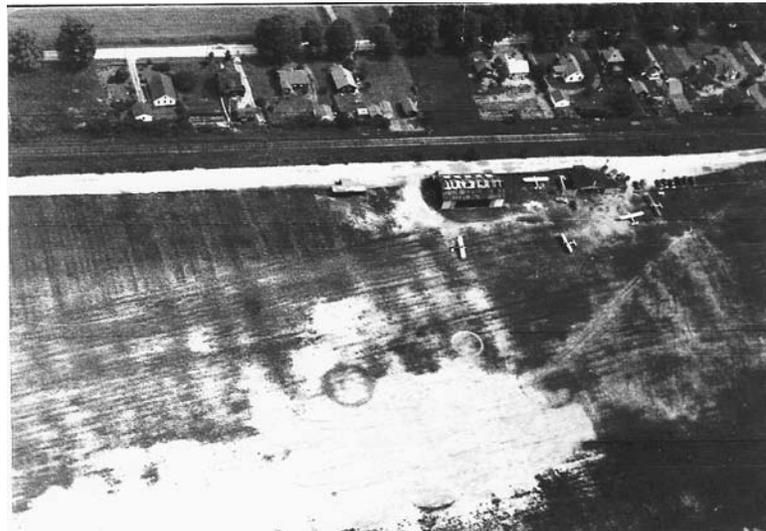
“Mr. Wisner was pleased with the location of the field and left the plane for several days to give several people a chance to take a trip.”

The above mentioned article was in the Port Jervis, Evening Gazette, August 2, 1920.

During the 1930s Bill Durland started the Huguenot Airport on land that had been owned by

Charles Jenks, Huguenot Road (Route 209). He was an Army Air Force Pilot during World War II and owned a single place Buhl Pup airplane. It had a 35 or 37 HP, 3 cylinder engine. Durland lived at the airport and flew his Army trainer home for weekends.

The Huguenot Airport was located on a 2000 foot grass strip. In the early 1940s a metal hanger was constructed by Hamilton Brothers who owned the Ford dealership in Port Jervis. The airport was then sold to Maxie Goldstein and Mary Lauridsen. They purchased all the parts from the bankrupt Skyranger Aircraft Corporation and assembled both Skyrangers and Aeroncas on the field. The Aeroncas were built from aluminum kits with canvas covering the frame. They had 60 HP engines, were painted yellow and sold for \$200.00. The Aeroncas looked similar to Piper Cubs.



*Huguenot Airport (late 1940's) Notice HUGUENOT painted on the hanger
Photo courtesy June Simpson.*

The following is an entry from the *1948 Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Airport Directory*:

Huguenot Airport a/k/a Port Jervis Airport

Location: Route 209, Huguenot, N. Y.

Huguenot Airport (1) Private:
3 mi NE of Port Jervis
El 450; Lat. 44-24, Long. 74-38;
New York Cht.

Unpaved strip: NE 2000'. Field markings;

Obstr: House-S; Trees—SW;
Knoll—NE.

Services: Hangars; 2-M. Office,
Major repairs,

Gas: 80 Oct. Training, Charter,
24 hour service

Taxi, Car, Restaurant, Lounge,
Hotel

Max Goldstein and
Marty Lauridsen, Mgrs.

Tel: 33-721

Airport Cited by AOPA (Aircraft
Owners & Pilots Assoc.)



2nd Lt. George Mc Ginnis and an Aeronca '46. at the Huguenot Airport. He was appointed to Stewart Squad on February 1, 1945 Auxiliary of Army Air Force



Student Pilots at the Huguenot Airport late 1940s.

Photo Courtesy of June Simpson

The airport was a busy place after World War II. There was a flight training program under the GI Bill.

The Civil Air Patrol also conducted programs there. Aircraft of the field included: Sky-rangers, Aeroncas, Cubs, Supercubs, WACOS, Stinsons, a few biplanes and three AT 6s that were purchased as surplus. One was converted to a smoker. A smoker is a plane that has been modified so that it leaves a trail of smoke which can be used for sky writing messages.

Goldstein and Lauridsen also ran a tow service. Their planes flew over the country side advertising goods and services. One of the banners advertised "Joe Lewis Punch" soda.

Clarence Reiser purchased the airport from Goldstein and Lauridsen in 1962. He used it as an airport and also home base for his business, Van Karner Chemical Arms. During 1965 and 1966, Allen Titus of Milford ran an Air Taxi Service out of Huguenot ferrying passengers to the World's Fair in New York City.

In 1972 George Shields of Shields Tire Service purchased the airport. It was used for a short period of time as a lumber company and in 1976 it was sold to Butler Mobile Homes. The old runway is now Airport Park.

Today there is a Huguenot VOR (Variable Omni Range) which is used by pilots (commercial and private) to make approaches to local airports. The VOR is probably named for the airport, even though the beacon is located up on top of the mountain in Mount Hope.

Photo Courtesy of June Simpson

Middletown Times Herald
Middletown, NY
July 25, 1949

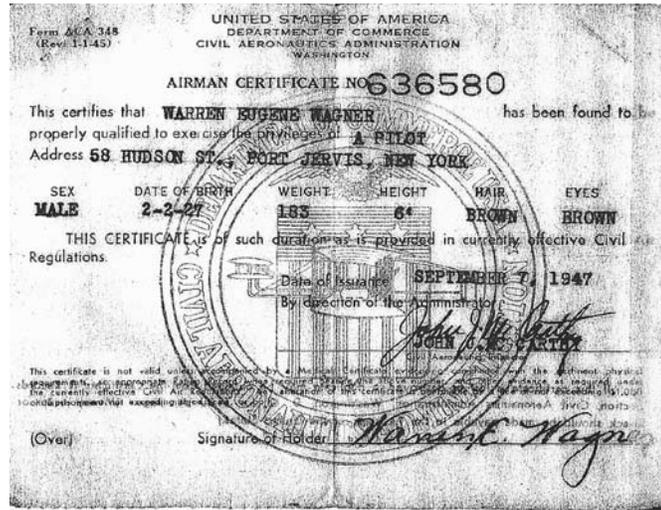
Air Show Crowd Thrilled by Unscheduled Crack-up

HUGUENOT—An air show given before several hundred persons at Huguenot Airport yesterday afternoon furnished an extra thrill when a plane piloted by Christian Lauridsen crashed at the south end of the field.*

Mr. Lauridsen had taken off from the north end and had reached an altitude of fifty feet. In banking the plane at the south end, he apparently did not have sufficient speed and crashed, wrecking his left wing.

The pilot was taken to St. Francis Hospital, Port Jervis and was treated for shock. He was discharged this morning.

*Historian note—State Trooper Ernie Goodspeed jumped over the fence surrounding the airport to give assistance. In his haste he tripped and fell, however he was able to continue toward the crash and provide help.



Warren Wagner's Pilot License issued September 7, 1947.

Middletown Times Herald
Middletown, NY
November 10, 1958

Mysterious Blaze Destroys Empty Hangar at Airport

PORT JERVIS—A fire of mysterious origin completely destroyed the empty hangar at the Huguenot Airport at 6:25 pm Saturday and was one of seven fire alarms that kept the Port Jervis Fire Department on the go from Friday after-

noon to Sunday night.

The airport fire was reported to the fire department by Clarence Reiser, of Huguenot, who saw smoke pouring from the hangar which has not been in use since March when factory equipment stored in it was removed. Port Jervis Fire Chief Roscoe Case ordered the Excelsior and Howard Wheat Engine Companies to the scene.

By the time the firemen arrived, the flames had gained so much headway that the firemen were powerless to prevent the destruction of the frame building. Although hampered by lack of an adequate water supply, the firemen managed to keep the flames from spreading through tall weeds and grass to adjacent homes on Route 209, south of the hangar, by chemical extinguishers and water from the truck's booster tanks.

Chief Case said that he was conducting an investigation to determine the origin of the fire. He also said that he could make no estimate of the damage until he had completed his investigation.

The hangar and airstrip is owned by C. M. Lauridsen of Stamford, Conn. It has been six

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years since the Huguenot Airport has been used to accommodate airplanes although the landing strip has been maintained.

Three years ago the property was taken over on an option by the Port Jervis Community Development Corporation as a possible site for a new industry. For over a year the hangar was used to store factory equipment belong to the Castwell Company of Brooklyn; and now located in Middletown. This company had planned to erect a new manufacturing plant on the site.

However, the financial difficulties of the bankrupt O & W Railroad resulted in the abandonment of the railroad spur that ran to the site from Port Jervis and made it impossible for the development corporation to get clear title to a right of way that would connect the site with Route 209. Last March the option was dropped and the development corporation returned all money pledged to help finance the plant to the shareholders.

The other five alarms resulted from grass fires starting after noon on Friday. Port Jervis firemen were called to combat a fire in the woods back of the airport at Huguenot.

Special Thanks

I would like to thank Ross Decker, Dan Jenks, June Simpson, Warren Wagner and Freddie Weinert for sharing their airport experiences and knowledge which made this issue of *Deerpark Diary* possible.

Additional information, photos and stories about the Hu-

guenot Airport would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Town of Deerpark Historian, Norma Schadt, 1863 Huguenot Schoolhouse, PO Box 621, Huguenot, New York 12746. Phone 845-856-2702 or 845-754-8070.

Thank you.

Fine Art Prints by Peter Koenig

The Town of Deerpark Museum is pleased to offer two fine art prints by nationally recognized artist Peter Koenig. These charming prints titled "Apple Pickin' Time" (fall) and "Snow Day" (winter) pay homage to the Huguenot 1863 Schoolhouse and to those who seek to preserve this important aspect of our heritage. The artist is in the process of creating the entire four seasons Schoolhouse series. Spring and Summer will be completed in 2011. A portion of these sales will be donated to the Town of Deerpark Museum.

Peter Koenig has been selected for four consecutive years (2007-2010) as one of the top traditional artisans in America, according to a panel of experts convened by *Early American Life* magazine. The experts and curators from such prestigious institutions as the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, American Folk Art Museum, Hancock Shaker Village, Heritage Center of Lancaster County, Old Sturbridge Village as well as others in the field, independent scholars and professional instructors, selected the top craftspeople working with traditional tools and techniques. Koenig's work shows



"Apple Pickin' Time"



"Snow Day"

mastery of the art form, heritage techniques, and workmanship, according to the judges. "The judges look for authentic design and workmanship, whether the piece is a faithful reproduction or the artisan's interpretation of period style," said Tess Rosch, publisher of *Early American Life*. "Scholarship, as well as use of period tools and techniques, is particularly valued."

Visit the website to see these fine prints in color. For purchase of the prints, an order form is available. You can also visit the museum to see the prints.

Town of Deerpark Museum website

1863schoolhouse.org

Additional features on the website, include the history of the school, books available and events. If you have missed any back issues of *Deerpark Diary* you can copy them from the website. For additional information contact Norma Schadt, Historian, PO Box 621, 1863 Schoolhouse, Huguenot, NY 12746