



Smilin' Jack Airport 1942-1947

Smilin' Jack Airport was located at the intersection of Route 422 and Old Airport Road. It was situated on a farm owned by William Schmale. Frank Fuhr open the airport in 1942. This was during the start of WW2 when airspace near major cities and the coast was very restricted. Aircraft enthusiasts from the Philadelphia area and New Jersey needed a place to keep their planes and fly recreationally. Many small short lived rural airports popped up during this time period.

On September 8th, 1942, eleven sportsmen pilots began flying from Smilin' Jack Aiport. For residents of Amity Township, this must have been such a site to see. Up until recently, there were no known photographs of the airport or planes in Amity Township. We knew it existed, but strangely enough, there were no photos.

The airport operated from 1942 and seems to have been abandoned sometime in 1947. During those 5 years the airport had several notable incidents. In 1943 a student pilot and his instructor were forced to parachute from their plane that they lost control of. The student was killed in the fall. The plane crashed somewhere close to Earlville near the Manatawny. A similar incident occurred in 1944 when a student pilot and her instructor were both killed when the engine of their plane failed.

In late 2019, during the 300th Celebration, Paul "Skip" Weller provided us with photos that he had stored in a shoe box in his attic. His father, Paul Weller was an avid photographer. The photos were dated "Sept 42". After comparing them to the modern landscape, there was no doubt that we finally had pictures of Smilin' Jack Airport.

Any mention of the airport disappeared in 1947. In a 1950 newspaper article it is referred to as the "old" Smilin' Jack Airport. This area is the location of the Shoppes at Amity and the Westridge housing addition.



"Taildragger" parked at airport with Monocacy Hill in the background.



Unidentified pilots pose next a plane in September of 1942

New Airport Opens At Douglassville

By Staff Writer

DOUGLASSVILLE, Sept. 8—Eleven planes today were operating out of a new airport opened near here over the week-end as sportsmen-pilots from New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania points flew here to leave the area restricted to military flying.

The new field, situated along the north side of the one-way section of the Pottstown-Reading pike northwest of the village, is being operated by Frank Fuhr, Essington.

Six of the eleven planes are from New Jersey and the remaining five are from sections in Pennsylvania where flying has been banned by the Army.

The field has been named the "Smilin' Jack Airport" after the comic strip pilot.

This section now has three airports which are on the fringe of the restricted area. Pottstown airport, at Limerick, has resumed operations after receiving governmental approval; while the second field also is a new airport at New Hanover, at the intersection of Swamp and Layfield pikes.

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**SMILIN' JACK AIRPORT
DOUGLASSVILLE, PA.**
(Between Pottstown and Reading
on Highway 422)

1943 Newspaper Article



2020 Location of Airport