# AMERICAN HERITAGE HERITAGE TRAVELER



# Guide to Historic Sites in North Carolina







# Colonial Settlements and Historic Homes

#### 1. Historic Halifax

This 1760 town, perched on the southern bank of the Roanoke River, became a transportation hub and crossroads of politics and culture before the American Revolution. The 1776 "Halifax Resolves," drafted here on April 12, became the first official action by an American colony to call for independence from Britain. Five different guided tours of the 40-acre historic district enable visitors to travel through nine 18th- and 19th-century buildings, including taverns, plantation homes, law offices, a jail, and a springhouse. The visitor center features displays on slavery, transportation, and colonial clothing. (252) 583-7191 or www.nchistoricsites.org/halifax

# 2. Historic Hope Plantation

The circa-1803 Federal-and-Georgian style mansion, once owned by Gov. David Stone,

and the modest 1763 colonial King-Bazemore house, built by local planter William King, are the main features of this 45-acre historic site. Ninety-minute guided tours of both homes pass through 16 period-furnished rooms, such as the library, bedrooms, and ballroom. (252) 794-3140 or www.hopeplantation.org

# 3. Historic Edenton

North Carolina's second oldest town served as the colony's first capital from 1722 until 1743, later becoming an important stop on the Maritime Underground Railroad during the Civil War. Guided walking tours of the historic district leave from the visitor center and highlight Edenton's famous 18th- and 19th-century buildings, which include the 1767 Chowan County courthouse, the 1736 St. Paul's church, and the 1827 home of James Iredell, a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. (252) 482-2637 or www.nchistoricsites.org/iredell

# **4. Somerset Place**

The densely forested 100-acre swamp purchased by Josiah Collins in 1774 grew over three generations into one of the largest plantations in the upper South, producing lumber, wheat, corn, and rice. Ninety-minute guided tours of the modern, 31-acre historic property begin in the visitor center, the site of a former boarding school, and pass through eight original 19th-century

buildings, including the slave hospital, dairy, kitchen, laundry, and the 14-room Collins mansion. (252) 797-4560 or www.nchistoricsites.org/somerset

## **5. Wright Brothers National Memorial**

On December 17, 1903, Orville Wright famously took off from Kill Devil Hills in the *Wright Flyer I*, marking the world's first powered and manned aircraft flight. A 10,000-square-foot visitor center features a full-scale replica of the *Flyer* along with a block from the original engine and a reproduction wind tunnel. Visitors can also see the reconstructed Wright brothers' living quarters and hangar. (252) 441-7430 or www.nps.gov/wrbr

# **6. Fort Raleigh National Historic Site**

England's first American colony at Roanoke ended in disaster in 1587 when its 117 settlers mysteriously disappeared. This 512-acre site features a 6,000-square-foot visitor center with exhibits that explore life in the colony, why the colonists' disappeared,

and the area's participation in the Civil War. Within walking distance lie the restored earthworks that surrounded the colony and the Elizabethan Gardens, a 10-acre park with elaborate formal gardens. (252) 473-5772 or www.nps.gov/fora

# 7. Roanoke Island Festival Park

This 27-acre park contains four exhibit areas: the reproduction 16th-century square-rigged sailing

OM (FLAG); OLD SALEM VILLAGE (TOP LEFT); THE BILTMORE COMPANY (TOP CENTER); FAY MATTHEWS (TOP RIGHT

ship, *Elizabeth II*; the recreated Roanoke settlement site in which costumed interpreters demonstrate early-16th-century woodworking, blacksmithing, and other activities; the Adventure Museum, which gives visitors the opportunity to don 16th-century clothing, experiment with an early navigational tool known as an astrolabe, and listen to "Stumpy the Pirate;" and the American Indian Town, which features a Coastal Algonquian community of longhouses, work shelters, and a ceremonial dance circle. (252) 475-1500 or www.roanokeisland.com

Transportation and Military Involvement

## 8. Historic Bath

In 1705 French Protestant traders established this town on the Pamlico River at a strategic point coveted both by hostile Tuscarora Indians and the infamous pirate Captain "Blackbeard." Forty-five minute guided tours take visitors through seven original 18th- and 19th-century structures, including the 1752 Palmer Marsh house, the oldest residence in the state, as well as the period-furnished Bonner house, which was built by pioneer

farmer Joseph Bonner. (252) 923-3971 or www.nchistoricsites.org/bath

# 9. Tryon Palace Historic Sites

Royal British Governor William Tryon brought architect John Hawks from England in 1764 to design this 20-room Georgian palace, which served as the center of North Carolina's colonial government until the Revolution ended. Costumed interpreters lead 45-minute guided tours through the English-style rooms. The

16-acre grounds contain the separate kitchen building, stables, blacksmith shop, and 18th-century British-style gardens. (252) 639-3500 or www.tryonpalace.org

# **10. Beaufort Historic Site**

Established in 1709, this shipbuilding and fishing town was a bustling deep-water port frequented by traders and pirates in the 18th century and later saw extensive use during the Civil War. Today the historic site's restored 18th- and 19th-century structures feature prominently on the 60-minute guided tours that begin in the welcome center and cover six buildings—three

homesteads, the apothecary shop, jail, and county courthouse. (252) 728-5225 or www.beauforthistoricsite.org

# **11. Fort Macon State Park**

Army engineers completed this 119,586-square-foot pentagonal masonry fort on the eastern tip of the Bogue Banks in 1834. During the Civil War in 1862, Union Gen. Ambrose Burnside and 3,000 men bombarded the fort, forcing surrender from Col. Moses J. White and his 450-man garrison in only 11 hours. Since then the fort has served as a military

prison, a state park, and a World-War-II coastal fortress. Ranger-guided tours visit the 26 vaulted casements, gunpowder magazines, the ration storage room, living quarters, and kitchen. The museum, located inside the fort, contains exhibits on World War II with weapons, uniforms, and personal items. (252) 726-3775 or www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/foma/main.php

## 12. Wilmington Railroad Museum

This 1883 railroad freight warehouse, which contains a 7,500-square-foot museum devoted to Wilmington's 170 years of railroad history, features route maps,



Two armies colliding. One nation at Stake.

Bentonville. The last great battle of the Civil War. Just one of more than two hundred interpreted sites found along North Carolina's Civil War Trails. Request a free brochure at visitnc.com/civilwar or call 1.800.VISIT NC.

north carolina

baggage scales, and a replicated ticket counter used during the 19th and 20th centuries when the Wilmington & Weldon and Atlantic Coast Line Railroad stopped here. Visitors can climb aboard an 86-ton steam engine, a Potomac Railroad box car, and a Seaboard Coast Line caboose. (910) 763-2634 or www.wrrm.org

# 13. Battleship North Carolina

When commissioned in April 1941, this battleship, which could reach speeds up to 28 knots, was one of the U.S. Navy's greatest weapons. Armed with three 45-caliber guns and an officer and crew compliment of nearly 2,500, the *North Carolina* participated in every major naval offensive in World War II's Pacific Theater. Nine decks are open to the public; visitors can see the radio and engine rooms, gun turrets, and crew quarters. (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com

# **14. Fort Fisher State Historic Site**

This Confederate fort on the Cape Fear River protected the last remaining supply route for Gen. Robert E. Lee's army near the end of the Civil War. After Union troops stormed the fort's 45-foot-tall earthworks in a massive amphibious assault on January 15, 1865, the Army of Northern Virginia lost critical access to food and ammunition. Later during World War II, Fort Fisher served as an important anti-aircraft gunnery training center. Forty-five-minute guided tours of the 264-acre site begin in the visitor center and lead past the earthworks overlooking the coast and over a traverse featuring a pre-Civil-War 32-pound seacoast gun behind a reconstructed palisade fence. The museum contains exhibits on Civil-War-era artillery, blockade runners, World-War-II servicemen, and artifacts from the shipwreck of Modern Greece, an 1859 British iron steamer that was attacked by both Union and Confederate soldiers in 1862 off the coast of Fort Fisher. (910) 458-5538 or www.nchistoricsites.org/fisher



# **15. North Carolina Museum of History**

This 55,000-square-foot museum explores North Carolina's heritage, including exhibits on the arrival of European colonists, the fight for independence from Britain, the "War Between the States," moonshine production, and modern-day sports figures. Featured artifacts include

19th-century weapons, Civil-Warera photographs, a German periscope from World War I, and a POW bracelet from the Vietnam War. Interactive exhibits enable visitors to handle colonial-era medical tools and Civil War uniforms and equipment, such as a U.S. Cavalry carbine, a dragoon officer's sabre, and a stoneware water jug taken as loot by a Confederate soldier at Hampton Roads. (919) 807-7900 or www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

# 16. Tobacco Farm Life Museum

This five-acre farm village contains seven buildings in which costumed docents demonstrate the activities of rural

19th-century tobacco

planters. The 5,000-square-foot gallery contains tractors and farm equipment, while the homestead features 19th-century furnishings. Visitors can also travel through the replicated tobacco pack house, which includes a weighing and inspection station used in tobacco auctions, as well as a smokehouse, kitchen, and barn. (919) 284-3431 or www.tobaccofarmlifemuseum.org

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# 17. CSS *Neuse* State Historical Site and Governor Caswell Memorial

Under Lt. Benjamin Loyall, this Confederate ironclad patrolled the stretch of the Neuse River from Kinston to New Bern in 1864. Loyall ordered it scuttled in March 1865 as Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman marched toward the coast. A 30-minute guided tour features the excavated remains of the hull and upper structure. A small museum on the grounds explores the political career of North Carolina's first governor, Richard Caswell. (252) 522-2091 or www.nchistoricsites.org/neuse

# 18. Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site

For three days in March 1865, Confederate Gen. Joseph Johnson's army of 21,000 men battered Maj. Gen. William Sherman's 60,000-man force outside of Four Oaks, but failed to break the Union lines. Today the 130-acre park commemorates the last full-scale Civil War battle fought in North Carolina with a 1,000-square-foot visitor center featuring battle maps and muskets, the 1855 Harper House, which the Union army used as a field hospital,

and a quarter-mile trail following the original Federal trenches. (910) 594-0789 or www.nchistoricsites.org/bentonvi

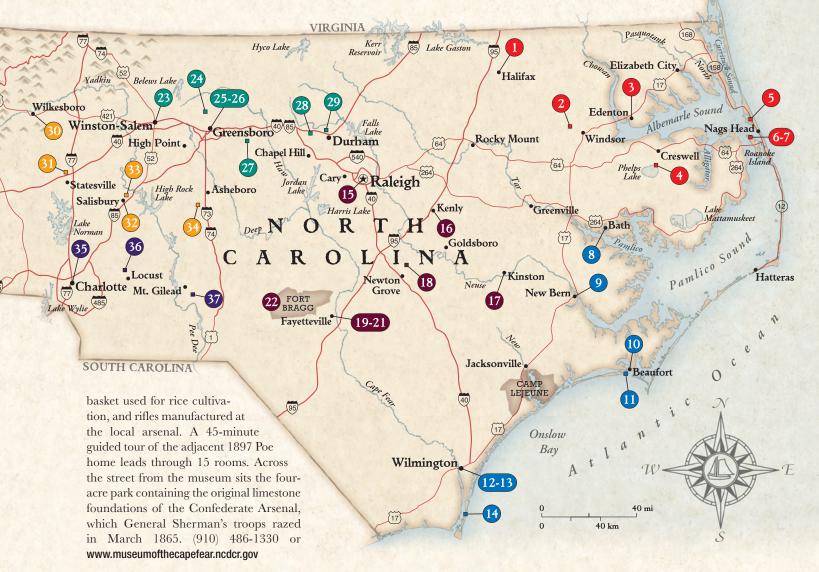
# 19. Historic Fayetteville

First settled in 1739 by emigrants from the Scottish Highlands this modern town of 210,000 still contains 19th-century mansions, estates, and more than a dozen other accessible historical points of interest. The stone marker at Liberty Point downtown bears the names of the 55 patriots who signed an early document declaring their commitment to freedom from Britain. Standing in the downtown circle intersection of Hay, Person, Gillespie, and Green streets is the 1838 Market House, formerly the city center of commerce and government, which features a square arcade and cupola bell reminiscent of the English town hall market. Fifteen minutes outside of town sits the one-acre Averasboro Battlefield Complex, a museum to a Civil War engagement in which 1,000 Union and Confederate soldiers died on March 14, 1865. (910) 483-5311 or www.visitfayettevillenc.com

# 20. Museum of the Cape Fear Historical Complex

This 14,000-square-foot museum, which features eight exhibitions on the history of southeastern North Carolina, examines Paleo-Indians, 18th-century Scottish immigration, the American Revolution, and the steamship industry on the Cape Fear River. Artifacts include a 2,000-year-old Indian canoe, an early 19th-century winnowing





# 21. Airborne and Special Operations Museum

This 59,000-square-foot facility documents the history of the Airborne from its beginnings in 1940 to the present day. Exhibits include a replica of a burned-out French village in Normandy liberated by Airborne units in June 1944 and a diorama depicting a Special Forces hidesite, used for reconnaissance during the Persian Gulf War. Aircraft on display include a Douglas C-47 Skytrain, Waco CG-4A glider, and a UH-1 Huey helicopter from the Korean War. (910) 643-2766 or www.asomf.org

## 22. Fort Bragg

Established in 1918 as a field artillery base, this fort serves today as the world's largest airborne facility and home of the 82nd Airborne Division, renowned for its daring drop behind enemy lines on D-Day. A 251-square-mile base contains 352

historic buildings, spread throughout the Beaux-Arts Old Post Historic District, and the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, where military personnel trained during the Cold War. (910) 396-6680 or www.bragg.army.mil

# Estates and Battlefields

# 23. Old Salem Museums and Gardens

Moravians from the Czech Republic founded this town in 1766. Today, 80 of Old Salem's buildings have been restored, including two schools, a fire engine house, and shoemaker shop. The 100-acre outdoor museum features recreations of daily 19th-century tasks, such as washing clothing, baking bread, and making furniture. Visitors can see fruit orchards, herb

gardens, and take a 50-minute guided tour of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, which has 12 galleries of paintings, textiles, furniture, and metalwork. (336) 721-7300 or www.oldsalem.org

# 24. Guilford Courthouse National Military Park

On March 15, 1781, British general Lord Charles Cornwallis's force of 1,900 men suffered 25 percent casualties on this site in a pyrrhic victory over Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene and his 4,500-man army. Within seven months, Cornwallis would surrender his weakened army to the Americans. The 226-acre park contains four miles of walking trails and an 8,000-square-foot visitor center featuring exhibits and Revolutionary War artifacts. A 2.5-mile driving tour leads past the gravesites of Declaration of Independence signers John Penn and William Hooper. (336) 288-1776 or www.nps.gov/guco

# 25. Blandwood Mansion

This 1795 mansion, renovated in 1846 for antebellum governor John Motley Morehead, is the oldest Italianate building in the United States. Docents lead 45-minute guided tours through the farmhouse, law office, and kitchen. The two-acre grounds feature a rose garden and a kitchen garden. (336) 272-5003 or www.blandwood.org



This 30,000-square-foot museum commemorates the famous 1960 Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins during the civil rights movement. Located within the F. W. Woolworth building where the protests took place, the museum features the original "whites only" lunch counter, where young black activists demanded service, and 16 exhibits on racial violence, Jim Crow laws, and the overall civil rights movement. (336) 274-9199 or www.sitinmovement.org

# **27. Alamance Battleground**

On May 16, 1771, 2,000 disgruntled North Carolina farmers—members of a group



known as the Regulators—attacked the royal militia at this field near Alamance Creek in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain lower taxes and end corruption among sheriffs. Today the 40-acre site features a 2,240-square-foot visitor center with a 25-minute film on the battle, as well as arti-

facts excavated from the battlefield, including a Continental Army button and a powder horn. Nearby sits the John Allen House belonging to the brother-in-law of prominent Regulator Herman Husband, which contains period furniture, cookware, and a spinning wheel. (336) 227-4785 or www.nchistoricsites.org/alamance

# 28. Bennett Place State Historic Site

On April 17, 1865, eight days after General Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, Gen. Joseph Johnson and Gen. William T. Sherman first met beneath a truce flag at this 1846 estate to discuss the largest troop surrender of the war, including the Army of Tennessee and all remaining Confederate forces in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. A 30-minute guided tour showcases

three rooms with period furniture. The visitor center features artifacts from the Bennett family and Civil War clothing and weapons. (919) 383-4345 or www.nchistoricsites.org/bennett

# 29. Duke Homestead

J. B. Duke, the son of prominent Orange County tobacco farmer Washington Duke, built this modest frame house in 1852 on a 300-acre plot. After the war, Duke established North Carolina's first tobacco factory, which soon evolved into the American Tobacco Company. Visitors can take a 45-minute guided tour of the family home, smokehouse, curing barn, pack house, and tobacco factories. (919) 477-5498 or www.nchistoricsites.org/duke

# Colonial Forts and Museums

# **30. Wilkes Heritage Museum**

This 20,000-square-foot 1902 Wilkes County Courthouse houses a local county history museum. Exhibits examine the early settlement years, the American Revolution, NASCAR racing, and the moonshine distilling process. Located on the two-acre grounds are the 1779 Robert Cleveland Home, a log cabin owned by the Revolutionary War captain, and the 1859 Old Wilkes Jail. (336) 667-3171 or www.wilkesheritagemuseum.org

# **31. Fort Dobbs State Historic Site**

When completed in 1756 during the French and Indian War, this oak-walled fort was the only fortified military headquarters on the Carolina frontier. White settlers used it successfully to defend against an attack on February 27, 1760, by Cherokee Indians incensed by numerous insults inflicted by their former British allies. The 32-acre park hosts frequent living history events and permanently features the excavated foundation of the original fort. The visitor center contains reproduction firearms, uniforms, weapons, and a scale model of the fort. (704) 873-5882 or www.fortdobbs.org

# **32. Salisbury National Cemetery and Confederate Prison**

An estimated 5,000 Union soldiers lie buried in this 13-acre cemetery, once the site of a Confederate prison in which as many as 11,700 inmates died between December 1861 and November 1864. A 10-mile audio driving tour begins at the Salisbury Visitors Center and travels past

# Visit Greensboro



Visit the Greensboro Historical Museum to view its magnificent collection of Confederate firearms, along with other Civil War artifacts, and paintings by Don Troiani. The exhibit stands apart from others by featuring the finest examples from every major Southern armory. Located in the cultural district of downtown. Admission, tours and parking are free.



800.344.2282 visitgreensboronc.com

monuments, the guard master's lodge, and gravestones of such notable figures as Buffalo Soldier Marshall Sharp. The newer 52-acre national cemetery annex, located three miles to the northwest, contains more than 4,000 graves of 21st-century veterans. (704) 636-2661 or www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/salisbury.asp

# 33. North Carolina Transportation Museum

This 57-acre museum complex features a 37-bay Roundhouse, one of the largest ever built, and 25 restored locomotives. Highlights include an Atlantic Coast Line #1031, Duke Power Company #111, and Seaboard Air Line #544, as well as 20 additional rail cars. Visitors can watch an airplane restoration in the 1905 repair shop and see antique automobiles in the flue shop warehouse. (704) 636-2889 or www.nctrans.org

## **34. North Carolina Aviation Museum**

This 20,000-square-foot museum, which lies within two hangars at the Asheboro Municipal Airport, contains eight operable military aircraft, including a Swiss P-3 from the late 1950s, a Cessna L-19 "Bird Dog" used in the Vietnam and Korean wars, and a 1943 Piper J-3 "Flitfire," the last plane ever flown by Orville Wright. Visitors can also see military uniforms and B-25 and Douglas engines. (336) 625-0170 or www.ncairmuseum.org



# 35. Levine Museum of the New South

This 40,000-square-foot museum focuses on post-Civil War history with exhibits on the industrialization of agriculture and growth of the railroad, Jim Crow segregation, and modern immigration. Interactive displays enable visitors to sit inside a sharecropper's cabin, run their hands through seed cotton, and wander through shops along a recreated 1940s Main Street. (704) 333-1887 or www.museumofthenewsouth.org

# **36. Reed Gold Mine**

Twelve-year-old Conrad Reed, the son of a Hessian deserter-turned-farmer, discovered a 17-pound gold nugget on this site in 1799. The placer creek gold mine that soon developed here was the first of its kind in the New World. The visitor center contains exhibits on the formation of gold, the mining process, and the metal's many historic uses.

# North Carolina's Crystal Coast



Discover a place where timeless beauty, coastal charm and rich history run wild. Where free-roaming Spanish horses, pristine beaches and friendly faces welcome you all year long. With so much to enjoy, you'll leave life as you know it behind - on North Carolina's Crystal Coast.



800.786.6962 crystalcoastnc.org

# Salisbury-Rowan County



Find your authentic North Carolina Civil War experience in Salisbury-Rowan County. Explore three NC Civil War Trail sites, the Salisbury Confederate Prison site, 11 historic districts and over 20 antique shops. Stay and research your family history. Live the story of American history at its finest – an unforgettable adventure awaits you.



800.332.2343 visitsalisburync.com

Visitors can pan for gold during the summer months and hike a 1.5-mile nature trail. (704) 721-4653 or www.reedmine.com

## **37. Town Creek Indian Mound**

This large ceremonial mound was the centerpiece of a large religious and political center built by the Pee Dee people along the Little River during the 11th century. Visitors can see the ceremonial center, temple mound, and mortuary. The adjacent visitor center displays Pee Dee artifacts, including spear and arrowhead points, soap stone bowls, game pieces, and jewelry. (910) 439-6802 or www.nchistoricsites.org/town

Vanderbilts, Sandburgs, and the Cherokee Nation

## 38. Historic Asheville

During his search for gold and El Dorado, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto visited this city in 1540 when it belonged to the Cherokee Indians. Europeans began permanently settling here in 1784. The downtown Pack Square is known for its Art Deco buildings, which include the 1913 Grove Park Inn, which hosted eight U.S. presidents, the

1928 city hall, and the 1929 S&W Cafeteria. Visitors can take the self-guided 1.7-mile Urban Trail loop that winds through the city. www.exploreasheville.com

## 39. Biltmore

George Vanderbilt II, grandson of industrial tycoon Cornelius Vanderbilt, modeled this 250-room summer estate after the ornate châteaux of France's Loire Valley. The Biltmore opened in 1895, its grand mansion surrounded by 125,000-acres of gardens and landscapes engineered by Frederick Law Olmstead, who designed New York City's Central Park. Today 8,000-acres remain. Visitors can tour the mansion, walk the gardens, ride 80 miles of horse trails, shop in a complex of eateries and stores, and stay in a country inn. The Antler Hill Village features exhibits on farming and the Vanderbilt family. (800) 411-3812 or www.biltmore.com

# **40. Blue Ridge National Heritage Area**

This 11,000-square-mile heritage region in the Great Smoky Mountains, first populated by the Cherokee Indians and later by Scotch-Irish immigrants, played a significant role in North Carolina's history. It was here that the mountain folk originated their traditional craft movement and rich musical heritage. Historic sites include Fort Defiance in Lenoir, home to Revolutionary War Gen. William Lenoir; the Basilica of Saint Lawrence



in Asheville, built by famous architect Raphael Guastavino; the Historic Johnson Farm in Hendersonville, a 19th-century tobacco farm; and the Vance Birthplace in Weaverville, home to North Carolina politician Zebulon Baird Vance. (828) 298-5330 or www.blueridgeheritage.com

## 41. Western North Carolina Air Museum

This 10,000-square-foot museum, contained within a hanger across from Hendersonville Airport, features 13 aircraft including a 1945 Stearman N2S-4, a 1949 Ercoupe 415CD, and a 1936 Piper J-2. Displays also include jet engines, propellers, flight manuals, and model airplanes. (828) 698-2482 or www.wncairmuseum.com

# 42. Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site

Author of the *Rootabaga Stories* and a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Lincoln, Carl Sandburg lived in this 1838 Greek-Revival mountain home between 1945 and 1967. Visitors can take a 30-minute guided tour of the home he named "Connemara" and see the family's original furnishings and personal items, including their 10,000-book library. The 264-acre site also contains vegetable and flower gardens, five miles of walking trails, and the goat farm, once maintained by Sandburg's wife, Lilian. (828) 693-4178 or www.nps.gov/carl

## 43. Museum of the Cherokee Indian

This 30,000-square-foot museum of the Cherokee Nation examines more than 11,000 years of Indian life in North Carolina, starting from the Paleo-Indian period and progressing through the Archaic and Mississippian cultures, the establishment of trade routes, and their disastrous clashes with European-American civilization. Digital displays and holograms depict various aspects of tribal life, including cooking, while artwork details important events, such as the Trail of Tears. (828) 497-3481 or www.cherokeemuseum.org

