

# I Remember Old Tuscaloosa

By Fred Maxwell

(Editor's Note: This is a continuation of last week's column on the airfields of Tuscaloosa.)

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Even as early as the opening of Maynor Field in 1929 it was realized that a much larger field would be necessary to meet the requirements of an adequate airport for our community. After looking over the entire county it was obvious that the large acreage just west and southwest of Maynor seemed to be an optimum location. Several apparently good areas down the Sander's and the Foster's Ferry Road were ruled out on account of extreme highwater conditions on the Black Warrior river would flood the airfield at a critical time when it might be very essential for emergency operations.

The desired property adjacent to Maynor Field belonged to the Van de Graaff estate and was in the process of a complicated probaton of a will and therefore considered off the market and unavailable.

Hargrove Van de Graaff became very interested in an airport for the City and he was added to our Junior Chamber of Commerce committee on airport acquisition.

Hargrove's enthusiasm over the project was outstanding, yet so great was his honesty and integrity that he refused to push the Van de Graaff property until he was convinced that it seemed to be the optimum location. Together he and I went over all the sites I had considered and many more before he was convinced.

Hargrove was made co-chairman of the J.C.C. Aviation committee and it was worked out whereby the desired property could be sold to the City prior to the completion of the probaton of the will by allowing the court of equity sell the property at a proper appraised price and the court holding the proceeds for final disposition.

At this point I retired from the chairmanship of the J.C.C. Aviation committee on account of passing the eligible age for membership.

Under the able leadership, the city of Tuscaloosa acquired by purchase the acreage for the enlarged airport and it was duly named and dedicated to Hargrove Van de Graaff as Van de Graaff Field.

The old Maynor Field was not included in the new airfield but was utilized as a gravel pit.

(Editor's Note: To be continued.)