Asheville [1]

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." #

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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]
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Buncombe County [41]
Asheville [42]
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NCpedia. [43]

30 August 2010 | Gregory, Lisa

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/cherokee [12] https://ncpedia.org/exploring-north-carolina-history [13] https://www.ncpedia.org/buncombe-turnpike [14] https://www.carolana.com/NC/Transportation/railroads/nc_rrs_western_nc.html [15] https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/sanitariums [16] https://www.biltmore.com/our-story/estate-timeline/ [17] https://www.biltmore.com/ [18] https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000278 [19] https://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/carl-sandburg [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/spotlights/bmc [32] https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/141384321 [33] http://digitalstatelibnc.cdmhost.com/cdm4/results.php?

CISOOP1=exact&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOROOT=all&CISOBOX1=Asheville+%28Buncombe+County%2C+N.C.%29

[34] https://digital.ncdcr.gov [35] https://search.worldcat.org/title/north-carolina-gazetteer-a-dictionary-of-tar-heel-places-and-their-history/oclc/441211592 [36] https://search.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