

Asheville ^[1]

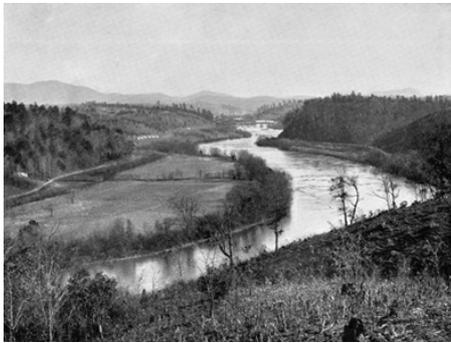
Share it now!



Asheville

by Lisa Gregory
[Government & Heritage Library](#) ^[2], 2010.

See also: [Pisgah National Forest](#) ^[3]; [Biltmore House](#); ^[4][Asheville](#) ^[5] (UNC Press)



View of the French Broad River above Asheville (Courtesy North Carolina State Archives)

^[6]Asheville, whose namesake is North Carolina governor [Samuel Ashe](#) ^[7], is located in [Buncombe County](#) ^[8] in Western North Carolina at the edge of [Appalachia](#) ^[9]. Situated in [thick forests](#) ^[10] along the [French Broad](#) and Swannanoa Rivers, the area was heavily traveled and settled by Native Americans, especially the [Cherokee](#) ^[11], before Europeans moved into the area after the [Revolutionary War](#) ^[12]. Originally called "Morristown," it was renamed "Asheville" and incorporated in 1797.

Expansion of the western part of North Carolina, including Asheville, remained slow until the [Buncombe Turnpike](#) ^[13] (1828) and [Western North Carolina Railroad](#) ^[14] (1880) made inroads to that part of the state. The area's remote but increasingly accessible nature contributed to its therapeutic use for those suffering from illnesses like [tuberculosis](#) ^[15].

In 1887, [George Washington Vanderbilt](#) ^[16] commissioned [Biltmore House](#) ^[17], built by [Richard Morris Hunt](#) ^[18] with landscaping designed by [Frederick Law Olmsted](#) ^[19] and surrounded by a sprawling 125,000 acre estate. The [Biltmore Forest School](#) ^[20], begun in part to train forest managers for the estate and nearby Pisgah Forest, was the first forestry school in America. The estate, which contributed greatly to Asheville's standing as a retreat and tourist destination, still draws large numbers of visitors today.



Thomas Wolfe Memorial (Courtesy flickr user larry wfu)

[21]

In addition to its natural attraction as a destination along the [Blue Ridge Parkway](#) [22], Asheville also has a history of drawing artists to the area. The author [Thomas Wolfe](#) [23] was born in Asheville in 1900 and described a fictionalized version of Asheville in his first novel, *Look Homeward, Angel*. [24] Other renowned twentieth century authors who found their way to Asheville include [William Sidney Porter \(O. Henry\)](#) [25], [F. Scott Fitzgerald](#) [26], and [Carl Sandburg](#). [27] [Black Mountain College](#) [28], an experimental college designed to educate the whole student through living in a close-knit community, brought numerous artists, authors, and thinkers of the 20th century to the Asheville area during its brief existence (1933-1957).

With institutions like the [Southern Highland Craft Guild](#) [29] and a downtown district that still exhibits much of its original architecture, tourism and hospitality are some of Asheville's [chief industries](#) [30] today.

Asheville's estimated population:

1980: 54,022

1990: 61,855

2000: 68,889

2008: 78,313

Asheville's land area (square miles):

1980: 29.09

1990: 34.118

2000: 40.921

2008: 44.230

Data from the NC State Data Center:

References and additional resources:

"Asheville and environs: The built environment." #

Black Mountain College Collection. State Archives of North Carolina. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/custom/black->

[mountain-college](#) ^[31] (accessed November 1, 2013).

Chase, Nan K. 2007. Asheville, a history. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co. Publishers.
<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/141384321> ^[32]

[Items related to Asheville, NC](#) ^[33], from the [Government & Heritage Library Digital Collections](#) ^[34].

Powell, William Stevens, and Michael R. Hill. 2010. *The North Carolina gazetteer: a dictionary of Tar Heel places and their history* ^[35]. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. p. 571.

Powell, William Stevens, and Jay Mazzocchi. 2006. *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* ^[36]. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. p. 1215-16.

Sondley, F. A. and Theodore Davidson. 1922. Asheville and Buncombe County. Asheville: The Citizen Co.
<https://archive.org/details/ashevillebuncomb00sond> ^[37]

Image credits:

View of the French Broad River above Asheville. nd. OP_110. North Carolina State Archives.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/north-carolina-state-archives/4821470718/> ^[6]

Thomas Wolfe home. 2004. Image courtesy of flickr user larry wfu <https://www.flickr.com/photos/larrywfu/348226736/> ^[21]

Subjects:

[100 North Carolina Icons](#) ^[38]

[Cities](#) ^[39]

Authors:

[Gregory, Lisa](#) ^[40]

Origin - location:

[Buncombe County](#) ^[41]

[Asheville](#) ^[42]

From:

[NCpedia.](#) ^[43]

30 August 2010 | Gregory, Lisa

Source URL: <https://ncpedia.org/geography/asheville>

Links

- [1] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/asheville>
- [2] <https://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/>
- [3] <https://ncpedia.org/pisgah-national-forest>
- [4] <https://ncpedia.org/biltmore-house>
- [5] <https://ncpedia.org/asheville>
- [6] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/north-carolina-state-archives/4821470718/>
- [7] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/ashe-samuel>
- [8] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/buncombe>
- [9] <https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/>
- [10] <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/compass/issue9/03distro.htm>
- [11] <https://ncpedia.org/charokey>
- [12] <https://ncpedia.org/exploring-north-carolina-history>
- [13] <https://www.ncpedia.org/buncombe-turnpike>
- [14] <https://digitalheritage.org/2010/08/railroads-in-western-north-carolina/>
- [15] <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/sanitariums>
- [16] <https://www.biltmore.com/visit/biltmore-house-gardens/estate-history>
- [17] <https://www.biltmore.com/>
- [18] <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000278>
- [19] <https://www.olmsted.org/>

- [20] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biltmore-forest-school>
- [21] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/larrywfu/348226736/>
- [22] <https://www.ncpedia.org/blue-ridge-parkway>
- [23] <https://ncpedia.org/wolfe-thomas>
- [24] <https://www.ncpedia.org/wolfe-thomas>
- [25] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/porter-william-sidney>
- [26] <http://fscottfitzgeraldsociety.org>
- [27] <https://poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/28>
- [28] <https://ncpedia.org/black-mountain-college>
- [29] <https://www.ncpedia.org/southern-highland-craft-guild>
- [30] <https://www.ashevillechamber.org>
- [31] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/custom/black-mountain-college>
- [32] <https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/141384321>
- [33] <http://digitalstatelibrary.ncdcr.gov/cdm4/results.php?CISOOOP1=exact&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOROOT=all&CISOBOX1=Asheville+%28Buncombe+County%2C+N.C.%29>
- [34] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/>
- [35] <https://www.worldcat.org/title/north-carolina-gazetteer-a-dictionary-of-tar-heel-places-and-their-history/oclc/441211592>
- [36] <https://www.worldcat.org/title/encyclopedia-of-north-carolina/oclc/67727572>
- [37] <https://archive.org/details/ashevillebuncomb00sond>
- [38] <https://ncpedia.org/north-carolina-icons>
- [39] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/cities>
- [40] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/gregory-lisa>
- [41] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/mountain-8>
- [42] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/mountain-9>
- [43] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/ncpedia>