

Weldon G. Cannon History Files

EULESS AND AVIATION

In this folder donated to the City of Euless, labeled EULESS AND AVIATION [also called AVIATION AND EULESS], are a few key documents and other materials from files donated to The University of Texas at Arlington for the Weldon G. Cannon Euless Collection in the Special Collections of the University Library. Following is a brief summary of materials in 2 folders under this subject that were donated to UTA:

1. EULESS AND AVIATION (also called AVIATION AND EULESS)

Folder contents

Narrative, incomplete, documented for early part only; work file of materials; ca. 2 1/2 ."

2. WILLIAM G. FULLER

Folder contents

About Euless Mayor and Fort Worth Aviation Director, much of it copied from UTDallas Aviation Collection; work file; accompanies Aviation and Euless file; 3/4".

[This was written as a potential narrative for an Official Texas Historical Marker in case the Euless Historical Preservation Committee should ever want to apply for one. Even if the marker is never secured, it is still a good narrative about an important part of Euless history. The story is not finished and will need to be updated until the time of application. It was last revised in May 2014.– Weldon Cannon]

EULESS AND AVIATION
(other possible titles)
AVIATION IN EULESS
EULESS AND AVIATION: A RELATIONSHIP
COMMERCIAL AVIATION IN EULESS
EULESS AND THE AVIATION INDUSTRY/BUSINESS
AIR TRANSPORTATION IN EULESS
AERONAUTICS IN EULESS
EULESS TAKES FLIGHT
etc.

By Weldon G. Cannon

Context

Aviation in Texas developed early, thanks largely to geography and weather. Located midway between coasts and a gateway to Latin America, the Texas terrain was relatively flat and the climate was generally mild, with much sunshine. During World War I, both Fort Worth and Dallas were home to army air force training fields that developed into major commercial airports. Euless, a small rural farm and dairy community, was strategically located on a direct line exactly half way between the airfields. *[following are two alternate endings to this paragraph: >As early as the 1920s a relationship between Euless and aviation began developing, became increasingly stronger, and even today has an impact in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.< >Euless, whether as a Northeast Tarrant County farm community or a city in the heart of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, has had a special relationship with [the aviation industry] [aviation interests] for more than 70 years.<]*

1. Ron Tyler, Editor-In-Chief, The New Handbook of Texas (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 319-320, vol. 2, pp. 487-488, vol. 4, pp. 306, 589; George N. Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford: Heart of the Metroplex (Austin: Eakin Press, 1995), pp. 42-44, 47, 50-51, 86-87.

Overview

Euless residents were well aware of new developments in aviation as the 20th century unfolded. When Charles Lindbergh landed in 1927 at the new Fort Worth municipal airport, recently named Meacham Field, at least 20 people from Euless went to see the aviator who had just completed his trans-Atlantic solo flight.

2. The Arlington Journal, September 30, 1927, p. ?; J'Nell Pate, North of the River: A Brief History of North Fort Worth, (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1994), p. 121; Bilstein, American Aerospace.

Eules's strategic location relative to aviation became evident by 1932 when the Civil Aeronautics Administration erected an airline beacon tower at Eules. Civilian aviation in North Texas had been developing for several years. About 1930 regularly scheduled passenger and air mail flights on transcontinental routes began from both Meacham Field and Dallas' Love Field with all of them landing at both fields, but flying over Eules. Hence, the Eules beacon was an important navigational aid. Topping off the tower, about 35 or 40 feet tall, was a revolving two-directional light showing white on one side and red on the other. The powerful beams could be seen many miles. In cloudy or foggy weather the sky around Eules glowed alternately white and red as the light revolved. Pilots could know they were on track between Meacham and Love Fields, exactly half way between.

3. Tarrant County Deeds, MSS, vol. 1166, pp. 594-595, vol. 1173, pp. 42-43, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas; Tyler, The New Handbook of Texas, vol. 4, pp. 306, 589; Photographs of Eules made from the Beacon Tower ca. 1953, in possession of Weldon G. Cannon, Temple, Texas; William Fuller Collection in the History of Aviation Collection, Box 41, Folder ?24-34?, McDermott Library, The University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas; interviews with Robert Nail, etc.; Fort Worth Record-Telegram, 1927.

A few years later, again because of its location, Eules was caught up in an aviation-related controversy that began in 1940 and involved numerous North Texas cities and businesses, plus state and federal governments. As larger, more complex airplanes requiring more sophisticated maintenance and longer runways came into use, it became increasingly impractical for airlines to land planes at two airports barely over 30 miles apart. The obvious solution was a new airport midway between Fort Worth and Dallas. The proposed site was usually at Eules. Before the matter was finally settled, however, more than a quarter century of fiercely debated issues and delicate negotiations were required, involving the United States Civil Aeronautics Administration, the U.S. Army, the Texas Aeronautics Advisory Committee, the cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, and Arlington, plus the chief airlines operators in North Texas, American Airlines and Braniff Airways. Neither Eules, an unincorporated village, nor its individual residents, had any say in the matter, but were profoundly affected by every decision.

4. Fuller Collection; Stanley H. Scott and Levi H. Davis, A Giant in Texas: A History of the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport Controversy 1911-1974 (Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1974), p. 3, 7; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 19, 1962, sec. 5, p. 1; Stanley Howard Scott, "The Battle of Midway Airport: The Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport Controversy," MA Thesis, 1967, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, pp. 6-7.

Only a few milestones in the murky controversy, those that affected Eules, can be noted here. In 1940 when Fort Worth and Dallas applied for Federal aid in upgrading their airports, the CAA said that it would consider assisting one joint airport but not two so close together. Then, with U. S. entry into World War II looming, the Army entered the picture, saying it was interested in locating a pilot training field between Fort Worth and Dallas. While the cities wrangled over sites, terminal location and highways to the proposed field, Army engineers were busy surveying. Their site of choice in 1941 was one and one-

half miles east of Euless. Braniff and American became involved, buying the property, but turning it over to a neutral third-party, Arlington, a small city between Fort Worth and Dallas.

5. Fuller Collection; Scott and Davis, A Giant in Texas, pp. 7-10; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 19, 1962, sec. 5, p. 1.

Because of an incident that had nothing to do with the big cities controversy but that was aviation-related, Euless made headlines briefly in 1941. At 9:15 p.m. on June 21, a Los Angeles-to-New York American Airlines DC-3 Skysleeper that had left Fort Worth for Dallas only a few minutes earlier crashed-landed a mile and a half east of Euless when both engines failed. The Skysleeper, designed like a railway Pullman sleeping coach, barely missed a house, belly landed in a grain field and slid into a peach orchard. None of the 13 passengers or three crewmembers was injured. One passenger reportedly commented that he had heard an airport was planned for the site but that the landing was not quite what he expected. Another was heard complaining about getting her shoes dirty in the wet black land. All were taken to Love Field to continue their trip to New York. A few days later the airplane was moved along the highway through Euless to Meacham Field for inspection.

6. Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Morning Edition, June 22, 1941, p. 1 June 23, 1941, p. 4, June 24, 1941, p. 8; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Evening Edition, June 23, 1941, p. 4, June 24, 1941, p. 10; The Dallas Morning News, June 22, 1941, sec. 2, p. 1, June 24, 1941, sec. 1, p. 3; Euless: From Grange Hall to Texas Star (Euless: City of Euless, 2003), p. 15; Photographs in possession of Weldon Cannon, Temple, Texas; Interviews.

With the nation's official entry into the war after Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, the CAA and the Army proceeded with construction plans. When work began on May 24, 1942, Euless was overwhelmed with a swarm of airport builders. There were no local hotels or restaurants, so residents rented every spare room to boarders and even rented spaces under trees where workers parked their mobile homes.

7. Fuller Papers; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 19, 1962, sec. 5, p. 1, ?May, 1942?; The Dallas Morning News, ?May, 1942?; Interviews.

By July 1943, the airport, now named Midway, was finished. It became a flight training field for army and navy personnel, plus American and Braniff pilots. Meanwhile, Dallas announced that it was no longer interested in a joint airport but would develop and expand Love Field. Fort Worth, however, began looking for a new site to build a municipal airport when the war ended and in 1947 purchased Midway from Arlington for the purpose.

8. Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 19, 1962, sec. 5, p. 1; Scott and Davis, A Giant in Texas, pp. 10-12, 17; .

Euless was booming by now. New residents were moving in and businesses were being established. There was talk of incorporating a municipality, perhaps even including the airport site. Then, on June 18, 1948, Fort Worth dropped a bombshell when it annexed the airport. In order to reach the site with a contiguous strip of city limits, it annexed a narrow strip along Northeast Tarrant County roads, including Pipeline Road, one mile south of the Euless business district. Thus, part of the county map was

forever drawn, and Euless, if it should ever incorporate, could never grow south without Fort Worth's consent. In fact, Euless did incorporate in 1950 with its southern city limits abutting Fort Worth's along Pipeline road. The southern half of what had always been considered part of Euless would never be in the City of Euless, so it turned its attention to expanding west, north, and northeast.

9. Scott and Davis, A Giant in Texas, pp. 20-21; Scott, "The Battle of Midway Airport," p. 35; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Morning Edition, June 19, 1948, p. 5; Tarrant County Commissioners' Court Minutes, MSS, vol. 43, pp. 571-575, vol. 44, pp. 564-565, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas.

Fort Worth proceeded to turn Midway into its municipal airport. Again, Euless was overwhelmed by airport workers, when, on December 1, 1948, construction began. On April 24, 1953, Greater Fort Worth International Airport, Amon G. Carter Field, officially opened. Euless began to change rapidly as permanent airport workers, pilots, and other aviation-related people made it their home. Local citizens were proud that their community was home to the magnificent new airport, even though, technically, it was not in the City of Euless.

10. Scott and Davis, A Giant in Texas, pp. 17, 21, 23; Interviews.

Completion of the airfield also unleashed a new set of developments over which Euless had no control. Euless, a two-square mile municipality, was a general law city, meaning it could annex adjoining land only if requested by property owners. All around it were home rule cities that could annex whatever they chose—Fort Worth, Arlington, Irving, Grand Prairie, and after 1956, Hurst.

11. Newspaper and other accounts, esp. George Green.

Grand Prairie immediately jumped into the fray in May, 1953, annexing thousands of acres in western Dallas County near the airport and reaching into Tarrant County, taking in land north of Carter Field. Irving, however, a few weeks before, had annexed a strip to the county line, touching the Fort Worth city limits at the airport. Hence, the Grand Prairie annexations north of that line and in Tarrant County were void. Euless officials soon persuaded many property owners north of Carter Field to join it. Today, much of this land is in the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, as well as the City of Euless.

12. The Dallas Morning News, Fort Worth Star-Telegram; Official Website of the City of Euless, "Economic Development;" interviews with Ernest Millican Jr, Bill Byers, etc.

Euless settled comfortably to living with a major airport next door. In November 1957, American Airlines dedicated its "stewardess college" for training flight attendants, the first such institution in the country, on the western fringe of the airport near Euless. The airline also built a training school for pilots nearby. But Carter Field, officially renamed Greater Southwest International Airport, was doomed. Since Dallas generated far more airline passengers than Fort Worth, Love Field boomed and Carter Field fell into doldrums.

13. Scott and Davis, A Giant in Texas, pp. 34-35, 39-43; Green, Hurst-Euless-Bedford, p. 67;

By 1962, however, all major parties finally agreed that one airport, half way between both cities, must be built. Since the Fort Worth airport could not be expanded because of surrounding topography, a

totally new site was selected, a short distance north, within the cities of Euless, Grapevine, and Irving. Again, Euless was profoundly affected, but now as a small city with certain legal rights and a home-rule charter adopted in 1962, its opinions had to be considered in developing and operating the new airport.

14. Scott and Davis, A Giant in Texas, p. 43, 49-50; Euless: From Grange Hall to Texas Star, p. 26, 28-31; Official Website of the City of Euless, "Economic Development."

Among Euless civic leaders in the late 20th century, several were involved with aviation. William G. Fuller, known as "Mr. Fort Worth Aviation," moved to Euless in 1954 soon after Carter Field opened. After developing Fort Worth's Meacham Field as a municipal airport in 1925, he served as aviation director for the city intermittently until 1961. In his new home, he was chairman of the Euless City Charter Committee in 1962 and served as Euless mayor from 1963 to 1969. He was succeeded as Euless mayor by Albert C. "Pete" Krause, a Braniff Airways pilot who had lived in Euless since 1963 and served until 1975. In 1957, W. M. "Blackie" Sustaire became Euless' first police chief after serving as chief of security at Great Southwest since its opening in 1953. He then served as city manager from 1974 to 1989, the longest tenure in that office. At Fuller's urging, Mary Lib Saleh, a civic-minded neighbor and friend, ran successfully for a position on the city council in 1989. In 1993 she was elected mayor, a position she held until 2014, making her the longest serving mayor in Euless history. The succeeding mayor and other city leaders continue to be involved closely in the development of DFW Airport.

15. Euless City Records; Fuller Collection; Interview with Mayor Mary Lib Saleh.

During the term of Mayor Fuller, planning for DFW International Airport began. Construction started in 1968, and the airport opened in 1974. As with Greater Southwest, the workings and destinies of the new airport and Euless were closely intertwined, probably even more than ever, because much of the city and the airport overlapped. The total impact of a \$700,000,000 project so nearby profoundly affected all aspects of life in Euless. Fort Worth's primary link with the airport, Highway 183, later renamed Airport Freeway, was reconstructed through the heart of Euless by 1970, giving Euless quick access to most of the Dallas-Fort Worth region. The number of people who pass through Euless each day traveling to and from the airport is estimated to be ???.

16. ??????

The proximity of the airport also had negative consequences. Speculators [bought overvalued] [paid exorbitant prices for] land in Euless for residential and commercial building but were unable to follow through with their plans. Hence, development in Euless was stymied in the 1970s but resumed when land prices became reasonable.

17. ??????

A major problem developed in 1988 when the D-FW Airport Board abandoned its original master plan, announcing plans to build new runways, including one on the west side of the field, that would allow landings and takeoffs over a sizeable part of eastern Euless outside the airport boundaries. With the airport authority claiming zoning rights over the properties and forbidding single family house

development, Euless faced the prospect of losing a major source of projected tax revenue. The city sued the authority in 1991, claiming that under state law it had zoning authority over properties in the city but not within the airport property. Euless prevailed in court, but Fort Worth and Dallas persuaded the Texas Legislature in 1993 to pass a law giving the airport authority over zoning even outside airport boundaries. Euless sued again, but the law was upheld.

18. ?????

The only recourse for Euless was to negotiate with Dallas and Fort Worth and secure the best agreement possible. And in 1994, Jeff Fegan, newly appointed Executive Director of DFW Airport, announced that "Our goal is to get away from the confrontational mode that we've been in for the past several years." Hence, in 1998, Euless, Fort Worth, and Dallas finally came to terms with an interlocal agreement for revenue sharing. They agreed that Euless would be compensated for lost tax revenue from properties in [Euless but outside airport boundaries] [the portion of Euless within airport boundaries] and that future revenues from operations within airport boundaries and in the city of Euless would be divided equally among Euless, Fort Worth, and Dallas. As part of the 1998 interlocal agreement, the DFW Airport Authority agreed to build a new consolidated car rental facility within Euless on airport property. An annual income of about \$3,500,000 was projected for Euless. This time the Texas Legislature came to Euless assistance with a special law allowing Euless to collect a [5] [8]% car rental tax.

19.?????

For the fiscal year 2012 Euless collected ??? in revenue from DFW Airport, without having to pay for any infrastructure or public safety, a significant portion of the city's total revenue of \$???. In the peak year, 200?, Euless received \$???? . In 2013, Euless opened a Family Life Aquatic Park, costing \$7.5 million, paid for with the car rental tax.

20. ?????

The relationship of Euless and aviation also has taken some [unexpected] [unusual] societal turns. For example, the Tonganese population of Euless is about 3,000, the largest of the Tongan community in Texas, and the ??? of any in the United States. The first Tongans came to Euless in 1972 as employees of American Airlines. Other family members and friends soon followed. Trinity High School in Euless has become a Texas football powerhouse, winning state championships in 5A Division 1 in 2005, 2007, and 2009 and ranking among the top teams for many years, thanks considerably to the contribution of Tongan players on the team. Elements of the Tongan culture, reflected in practices such as the Haka Dance before ball games, are now counted among Euless traditions. At least in part because of its proximity to the airport, Euless has become home to other peoples from a variety of international cultures, plus businesses involved in a world-wide economy.

21. ?????

In 2009, DFW Airport Director Fegan called attention to the vast amounts of undeveloped land within airport boundaries, ???? acres of it in Euless. He said that he expected it to be developed

eventually, in the course of traditional [market operations] [real estate operations] [operations of real estate markets]. Euless, Fort Worth and Dallas, and the airport will all benefit from these developments. In 2013, plans were announced to develop Southgate Plaza on DFW Airport property near the south entrance, but in Euless, for a new consolidated airport headquarters, a hotel, retail shopping, and a new U.S. Postal Services center. Euless will benefit significantly from this development.

22. Fort Worth Star-Telegram, December 4, 2012, p. ?; ????

Another significant milestone was marked in 2013 when Euless became headquarters to the largest airline in the world—American Airlines Group, the outcome of a merger of American Airlines and U. S. Airways. Site of the new headquarters was in the Euless voting precinct when it was created in 1888. After that it was always considered part of Euless until 1948 when the City of Fort Worth annexed it. It is still located within the Hurst-Euless-Bedford School District, successor to the Euless and other school districts.

23. Fort Worth Star-Telegram, December 8, 2013; The Dallas Morning News, December 10, 2013; Tarrant County Commissioners' Court Minutes.

Significance

The interests of Euless and aviation in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex have been closely linked for many years. Each has had a profound effect on the other. [For nearly 80 years, the relationship has been increasingly intertwined so much that by now the interests of the two are inseparable.] [For nearly 80 years, the interests of the two have become increasingly so intertwined that by now they are inseparable.] [Permanently intertwined] [An effect on international commerce...] [A far reaching effect on commerce. . .]

(To be continued, indefinitely . . .)

In this file folder is a rough draft of an unfinished historical narrative that I intended being part of an application to the Texas Historical Commission for a Texas Historical Marker tentatively titled "Euless and Aviation." I based the draft on the materials found in the file. Also see another file about William G. Fuller, longtime Director of Aviation for Fort Worth, developer of Meacham Field and Greater Fort Worth International Airport (Greater Southwest Airport, Amon G. Carter Field), and Euless Mayor. – Weldon G. Cannon, 2017.

This file folder contains materials about William G. Fuller, "Mr. Aviation of Fort Worth"—longtime Director of Aviation for Fort Worth, developer of Meacham Field and Greater Fort Worth International Airport (later named Greater Southwest International Airport, Amon G. Carter Field), and Mayor of Euless, 1963-1969. Much of this was taken from the William G. Fuller Collection of the History of Aviation Collection of Special Collections at the McDermott Library of The University of Texas at Dallas. Also see another file folder about Euless and Aviation.—Weldon G. Cannon, 2017.

There is little in this material given to city of Euless about Fuller. What I gave UTA is mainly about his aviation career.

wgc