

June 1998

# First Air Mail Leaves Ambler in 1938

by Newton M. Howard

May 19th of 1938 was a day to remember at the Post Office in Ambler, for on that Thursday, the first Air Mail left Ambler by truck at 2:20 p.m. This was the first leg of a journey with its destination nearby Wings Field. On the truck were the Postmaster, Oscar H. Stillwagon, and Assistant Sidney Horn, each carrying a mail pouch. The

Post office at this time was located in the former Reed's Garage building on Butler Avenue, having moved there from their quarters in the Wyndham Hotel six years before.

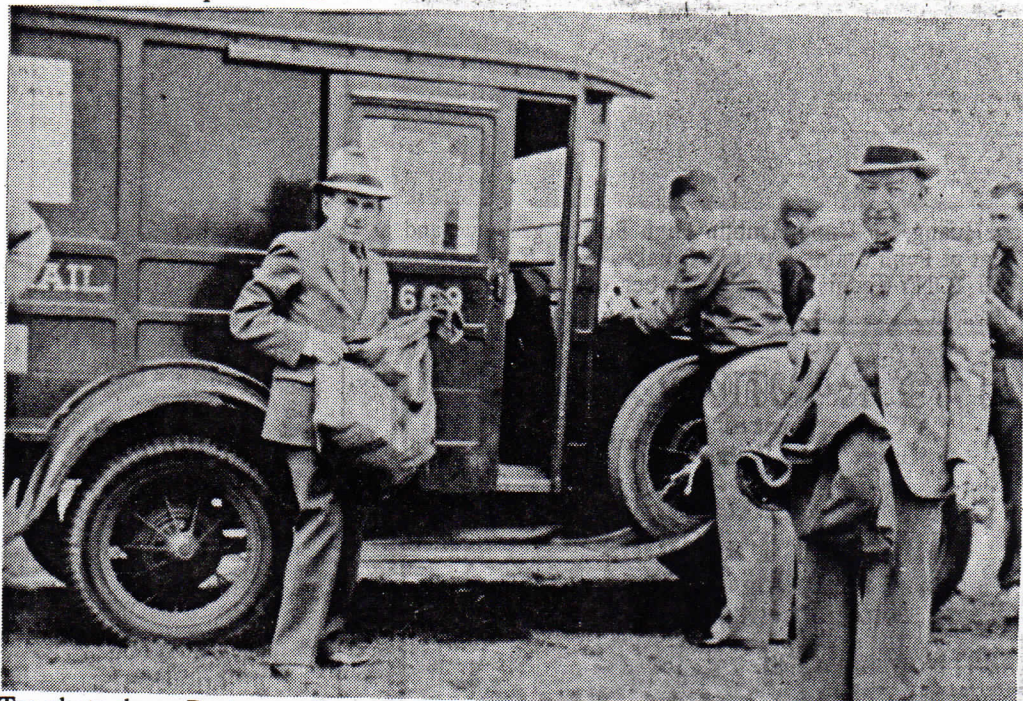
Arriving at Wings Field, they were met by two waiting planes, piloted by George Miller and Robert Boswell, who had been authorized by the Postal

Department to fly the mail to Philadelphia. For reasons of safety, one pouch was to be carried in each plane. Adding to the ceremony, a squadron of four Navy planes flew over the field and dipped their wings in a salute to the district of Ambler. Stillwagon, after delivering his mail pouch to the pilot, was invited to be a passenger in one of the

planes but declined the offer.

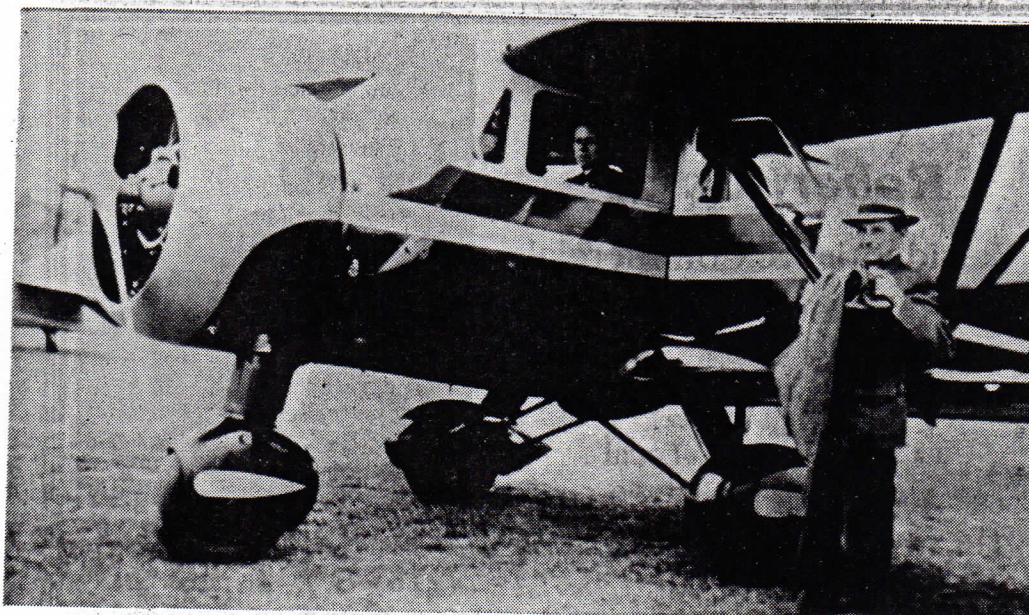
At precisely 2:40 p.m. the two planes majestically took to the air, inaugurating the first Air Mail flight from Ambler, with the destination being the S. Davis Wilson Airport in Philadelphia. The two pouches contained Air Mail from 33 other post offices in the area besides Ambler. Some of these were Norristown, Conshohocken, North Wales, Skippack and Willow Grove.

Another occurrence during 1938 was the completion and dedication of the new Ambler Post Office building across Butler Avenue. This was vacated in recent years and now houses the Ambler Borough offices, and the Police Department.



Top photo shows Postmaster Oscar H. Stillwagon and Assistant Sidney Horn arriving at Wings Field, while lower photo shows Postmaster Stillwagon delivering his mail pouch to pilot of one of the planes.

Photos courtesy of Oscar H. Stillwagon, Jr.



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