

Jan. 2, 2019 Touring

TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

An article from the Sullivan Review dated Oct. 30, 1947 peaked our interest:

“Eagles Mere Airport – Construction work on the Eagles Mere airport started early this week. The contract for clearing, grubbing and grading was awarded the G.B. Cramer Construction Co. of Lebanon. This contract calls for the clearing of

approximately 31 acres of wood land and the excavation and embankment of 50,000 cubic yards of earth and rock. Completion of this phase is scheduled for 120 days. A contract for the second phase of construction, the turfing, has been awarded to Henkels and McCoy of Philadelphia, to be started next spring by W.R. Stepp the designer and engineer in charge. Mr. Stepp states that when completed the runways will be 2,300 feet long and 300 feet wide. Runways of this size place the field within the Class 1 designation.

“Financing is being done with a Boro Bond Issue of \$17,500; grant from the Pennsylvania Aeronautics Commission of \$17,500; grant from the Civil Aeronautics Administration of \$34,000.

“This is the first field in Pennsylvania to be constructed under the Federal Airport Act of 1946.”

To say the least, this article prompted more search. As it happened Ruth Park Hilde had come into the museum with material for the archives, unrelated to the airport question but she was well aware of the subject. Reason: the airport was placed on their family farm. So, we contacted Joan Werner, president of the Eagles Mere Museum and provider of photos pertaining to the airport. She also sent to us the recap that follows:

- From the Crestmont Views of Aug. 14, 1946: For many years the question of an airport in Eagles Mere has been a subject of discussion. Every one agreed that it would be a valuable addition to our resort, but no one could work out a plan by which the necessary work could be accomplished. At last, however, by the cooperation of the borough council, the State of PA and the federal government the construction of an airport is well under way. It is situated about 2 miles below Eagles Mere. The site is known as the Parks farm. When the work is finally completed, it is hoped that it will be put to prompt and continuous use, and that many who have considered Eagles Mere too distant from their homes, will now be encouraged to come by airplane.
- The airport's initial dedication took place Aug. 17, 1946. Two runways: One 900' running north and south. The other is 1100' running southwest to northeast. There will be construction soon on two 200' runways. Hangar facilities are to be constructed.
- From the Crestmont Views Feb. 1947: E.M. Landing Field Keeping step with the demands of the times, Eagles Mere has provided a space on a plateau just somewhat southwest of town, below the Golf Course, for a local landing field for small airplanes. So far, the field has been dedicated and light planes have landed and taken off from it. Plans to be followed will enlarge the field, install the necessary devise for safety, and connect the field with the State Highway with a solid new road. The field should then accommodate larger planes.
- The Crestmont Views Feb. 1948: Our own baby airport which was build a couple of years ago below Eagles Mere is now undergoing enlargement and improvement from a grant through the Civil



Aeronautics Authority plus funds from the Borough of Eagles Mere. Men and machines have been at work off and on since last season developing this landing field to accommodate larger planes. It is hoped that this work will be completed by the time the summer season opens and that private planes will avail themselves of this convenience.

- The Crestmont Views Feb. 1950: Flying This season there will be a building suitable to house waiting room, refreshment stand and telephone connection at the air field, according to Dr. Richard Thompson of Washington who has been largely instrumental in accomplishing these flying facilities, and who is himself a regular air commuter.
- Aug. 6, 2005 The airport was sold at auction for \$1.1 million to Mark Stitzer and George Jenkins.

The amount of work and dynamiting that it took to level the area for these runways was an exceptional feat given the amount of rock and stone throughout Sullivan County. Today a marked dirt road will lead you up to the site but only as far as it dead ends at the base of a landing strip. History can teach us much and sometimes it is to simply admire the efforts of the past.

For this and more information on history within Sullivan County, you can contact us by phone at 570-946-5020 or email museum@scpahistory.com and visit our website at www.scpahistory.com and please like us on Facebook.



