



RUE CESSNA ST.

TERRAIN D'AVIATION | AIRFIELD



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A Salute to Our Pioneers in Aviation – Cessna Street

Located south of the Mattawishkwia River and connected to Highway 583 South, Piper, Cessna, and Beaver Streets (now Hallé Street) are all named after small North American planes that were popular at the time. These streets refer to the two emergency airstrips commonly referred to as the “Louisbourg Airfield or Airstrip”¹.

Built as part of a national job-creation program to counter the economic crisis of the 1930s, these airstrips allowed military planes, during the Second World War, to land for fuel or in emergency situations². They were also used by the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests (Ministry of Natural

¹ Louisbourg is the common name used by the population for this sector of the town of Hearst.

² *Porcupine Advance* (May 14, 1936), p. 1.

Resources and Forestry) airplanes, by small planes used to supply the American military base in Pagwa (140 km northwest of Hearst), and by private airplanes used for business, hunting and recreational purposes³. It is also at this location that many local people obtained their pilot's license⁴.



Carte tirée de l'ouvrage : The official plan of Hearst, *Marshall Macklin Monaghan Limited*, s.d. [1980]. Disponible au Centre d'archives de la Grande Zone argileuse, collection CAGZA.

Located near the runways was a huge orange and white weathervane that resembled a trumpet, which allowed the pilots to determine the velocity and direction of the winds. It also served to indicate which of the two runways to use for take-off or landing⁵. One runway running east-west and a

³ Payeur, André. *Mon histoire, journal d'une vie*, Montreal, BouquinBec, n.d.

⁴ Information provided by Janine Lecours, 2021.

⁵ Payeur, André. *Mon histoire, journal d'une vie*, Montreal BouquinBec, n.d.

second running south-west to north-east, were available to them.



Photo: Louisbourg Airstrip. Town of Hearst Municipal Archives, n.d.

Along the runways were hangars for storing small planes. They were located where *Maison Renaissance*, a rehabilitation centre, now lies. It is estimated that they were demolished at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, when the runways were decommissioned. In 1981, Hearst acquired a new place

dedicated to aviation. Located on the shores of Johnson's Lake, north of Hearst, a flat and partially cleared land suitable for the establishment of a real airport. As for the former Louisbourg airfield, it now houses two sedimentation ponds, the Jules Léger Park, a large slide much appreciated by local children and La Maison Verte – a nursery and garden centre. Hallé Street (formerly Beaver Street), which completes the area, was named in 1981 in honour of Michel Hallé, a pioneer and businessman who once resided there⁶.

- *Daniel Fauchon*

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⁶ Town of Hearst Municipal Archives, *By-Law No. 47-81*, September 8, 1981.