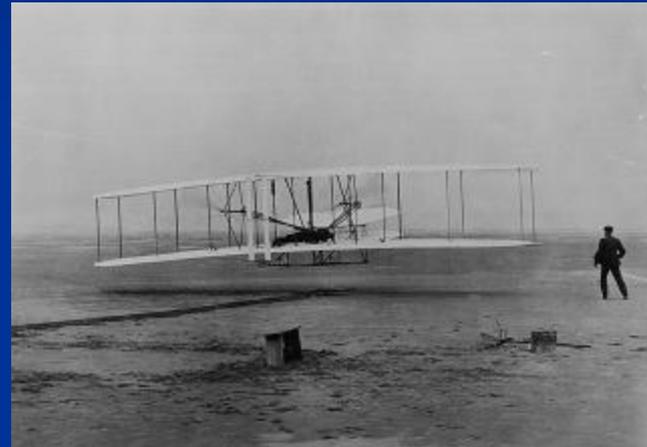


Aviation History  
in  
Brownwood, Texas

By Frank T. Hilton

# December 17, 1903

- The first controlled, power and sustained heavier-than-air human flight by Orville and Wilbur Wright at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.



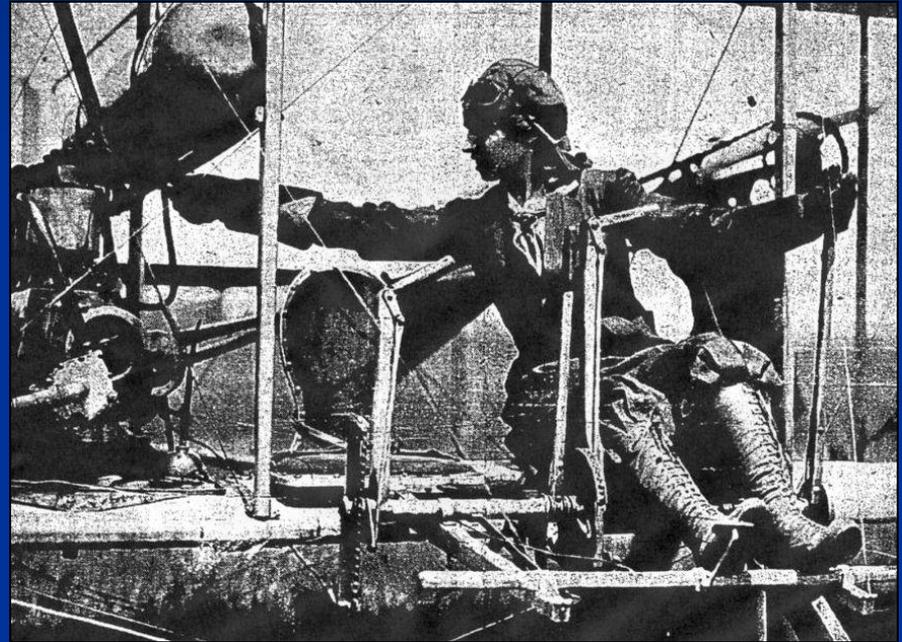
# October 4, 1913

- Post office Department at Washington, D. C. established areoplane mail service between Brownwood and Comanche, Texas.
- Lester Miller flew one trip each day, October 10, 11, 12, 1913, during the Free Fall Fair.



# October 7, 1914

- Miss Katherine Stinson, the youngest aviator in the world made daily flights at Brownwood Free Fair.
- She took passengers up for \$25.00 per person.



# March 3, 1920

- Lieutenants R. W. Lutz and F. E. Monor of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, flew a new Curtis plane over Brownwood, using the landing field west of the end of Austin Avenue as their base.
- “Airplanes flew over Brownwood and there was a local airport near Willis Creek near 12th and 13th streets,” John A. Thomason said. He described it as a north-south runway that looked like two straight dirt paths that accommodated the wheels for take-offs and landings.”

# November 10, 1929

- The Brown County Fair Association decided to permit airplanes coming to Brownwood to use the fifty acres inside the mile race track. This has been used successfully in the past by airplanes.

# 1935

- Airport in Brownwood was launched as a 200 acre tract leased by the city from the county.
- Dr. Edgar Fuller, Dallas scientist and inventor, constructed the beacon field for the airport.
- WPA funds applying six-inch calicle base on runways, clearing and leveling.

# September 11, 1940

- The Army Air Corps officially approve the 200 acre Brownwood municipal airport as headquarters for the air squadron of the Thirty-Sixth Division.
- By December 3, 1940, mess halls, tent frames and other faculties were up where the 111<sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron was being quartered.

# June 20, 1941

- The Robert E. McKee Construction Company is winding up work on the Bakery, laundry and the military hanger at the airport.



1941-1946



# April 7, 1946

## 10,000 Visitors Attend Brownwood Airport Opening

By JACK DURHAM

Reporter-News Staff Writer

BROWNWOOD, April 7—An estimated crowd of from 8,000 to 10,000 visitors swarmed over Brownwood's new municipal airport facilities here today to witness an aerial show and participate in open house festivities making the official opening of the former 1,500 acre army air base for civilian use.

The huge air field installation, with four concrete runways each 6,500 feet in length, officially became the property of the city of Brownwood Saturday, the first Texas army field to revert to civilian use and one of the first in the nation to be converted, according to Brownwood's Mayor Wendell Hayes

By 1 p. m. when Army Air Forces pilots began their dazzling display of aerial acrobatics, an estimated crowd of 5,000 persons was milling around the runways and hangar inspecting some 35-odd types of civilian and military aircraft on the field. A stream of traffic to the field kept military and state police busy throughout the afternoon.

Private pilots from Abilene, Cleburne, Austin, Gorman, Paris, Waco, Brady, San Antonio, Fort Worth and other West Texas cities flew in to join in the day's celebration. Army air forces planes and pilots were here from both Lake and Williams Fields at Phoenix, Ariz.; Enid, Okla.; and Bergstrom Field at Austin.

Amid the myraid of aircraft parked up and down the runways were two huge Army CG-4A gliders, used in the transport of airborne combat troops, that drew the greatest attention. A C-46 piloted by Capt. John C. Stough towed in the gliders, which were in charge of Capt. Charles E. Lawrence, former Howard Payne college football star of the late 'thirties, also stationed at Bergstrom Field. In a late morning exhibition, Capt. Lawrence cut one of the gliders loose from the tow ship over the field and put the motorless craft through a series of loops, wingovers and other maneuvers before bringing it neatly in to rest.

Please See AIRPORT, Pg. 8, Col. 5

# October 8, 1947

- Trans-Texas Airways started regular airline service in Brownwood using two DC-3s. The route ended in San Angelo from Dallas.



# November 1, 1949

- By 1949, TTA was flying 3 flights daily from Dallas, Ft. Worth, to Brownwood, Coleman, San Angelo to Fort Stockton, Marfa-Alpine to El Paso and back.
- However, that was cut back to two flights each way in 1950.

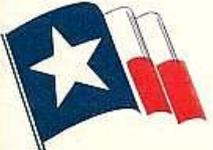
COMPLETE SYSTEM SCHEDULES  
Effective January 1, 1952

# TRANS-TEXAS Airways



Fast... comfortable  
DC-3 Starliners

HOUSTON  
GALVESTON  
BEAUMONT-PORT ARTHUR  
JUPPIN  
MCGOCHES  
PALESTINE  
TYLER  
DALLAS  
FORT WORTH  
VICTORIA  
BEEVILLE  
ALICE  
SAN ANTONIO  
CORPUS CHRISTI  
UVALDE  
EAGLE PASS  
DEL RIO  
MISSION-ALLEN-EDINBURG  
HARLINGEN  
BROWNSVILLE  
EL PASO  
FORT STOCKTON  
PECOS  
MARFA-ALPINE  
MCANNEY  
SAN ANGELO  
BROWNWOOD



Fly the route of the  
*Starliners*

# October 14, 1950

- A Brownwood twister caved in two wall of a new \$25,000 administration building at the airport. The northwest corner of the building was completely blown away. Plate glass windows in the building were blown out.

## Tornado, Hail Damage Severe

By DON TABOR  
Reporter-News Staff Writer

Thursday's rain clouds came as both a blessing and a curse to West Central Texas — a blessing to dry areas receiving over two inches of steady rain, and a curse to Brownwood with a destructive tornado and to other points where hail totally stripped cotton crops.

The Brownwood twister caved in two walls of a new \$25,000 administration building at the city's municipal airport and then

a small twister torn northwest of the city Thursday afternoon but it never hit the ground. He added he had seen twisters in East and West Texas and knows one when he sees it.

**Brownwood, Early Battered**  
The Brownwood airport was heavily damaged. The northwest corner of the building was completely blown away. Plate glass windows in the building were blown out. The storm occurred about 5:30 p.m.

Water temporarily swept over some streets in Abilene.

"Torrents" reportedly swept over S. 3rd, S. 4th, S. 7th and S. 10th at the Treadaway Blvd. crossings, and six cars were stalled in hub-deep water at the Cooper Junior - Senior High School parking lot.

The ground at Elmwood Memorial Park "turned white"

with hail stones, heavy hail was reported in northwest Abilene, and marbleite hail fell in the downtown area. Dyess AFB measured hail of ½ inch in diameter.

**WFAA OFF AIR**  
A brilliant electrical display accompanied the storm at Dallas. Lightning knocked the 50,000-watt Radio Station WFAA off the air.

See RAINS, Pg. 5-A, Col. 4

WHERE IT RAINED

# January 1, 1956

- Miller & Company, manufacturer of western shirts begins operations in a hanger building. Mr. and Mrs. O. K. Gray are managers of the plant. A total of 87 machines were installed to make the shirts.



# July 30, 1968

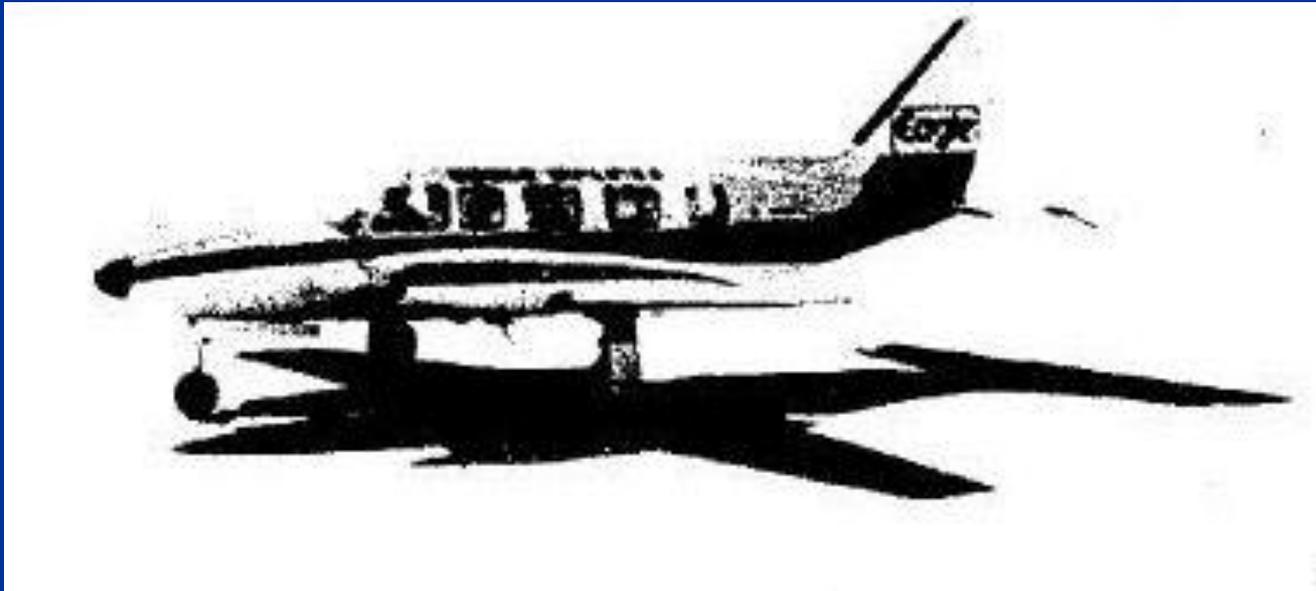
- Stockholders of Trans-Texas Airways, Inc. voted this week to change the state of incorporation of the firm and name of the firm to Texas International Airlines, Inc.
- In 1969 Trans-Texas Airways becomes Texas International and operated a fleet of DC-9 jets. TTA continue to serve the Brownwood market.
- November 29, 1976 Last Flight of TTA out of Brownwood.

# July 17, 1976

- Texas Aeronautics Commission approved a permit for Eagle Commuter Airlines of Brownwood, owned by Gerald James of Brownwood, to provide three round-trip flights daily from that city to Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.
- The firm would fly a twin-engine Cessna 402 aircraft with eight passengers and two pilots.

# December 1, 1976

- The Eagle landed at the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport here about 11 am.



# February 25, 1986

- Eagle Airlines has been forced to discontinue operations pending an investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration. It was based on exceeded flying times on turbocharge clamps, and a couple of other things.
- They were out of business.

# Exec Express Airline

- Exec Express Airlines starts daily service to Brownwood from Dallas/Fort Worth on September 24, 1986 but filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 1988.
- Exec Express II resumes normal flights after its planes were grounded by Federal Aviation Administration for improper maintenance schedules and records.

# June 9, 1991

- Lone Star Airlines (name changed from Exec Express II) began service to Brownwood using a turbo-powered plane, the Fairchild Metro II in addition to its Beechcraft C-99 airlines.



# Late 1996

- Lone Star Airlines was acquired by Peak International out of Aspen, Colorado. The airline was liquidated in October 1998.
- Some of the routes were taken over by Big Sky Airlines.
- In October 1998, Big Sky took over Lone Star Airlines following their bankruptcy.
- Big Sky Airlines made its final flight out of Brownwood on September 30, 2002.

# Mesa Airlines

- Began service on October 1, 2002, replacing Big Sky Airlines, and operating the 19-seat Metroliner. It was a subsidiary of Mesa Air Group out of Phoenix.
- February 1, 2004, Mesa Airlines more than doubled the fares of its flights between Brownwood and Dallas-Fort Worth from \$74 to \$150 one way and from \$150 to \$320 round trip. Flights were only 10 to 20% filled.



# March 12, 2005

- Mesa Airlines made its last flight out of Brownwood. Mesa left Brownwood when the federal government eliminated Brownwood from the Essential Air Service subsidy, saying the route did not generate enough passengers.
- That same year the new T-hanger project was completed to house private planes.



# May 13, 2009

- National Guard soldiers from North Carolina worked on a storm-damaged Apache Longboy helicopter Monday at the airport. One helicopter was blown over in a storm, and numerous others were damaged when their rotor blades flopped around in the high winds, soldiers said.

# Airport Today



- **Brownwood Regional Airport is a City owned facility. It is located approximately 5 miles north of Brownwood, off of US 183.**
- **Overnight hanger facilities and tie downs are available. the terminal building has a passenger lounge, pilot lounge conference room. Weather briefing room and vending machines.**
- **Rental cars and crew cars are also available . Full service FBO with 100LL and Jet A, 24hr self serve 100LL and for after hours Jet A .**