



Tail-draggers tied down next to runway with houses on Route 3 in the background.

*Courtesy of Raymond Strout*

## **Dream Realized—Dream Lost: Hancock County/Bar Harbor Airport 1934-1984**

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### **Tragedy**

They must have been happy. And tired. They had completed a successful business trip to Sherbrooke, Quebec, landing in the cold rain and fog at Bangor to clear Customs. They switched planes, from a Beechcraft 99 to N98720, Bar Harbor Airlines' Cessna twin-engine plane, with its full fuel tanks. They departed Bangor at 9:56 p.m. for the short flight to Bar Harbor. The pilot chose the localizer approach—a flight path following a radio signal that gives the pilot horizontal guidance to the runway centerline—to runway 22 despite a quartering tailwind. The ceiling was estimated to be 600 feet and the visibility one mile by the weather observer on the ground so, in order to land into the wind, the pilot must have been planning to circle to land on runway 4 (the opposite direction but same surface as runway 22). Under the FAA regulations for this approach, a plane would be permitted to descend to 580 feet, just barely under the estimated 600 foot ceiling.<sup>1</sup>

N98720 descended beneath the ceiling. Seeing the lights of the airport, the pilot turned gently to the right, commencing his circling approach to runway 4. While circling, something went terribly wrong. The right engine failed. The right wing dropped. The left wing rose, still powered by the left engine. N98720 veered sharply to the right and plunged toward the ground from 580 feet. At the last second, the pilot threw "both his arms up in front of his face as if protecting himself," while the copilot grabbed the yoke in a vain attempt to right the plane.<sup>2</sup> The four occupants never had a chance. N98720 crashed upside down in a fireball one mile west of the Bar Harbor Airport.<sup>3</sup>

That night, Bar Harbor Airlines lost its co-owner and co-founder, Tom Caruso; its General Manager, Tom's son, Gary Caruso; its Chief Pilot, Peter Monighetti; and its Assistant Chief Pilot, Malcolm Connell.<sup>4</sup> That night, four wives lost their husbands. That night, three babies under the age of one year lost their fathers.

This was the first fatal civil aviation airplane accident in Hancock County.<sup>5</sup> How could it have happened? Was it "pilot error?" Hard to believe; Peter Monighetti and Malcolm Connell were two experienced pilots. Was it a result of rushing home to loved ones? The weather? The plane? The answer wouldn't come until a long time later.

It was 10:10 on the night of May 16, 1978.<sup>6</sup> It wasn't the end of the Bar Harbor Airport but, to many at the time, it seemed so. From its simple beginnings during the Depression, the airport had become a hub of activity for the local community thanks to the infusion of capital from local and federal government sources and one family's passion.

### **FDR, Not that Jordan River, and the Lure of Aviation**

Aircraft accidents in Hancock County were infrequent during the early days of aviation. According to one list, there were only five between 1911 and 1933, none involving a fatality. As the *Bar Harbor Times* of January 31, 1934 editorial observed: "Air transport travel has made tremendous strides during the past few years. During the first six months of 1933 the American line flew 76,642,293 passenger miles with but two passenger fatalities and that means that a passenger would fly, on the law of averages, 38,321,146 miles before a fatal mishap might occur."<sup>7</sup>

The Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce undertook to site an airport in the vicinity of Bar Harbor during the period from 1927 to 1934 and that same editorial may have provided the rationale for the Chamber's efforts: "An airport would doubtless help our summer visitors enjoy more time with us and through airmail and other services provide them with close contacts with their business activities. . . . It is essential to the future of this island that we provide adequate facilities for the accommodation of aircraft." The Chamber's efforts succeeded at an unlikely time.

The winter of 1933-34 was going to be particularly devastating, at least in the eyes of President Franklin Roosevelt, his appointee to guide the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) Harry Hopkins, and the millions of the poor and unemployed, assistance for whom under FERA was limited to only one member per family and was based on need. In case of desperate need, cash payments—the "dole"—would be made directly to the individual.

As an alternative to the dole, the New Deal's Public Works Administration (PWA) sought to create jobs for the unemployed by partnering with the private sector. The process was slow, depending on the advertising and bid process to award contracts.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, eight months into FDR's first term, very little progress had been made to lower the peak Depression-era unemployment rate of 24.75 percent.<sup>9</sup> With a harsh winter facing the nation, and starvation a real possibility for some, the President decided to try a different strategy. On November 8, 1933, he signed an Executive Order creating the Civil Works Administration (CWA).<sup>10</sup> Its goal was to put four million people back to work within a month.<sup>11</sup> Rather than becoming employed in the private sector as envisioned by the PWA, they would immediately become employees of the federal government, eligible to receive a minimum wage of \$15 per week for a thirty-hour work week, more than the \$6.50 per week they received on the dole, and, for half of the four million to be hired, they would not have to go through the humiliating process of proving their lack of "means." All they had to prove was their need for a job.<sup>12</sup> This program also satisfied Harry Hopkins' test: "Give a man a dole and you save his body and destroy his spirit. Give him a job and pay him an assured wage, and you save both the body and the spirit."<sup>13</sup> Within two months, Hopkins' CWA had reached its goal. During the program's mere five-month life span, the "C.W.A. men" participated

in one hundred eighty thousand projects, including the construction or improvement of one thousand airports.<sup>14</sup>

One of those airports was born in a mid-Depression wave of land purchases on the western shore of the Jordan River in the Town of Trenton, Maine. In late January and early February 1934, Chester A. Wescott and Gerard L. Austin, both of Bar Harbor, gathered four-month options to purchase the parcels comprising the described "site of the proposed landing field" and containing 243 acres, more or less, from the owners<sup>15</sup> at prices between \$35 and \$125 per acre. Mr. Wescott and Mr. Austin were acting as agents for the Town of Bar Harbor, which called a special town meeting to consider four articles, Article 2 of which read as follows:

To see if the Town of Bar Harbor will vote to accept, establish, construct, purchase, lease, control, equip, improve, maintain and operate an airport and landing field for the use of aircraft within the limits of the Town of Trenton, said landing field being bounded on the north by land of H. L. Copp, on the east by Jordan's River, on the south by land of Mrs. Frank Dunbar, and on the west by a line parallel to and at a distance of 400 feet, more or less, from the State Highway leading from Ellsworth to Bar Harbor, and containing 200 acres more or less.<sup>16</sup>

The Bar Harbor special town meeting was held on February 13, 1934, at 2 p.m. Julian Emery, the Moderator, read Article 2 to the meeting and then assured the voters that "the Jordan River mentioned was the one in Trenton and not one in Asia." After hearing a description of the work to be done, learning that Trenton had approved the airport by a vote of 57 to 1, and hearing from Captain Jones, Aeronautical Director in the State of Maine, that he had requested 125 men to do the job—more than for any other such project in Maine except for the airport project in Augusta—the townspeople overwhelmingly approved Article 2 by a vote of 169 to 58.<sup>17</sup>

Where would the Town get the money to purchase the land, clear it, and then build and operate an airport and landing field? One source of funds was the issuance of "the Town's negotiable notes or bonds in a sum not exceeding \$20,000,"<sup>18</sup> an amount insufficient to buy all the land. The other source is referred to in Article 4 adopted at the special town meeting: monies raised

by the Town's notes and bonds would be used "in conjunction and together with funds to be expended by the United States Government with and under the supervision of the Public Works Administration,"<sup>19</sup> ultimately, the CWA.

Remarkably, within a three-week period in the winter of 1934, options for the parcels needed for the airport site had been obtained and special town meetings in Trenton and Bar Harbor had approved the project. By the end of April 1934, the purchases had taken place, and the deeds had been recorded in the Hancock County Registry of Deeds.<sup>20</sup> The Inhabitants of the Town of Bar Harbor, the corporate name of the municipality, had become the proud owner of a large parcel of land that would be known initially as the "Bar Harbor Municipal Airport."

The March 7, 1934 edition of the *Bar Harbor Times* reported that "C.W.A. men have been transferred from Bar Harbor work onto the Airport Project at Trenton." Taking advantage of the warm weather, they had started clearing the land even before the deeds had been signed! In early May of 1934, the Selectmen voted to hire six more trucks at \$10 per day in addition to the nine trucks already assigned to the project, to hire a tractor at \$1.50 per hour, and to increase the pay of the nine trucks already hired by \$2 per day, all "in order to get [a] portion of [a] runway for use this summer."<sup>21</sup> Several more times that late spring and into summer the Selectmen voted to hire more assistance or to increase the pay. One runway was built that summer and a second was built in 1936.

The contributions of the CWA to the Island during the winter of 1933-34 were enormous. The number of man hours performed by the CWA employees for the benefit of the Island towns as well as Acadia National Park was reported to be 135,000 and the total amount spent \$125,000, of which \$86,000 went for work in the Park.<sup>22</sup> As of February 28, 1934, 394 men and women had been employed in the area by the CWA. But, for political reasons, namely the opposition to the program from the Republican Party, and in contemplation of the upcoming 1934 mid-term elections, FDR terminated the work of the CWA at the end of March 1934.<sup>23</sup> It had fulfilled its goal, getting the nation—and Mount Desert Island with it—through the winter.

You can feel the excitement surrounding the subject of aviation by reading the *Bar Harbor Times* newspapers published during this

construction period. Front page stories include that of Francis Ahlblad who, on a Sunday afternoon flight in February, 1934, turned over the controls of the plane to his "companion" and then, while still airborne, climbed out on the plane's undercarriage and fixed a broken cable holding one of the plane's skis— "After . . . the cable [was] repaired, Ahlblad climbed back into the cockpit and the plane landed without any difficulty;"<sup>24</sup> and that of Alvin Hatch and Francis Ahlblad who flew medicine right into the yard of Mrs. Tasker in Bradford, Maine, where she lay snowbound in her home and in need of her medication—"Mrs. Tasker's health was much improved as a result of the medicine they carried her."<sup>25</sup> There were at least two "Flying Clubs," one for those of high school age or older, and a boys club for those under high school age.<sup>26</sup> There was also a model airplane club.<sup>27</sup> There were even free flights to be won if you were a patron of Hatch's Cash and Carry Market on Ledge lawn Avenue. "RULES: You must be a Customer of our store to win these FREE Flights, if you are not already one, now is the time to start, we can save you money."<sup>28</sup> And it was a Curtiss Robin plane owned by A. U. Hatch of this same Hatch family and piloted by Francis Ahlblad that was either the first or second plane to land at the "Bar Harbor Municipal Airport" in mid-July, 1934, a mere five months after the special town meeting that authorized the construction of the airport.<sup>29</sup>

### **Coastal Patrols, Blimps, Dummy Deck Landings, and Torpedo Attacks**

World War II brought substantial changes to Bar Harbor Airport. In fact, on November 16, 1940, more than a year before the attack on Pearl Harbor but fourteen months after the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, the Bar Harbor Selectmen adopted resolutions granting the federal government the right to further develop the airport at an approximate cost of \$110,000.<sup>30</sup> This work was deemed "necessary to national defense." By the time they were done, and with substantial additional funds expended during the war, three new asphalt runways (4500, 3900, and 3600 feet in length) and a seaplane ramp were constructed.

Bar Harbor Airport was reborn as "Coastal Patrol Base #20" and during the last week of August 1942, the Civil Air Patrol arrived in force. At the time, the facilities consisted of "one hangar, a canteen, a small

building used by the guards.” The men, when not performing their coastal patrol duties, built the remaining buildings necessary for their operations. A typical day for a pilot was described as follows: “Regular hours of duty were an unheard-of luxury. A pilot dug a few yards of ditch—and Maine digs hard—helped shingle part of a roof, attended a class, flew a patrol, and then grabbed a sandwich and a few cups of coffee, and took over O.D. duty. If the guards weren’t—he stood guard; they carried wood for fires; everything and anything to be done, they did. Pilots in name only.”<sup>31</sup>

By December, with its biting cold and short daylight hours, the base was ready to perform its mission. Then disaster struck. The buildings constructed over the course of the previous three months burned to the ground. Notwithstanding this setback, the men went back to work immediately and rebuilt the base in time for spring, and all during this construction period continued with their coastal patrol missions. There was one patrol that didn’t return, however. On February 2, 1943, Lieutenant William Hites, pilot, and Wells L. Bishop, observer, took off and headed out over the ocean on patrol. Efforts to recover them were unsuccessful.<sup>32</sup> Considering that the men of Coastal Patrol Base #20 were flying 1930s- and 1940s-vintage single-engine planes over the frigid waters of the North Atlantic in the dead of winter, it is remarkable that more planes and men were not lost.

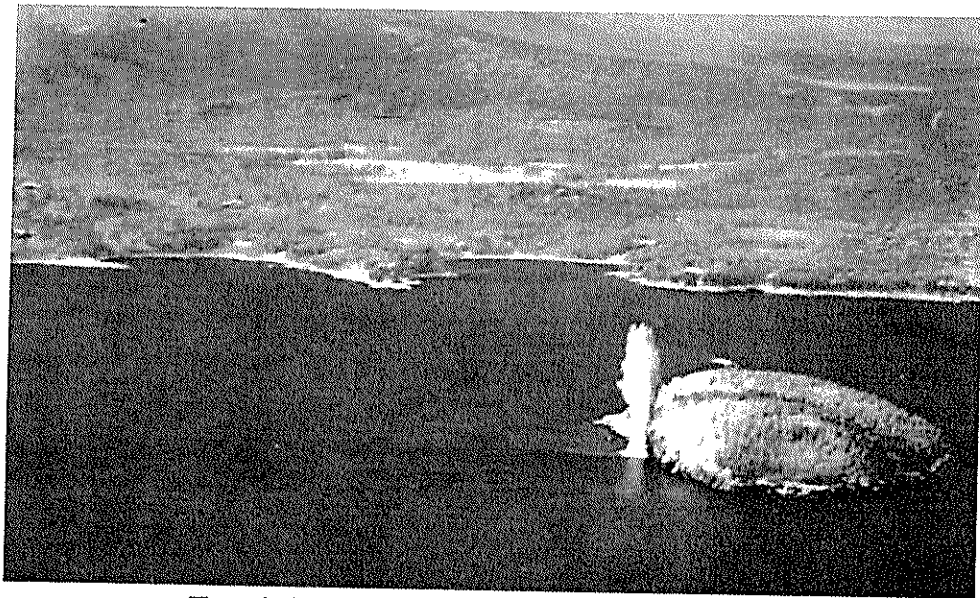
The mission of the Civil Air Patrol lasted only a year, ending in late August of 1943. The airport was recommissioned as a Naval Auxiliary Airfield (NAAF) on December 12, 1943. The Navy took advantage of the airport’s seaplane ramp, and also installed a blimp mooring mast. “The mission of the base was to support 6 scout observation aircraft and the blimp facilities.”<sup>33</sup>

Whereas the complement of the Civil Air Patrol men at Coast Patrol Base #20 was approximately seventy men, there were only one officer and twelve men to man the base and fulfill its NAAF mission.<sup>34</sup> However, British airmen used the field for seven months in 1944 for “Aircraft Dummy Deck Landings,” practice aircraft carrier landings on specially equipped runways. However, searching for German submarines, flying a blimp (used for anti-submarine escort of coastal merchant ships), and making dummy deck landings weren’t the only aerial activities taking

place here during the war. It appears from these photos that torpedoing the Porcupines was also part of the training.



Plane dropping torpedo bomb in Frenchman Bay off the Thrumcap, 1944. *Courtesy of Hancock County/Bar Harbor Airport*



Torpedo bomb striking Bald Porcupine Island, 1944. *Courtesy of Hancock County/Bar Harbor Airport*

The airport's war work soon came to an end. The NAAF's mission was suspended during the winter of 1944-45, reopened in March 1945 for four months, and then, in 1946, the airport was returned to the control of the Town as a much-improved facility.<sup>35</sup>



## Sicilian Entrepreneurs, Flying Fishermen, Pizza, Hangar Dances, and the Tax Lady

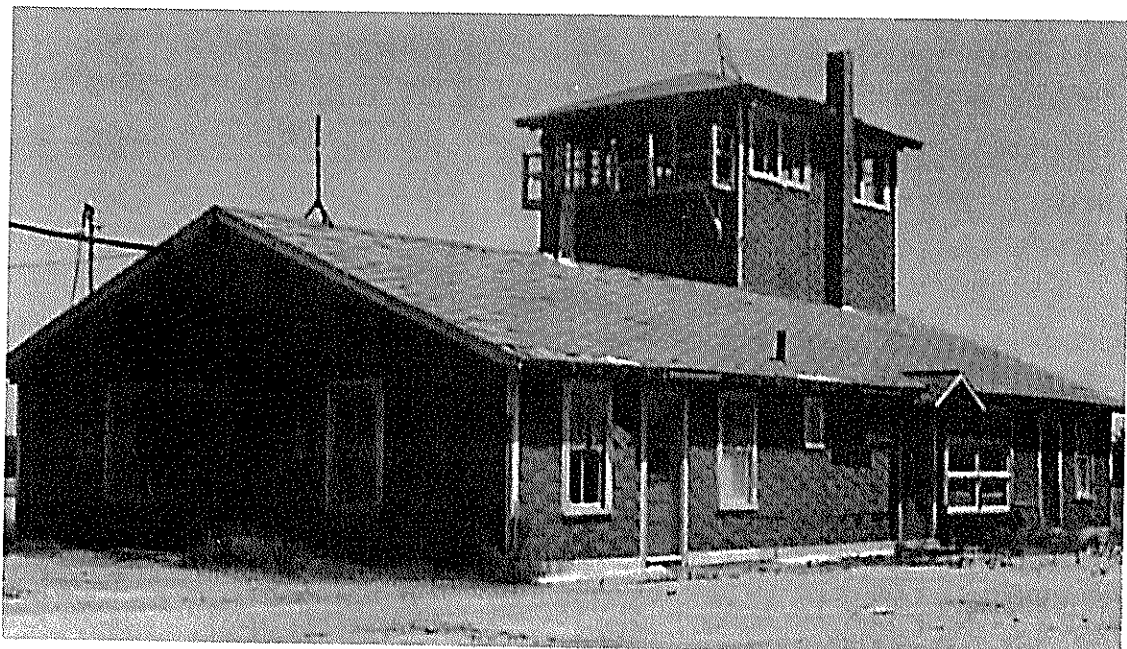
Within days after the decommissioning of Coastal Patrol Base #20 at the end of August 1943, the base commander, Major James King, three other members of the coastal patrol, and six Bar Harbor businessmen and professionals formed a Maine corporation named Bar Harbor Airways, Incorporated (BHA).<sup>36</sup> The primary purposes of the corporation were to “carry on a general air service business, including transportation by air, and airport service. . . .” The Town of Bar Harbor entered into a five-year lease with BHA for a term commencing March 7, 1944 or as soon thereafter as the federal government returned the control of the airport back to the Town.<sup>37</sup> Strong and dynamic management was needed to lead the operations at the airport if it was to flourish without the further support of the federal government. Who would step forward to take up the challenge? Unexpectedly, it was not BHA, Major King or his businessmen co-owners.

Certainly, no one would have predicted that the future success of the airport would depend upon two brothers in their twenties from Lawrence, Massachusetts. After serving in the war, they joined their uncle, Soly Caruso, in Southwest Harbor and were keeping busy flying sightseeing flights from Hinckley’s Dock in Manset and the Municipal Pier in Bar Harbor.<sup>38</sup> The brothers were Joseph and Thomas Caruso, sons of Angelo and Rose Caruso, immigrants from Sicily. Each was a pilot; Tom had his instructor’s rating.<sup>39</sup> and Joe was a certified aviation mechanic.<sup>40</sup> Somehow, they ended up with the ownership of BHA and in the winter of 1948 assumed the rights under BHA’s lease.<sup>41</sup>

These young men displayed imagination in their business endeavors and were remarkable salesmen right from the beginning. Up until October 1949 they transported lobsters by air to Newfoundland.<sup>42</sup> They taught fishermen to fly so that they could find and track fish offshore.<sup>43</sup> With the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce, they co-sponsored the New England Air Tour which, for its first six years (1950-1955), made Bar Harbor Airport its destination site, attracting approximately one hundred planes and three hundred people to the airport each year for a weekend in June.<sup>44</sup> And the recently married and dashing Tom Caruso escorted Jane Harrigan, the newly elected Miss Maine, “a 21-year-old statuesque blonde from Millinocket,” on a sightseeing flight over Bar Harbor and the Porcupine Islands, a trip that was covered in the Fall 1950 issue of *The Pine Cone Magazine* published by the State of Maine Publicity Bureau.<sup>45</sup>

The brothers added a snack bar manned by their parents who introduced the Down Easters to pizza, or “piazza,” as the locals liked to call it.<sup>46</sup> Even the hangar dances became a weekly staple during the summer; they were held every Wednesday night from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. and featured “Bill Stetson and His Orchestra, 9 pieces.”<sup>47</sup> The brothers also ran a flight school, training students from the age of sixteen to eighty. According to Joe Caruso in a 1950 interview, “Anybody who wants to can learn to fly. It would cost the average fellow about \$85 to go through to his own pilot’s license.”<sup>48</sup> The growth of BHA continued in the fifties, expanding operations first into Portland,<sup>49</sup> and then into Lewiston where the company was awarded the contract for that airport’s management.<sup>50</sup>

The success of the business attracted the attention of the Trenton tax collector, Althea Marshall, who assessed against the Town of Bar Harbor a tax upon the snack bar, the hangar where the dances were held, two garages, and other buildings. Although municipally-owned airports and their structures were generally exempt from local real estate taxation, the exemption did not apply to structures or land “not used for airport or aeronautical purposes.” Trenton argued that the taxed buildings were used for commercial purposes (restaurant, dances, etc.) but the Maine Supreme Judicial Court held otherwise in a 1959 decision that provides a detailed description of BHA’s 1956 operations.<sup>51</sup> We also learn in the decision that in a supplement to the new lease dated February 9, 1956, BHA undertook the duties of Airport Manager—namely, furnishing janitorial and custodial services to the terminal



Old terminal and snack bar northwest of runway 4-22. *Courtesy of Barbara Caruso*

building, maintaining the airfield, parking spaces and storage area, assuming responsibility for the "proper operation of the airport and of the aircraft and to keep the lights clean and capable of functioning." BHA also "sold gasoline for aircraft consumption, collected rental for storage of planes, repaired planes for a monetary consideration and acted as sales agent for a plane manufacturer. It conducted a flying school for gain." And it also still operated its snack bar.

The 1960s brought among other events the conveyance of the airport property from the Town of Bar Harbor to Hancock County (1962),<sup>52</sup> the escorting of Lady Bird Johnson, our First Lady, and her party to Campobello Island (1964),<sup>53</sup> and the phasing out of Northeast Airlines service (1968-69). The decade also brought the day-to-day operations of BHA under the control of Tom Caruso, as Joe had decided to move to the Portland area to form a new venture, Maine Aviation Company. If you had asked Tom Caruso what flight stood out in his mind during this period, he might have recalled a charter flight he took with a passenger headed to Boston. Due to poor visibility, he flew very low and followed the Maine Turnpike south—what pilots call "IFR" for "I follow roads." The driver of a truck carrying half a load of ham, seeing the oncoming plane in his lane, swerved out of the way, went into the ditch and tipped over. Another driver observed that if the plane had been a few inches lower, he would have collided with it. Tom landed a few minutes later at the Lewiston airport. In the exercise of good judgment, the "passenger, not identified, continued to Boston by car."<sup>54</sup>

#### **"Let Them Walk," the Flying Birthday Card, Ice Sculpture Contest, and the New Terminal**

Potentially devastating to the airport and BHA was the decision of Northeast Airlines to phase out its passenger service at Bar Harbor. When asked what people were supposed to do after Northeast terminated its service, a company vice-president reportedly replied, "Let them walk."<sup>55</sup> Tom Caruso's answer to this challenge was to offer fifteen-minute shuttle flights from Bar Harbor to Bangor to connect with outgoing Northeast Airlines flights to Boston so that businessmen would not have to drive to Bangor and leave their car there during their trip.<sup>56</sup> Then, in 1970, the company changed its name to Bar Harbor Airlines, hired its first two pilots<sup>57</sup>—the aforementioned Peter Monighetti and Malcolm Connell—and decided to provide direct roundtrip flights between Bar Harbor and Boston for a one-way fare of \$27.62.<sup>58</sup>

This decision kicked off a period of tremendous growth in the company; it expanded from three employees to sixty employees in five years, and doubled that number in the following three years.<sup>59</sup> Other accomplishments followed. It became an international airline, adding flights to Quebec City in 1972.<sup>60</sup>



Tom Caruso's Navy portrait.  
*Courtesy of Barbara Caruso*

It also added service to Bangor, Portland, and Presque Isle. Its decision to paint its new Beech 99 plane, N200TC, red, white and blue in honor of the nation's two-hundredth birthday also brought the company extensive publicity and even a Joint Resolution of the Maine Legislature designating N200TC as the official "Bicentennial Airplane for the State of Maine," and the "State of Maine's Flying Birthday Card to our country."<sup>61</sup>

The company garnered additional publicity by sponsoring the team of three University of Maine students who won the ice sculpture contest at the Quebec City Carnival with a cartoon sculpture of "President Nixon and Prime Minister Trudeau sitting in a boat solving their differences over a cold beer."<sup>62</sup> The company went from carrying 3,189 passengers in 1970 to 53,827 passengers in 1975 and 96,296 passengers in 1977.

Improvements to the airport proceeded hand-in-hand with the growth of the Airlines. In 1968, Runway 4-22 was extended by seven hundred feet; strobe lights for Runway 22 were added in 1969; a localizer and non-directional beacon, navigational devices for landing, were added in 1971; an Airport Master Plan was devised in 1974; and an approach lighting system was added in 1975.<sup>63</sup> The growth continued into 1978. On April 15, the Hancock County Commissioners introduced a new terminal at the airport with an "Open House" at which over 1,600 guests were treated to sightseeing flights until the early evening.<sup>64</sup> On May 1, Bar Harbor Airlines inaugurated its route to Hartford, Connecticut.<sup>65</sup> Why Hartford? Because "surveys by the Maine Department of Transportation revealed that one out of every 10 airline passengers in Maine were bound for Hartford."<sup>66</sup> Ever the publicity hound, Tom Caruso invited Governor James Longley on the maiden flight. The Governor declined the invitation but congratulated Bar Harbor Airlines on its economic benefit to the region.<sup>67</sup> Bar Harbor Airlines' passenger service to Sherbrooke,

Quebec was scheduled to commence on June 15.<sup>68</sup> Why Sherbrooke? Tom's son Gary Caruso explained: "There's [*sic*] 100,000 people in that city; another 150,000 living within 50 miles; they have two colleges and 50 companies that employ over 500 people. They have the largest asbestos mine in the world. But they don't have air service."<sup>69</sup>



Tom Caruso at the controls of a commercial flight in the mid-1970s. *Courtesy of Barbara Caruso*

In June, Bar Harbor Airlines planned to commence construction of a large storage hangar and an office building for its marketing, training, and station management departments. It also planned to purchase larger aircraft to carry the ever-increasing number of passengers,<sup>70</sup> a number that had grown from one thousand passengers in 1968 to one hundred fifty thousand in 1979.<sup>71</sup>

### The Verdict, the Return of Miss Maine, and the Dream

In a 1950 interview, Joe Caruso had commented, "Statistics show flying is safer than driving a car. I hope people will soon begin to realize that a good plane in the air is nearly fool proof."<sup>72</sup> So what happened to bring down N98720 with its four occupants? It took almost six years to find out. In the spring of 1980, three of the four widows brought a lawsuit against Cessna Airlines in the Federal District Court claiming that it was responsible for the deaths of their husbands and seeking damages for their losses. After a three-week trial in April 1984, the jury provided the answer to whether N98720 was a "good plane in the air" brought down by the negligent acts of its pilot, Malcolm Connell. The answer was a resounding "no," with the jury holding the plane manufacturer 100 percent responsible for the crash. It also granted the widows what was then the largest damage award in Maine history: \$3,300,000.<sup>73</sup> The evidence submitted by the plaintiffs at the trial proved that, prior to the crash, the governor drive shaft in the right engine had broken in flight, causing the right propeller to swivel into a position producing no thrust from the right engine, thus sending the plane into a sharp right hand turn into the ground.<sup>74</sup> The fault lay in the design of the governor drive shaft, not in the hands of Malcolm Connell.

After the 1978 crash, Bar Harbor Airlines continued operations under the direction first of Joe Caruso,<sup>75</sup> then of Tom's widow, Barbara Caruso, and finally of Allyn Caruso, Joe's son and Tom's nephew. The Airlines did indeed open its service to Sherbrooke on June 15, 1978. And, following a Tom Caruso marketing practice, the person chosen to break the traditional bottle of champagne on the Beechcraft 99 airplane before its inaugural flight to Sherbrooke was nineteen-year-old Terri-Elane Gilpatrick of Lincoln, the reigning Miss Maine.<sup>76</sup>

As for the airport itself—now known as the Hancock County/Bar Harbor Airport—it is still in existence, and since 1978 has been under the direction of long-serving Robert Cossette and his successor, M. Allison Rogers, both capable and helpful airport managers hired by the Hancock County Commissioners. The terminal that opened on April 15, 1978 is still being used for passenger service to Boston and is situated on Caruso Drive, named to honor the family whose members brought the airport such success. Two of the runways originally constructed during World War II and renovated since then are still in use and until recently fishermen were still flying their planes offshore to spot fish. Although the Caruso family-owned Bar Harbor Airlines no longer exists, the airport continues to provide a location for flight training, sightseeing flights, glider flights, maintenance and storage of private aircraft, and sale of pilot supplies.

But some may miss what the Carusos brought to the flying community in addition to the usual services provided at an airport. It no longer hosts New England Air Tours bringing one hundred planes to Bar Harbor for a weekend in June, or hangar dances every Wednesday night in the summer, or a snack bar serving "piazzas," or periodic Miss Maine visits to highlight some new event or accomplishment. While those left behind on that night long ago may dream of what might have been, Bar Harbor Airport waits for another who dreams of what might be.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> FAA approach plate issued in 1984 Instrument Landing System, localizer and circling approaches for landing on runway 22 (or 4 if circling). It is assumed that the procedure and minimum requirements were the same for a circling approach in May 1978.

<sup>2</sup> John J. Cahill to National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) September 21, 1978. Cahill was the Regional Flight Surgeon. The Report of Investigation by Medical Examiner

- H. H. Atkins, M.D. dated May 17, 1978 contains a description of the injuries to Malcolm Connell and the other occupants.
- <sup>3</sup> The location of the crash site, the weather at the time of the accident, and the history of the flight are derived from the NTSB Factual Aircraft Accident Report (No. NYC-78-F-A054).
- <sup>4</sup> Ken Buckley and Maureen Williams, "Caruso's Brother takes over airline after fatal crash in Trenton," *Bangor Daily News*, May 18, 1978.
- <sup>5</sup> Hale G. Joy, "Crash Was First Fatal in County," *Ellsworth American*, May 18, 1978.
- <sup>6</sup> James P. Chicetto, "Aircraft Accidents in Hancock County," in letter to Bob Cossette, Airport Manager, December 1, 1996. Chicetto was the President of the Maine Aviation History Society. See Airport Manager's "History" file at Hancock County/Bar Harbor Airport.
- <sup>7</sup> "We Need An Airport," *Bar Harbor Times*, January 31, 1934.
- <sup>8</sup> June Hopkins, "Harry Hopkins and Work Relief During the Great Depression," *The Social Welfare History Project* at [www.socialwelfarehistory.com](http://www.socialwelfarehistory.com), 3.
- <sup>9</sup> "Unemployment Statistics During the Depression," [www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1528.html](http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1528.html).
- <sup>10</sup> Executive Order no. 6420b, November 9, 1933, *The Donnelly Collection of Presidential Executive Orders*, [www.conservativeusa.org/EO](http://www.conservativeusa.org/EO) (website of The Conservative Caucus).
- <sup>11</sup> "This Week in History: November 7-13, 1933: The Civil Works Administration," *The Schiller Institute*, November 2010, 3. See [www.schillerinstitute.org](http://www.schillerinstitute.org).
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.
- <sup>13</sup> Hopkins, "Harry Hopkins and Work Relief," 3.
- <sup>14</sup> "This Week in History," *The Schiller Institute*, 3.
- <sup>15</sup> "Bar Harbor Airport," file 1724, Fenton Law Firm archives, Bar Harbor, Maine. This file contains original, executed Option for Sale and Purchase forms from the landowners to Chester A. Wescott and Gerard L. Austin, virtually all of which date from January and February 1934.
- <sup>16</sup> Town of Bar Harbor. "Minutes of Special Town Meeting – Feb. 13, 1934," Article 2.
- <sup>17</sup> *Bar Harbor Times*, February 14, 1934.
- <sup>18</sup> Town of Bar Harbor. "Minutes of Special Town Meeting – Feb. 13, 1934," Article 3.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 4.
- <sup>20</sup> See deeds to the Inhabitants of the Town of Bar Harbor recorded in the Hancock County Registry of Deeds in Book 643, Page 420; Book 643, Pages 281, 282, and 283; Book 644, Page 474; Book 644, Page 111; and Book 644, Page 95, for example.
- <sup>21</sup> Town of Bar Harbor. "Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting," May 1934.
- <sup>22</sup> *Bar Harbor Times*, May 2, 1934.
- <sup>23</sup> Charles Peters and Timothy Nash, "Four million jobs in two years? FDR did it in two months," *Slate Magazine*.  
[www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/2009/01/wrong\\_harry.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/2009/01/wrong_harry.html), 3.
- <sup>24</sup> *Bar Harbor Times*, February 21, 1934.
- <sup>25</sup> *Bar Harbor Times*, March 7, 1934.
- <sup>26</sup> *Bar Harbor Times*, March 28, 1934.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> *Bar Harbor Times*, July 18, 1934.
- <sup>30</sup> Town of Bar Harbor. "Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting," November 16, 1940.
- <sup>31</sup> Sgt. Clare Hamlin, "Civil Air Patrol, Coastal Patrol Base #20," 1943, Bar Harbor Historical Society archives, Bar Harbor, Maine. "O.D." means officer of the day.



- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 3. The entire discussion about the Civil Air Patrol is derived from this four-page article.
- <sup>33</sup> "NAAF Bar Harbor, Maine," Bar Harbor Historical Society archives, Bar Harbor, Maine.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., 2.
- <sup>36</sup> Certificate of Organization of Bar Harbor Airways, Incorporated dated September 15, 1943, recorded in Corporate Book 5, Page 174 in the Hancock County Registry of Deeds. Among those named as owners and directors are Ralph C. Masterman, Alton L. Marshall, C. Leslie Brewer, A. George Goodrich, Alvin U. Hatch, and Gardiner A. Reed, all of Bar Harbor.
- <sup>37</sup> The lease is recorded in Book 697, Page 363 in the Hancock County Registry of Deeds.
- <sup>38</sup> "Caruso Brothers Have Busy Airport," Barbara Caruso scrapbook, a compilation of newspaper articles, advertisements, clippings, and photographs, many of which have no identifiable source (hereinafter "Scrapbook").
- <sup>39</sup> "Airport Notes," Scrapbook.
- <sup>40</sup> "Caruso Brothers Have Busy Airport," Scrapbook.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> John R. Wiggins, "The Success Story of Bar Harbor Airlines," *Ellsworth American*, April 13, 1978.
- <sup>44</sup> Scrapbook; see various articles in the *Bar Harbor Times* and *Ellsworth American*—"All Airways Lead to Trenton Airport," "Bar Harbor Serves as Week-End Host for Second New England Air Tour," "Air Rendezvous To Gather at Airport Saturday-Sunday," and "Maine Air Tour Draws 125 Planes in Bar Harbor on Air Tour."
- <sup>45</sup> Bill Hatch, "Miss Maine at Bar Harbor," *The Pine Cone*, State of Maine Publicity Bureau (Portland, 1950).
- <sup>46</sup> Interview with Gail Caruso, daughter of Tom Caruso, October 30, 2012.
- <sup>47</sup> "The Hangar Dance, Every Wednesday Night, 9:00 to 1:00, Bar Harbor Airport in Trenton," newspaper advertisement, Scrapbook.
- <sup>48</sup> "Caruso Brothers Have Busy Airport," Scrapbook.
- <sup>49</sup> "Bar Harbor Airways Becomes an Airline," *Ellsworth American*, September 11, 1970.
- <sup>50</sup> "Caruso Brothers Pledge Efforts to Promote Flying," Scrapbook.
- <sup>51</sup> Marshall v. Inhabitants of the Town of Bar Harbor, 154 Me. 172, 148 A. 2d 687 (Me. 1959).
- <sup>52</sup> See deed from the Town to County of Hancock dated March 20, 1962 and recorded in Book 975, Page 98 in the Hancock County Registry of Deeds.
- <sup>53</sup> Lady Bird Johnson to Thomas Caruso, September 11, 1964, Scrapbook.
- <sup>54</sup> "Low-Flying Plane Forces Truck to Tip," Scrapbook.
- <sup>55</sup> "Bar Harbor Airways Becomes An Airline," *Ellsworth American*, June 11, 1970.
- <sup>56</sup> Flight schedule, "Effective June 1 thru September 30," showing a schedule of seven shuttle flights between Bar Harbor and Bangor, Scrapbook.
- <sup>57</sup> "Caruso Was Successful Optimist," *Ellsworth American*, May 18, 1978.
- <sup>58</sup> "Bar Harbor Airways Becomes An Airline," *Ellsworth American*, June 11, 1970.
- <sup>59</sup> "BH Airlines Has Grown From 3 to 60 Employees in 5 Years," *Bar Harbor Times*, January 2, 1975; Bar Harbor Airlines fact sheet, "We're Bigger Than You Think," Scrapbook.
- <sup>60</sup> "Inaugural US-To-Quebec Flight To Originate at BIA," *Bangor Daily News*, July 29, 1972.



- <sup>61</sup> "Joint Resolution Designating Bar Harbor Airlines Aircraft N200TC As The Official Bicentennial Airplane For The State of Maine," H.P.1695, Scrapbook.
- <sup>62</sup> "Quebec carnival marked by international contest," Scrapbook.
- <sup>63</sup> John R. Wiggins, "Bob Cossette, Airport Manager," *Ellsworth American*, April 13, 1978.
- <sup>64</sup> "Thousands Attend Airport Open House," *Bar Harbor Times*, April 20, 1978.
- <sup>65</sup> "Bar Harbor Airlines business soars," *Bangor Daily News*, June 28, 1978.
- <sup>66</sup> "Bar Harbor Airlines makes success, growth look easy," *Bangor Daily News*, April 22-23, 1978.
- <sup>67</sup> Governor James B. Longley to T.J. Caruso, April 5, 1978, Scrapbook.
- <sup>68</sup> "Sherbrooke inaugurated, next Hartford," *Bangor Daily News*, June 25, 1978.
- <sup>69</sup> "Bar Harbor Airlines business soars," *Bangor Daily News*, June 28, 1978.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>71</sup> Bill Caldwell, "Soprano Voice In Cockpit," *Waterville Morning Sentinel*, October 12, 1978, Scrapbook.
- <sup>72</sup> "Caruso Brothers Have Busy Airport," Scrapbook.
- <sup>73</sup> "Jury rules Cessna negligent in crash that killed 4," *Bangor Daily News*, April 22, 1984; A. Jay Higgins, "\$3.3 million Cessna suit award largest ever made by Maine jury," *Bangor Daily News*, April 26, 1984.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid. This statement is also based on the author's recollection of the testimony of plaintiffs' experts at the trial. The author represented Victoria Caruso, Personal Representative of the Estate (and widow) of Gary Caruso, in the lawsuit against Cessna.
- <sup>75</sup> Dennis Mills, "Official declares line not for sale," *Bangor Daily News*, June 28, 1978. "Soprano Voice In Cockpit," *Waterville Morning Sentinel*, October 12, 1978, Scrapbook.
- <sup>76</sup> Maureen Williams, "Sherbrooke inaugurated, next Hartford," *Bangor Daily News*, Scrapbook.



Winter landing, 1930s. *Courtesy of Raymond Strout*