

CROSS-REFERENCE WITH PEACHTREE-DEKALB AIRPORT?

2012.3.33

FAIRFIELD "DOC" MANGET

Recording begins with the opening remarks of a man later identified only as "Bob," already in progress.

"BOB": . . . ahead, and we hope to accomplish a lot more. I think the "I Remember Hour" is one of the nicest things that you do—I shouldn't say "you" anymore, since I'm part of the organization [DeKalb Historical Society]. We're preserving some of the ideas in kind of an informal way through the people who've lived through the recent history of the county. I think in the future it's going to be an extremely valuable resource. I think it's a lot of fun just to listen to people hold forth on what they recall. So, without any more introductions, we'll move it along.

"BOB" moves off-camera, and JAMES MACKAY appears and addresses audience.

MR. MACKAY: Well, we certainly welcome you, Bob. We were casting about for someone who could tell us something important about the county who had a long acquaintance with it, and the name of FAIRFIELD "DOC" MANGET surfaced. I had talked to him earlier. And we now have over fifty hours of interesting videotapes of interesting people, [to MR. MANGET] and we've saved the detailed introduction so as not to encroach on the time that we promised you. This is your studio audience. Fran Broadnax back there of our staff is our camera person. And just forget about that camera. You can talk sitting up or standing up or sitting down, and— [To someone off-camera] Are we going to have our refreshments?

RESPONSE, *off-camera*: I've heard such.

MR. MACKAY, to MR. MAGNET: Well, we customarily do. But after the hour we're going to have an opportunity, and we hope with some cookies and punch in the Old Courtroom. [Resumes talking to audience] But I can't imagine a job that requires more

responsibility than planning, designing, and managing a big airport. And it's one of the busiest activities in our county and in this part of the country; and we've had one personality that has been a leader out there as long as I can remember. [To MR.

MANGET] I remember when I was in grammar school, I think you were put in charge of that [laughter]. [To audience] And anyway, DOC MANGET is going to talk to us about the DeKalb-Peachtree Airport, which has had a great impact on this county.

I spoke to my law partner, Phil Court [spelling?] and mentioned it; and he said, "Is he going to talk about the stuff that they're writing up in the papers currently about the airport?"

I said, "No, he's a historian" [laughter].

[To MR. MANGET] Well, we welcome you and look forward to anything you have to say.

MR. MANGET, rising, as MR. MACKAY takes a seat off-camera: Thank you, James. Don't let him kid you. He and I were at Emory together [laughter]. I was going to make this very informal. I feel right at home here. I see everybody I know: Clay, [inaudible first name] McLachlan [spelling?], Taylor Holman [spelling?] that just came in, Bob Pendergrast [spelling?], there's Ms. Nunn back there—it's just great to be here among friends.

I got interested in aviation not as early as the Wright brothers, but it wasn't too long [rendered inaudible by audience laughter]. You know, the Wright brothers--one of Georgia's favorite famous people, named Mr. Ben T. Epps, he went to Georgia Tech, and he was an electrical engineer and a bicycle repairman and a car—automobile mechanic over at Athens, over in Clark County. And only four years after Kitty Hawk—the Wright brothers in December 1903—he built and flew the first plane that has [inaudible] from Georgia. Mr. Epps had six sons, and all of them were pilots. And I'm telling you this because it has a direct bearing on what is happening today. His youngest son is Ernest Patrick Epps, we know as Pat Epps. He runs Epps Air Service out at DeKalb-Peachtree Airport. He has been there for the last about twenty-six years, and he runs a full-service aviation aircraft

service organization there, and he's done a tremendous job. I'm glad to be connected with really the first family of aviation in the state. And only four years after 1903 is pretty early to be building your own plane and flying it.

Later on I had a chance out here in one of the cotton fields—my dad gave me a dollar and a half to take a ride in an open biplane, an old [inaudible—sounds like “Wocker”? could be “Waco” or “Fokker”?], and he got up and went down and around. I was fairly small—I think I was about seven years old; and I had a little neighbor friend with me. And we were small enough where they put both of us in the cockpit, one seatbelt across both of us; and we thought that was the greatest thing that had ever happened. After that, I used to—my brothers, Ed and Vic Manget—we all three of us used to “borrow” little pieces of chalk from the school blackboard every afternoon before we went home [*audience laughter*]. And we would get up on our garage roof and draw about a six-foot arrow, pointing somewhere toward the airport, and underneath it in about three-foot letters we wrote, “AIRPORT.” We don't know if it ever helped any pilot find the airport, but it made us feel real good [*laughter*].

Then you—I don't know, I suppose some of you may be approaching my age, but at one time DeKalb County had three airports. They had Gunn [Air]field, Stone Mountain—which we still have—and DeKalb-Peachtree, which the earlier name was just DeKalb Airport, had that name. But Gunn [Air]field, you remember, it was out on Panola Road, about, oh, that's roughly between Avondale Estates and Lithonia. And that was some airport. It had one runway. It was about a little over two thousand feet long, and one end of the runway was forty-five feet below the other end [*audience laughter*]. That's a pretty good dip for only two thousand feet. So the old story goes that if you—anybody that learned to fly at Gunn Field could go and land anywhere in the world [*audience laughter obscures rest of comment*]. Mr. George Gunn, a friend of mine, was the one that ran that. Then, of course, it probably now has condominiums. We lost that airport. It had about seventy planes based there when it closed. And, of course, we had to take those planes and put them over at Stone Mountain or out at Peachtree.

Stone Mountain, of course, came along later; but it's also a privately owned airport. And they are improving that—that airport is—one end is—they have one runway, and one end of the runway is pointing toward the mountain property, and the other end is right at the edge of the Gwinnett County line. So it's barely in DeKalb County, but we count it as one of DeKalb County's own.

I remember going out in 1937, '38, and '39. My brother Ed had an old A-Model Ford, and we would drive way out in the country to where the old naval air station was, and we would sit out there on the side of the road. Clairmont was just a little bit bigger than a one-lane road, and Dresden was then named Candler Road; and all that, of course, has been changed. And that's one reason that I got interested in the navy.

The history of PDK [Peachtree-DeKalb Airport] goes way back before World War I. That area was part of old Camp Gordon, which really spread out all around what is now Chamblee. And you remember reading about it: that's where Sergeant Alvin York of Tennessee trained during his—before he went overseas and became quite famous as a soldier. After World War I the government started selling off the property—most of the property was part of old Camp Gordon. It was bought by—most of it was bought by a real estate man named Mr. T. R. Sawtell, and he broke it up into smaller parcels and started selling it for farmland and dairy lands.

About that time, which is the late '20s or early '30s, Captain Jesse Draper, who was a real estate man in Atlanta and a World War I navy pilot, recognized that there was a chance of building an airport. He started a club called Atlanta Aero Club, and they tried to get interest up in the county in buying that about three hundred acres of very flat land out there. Mr. Charles A. Matthews, who was then the commissioner—sole commissioner of DeKalb County, which was 1935--signed an option to buy that three hundred acres of land. But unfortunately he passed away before the deal was settled, and nothing else happened until about 1939, when it became obvious that the county could get WPA help in building the runways and the buildings out there to have an operable county airport. So that's exactly what happened. They bought those 333 acres and built two hangars, which

are still there. They're in good shape and still being used for aircraft storage and offices and so on.

The navy showed a lot of interest about this time in setting up a small contingent out there, and it had approximately eight or ten acres abutting the runways; and they started with some training programs. And as the World War II came closer and closer, and defense was beefing up, the navy worked out a lease with the county commission to lease the entire airport for naval training. That happened, and the navy completed the runways and built many other buildings there, some of which are still standing [inaudible].

The area has progressed quite a bit since that time. Early in the—early during this period, the entire training was done with two different kinds of planes. One was the N3N, which was a biplane, open two—fore and aft open cockpit jobs; and it was called an "E Base"—elimination base. That meant that people that had been chosen to go into navy flight training could go out there, and they were actually in the navy, and they would get approximately eight to ten hours of instruction. And if they passed and had what it took to become a pilot and meet all of the qualifications, then, of course, they went on to their other advance squadrons and usually to their fleet. But at that time the other aircraft was an N2S—a Stearman, which looked very much like an N2S. If you saw pictures of them, they—you'd have a hard time trying to keep them apart. And then, of course, were all painted yellow, as the trainers were, completely yellow, with [inaudible]. And everyone became—the aircraft became known as Yellow Perils.

During the period when the navy was there during the war they had quite a few people that were—famous people that we have heard of anywhere else, seen them on the screen, that took lessons out there and took their training. One of them was Tyrone Power and Robert Montgomery and Wayne Morris, if you remember those actors. Tyrone Power went on to become a Marine pilot. They got the same training that the navy pilots did and wore the same wings; but, of course, the Marines wore the Marine uniform. But the other two became navy pilots.

After the war there was some uncertainty as to whether the base for the navy would still stay there on that parcel and continue leasing that from the county for \$18,000 a year. Actually, the county offered to sell the entire property for \$2.5 million, but the navy turned it down and stayed there for many, many years after that. But as time went by and planes became more sophisticated, the navy decided that they definitely had to move to a larger airport with longer and heavier-stretched runways. So at that time they did quite a bit of negotiations and talk about what they would do. But as you probably know, they moved over to the south side of Dobbins Air Force Base, where the station is today. So in April 1959 the Naval Air Station Atlanta was decommissioned, and Naval Air Station Marietta was commissioned; so it just moved from one spot to another. But at that time Mr. Claude Blount saw fit to hire me as the manager. He knew I had taken training out there and had been flying out there in one of the fighter squadrons between World War II and Korea. So I was picked—I wasn't quite as—didn't stand out quite as much as Bob [*No last name given but apparently someone in the audience*]. There were only five people that interviewed for that, instead of seventy-something [*laughter*]. But I--at that time I was at El Paso International Airport as assistant director, so I was very pleased to come home. All of my family was here, and I was just tickled to get to come back and start [*inaudible*].

The airport now is—or after that period—one of the main things that we had to do was to actually remove all of the old World War II barracks buildings. They were built as wooden barracks that we couldn't convert to any good use or future use. And they were built just to last till after the war, and the ground underneath them was worth a lot more than what the building was on them [*sic*]. So our first four or five years was just completely demolishing rather than building, and that took quite some time and some effort. And I am very pleased that we got so many of them down when we did, because nowadays, with any building that you want to tear down, it has to be inspected for asbestos. And asbestos, that's a no-no; and you have to pay a tremendous amount of money to just get the asbestos out before you do anything else.

So that is the story of the early days. There are many, many stories; and I am proud to say that, in the forty-eight years that the airport has been there, during the navy and afterwards, there has never been a single fatality for someone on the ground from any aircraft that has been flying from or to that airport. We've had crashes, and we've lost pilots; but there have been none—no fatalities to anyone that lived on the ground or was on the ground at the time. We're very pleased to pass that on because we know [inaudible] is a dangerous thing. We're trying our best to improve it as much as possible, and every improvement that we can think of has for our policy that has to do with safety, so that's exactly what we are doing these days [sic].

I would like to slow down and maybe sit down and see if you have any particular questions you would like to ask me about it. I don't mind talking about it up to date, but I'd rather talk about what happened back yonder [laughter]. Are any of you pilots? I know I see one back there I know of [points to off-camera audience member]. Taylor Holman is a pilot for Sears & Roebuck back there. [Camera pans audience.]

OFF-CAMERA AUDIENCE MEMBER, apparently TAYLOR HOLMAN: Retired

MR. MANGET: Retired. And I don't know if there are any other pilots. [To MR. MACKAY, seated off-camera] Jim, you never did take lessons?

MR. MACKAY [off-camera]: No [Chuckles as he makes an inaudible comment.]

MR. MAGNET: I tell you, age does not have anything to do with flying. Audience laughter

MR. MACKAY: Tell us about the growth of activity.

MR. MAGNET: Well, before I tell you that, I will tell you that—remember Mr. Jim Bowen that had Bowen Press over here?

MR. MACKAY: Mm-hmm

MR. MAGNET: Well, Mr. Bowen was a former commissioner. And I don't know exactly how old he was at the time, but swear I believe he was at least seventy. He came out there [Peachtree-DeKalb Airport] and took flying lessons and actually learned to fly. He never did get to be an airline pilot or anything like that [laughter], but he did—and it

surprised me. But we have—at our flight schools there we have young people fifteen and sixteen years old right on up to sixty-five.

The development—when we first took over the airport in March 1959, and the decommissioning ceremony and the commissioning ceremony, which came right after that, we had some very talented and well-known people that attended. Mr. John Wesley Weeks, the attorney, was there. Mr. [inaudible—sounds like “Alleen”] Richardson, First National Bank, was there. Mr. Herman Lay of Frito-Lay was there. Captain [inaudible—sounds like “Steeler” or “Steela”], who was the last commanding officer, was in attendance, of course. And Judge James Davis was there. I remember that group very well; it was a very distinguished group.

And my first day there, in March '59, of course, the navy had moved out, taking all the furniture; and I chose an office. I had a packing crate that they left for a desk and an apple crate for a seat. And I'd been there about four years—excuse me, about four hours on the job, and here comes—parking lot completely empty, except for one car—and here comes about five cars loaded with people. Turned out to be the DeKalb County grand jury. *Audience laughter* And at that time I didn't know exactly what a grand jury was. I always thought that people were in trouble if they came to see you. But I couldn't help but wonder, “I haven't been here but four hours, and what could I have done so wrong in four hours that caused the grand jury to come out here and check?” *Audience laughter* But, of course, they were just interested in seeing what they had, what the county had. So, once they [inaudible] experience there before, I was able to walk around and show them the hangars. And it was really before we had any planes, so I just showed them what we had there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Did they get you any new furniture? *Audience laughter*

MR. MANGET: [Inaudible] they sure did—about three months later. I finally got rid of that old packing box just the other day. *Audience laughter*

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Tell us something about Gene Brown, who lived here in Decatur. Wasn't he an early [inaudible]?

MR. MANGET: Gene Brown was an early pilot, but I don't know very much about him.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Something connected with the mail, but I never have known what it was.

MR. MANGET: He was an early airmail pilot and was flying back there in an open cockpit.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He lived in Decatur, and his family lived up on Adams Street. And he would leave at night, about 6:30 or 7:00, when it would be getting dark, and he'd fly over his house there on Adams Street and circle it. And he had a little dog that always knew that was him. That dog would stand on his hind legs and just run around, and everybody on that side of the town—especially the young folks—would go out and say, "There goes old Gene!" And he'd be heading up in the dark, you know; and it was a thrilling sight to watch him leave. It happened about the time the only direction in the air would be beacons, you know, along with—

MR. MANGET: My arrow on the garage.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Yeah, your arrow on the garage [audience laughter]. He was really a [inaudible], and I think he went with Eastern Airlines after that and was their chief pilot for many years.

MR. MANGET: You know, another early pilot was John Hill. He was a navy pilot also, and I had the pleasure of flying in the same air group with him during Korea. But his father used to be either the owner or the editor of one of the Decatur or local newspapers here. I've forgotten his father's name, but he was a pretty well-known fellow also.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: The Ford dealer was Mr. Robert Tuggle. For many years he had a place over here on the west side of the [Courthouse] Square. J. C. will remember it. He developed the little Tuggle Field out here off of Sycamore Drive.

MR. MANGET: Yep

Several audience members join an off-camera conversation, several talking at the same time.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: That was about the first airplane I ever saw could land and take off was at Tuggle Field.

MR. MANGET: Doesn't Ralph Tuggle still own that property out there? *Laughs*

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I don't know whether that was the same Tuggle, but I guess—

MR. MANGET: I think it is.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: It's where Sycamore Drive is now.

MR. MANGET: But Ralph Tuggle [rest of sentence inaudible]. MR. MANGET *acknowledges an audience member who has a question: Yes, ma'am*

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Our son actually went to [inaudible] school out there, took lessons out there to get his solo [rest of sentence inaudible]. And he went on to the National Guard; he didn't [rest of sentence inaudible].

MR. MANGET: You mean—was that during the military time, or--?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: No, it was in '60—about '66, '67. He wasn't in the military. They turned [it] into a school.

MR. MANGET: Uh-huh. Is he still flying now?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: No—

AUDIENCE MEMBER (apparently the husband of the lady whom he is interrupting), *off-camera*: No, he got scared, and he quit. *Audience laughter, which obscures his next comment. Further comments are difficult to understand because of microphone placement, simultaneous conversations, and echo in the room.*

MR. MANGET, *laughing*: That's what did it. That story reminds me of one time—I didn't want to get into war stories, but I did something similar to that. I had been overseas, and the Japanese had sunk my ship, and I was a survivor and had come back, and they stationed me up near Norfolk. And I borrowed the commanding officer's plane. It

was a Staggerwing Beech; and they called it a staggerwing because it was a biplane, but the lower wing was way out forward of the higher wing. And it was made by Beech, and it was a fine little plane, and it was fast as it could be. It couldn't hold but four people, but he loaned it to me. So I flew down one weekend to see my folks, who were living over on Erie Avenue. And I had a good visit with them on Saturday, had to go back Sunday. I was all by myself in the plane, and I said, "Well, I'm just going off and tell my folks good-bye." So I took off, and I flew over Decatur, [*laughing*] and I made me a couple of real low passes over 172 Erie Avenue, and I really got in trouble. *Audience laughter.* I got back to Virginia, where I was stationed, and the commanding officer was waiting there for me. *Laughs.* He never had done that before. *Audience laughter.*

And he said, "I understand you've been flat-hatting."

Laughs. "Flat-hatting? What's that?"

[*Inaudible*] said, "Some of those naval officers that were on duty out at the field live around your mother and daddy's neighborhood, and they've already called and reported you." *Audience and MR. MANGET laugh.* And it couldn't have been anybody else, because it was the only Staggerwing Beech in Georgia; and everybody knew where I lived. *More laughter.* I didn't really have a chance to tell a story after that one. He excused me, there. I didn't do it anymore.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What's the story on that old wood-and-plaster arch that used to be on what's now Dresden Drive?

MR. MANGET: That used to be the main entrance to old Camp Gordon. I saw a picture of it not too long ago in one of the old magazines in the archives. That thing was there for many years, Bob. Did you ever--do you remember seeing it, or did you see a picture?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I've seen it, but I can't remember when it was demolished.

MR. MANGET: It was demolished during World War II, probably toward the end; because when I came back, it was gone. But it was—when they first put it up, it was a real

nice edifice. It was made out of wood, but it looked like—they had it painted white; it looked like, almost like, marble or something like that. But that—they moved the main entrance to Camp Gordon over there where it is now--used to be Carroll Avenue and is now Chamblee-Tucker [Road]. And so—and then they sold that part of the land from there all the way up, I guess, about half a mile north of Clairmont Road. So they—it [the archway former entrance] didn't mean anything to the military.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: What about the varieties of activities of aircraft? I know there's a pleasure pilot, commercial activities, [inaudible]. Tell us a sort of breakdown of how many planes are out there [at Peachtree-DeKalb Airport].

MR. MANGET: Jim, we have a little over five hundred based aircraft out there, and about 275 of them are strictly corporate or business-type aircraft. They're owned by corporations such as Rollins and utility companies and power companies, Southern Bell, [Atlanta] Gas Light, C&S Bank, Cardiac Systems, and that type of thing; and they are usually the more sophisticated type of aircraft. It's hard to think of any of us owning a plane that costs maybe 25 million dollars. That's what some of them that are based out there cost. And we have—the largest plane that we've had out there is—that we allow to come in out there—is made down here in Savannah. Used to be Grumman American, and now it's Gulfstream American; and they call it the Gulfstream One, Two, and Three. And they're working on a fourth model, which is about the same but more powerful than the others. And it is a fine corporate plane; it is one of the best that is made in the whole world, I guess.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: How long has that been made in the South?

MR. MANGET: I would say that the Gulfstream One—which was then the Grumman Gulfstream One—I would say probably about twelve to fifteen years, twelve to fourteen years, something like that. Their plant is right on the airport, and they have leased a large area there and built a tremendous plant and a lot of jobs in that factory. Because I flew a

lot of Grumman-type aircraft, I've always [inaudible] a lot of Grumman, and that's how this plane came about. Grumman designed it and built the first one, so it's a fine plane.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: Would that be the 25-million-dollar plane?

MR. MANGET: Yes. That would be that. Now, there are many others below that, of course; I used a high standard to give you a comparison. But then we have a lot of aircraft which are used jointly for business and pleasure. And people that I talk to, so many of them are manufacturers' representatives. They may have a territory of two states, or maybe five states, or even maybe seven states; and they tell me that they absolutely could not hold [inaudible] their jobs if they didn't have an aircraft to get around in to get them places, because most of them fly just about every single day. That's the reason that so many times you'll see a whole group of planes—maybe twelve or fifteen—standing in line waiting to take off Monday morning, and they've been around to the different places; and then Friday afternoon here they come back. You see them lined up in the sky waiting to get in. So it is a very, very good business, too. They call them "business machines," really.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: That takes tremendous space to park an airplane.

MR. MANGET: Yes, it does. We've—almost every place that we have to park one, we've got one parked. It's—we have now approximately seven hundred acres total in the whole airport. And we have—the improvements that have been made have been adding more asphalt for parking and more hangars to put them inside. The sun is the worst enemy of an aircraft, rather than rain or sleet or hail or anything else, because it deteriorates the interior and the instruments very quickly if it's out in the sun so much. So many people will not buy a—do not wish to buy a plane that's been un-hangared and from Florida, because most of those are parked outside, and you really have to redo the entire insides of the aircraft sometimes.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: What about "you-drive-its"? Is there much rental of aircraft?

MR. MANGET: Yes, there is, because a lot of pilots like myself that do not own an aircraft but when we fly, we have to rent a plane. So there are about five companies out there that have rental aircraft. To get your pilot's license these days--used to cost about two thousand dollars fifteen years ago; but now it's up to around four thousand. But what you do is get—go to one of the flight schools where they have a flying instructor. And you get about twenty hours of flight instruction with—under the instructor, with the instructor, and then you get about twenty hours of time—air—solo. And forty hours is the minimum that you can get in order to be able to take the exams to pass the private pilot's license. And then, of course, there are other—the private pilot's license, the single- and multi-engine instruments, and even the seaplane ratings and that type and so forth.

But to get back to the other type aircraft, we have lots of the small single engines, which are used primarily for pleasure. And I guess we probably have about the same number—well, no, about 180—and then the others are the ones that are used in [inaudible]. They fly two or three days for business during the week, and on the weekends they want to fly to Panama City or St. Simons or up in the mountains somewhere; and then they use their aircraft for pleasure and business.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: Clark Harrison flies in and out of there [Peachtree-DeKalb Airport], doesn't he?

MR. MANGET: Clark's plane is parked out there on the ramp, and he's still flying; and I think that's one of the most amazing things I've ever seen. The only other thing that even comes close to that is a friend of mine [inaudible] Macon, Georgia, area named Lewis Wilson.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: He was also mayor [of Macon], wasn't he?

MR. MANGET: He was mayor at one time and airport manager of that; and now he's deceased, and they named the airport after him, Lewis Wilson Field out there. But Lewis

was extremely crippled with arthritis. *Rises and bends from the waist to demonstrate Mr. Wilson's physical challenges.* In fact, he could not stand any straighter than this right here. *Takes a few steps.* Of course, he walked like this. And he was mobile, but he just could not straighten up. *Sits back down.* So he had a Piper Tri-Pacer, which is a single-engine small plane; and he passed the physical for a certain type license. Lewis got some real sharp interior decorator, and he had mirrors put all around the cockpit, where even though his head was bent—his body, his back was bent—he could look and see all the way around just like he needed to see [inaudible] he turned his head and sitting up straight. And he flew that Pipe Tri-Pacer for many years before he left.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: Did Pegram Harrison fly on [out of?] that airport when he flew to Greece recently?

MR. MANGET: Yes, yes he did. And another interesting flight that several years ago we had National Business Aircraft Association annual conference out there, and it's our only claim to international fame. But a Falcon 50, a new tri-engine—that's two engines in the fuselage and one in the tail—took off from Marseilles, France, and flew all the way from France to DeKalb-Peachtree Airport nonstop. And that was quite a feat.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: And you're going to tell us that your arrow was what got it there? *Audience laughter*

MR. MANGET: I suspect that that arrow has long been washed away. *Audience laughter* I'm not sure the garage is still there, to tell you the truth.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Who mans your control towers, the FAA [rest of question inaudible]?

MR. MANGET: When we first got the airport, we had to qualify to get federal employees [inaudible] air traffic controllers in the control tower. So for three years we had a couple of civilian controllers there; they worked for the county, worked for me. Then Mr. Bill James, who was hired just about the same time I was, and he had been a former military controller, and we hired four other controllers, so we had five—not all at the same time, but on shifts; we were open from seven in the morning till eleven at night,

so we only had two in the tower at one time. But those people worked for us, and we qualified for a number of landings and take-offs the first year we had the airport; but the FAA was behind us—behind the curve—and they didn't have any people they could send us, so it took three years for us to get federal employees, but now they're all Federal Aviation Administration employees; and I guess there must be about eighteen controllers, usually about four or five in the tower at the same time.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Question inaudible]

MR. MANGET: No, the airport is, but the control tower is still [rest of sentence inaudible]. We have a new—I don't know, the rumor is that it cost about a million and a half dollars—but we have a new control tower, which is about 190—130 feet above the ground. The old one was about sixty feet, so it's over twice as tall, and now they could not manage any more new commissions until about August. And that was all done by the federal government, not the airport [rest of sentence inaudible].

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: What were the length of the runways when you went there, and what are they now?

MR. MANGET: The longest one was 3980 feet, and then in 1968 we completed an all-weather runway of five thousand feet; and that's when the instrumentation was put on that runway. The others were too short for an instrument landing system equipment [rest of sentence inaudible]. But 1968 is when we qualified and completed it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: How many runways do you have?

MR. MANGET: We have four runways now: one set of parallel runways and two that we call "cross runways." And they're all shorter than five thousand feet.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: Without getting into any of the local controversy at all—because we all know that [inaudible phrase]—have they made any real progress in quieting airplanes, aircraft? [Possibly refers to complaints from DPK residential neighbors about airplane noise.]

MR. MANGET: Technology is doing its best, but it's going to slow to satisfy those of us that are in the business. But there's no doubt about it. Cessna makes a Citation jet

now—a twin jet—that we call “the airport manager’s friend.” You can hardly hear it. Sitting out there in my office out there on the airport, you can hardly hear it take off. So technology is working towards making jet engines quieter.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera, interrupts briefly with a question*—“What about birds?”—*but MR. MANGET does not hear or respond.*

MR. MANGET: That is going to help more than anything in the world, is if they would just hurry up with that high-tech stuff that will get those engines quiet. If we can just get them quieter than the neighbor’s lawnmower, I’ll be satisfied [*audience laughter*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You said people are too fussy. *A few inaudible comments arise from audience.*

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: It’s dangerous to answer that question [*audience laughter*]. [MR. MACKAY’s comment references the widely publicized controversy between the Peachtree-DeKalb Airport and residents of neighboring communities.]

MR. MANGET: Well, we don’t have any reporters in here [*audience laughter*].

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: No.

MR. MANGET: Well, some people are the type—and you know some, too—that will go to the lake and complain about the boats. They’re the ones that will move down to the beach and complain about the waves [*audience laughter*]. There’s always somebody that’s going to fuss about something. Jim?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *apparently “Jim,” but not MR. MACKAY, off-camera*: Like he had a good comment over here: What about the bird situation you had out there so—years ago?

MR. MANGET: We’re very thankful to the good Lord that we don’t have that problem anymore. We—that was about the saddest incident we’ve ever had there in the twenty-nine years that I’ve been there.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: What was that incident?

MR. MANGET: Well, the commissioners and all—with all their wisdom decided that they needed a place to dump garbage, so they picked a place at the airport between Buford Highway and the runways; and it was not maintained properly. It was actually raw garbage that turned out to be about a seventeen-acre birdfeeder. And it drew the starlings, grackles, and brown-headed cowbirds by the thousands—by the tens of thousands--out there. And we did everything we could, and Jim [*Looks out into audience, presumably at "Jim"*] helped me, and [*inaudible—sounds like "Coleman"?*] helped me quite a bit, doing away with some of them. But the—we tried chemicals, we tried noise cannons that use the carbonic flint to go off every two minutes—and then the people started complaining that the cannons were bothering them more than birds [*audience laughter*], so we stopped that. And—but the—finally, after the Sanitation Department started handling the refuse dump—garbage dump—better, covering it with dirt every night after all the employees left the site, and the birds gradually disappeared, and then they stopped hauling garbage—stopped the dumping garbage there at all. They don't dump any garbage there at all now. They haul it in there, run it through a hammermill-type of a pulverizer, and then pack it in trucks and take it away from that area. So none of it is left there. And once the free food—free bird food—and everything else was left there—it wasn't only the birds, it was—the stench would just about drive you away from it. It was a terrible period, I tell you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Talk about the accident.

MR. MANGET: Well, the accident—the—there was a Learjet that took off with six people, and they hit a flock of birds that were in the area, whether they were going to the dump, leaving the dump, or whatever. But anyway, they were in the way. And a jet engine is not like a prop engine. The prop would have just chopped them to pieces and gone on and left feathers on the leading edge of the wing; but a jet engine, if that intake of air stops or is interrupted, you lose your engine immediately. And it sucked up enough of these birds that were flying in close formation by the thousands, and where it blocked off the

intake—air intake—to both jet engines. And, of course, the plane lost its engines, lost its lift, and went down to the ground; and people were killed. So that was the--

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: That, as I was saying, was not the parachute—

MR. MANGET: No, that was down in—south of Griffin, I believe.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: Do any paratroopers--parachute-jumpers operate out of your airport?

MR. MANGET: Each year we have a "Neighbor Day," where we put on a little show. We don't call it an air show; we call it an aerial demonstration, because "air show" sounds too much like we're charging money to get to see it. No, this is just an open-house type thing; and we always have a place for parachutists to jump on that day. It's usually in May. But they don't jump there normally. Now, a lot of them—some of them—take off from the airport and fly down to a jump area. Normally the FAA and their charts and graphs will designate an area for pilots—a caution area for pilots—saying, "Gliders and/or parachutists in this area," so [inaudible] fly around it or fly through it will be very careful.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: Has the ultralight plane presented any problems to aviation?

MR. MANGET: Yes, it has. It's caused such a problem to us that we have banned them, other than for special occasions or special permission. And the main reason is not because they—doesn't matter whether they're more dangerous to fly or not, that's not the question. But most of the ultralights—to audience: Do you know what an ultralight is? It's a—it looks like a lawnmower engine with a wing and a bunch of pipes running across, holding it together, with a pilot sitting in the middle; and he—it will actually fly. And the thing doesn't weigh more than probably 170 pounds, the whole frame and the engine and prop. So that's why they call them ultralights. But they—the ultralights cannot taxi. They have to push them-- They've made some now that you can taxi. But you have to push them out on the runway to get them in position to take off. They can't move on the ground on their own speed. So that—in a busy airport, when we may have about two hundred planes in an

hour and a half, they're either waiting to take off or to land—and if somebody's out there on the runway pushing one of those little things out there, which would take probably fifteen minutes, you can see why we're not [sic] very anxious to have them. They're not quite as popular as they were when they first came out.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: They've killed a number of people.

MR. MANGET: That's true, because the--they were not—they were not stressed, and the FAA didn't have to check them—they didn't have to--like they do aircraft.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Do you have a place for helicopters to land?

MR. MANGET: Yes, yes we do. The—we have two helicopter companies out there, and that's where the county helicopters—the police helicopters, that's where they do all their maintenance and get some of their fuel and so forth. A lot of times you'll see it's sort of [inaudible]. They call them "Eagle One" and "Eagle Two." So if you hear those, that's the police helicopters. I think they've done a very good job in the county, and they have a special place that they go. Sometimes they're kept on top of the public safety building out at Camp Road, off of Memorial Drive. And see—look up there, and you'll see the rotors sticking over the edge, be sure that they're tied down real tight up there.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: Is there any scheduled shuttle service to Hartsfield?

MR. MANGET: In the—that was tried back in the early—in the middle '70s; and the aircraft—I believe it was a Navajo—it was about an eight-passenger aircraft. And they tried their best to get a shuttle from PDK out to Hartsfield. But they charged quite a bit for it, and they tried it for two months, and they could not make a living. And they just said, "Thank you very much, but we just can't do this anymore." People have got the—people have got the habit of driving out there or riding the bus, and they're just not going to pay it. I think even that far back, I think it was something like thirty dollars just to ride out there.

We also have had two commuter airlines, the small airlines that tried to make it out there; and neither of those were able to make it either. There's a lot of talk about

scheduled traffic and commuter airlines, but commuter airlines don't want to be there. They want to be down where they make the connections, down at Hartsfield. That's what they're doing; they're commuting those people up to catch another plane to go somewhere else. So they don't want to get caught up here and then have all that trouble to [inaudible—could be "get" or "hit"?] up on the ground down to Hartsfield. But they—the first one was Phoenix Airlines, and they had an old eighteen-passenger de Havilland; and their trip was to DeKalb-Peachtree to Savannah to St. Simons to Jacksonville and return. And they were in business for about six months.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera*]: I know we're all interested in superlatives. I've seen the [DeKalb] Chamber [of Commerce] rate that [Peachtree-DeKalb Airport] as maybe the fourth-largest of its kind. Where does it stand in the nation in terms of kind of airport?

MR. MANGET: It's not quite that high. I have not seen an FAA--a rating in the last year. They don't put them out every year. But as far back as 19—about ten years ago—about 1978, the FAA gave us a number of seventy-one out of fifteen thousand. So out of fifteen thousand airports, we were the seventy-first in operations. If you—now, that's all of them. That's counting Chicago O'Hare, New York Kennedy, Hartsfield, and all of them. If you cut the category down to general-aviation airports, I would say that we were mostly likely in the top ten. The number-one airport—general-aviation airport, no scheduled traffic—is in Van Nuys, California; and they have about 400,000 operations. DeKalb-Peachtree has about 254,000.

MR. MACKAY [*from the audience, off-camera, to audience*]: Are there any other questions? *Camera moves back to show MR. MACKAY on screen, standing next to MR. MANGET.* Ruby Sunbrook, I want you to come up here so we can thank you and applaud you. *MS. SUNBROOK makes her way to the front of the room, next to MR. MACKAY.* We've named Ruby and Belva Cleveland life members of the Historical Society because they've been hosting us at their own expense and their own labor so that we can have this delightful little gathering with our speaker afterwards if she wishes to—

MS. SUNBROOK: We're going to continue to do it this coming year.

MR. MACKAY: Oh, one other thing about our speaker—he's written this history. To

MR. MANGET: Are we going to get a copy—your personal copy—of the history of the airport for the DeKalb Historical Society?

MR. MANGET: Yes. It's not that big a book. *Laughs* It's just [inaudible].

MS. SUNBROOK, to audience member: Tell Belva to come here.

MR. MACKAY, to MS. CLEVELAND, off-camera: Belva?

MS. SUNBROOK: While Belva's coming in, I have a little presentation—a gift to the Society. *Holds up slim bound volume.* To historians time is the basic element, especially "time when." And personally we like to know on which day did it happen. This book is the perfect calendar for all the years during the Christian Era. It was printed in 1931. And in here, if you come within those years, you can find your date or date of any other event for all those years. I want to present this to the Society so it can be put in the library. But first I'd like—Mr. [inaudible—last name of "Bob," who opened the presentation; sounds like "Cody" or "Covey"?], I'd like you to leave it on the tea table today, because some of these folks would like to know if they were born on Sunday. "Sunday's child is fair of face." *Laughter.* MS. SUNBROOK presents book to "BOB." *Applause.*

MR. MACKAY, gesturing toward back of room: Belva Cleveland, back there at the door. *Camera pans back to MS. CLEVELAND, standing in doorway.* As I've said, these two ladies have been our hostesses in an admirable way, and we want to thank you. *Camera returns to MR. MACKAY at front of room.* And I called them up and said, "We don't want to take you for granted." I was in the Sunday school class over there at Glenn Memorial [Methodist Church] for sixteen years, and nobody ever came and said thank you or offered to replace me, so I just walked away. *Audience laughter.* So I called them [MS. SUNBROOK and MS. CLEVELAND] up and said, "Now, look, we thank you. And we don't want to take you for granted." They said for the time being they would like to continue to operate as they have, and so let's give them a big round of applause. *Audience applause.*

We'll have a chance to meet our new director in the Old Courtroom, and to hear—to meet
DOC MANGET.

END OF RECORDING