

# FYV TIMELINE

## Drake Field

### Aviation in Fayetteville, Arkansas

The following is a time-line of aviation in Fayetteville compiled by Mike Eckles of the Arkansas Air Museum. With additions, corrections and clarifications by Jake Lamkins.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>Oct. 5, 1911</b>	First flight in Fayetteville by Glenn Martin
<b>1918-1919</b>	First flight of the Zerbe Air Sedan, constructed by Professor J. S. Zerbe, Fayetteville's first aircraft builder. The test pilot was Tom Flannerty.
<b>1911-1929</b>	Various open fields are used as landing sites, including the old county fairground, the University of Arkansas farm and Sportsman's Club Golf Course
<b>1929</b>	A tract of land was purchased for \$5,000 to build the first permanent airport
<b>1936</b>	Residents of Fayetteville approve a \$20,000 bond issue to build a bigger airfield which will become Drake Field
<b>May 1937</b>	The Army Air Corps brings a training flight of 73 aircraft into Fayetteville for an overnight stay
<b>November 1939</b>	The first class of the Civil Aeronautics Administration's Civilian Pilot Training Program began flight operations at Fayetteville Field
<b>Jan. 17, 1940</b>	Maurice Ash becomes first woman to solo at Fayetteville Field. Her instructor was Ed Horton.
<b>September 1940</b>	Raymond J. Ellis took over the flight contract of the Fayetteville Civilian Pilot Training Program
<b>Oct. 1, 1940</b>	Fayetteville Flying Service begins operations at Fayetteville Field and is managed by Ray Ellis
<b>December 1941</b>	The Civilian Pilot Training Program ended at Fayetteville Field with 122 students earning their wings
<b>January 1942</b>	The CAA's War Training Service begins operations with the Spring semester at the University of Arkansas and uses Fayetteville Field for flight training
<b>December 1942</b>	Two C-47 transports towing a pair of CG4A Waco gliders were caught in a snow storm and forced to land at Fayetteville Field
<b>March 1, 1943</b>	The War Training Service ceases operations at Fayetteville and the 305th College Training Detachment begins
<b>May 1, 1943</b>	Ground broken for a new 139' by 150' all-wood aircraft hangar to house the planes of the 305th College Training Detachment
<b>June 28, 1944</b>	Dedication of the White Hangar, current home of the Arkansas Air Museum
<b>June 30, 1944</b>	The 305th College Training Detachment pulls out of Fayetteville after 2,600 students receive pilot training at Fayetteville Field
<b>April 11, 1946</b>	Fayetteville Flying Service takes 5,000 baby chicks from Joplin, Mo., to Springdale, Ark., at the request of John Tyson
<b>Aug. 10, 1946</b>	South Central Air Transport, or SCAT, leaves Fayetteville for Little Rock. The Cessna UC-78 twin-engine aircraft departs at 7:30 a.m., starting the commuter airline era in Arkansas

- 1947** Fayetteville Field renamed Drake Field for Dr. N. F. Drake, the man responsible for the acquisition of land for the first airport as well as Fayetteville Field
- Aug. 22, 1947** The community of Tontitown contracts with SCAT to ship grapes from its vineyards to President Harry S. Truman
- 1948** SCAT ceases operations. Fayetteville Flying Service begins a new flight service for the University of Arkansas called the "Flying Professor Program."
- 1949** The first paved, lighted runway completed at Drake Field. The runway (16-34) was 3,000 feet long. The first Flight Service Station was installed at Drake Field by the FAA, housed in the southeast corner of the White Hangar.
- Sept. 1, 1953** Scheduled Skyways, owned and operated by Ray Ellis, makes its first flight to Little Rock. The Cessna 195 piloted by Ellis carried University of Arkansas president John Caldwell, UA athletic director John Barnhill and Dwight Morris to Little Rock.
- Dec. 7, 1954** Central Airlines begins air service to Fayetteville
- 1955** The City of Fayetteville expands the runway at Drake Field by 800 feet to accommodate the Douglas DC-3s flown by Central Airlines
- 1956** Razorback Field was established as a private airstrip in northern Fayetteville by Bob and Jim Younkin.
- 1959-60** The first terminal building for passengers constructed at Drake Field
- September 1960** Central Airlines moves its operations from the "Chicken Shack" to the new terminal building
- 1961** The City of Fayetteville expands the runway by 1,200 feet to create a total of 5,000 feet. A parallel taxiway constructed at the same time
- 1962** The Flight Service Station moved its operations out of the White Hangar into new facilities next to the terminal building
- 1964** A new fire station is completed at Drake Field and is occupied by the Fayetteville Fire Department later in the same year
- 1965** The City of Fayetteville expands the runway at Drake Field again, adding 1,000 feet to the present 6,000 foot length
- 1966** A temporary control tower is constructed to fit on the roof of the White Hangar. This temporary tower is placed on the roof during UA sporting events to handle the influx of private aircraft.
- October 1967** Central Airlines merges with Frontier Airlines, with Frontier initiating service to Fayetteville with its fleet of Convair 580s.
- October 1972** Scheduled Skyways and Fayetteville Flying Service sold by Ray Ellis to Paul Jones
- 1973** Drake Field receives its first modern FAA control tower. The three-story structure is built next to the southern end of the Flight Service Station on the west side of the runway.
- October 1973** Ray Ellis retires from commercial aviation after 38 years as the main figure of Fayetteville aviation
- December 1978** Paul Jones turns over controlling interest of Scheduled Skyways to Ray Young
- September 1980** Drake Field opened a new terminal building south of the old terminal and Flight Service Station. The old terminal assumes the role of fixed base operator.
- Oct. 5, 1980** Formal dedication of the new terminal building
- November 1980** Royal American Airlines begins passenger service out of Fayetteville. This is the second Fayetteville-based airline and a joint venture by several area businessmen
- September 1981** Robert Shults assumed command of Skyways after Ray Young resigned his post as CEO of the airline. Young moves on to Emery Air Freight

<b>Jan. 30, 1982</b>	Frontier Airlines ends operations at Fayetteville after 15 years of service
<b>Feb. 1, 1982</b>	Metroflight Airlines takes over service from Fayetteville to Dallas-Fort Worth from Frontier. Within the next year, Metroflight changes its name to American Eagle
<b>November 1982</b>	Royal American Airlines ceases commuter airline service and begins a charter service. Within a year, Royal American ceases all operation after three years at Fayetteville
<b>1983</b>	Sunbelt Airlines began service from Fayetteville to Memphis and Little Rock
<b>Jan. 17, 1985</b>	Skyways merges with Air Midwest, one of the largest midwestern air carriers
<b>Jan. 18, 1985</b>	Air Midwest begins service from Drake Field
<b>June 1, 1985</b>	Atlantic Southeast Airlines, ASA, begins service from Drake Field
<b>Sept. 16, 1985</b>	Republic Express begins service at Drake Field. In 1988, Republic changes its name to Northwest Airlink
<b>1986-87</b>	The idea to create an air museum at the old White Hangar is put forward. The Arkansas Air Museum opens on a part-time basis
<b>1989</b>	The Arkansas Air Museum begins year-round operations, open daily
<b>Jan. 15, 1991</b>	U.S. Air Express begins service to Drake Field
<b>Feb. 1, 1991</b>	Trans World Express begins service to Drake Field after purchasing Air Midwest's routes and assets
<b>April 28, 1991</b>	TWE begins service with the 48 passenger ATR-42
<b>Oct. 5, 1991</b>	The City of Fayetteville proclaims Fayetteville Aviation Day
<b>April 19 92</b>	Politicians and businessmen in Benton and Washington counties begin plans to create a new commercial airport located near Highfill
<b>1992-94</b>	Drake Field's commuter traffic increases to make it one of the busiest commuter airports in the nation, serviced by five airlines and over 50 flights a day
<b>1993</b>	President Bill Clinton returns to Fayetteville aboard Air Force One for the first of several appearances at Razorback basketball games and other University events
<b>1994</b>	Major expansion of the Drake Field Terminal Building underway. Both TWE and American Eagle begin service with the Super ATR, a 72-passenger aircraft, the largest to operate from Drake Field.
<b>1995</b>	Construction is underway for the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport.
<b>1996-98</b>	Major improvements to meet the increasing commercial commuter traffic made at Drake Field including a new fire station, fuel handling facility and baggage claim area
<b>Fall 1998</b>	Test flights made with regional jets for local service made by ASA, American Eagle and Northwest Airlink
<b>Oct. 25, 1998</b>	Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport opens
<b>Nov. 7, 1998</b>	President Bill Clinton arrives in Air Force One to dedicate Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport
<b>November 1998</b>	American Eagle pulls its operations from Drake Field to become the first tenant at Northwest Arkansas Regional
<b>January 1999</b>	Trans World Express moves operations to NW Arkansas Regional
<b>March 1999</b>	Atlantic Southeast Airlines and Northwest Airlink cease operations at Drake Field to move to NW Arkansas Regional
<b>April 1999</b>	U.S. Air Express continues to operate from Drake Field as the only commercial operation