Interview with William T. Burns
April 12, 1977

Your first question is — I have admired you and your father as the kind of city officials who have rendered dedicated service to the city government of Philadelphia without special advantages to themselves and I would like you to tell me how it happened that such a sense of dedicated service to the city in your family has prevailed over all of these years —

Well, my father was certainly dedicated. He worked in the police department in Philadelphia for 42 years and rose to become Deputy Police Commissioner, at which rank he retired. I watched my father all during my boyhood and I guess he is the man who is unequaled in my judgment — strong and efficient person. He passed away a little while ago.

My dedication, if that's what it was, was a very happy association and relationship. I loved the airports of Philadelphia and it was easy to be dedicated.

The next question — in brief, what was your educational background and what sort of work experience had you had before you joined the staff of the Bureau of Aeronautics of the Department of Public Works of the City of Philadelphia? I haven't heard that term in a long time and that's exactly what it was. Except as a matter of fact, it was on the day that I was hired, December 1, 1945, that a bureau of aeronautics was created in the Department of Public Works and as I recall it wasn't created by any change in the city charter, just by the informal designation of a single room up in City Hall Annex with the words Bureau of Aeronautics on the door. And by the way, that was a misnomer. We're not in the aeronautics business. We're in the aviation business.

Before I joined the airport I had been flying navy airplanes. I flew in World War II. I flew a variety of navy airplanes. I flew the SPD, the dauntless dive bomber. I flew the PDY, DC-3, what we call the MAR 4-d's (?). I flew Kingfishers, which were the twin pontoon sea planes. And I wanted to continue flying in a way, I suppose, but my wife — if I were ten minutes late coming home from the squadron in Pensacola I would find her crying, because Pensacola was a pretty risky place with all the flight training going on. And every time the chaplain would walk in the navy point where we lived she would hide in the closet.

(WMP: What year would that have been?)

1943, '44, '45. During the war. Prior to that I worked in department stores in Philadelphia. Just by sort of an accident I worked in a department store called Snellenberg's while I was going to Temple University at night. And prior to that, just a simple high school education. I never did get a degree out at
Temple but I went there for something like five years and then I joined the navy in 1941. That was before Pearl Harbor.

I was not overseas. I was all over the country. I flew out in California, Iowa, Michigan, and Florida.

Next question -- what year did you go to work for the Bureau of Aeronautics? December 1, 1945. I've explained that.

Next -- from the general knowledge that you have accumulated from your work experience in aviation in Philadelphia can you tell me whether I am correct in my impression that the first commercial airline service to the Philadelphia area was rendered through the Camden airport, starting sometime in the 1920's and going through the '30's with the airlines in the early days flying Ford Motor Company tri-motor airplanes? Yes, that's true. The Central Airport in Camden, if I recall just reading about it, I remember visiting there as a boy. Toward the end of the '20's is when airline service moved into the Philadelphia region and they did fly tri-motor airplanes. As a matter of fact, they flew some buccers -- these were high-wing monoplanes, three engines, could climb, glide, and cruise at about 75 miles an hour. I never was in one -- oh, I was in one about two years ago. I flew one. American Airlines has a relic of the tri-motor era and as a PR effort they flew this thing around the country, visiting major cities and inviting aviation related personalities to take a ride in them. And when the captain of airplane heard that I had been a navy flier he let me sit at the controls.

Next -- can you tell me when the Bureau of Aeronautics of the Philadelphia City Government was organized and what its first assignments were? It was organized in 1945. Before that there had been obviously an airport here because this airport in its original version opened in 1940. The city operated it through the Department of Public Works with a chief executive called an Airport Manager. This was before there was a division of aviation or Bureau of Aeronautics or Chief of the Bureau. And the Director of Aviation was an Airport Manager. A fellow named Howard Shaeffer. He came from someplace out in Western Pennsylvania. I knew him only briefly. I worked for him for one month when Victor Dallin came in as Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics and one of his first acts was to fire Howard Shaeffer. This is a high-risk industry.

However, December, 1945, the first assignments were almost self-generating. Nobody in the Department of Public Works, aside from J. Victor Dallin, who was the new chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics seemed to care very much about the airport.
It wasn't a very valuable thing politically. If Vic Dallin wanted to spend a million dollars in those days to build something for the landing area or something for the terminal building and went to get that appropriation all these politically oriented people would think that million dollars could build 12 playgrounds. So like I say, it was a self-generating thing and Dallin was to a certain extent persuasive. What he did was to arouse the aviation oriented community to obtain some kind of a base from which to be able to ask for money to build the airport. And he made that commitment to build the airport. He built these buildings we are in. He built the maintenance building across the street. He did a lot of runway work and things like that.

(WMP: Wasn't there a private airport down here somewhere?)

Yes. There was a private airport about a mile away from here, right north of us. I never saw it, but that was back in the '20's. I think they called it Philadelphia airport, but it was not city-owned. Dallin used to fly from there.

Another thing the Dallin administration did was to make a commitment to the beginnings of what is the Philadelphia International Airport today. It was in Dallin's time that the architectural firm of Carroll, Grisdale, and Van Allen was designing the first elements of the present day terminal. This was a triumph for Victor Dallin. Even though he had all kinds of disagreements with the consultants that had been hired by I suppose it would have been Thomas Buckley, who was then Director of Public Works. I don't know how they selected consultants in those days but I have a suspicion. At any rate, Dallin didn't get along with them, didn't agree with them, and didn't prevail. I think generally, though, that stage of the program was successful. That first building.

(WMP: I probably didn't put in a question about how the contract was supposed to have been signed after $25,000 had been passed in the Mayor's office. Do you remember that story?)

Not specifically. But I can imagine.

(WMP: That was the basis for firing Airways Engineering. Remember Victor Blanc, the councilman, investigated it?)

Dallin couldn't stand those people. He didn't hire them. But he did make a great contribution.

Now you ask -- would you relate how the city of Philadelphia finally came to have an airport of its own? Who were the people who agitated for it? What land was acquired for that purpose and what sort of improvements were made?
I don't know the answers to some of those things. In 1940 the city had an airport on this site, Hog Island. If I recall correctly it was on 350 acres. In those days airplanes didn't need the runways that they do today and it was a typical airport of that era. The third terminal building was the one on Island Road. I think that terminal building was opened in 1940. When that terminal building was opened, and I can still show you the sign over here in our maintenance building, it was called the S. Davis Wilson airport. S. Davis Wilson was the Mayor of Philadelphia.

(WMP: He used to be called "Ashcan Sam" because he had his name on all the trashcans in Philadelphia.)

He used to go to work every morning in a police car with a siren all down Broad St. That was S. Davis Wilson. He drank himself to death. Right in his office. I heard a couple versions of that -- he was somewhat seduced into that. A couple of his associates who wanted to control things kept him that way so they could continue controlling. I won't mention their names because it is only a story.

At any rate, that was the beginnings of the airport. First it was the Philadelphia Municipal Airport. Then it became the S. Davis Wilson Airport and then it went back, when Mr. Wilson left office, it became Philadelphia Municipal Airport again. And then we were approaching war-time and Hog Island -- the riverfront of Hog Island, which was actually really a part of the airport land parcel became very active in war-time shipping. Ammunition loading. And because of the conflict between the ammunition loading operations and frequent flights of aircraft in the vicinity, the airport was closed. They were afraid of a catastrophe. So the airport was closed.

In the meantime, this was '42, in the meantime the United States was building another airport up in the far northeast (of the city). They were building a landing field as a base for fighter interceptor aircraft to protect the vital industrial area of Philadelphia. And by the time it was almost ready for operation the war in Europe ended and a few months later the war in the east ended. So the United States said to the city of Philadelphia, if you want the airport, you may have it. You have to sign a contract with the United States to agree to maintain it as a public facility for the life of the improvements which we have provided. Also, you have to finish the airport. This was in the days of Sam Baxter, the giant of a public employee. The city agreed, I think on his recommendation, to sign that agreement and to acquire that airport, thank God. The city finished it for practically pennies and has ever since owned that enormously valuable facility up there. As a matter of fact, after it was finished and before this airport was reopened, Philadelphia International, for the
five months preceding December of 1945 the airlines operated from North Philadelphia airport. American Airlines, United Airlines, Eastern, and TWA. And it was December 1, 1945 that they transferred -- this airport had been reopened and cleaned up. It was then called Southwest Airport. By the way, the silly sort of history of that place too -- remember the terrible jealousies between the emerging Northeast neighborhood and the politicians and the Republican days of Austin Meehan. And Clarence Crossen and people like that. They wanted the airlines to be forced to stay there and for every dollar that was ever appropriated, this was one of Dallin's heartaches, every dollar that was appropriated for Philadelphia International, or what was then called Southwest Airport, those councilmen would insist on an exact duplicate dollar be appropriated for Northeast airport, even though there was no reason to do it. It was appropriated but I don't think -- I don't think very often it was spent. That was the kind of thing you had to put up with.

Next -- when did the municipal airport at Hog Island attain scheduled airline service and how quickly was the city able to have its air service switched from Camden to Hog Island? That was about 1940. Oh, there was one other little interval here that I failed to mention. There was a time between the opening of North Philadelphia Airport and the reopening of this one, when Philadelphia had no air service at all. Central Airport wasn't operating. And the airline service to Philadelphia came to Allentown, Pa. All the air mail in and out of the city of Philadelphia arrived and departed through Allentown's airport. That was for a period of about two years. That would have been '42 through Spring of '45, when Northeast Airport got some airlines. One of the reasons I know that is I was in the navy and I would be writing letters home and my lady was writing letters to me and they would always be postmarked through Allentown.

Next -- when and how was Victor Dallin brought in and what was his role in the early days of the development of aviation in Philadelphia? I have a note I made in the margin -- "heroic". It was to the extent that he was able to get the community interested in the airport and persuade one way or the other, either personally or through the community that he had aroused to get some money to start taking care of air transportation needs of the region. That's another aspect that ought to be emphasized somewhere along the way. This is a perfect example of a regional facility, this airport. It serves three states, I don't know how many counties, and millions of people who don't live in Philadelphia at all. I would just guess -- and it has been a long time since we tested this -- that most -- more than 75% of the people who use this airport do not live inside the city of Philadelphia, but in New Jersey, Delaware, and the surrounding counties.
Next — was there a terminal building on Hog Island prior to the one which still stands there now and was in operation still when I became Director of Commerce under the 1951 city charter? No, there was no terminal building before that. There were hangars on that site before there was airline service. For private airplanes.

Next — did the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and various civic bodies lend their support to the persuasion of City Council to finance the development of the Hog Island site and to finance the operating expenses of the developing airport? Was there any federal aid to airports in those days? The first question, yes. The Chamber of Commerce and people like Walter Miller — he was a staunch supporter of development at the airport. Abby Wolf, the prominent Philadelphia attorney. Sam Eckert. People like that. Very respectable people. Really pitched in. This is what I meant when I said that Victor Dallin was able to round them up. He was the personality that they gathered round. It probably was their muscle more than his own that finally got the thing started. But he was sort of a (?)

Next — was there any federal aid to airports in those days? No. I don't think until about 1950.

Next — if you know, would you tell me when the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce became deeply interested in aviation and established its committee on aviation and airport development? That would have been around 1945.

Next — am I correct in my impression that Philadelphia International Airport had to be closed during World War II because of the proximity of the wharfs along the Delaware River at Hog Island being used for loading ammunition to be shipped abroad in connection with the war? Yes.

Am I correct in my impression that it was because of that situation that Philadelphia built a second airport — we've covered that, too.

Next — did all of Philadelphia's aviation then transfer to North Philadelphia, or did it go back to Camden, or did some of it go back to Camden and the rest to North Philadelphia? We've covered that too.

Next — did not some of the political leaders of Northeast Philadelphia seek to make North Philadelphia airport the major airport serving Philadelphia after the war and what part did the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, created in the early 1940's and chaired by Edward Hopkinson, with Robert B. Mitchell as Executive Director, play in that decision? Yes. I told you how that airport was born out there and how politicians did want to make it the principal facility, but people like Mr. Hopkinson and Mr. Mitchell, as I recall, rejected that concept because it was a relatively poor location. Don't forget, Philadelphia International Airport
today is one of the world's closest in airports to the center of the city. Probably the only one closer that I know is Washington National Airport. This airport is only six miles from City Hall and considering the volume of activity we have here and the fact that it is tolerated, it would have been insane to substitute North Philadelphia Airport. Another thing about this airport that I think has to be said -- as far as environment, the neighborhood -- we are extremely fortunate. This airport's runway system is literally embraced by the Delaware River. It lies in a curve of the Delaware River and of course the Schuylkill is another buffer. You can't occupy rivers with houses. So we are fortunate.

Next -- can you tell me who actually hired the engineering organization known as Airport Engineers and can you recall what functions were allocated to that organization? I can't tell you who hired them. Their contract as I recall was to prepare a master plan of this airport. They finally did prepare one which by today's standards were comical. They had eight pairs of parallel runways, which you don't need. Today's airplanes do not need to land into the wind. In those days I suppose they justified that concept. God knows how much it would have cost to build their master plan. At any rate, that was their assignment. A master plan. There was a serious disagreement between personalities at Airways Engineering and Dallin, who was Chief of the Bureau. Another personality that ought to be mentioned is Sam Baxter.

Sam Baxter supervised work of the consultants, not Vic Dallin. Sam Baxter was a professional engineer and almost an institution in Philadelphia city government and probably one of the most capable men that ever worked for the city. Vic Dallin was a flyer -- a romantic type. Baxter was a mathematician and a very strong executive. He supervised the Airways Engineering people and in that process he and Victor Dallin became contestants and of course Baxter prevailed. During the investigation in City Council of airport -- Thomas Buckley was the Director of Public Works or had been Director of Public Works. He was being questioned by some councilman or other. I remember being in the room. Tom Buckley was asked -- this feud between Dallin and Baxter came out in the testimony and Buckley was questioned and the question was -- don't you agree that if Victor Dallin had been given complete charge of the airport program it would be a whole lot better than it is today? Buckley pondered that question -- a totally honest man, I always thought, and the answer was "it would be infinitely worse."

Sam Baxter supervised the professional work and Victor Dallin was extremely interested in it but people didn't pay much attention to him because Baxter was running it.
Next question -- did Airport Engineers, the architectural firm, and Mr. Baxter and his department work reasonably well together, or was there friction and serious differences of judgment and opinion? They were totally incompatible intellectually, personally, any other way. Again, Victor Dallin was the fellow with the helmut and goggles and the white scarf around his neck and these people were engineers. They didn't understand each other and grew to intensely dislike each other.

I'll never forget the day when Walter fired Vic Dallin -- Vic Dallin's office was here, there was a conference room in the middle, and my office was here. Every time he was on the telephone you could him bellowing. Walter called and fired him and I knew that even before Dallin came racing right into my office. And my phone is starting to ring. Dallin is standing in my office telling me that Walter Phillips just fired him and Walter Phillips is on my phone. He was beside himself. He could not have done what had to be done. Louis rescued the situation.

(WMP: I think you did, too.)

One of the techniques I learned from you, by the way, when you were examining people for Deputy Executive Director of Aviation -- one of the things you did when you were examining these candidates. You went up to Wistar, Mass. and you wanted to see his (?) office and you wanted to see some of the correspondence he had written, apparently determining how capable he was, how literate he was. And I always thought that was a very clever way to make a judgment.

Another thing you did, and I don't know if I ever really said thank you for it. There was only supposed to be one deputy and Francis Fox came out number one on the list. I eventually came out number two on the list. Walter hired me also. And I've never forgotten that gesture.

(WMP: That wasn't a gesture. We needed you.)

Next -- Is my impression correct that the manager of the airport, Victor Dallin, was almost completely disregarded in the planning and construction of the new terminal building, or was there a good feed-in from him in the days before I came on the scene? There was some feed-in from him, as I recall. Again, the architects, Carroll, Grisdale, and Van Allen, reported essentially to Sam Baxter. But Victor Dallin's office was in City Hall Annex, and so was mine, and on his lunch hour he would go over to Carroll, Grisdale, and Van Allen, and I can remember observing the annoyance in the expressions of the people who were working on the plans for that terminal building. It was as though it was none of Dallin's business. He was extremely interested in it. But he didn't
control it at all. And yes, he was almost completely disregarded. I'm inclined to agree with Buckley's assessment that if they had dared put Victor Dallin in control it would have been goofy.

Next -- how did it happen that the city engaged James C. Buckley of New York as a consultant on aviation, and in the beginning, what was the scope of his work? That's a very appropriate question. Biting the hand that feeds you. Victor Dallin hired Buckley. He hired him and eventually that caused his downfall. I fired Buckley. Had to do it twice. Remember that ridiculous master plan for the terminal building he was promoting? Buckley was no planner at all. He was a brilliant man as far as technical stuff was concerned, but he was not an airport planner. He was an excellent economist. But when it came to planning or considering people, or what people needed or wanted, he wasn't interested. Buckley in some ways wasn't even human. He never even went home. He would bill the city for 24 hours a day of work and the Controller would say how can a person work 24 hours a day? But he did. He had an annual contract with a little hotel across the street from his office and he would go over across the street for an hour and come back to work.

At any rate, I went up to Buckley in New York. And we had a lot of small talk. I knew that the program would never get anywhere if he were in it because no one else would be allowed to control it. Freddy Mann was Director of Commerce. By the way, by then Lou Inwood had been fired and Buckley brought the Director of Aviation from Denver in, David G. Davis. So Davis was my boss but he had been transferred up to the Department of Commerce to take Pete Schauffler's job over and I was made top man at the airport. So I assumed responsibility just like that and knew that we had to build something. I knew that I had to get some good advice, so I went up to Buckley in New York and Davis went with me. Davis and Buckley were almost like brothers. We sat in Buckley's office for a while and finally I said Jim, this is very interesting but it is not what I came up here to talk about. He said I know. You want to fire me. I said Jim, I wouldn't have put it that way. What I wanted to tell you is that I'm not going to recommend that you be re-hired to do any master planning for the city. Or to do anything. He said, well, I won't take that from you. I'm going to have to see Fred Mann.

So he made an appointment with Fred Mann. And Fred Mann, Dave David, Jim Buckley, and I went to lunch at the Locust Club and I did the same thing again right in front of Fred Mann. And I give Freddy Mann credit. He let me do it.
Then we hired Arnold W. Thompson Associates. They are the ones who helped me master plan what you see over here now.

(end of the first interview with William Burns)

Second Interview with William Burns, April 19, 1977

We left off with question 26 — would you say that when I came on the scene as Director of Commerce that I leaned too heavily on Mr. Buckley for advice, thereby destroying the morale of the officers in charge of the airport operations? Actually, it is two questions. You probably leaned very heavily on Jim Buckley, but you had no one else really to lean on. I think you tried to lean on Mr. Dallin until you became impatient with his irresponsible approaches to things and as I think I said in an earlier question, his romantic approach to airport administration. Buckley was almost a scientist in airport administration and you needed that. You didn't know anybody else there. So you did lean heavily on him and you did probably disillusion Vic Dallin by doing that. Even though Dallin brought Buckley into the scene in Philadelphia earlier, Victor Dallin resented him or began to resent him then. And I think Jim Buckley had the same kind of lack of regard for Vic Dallin's professionalism that you wound up having.

As for the morale of other people in the office, there weren't many other people in the office. There was -- I was Acting Assistant something or other and we had Bill Hamil, but the organization was so shallow that I don't think anyone else knew what was happening between you and Vic Dallin or among you, Vic Dallin, Jim Buckley and myself. So morale wasn't hurt at all. And what happened had to happen. You had to do what you did and you did it promptly.

Next question -- do you think it was inevitable that Victor Dallin had to be replaced, or do you think that I failed to give him a fair chance at heading up the Division of Aviation of the Department of Commerce as set up by the 1951 city charter?

Again, there are two questions. It was positively inevitable that Victor Dallin had to go. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time and could not have led the program that was then being undertaken. I remember, as a matter of fact I made a little note here -- remember Frank Short (?), who used to work for you? He was the first man who became violently against Victor Dallin
and his approach to business, even in the days of Mayor Samuel, when Frank Short was the Secretary to the Mayor. Frank Short ran the city for many years. Samuel wasn't running the city.

Next question -- would you tell the story of how when Louis Inwood came in as the new Director of Aviation, the staff was enlarged and the completion of the new terminal was expedited? Louis Inwood -- you brought him in Walter, after Dallin. He was a professional airport administrator, not a flier. Louis was exactly the man that you needed then because the program of expanding the airport under the 20th century was a commitment underway. Louis Inwood recognized the need for a strong, in-house technical department of engineering branch of the Division of Aviation. He brought Clark Pace with him from Kansas City, who headed that and who supervised the consultants and to a certain extent even the construction contractors in that 1951 program. Louis Inwood also recognized the need for expansion of -- perhaps even more important functions in the Division of Aviation, the administrative functions. He brought in a certified public accountant, who created his own staff on down from him and we began to get business-like in supervision of budgets and payrolls and we began to deal more honestly, I suppose would be the way to say it, with personnel management. We tried to control overtime better than it had been controlled. By then the line item budget had been eliminated and we had a lump sum in Class 200 for personal services and Class 100 for our own employees and Louis was able to use the money rather than the job that City Council had individually approved. In those days before you came in, you took a budget into City Council and they approved it line by line. If there was a job for a plumber in our personnel budget, that got scrutinized, they wanted to know who the plumber was going to be and this kind of thing. It was impossible to operate that way and the new charter recognized that and Louis Inwood was the first to enjoy the ability to turn from this to that in his own budget as long as he didn't exceed that budget.

Louis was excellent. Buckley, by the way, I suppose recommended Louis Inwood to you.

(WMP: Buckley gave me a number of possibilities and I went around from one airport to another getting acquainted with people. I went to Port Authorities and met several people there and got leads through them.)

Let me tell you a story about Buckley and me in those days. I probably -- after I had heard -- now I don't know whether this was your administration or Freddy Mann's when Freddy Mann terminated Louis Inwood. Freddy Mann brought Dave Davison from Denver. I remember being disappointed, I guess, being the mild word. I remembered that Buckley brought Louis Inwood in -- at any rate,
he was instrumental in Louis Inwood's coming here. You would not have known Louis Inwood except for Buckley. And Fred Mann would not have known Dave Davis except for Buckley. And I'm sure that Fred Mann -- that Buckley did not give Fred Mann an assortment of possibilities. But I remember going to Jim Buckley and telling him that I didn't like the idea of his recommending people from all over the country to come into Philadelphia every time Philadelphia needed a number one man. And -- in other words, I said, I guess, that I wanted that job. Buckley told me -- you know what I would do if I were Freddy Mann? I said no. He said I'd give you the job and if you couldn't do it, I'd fire you. That turned me right around and I walked out.

That's how Louis came in and he expanded and managed the staff, he managed the expansion program with a tremendous enthusiasm and energy and he drove the contractors to the target of the 50th anniversary of powered flight -- Dec. 17, 1953. Louis Inwood was a good leader, a good professional, and a very wonderful man personally. I grew to love Louis Inwood.

(WMP: The opening of the airport was the first major improvement completed after the Depression and the war, so it excited the city. And the opening was publicized so well that crowds of people came.)

There was a three-day celebration as you recall. The building was open before the airplanes came to it, so that people could inspect this new concept of an air terminal. It was a major event.

Question 29 -- Has the form of organization which we set up in 1952 remained essentially the same up to the present time and is it still functioning adequately? Yes, essentially the same, but greatly expanded in the engineering and technical branch of the Division of Aviation and housekeeping -- I'll get you the numbers of employees and it will really be dramatic. We had 25 janitors in those days -- now I guess we must have a couple of hundred. Security -- we had a handful of airport guards in those days, they have since become the Police Department of Philadelphia, which as you know also took over what used to be the park guard. That is now all city police. And we must have again a couple of hundred policemen. But there are new and different responsibilities now -- security at the check points as you board the airplane to make sure you are not some kind of lunatic. Also, administration and accounting -- that was what Louis started to beef up and what we continued to beef up until it is now a very professional little branch of the Division of Aviation and I think does an outstanding job. But the numbers will be significant. But don't forget when you get those numbers, those will reflect not the same level of mission that we had in 1952 and so forth, because since then we have quadrupled at least the size of the airport.
and spent something like 275 million dollars since '53 and '77. This program we just finished cost 190 million dollars. That included the marvelous new runway and all of the terminals. It includes Cargo City. It includes the overseas terminal. It includes expenditures that others have made -- because there has been an airport motel built. Ours was the first airport motel built in the United States. It is not now much of a credit to us because of the attitude of the people who used to operate it and who are now in litigation with the city about what they claim has been damage to the value of that hotel in terms of patronage. We are defending that suit vigorously, I hope, because I don't think we hurt the motel at all. Some day we will in continuing expansion stages -- we will have to wipe it out. But what you see down there now is only four terminals in operation today. The master plan for the airport is eight terminals. It is a long time before we will need eight, in my judgment, but eventually that is the capacity of that -- the runway capacity would be compatible with the number of gates that eight terminals on that site can provide. Which is another indication of the thought process which indicated back in the days -- that North Philadelphia could not have done that job. If anyone would have tried to put any airplanes in North Philadelphia today -- any important number of turbine airplanes -- there would be rebellion. Do you know that an ordinance was passed a few years by Philadelphia City Council prohibiting the use of North Philadelphia airport by turbine powered aircraft in excess of 25,000 pounds? There are none lighter than that!

We already dealt with question 30 -- Would you please describe the growth and development of Philadelphia International Airport since 1955 and indicate the approximate magnitude of money invested there today? That's another number that I want to get on the transcript. I'll double check that. But just while we are talking about it -- since 1955 I have characterized what we have done at the airport as the largest single public works project ever undertaken by the City of Philadelphia. The expansion of Philadelphia International Airport. The largest single project. In the terminal building and the parallel runway and Cargo City -- and this figure I will double check -- I would say we had spent in my administration of the Division of Aviation over $250 million capital. We have done it I would like to think carefully and prudently and not before we had reliable philosophical commitment from the airlines that they would agree to rates and charges that would sustain that annual debt. And I think that they are now about to close those negotiations which unfortunately got tangled up in a lot of technical and other matters that I am not sufficiently informed about. But the point is that the airport -- land acquisition, Cargo City, the passenger terminal, the overseas terminal, the runway systems, at least a quarter of a billion dollars in
the last 12 years. Perhaps this is an appropriate time to deal with the question of a master plan.

When Louis Inwood left and Dave Davis came in the role of Jim Buckley was reinforced again by Dave Davis. I would say that if Jim Buckley were still here to hear it and I'll prove that in a moment. Jim Buckley had a master plan which I suppose was developed just as a kind of an exercise in Jim Buckley's office when Louis Inwood was Director of Aviation. And we really didn't need a master plan. We just had built what we thought was the master airport. I thought that I suppose then. I was totally inexperienced at that time. Jim Buckley continued to push this master plan of his onto Dave Davis and Dave Davis never resisted the Jim Buckley idea.

At any rate, Jim Buckley was still presenting this master plan which if you look at it now it is almost laughable. It was nothing but a single one-story structure in front of what you dedicated in 1953. Just a ticketing building was all it was with one additional 500-foot long finger as we called it in those days. The airlines were by then -- this was after Davis was taken uptown by Freddy Mann and I was put in charge of the Division of Aviation. The airlines were restless if not angry at the lack of planning in Philadelphia for an airport. I remember in 1965 Philadelphia Magazine, Herb Lipson, did a big piece on the airport. I remember the one line in it -- they had talked with me like you are talking with me now for a couple of days. I have the story somewhere in my files. It turned out to be a good story because it helped me. Lipson has a way of making people perform. He is pretty direct. But they interviewed me and I talked about what I considered my promise to the people to pick the airport up again like it had been picked up 15 years earlier. But then prosperity overwhelmed the airport and it became too small and shabby. The article says "when Burns says he has a plan what he means is he has a plan for a plan." And then I look at Jim Buckley's master plan and realize that I didn't have a plan. This was when I went after Dave Davis was taken uptown. Dave Davis and I had become close personal friends and Dave Davis and I had mutual respect for each other. He and I went up to New York on a train to meet with Jim Buckley. Dave Davis knew why I wanted to go up there. I suppose he came along with me maybe to stand alongside me. We had lunch and an hour or so's conversation in Jim Buckley's office -- small talk. He was talking about my terrible frustrations with Tinicum Township to try to get consent to buy land for the clear zone for a new runway and what I went through. I used to come home nights and actually sit on the little back porch of my house with a can of beer and I would weep. My wife will tell you this. Weep with rage and frustration that I couldn't get these people to see that the runway was good for them in every way. Good for them environmentally, which was what they were
pretending was their problem. And good for them economically and socially and every way. We needed that runway.

But anyway, we went up to New York and we talked about things like that for a while and I think I remember the phrase I used. I said Jim, it is always nice talking with you but I didn't come up here to talk about Tinicum Township and the runway. He said I know, you came up here to fire me. I said no, that isn't the way I would put it Jim, I just came up to tell you that we are going to do some master planning and I'm not going to recommend you to do it. He said well I won't stand for that. I'm going to have to talk to Freddy Mann. Freddy Mann was Director of Commerce. I said it is up to you. And I have to give Dave Davis credit. He didn't desert me. He didn't join very much in that sort of argument that Jim Buckley and I had. But Jim Buckley did come down to Philadelphia and met with Freddy Mann. I'll give Freddy Mann credit too. He invited me to join and we met in the Locust Club for lunch. And I said exactly the same thing in the Locust Club that I said in New York and then Freddy Mann permitted me to hire the new team of consultants. And those are the people -- Arnold W. Thompson and Paul Stafford -- who master planned the present terminal and the rest of it which is to come. The eight terminal concept. And the city is now committed to that. I suppose it is reversible somehow or other. One man has already tried to reverse it. That is Vincent Kling, who designed this stage of it. I told you the other day that he went to see Mayor Tate? And I suppose I can even give Tate credit for supporting me on that whole thing. But Vincent Kling I think wanted a brand new expression of an airport named Kling. And he wanted to build it down on the riverfront, which I suppose is not ridiculous but in view of the commitment that had been made in terms of runway alignment, highway alignment, and the investment already made in the present site for preparation of the land for foundations and everything. It would have been I would say unnecessary to do that and unwise and foolish.

(WMP: Who brought Kling in?)

When it was decided that we were going to have this airport the way it is today things were still in my hands. The master planning had been done with me, not with anybody else. But again to be certain that we were getting appropriations to start design and subsequent construction, I started looking for the architects that I wanted to do the job. I formed the committee which included Arnold Thompson, the master planner who did the work. Paul Stafford, his associate, who was an engineer. Norman Jerusalem, who used to work for me as the chief engineer at the airport and who was one of the greatest talents in the business, although he is not in
it any more. He has his own -- he inherited his father's business and he is now out of the technical field. And one other man. There were five of them on this little committee. And we advertised nation-wide for architect-engineering services to design the details of this master plan. And the master plan is only a sort of allocation of space and an indication of shape and capacity and then the architect takes it from there. We advertised nation-wide and twelve important firms were in the final selection process. You get down to the top contenders. We took a suite in the airport motel so that we wouldn't be bothered over in the terminal building by day-to-day business. That was turned over to Brew (?) and people like that so that I could concentrate on the selection process. Literally for three months we interviewed these architects. Some of them we brought in once and then discarded. Others we brought back and we narrowed the list down to about four or five and then we went to those four or five offices. We went down to Atlanta and we went to Washington and New York and Chicago to see whether everything they told us about how they operate was reasonably accurate. If they said they had 200 people to see that they had more than 10. Just verifying things. And then I personally wrote I think it was a five-page letter describing this whole process to Mayor Tate. And coming up with a final single recommendation as to the firm to do the work. And that firm I recommended was C. F. Murphy and Johnson. Johnson who did the Seagram Building in New York -- one of the most beautiful buildings I've seen. He is an artist. And C. F. Murphy of Chicago, who did O'Hare. And I was impressed with O'Hare and ours sort of resembled the O'Hare concept of an airport. At any rate, I wrote this letter and sent it up to Mayor Tate. About two or three months later, nothing had happened until one day Abe Rosen, who was then Director of Commerce, called me up to the office to tell me that the architect was going to be Vincent Kling. So there were later stories in the paper and somebody saying that Burns had recommended three and Kling was one of them so Kling got it. That wasn't what Burns recommended!

(BF: Was Kling on your list at all?)

No. Well, Kling was interviewed several times and we went to his offices. But the point was I only recommended just one man. And the paper said I had recommended any one of three. Which I hadn't. Anyway, how he was selected I don't know. And in fairness to him and certainly to the people who work for him I'm not dissatisfied with what Vincent Kling's firm did -- I wasn't pleased with his attempt to torpedo the idea that I thought was so wise -- to build where we are and to take advantage of the highway systems and the runway systems that had already been built. I think the waterfront idea if you could go back to 1950 would be worth looking at then. I suppose there is something relative about a river and an airplane that could have been exploited, but it was too late.
Where were we now? Has the overseas traffic in and out of Philadelphia International Airport grown very much in recent years and is it likely to grow at a faster pace than domestic services? No, it is not likely to grow at a faster pace than domestic services. As a matter of fact, it has -- the growth of overseas traffic in the last five years has been negative. The reason as I see it for that is that we are too close to the marketplace for North Atlantic transportation, which is Kennedy airport in New York. People who fly to Europe, except for just vacationers or tourists, even a lot of the vacationers and tourists go to Europe to go to the home country. The German people like to go to Germany and the Irish people like to go to Ireland and the Italians go down to Rome and they fly whenever they can they fly their native flag carrier. The German population of Philadelphia probably wouldn't think of going to Germany on anything but Lufthansa.

The Italians will take Alitalia. Only those people who have no ties would prefer Panamerican. But all of these carriers are available at New York's Kennedy airport. Iberia, the Spanish airline, KLM, Swissair, Lufthansa, Air Isreal. So the airlines have all made tremendous commitments to New York service. The airlines know that most of the travel across the North Atlantic is tourist travel not business travel. So they don't feel that they have to expand out of New York, certainly not to a place so close as Philadelphia. They know they are going to get that passenger anyhow. Now maybe down in Texas it would be different, I don't know. But I don't really see a strong overseas traffic here in Philadelphia. Domestic, yes. We did an interesting thing -- when we were all frightened by the terrible prosperity of 1965 through '69 when air passenger statistics were rising at 20-24 percent a year and Philadelphia's airport was strangling and I couldn't hide fast enough when I got there because nothing was big enough for anybody. The newspapers were beginning to growl, Herb Lipson was writing these snappy articles about the airport in his magazine, and it was frightening. We sat down and did an exercise. Paul Stafford, one of these two master planners that I told you I had, he was a very realistic fellow. It was hard to get him upset or frightened. I panicked about everything. If someone wrote a letter about a dirty washroom, I got frightened. But Paul Stafford -- here we are up to our nose in passengers and the baggage can't move and the taxis can't get in, you can't load and unload, you can't park enough airplanes. He did an exercise one time to get me to settle down. He said you know, this can't continue to happen. I said why not? He said because if the traffic keeps rising at the rate we are seeing today in the year so and so there won't be any people walking on the face of the earth -- they will all be in airplanes. So that settled me down.
(WMP: do you remember that we built a hangar for TWA? Was Howard Hughes then owning TWA? Anyway, my question is why didn't we build more hangars in Philadelphia?)

Why didn't we build more? I really don't know why TWA built its hangar because Philadelphia is not the base of any big airline. TWA built that hangar -- I always thought it was some kind of a gesture to Philadelphia. They never used it properly and they can't use it now because their airplanes can't even fit into it. The whole idea of a hangar as we used to know it is changed now. These great big planes that they have today they don't even put in hangars. You can't build a hangar big enough for a 747. Oh, they probably have a couple here and there where they have to do some unusual kind of maintenance work, but the airplanes don't need the maintenance that they used to need. The turbine engine has no parts that stop and go like the pistons in your automobile. Everything is just smooth rotary motion. They take the engine -- the engine is no longer an integral part of the airplane like it was in the old days. They could unloosen a few bolts and take that thing out of a cradle and move the engine into a building and that's that. They are completely removable. But where the airlines do have the hangars they have it at one place and that is usually at one end or the other of their route. Like Los Angeles would be the end of let's say the TWA cross-country route. I think United's big maintenance base is in Oakland, California right across the bay from San Francisco. And it is convenient to terminate a flight and put it into a cycle of maintenance at the end of the line. There won't be in Philadelphia -- won't be any more hangars. If there were I would have heard of that possibility before now. And I don't think we want them either. As far as some kind of local value it is represented by the number of people it employs.

(WMP: What happens if an airplane needs service here when it lands?)

That doesn't require a hangar. If something goes wrong with an engine they will take that one off and fly another one in. That happens more frequently than you know.

Next -- the answer to question 31 is in a nutshell that I don't see overseas traffic rising in any spectacular way. Domestic service, yes, there is something I want to say about that. Domestic services I do see increasing. There are three additional carriers who are now actively pursuing applications for service in Philadelphia -- Braniff, which is the last remaining east-west trunkline that does not come into Philadelphia. I think Braniff is going to come in within a year. Piedmont, which is a very strong regional carrier south and southwest of us wants operations in Philadelphia. And North Central -- that would be north and towards Chicago. Those three central carriers are very anxious to come
Philadelphia and we have space for all of them right now. We have five empty gates so without building anything new we can accommodate five more airplanes. That is without terminal A, which would have 12 gates whenever someone decides to finish it.

(WMP: Does that mean five more airlines?)

No, it means five more gates, so it depends on if Braniff would come in with schedules that would require the use of two gates at the same time, that would leave the others for Piedmont and North Central. But I would say that these five gates would accommodate any combination of schedules of Piedmont, Braniff, and North Central.

And then as the other airlines get busier -- you see, the airlines are carrying more people but that doesn't mean they are flying more airplanes. It just means they are flying larger airplanes. And the airlines are not going to send another schedule in here when they are flying a DC-10 out of here with 50% load factor. They are -- if you want to go to Phoenix, Arizona at 9 o'clock in the morning and TWA or American Airlines has a flight out at 11:30, they will tell you to wait until 11:30 because they know they are going to have a couple of hundred of seats for sale on that flight. The DC-9's -- you will see more DC-9 type traffic. We need another small airplane, I think. For the businessman.

By the way, I went to Washington the other day. I don't like to recommend the competition. Do yourself a favor if you are going to downtown Washington. Take this new Amtrak parlour car service. The trains are immaculately clean inside and out, the roadbed is much better. Puts you in right downtown. To fly down to Washington and back on a DC-9 would have cost me $65 one way -- that's $130. Do you know what it cost me on the train? Round-trip. $38. And believe me, just try it. Take a parlour car. Don't rush for a seat in the coach. There were four people in the parlour car. They are larger chairs, service to your chair if you want a drink or a sandwich. Clean, quiet, and the people are no longer railroad employees, they are Amtrak now and the old Pennsylvania Railroad guy -- if you didn't like what he was doing, that's just too bad. But these people are courteous and they are younger. It's very good, especially the money.

Next -- question 32 -- is there any consideration being given to the construction of a super airport which would serve southern New Jersey, Delaware, and eastern Pennsylvania, such as was talked about and studied in a preliminary way by the organization known as the Committee on Regional Development, which was representative of big business leaders in southeastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and northern Delaware? No. There is no consideration being given to that, although there was an enormous amount of effort put into that project to develop the concept.
Someone had the idea. One of your acquaintances, Pete Schauffler. He and a fellow named Rhiners (?), who was an attorney and other people were promoting that concept. I guess as enthusiastically as I've ever seen that concept promoted. The idea was that this airport would be built in the middle of the Jersey Pine Barrens. That would be in Burlington County. This was at a time when two things were happening. Philadelphia's airport was sort of languishing. It was inadequate in capacity, it was inadequate in every test you could apply, I suppose. At the height of the popularity of this concept. New York was looking for a fifth airport. New York's horrible environmental problem. They needed a fourth airport. And Philadelphia someday, long after my grandchildren have grown up, will need a third airport. And I know where that airport is going to be -- where it ought to be. Willow Grove. I did that study. But getting back to the Pine lands. These people were advocating the Burlington County airport as New York's fourth airport and Philadelphia's first airport. I had to face that concept at a time when our airport was admittedly terrible. I had to fight that off and at the same time get money to invest in this airport, which they were trying to say shouldn't be done. But anyway, it was done.

Even the newspapers editorialized the virtues of the concept of the Burlington County airport. It had no virtue at all. The people of Philadelphia don't live in Burlington County. They live in Philadelphia and they don't want to go to Burlington County.

And now we've got the rail service to the airport in Philadelphia. Let them come to Philadelphia. Let Philadelphia not go to them. And now we have it -- or will have soon. You saw the stations.

Eventually you will go to 30th St. station from the airport, unless there is some big particular event at the Civic Center, like a convention, there will be a station at the Civic Center. So that would be an unusual, but occasional stop. 30th St. would be the first stop, Suburban station would be the next and then the tunnel when it is built to the Reading Terminal. And from there you distribute all your passengers on the spokes of the wheel into the commuter rail system. And then from there, or by some juncture that I want to recommend as a part of this contract I'm trying to organize, to Atlantic City -- to the gambling industry. Because Philadelphia International is Atlantic City's airport. And if they are so damned dumb that they try to build an airport of their own down there, they can have it. Because the airlines won't use it. You can get from our airport to Atlantic City by automobile in an hour and 10 minutes over the Walt Whitman bridge. I can get to Wildwood in a hour and a half in my automobile. Now you put that train into the airport and unload all these people who are looking for the gambling tables in Atlantic City, they will be in their hotels in less than an hour. For anybody to invest money in a big airport at Atlantic City -- and it would have to be a big one -- because the airlines are not going to fly twin engine DC-3's.
They are going to be flying DC-10's, L-10-11's, and 707's and so forth. So that railroad has solved many problems. It has created support in this community for what we did at Philadelphia International Airport. It has wiped out this threat of an airport in Burlington County. And by the way, New York was outraged by the idea that they should use Burlington County for their airport. Because that was not where they wanted it. They don't say where they want it now because they are beleagured by the environmentalists. So they just keep quiet now.

(BF: do you know when the railroad spur will be completed?)

There was a newspaper article last week. It showed the route. The story indicated that the stations were already built at the airport, that construction is underway of the right of way. You can see the vertical structures that are going to carry the traffic across the industrial highway and I-95. It will come across the Schuylkill on Penn Central right-of-way and then it shifts onto a right-of-way -- that the paper says they are quarrelling about who owns it, whether it is Penn Central or Reading -- then it shows the route down north of the airport where it parallels the Industrial Highway till you get west of Scott paper and then it comes in on an overpass right into that right-of-way that you folks saw down at the airport. So that is definitely under construction now. The estimate for when it will be completed is 1980. It's a shame it will have to take that long, but --

So that's the answer to number 33. Number 34 -- will the connection become more important when the mid-city tunnel interconnecting the Penn Central and Reading railroads is constructed and operating? Yes, I think I have answered that in another question. This is where I made a note to mention Atlantic City and the spokes of the wheel into the suburbs. And I think that eventually -- I don't think anybody can lose money by betting on rail transportation. Did you hear President Carter last night on energy? I don't know President Carter yet, but I thought that that was the most sober and the most unemotional but convincing presentation I've heard -- I don't like these people who go screaming in my ear that we are going to be out of fuel next summer, but when Carter says 1985 or something like that, you begin to get convinced. So that's why I think rail -- or mass transit -- we are going to have to give up these stupid automobiles like this one I have and we are going to have to get back into another way of moving around. You can't put coal in a gas tank.

I don't know whether we talked about supersonic airplanes. I'd like to be recorded as saying that I think that the supersonic flight, much as we don't like it, is here and I think we have to be ready for it. I think Philadelphia ought not to take an
automatic position against supersonic airplanes. This is not any kind of an endorsement of the present generation of supersonic airplanes because I don't think very much of that airplane -- that's the Concord. But I do think there are reasons why the United States, the Congress, and other governments ought to be willing to look more seriously at the concept of the United States supersonic airplanes.

(WMP: I imagine they make an awful lot of noise getting off the ground.)

Yes. It does. So does a thunderstorm. But if you only have one of them a day you can take it. And you are never going to have a lot of supersonic airplanes. You are never going to need a lot of them. And if they don't take off at 2 o'clock in the morning and if they don't take off every half hour -- noise is relative. A little bit of noise is all right because it makes you enjoy the quiet that follows. But seriously, I think that the airplane is going to come. If we don't build it -- well, Russia has obviously got them. So does France. I think we owe it to the American working man and the American business man. For those who have to travel across oceans. You'll never fly the airplane across the United States -- it will lay down a carpet of noise ten miles wide on either side and the sonic boom would be less tolerable than the take-off noise. The sonic boom is quite different. There is no sonic boom on take-off. It's just a roar of energy.

Well, do you think that does it?

(WMP: Very nice, Bill. You've done a great job.)

I don't know about that but I've been very interested in it. It refreshes a lot of nice ideas I remember.