

Our State

PRESENTS

50 MOMENTS *that* MADE NC



IT HAPPENED HERE:
The momentous first flight is celebrated at the Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills.

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1 COLONISTS ARRIVE 1580s In 1584, Sir Walter Raleigh sent an expedition to explore the Carolina coast. Two American Indians, Manteo and Wanchese, returned with the ships to England to share news of their home. Soon after, 117 colonists, under the command of John White, settled on Roanoke Island, where Virginia Dare was born. When White returned three years later, the colonists had vanished.

4 MORAVIANS SET UP WACHOVIA 1753 Like other North Carolina settlers almost a century earlier, the Unity of Brethren — Moravians — found in North Carolina a place of promise and plenty. A dozen settlers arrived in present-day Forsyth County in 1753 and dubbed the place “Wachovia.” The name was in honor of a place of refuge in Austria and in anticipation of their new settlement’s success.

5 HALIFAX RESOLVES 1776 Would-be independent North Carolinians declared their freedom from Great Britain on May 20, 1775, with the Mecklenburg Declaration. But for many historians, it was with April 12, 1776’s Halifax Resolves that North Carolina became the first colony to declare independence and earn the title “first in freedom.”

8 CHEROKEES FORCED WEST 1838 Before North Carolina was even a colony, western North Carolina was Cherokee territory. But in the 19th century, the tribe’s claims to land were moot. In 1838, most of the Cherokee population in the South was forcibly moved west to Indian Territories. Some Cherokee stayed in North Carolina, as the result of either treaties or negotiations with military officials.

6 OVERMOUNTAIN MEN BATTLE BRITISH 1780 A band of soldiers formed in the North Carolina mountains, ended up at the foot of King’s Mountain on the border between North and South Carolina, and launched one of the great attacks of the Revolutionary War, routing the British forces atop the mountain and proving that North Carolinians would fight fiercely for their independence.

9 PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM 1839 The first public university opened in 1795, but it was a half-century before the Education Act of 1839 took the first step to guarantee education for all citizens. In 1840, the state’s first public school opened in Rockingham County. This law made a promise to the future of North Carolina every bit as profound as our commitment to being the first state in higher education.

7 CONRAD REED FINDS GOLD NUGGET 1799 Twelve-year-old Conrad Reed from Cabarrus County was fishing when he found a 17-pound rock that turned out to be gold. His discovery prompted the nation’s first gold rush and turned North Carolina’s backcountry into a place to find and build fortunes, which people have been doing here ever since.

10 RAILROAD EXPANSION 1848 The Senate was debating whether North Carolina’s railroad should expand from north to south or east to west. Calvin Graves, a Democrat from Caswell County, cast the tie-breaking vote for the east-west line, bypassing Graves’s district. The vote angered his constituents, but gave rise to a rail line that would help give rise to Charlotte and Asheville.



2 CAROLINA CHARTER 1663 English founders of what would become Carolina sought “to transport and make an ample colony of subjects” in this place claimed for their home country. The charter granted property to eight men, allowing them to make a profit from the land and any settlers to be governed under the “laws and customs of [the] kingdom of England.” These were the first steps toward self-governance and the roots of a state.

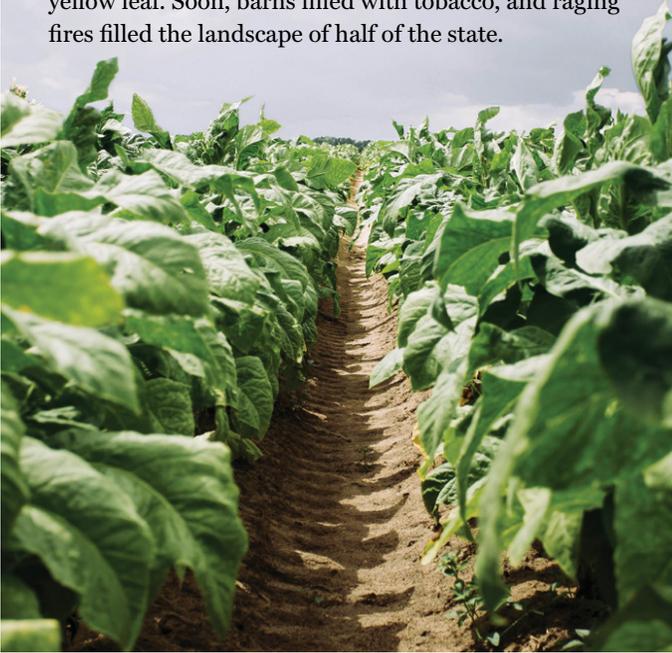


3 BLACKBEARD KILLED AT OCRACOKE INLET 1718 After a few lucrative years of pillaging the southern Atlantic, Blackbeard settled in Bath under the protection of Gov. Charles Eden and with much of his plunder in tow. His next foray for more riches would be his last: Lt. Robert Maynard of Virginia killed Blackbeard and took his head as a trophy. We’ve had a bad case of pirate fever ever since — seeking out Blackbeard’s treasure, naming mascots after him, telling the story, and spreading the legend of our most ferocious pirate.

11 RISE OF TEXTILE INDUSTRY 1853 Cotton wasn’t king in 19th-century North Carolina, but in 1853, we found our niche as textile manufacturers, starting with the birth of Alamance Plaid. The coarse woven blue-and-white material was the first dyed cloth in the South. By the turn of the 20th century, it was far from alone, as textile mills had popped up across the state from Elizabeth City to Eden, Gastonia to Goldsboro, and dozens of towns in between.

12 BRIGHT LEAF TOBACCO 1856

The story of North Carolina's signature crop began when a Caswell County slave fell asleep while tending the fire in a flue-cured tobacco barn. Upon waking, he frantically stoked the dying embers, building an inferno that produced a sweet, rusty yellow leaf. Soon, barns filled with tobacco, and raging fires filled the landscape of half of the state.

**13 FORMER SLAVE'S BOOK PUBLISHED 1861**

Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is required reading for anyone who wants to try to understand life in one of the darkest chapters of our history. Born enslaved in Edenton in 1813, Jacobs fled, spent seven years hiding in an attic just out of sight of her pursuers, and survived a harrowing journey north to tell her story.

**14 BATTLE OF BENTONVILLE 1865**

The "largest battle ever fought on North Carolina soil," according to Dr. Kevin Cherry, also marked an end of sorts: the "last time the Confederacy was able to mount an offensive in the field." The next month would see Southern forces from this battle surrender at Bennett Place outside Durham Station. This marked the official end of fighting in North Carolina.

15 LUMBEE INDIANS AVENGE CIVIL WAR MISTREATMENT 1865

The Civil War ended for combatants in April 1865, but for Henry Berry Lowry and his gang of outlaws in Robeson County, it was just beginning. Lowry and his band became "the Rob Roys and Robin Hoods" of southeastern North Carolina. Their reign ended in the early 1870s, as authorities and bounty seekers hunted down members. But Lowry himself was never killed or captured.

16 FREEDMEN'S CONVENTION 1865

On September 29, 1865, more than a hundred delegates met at Raleigh's African Methodist Episcopal Church. They came as representatives of their communities, and met openly and publicly to discuss their vision for the state's future in the tumultuous days after the Confederate surrender. A gathering of white men voted a few days later to revise the State Constitution and reenter the Union, but it was the vision of the Freedmen's Convention that was most enduring: a state of harmony and equality, ideals that we have set our sights on ever since.

17 NC RECOGNIZES EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS 1866

There are nations within our state. The Cherokee that were not exiled in 1838 set about rebuilding their communities. In 1866 they were recognized by the state, and in 1876 a survey established the Qualla Boundary, the officially recognized Eastern Band of Cherokee homeland. It became a place *of* but not *in* North Carolina, a place within these borders but wholly outside of it.

19 FIRST COLLEGE FOOTBALL GAME 1888

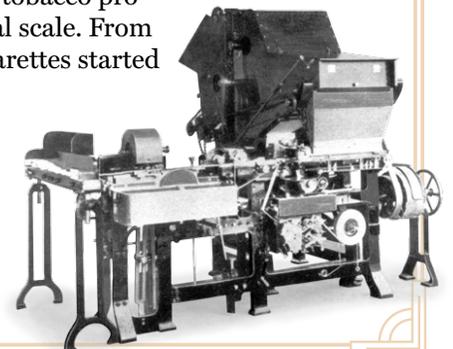
The players barely understood the rules, few supporters came, and the final score of 6-4 says all you need to know about the pace of the game. Wake Forest emerged with bragging rights over UNC. It was the only game against an outside opponent for either team. In fact, the October 1888 contest was the first proper college sports game in North Carolina history.

**20 PEPSI 1893**

Milk might be our official state beverage (yes, really), and some folks will fight tooth and nail to defend Cheerwine, but it's Pepsi that we drink every day. Born in a New Bern pharmacy in 1893, Pepsi was a response to newly temperance-minded North Carolinians and the increasing importance of pharmacies, soda fountains, and other public places of amusement.

18 CIGARETTE-ROLLING MACHINE LEADS TO DUKE FORTUNE 1884

The whole Duke fortune, and everything it built in North Carolina, can be traced back to one moment in 1884 when James B. Duke took a chance on a cigarette-rolling machine invented by a Virginia teenager. The machine replaced hand-rolling and allowed for tobacco production on an industrial scale. From Durham, packaged cigarettes started going out all over the world, and the money that would help found Duke University and the Duke Endowment came rolling in.



21 BILTMORE IS BORN 1889 Like a lot of people, George Washington Vanderbilt fell under Asheville's spell. Unlike other visitors, though, he turned around and bought an entire nearby town, renamed it Biltmore, and started buying up all of the land in sight. In a few years his 125,000 acres became host to both his elaborate summer home and the first school of forestry in the United States.

22 WILMINGTON COUP 1898 Over a few days in November 1898, white insurgents overthrew the elected, biracial government of Wilmington, expelling its black leaders. The Wilmington Coup was a blow to equality, justice, and the electoral process in North Carolina, and one whose ultimate legacy offers stories of struggle, persistence, and more work still to be done.



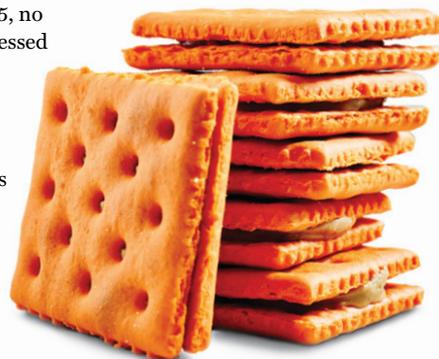
23 RISE OF BLACK WALL STREET 1899 North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance began in Durham as an outgrowth of the mutual benefit and fraternal organizations that sprang up after Emancipation. The company became a symbol of African-American progress in the South. But more important than the homes it helped build were the jobs it helped create, and the organizations it helped establish.

24 FIRST RADIO BROADCAST IN NORTH CAROLINA 1902 Sitting in his workshop on Roanoke Island in April 1902, Reginald Fessenden could hear faint musical notes on his radio coming from Buxton on Hatteras Island, 60 miles distant. With that, Fessenden made the first radio broadcast in North Carolina and the first broadcast of musical notes in the world.

25 WRIGHT BROTHERS' FLIGHT 1903 It's easy to imagine the Wright brothers and their neighbor Reginald Fessenden in their respective workshops, just a few miles apart over open water. Just a year after Fessenden's broadcast, the Wrights launched Orville over the sands of Kill Devil Hills. With that, human flight was born, and the Outer Banks became home to another innovation.

26 PROHIBITION COMES TO NORTH CAROLINA 1909 The state that's first in flight was also first in temperance. On New Year's Day in 1909, our state became the first in the South to enact Prohibition. And after a federal law made transporting alcohol to a dry state illegal, moonshiners and bootleggers in North Carolina added another facet to the legacy of Prohibition: stock car racing.

27 PACK O' NABS 1915 When Charlotte's Lance company began producing the now ubiquitous cracker sandwiches in 1915, no one could have guessed that the cheap and filling snack — affectionately known as Nabs by generations of fans — would become so popular with working people on the go.



28 FIRST STATE PARK 1915 By the early 20th century, Mount Mitchell — dwarfing its Black Mountain neighbors and all other peaks east of the Mississippi — had been thoroughly stripped of much of its natural splendor, leading Gov. Locke Craig to seek its protection. He did so by establishing it as the first state park in North Carolina.

30 FURNITURE 1921 In High Point, the railroads, textile mills, and timber industries all met in a big, 10-story building constructed in 1921: What's now the International Home Furnishings Market began as a decidedly local affair in 1909, but from humble beginnings it quickly became the furniture show for the whole South, and eventually, the entire world.



29 FORT BRAGG OPENS 1918 Created out of a swampy morass in Hoke and Cumberland counties, Fort Bragg began as an artillery training ground and a convenient stopover for pilots heading to bigger bases in the West and South. But during World War II, the base grew in size and importance, becoming the headquarters for the famous 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions.

31 HIGHWAY ACT 1921 With a \$50 million bond issue and a one-cent gasoline tax, the 1921 Highway Act unleashed a team of engineers and road workers to expand and improve the state's roads and bridges, transforming us into the Good Roads State. Within a few decades, travelers could take U.S. 64 or I-40 across the state — or clear across the country.

32 JUGTOWN POTTERY ESTABLISHED

1921 Jacques and Juliana Busbee came to Seagrove via Raleigh and New York and brought the 200-year-old utilitarian pottery of Seagrove into art galleries and collectors' homes. They helped turn pottery into art, and in the process, helped save the Seagrove tradition for today's Piedmont potters.

33 HILLBILLY MUSIC GETS ITS FIRST BIG HIT

1925 Before there was country music, there were hillbilly records and mill musicians, like Charlie Poole, a pioneering banjo player who roamed the Piedmont playing music with his North Carolina Ramblers. On July 27, 1925, they recorded "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down Blues." It sold more than 100,000 copies, the first big hit for Charlie Poole and for hillbilly music.

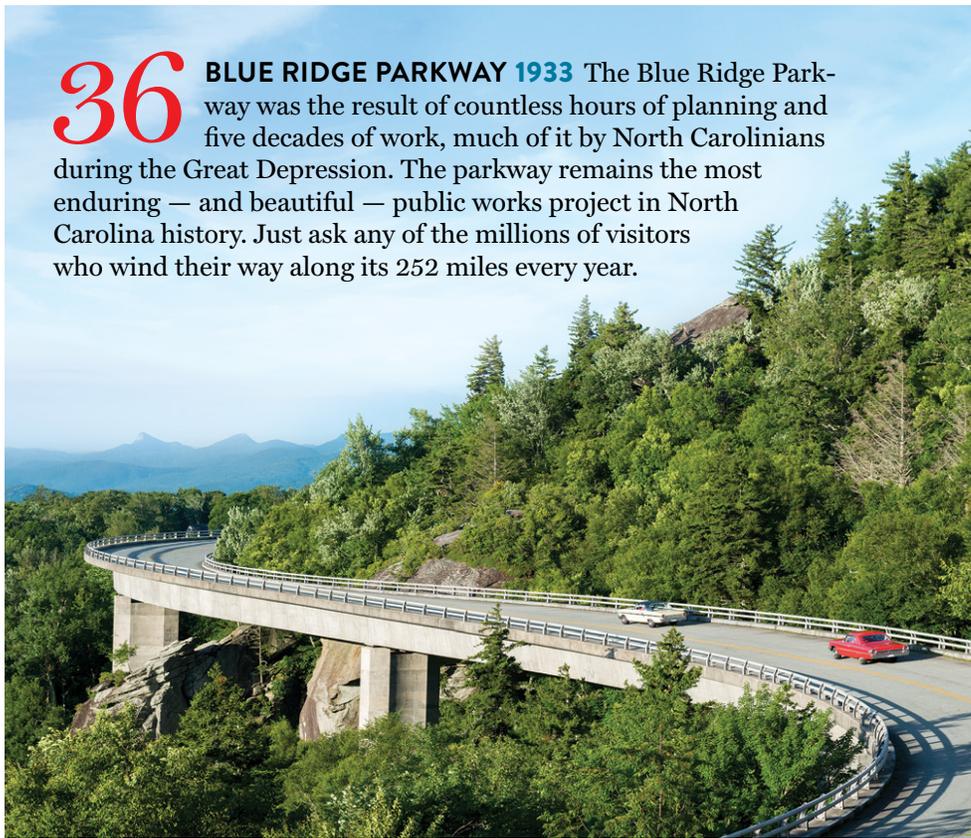
34 THOMAS WOLFE ESTABLISHES NC'S LITERARY PRESENCE

1929 Thomas Wolfe had to go far away from his birthplace in Asheville — first to Chapel Hill and then abroad — to write about it. The result was *Look Homeward, Angel*. Other writers followed — such as Lee Smith, Charles Frazier, and Ron Rash — but it was Wolfe who established our literary reputation.

35 LORAY TEXTILE STRIKE

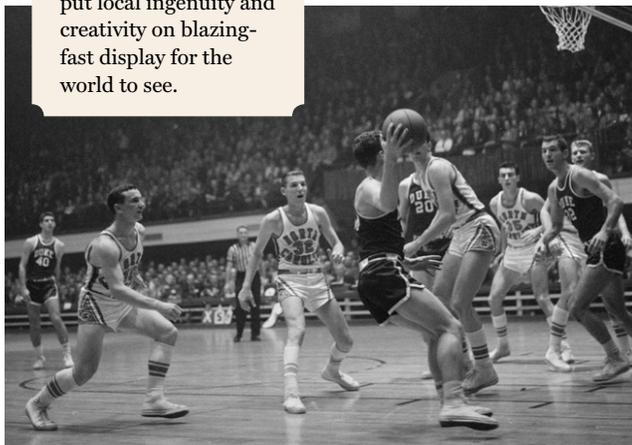
1929 When the workers at the Loray mill in west Gastonia went on strike, they were hoping for better hours, higher pay, and safer working conditions. A few months later the strike was over, but not before the police chief was killed, one of the strike leaders was also murdered, and another fled to the U.S.S.R. to avoid murder charges. Few of the strikers' demands were met, but the strike helped expand the nation's labor movement.

36 BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY 1933 The Blue Ridge Parkway was the result of countless hours of planning and five decades of work, much of it by North Carolinians during the Great Depression. The parkway remains the most enduring — and beautiful — public works project in North Carolina history. Just ask any of the millions of visitors who wind their way along its 252 miles every year.



37 NASCAR AND COLLEGE BASKETBALL HAVE BIG YEAR

1949 This was the year the first NASCAR race was held at Charlotte Speedway and the first Dixie Classic tournament was held at Reynolds Coliseum in Raleigh. The Dixie Classic created and cemented in-state basketball rivalries, and NASCAR put local ingenuity and creativity on blazing-fast display for the world to see.



38 NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOLS ARE INTEGRATED

1957 More than a century after North Carolina's Education Act, and three years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, Dorothy Counts entered Charlotte's Harding School amid a crowd of jeering onlookers. Her story put pressure on North Carolina to deliver on the promise of equal rights for all of its students.

39 RTP 1959

Coming out of World War II, Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill were three college towns connected by nothing more than an annual rivalry game. Enter a variety of government and university leaders, who turned 4,000 acres of wilderness into Research Triangle Park — a suburban home for pioneering, international companies.

40 SIT-INS 1960

The moment four young men walked in and took their seats at the counter, everyone in the room must have known exactly what they were doing. The sit-ins at Greensboro's Woolworth's weren't the first, even in North Carolina, but they sparked a nationwide movement. Today, those same seats are scattered at museums around the country, a monument to the enduring legacy of a moment that sparked some of our state's — and country's — most important changes.

41 THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW PREMIERES

1960 “*The Andy Griffith Show* created the stage for the artistic telling of the state’s story, akin to Athenian drama,” professor Gary Freeze says. The show put to stage, as Freeze suggests, the hopes, fears, and above all the complexities of life in much of this state, and made Mayberry our very own symbol of small-town perfection.

42 NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAM 1963

The legislative act that created the state’s community college system came amid nearly a decade of commissions, reports, and other laws. What it established was a network of colleges for every community in the state. One of Terry Sanford’s crowning achievements as governor, the law truly made college available for everybody.

43 NAT JONES AND JAMES BROWN CREATE FUNK MUSIC 1964

The wildest purveyor of funk, George Clinton, hailed from Kannapolis, but funk’s origins were in Greenville, Rocky Mount, Wilson, and especially Kinston, and the classrooms of eastern North Carolina, where musicians like Nat Jones — an early James Brown bandleader — taught band and honed their craft.

44 NC ZOO OPENS 1974 In the heart of the Piedmont, right at the foothills of the Uwharries in Randolph County, sits a landscape filled with lions, polar bears, elephants, and all kinds of exotic fauna and flora. This, of course, is the North Carolina Zoo. Bigger than any other walk-through, natural-habitat zoo in the world, it’s not just another tourist draw; it’s an extension of our deep connection with nature.



45 BANKING IN CHARLOTTE 1981

It used to be that banks were local and Charlotte was a textile town. That changed for good when Hugh McColl of North Carolina National Bank made the first of several purchases of smaller Southern banks. By the end of the next decade, he’d built a behemoth, brought Bank of America’s headquarters to Charlotte, and made the city the financial capital of the South.

46 THE NEW YORK TIMES VISITS CROOK’S CORNER 1985

Renowned food critic Craig Claiborne championed the elevation of Southern cuisine when he wrote, in a successive series that summer, about restaurants in Winston-Salem and Chapel Hill, kicking off a food movement that pulled North Carolina into the national culinary spotlight.

47 BULL DURHAM 1988

North Carolina has been the background star of films since at least the 1910s. The establishment of the NC Film Office in 1980 put North Carolina out in front, and drew filmmakers and television producers to put our state on screen. The result? One of the most memorable movies ever filmed in and about North Carolina: *Bull Durham*.



48 CAROLINA PANTHERS 1993 The Charlotte Hornets were here first, but it was the Panthers that signaled our arrival on the national scene. The Panthers had the uptown stadium, the lights, and all the glamour. And crucially, they’re the *Carolina* Panthers, a team that the entire state, and the entire region, can be proud of.

49 FAIR AND EQUITABLE

TOBACCO REFORM ACT 2014 Despite its complicated name and language, the law was fairly simple for North Carolina tobacco farmers. It meant the end of the quota system that had kept them in business for decades. The resulting \$10 billion in buyouts allowed farmers to start fresh, some trying their hands at winemaking or aquaculture, others investing in hogs, soybeans, or poultry. Either way, it meant new industries and opportunities.

50 10 MILLIONTH TAR HEEL 2015

At some point in 2015, a baby was born or a family crossed the state border, and North Carolina officially contained 10 million residents. That moment, maybe more than any other on this list, was the culmination of decades of change, of migration from both North and South, and of an economy transformed by technology and innovation. This population spike tells a deeper story, one of traditions old and new being merged, of history being remembered, and of a future being made. **Os**