Photo of the Month

C. Jimmie Carter

First weekly air shipment of broilers
from Rogers Airport, Nov. 30, 1949.
Neg. # 20645

C. Jimmie Carter represents a colorful character in the history of Rogers and is most well-known for his involvement with the area poultry industry and development of the Rogers Airport. Pictured at right is the first weekly air shipment of broilers to Alaska by Rusty Air Service on November 30, 1949. Carter, president of the Rogers Airport Corporation, is the gentleman wearing the hat and suit jacket in the image and was once quoted as saying, "I still find living the most interesting thing in the world."

According to a 1958 *Poultry & Eggs Weekly* article, Carter was a "jack-of-all trades" and had "worked as a farmer, cow poke, prize fighter, wrestler, magician, radio announcer, Judo instructor, timber cutter, ox team driver, night club bouncer, mule skinner, taxi driver, air show promoter, airplane pilot, special policeman, public relations man, and baby sitter." These qualifications would certainly look interesting listed on a business card! Carter also claimed to have "sold everything from dried fruit dippers to airplanes, crossed Texas in a covered wagon, walked a mile in a sub-zero snowstorm without a shirt, force-landed an airplane in the Ozarks, spoke over the radio for a congressman, chaperoned a beauty

queen, and broken an arm after being thrown by a Texas bronc."

In 1924 he started selling radios and then medicines out of his car in Kansas City. Poultryman was added to his resume after arriving in Rogers in 1933 with the start of his poultry remedies business. This occurred during the depression and one of the tales associated with Carter relates that he was so poor upon arrival in Rogers that he had to borrow water and containers to mix remedies in. In 1966, Carter reported that in "truth" he mixed the remedy in a 50-gallon drum, but added a gallon of water for every gallon of remedy removed and, thus, never ran out of the product.

By 1938, Carter had established himself as a businessman and member of the community. Carter's local fame grew during the winter of 1940 when he took his car for a drive on frozen Lake Atalanta. "Crazy" Jimmie Carter eventually broke through the ice and had to have his car recovered while the onlookers gathered along the shore reveled in the sight, as he also did. He reported that he wanted to enjoy the ice even though he couldn't skate.

The local economy focused heavily on poultry production by the mid-1940s and depended on receiving chicks from out of state hatcheries. The high demand for chicks could not be met by over the road shipments from regional suppliers, so air transport seemed to be the answer. Carter worked with civic leaders for financial support to improve the airport, which had been established in 1945. Landing strips were smoothed, lights were installed, and support buildings were erected.

Carter imported 40,000 chicks into the northwest Arkansas area in 1947 and by 1951 20 million chicks were flown into the Rogers Airport. A large amount of poultry products were also shipped out. Eastern hatcheries began shipping eggs via air transport instead of chicks due to the efficiencies of the system. By 1957 he opened his own 60,000 capacity broiler farm and continued to provide poultry medications to the public. According to the 1959 Rogers City Directory, the C. Jimmie Carter Co., Poultry Remedies & Broiler Farm office was located at 324 South First Street on the corner of Cherry Street and the phone number was 1330 on the local exchange.

Carter served as the president of the airport board of directors from 1948 to 1977. The State of Arkansas Division of Aeronautics presented a citation to Carter in 1972 for "outstanding service to aviation in the State of Arkansas and the Nation." Although some controversy surrounded the end of Carter's tenure with the Airport Commission in 1977, the city had recognized Carter's dedication to the community with Resolution No. 301 in 1975, which designated the airport as Rogers Municipal Airport – Carter Field.