

KRUEGER'S FLYING SERVICE
STUART'S FIRST SEAPLANE SERVICE

The roots of the Stuart Airport stretch back to just after the Wright Brothers' airplane first flew in 1903. Hugh L Willoughby was among the first to fly on the St. Lucie River. He was developing the "Willoughby Pelican", a "modernized" Wright-Flyer type floatplane.

Burt's Krueger, Uncle of Stuart Mayor, Karl Krueger purchased two HS Curtis Flying boats after World War I, then converted them to carry passengers. He later built two hangers along Krueger Creek (now Snug Harbor). He lost nearly everything in the hurricane of 1926 but bounced back the following year to form the area's first air mail service based in Stuart. During the Great Depression, he carried passengers to and from South America, a route later taken over by Pan American Airways.

During the early part of the century, the St. Lucie River was the only landing option for nearly a decade. The first airplanes seen in the county on a regular basis were Navy amphibians that flew from Miami along the coast searching for submarines, then landed in Stuart to refuel at the Gulf Oil Company.

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