

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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Tuscaloosa's first aviation landing field "Druid Field" was offically closed about May 1925, but transient small planes continued to use the shrinking runway for two or three years longer.

In looking for a location for a new landing strip for airplanes it was noticed that a North-South strip of land between the M&O tracks and the Columbus road (Highway No. 82) lying just east of the current Tuscaloosa Airport - Van de Graaff Field, although limited in size had some very desirable characteristics of

location topography and drainage. It was noticed how quickly surface rain-water disappeared. It is now evidenced by the huge gravel pit that underlaid the field and has been deeply excavated to secure the gravel for market.

Permission was granted by the heirs of the Van de Graaff estate to use this area gratis for a municipal aviation landing field provided we would vacate the property on request.

The surface of this field was given a smoother finish by the City and County of Tuscaloosa as was done for Druid Field. A 50 foot circle of white gravel was placed in the center of the landing strip as a marker to identify it from the air.

This field was dedicated on May 28, 1928 as Maynor Field. It was named

for Eldridge (Doggy) W. Maynor who was the third University of Alabama student to be killed in W.W.I. He left the University in 1917 to join the 101st Field Artillery unit in the aviation (spotter) department. His diploma was granted post-humously. Notice of his death came by cablegram dated June 9, 1917.

The "log" for Maynor Field for May 28, 1928 shows the first entry as Eugene Maynor, brother of "Doggy" who flew in from Birmingham in a Curtis aeroplane.

The 106th Observation Squadron of Alabama National Guard took a prominent part in the dedication. Fly-ins by visitors included guests from Anniston, Birmingham and Meridian. Among the fly-in guests are: - Wallace Aderholdt, Knox Ide, W.P. Aker, Jr., E.C. Lloyd, Bob Alston (all from Anniston); Lt. E.M. Rutz, Bobby Gill, John Gill, Lt. Lloyd Barnett, Asa Roundtree, Jr., Lt. O. C. Beatty (from Birmingham); L.C. Pope and

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Frank McDonald (from Meridian); Mark Hodo - President and Charlie Breham - Secretary of Birmingham Junior Chamber of Commerce; Dick Merrill - U.S. Airmail pilot; A.J. Carroll - Manager St. Tammany Gulf Coast Airways, Inc.

Subsequent fly-in visitors include: Lt. Gross - U.S. Air Service, Montgomery; Lt. Berry - 106th Observation Squadron; D. Davis - Alabama Power Co. Advertising; Major Sumter Smith - Commanding Officer of 106th Observation Squadron; L. Poole - U.S. Post Office Department; Captain K.D. Brabston - 106th Observation Squadron; Lt. George R. Bynum Jr. - 106th Observation Squadron; Universal Flyers, Inc. - Flying Circus Gates Flying Circus - Paterson, N.J. E.R. Klow - Montgomery School of Aeronautics.

The last entry in the Maynor Field log was made as of March 15, 1929.

(Editor's Note: To be continued.)