



HISTORY OF MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



Miami International Airport dates back 92 years, when Pan American Airways shifted their operation from Key West to Miami. Pan American had originally established their headquarters in Key West simply because it was the closest point in the United States to Cuba. At the time, single-engine aircraft had an alarming tendency to be unreliable and often required emergency landing areas because their dependable range was not much more than 100 miles. By the time Pan American Airways finally became operational in the fall of 1927, the Fokker F-7 trimotor had become available. The F-7 offered a greater range and much improved reliability with three engines. These aircraft were powered by three Wright Whirlwind engines that produced 240 horsepower each and carried eight passengers at a speed of 118 mph with a range of 600 statute miles. Thus, the strategic location of Key West became less important and could not match the advantages that Miami offered, providing the services and resources that were required for the ambitious plans of Pan American Airways.



Pan American Terminal - 1929



Fokker F-7 Trimotor - 1928



Pan American Field - 1928

Pan American purchased a 116-acre tract of scrub land from the Seminole Fruit and Land Company that was situated along the south side of N.W. 36th Street, adjacent to Miami Springs, and constructed Pan American Field. This small airport eventually became the foundation for one of the largest and busiest airports in the world, known today as Miami International Airport.

Pan American Field started operations in September 1928. The new airport was constructed with a modern terminal building, two hard surfaced runways, concrete aprons and two hangar buildings. The terminal building was designed by architects Delano and Aldrich, the same architects who later designed the Dinner Key Seaplane base and the original LaGuardia Airport in New York City. The terminal, which was constructed at a cost of \$50,000, was the first modern airport passenger facility built in the United States that was designed to handle passengers exclusively. Built of reinforced concrete, the structure had large windows on both ends with a spacious interior that featured a high domed ceiling. A balcony on the second level overlooked the waiting rooms that were finished with tile floors and buff-colored stucco walls. Miami's first terminal was ahead of its time, with separate waiting rooms for arriving and departing passengers, offices, a restaurant, pilot facilities, customs, immigration and a public health office.



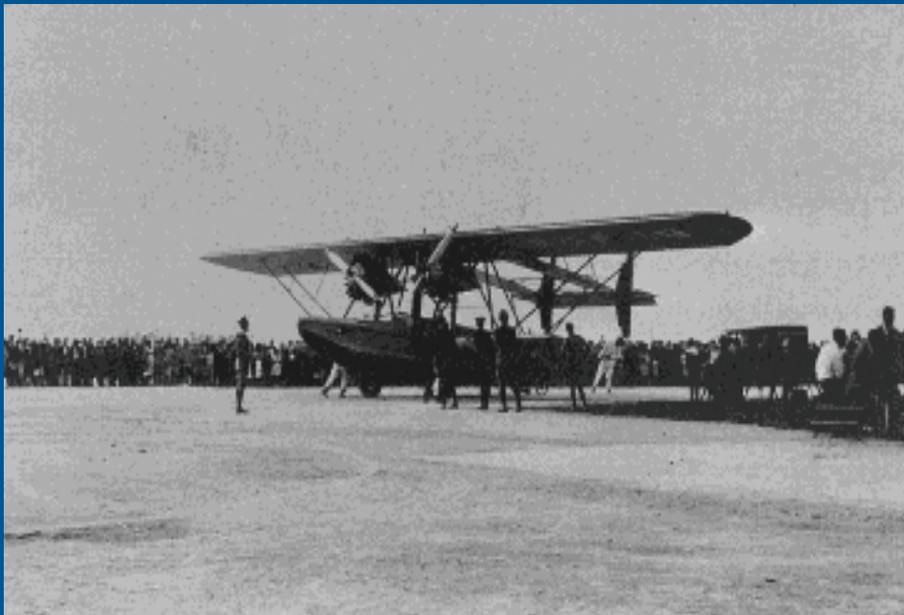
Pan American Terminal - 1928



Pan American Terminal Interior - 1928



Sikorsky S - 38 Amphibian Aircraft



First Scheduled Flight - September 15, 1928

The first scheduled flight from the airport was made by a Pan Am twin-engine Sikorsky S-38 amphibian aircraft piloted by Captain Edwin Musick on September 15, 1928. Musick departed Pan American Field loaded with 340 pounds of mail and two passengers and headed south, bound for Key West, where its mail and passengers were transferred to a Fokker F-7 tri-motor aircraft for the final leg to Havana. This event marked the first scheduled flight and the beginning of regular scheduled service from what is now MIA. Two months later this flight would eliminate the stop at Key West and fly direct from Miami to Havana utilizing the new Fokker F-7. Later, in 1929, Pan American upgraded their fleet with Fokker F-10, twelve-passenger aircraft.

The following is an excerpt from an article published by the Miami Daily News on January 1, 1929:

Pan American Airways, Inc., have brought offices from Key West to Miami and have equipment representing an investment of nearly \$500,000, according to its officials. Daily passenger and mail service is being operated by the company with two planes making the Miami-Havana round trip every day.

The company has developed a modern airport on 36th St. and built the first passenger terminal of its kind in America. Two hangars have been completed at the field and another is being erected. Twelve ships, most of them 12 passenger Fokkers, compose the fleet and more will be brought here during the winter.

Before the end of the season the company plans a thrice-weekly service to Camaguey, Santiago de Cuba, Port au Prince, Santo Domingo and San Juan. On Jan. 2 the Nassau service will become a reality and on Jan. 9 the line will be extended to San Juan.



Charles Lindbergh at controls of Pan American Fokker F - 7



Pan American Field Terminal

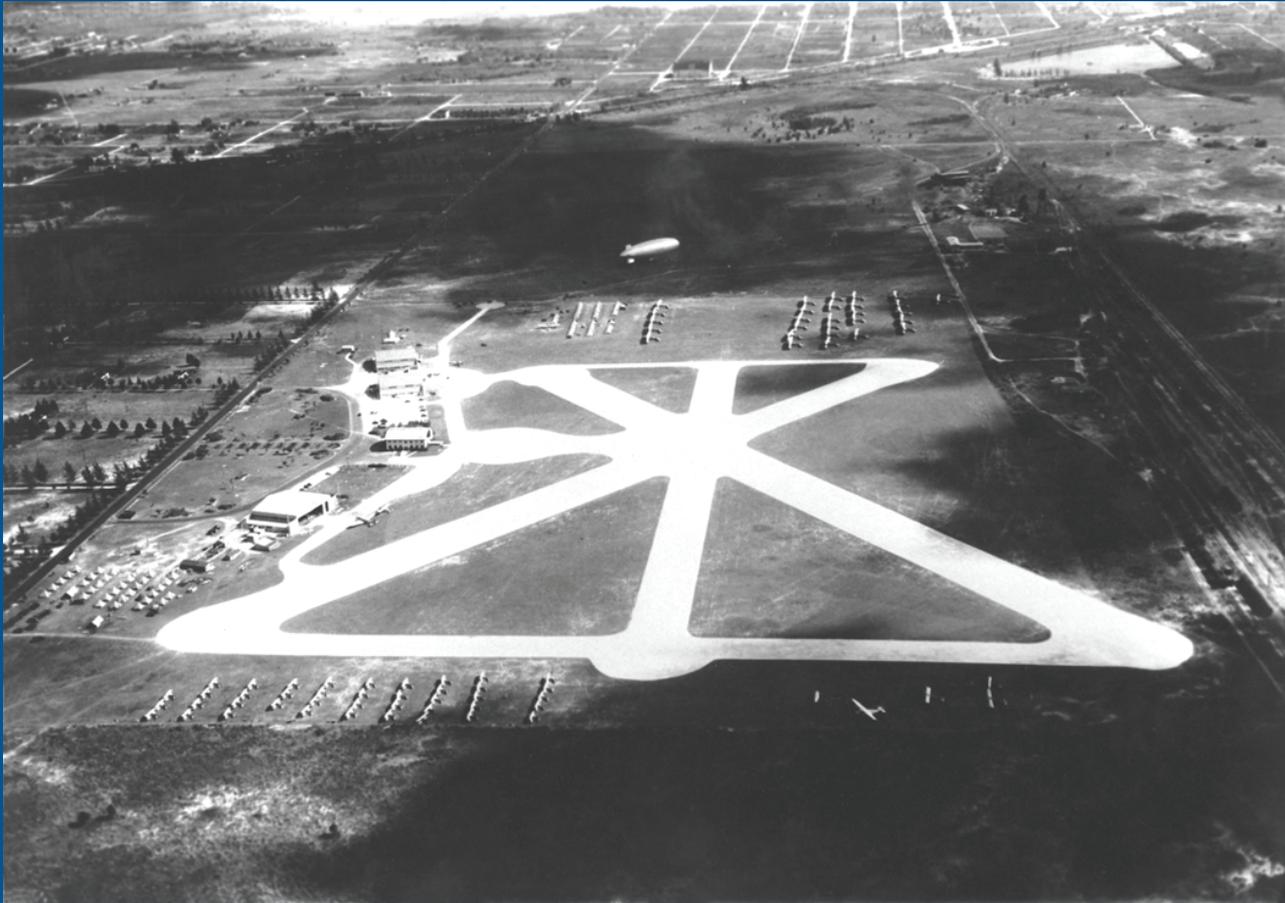


Official Dedication Ceremony - January 9, 1929



Inauguration of Service to San Juan - January 9, 1929

Although regular operations were started in September 1928, the official dedication ceremony did not take place until January 9, 1929. The highlight of the ceremony was the departure of a Sikorsky S-38 piloted by Charles Lindbergh to inaugurate the first regular mail and passenger service to San Juan. Lindbergh had been hired by the new airline as a consultant to conduct survey flights for new routes to the Caribbean and South America. By mid-1929 Miami had become the number one port of entry by air, with the capacity to handle 25 aircraft a day.



Pan American Field - 1930

In early 1930, the airport was expanded with the construction of a third runway, connecting taxiways and a third hangar. All three original hangars remain in use today. Unfortunately, the terminal that had set a precedent for modern airport terminals was demolished in the early 60s to make room for new construction. By the end of 1930, Pan American had increased its Latin American routes to 20,308 miles, the majority of which originated from the terminal in Miami.



Aero-Car, designed by Glenn Curtiss, was used to transport passengers between Pan Am Field and Dinner Key Seaplane Base in the early 30s.



Eastern Airlines Great Silver Fleet at the 36th Street Airport - 1937

In late 1930, Pan American made the decision to become mainly a flying boat airline. By January 1, 1932, the airline had made the transition and was operating solely from the newly acquired Dinner Key Seaplane Base. Pan American Field was then used by the airline mainly as an overhaul and maintenance base for their fleet of Sikorsky S-38 amphibian aircraft, which could land on water or land. During 1930, before Pan American started shifting operations to Dinner Key, Pan American Field handled 8,600 passengers and 20 tons of cargo.

Pan American Field was made available for use by other airlines in early 1934. Eastern Airlines immediately shifted its operations from Miami Municipal to Pan Am Field, and by the end of 1935 it carried 12,596 passengers out of the Miami terminal. National Airlines soon followed, marking the beginning of a major multi-airline airport, which then became known as the 36th Street Airport.

In 1940, Pan American turned its attention once again to the 36th Street Airport, embarking on a \$250,000 expansion program, followed two years later by a \$1,345,000 expansion program that included the purchase of an additional 114 acres of land.

Several other airlines, including Delta Air Lines, were using the 36th Street Airport by 1945 and its size had increased significantly, stretching from Red Road to LeJeune Road. On September 14, 1945, the Dade Board of County Commissioners implemented Chapter 22963 in Florida law, which enabled them to act as a Port Authority. Negotiations were promptly started to purchase the airport from Pan American Airways. The first airport revenue bonds ever issued in the United States were used for this purpose.



The 36th Street Airport - 1945



Miami Army Airfield - 1945



The 36th Street Airport

During World War II, the Miami Army Airfield was constructed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers about a mile southwest of the 36th Street Airport. The Miami Army airfield became a major center for pilot training by the government. Trainees from all parts of the world were trained at this facility and it was estimated that 114,000 men were being trained as pilots at the peak of the training period. After the war, the airfield was no longer needed by the Army and was acquired by the Port Authority in 1947. The Seaboard Railroad tracks that bisected the two airports were removed two years later and the two airports were joined to form one. The facility was then given a new name: Miami International Airport. Pan American Airways and Eastern Airlines made significant expansions to their maintenance facilities, and by 1949 MIA had become the largest aircraft overhaul and maintenance facility in the world for commercial aircraft.

In 1951, the Port Authority annexed a substantial amount of acreage west of Red Road and south of 36th Street. Several other minor annexations brought the airport's total land area to a sprawling 2,878 acres. In 1950, 1.4 million passengers traveled through the 36th Street terminal facilities and flight operations had increased to more than 900 a day. Many foreign carriers were now using the airport and Miami was rapidly emerging as the gateway to Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. It soon became apparent that the 36th Street terminal facilities were outdated and insufficient to handle the steadily increasing passenger traffic. Plans were drawn for a new terminal complex to be constructed at N.W. 20th Street and LeJeune Road. Construction of the new terminal facilities was started in early 1957.

On December 5, 1958, National Airlines launched the first scheduled passenger jet service in the United States for its New York to Miami route. The aircraft was a Boeing 707 that was leased to National by Pan American.



MIA (36th Street Airport) - 1949



First Scheduled Passenger Jet Service Dec. 5, 1958



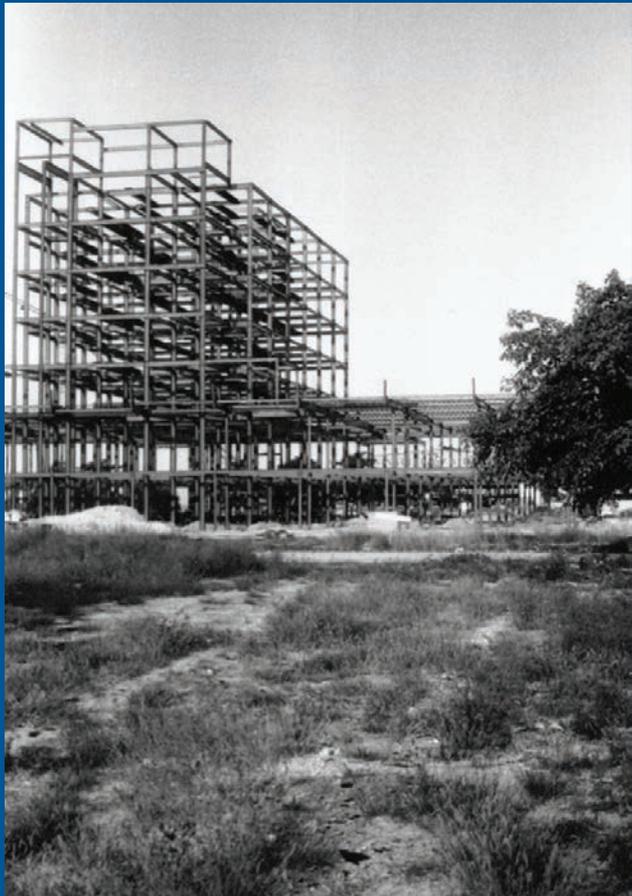
20th Street Terminal - 1959

On February 1, 1959, the new 20th Street terminal opened with five concourses, a restaurant, 270-room hotel, post office, two-level roadway system, office building and numerous shops. At the time, this was the largest centralized terminal in the world. During 1959, Delta completed its new hangar and maintenance facility adjacent to the new terminal.

One year after the new terminal began operations, it was handling 4.2 million passengers a year. Miami International continued to grow throughout the 1960s with the addition of another concourse, two-level parking deck and numerous improvements.



Terminal Interior - 1959



20th Street Terminal under construction - 1957



MIA Terminal - 1962



In 1964, National Airlines became the first all-jet airline in the nation



1971



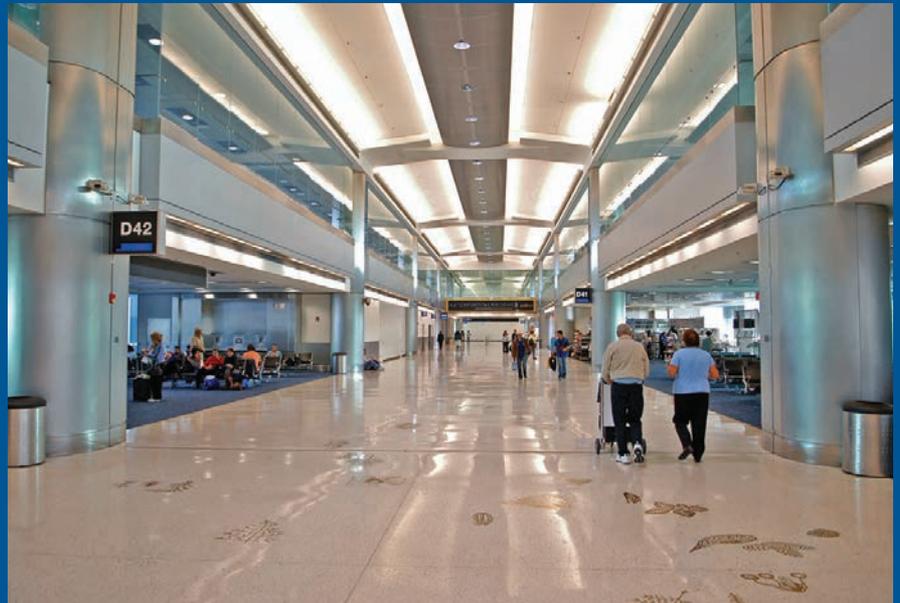
1976

Major expansion programs throughout the 70s, 80s and 90s helped Miami International Airport maintain itself among the busiest airports in the world. A multi-billion Capital Improvement Program begun in the 90s expanded and modernized the airport to provide aviation facilities critically necessary to South Florida's tourism and trade industry. In 1997, the annual economic impact generated by MIA amounted to over \$13 billion and 196,000 direct and indirect jobs. A little-known fact is that no local tax dollars are used for the expansion and operation of the airport. MIA's Capital Improvement Program was funded primarily by airport revenue bonds. Airport revenues are generated from aircraft landing fees, facility rental charges and commercial operations.

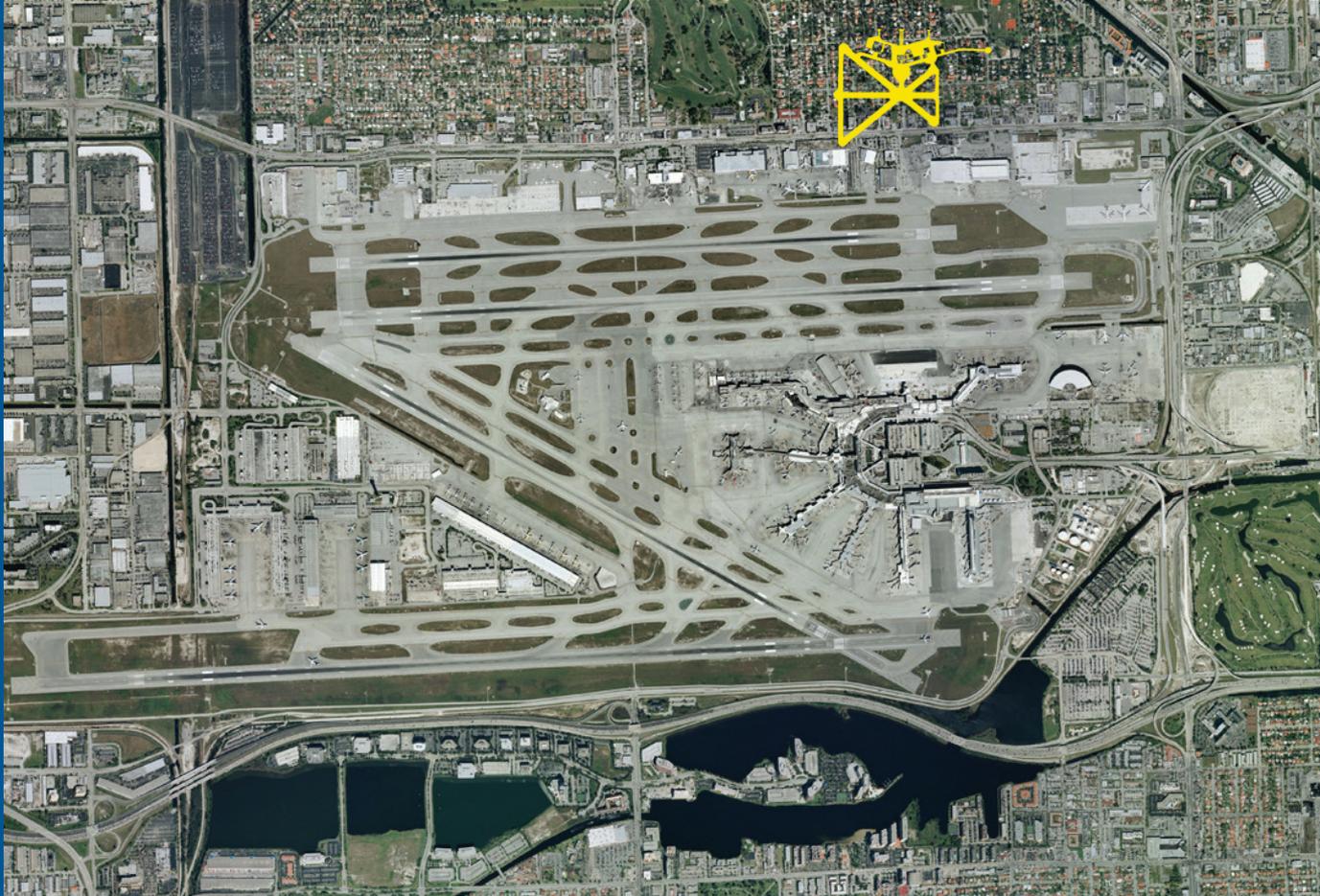
In 2008, MIA had 92 scheduled carriers and 33 charter airlines flying to five continents, with more than 3,000 weekly flights to over 180 cities worldwide. MIA was the second-busiest international passenger airport in the United States and led the nation in international cargo volume. From a small 116-acre facility that handled 8,600 passengers and 20 tons of cargo a year, MIA had evolved into a 3,230-acre giant supporting a multi-billion dollar industry, handling more than 34 million passengers and nearly two million tons of cargo.



2008



Terminal Interior



MIA in 2008, compared to the original 1928 airport



Current view of Miami International Airport



North Terminal



South Terminal

In 2019, MIA served a record-high 45.9 million annual passengers. It also offered more flights to Latin America and the Caribbean than any other U.S. airport, was America's third-busiest airport for international passengers, boasted a lineup over 100 air carriers and was the top U.S. airport for international freight. Additionally, MIA was the leading economic engine for Miami-Dade County and the state of Florida, generating business revenue of \$31.9 billion annually and approximately 60 percent of all international visitors to Florida. MIA's vision is to grow from a recognized hemispheric hub to a global airport of choice that offers customers a world-class experience and an expanded route network with direct passenger and cargo access to all world regions.



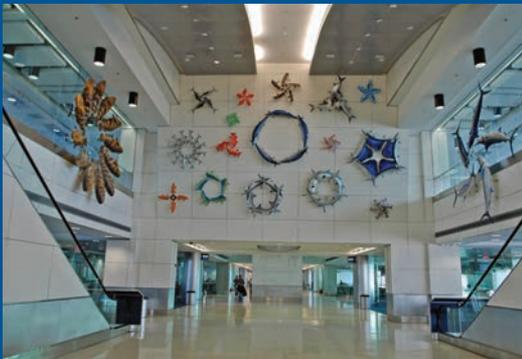
South Terminal



Concourse J



Concourse D



Concourse D



Concourse D



Concourse F





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