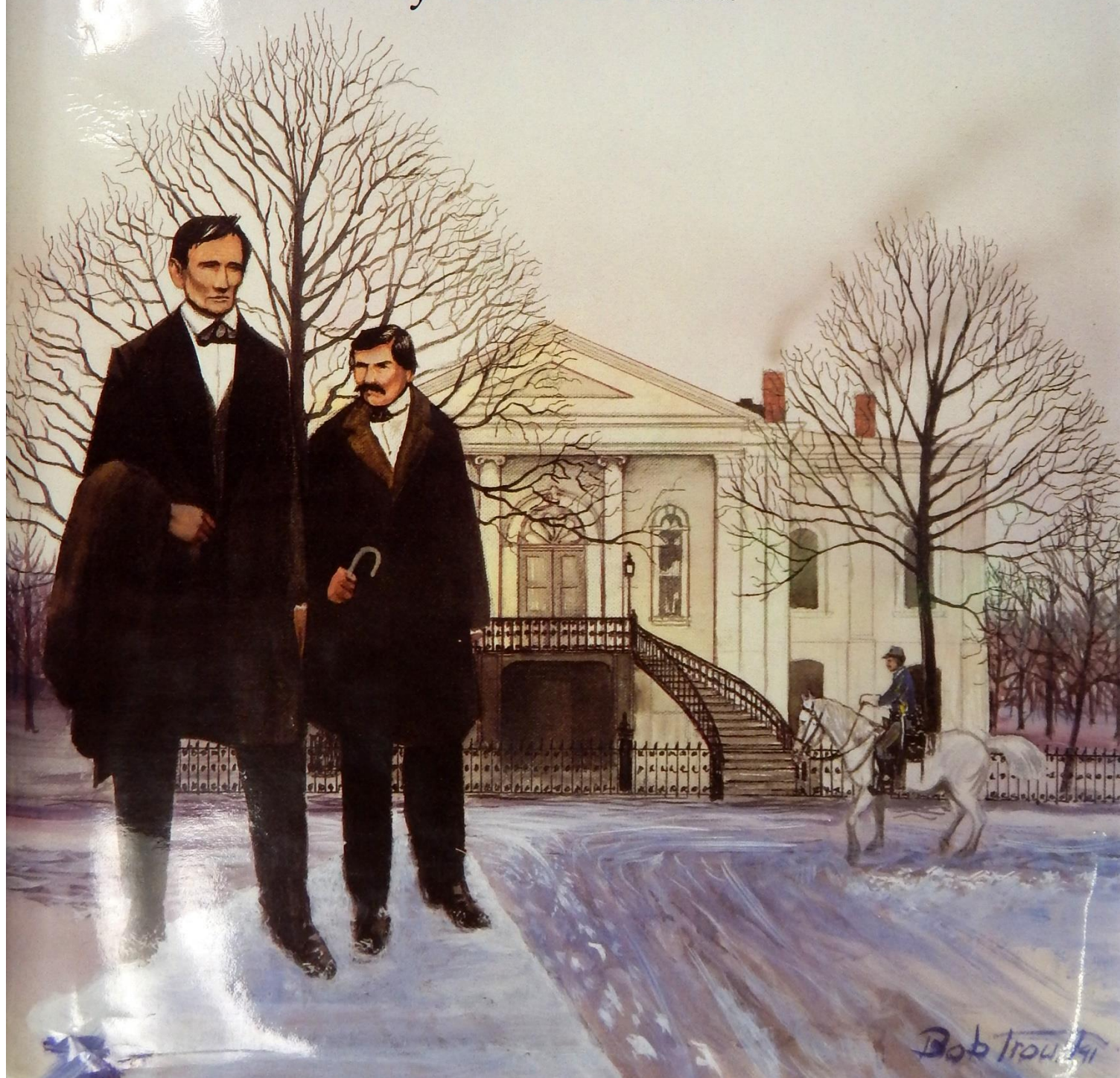


Mt. Vernon

A PICTORIAL HISTORY

by Thomas A. Puckett



Mt. VERNON AIRPORT

From a small 60-acre grass landing field in the early 1930's to the present 6500-foot main runway, sophisticated electronic navigation and landing facilities and a modern terminal building, Mt. Vernon has one of the finest small city airports in the nation. It was started by three local aviation enthusiasts, Earl Outland, Miles Talbot, and Harry Ford. Yet even before they started flying two ex-military pilots, Arthur Warren and Arthur Brown, who learned to fly during the first World War often flew from local grass strips on the edge of town. In 1955 the city, as a result of an election, turned over the administration of the airport to the newly-created Mt. Vernon Airport Authority. This was the catalyst for the consistent growth and improvement of this fine facility. Over the years, the Airport Authority and airport administration have been ably served by dedicated and devoted aviation oriented business leaders.

Mt. Vernon was served by Ozark Airlines for 17

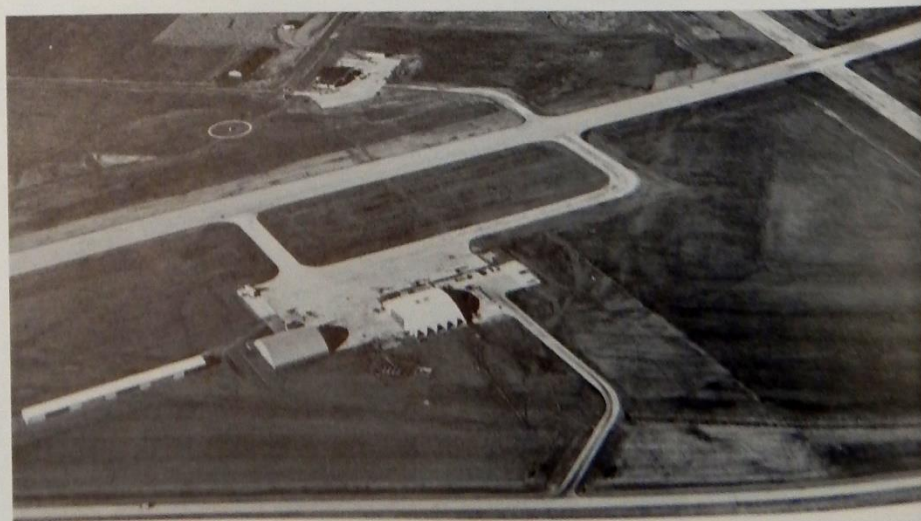
years and later by other commuter airlines as they linked the city with small and large cities across the nation.

In addition, many corporate, business, and private aircraft owners use the airport facility as they conduct their business in the community. The use of the modern airport facilities has been one of the criteria for several businesses to decide to locate in the area. Over the years, both the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds and the U. S. Navy Blue Angel Aerobatic Teams have performed here. Also the famous Goodyear blimp annually overnights at the airport enroute to or from national athletic events such as the Indianapolis 500 Auto Race. National political leaders, famous actors and entertainers have used the airport to visit the city or in passing through. The airport should continue to be a prime factor in the future growth of Mt. Vernon and the surrounding community.



The original 60-acre grass strip airport in 1938 at Airport Road and Stinson Drive.

In 1959 there were two terminal areas at the airport before final relocation to the present site in 1976.



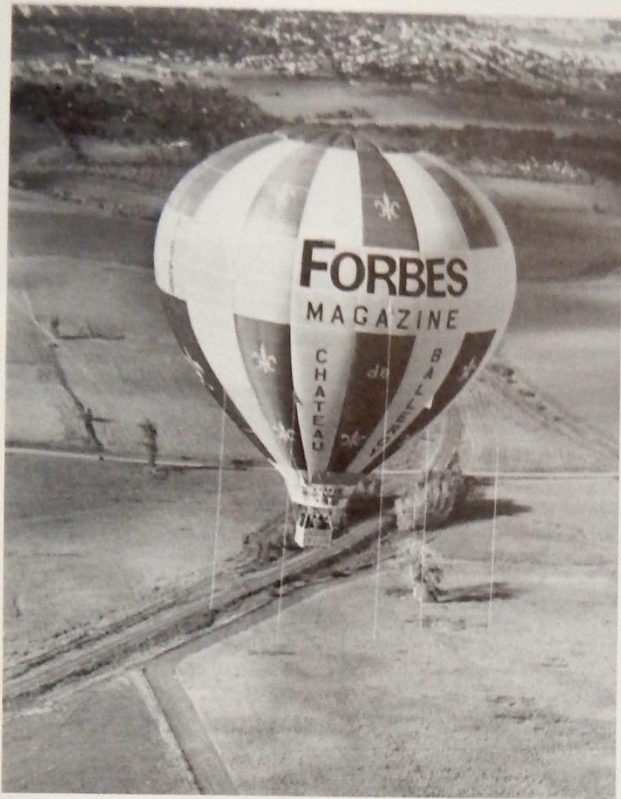
Hangars and airplanes at the original site of the airport in 1946 at Stinson Drive and Airport Road.



Local aviators Frank and Mildred Weatherford in 1941 with their aircraft at the first airport.

The new terminal area was built in 1976 featuring modern airline and FAA offices, a lobby and restaurant.





In 1974 magazine editor Malcolm Forbes landed north of the airport for an overnight stop as he crossed the country from west to east.

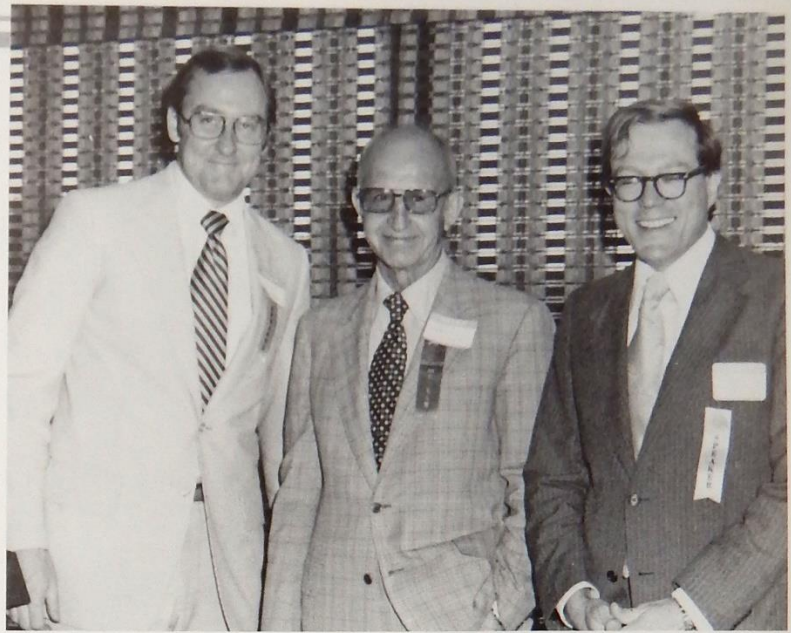


The Goodyear blimp *America* touches down at the airport for an overnight stop enroute to a Notre Dame-Army football game.



A charter group boards an Ozark Airline DC-9 at the airport in 1975 for a trip to Las Vegas.

Pictured at the dedication of the new airport terminal building and other facilities in June 1977 from left to right are: Governor Jim Thompson, Stan Koziara, chairman of the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority, and Langhorne Bond, administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration.



In August 1986, the Illinois Division of Aeronautics dedicated the first publicly-owned and operated heliport in the State of Illinois, located on Potomac Drive near the I-57 and I-64 interchange in West Mt. Vernon. Left to right: Lt. General Bob Coverdale, director of the Illinois Division of Aeronautics, Stan Koziara, chairman of the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority, Max Firebaugh, manager of the Mt. Vernon Airport, and Brigadier General Jack Bennett, vice chairman of the Mt. Vernon Airport Authority.



Victor Borge, popular entertainer, stopped at the airport enroute to St. Louis. Other notables who have visited the airport include: President and Barbara Bush, Mrs. Jimmy (Rosalyn) Carter, Vice President Walter Mondale, Governor George Wallace, singer Crystal Gayle, Senator Everett Dirksen, and numerous others.



Ed Sullivan, famous radio and television personality, visited the airport and city several times. While here he pursued an interest in Sullivan Cablevision. While in the city he attended a local high school basketball game and visited other sights.