

## Downingtown Airport / Shannon Airport, Coatesville PA

39.98 North / 75.74 West (West of Philadelphia, PA)



Downingtown Airport, as depicted on an August 19, 1958 aerial view (from [Penn Pilot](#)).

According to former flight instructor Dan Kukjian, "Downingtown Airport began around 1954, and owner at that time was a man named Park Book."

It had been an airport with hangars & an office & 3 runways before the Shannon family purchased it."

The earliest photo which has been located of Downingtown Airport was a June 7, 1958 aerial view (from [Penn Pilot](#)).

It showed the field as having 2 (or 3) grass runways, with a few small hangars & 2 light aircraft along the north side.

However, no airport at this location was yet depicted  
on the 1958 NY Sectional Chart (courtesy of Norman Freed).



The earliest aeronautical chart depiction of Downingtown Airport which has been located  
was on the 1960 Washington Sectional Chart (courtesy of Mike Keefe).

It was described as having 2 runways, with the longest being a 2,000' turf strip.  
Downingtown Airport may have gone through some period of closure during its change in ownership,  
as the Aerodromes table on the chart included the remark, "Closed until further notice."

Park Book sold the airport to Bob Shannon Sr. at some point around 1960-61 (according to Dan Kukjian).

According to Dan Kukjian, Bob Shannon purchased a former airway light beacon tower in 1961  
which had been used by the airmail pilots in the 1920s,  
and was located off of Route 10, near the town of Compass.  
Bob Shannon bought the tower for \$1, disassembled it,  
and trucked to the airport & reassembled it to serve as the airport beacon tower.

The 1963 New York Sectional Chart (according to Chris Kennedy)  
and 1964 Washington Sectional Chart (courtesy of John Voss)  
described Downingtown Airport as having a single 3,160' turf runway.

The field was renamed in memorial to former owner Bob Shannon after his passing.  
It was labeled as Shannon Memorial Airport on the 1967 Washington Sectional Chart (courtesy of Mike Keefe).





The 2 grass runways at Shannon had evidently been replaced by a significantly longer paved runway at some point between 1964-71,

as shown on a July 5, 1971 aerial view.

Over 16 light aircraft were visible on the field.

The 1975 SkyCharts Enroute Atlas (according to Timothy Aanderud)

described Bob Shannon Memorial Field as having a single 2,600' hard-surface Runway 12/30.



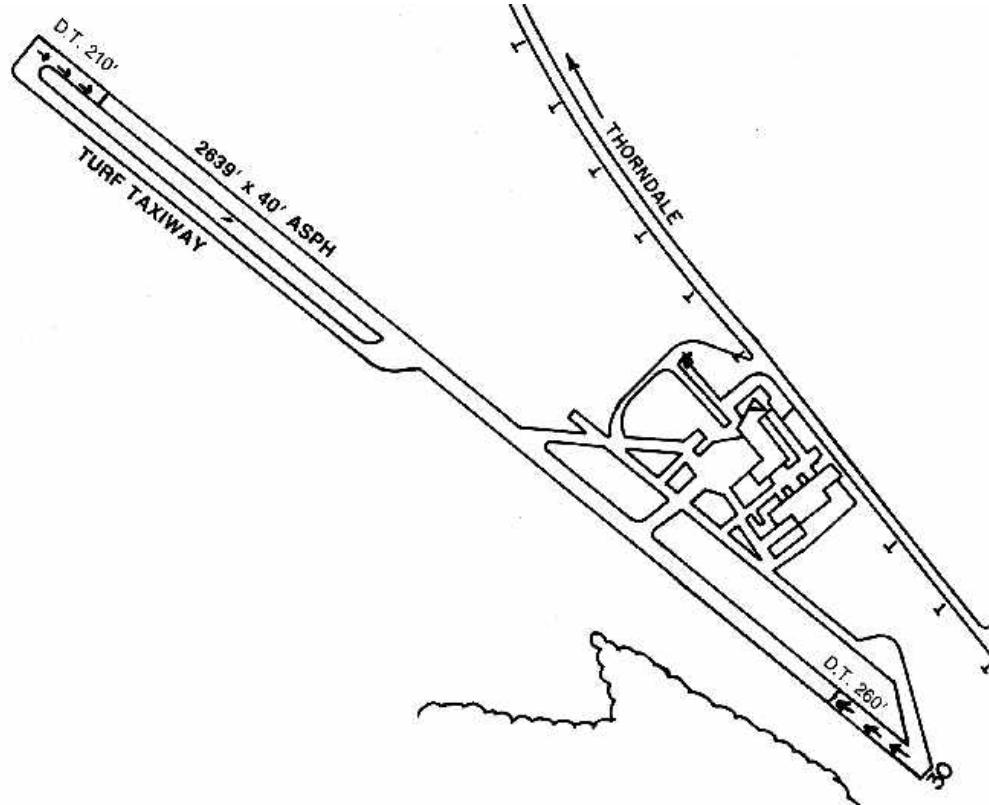
The 1975 Washington Sectional Chart (courtesy of Ed Drury)

described Shannon Memorial as having a 2,600' paved runway.

Josh Garfield recalled, "I took my first flying lesson at this airport on December, 18, 1976."

On the 1978 chart, it was described as having a paved 2,600' Runway 12/30, as well as shorter parallel turf strip.

The manager was listed as Robert Shannon Jr.



Shannon Airport, as depicted in the 1992 PA Airport Directory (courtesy of Timothy Aanerud).



At the time of the 1992 SPOT2 aerial picture, the airfield consisted of a single 3,000' paved runway (which appeared recently resurfaced & painted), along with a group of small hangars north of the runway. It appeared quite healthy -

note the plane on the middle of runway & the large number of planes parked along north side of field.

Shannon was still depicted as an active airfield on the 1993 Washington Sectional Chart (courtesy of Mike Keefe).

Unfortunately, Shannon was closed sometime between 1993-98.

According to a local resident,

the airport closed due to disagreements among the brothers & sister who owned the field.



A 1998 aerial picture looking south at Shannon Airport (after it was closed, but before it was redeveloped) by Philip K.

Paul Freeman flew over the site in 2001,

to find that nothing remained recognizable from the air as a former airport.



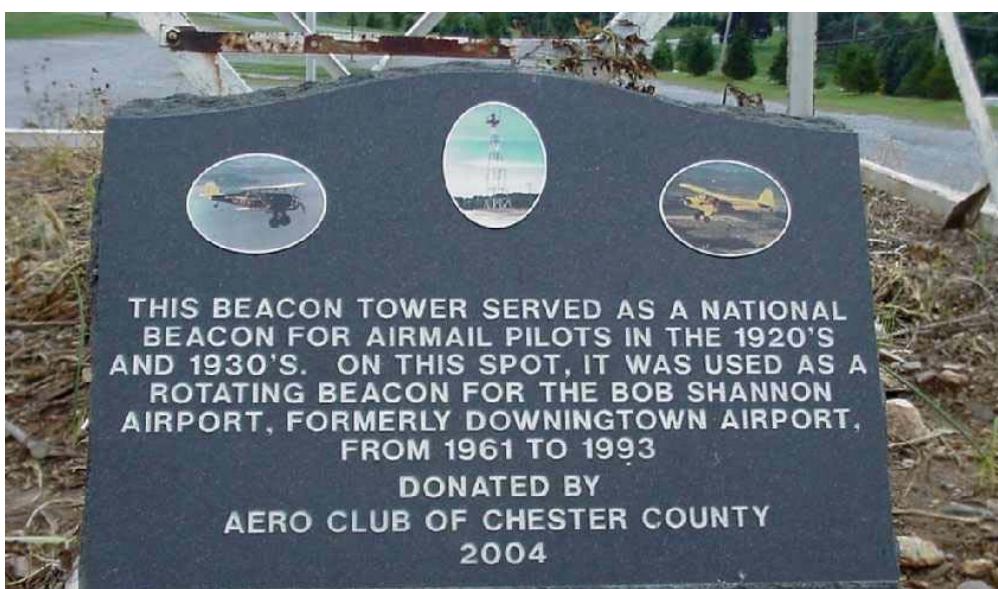
A 2001 photo by Jay Cooke of what has become of the site of the former Shannon Airport - an athletic complex.



A 2001 photo by Jay Cooke of the former beacon light tower of Shannon Airport, which remains standing in the middle of what is now a parking lot for the athletic fields.

According to Jay Cooke, who visited the site in 2001, the property has been redeveloped as an athletic complex.

In an ironic twist, the rotating beacon light tower still remains all by itself - it now stands in the middle of a parking lot.





A 2004 photo by Rick Davis of a granite plaque on the former Shannon beacon tower

which will be dedicated on 9/25/04 by The Aero Club of Chester County.