

# Major missing following flight

Donald H. (Don) Major, former mayor of Kilbourne and a prominent area farmer and businessman, remained missing at presstime this week after he and his airplane disappeared on a flight from Vicksburg, Miss., to Kilbourne last Friday morning.

Major had flown to Vicksburg to pick up parts for a combine, taking off from his private airstrip about 9:30 a.m. that day in his single engine Cessna 177 Cardinal, according to Gene Bolding, Major's farm foreman. Major landed at Vicksburg and secured the combine parts and took off from that airport between 10:30 and 11 a.m.

In Vicksburg, witnesses said Major appeared to be ill when he picked up the combine parts and again at the airport. While in Vicksburg, Major had the plane's fuel tanks topped off.

Sheriff's officers said that a school teacher with a class of children at a Vicksburg school recalled the blue and white airplane pass over the campus just as she was taking the children inside because it had begun to rain.

That was the last known sighting of Major's aircraft.

When he had failed to return to Kilbourne by 8:20 p.m. Friday night, the Sheriff's Department was notified. Sheriff Gary K. Bennett said that night checks of surrounding airports and a flight service station were made to see if any contact had been made with the aircraft that Friday.

Then, Saturday an aerial search began over Major's flight path by volunteer flyers and members of the Civil Air Patrol. That CAP search was headquartered at the Madison Parish Airport at Tallulah. Sunday and Monday the Louisiana State Police Helicopter was employed in the search but poor visibility has hampered the aerial operations.

Sunday, a ground search was organized on Pittman Island in East

Carroll parish after a hunter advised the sheriff's department that he had heard something that could have been an airplane crash.

That search produced nothing, Sheriff Bennett said, and ground search was continued and intensified in that area and broadened to Sayers Island.

Tuesday, the sheriff said the ground and air search was resumed. He added that it must be presumed that the aircraft crashed and the search will be continued in that area. "We're going to concentrate the search in that area of Mississippi river islands because of the reports from hunters that they heard what seemed to be an airplane in distress, but it does not seem to be at the approximate time he would have been in the area," the sheriff commented.

He said that search would continue until the plane is found or it became reasonable to assume that it either is not down in that area or cannot be found in that densely wooded terrain.

"When that time comes, we will evaluate the situation and see what else we will do," Sheriff Bennett said.

Major would have been 51 on November 22. He was a graduate of Kilbourne High school, attended Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, was owner with members of his family of extensive farming interests both in the Kilbourne area and in Arkansas, just across the state line. He was also part-owner of Kilbourne Hardware, Inc., a member of the board of directors of the Bank of Oak Grove, and served as mayor of Kilbourne.

He is the son of the late C.E. Major and Mrs. Dell Major, of Kilbourne.



Don Major

## Roberts takes oath today

Glynn David Roberts, of Rayville, will be sworn in as Judge of division B of the Fifth Judicial District in Rayville today at 10 a.m.

Roberts won the election on October 22, to fill the vacancy caused by Judge John C. Morris, who retired due to ill health.

Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Jim Dennis will perform the oath in the courtroom in Rayville's courthouse this morning.

Judge Roberts is the son of the late J.K. Roberts and Mrs. Iona Roberts, of Oak Grove. He is married to the former Patsy Gammill of Rayville, and they have one son, Gregory.