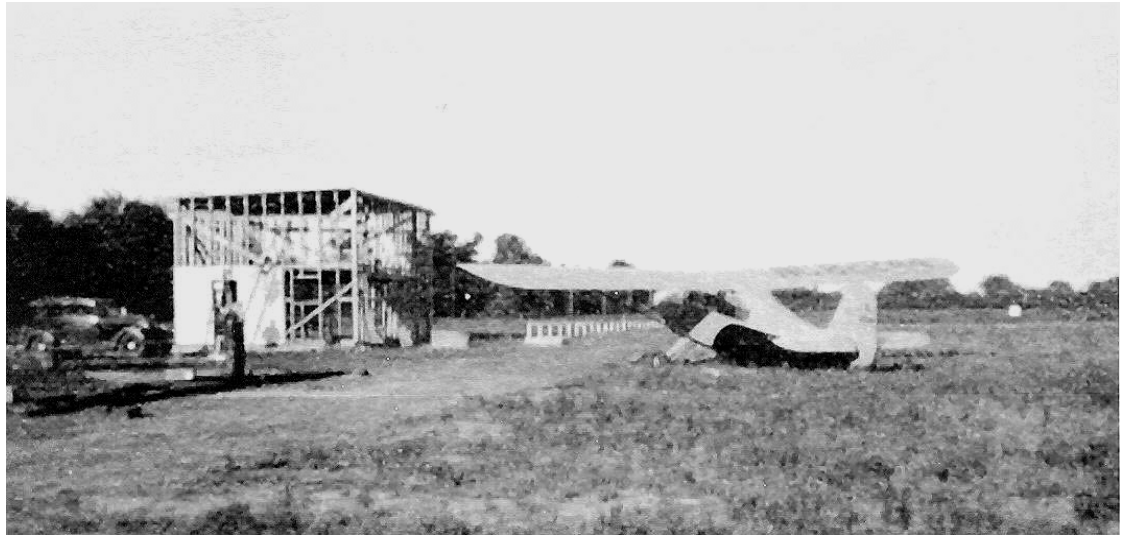


# W.L.S. Airport

In 1946 a group of five men Ted Dworzynski of Staunton, Lt. John Bellovich of Williamson, and Elmer France, Arthur "Bike" Coalson Sr., and John Repovsch of



Livingston planned to build an airport and flying school. It was located on John Repovsch's land a quarter of a mile north of the Route 66 overpass over the Big Four Railroad. It encompassed eighty acres and was east of Mt. Olive and Staunton Coal Mine #2.

In February 1946, the Illinois Department of Aeronautics approved the plan. It was named W.L.S. Airport; the initials designating Williamson, Livingston and Staunton, the three adjoining communities.

By June 13, 1946 four airplanes were available for passenger service. One was a PT-23 Army primary training plane and one a Navy Timion training plane.

One Sunday in October 1946, an air show was held at the airport which included the following:

- 1:45 Formation Flying
- 2:10 Leonard Brown of Staunton former Army pilot
- 2:40 Bombing Practice
- 3:10 Comic Stunt Flying
- 3:40 Felix Revello of Wilsonville former Army pilot
- 4:00 Ted Soper, well known stunt pilot
- 4:20 Parachute Jump by Flash Kelly, known as "The Greatest"

Admission fee was 75 cents for adults and 25 cents for children. Fifty cents of the adult price could be applied to a \$2.00 airplane ride after the show or anytime within thirty days.

Charles G. Baker of Hillsboro lost his life when his plane crashed near W.L.S. Airport. He had come to observe the air show and was killed as he left the airfield. William K. Claxon, a passenger in the plane, was injured.

On September 1, 1947, Labor Day, the W.L.S. had a formal opening. An afternoon of flying exhibition, stunts, glider flights, parachute jumps and bombing was held with three men from Springfield participating – Jimmy Graham, Arthur Treppler and Norman Bruckner.

A fish fry was held in the afternoon and evening. In the evening a dance was held in the big hangar with Louis Baldoni and his Vets furnishing the music.

In January 1948 Myrle J. Stinnett and James Denniston, Jr. were managers of the airport.

## WLS Airport



**UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT**

**WILL BE OPEN EVERY DAY  
BEGINNING JAN. 17, 1948.**

*Flight Instructor and A-E  
Mechanic on Duty*

**Myrle J. Stinnett   James Denniston, Jr.**  
MANAGERS

*Watch for Announcement concerning  
G-I Flight Training*