

**Davis Islands, Then and Now – Tampa General Hospital and Peter O. Knight
Airport**
by Rodney Kite-Powell

Another in an occasional series...

Of all the businesses and institutions that make up the Davis Islands community, two stand out due to their large size and larger contributions to the economy of the Islands in particular and the city in general – Tampa General Hospital and Peter O. Knight Airport.

No other Davis Islands institution has changed as much over the past eighty years as Tampa General Hospital. The facility opened in 1927 as Tampa Municipal Hospital and was considered a state of the art solution to Tampa's long standing critical care woes. The hospital replaced the outmoded and outdated Gordon Keller Memorial Hospital, which was located on the grounds of the Tampa Bay Hotel (now the University of Tampa).

To say the hospital has grown over the past eight decades is an understatement. Indeed, the original 1927 building is almost unrecognizable under the various expansions that have taken place over the past fifty years. The original hospital building stands literally in the heart of today's Tampa General, representing the hopes and pride of a previous generation.

Peter O. Knight Airport is a fixture on the southern end of Davis Islands. Constructed over seventy years ago, Peter O. Knight has hosted private air service and commercial airlines, sending and receiving people to and from a wide variety of cities, states and countries.

Originally configured with a seaplane basin for international air travel, the small airport has since evolved into a municipal airport serving the greater Tampa Bay area. The terminal has changed over the years, too, going from the original coquina block structure of the 1930s to the current modern design. Though its look has changed, the airport's mission has remained the same.

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