

North Carolina

Each of the three regions of North Carolina is unique from the other. The history and geography of each region affect how people there live, work, and govern themselves.

Native American populations inhabited North Carolina from pre-historic times and continue to present day. But their population and lifestyle have been greatly affected since European contact, first from exposure to disease from which they had no immunities, to the forced movement of their people to reservations making room for more immigration from Europe. For more information on this painting and primary source notes of the artist, go to <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/debry/id/49> as well as more information on early native peoples of North Carolina you can listen to the podcast at ncpedia.org. <http://ncpedia.org/history/early/native-settlement>

Living on the Coastal Plain

People on the Coastal Plain live in many different communities. Most are small and base their industry from the water and coastal lands. Some, such as [New Bern](#), were founded almost 300 years ago.

[Wilmington](#) is the state's busiest deepwater port. *Deepwater ports* are able to handle large cargo and container ships. Morehead City, founded in 1853, is another deepwater port. They are the only deepwater ports on the coast of North Carolina. (*Why might deepwater ports be important to North Carolina's development?*)

Several Coastal Plain communities grew because of their location near military bases. In 1918, Fort Bragg, an Army base, was built near Fayetteville. Joining this base were Pope Air Force Base, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and Air Station Elizabeth City with the Coast Guard. Marine Bases include Camp Lejeune, Cherry Point and New River. All of these bases make North Carolina in the top five of states that host military bases.



Figure 1 Native Americans sitting around a fire. Created 1590

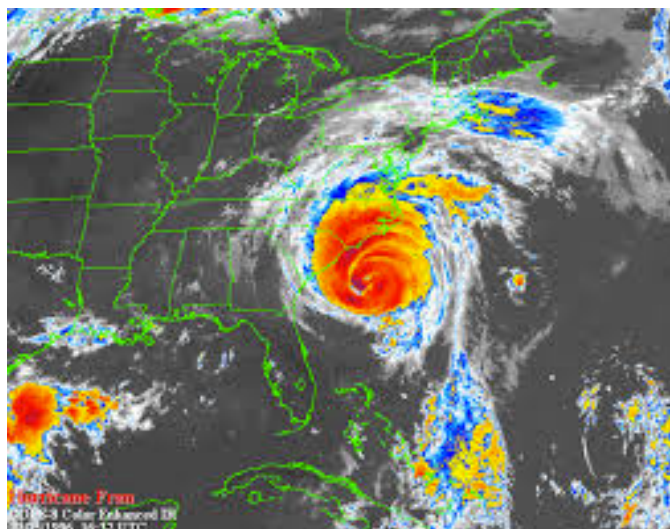


Figure 2 Hurricane Fran September 5, 1996

People living on the Coastal Plain sometimes face hurricanes. **Hurricanes** are huge rotating storms with wind speeds of 74 miles an hour or more. Hurricanes form over ocean waters starting off the west coast of Africa. Even though they start on water, their movement over land can cause major property damage and loss of life when they reach shore.

New satellite technology gives communities time to prepare. Often communities and religious groups work together to prepare for hurricanes. They provide safe shelters and help people recover after the storm.

Working on the Coastal Plain



Many Coastal Plain jobs are tied to the region's resources. For centuries, people have worked in industries such as fishing, farming, and forestry.

Today, fishing remains a major industry on the Coastal Plain. Fish and shellfish are caught in coastal waters and are also raised on fish farms.

Agriculture is still one of the region's top industries. Today, farmers raise many different

types of crops and livestock. Many of their products are shipped to other states.

In the past, colonists used the Coastal Plain's forests to make materials for shipbuilding. Today, these forests are used mainly to make wood products and paper.

The Coastal Plain also has many service workers, people who do jobs or activities for other people for pay. Service workers include teachers, bankers, government employees, and workers in the tourism industry.



Figure 3 Menhaden fishing



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Living in the Piedmont

More people live in the Piedmont than in any other region of North Carolina. Large urban areas, including the Triangle, the Triad, and Metrolina are located in the Piedmont. Metrolina covers 12 counties in North Carolina and South Carolina. At the center of Metrolina is

the city of Charlotte.

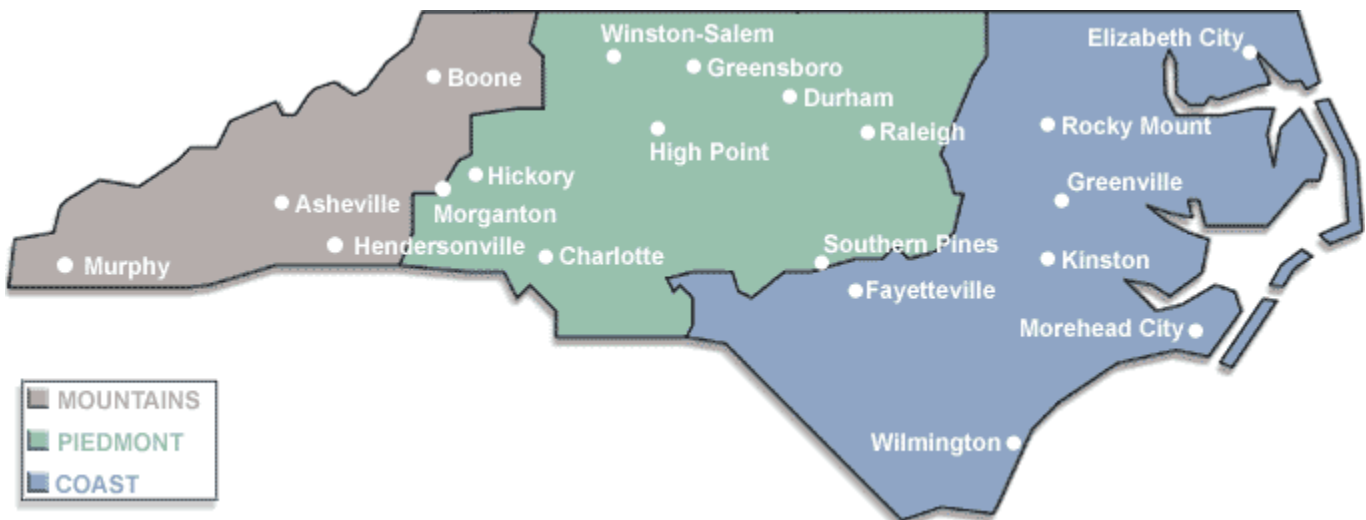




Figure 4 Raleigh, North Carolina Capital Building

Charlotte is North Carolina’s largest city. The city has many highways and railroads and the state’s largest airport. Over time, Charlotte has become a transportation **hub** for the southeastern United States. A hub is the center of a business or industry. Charlotte is also a center for banking.

The state capital, Raleigh, is also in the Piedmont. As a result, elected state officials live and work there at least part of the year. Most state government offices are also located there.

The Piedmont is also a center of higher education. Many of the state’s colleges and universities are located in the region. Thousands of students

attend these schools each year.

Working in the Piedmont

Many people in the Piedmont earn their living through manufacturing and technology. They make products including chemicals, electronics, machines, pharmaceuticals and medicines. Textiles, furniture, and tobacco were important industries in the region for many years but have declined in importance as the world marketplace has grown.

Tobacco manufacturing is still important to the region but because of health risks, fewer people buy tobacco products today. As a result, new industries are making way in the Piedmont such as other agricultural growth with cotton and soy beans.

Many service workers in the Piedmont work in state government. Their jobs include taking care of public health issues and working to protect natural resources.



Figure 5 retrieved from <http://www.indyweek.com/news/archives/2014/02/03/research-triangle-park-plans-for-the-biggest-changes-in-50-years>

Living in the Mountains



There are more than 200 communities in the Mountain region. Many have no more than a few thousand people. Some western North Carolina towns such as Asheville and Hendersonville have grown in recent years. Asheville, with more than 70,000 people, is the region’s largest city.

People are attracted to the Mountain region because of its natural beauty and mild climate. Many artists call the area home, as do college and university students. Galleries throughout the region display and sell local artwork. The region also has many retirement communities, places where some people live when they no longer work at full-time jobs.

The Mountain region is a popular vacation spot. Tourists began visiting the region in the late 1700's. Over time, many resorts were built for visitors in the mountains.

Today, there are many vacation destinations in the Mountain region. The towns of Boone, Banner Elk, and Blowing Rock are located near popular ski resorts.



Figure 6 Sugar Mountain, NC

Working in the Mountains

People in the Mountain region rely on industries tied to the region's resources. Farming, mining, forestry, manufacturing, and the service industry are important to the region.



Figure 7 Hendersonville, NC Apple Farm

Mountain farmers raise fewer crops than those on the Coastal Plain. Apples, Christmas trees, tobacco and a growing wine industry are crops of the region. Farmers also raise beef and dairy cattle.

Most of North Carolina's mines are located in the Mountain region. More [feldspar](#), [lithium](#), [olivine](#), and [mica](#) are mined in North Carolina than in any other state. The first gold rush in the United States occurred in Cabarrus County, North Carolina in 1799. The [Reed Gold Mine](#), was designated a [National Historic Landmark](#) and can be visited today.

As in the Coastal Plain, the Mountain region's forests are used to make wood products and paper. In addition to paper, factories in the region make furniture and process foods.

The most important industry in the Mountain region is tourism. The Blue Ridge Parkway alone is visited about 20 million times a year. Tourism provides jobs for thousands of people in the Mountain region.