

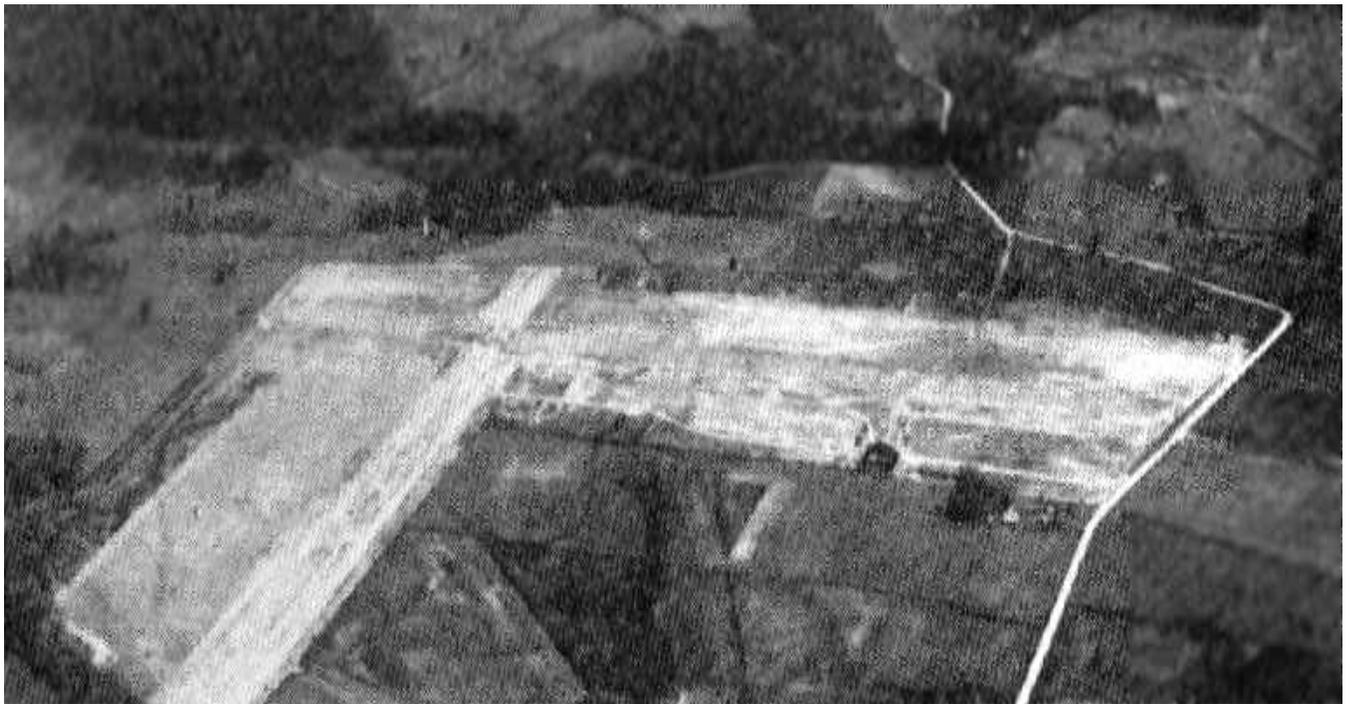
Abandoned & Little-Known Airfields:

Western North Carolina

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Asheville-Hendersonville Airport, Fletcher, NC

35.44 North / 82.48 West (East of Asheville Regional Airport, NC)



An aerial view of the Asheville-Hendersonville Airport,

from the Airport Directory Company's 1937 Airports Directory (courtesy of Bob Rambo).

The original Municipal Airport for the town of Asheville was located southeast of the town.

The date of construction of the Asheville-Hendersonville Airport has not been determined.

The earliest reference to the Asheville-Hendersonville Airport which has been located

was in the Airport Directory Company's 1933 Airports Directory (courtesy of Chris Kennedy).

It described Asheville-Hendersonville as being a 50-acre field, having 2 "silt-loam" runways in an L-shape,

measuring 3,100' north/south & 1,200' east/west.

A hangar was said to have "Asheville Airport" painted on the roof.

The earliest depiction of the Asheville-Hendersonville Airport which has been located was in the Airport Directory Company's 1937 Airports Directory (courtesy of Bob Rambo).

It described Asheville-Hendersonville as having 2 "silt-loam" runways, with the longest being a 3,100' north/south strip.

A hangar was said to have "Asheville Airport" painted on the roof.



A photo (believed to be 1937) showing 8 aircraft around & inside the A&H Flying Service hangar at Asheville-Hendersonville Airport (courtesy of Frank Blazich).



A photo (believed to be 1937) of a Stinson Reliant in front of the A&H Flying Service hangar at Asheville-Hendersonville Airport (courtesy of Frank Blazich).

According to Mark Hess, "Mark Reed... was the Manager of the Asheville-Henderson Airport before WWII."

The Asheville-Hendersonville Airport was described in a 1940 U.S. Airport Directory (according to Paul Cotrufo)

as having 2 runways: a 2,200' east/west paved strip & a 3,200' north/south turf strip.



Asheville-Hendersonville was depicted as a commercial or municipal airport on the May 1941 14M Regional Aeronautical Chart (courtesy of Chris Kennedy).

The April 1944 US Army/Navy Directory of Airfields (courtesy of Ken Mercer) described the Asheville-Hendersonville Airport as having a 4,000' hard-surface runway, and indicated that both Army & Navy flight operations were conducted from the field.

According to Hillis "Al" Cunliffe, commercial airline service at the Asheville-Hendersonville Airport "began after WW2 & was provided by Delta Airlines, Capital Airlines, and Piedmont Airlines.

Asheville was one of the enroute stops on Piedmont's inaugural service from Wilmington, NC to Cincinnati, OH."



A series of 3 undated photos (circa 1950s?) of 3 DC-3s in front of the Asheville Hendersonville Airport terminal,

and other aircraft in front of the Skyline Airways hangar (courtesy of Mike Whitt).

Mike reported, “The photos were sent to me by the daughter of the man who was the FBO at this airport.”



The last dated photos which have been located showing the Asheville-Henderson Airport still in operation was a series of 1954 photos by James Brown.

This photo shows a Piper in front of the FBO hangar.

James recalled, “I had just gotten my drivers license & I would drive out there to watch the planes.

I took my first plane ride there in a J-3 Cub, we flew out to Asheville & back, it was the first thrill of my life.”



A 1954 photo by James Brown of Asheville-Henderson's "control tower which was just to the left of the hangar."



A 1954 photo by James Brown of Asheville-Henderson, showing “a Piper Apache & a Delta DC-3.

The DC-3 airliners that served the airport were Capitol, Delta, and Piedmont Airlines.”

The Asheville-Hendersonville Airport also had some use in testing of ejection seats. The Stencel Aeronautical Research Corporation (which produced aircraft ejection seats) had a plant "located about 2 miles from the Asheville Airport on the main access road from Route 25", according to Hillis "Al" Cunliffe.

"My father worked for the Stencel organization from the day it opened it's doors in 1958 until his retirement in 1982.

He was one of the original dozen people hired by the company's founder, Fred Stencel.

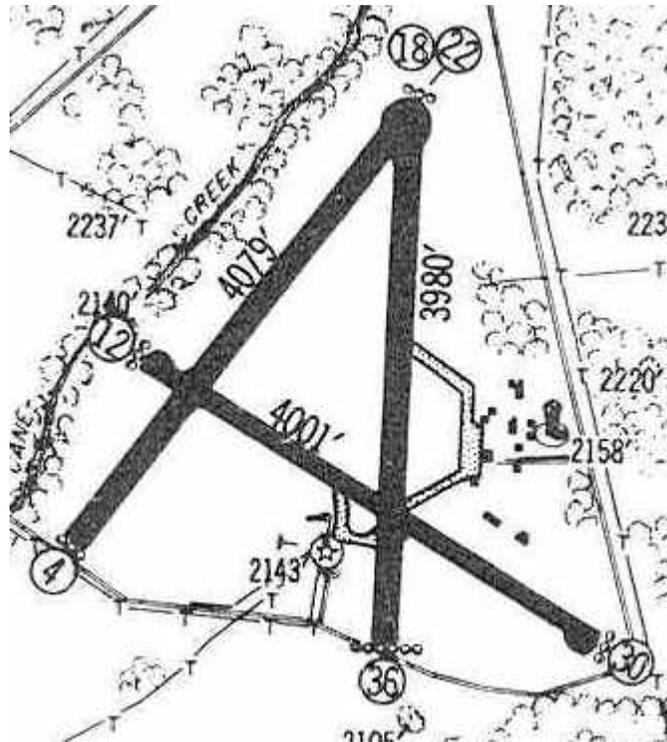
He maintained the 3 different aircraft the company operated to support their R&D efforts."

The airplanes were kept the Asheville Regional Airport.

Over a period of several years they owned an SNJ-5, a TBM-3 and a Douglas A-26.

The SNJ-5 & TBM were operated at the same time,

but the A-26 was the last airplane they had, for only a year or so."



The 1960 Jeppesen Airway Manual (courtesy of Chris Kennedy)

depicted the Asheville Hendersonville Airport as having 3 paved runways (with the longest being the 4,079' Runway 4/22),

as well as a taxiway leading to a ramp on the east side of the field,

around which were clustered a large number of small buildings & a tower (a control tower?).

In January 1961 the new Asheville Airport (today's Asheville Regional Airport) was opened 3 miles to the west.

The new airport featured a much longer runway,

which would be more compatible with modern airline flights.



Both the new & old Asheville Airports were depicted on the January 1961 Charlotte Sectional Chart (courtesy of Chris Kennedy). Asheville-Henderson Airport was described as having a 4,100' hard-surface runway. The Asheville-Hendersonville Airport was closed at some point between 1961-63, as it was labeled "Abandoned airport" on the May 1963 Charlotte Sectional Chart (courtesy of Chris Kennedy).

Paul Cotrufo recalled, "When I visited that old airport in 1973, it was 'way out in the boonies', no sign of urban development anywhere, horse & farm country."

According to Hillis "Al" Cunliffe, "The old airport was used as a drag strip for several years, then became an industrial park."

As seen in the 1994 USGS aerial photo, the outline of 3 former runways were still recognizable at the site of the original airport.

Numerous large industrial buildings had been built on & along the former runways.

Recent street maps label the property of the former airport as the Cane Creek Industrial Park.

Ironically, as of 2004, the site of the former Asheville-Hendersonville Airport still has some aviation use.

The [Cane Creek Airport](#) is listed as of 2004 in the Airport/Facility Directory as a private airfield.

It consists of a 2,680' turf Runway 4/22, visible immediately adjacent to the northwest side of the large industrial building in the above aerial photo.

The owner is listed as L. A. White, and a total of 7 aircraft are listed as being based at the field, including 5 single engine aircraft & 2 gliders.

Several small Quonset-hut style buildings just north of the large building may serve as hangars for the field.

Thanks to Hillis "Al" Cunliffe for pointing out this reuse of the old field.



A circa 2006 aerial view looking north at the remains of 2 runways & the taxiway leading to the former ramp,
now covered by an industrial building.

The site of the Asheville-Hendersonville Airport
is located north of the intersection of Mills Gap Road & L A White Road.

Thanks to Paul Cotrufo for pointing out this airfield.