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NEWARK METROPOLITAN AIRPORT

Today, at the southeastern edge of Newark where formerly sea gulls glided noiselessly to rest among waving cattails and sawgrass, wide runways stretch to the horizon over the vanished marshes, great airplanes swoop down from the sky to alight before modern steel and concrete hangars. From dreary swampland in 1927 to one of the world's busiest commercial air terminals in 1939--this is the dynamic rise of Newark Metropolitan Airport.

At night the scene at the airport takes on a dramatic quality. The great expanse is cloaked in darkness. Here and there red lights mark the roofs of hangars and buildings on the field and in its vicinity. Suddenly the field is flooded with light; overhead an airplane is heard; its lights flash into view; it circles the field, slowly glides down and sweeps along the runway to its terminal. Attendants rush forward to assist travelers from the planes and to direct them to waiting automobiles which will carry them in a few minutes over the Pulaski Skyway and through the Holland Tunnel to New York, whose towers are visible from the landing field. The floodlights are turned off, the small red lights seem now to grow brighter and the airport stands out in silhouette, an impressive symbol of mechanized twentieth century civilization.

As early as 1919 Newark had an airport on property belonging to the Forest Hill Golf Club. But Heller Field, as it was called, was abandoned in May 1920 by the government's air-mail service because of its small size and the hazards which caused many accidents. Five years later air mail was being transported by private companies from their headquarters at Hadley Field near New Brunswick, but increased business necessitated a base closer to New York City. The Aeronautical Club of New Jersey, headed by John J. Bergen and Clarence Chamberlin, the famous aviator, urged construction of an airport at Newark, but city officials were too intent on improving Port Newark to consider using valuable land in that region for such a visionary purpose.

Lindbergh's dramatic solo flight across the Atlantic in May 1927 fastened public attention upon the practical future of aviation. City officials saw the prospective need for landing fields near urban centers. Mayor Thomas L. Raymond of Newark publicly gave his support on July 11, 1927 to the building of a municipal airport and requested the City Engineer, James W. Costello, to prepare plans for a \$6,000,000 project. The idea was endorsed by the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Aeronautics, William P. MacCracken, and several months later a commission appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, Herbert C. Hoover, announced that the proposed site of the Newark Airport, adjacent to Newark Bay and