

## Otto Poschke's "Poschke's Harbor Beach Airport"

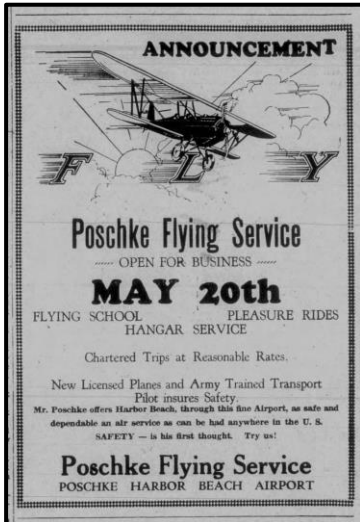


Otto A. Poschke

Pre-dating Ingram's Air-Port-Hope airfield, was an airport in Harbor Beach constructed in 1928 by Otto Poschke. Known as Poschke's Harbor Beach Airport, it was presumably the first airport in Huron County, and was located on Section Line Road just west of town.

Mr. Poschke, was born in Germany in 1887 and the Poschke family came to Harbor Beach around 1890. Upon reaching adulthood, Otto moved to Cleveland Ohio and became a successful businessman. With his roots in Harbor Beach, he decided to purchase his family estate and convert the available farm acreage into an airfield. He purchased the property in 1928 and one year later had plowed, leveled and seeded 40 acres in preparation for an airport. He constructed two runways forming an "X" and each approximately 2,000' in length. During the construction phase, Poschke continued his business in Cleveland and frequently flew back to Harbor Beach to roll up his sleeves, and also to manage the hired help. A hanger was soon built near the road large enough to hold several airplanes. The roof was painted a black and white checkerboard.

The Poschke Harbor Beach Airport was dedicated and licensed in July of 1931. George Inhelder managed the operations of the airport and Captain Hal Dungan was a pilot and flight lessons instructor.



Harbor Beach Times May 15, 1931



Once a hustling and bustling airport 90 years ago, now consigned to the pages of history

A very successful airport, it was used extensively as a passenger destination point, cargo shipments, civilian usage, and flying lessons. it attracted huge crowds at annual fly-ins similar to the Air-Port-Hope Fly-ins. during the war years the government imposed temporary restrictions for civilian aircraft and the Poschke airport was temporarily restricted and limited

to emergency Landings only. In 1946, Otto Poschke sold the airfield and hanger to Carl Gerstenschlager (Son-in-in-law of George Inhelder). He kept the homestead and upon retirement left Cleveland and moved back to the Harbor Beach home.

The airfield continued its operations thru the 50's At which time cost of fuel, fewer training students, etc. was becoming an increasing burden as Gerstenschlager had to personally cover the operations. The airfield continued for several years but no longer a profitable business. By 1970 the airport was no longer being utilized and was subsequently purchased by Bad Axe Manufacturing, an automotive supplier. The hanger and facilities were utilized for the manufacturing of its products.

Unfortunately, evidence of the once thriving Poschke Airport is nearly gone. Otto A Poschke passed away on Aug 30, 1972.