



Chicago's Midway Airport

The First Seventy-Five Years

By Christopher Lynch

MIDWAY WAS CHICAGO'S FIRST OFFICIAL AIRPORT, and for decades it was the busiest airport in the nation, and then the world. Its story is an American story, encompassing heroes and villains, generosity and greed, boom and bust, progress and decline, and in the final chapter, rebirth. Join Christopher Lynch as he combines oral histories, narrative, and historic and contemporary photos to celebrate the rich and exciting 75-year history of this colorful airport and the evolution of aviation right along with it.

→ **Heroes and Daredevils**

Meet a cast of characters whose dreams, courage, and resolution put the pieces in place for one of the country's most historic airports as they first charted the space between Heaven and Earth from the Chicago area. Inventors. Barnstormers. Airmail flyers. World War aviators. Industrialists. All-star pilots like Charles Lindbergh, Jimmy Doolittle, and Bessie Coleman.

→ **Transportation Hub**

Follow a bustling, centralized metropolis as it evolves from the nation's railroad capital of the 19th century to the aviation leader of the 20th, both roles intersecting in the 1940s when train tracks of the largest railroad in the country ran through the airfields of Midway, the world's busiest airport.

→ **Heart of a Neighborhood**

Journey to a residential neighborhood with one-square-mile of excitement at its core: An airport that served as employer, visitor's attraction, social center, and lifeline to glamour. One with its elementary school just yards away from an active runway.

→ **Crossroads of the World**

Relive Midway's heyday—a golden era when movie stars and international dignitaries routinely deplaned there to great media fanfare, when Marshall Field's Cloud Room provided elegant dining with a panoramic view of the tarmac.

→ **Birth of the Airlines**

Watch the emergence of fledgling airlines at Midway—United, American, and others—that changed forever the way people traveled. From there began the brutal competition that still marks the industry today. It ended the dominance of the railroads, legislated the inexpensive “non-skeds” out of business, and re-emerged in the 1990s with such no-frills carriers as ATA and Southwest Airlines that continue operating successfully from Midway today.

→ **Reinvention**

Discover an airport penned in by its own success, unable to expand and initially unable to accommodate the jet age. Through persistence, repositioning, political maneuvering, and ongoing reinvention, the cherished Midway is once again on top, thriving in a new age of challenges in the air.

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