

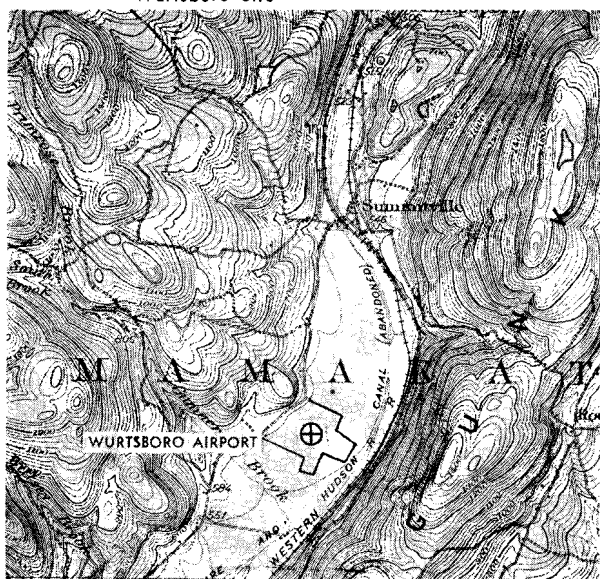
# Soaring SITES III

**Ellenville and Wurtsboro**  
by Arthur A. Ramer

The history of soaring activity in the Ellenville area began with the first take-off by Lewin Barringer in the Bowlus-duPont Albatross II on April second, 1935, a flight which ended 156 miles to the southwest and just missed establishing a new American record. A few weeks later he made two more unsuccessful attempts to better the record, in each case covering more than thirty miles down the long, continuous ridge before having to give up because of changes in wind direction. These flights demonstrated beyond a doubt the possibilities of soaring from this site with northwest winds, reinforced by powerful thermals generated in the valley and the foothills below the ridge. The Mt. Mongola site, which is 1400 ft. above the valley and the town of Ellenville, had the disadvantage of being limited in area and belonging to a religious society which uses it as a summer camp for New York children.

Activities that followed the discovery and inauguration of the site were continued shortly afterwards by the Metropolitan Soaring Association, which operated from a shelf on the same mountain, 200 ft. lower, known as Mt. Meenagha. Shock cord launching had to be used at this site also, but it was found more practical in several ways, particularly that of being owned by Mr. Bert Terwilliger, prominent citizen of Ellenville and Chairman of the town's Glider Committee, who owned the closed Meenagha House Hotel and made it available for soaring pilots who wished to camp on the site. Accounts of successful soaring meets on Mt. Meenagha have already appeared in earlier issues of the magazine.

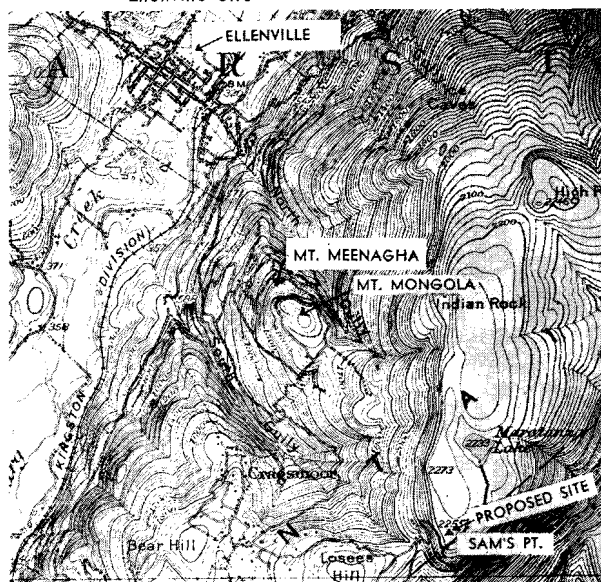
Wurtsboro Site



During the past three years that this site has been used, various groups have used, for auto tow training, the Wurtsboro Airport, eight miles to the southwest, at the foot of a continuation of the same ridge, the Shawangunk Mountains. The most active club at this site has been the Airhoppers Gliding and Soaring Club, several members of which drove to Wurtsboro nearly every week-end last summer.

Not long ago, we were faced with having to give up the Mt. Meenagha site as the property had been bought by an Italian recreation association, which refused to extend permission beyond a last meet in October, so the Wurtsboro site began to take on new prominence as a possible gliding and soaring site. The first soaring flight from auto tow from the Wurtsboro Field was made by Emil Lehecka in his special Cadet. Releasing while climbing in a northwest wind, Emil swung around and headed downwind, directly for the mountain, which he easily reached with sufficient altitude to

Ellenville Site



take advantage of the slope wind and, in a very short time, he had climbed up the side of the mountain and was soaring high above the ridge, 870 ft. above the valley bottom at this point. Another possibility was discovered by Emil on the opposite side of the field, when he soared over a low knoll, barely 100 ft. high and about 500 feet long, across the road from the airport. Emil found that it was possible to do slope soaring over this small hill on southwest winds of fair velocity.

In addition to these two sites already mentioned, there is yet the undeveloped Sam's Point site, which is on the opposite side of the mountain from Ellenville. If both a take-off site on the mountain and a landing site in the valley below are cleared, this may well become one of the greatest slope soaring sites in America, if not also in the world, as it offers tremendous possibilities for soaring on winds anywhere from northwest to east, with a drop from the flat mountain top of from 1700 ft. to more than 2000 ft. It will be the subject of a later article.

As the Wurtsboro field is now the center of operations and one of the most practical sites in America for auto or winch tow launching, with their accompanying