

Fulton Had One and Only One Airmail Flight

By Barbara Mask

It was a spectacular and highly-publicized event! On May 19, 1938, Dr. Enno Musk, a local optometrist, flew his own personal plane from Fulton with 1,063 pieces of mail. Dr. Musk was commissioned by the U. S. Postmaster as part of the nationwide celebration on the 20th anniversary of air mail in the United States. It was also the 100th anniversary of John Baker, Fulton's founder, appointment as the local postmaster, but the national air mail delivery service was the major focus of this celebration; thus the air-plane connection.

A large crowd gathered at the Jacob Schaver farm south of the J. T. Cullen Boiler Company to observe the departure from the temporary airstrip. Dr. Musk autographed many of the special issue envelopes (nine of which are part of the Fulton Museum collection). Andrew Bennett, custodian at the Fulton Post Office, raised the flag and the crowd sang The Star Spangled Banner.

John L. Poole, City Attorney, spoke on the history of mail delivery in Fulton. The program presented on Sunday, the 18th, by Dr. Rich Londo, will describe the modes of transportation throughout the years of delivering the mail beginning here in Fulton with steamboats and ox-teams.

Dr. Musk was an experienced pilot and owned two planes. He was a captain in the Civil Air Patrol. On this anniversary date he circled the field above the crowd, flew to Morrison and on to Sterling, his destination. The bags of mail were placed on another flight for Moline and then to the rest of the world.

Dr. Londo's interest in stamp collecting began when he was in 6th grade in the Round Grove Rural School east of Morrison. The hobby led to researching the history of the postal delivery services in Whiteside County. The post office in Fulton has issued other 'first covers,' or 'special issues.' One was marked on the century anniversary of the arrival of the Galena and Chicago Union steam locomotive, the Pioneer, on December 15, 1855. Additional envelope first covers were designed and approved for the Bicentennial Celebration in Fulton in July, 1976 and the Sesquicentennial Celebration of the founding of the City of Fulton in 1985.



This special issue envelope commemorates the 20th Anniversary of air mail delivery in the U.S. Photos of John Baker, Fulton's first Post Master, and Dr. Enno Musk, the pilot were featured on the envelopes that left on this air mail flight.