

## HEINLEIN GENEALOGY

# Pittsburgh International Airport

In 1987, with the financial backing of USAir (then the dominant carrier in Pittsburgh), work commenced on a billion-dollar expansion which was designed by Tasso Katselas Associates, Inc..<sup>[29]</sup> On 1 October 1992, the new terminal opened, with operations having been transferred overnight from the old terminal. (The old terminal was kept until 1999 to house remaining operations offices.) The new terminal had numerous innovative features, including an AirMall, with more than 100 retailers and eateries. The air mall and underground tram were considered cutting-edge. The new landside/airside design construction eliminated the need for connecting passengers to go through security more than once. The airport was equipped to handle up to 35 million passengers per year.<sup>[30]</sup> The modern and innovative Pittsburgh airport became a model for other airports around the world. Its design simplified aircraft movement on the airfield and enabled easy pedestrian traffic to the gates.

US Air expanded with the new airport, and by 1995 they had nonstops from PIT to 91 airports, plus 28 more on USAir Express.

In 1997 the airport handled almost 21 million passengers, more than any previous year.<sup>[31][32]</sup> By the late 1990s growth had leveled off, with USAir concentrating on expanding at Philadelphia and Charlotte/Douglas International Airport, which had been a hub airport of Piedmont Airlines.

In August 2001, the airport had its busiest month ever with 2 million passengers and an average of 633 daily flights, and was on track for 2001 to be its busiest year ever. Then the September 11 attacks harmed the aviation industry, and US Air in particular, setting in motion the decline of Pittsburgh as a hub.<sup>[33]</sup> US Air began slashing jobs a week after the attacks and filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization in 2002. High operating costs at the airport put the US Airways hub in Pittsburgh at a serious disadvantage. By 2003, US Airways reported to be running a \$40 million loss per year (\$56.3 million present day dollars) operating its hub at Pittsburgh,<sup>[34]</sup> while also paying roughly 80% of the new airport's \$673 million debt (\$947 million present day dollars) stemming from its requested construction of the new terminals.<sup>[35]</sup>

Just before emerging from bankruptcy in 2003, US Air canceled its leases at Pittsburgh without any notice to airport and county officials, a move that former Allegheny County Airport Authority executive director said was "completely immoral and unethical" in a 2021 interview.<sup>[33]</sup> US Air filed for bankruptcy again in 2004. After failed negotiations to lower landing fees and debt obligations, the airline announced in December 2004 that it would be reducing operations at Pittsburgh, shifting hub operations to Charlotte and Philadelphia.<sup>[36]</sup> By the end of 2005 the airline had eliminated 7,000 jobs while operating roughly 200 flights per day, mostly domestic.<sup>[37]</sup> It ceased all service to Europe. A year later, US Airways had only about 170 flights per day to and from Pittsburgh, most being domestic flights.<sup>[38]</sup> Unrelenting flight and job cuts continued through the decade; accompanied by the airline's closure of Concourse E on the Landside Terminal and a portion of Concourse A on the Airside Terminal. In 2007, US Air's market share in Pittsburgh dropped below 40% for the first time since the airport's expansion in 1992.<sup>[10]</sup> By the end of the decade, US Airways had reduced to 68 flights per