



PUBLIC FORUM  
#15-8-9

## Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented enter "N/A" for "not applicable." Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name Old Port Columbus Terminal and TAT Hangar

Other name Columbus Municipal Airport; Old Port Columbus Airport Control Tower

### 2. Location

Address 4920 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Zip Code 43219-1881

### 3. Historic Preservation Officer Certification

As the designated authority under the Columbus City Code Chapter 3116 and 3117, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the Columbus Register of Historic Properties and meets the procedural requirements set forth in Columbus City Code Chapter 3117. In my opinion, the property or properties  meet(s)  does not meet the Columbus Register criteria. I recommend that this property or properties be considered significant  locally  nationally  statewide.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Historic Preservation Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

In our opinion, the property or properties  meet(s)  does not meet the Columbus Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Historic Resources Commission Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### 4. Columbus City Council Certification

I hereby certify that this property or properties is/are:  
 entered in the Columbus Register.  
 determined not eligible for the Columbus Register.  
 removed from the Columbus Register  
 other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I hereby certify that the Franklin County Recorder has been notified that this property or properties has/have been entered into the Columbus Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Historic Preservation Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Historic Form  
 11-14-14

5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check all boxes that apply)

- private
- public – local
- public – State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the Columbus Register**

0

6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

Airport terminal  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Airplane hangar  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

Vacant  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Storage  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

foundation: Concrete  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 walls: Brick, Glass, Metal  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 roof: Composite, Metal  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 other  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See Continuation Sheets

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable Columbus Register Criteria**

**Period or Periods of Significance**

A. The design or style of the property's exterior and/or interior is of significance to the historical, architectural or cultural development of the city, state or nation.

1929-1958

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. The property is closely and publicly identified with a person who has significantly contributed to the historical, architectural or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

**Significant Date or Dates**

1929

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

C. The property is identified as a significant work of an architect, artisan, engineer, landscape architect or builder whose individual work has influenced the historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

**Significant Person or Persons**

(Complete if Criterion 2 is marked)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

D. The property demonstrates significant craftsmanship in architectural design, detail, or use of materials.

**Architect/Builder**

Allied Architects Association

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E. The property is closely and publicly identified with an event, or series of events, which has influenced the historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in the box if applicable.)

Property is:

less than 40 years of age or achieved significance within past 40 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

*See Continuation Sheets*

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

*See Continuation Sheets*

**Primary location of additional data**

Columbus Historic Preservation Office  
 State Historic Preservation Office

University  
 Other

Name of repository

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 5.749

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property, or properties or district on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheets

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheets

11. Form Prepared By:

Nathalie Wright, Historic Preservation Consultant
Name/Title

Judith B. Williams, LLC.
Organization

349 E. Tulane Rd.
Street Address

614-447-8832
Telephone

Columbus
City

Ohio 43202
State Zip Code

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Map (A to scale sketch map for individually listed property, or properties or historic district.)

Photographs (Representative black and white photographs of the property, or properties or historic district.)

Additional items (check with the Columbus Historic Preservation Officer for any additional items.)

13. Property Owner

(Use Continuation Sheets to list additional property owners.)

Robin Holderman, Columbus Regional Airport Authority
Name/Title

4600 International Gateway
Street Address

Telephone

Columbus
City

OH 43219
State Zip Code

City of Columbus, Department of Development  
Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office

## Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Section Number 7

Zip Code 43219

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### Narrative Description

The original Port Columbus is located at the southeast corner of the current Port Columbus International Airport, located seven miles from downtown Columbus. The nominated property includes two buildings, both constructed in 1929. The historic Port Columbus buildings include a passenger station/administration building and an accompanying airplane hangar. The rectangular passenger station is two stories in height, with a three story observational tower. The tower is octagonal in shape, which serves to distinguish the building. The hangar is a one-story building, identifiable by its corner towers and barrel vault roof.

NOTE: The original name for the nominated 1929 property was simply Port Columbus. The architectural drawings designated the control tower building as the Administration and Passenger Station building. The hangar was known as the TAT Hangar. Over the years, both the overall property and the individual buildings have been known by different names. Port Columbus was also referred to as the Columbus Municipal Airport in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Administration and Passenger Station building was also historically known as the Passenger Terminal, or just Terminal, building. The Control Tower name appears to be a later name associated with the building from the mid-1900s. For purposes of the nomination text, the property will be referred to as Port Columbus and the individual buildings will be referred to as the Passenger Terminal and the TAT Hangar. *To avoid confusion with the current Port Columbus Airport, the designated nomination name is Old Port Columbus Terminal and TAT Hangar.*

Listed under the name Port Columbus Airport Control Tower, the terminal was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. At that time, it had two additions attached to it, which were removed by 2008. The building now exhibits its original configuration as constructed in 1929.

#### Passenger Terminal

The north elevation of the terminal overlooks the adjacent runway, this façade contains the three-story octagonal tower. The south elevation faces E. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The east end bay was originally an open vestibule that served as the passenger entrance from the train located across E. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The Passenger Terminal has a flat roof, except the observational tower which has a hipped roof. The yellow brick building has minor decorative detailing, created by contrasting dark brown bricks. Decorative elements are found at the cornice line, at windows, and some doorways. At the cornice, the contrasting brick is two courses along the roof and is present on each elevation. Five header courses in a stacked-bond form a decorative band between the upper story windows and the cornice. This band mimics the effect of having dentals on the building. Additionally, the window lintels on the second floor are composed of two header courses of the contrasting brick color, and 'dots' of paired header courses are between each window bay at the second floor.

The first floor window bays have soldier course lintels in the same color as the rest of the building. Existing windows in these bays are modern replacements. The second story windows are original to the building, and the same throughout. They are three-over-three windows, which are unequally proportioned with the lower sash being larger than the upper sash. The building is on a concrete foundation and the corner piers of the observation tower are also concrete that have been wrapped in metal.

The north façade, facing the flight line, has a series of ten window bays extending to the east from the observation tower. (Photos 1-2) The tower has a 3<sup>rd</sup> story, extending above the remainder of the building. Each corner of the octagonal tower is emphasized by a pier topped with red lights. At the peak of the tower roof is an iron railing, encircling a large search light. The tower at the first floor has large window bays on each protruding side. Each window bay is comprised of multiple lights. The first floor window bays are nearly full-height floor to ceiling configurations. The multi-light 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows are smaller in scale than the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The entire 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the tower is glass enclosed, with full-height window bays. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level aligns with the roof, and there's a door providing easy access to the roof from the interior. The tower has a standing seam metal roof and each octagonal bay is topped with a metal sawtooth crenellated parapet.

On the north façade at the first floor, the window bays are full height. Each opening has a four light transom. Most of the bays have door openings below the transom. The doorway at the easternmost end of the building serves as the primary door, and it is emphasized by vertical bands of contrasting brick. The vertical bands consist of stacked-bond yellow bricks in between four stacks of brown header course bricks. The vertical bands extend up into the second floor.

The south elevation faces onto E. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. (Photo 3) Window configuration matches that of the north façade. The second bay, near the east end of the building, protrudes outward and corresponds to a stairwell on the interior. Two doors are present on the south façade. One is at the easternmost bay and the other door is centered on the south elevation, three steps above grade. It has a simple stone surround, five square transom windows and a side light. The end bay of the south elevation to the west is a blind wall. The blind wall has ten columns of stacked header brick in contrasting color. The center section of this end bay contains a chimney stack, which extends above the roofline.

The east and west elevations are three bays wide. Both have the same window and door configuration as the primary elevations. The decorative vertical band of bricks is at each corner wall of the east elevation. (Photos 3-5) The west elevation also has a secondary door. (Photo 6) The secondary door may be a later alteration, as it does not have any fenestration like the other entrances.

On the interior of the terminal building, there is some historic fabric remaining. Historic fabric includes exposed brick walls in the original stairwells and 1<sup>st</sup> floor tower room (Photos 7-8) and some remnants of the tile floor. Original architectural plans indicate that a pilot's lounge was in the southwest corner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. An extant fireplace is likely a remnant of this former lounge. (Photo 9) The fireplace hearth is faced with quarry tiles, similar to the floor remnants. A wood mantle is above the fireplace opening. The original architectural plans designate the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor as offices, including offices for TAT at the eastern end of the building. The manager's office is shown within the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor octagonal tower. Another historic feature of the interior is the metal spiral stair from the second floor to the third floor of the observational tower. The third floor of the observational tower is an open space with the metal roof trusses exposed. (Photo 10) A door leads out onto the roof of the building. (Photo 11) Non-historic partitions and dropped ceilings have been removed from the building in recent weeks in order to expose the original structure.

### TAT Hangar

The TAT hangar is a large scale rectangular one-story building. (Photo 12) At 206 x 145 feet, with a 22' ceiling height, the hangar was designed to contain six-to-nine Ford Tri-Motor planes. It is located roughly 400 feet north, and slightly east, of the Passenger Terminal. The hangar features a central barrel vault section and brick corner piers/towers at each corner. The corner towers on the façade are significantly larger in scale than the piers on the rear elevation. They are three stories in height and the roofline of the piers is roughly the same height as the apex of the barrel vault. Each of the front corner towers has an entrance bay facing the runway. A window on the second floor has a blind arched transom and small windows are present on the third floor.

On the façade, the central barrel vault section of the building is faced with painted corrugated metal. (Photo 12) A sign near the roof has the old TAT logo which is blue and white with an intersecting red and white arrow; it is similar to the original but was painted more recently. Within the arrow are the words Transcontinental Air

Transport, Inc. Both east and west ends of the hangar were originally glazed doors that opened to accommodate airplane storage. Today, only the east door remains. The original vertical metal panels exist on both elevations. North and south side elevations are glazed with multi-light steel windows as well. Corrugated metal sheets cover the remaining multi-light windows throughout the building.

The south elevation has a one-story linear wing that extends the length of the building from the front corner tower back to the rear elevation. (Photo 13-14) It is part of the original design of the building. The south elevation walls are faced with the same corrugated metal sheets as the façade.

The front, northern corner pier has a protruding entrance bay that is glass enclosed. (Photo 15) It appears to be a circa 1950 enclosure. A one-story concrete block addition is behind the corner pier on the north elevation. This non-historic addition is L-shaped extending outward from the main building. It has four-light windows and three entrances. The addition extends along the north elevation, blocking original windows, but stops short of the rear elevation. Near the corner where the concrete block addition meets the original portion of the building, there is a section of original multi-light metal windows that is exposed. A brick wall with a header course continuous sill is below the window line on this elevation.

The rear elevation has two door openings near the north end. (Photo 14) Otherwise, this elevation is blank. The vertical metal facing at the top of this façade is original, as is that on the opposite elevation. The rear corner piers are plain without any fenestration.

On the interior, the TAT hangar is still an open expanse on much of the first floor. (Photo 16) However, a drop ceiling has been added and the view up to the vaulted roof trusses has been blocked. (Photo 17) There are some places within the building where the original industrial windows are still intact and visible. (Photo 18) The glass is wire reinforced glazing. A series of offices is present within the north and south one-story additions. Entrance vestibules are within the front corner towers.

### Historic Integrity

Although both buildings of old Port Columbus have had minor alterations over the years, they each maintain historic integrity. Both buildings exhibit their original function and their historic significance. The historic physical setting of Port Columbus is intact, at the edge of the present day airport facility. The relationship between the Passenger Terminal and the TAT Hangar is also intact, with a runway still present between both buildings. (Photo 1 and Aerial Photo) No construction has occurred between the two buildings, retaining the historic visual connection between them. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Railroad line is still present to the south of the terminal building. Historically, passengers arrived from New York City by rail, stopping at a depot near the Passenger Terminal, and then continued westward by plane from Port Columbus. A covered walkway once connected the railroad depot to the passenger terminal. Travelers walked underneath the walkway, entering the building on the east end of the south façade. A covered walkway also extended out from the north façade to the waiting plane on the flight line. Patrons could also access the Passenger Terminal from the road, via a circular driveway on the east end of the building. A paved terrace lined the east and north elevations of the Passenger Terminal.

City of Columbus, Department of Development  
Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office

## Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Section Number 8

Zip Code 43219

### Statement of Significance

In 1979, the Port Columbus passenger terminal was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (the TAT Hangar was not included). The National Register nomination summarized the historic significance of the building for its role in early passenger aviation. "When constructed in 1929, the Old Port Columbus Air Terminal Tower was one of the first airport facilities in the country. It achieved early significance in the history of American air transportation. Port Columbus was the first transfer point in the west bound transcontinental passenger service which was operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad, Railway. Passengers travelled by rail from New York to Columbus where they boarded the TAT Ford Tri-Motors to Waynoka, Oklahoma. There they boarded another train to Clovis, New Mexico and completed the journey with a TAT flight to Los Angeles. The trip scheduled for 48 hours inaugurated July 8, 1929 with the departure of the first planes *City of Columbus* and the *City of Wichita* from Port Columbus...Old Port Columbus remains as a reminder of Columbus' major contribution to American air transportation."<sup>1</sup>

#### Background History – Transcontinental Air Transport

Transcontinental Air Transport, also commonly known as TAT, was established in May 1928. The new company had an ambitious goal: to establish a regularly scheduled air passenger service in the United States and to create the first permanent transcontinental airline service. At this point in aviation history, airplanes were mostly used for military or air mail purposes. The Ford-Stout Airlines began carrying mail in 1926. In late 1927, short city-to-city routes for passengers were started, although it was not a well-organized network of flights beyond a regional basis. TAT dubbed the transcontinental service the Lindbergh Line.

TAT was formed by a conglomeration of interested parties, predominantly tied to aviation or allied industries. Officials from National Air Transport, Curtiss Aeroplane & Motor Company, Wright Aeronautical Corporation, Ford Motor Company, and the Pennsylvania Railroad were among the founders, as well as a banker and a Vanderbilt. To lend further pedigree to the new company, Charles A. Lindbergh was recruited to chair the Technical Committee and Amelia Earhart was invited to serve as Assistant to the General Traffic Manager. Lindbergh was a national hero, fresh off his solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927. Earhart too was a nationally famous aviation figure, having set women's flight records, including being the first woman to fly across the Atlantic, in June 1928.

The Technical Committee was in charge of several important decisions, including the type of planes to secure and the transcontinental route itself. TAT purchased ten Ford Tri-Motor airplanes to begin its initial transcontinental flights. Built of duralumin, the Ford Tri-Motor was capable of carrying 12-15 passengers, their luggage, and typical load of mailbags.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Recchie, Nancy. *Old Port Columbus Airport Control Tower National Register of Historic Places Nomination*, Columbus, Ohio, 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Kirk, Robert F. *Flying the Lindbergh Line: Then and Now (Transcontinental Air Transport's Historic Aviation Vision)* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2013), p.5.



The route was determined largely based upon train schedules and connections and weather patterns. The decision to utilize the railroad was partly due to the lack of ability for night flight and partly due a desire to capitalize on the railroads' good safety and punctuality reputation. The setup made the railroad a partner, instead of a competitor.

The complete route chosen by TAT's Technical Committee contained two train segments and ten airport stops, in the 48 hour transcontinental journey. Going west from New York City, a traveler rode overnight on the Pennsylvania Railroad from Pennsylvania Station to Port Columbus. The first flight segment on the westward trip occurred at Port Columbus, where the traveler spent the day on a plane until reaching Waynoka, Oklahoma. Between Columbus and Waynoka, four fueling stops took place along the way, in Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City and Wichita. The transcontinental traveler then boarded a second overnight train, this time on the Santa Fe Railroad, from Waynoka to Clovis, New Mexico. Leaving from Clovis, the second day of flight included fueling stops in Albuquerque, Winslow and Kingman, Arizona, and then ending the journey in Glendale, California (the location of Los Angeles' airport at the time).

Along with the above decisions, the Technical Committee had to ensure the development of infrastructure for the Lindbergh Line. Planning and construction for the massive cross-country enterprise took over a year to complete. "One of the main problems in establishing the TAT route across the U.S. was the condition of the airports along the desired route. None of the existing airports and of course none the proposed Ports had the needed runways, ramps, hangars, and lighting that were required by TAT... TAT built these new airports and constructed them to meet all required aviation safety and lighting requirements."<sup>3</sup>

In addition to airport passenger stations, TAT needed aircraft maintenance hangars and radio and weather stations. Radio towers and weather stations were built at each Port. In order to avoid being a navigational hazard, radio and weather towers were constructed a mile from the Ports.

By June 1929, it was decided that TAT would be ready for inaugural flights in July. Facilities would soon be ready and 50,000 miles of test flights along the route had been completed. "According to Plane Talk, '...three million dollars were invested in the proper ground facilities in order that TAT planes might operate with reliability and comfort of the associated railroads...Passenger stations, equal in comfort and convenience to a railroad passenger station, have been erected at all TAT Ports...'"<sup>4</sup>

On July 8, 1929, two planes would leave from Port Columbus headed west and two planes, headed east, would leave from Glendale. "In Los Angeles, on the afternoon of July 7, 1929, seated with the Governor of California, C.C. Young, and other dignitaries, Lindbergh pressed a button that flashed a signal across the continent to a bell in New York at the Pennsylvania Station. At the sound of the bell the wheels of *The Airway Limited* began to roll, taking its first and historic group of passengers to the train/plane connection in Port Columbus."<sup>5</sup>

*The Airway Limited* arrived at Port Columbus on schedule, at 7:35 a.m., and the adventurous travelers walked from the train station to the Port Columbus terminal. "It was a cloudy day with light rain falling in Columbus...The terminal was brand new and its yellow colored bricks added a sharp contrast to the gray day."<sup>6</sup> Despite the rain, 3,000 people crowded the terminal grounds to witness the historic event. Nineteen passengers were divided between the *City of Columbus* and *City of Wichita* planes for the maiden flight westward. Henry Ford, Edsel Ford, William B. Mayo (Chief Engineer of Ford Motor Company), and Harvey Firestone were at the top of the list of prominent guests at the opening TAT flights.<sup>7</sup> After the two planes departed, by 8:17 a.m., TAT's General Traffic Manager hosted a celebratory breakfast in the TAT hangar.

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<sup>3</sup> Kirk, *Flying the Lindbergh Line*, p.11.

<sup>4</sup> Kirk, *Flying the Lindbergh Line*, p.31-32. *TAT Plane Talk* was the company's monthly newsletter.

<sup>5</sup> Kirk, *Flying the Lindbergh Line*, p.29.

<sup>6</sup> Kirk, *Flying the Lindbergh Line*, p.32.

<sup>7</sup> Kirk, *Flying the Lindbergh Line*, p.32-33.

In Glendale, on the same day, two Ford Tri-Motors took flight heading east. Charles Lindbergh piloted the *City of Los Angeles*, with nine passengers. He only flew to Winslow, Arizona though, returning to Glendale on July 9. Amelia Earhart, who had traveled from New York City on the train, was one of the ten inaugural passengers on the *City of Columbus*. She flew with Lindbergh, and his wife, back to Glendale, thus completing the entire transcontinental route.

For a start-up business in a pioneering industry, TAT was reasonably successful in its first few months. However, the stock market crash in October hurt their efforts. In November, TAT reduced its transcontinental fare from \$338 to \$267. It then merged with Maddux Air Lines, becoming TAT- Maddux Air Lines. The addition of Maddux Air Lines, formed in July 1927 with one plane flying between Los Angeles and San Diego, strengthened the company and automatically gave it an established route to San Francisco, which Maddux had added.

In April 1930, TAT reduced its rate again to \$160. This price point proved fruitful, as a dramatic increase in ticket sales occurred. By this time, the Norfolk and Western Railway had extended its service to Columbus to take advantage of air-rail service. From Virginia and the Carolinas, “passengers westbound traveled on the *Pocahontas* to Columbus and arrived at 7:35 a.m. in time to board the westbound TAT plane.”<sup>8</sup> The air-rail partnership was short-lived, as the necessary infrastructure for night flying was soon in place. By 1931, an all air schedule was made possible.

In early 1930, under pressure from President Herbert Hoover’s Postmaster General, TAT-Maddux merged with Western Air Express to become Transcontinental & Western Airlines, Inc. The company was thus awarded the central transcontinental airmail route. During TAT’s various mergers, the company continued to utilize Port Columbus. In 1950, in acknowledgment of its expanded international routes, the company changed its name to Trans World Airlines, more commonly known as TWA. Through a series of management missteps, beginning in the 1960s, TWA was purchased by American Airlines in 2001, thus ending its storied aviation history.

### Background History – Port Columbus

City officials had been lobbying for a municipal airport near Columbus since the end of World War I. Up to that point, the city only had rudimentary landing fields, which predominantly accepted air mail flights and taught flying lessons. The Ohio State University built a landing field west of the campus in the early 1910s. In 1917, the university established an aviation school to train pilots for WWI involvement. Located on East Broad Street, very close to the future Port Columbus, the 1923 Norton Field hosted the Columbus Flying Service and sometimes served as a United States army port. In 1926, the first air mail service for Columbus was begun, with Colonial Air Transport, a subsidiary of Continental Air Line, holding the contract. Other small landing fields contemporaneous with Port Columbus included the Linden airport, on Huy Road, Clickenger field, on the southeast side, and the Sullivant field, on the west side.

City leaders proposed a bond issue in 1927 for a municipal airport on the southwest side, but it was rejected by voters. For multiple reasons, TAT wanted a port in Columbus, but there was not a sufficient extant facility for its purposes. Once TAT approached the city with its proposal for the Lindbergh Line and a port in Columbus, there was greater motivation to pass a successful bond issue. In the fall of 1928, a bond issue of \$850,000 was approved by voters. In January 1929, the City of Columbus purchased the first 350 acres for Port Columbus.

Over several months’ construction, “the city built a new airport it advertised as ‘The World’s Greatest Air Harbor.’”<sup>9</sup> Port Columbus included lighting for eventual night flights, a weather station and radio tower off-site, the runways, aprons, and the TAT hangar. Additionally, “reaching up to 50 miles, a high-intensity beacon light, reportedly the first of its kind in the U.S., sits atop the Port Columbus tower and flashes the initials “PC” in Morse Code to pinpoint the airport’s location.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Kirk, *Flying the Lindbergh Line*, p.41.

<sup>9</sup> Darbee, Jeffrey T. and Nancy A. Recchie. *The AIA Guide to Columbus* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008) p.301.

<sup>10</sup> <http://columbusairports.com/about-us/our-history/>

Allied Architects Association, of Columbus, was chosen as the designer of the \$50,000 administration/passenger terminal. During the 1920s, the firm was responsible for a number of civic construction projects. In 1928, its Columbus City Hall and Central Police Station designs were completed. In 1929, Allied Architect's design for the municipal hangar at Port Columbus was under construction. Allied Architects Association was a collective of nearly two-dozen local architects. Noted members included George H. Bulford, J.E. McCarty, W.J. Richards, Charles Inscho, and Howard Dwight Smith.

Along with the city engineer, who worked on runway design, TAT also provided planning and construction assistance for Port Columbus. The TAT maintenance hangar cost \$100,000 to build and was designed by the engineering firm of Love-Sultan, Inc. It constructed by Middle States Construction Company. Middle States Construction, a Columbus firm, also constructed the Pennsylvania Railroad's station at Port Columbus.

"TAT flew over 500,000 miles, carrying almost 3,000 passengers in their first six months of operation... The number of passengers traveling the eastern section of the route from Port Columbus to Waynoka increased so much that TAT purchased two Curtiss Condor biplanes to service the route and add more seats to it."<sup>11</sup> Port Columbus had become an important airport, and over 11,000 people traveled through Port Columbus in its first year of operation.<sup>12</sup> In addition to passengers flying in and out of the city, people could take short sightseeing trips over Columbus, and 5,236 people took advantage of this opportunity in 1929-30.<sup>13</sup>

Port Columbus quickly had other tenants, aside from TAT. The Curtiss-Wright Flying Service started an aviation school, taxi-plane, and planes for charter service at the new airport in 1929. Leasing a site from Port Columbus, a separate hangar for Curtiss-Wright was under construction by July. And, U.S. Airlines, Inc., of Cleveland, quickly followed suit.

Before the completion of Port Columbus, air mail planes landed at Sullivant Field, but by 1930, Port Columbus was accommodating night flights for mail service. The city was a stopping point, between Cleveland and Louisville, on Contract Air Mail route No.16. "North bound planes depart from the Columbus airport at 9:45 p.m. and arrive in Cleveland at 11:30 p.m. in time for connection with west coast and southwest mail planes and the eastbound planes for New York, Boston and other eastern cities. Incoming mail arrives in Columbus at 4:40 a.m. in time for morning deliveries."<sup>14</sup>

In 1936, laborers with the Public Works Administration built an east-west runway at Port Columbus. During World War II, the federal government took over operation of Port Columbus, making improvements to the airport, and operating the Curtiss-Wright plant, which had been established on airport property in 1940. Port Columbus returned to city control in 1946, and the mayor formed a metropolitan airport commission that year. In 1954, an air show celebrating Port Columbus' 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary was held, with performances by the Navy Blue Angels and the Air Force Thunderbirds.

The original Port Columbus terminal was replaced by a new Port Columbus Airport terminal in 1958. Since then, the original facility has been used for offices and by small aircraft operations. The former TAT hangar was used by Executive Jet Aviation for a number of years. The buildings were owned by City of Columbus until 2007, when they were transferred to the Columbus Regional Airport Authority. The passenger terminal is presently vacant and the TAT hangar is used for storage.

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<sup>11</sup> Kirk, *Flying the Lindbergh Line*, p.36.

<sup>12</sup> <http://columbusairports.com/about-us/our-history/>

<sup>13</sup> Moore, Opha. *History of Franklin County Ohio* (Topeka-Indianapolis: Historical Publishing Company, 1930), p.438.

<sup>14</sup> Moore, *History of Franklin County Ohio*, p.437.

## Historic Significance

Port Columbus is significant for its role in local and national aviation. It meets Criterion E under the broad pattern of transportation history. The Period of Significance is 1929, when Port Columbus opened, to 1958, when it was replaced by a new terminal building. Local Crosley Radio dealers that had recently begun receiving shipments via airplane, J.H. & F.A. Sells recognized the importance of commercial flight for Columbus. "Last year or the year before, Aviation was an infant as compared with today. A toy for the reckless---a machine of destruction in time of war. Now all progressive cities are building or planning airports."<sup>15</sup>

Columbus was a growing city in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and by the 1920s, a municipal airport was viewed as a necessity by city leaders nationwide. Columbus wanted to be progressive. Although there were a few scattered landing fields around the Columbus, Port Columbus was the first municipal airport in the state capital. Despite the half-dozen air schools and five air fields scattered around the metro area, "the municipal airport, of approximately 650 acres, with every modern facilities, including concrete runways, is the only true air terminal in the city."<sup>16</sup>

When planning its transcontinental route, TAT saw Columbus as being a strategic location. Indeed, Columbus was TAT's first choice for the eastern port for several reasons, a major one being the existing passenger service with the Pennsylvania Railroad.<sup>17</sup> City involvement certainly was a big factor as well. "The city of Columbus was quite willing to help establish a new airport and equip it to TAT standards. To do this, the city passed a bond to help fund the new airport."<sup>18</sup> As to be expected, many of Columbus' most prominent political and business leaders were on the airport committee, formed to promote the 1928 bond issue. Many of the surnames, still recognizable today, included Casto, Huntington, Jeffrey, Lazarus, Vorys, and Wolfe.

To say that the completion of Port Columbus was a big deal is an understatement. A three-day dedication occurred July 6-8, 1929, commemorating the new airport and the inaugural TAT flights. Twenty-thousand people attended on the first day, Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup>.<sup>19</sup> Dedication activities on Saturday and Sunday included passenger flights, exhibition/stunt flights, parachute jumping onto targets, and music by the American Legion band. Representing the first commercial landing on the field, an eight-plane fleet from the General Tire & Rubber Co. arrived from Akron, on Saturday. Flown by military pilots, the fleet displayed night flying for the crowds. On Sunday, the *Columbus Dispatch* described the closing ceremonies from the previous day. "Saturday night presented a beautiful spectacle...The port, Saturday night, shone like a jewel on the eastern rim of the city. All lights, including boundary lights, ceiling lights, hangar floodlights, the 3,000,000 candle-power beacon light with its 'PC' code on course light and the 8,000,000 candle-power flood light, were turned on for the first time."<sup>20</sup> Sunday, the second day of ceremonies brought 50,000 visitors to Port Columbus.<sup>21</sup>

Speakers at the Port Columbus dedication program on Monday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, included Ohio governor, Myers Y. Cooper, and the state director of aeronautics, John M. Vorys, and Major Clarence M. Young, assistant director aeronautics for the United States department of commerce. The dedication address was given by Dr. W.O. Thompson, president emeritus, Ohio State University. The final dedication event was held Tuesday evening, July 9<sup>th</sup>, when the eastbound passengers from Los Angeles arrived at Port Columbus. All inaugural passengers, east and west bound, were given dedication scrolls as souvenirs.

Upon completion, accolades came from near and from far for Port Columbus. Arriving by special train from Detroit for the inaugural TAT flight, Henry Ford was interviewed by the newspaper. He stated, "The alliance of air and rail, completed at Columbus today, is an event of historic importance...The benefit which will result to

<sup>15</sup> J.H. & F.A. Sells Advertisement in Aviation Edition, *Columbus Sunday Dispatch*, July 7, 1929, p.G-31.

<sup>16</sup> 'Five Airports, One Terminal, Six Air Schools,' *The Columbus Sunday Dispatch*, July 7, 1929, p.G-24.

<sup>17</sup> Kirk, *Flying the Lindbergh Line*, p.305.

<sup>18</sup> Kirk, *Flying the Lindbergh Line*, p.305.

<sup>19</sup> Zwick, Lionel W. 'Expect 40,000 Visitors at New Airport During Day; 20,000 on Field Saturday,' *Columbus Dispatch*, July 7, 1929.

<sup>20</sup> Zwick, Lionel W. 'Expect 40,000 Visitors at New Airport During Day; 20,000 on Field Saturday,' *Columbus Dispatch*, July 7, 1929.

<sup>21</sup> 'Port Columbus Dedicated In Rainstorm,' *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, July 8, 1929, p.6.

business from this new facility and saving of time will become more and more apparent to the public. This is not only a great day of railroading and aviation; it is a great day for American efficiency.”<sup>22</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, then governor of New York, sent a congratulatory message to be shared at the dedication.<sup>23</sup>

During the dedication program for Port Columbus, the *Columbus Dispatch* printed a special 50 page Aviation Edition section on Sunday, July 7, 1929. Nearly every advertisement in the special section congratulated the city for Port Columbus or attempted to attach the respective company’s name to the airport, no matter if the link was relevant or not. Sample advertisement quotes include the following:

- General Electric, “The executives of the City are to be congratulated on this modern airport, the latest evidence of their progressive policies, and the people of Columbus and vicinity may well be proud of their place on the air map of America.” (page G-10)
- “The Elks rejoice with their fellow-citizens that PORT COLUMBUS is now a reality.” (page G-19)
- The W.E. Lamneck Co., makers of laundry dryers, advertised “Our Products Are as Modern as The Columbus Airport. What the Columbus Airport is to Columbus – We are to the Home and Housewife.” (page G-24)
- “The Jeffrey Manufacturing Company heartily congratulates the city of Columbus, its industries and institutions, upon the dedication of Port Columbus.” (page G-25)
- The Neil House Hotel: “Port Columbus Will Lead Our City To Prosperity” (page G-43)

In 1929, Lionel Zwick, the *Dispatch*’s aviation editor, had high praise for the aesthetics of the new airport. He wrote, “Port Columbus will be one of the most beautiful airports from an architectural standpoint...All construction work ties in with the general architectural scheme of the administration depot building.”<sup>24</sup>

In 2012, Robert Kirk echoed Zwick’s sentiments. Kirk, a pilot and teacher, and his wife traced the Lindbergh Line in July 2012. Visiting each TAT Port, he compiled the history and condition of every location. Traveling west to east, Robert and Vicki Kirk arrived at Port Columbus last. Upon seeing the passenger terminal, he notes that “it was more striking and beautiful than I had imagined. It’s just like it was described in the 1929 reports...It’s truly one of the most attractive aviation buildings I’ve ever seen. It’s a work of architectural excellence.”

Port Columbus was and still is an architectural gem. It was also an important aviation-related property in the city and the country. Port Columbus’ contribution to the first transcontinental air route in the United States is historically significant. The 1929 administration building and hangar are tangible reminders of a time and place in American aviation history. “PORT COLUMBUS stands as a monument to our splendid city...”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> ‘Ford Terms Air and Rail Alliance Historic Event,’ *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, July 8, 1929, p.1.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Port Columbus Dedicated In Rainstorm,’ *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, July 8, 1929, p.6.

<sup>24</sup> Zwick, Lionel W. ‘No Field in World Is Comparable to Columbus’ Airport,’ *The Columbus Sunday Dispatch*, July 7, 1929, p.G-1.

<sup>25</sup> Claude Meeker Advertisement in Aviation Edition, *Columbus Sunday Dispatch*, July 7, 1929, p.G-43.

City of Columbus, Department of Development  
Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office

## Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Section Number 9

Zip Code 43219

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City of Columbus, Department of Development  
Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office

### Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

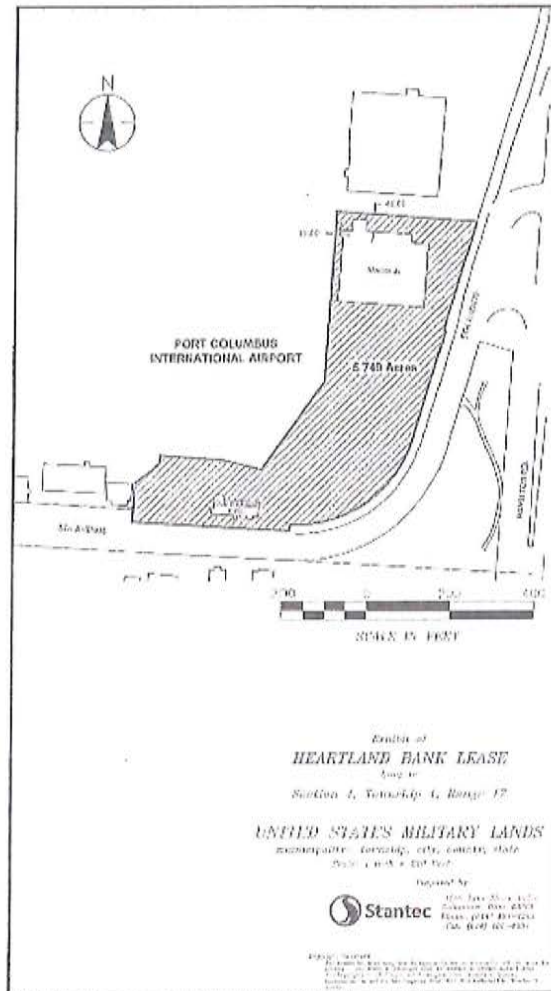
Section Number 10

Zip Code 43219

#### Geographical Data

##### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated boundary includes 5.749 acres, the historic terminal building and the former TAT Hangar. The nominated property (shaded area) is indicated on the illustration below.



##### Boundary Justification

The nominated boundary includes the property historically associated with the Passenger Terminal and the TAT Hangar. The boundary for the nominated property reflects its historic function, physical relationship between the buildings, and historic integrity.



City of Columbus, Department of Development  
Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office

## Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Section Number Additional Documentation

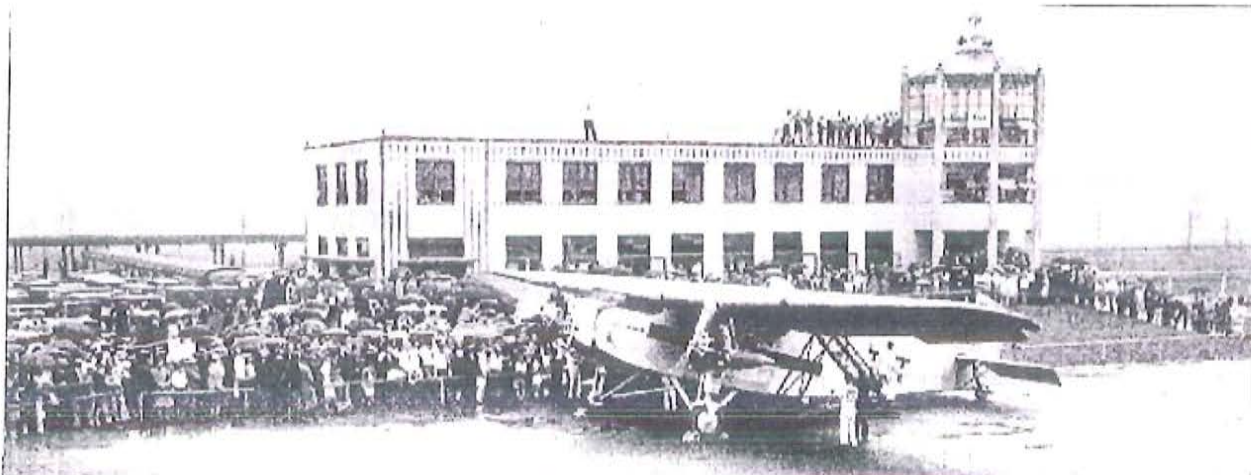
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### Historic Images



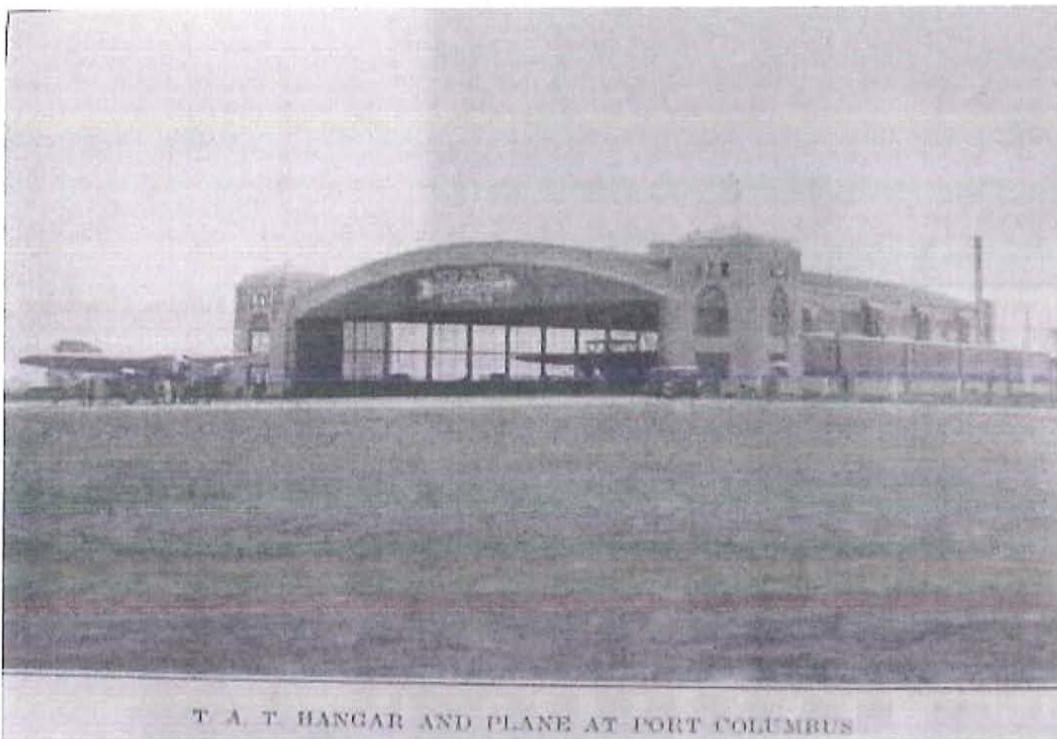
Administration Building under construction. From the C.R. Chappellear Company advertisement, Aviation Edition, *Columbus Sunday Dispatch*, July 7, 1929, p.G-4.



Inauguration Day, July 8, 1929. From 'Tracing TWA's Routes,' *TWA Ambassador*, July 1979.



Middle States Construction Co. Advertisement in Aviation Edition, *Columbus Sunday Dispatch*, July 7, 1929, p.G-35.



T. A. T. HANGAR AND PLANE AT PORT COLUMBUS

1930 view of TAT Hangar. From *History of Franklin County Ohio*.

A-15—Port Columbus, Columbus, Ohio



SA-61177

Date unknown. From Columbus Metropolitan Library Image Collections.

# Columbus' Air History May well date from Today

## PORT COLUMBUS and Start Operations together

With a very wholehearted spirit, Transcontinental Air Transport, Inc., congratulates the citizens of Columbus on the official dedication of Port Columbus. This occasion coincides with the start of TAT plane-train service from Coast to Coast in 48 hours.

For over a year, aviation authorities of America have been carefully building the ground establishments for TAT, reaching from New York to Los Angeles. Every contingency has been foreseen, and met with the latest equipment produced by Science. Several million dollars have been spent before operations begin, to insure to TAT travelers the most dependable, comfortable and speedy air transportation.

Port Columbus is the Eastern Terminal of TAT flying. Today, and each day thereafter, TAT service will be available to the Pacific Coast, and intermediate points. It will save Time, of course, and provide the highest quality of travel-convenience available in this or any other country in the world.

Columbus may well date its air history from today which inaugurates both Port Columbus and the outstanding TAT service.

For detailed information on schedules, fares, etc., consult TAT traffic office, Port Columbus, or leading travel or ticket agencies.

*By press copy.*

### THE TAT ROUTE

New York City  
Columbus, Ohio  
Indianapolis, Ind.  
St. Louis, Mo.  
Kansas City, Mo.  
Wichita, Kansas  
Wynnton, Okla.  
Chico, New Mex.  
Albuquerque, N. M.  
Winnipeg, Minn.  
Knoxville, Tenn.  
Los Angeles, Calif.



COAST TO COAST BY PLANE AND TRAIN

TAT Advertisement in Aviation Edition, Columbus Sunday Dispatch, July 7, 1929, p.G-15.



## We Congratulate Columbus

The citizens of Columbus, and the men responsible for the conception and building of Port Columbus have looked into the future—they have performed a service of inestimable value to our city—a service from which TRANSPORTATION, INDUSTRY and FINANCE will benefit alike.

The opening of the Airport, the rapid strides made in aviation, and the business which will develop from this enterprise, all combine to insure the future prosperity of Columbus and Central Ohio. We are today looking into a future bright with prospects for a healthy expansion of business and industry, as

finance judiciously makes available their capital requirements.

The Ohio National Bank, for forty years a strong constructive factor in the industrial development of Central Ohio, has confidence in the future of our community, and pledges its continued support to such enterprises as will contribute to a larger and more prosperous Columbus.

Our officers and directors appreciate the privilege and honor of this opportunity to congratulate Columbus on this fine achievement, an achievement that will have a far-reaching effect on the development, not only of Columbus, but of the entire Middle West.

### The Ohio National Bank



It is a Continued Career  
Which Shows us True

Ohio National Bank Advertisement in Aviation Edition, Columbus Sunday Dispatch, July 7, 1929, p.G-26.

# Columbus, Ohio

## The Nation's Greatest AIR HARBOR

Where Plane and Train Meet -  
At the Tip of the Air-line Funnel



WHEREVER the voice of industry  
is heard, it is heard in the  
language of progress and development.  
The voice of TRANSPORTATION,  
what the world may be, and to  
TODAY its wings are reaching  
to rest in COLUMBUS, our city is  
HAVING A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY  
TO BE THE TIP OF THE AIR-LINE FUNNEL  
AND THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE GREAT  
WESTERN METROPOLIS AND THE GREAT  
EASTERN METROPOLIS.

**New York Built Its Harbors,  
Dredged Its Channels -- and  
Built a Great City With Its Sea  
Harbor**

When her TRIBUTARIES had made her the  
advantage of the geography and created the necessary ARTIFICIAL  
CHANNELS, she gave them and the harbor which  
is the great sea.

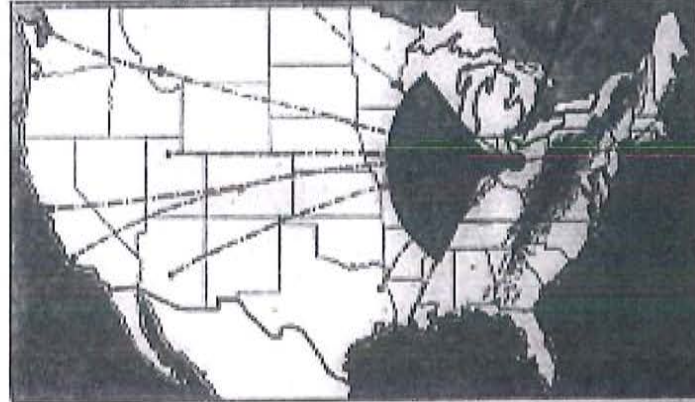
In all the history of the world, we find greater cities  
than Columbus, Ohio, which has the advantage of the  
great air-line funnel.

**"The Air" Has Come to  
COLUMBUS--**

It has been waiting here for Columbus for thousands of years,  
ready for the work of the transportation. To the East of  
Columbus is the Allegheny Mountains, one of the most  
impassable things known to the world, rising with  
mountain walls and air transportation will bring them  
to challenge the most advanced science. To the West,  
the Northwest and the Southwest are long stretches of  
flat prairie, which are rapidly being transformed into

**ORGANIZED AIR LINES for  
commercial transportation**

"The city from the National Highway -- the highest route  
to East from East to West." Adapted from the old



**The Allegheny Mountains Can-  
not Be Erased--**

And we cannot talk to connect in a big way with the air  
systems and developments which are being coming into  
country. So we are building GREAT AIRPORTS, build-  
ing up our GREAT AIR HARBOUR, "developing our coun-  
try" and "BUILDING OUR PEOPLE". In the transportation  
city will be leading cloud by air transportation, food and  
center of air industry. THROUGH THE COURSE  
HISTORIC COURSE HAVE THE NATURE HAS BUILT  
AT OUR DOORSTEP.

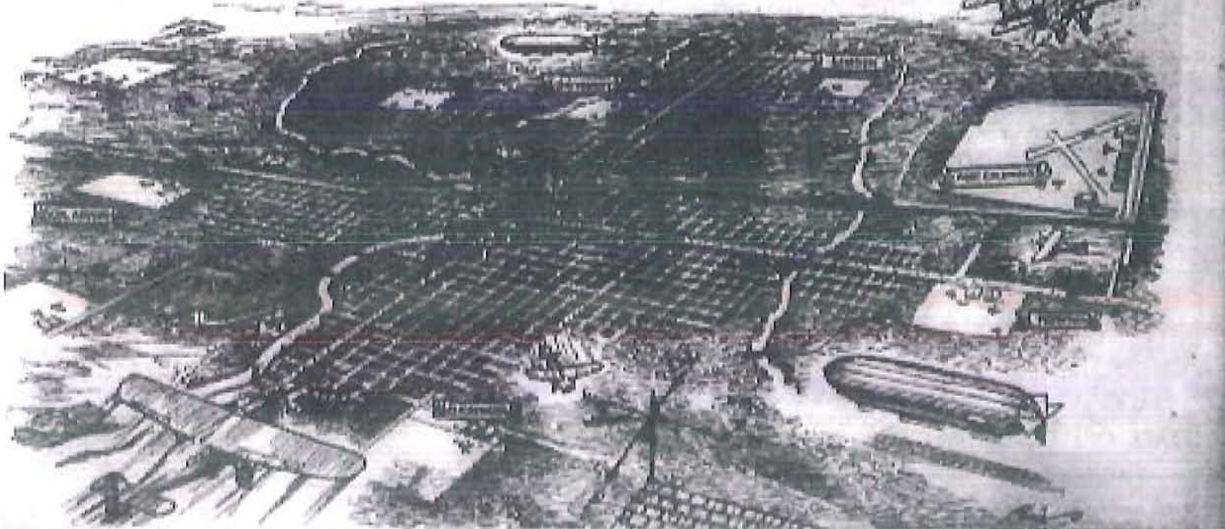
regions, built of the progress of other days who came to  
rest in the last century's past, when "roads and iron"  
rivers they could find through the Alleghenies. What  
now developments the future may bring in transportation,  
it is logical to believe that the National and National  
roads across country will play the largest part.

**Columbus Is at the Tip of the Funnel  
Into Which the Air Lines Converge!**

Airline authorities say that it is the NATIONAL  
FASTEST EAST PORT. JUST OUTSIDE THE  
TODAY. TO MAKE AIRCRAFT MAY SAFELY  
TRAVEL IN CROSS CONTINENT TRANSPORTA-  
TION LINES, will follow the route, both to the north and  
the Allegheny to the South.

*Don M. Casto*

**Columbus is the Brightest Star on the Great Air Map Now Being Drawn!**



Don M. Casto Advertisement in Aviation Edition, Columbus Sunday Dispatch, July 7, 1929, p.G-37.


**CONGRATULATIONS**  
 TO  
**PROGRESSIVE COLUMBUS**  
*on the Dedication of the FIRST*  
**AIR-RAIL**  
**HEAD QUARTERS**  
 LINKING COAST TO COAST .....  
 ..... IN A GREAT PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT  
 VIA  
**PORT COLUMBUS**  
**LOEWS & UNION ARTISTS**  
**THEATRES**  
 ENTERTAINMENT HEADQUARTERS  
**OHIO**  
 STATE STREET  
 OPPOSITE CAPITOL  
**BROAD**  
 WEST BROAD  
 STREET

Loews Theatres Advertisement in Aviation Edition, *Columbus Sunday Dispatch*, July 7, 1929, p.G-50.

LOOK AT WHAT WE GOT IN OUR "AIR SOCK!"



Dispatch cartoon comparing TAT to Santa Claus. From *Columbus Sunday Dispatch* July 7, 1929.





City of Columbus, Department of Development  
Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office

### Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Section Number Photographs

Zip Code 43219



Aerial view. The Passenger Terminal is at the southeast corner of the flight line, near the bottom of the image, and the TAT Hangar is at the top right of the image. Note the railroad tracks at the bottom. From Google Maps.



1. Passenger Terminal, view from the TAT Hangar, looking south.



2. Passenger Terminal, north and west elevations, looking southeast



3. Passenger Terminal, south and east elevations, looking northwest



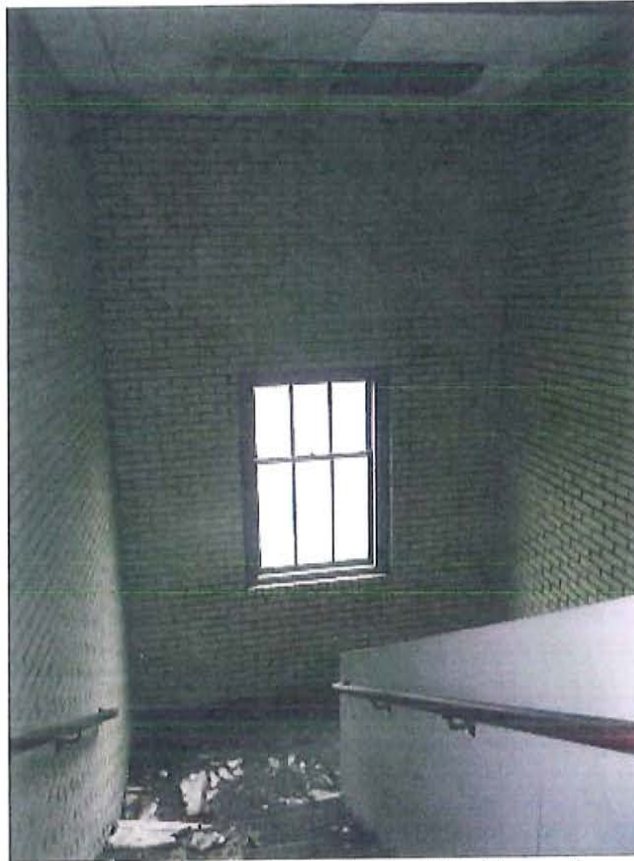
4. Passenger Terminal, east elevation, looking south



5. Passenger Terminal, east and south elevations, looking northwest



6. Passenger Terminal, west elevation, looking east



7. Passenger Terminal, stairwell, looking south



8. Passenger Terminal, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, looking northwest



9. Passenger Terminal, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, looking southeast



10. Passenger Terminal, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, looking west



11. Passenger Terminal, tower and roof, looking west



12. TAT Hanger, west elevation, looking southeast



**13. TAT Hanger, west and south elevations, looking east**



**14. TAT Hanger, south and east elevations, looking northwest**

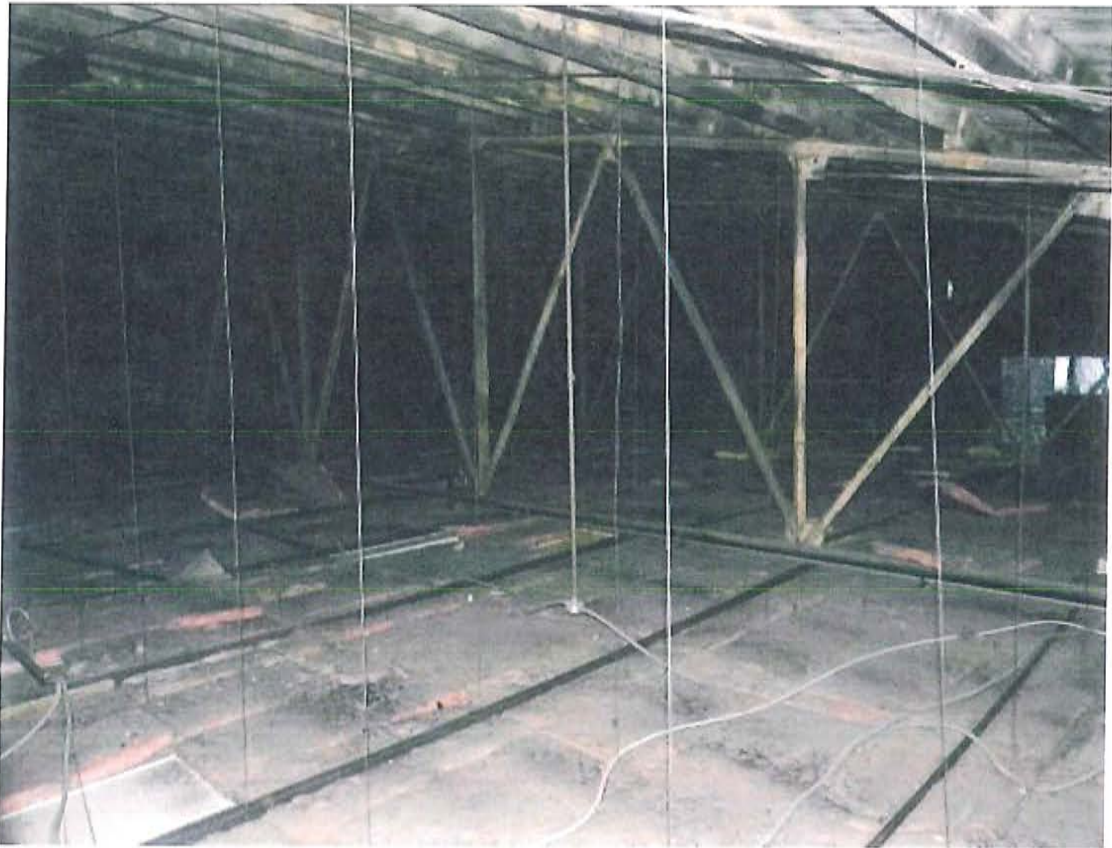




15. TAT Hanger, west and north elevations, looking southeast



16. TAT Hanger, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, looking northwest



17. TAT Hanger, hangar trusses above drop ceiling



18. TAT Hanger, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, original windows