

## CHAPTER

## 7

## The Antebellum Era

## Chapter Preview

## Terms:

antebellum era, states' rights, republican simplicity, War of 1812, Rip Van Winkle state, subsistence farming, clubbing, recession, internal improvements, canal, common school, Literary Fund, suffrage, Democratic Party, Whig Party, curriculum, literate, plank road, Trail of Tears, plantation, staple crop, yeoman farmer, artisan, emancipation, slave code, quarters, free black

## People:

Thomas Day, Nathaniel Macon, Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, Benjamin Forsyth, Johnston Blakeley, Otway Burns, Dolley Payne Madison, Archibald D. Murphey, William Gaston, Joseph Caldwell, David L. Swain, John Motley Morehead, Calvin H. Wiley, Mary Bayard Clarke, Edwin M. Holt, John Reed, Christopher Bechtler, Tsali, William H. Thomas, John C. Stanly, "Elder" Ralf Freeman, John Chavis

## Places:

Beaufort, Portsmouth, Morganton, Wilkesboro, Statesville, Goldsboro, Morehead City, Durham, Rocky Mount, Rutherfordton, Gold Hill, Qualla

Thomas Day was a rarity among North Carolinians in the **antebellum era** (the time in nineteenth-century America before the Civil War began in 1861). Although his heritage was African American, this "free person of color" overcame the prejudice often directed toward people like him. About 1825, he went into business in the little town of Milton, on the Dan River near the Virginia line. His woodworking skills made him a celebrity among state residents. He could make pieces of furniture that left some customers speechless when they first saw his work. Some of the most important residents of the state even had him carve their mantels and stairs. They included physicians, planters, legislators, even a governor or two. His curved edges were as graceful as the wings of a swan, his curled trim was often as elegant and elaborate as a royal gown, and his lacquered finish shone like the luster of polished gemstones. For more than thirty years, Day and a biracial crew—some of whom were enslaved, but not by him—made furniture in an abandoned tavern. In a time period when almost all black residents were enslaved, and most white citizens poor, Day distinguished himself and brought fame to North Carolina. He also made enough money to send his daughters north to be educated at an integrated school and have a life that they could not have in the South.



Self Check Quiz  
COMING SOON



Key Terms

well prepared to manufacture all kinds of MAHOGANY,  
NUT, AND STAINED FURNITURE He has on hand a small  
of Mahogany Furniture, made of the best St. Domingo mahog-  
n the newest fashion, and executed in the most faithful manner."

—Advertisement, *The Hillsborough Recorder*, April 6, 1825



Thomas Day  
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Gallery, March 1950



Learn NC:  
Thomas Day

In the decades between their acceptance of the U.S. Constitution and the advent of the Civil War, North Carolinians struggled at first, then succeeded at getting their state off the ground. For years they suffered for their lack of navigable rivers and good ports, and thousands of residents moved west. When a new technology—railroads—became available in the 1830s, North Carolinians transformed themselves and their state. They soon had their farms, factories, schools, and stores up and running in a way that would benefit the majority of citizens. In the space of a generation, North Carolina went from being one of the worst states in the Union to having the potential to be one of the best.

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**Background:** The largest collection of Thomas Day's furniture is in the State Museum of History in Raleigh. Some of his pieces are almost always on display for visitors.

# Signs of the Times



## Population

The state had the slowest growth rate in the nation during the antebellum era. Roughly 100,000 residents were added every ten years. From a population of 478,000 in 1800, the state grew to well over 900,000 residents at the end of the 1850s.

## U.S. Expansion

Between 1790 and 1860, the nation added twenty new states. In order of admission, they were Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama, Maine, Missouri, Arkansas, Michigan, Florida, Texas, Iowa, Wisconsin, California, Minnesota, and Oregon.

## Literature

Noah Webster of Massachusetts published a comprehensive dictionary in 1828, introducing many American words and simplified American spellings (like *color* instead of the English *colour*). His second edition, published in 1840, contained the word *bunkum*, named for Buncombe County. This word was created by a North Carolinian to describe a political speech of little value. We still use the slang word *bunk*.

## Religion

The Second Great Awakening encouraged people of the new nation to join churches. It was started in Kentucky by people who had moved there from North Carolina. The revival quickly spread back to North Carolina and led to the growth of the Baptist and Methodist churches. By 1850, half the churchgoers in the state belonged to one of these denominations.

## Sports

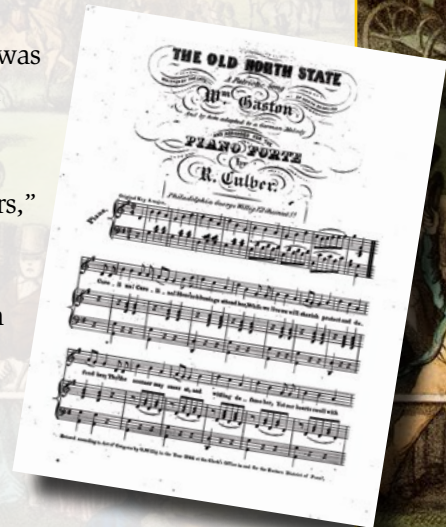
Horse racing took the state by storm in the early 1800s. Almost every town had a racecourse. In the mid-1800s, North Carolinians played “fives,” a simpler version of tennis that used solid wooden rackets. “Bandy” was a game like golf where curved sticks knocked tiny balls—covered in leather and filled with goose feathers—into holes scattered around a field.

## Science and Technology

William Fox Talbot in England and Louis Daguerre in France each developed the science of photography in the late 1830s. It took until about 1850 for “daguerreotypists” to appear in North Carolina. The person having a portrait taken often had to sit perfectly still for more than a minute.

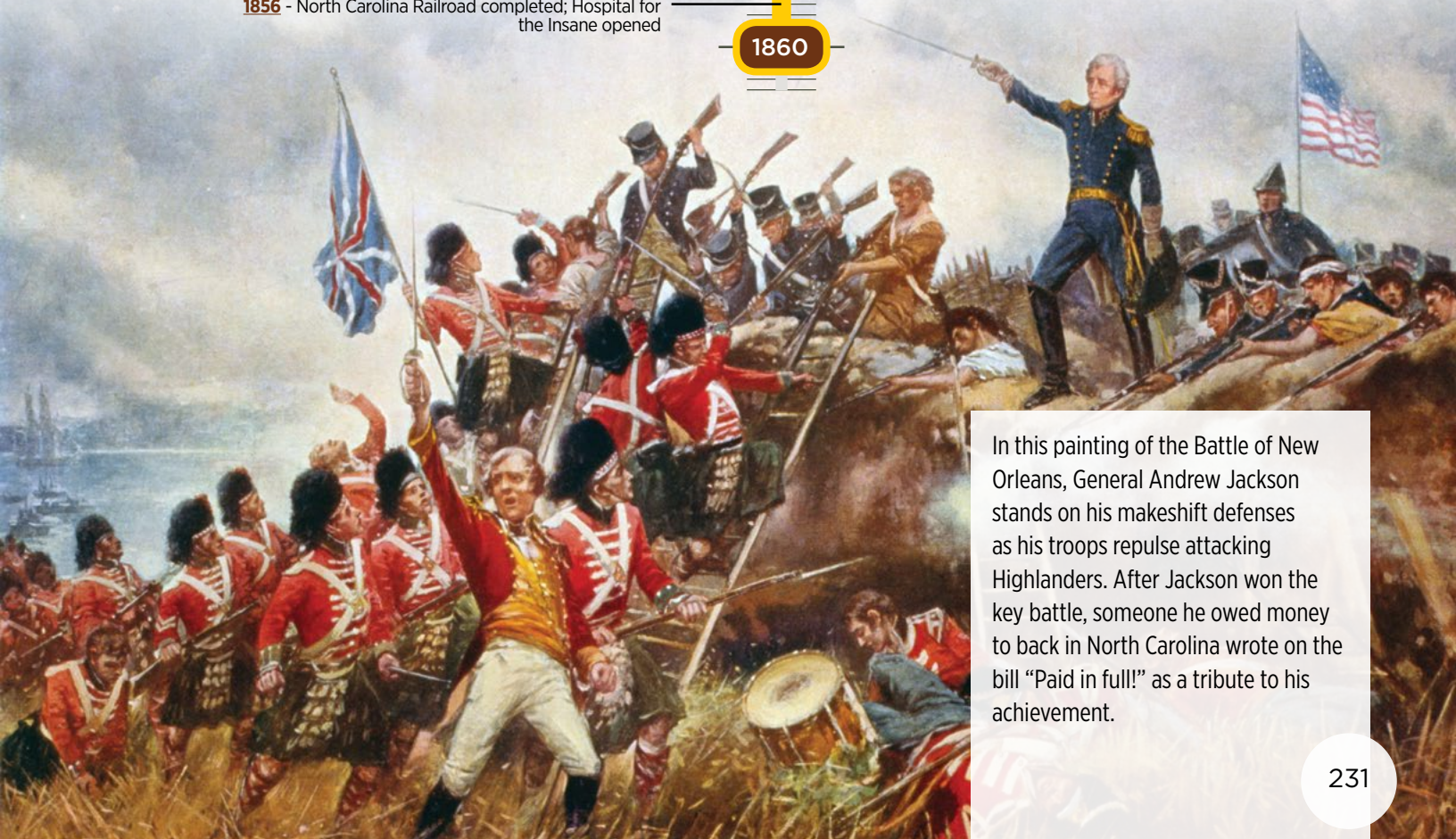
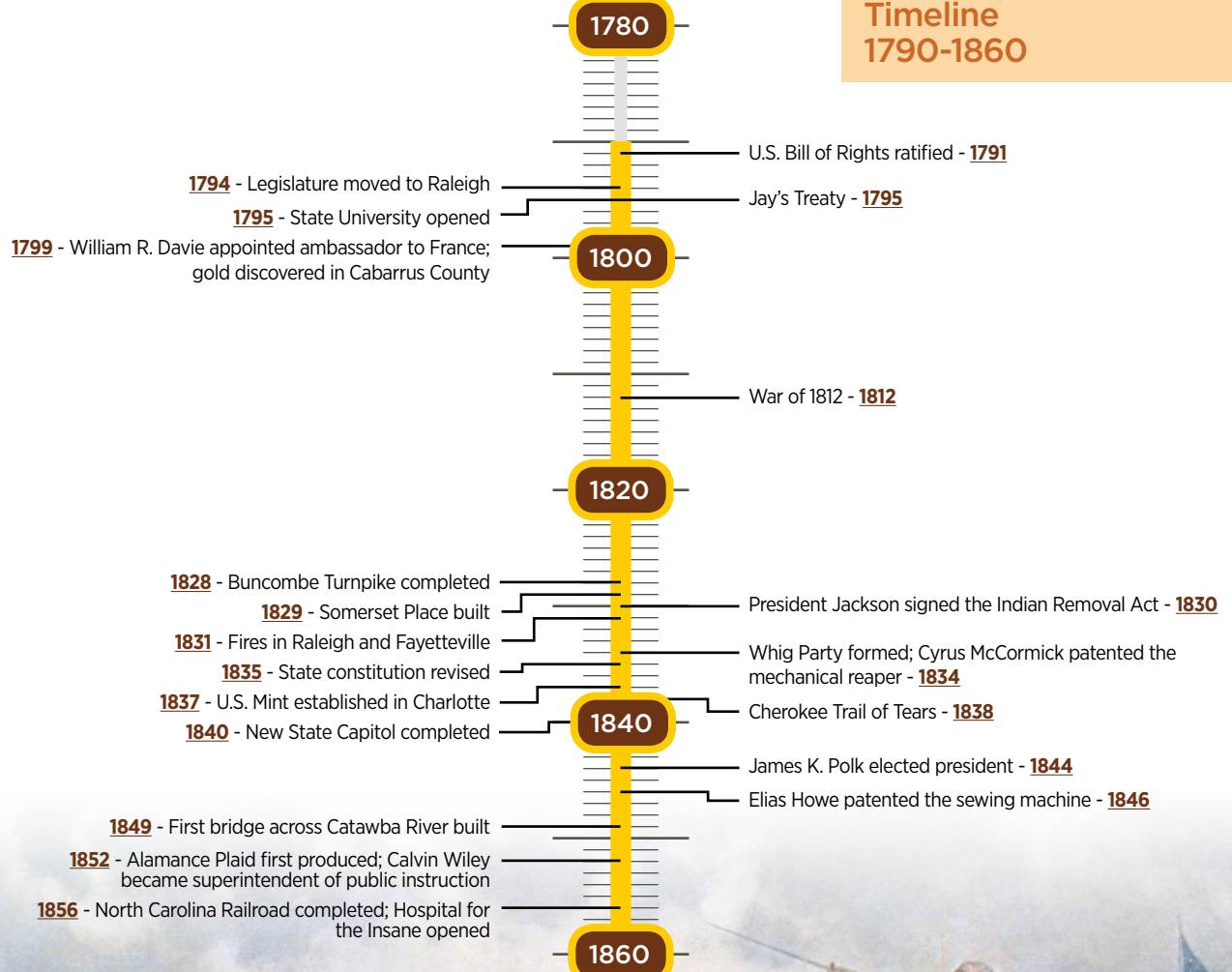
## Music

While the waltz was being introduced in Europe, North Carolinians still danced “scampers,” an early form of square dancing. Attorney William Gaston and his sister composed “The Old North State” to create state loyalty. It was first sung at a political rally in 1842. In 1926, it became the state song.



**Figure 7.1**

**Timeline**  
1790-1860



In this painting of the Battle of New Orleans, General Andrew Jackson stands on his makeshift defenses as his troops repulse attacking Highlanders. After Jackson won the key battle, someone he owed money to back in North Carolina wrote on the bill "Paid in full!" as a tribute to his achievement.

## Section 1

# The State That Moved Like a Turtle



War of 1812: Forgotten but Important

## As you read, look for

- ▶ North Carolinians' belief in states' rights and their turn toward Jeffersonian ideals;
- ▶ how Nathaniel Macon's lifestyle represented "republican simplicity";
- ▶ causes of the War of 1812 and its effects on the nation and the state;
- ▶ North Carolinians who played roles in the War of 1812;
- ▶ terms: **states' rights**, **republican simplicity**, **War of 1812**.

Setting a Purpose

a-z

GLOSSARY

North Carolina had been a backwater colony before the Revolution. Little changed, relatively speaking, once the Constitution was written. Much of the political power remained in richer states like New York and Virginia. Although North Carolina was large in area and people, it only marginally shaped the early nation. Its tradition of distrusting political power of any type, however, reflected the governing approach that dominated the nation after 1800, and North Carolina began to contribute to the first ranks of national leadership.



**Right:** Several generations of the James Iredell family lived in this house in Edenton. It was built during the Revolutionary War and expanded during the War of 1812.

## North Carolina and Federalism

North Carolina's defiant character came out soon after the state joined the Union. Congress had passed a law to organize the United States Supreme Court. The law said that any dispute between a state and people in another state would be decided in the federal court, not the state courts. North Carolinians once again remembered how William Tryon had tried to take away their ability to govern themselves. They objected to this measure so strongly that the state legislature, meeting in 1790, refused to take an oath of allegiance to the new federal government.

North Carolinians were happy to see the ratification of the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It reserved to the states or to the people all power not delegated to the federal government in the Constitution itself. North Carolina, thus, became one of the first proponents of **states' rights**, the political position that the states could assert their independence when they believed the federal government was doing something wrong. U.S. Supreme Court Justice James Iredell of Edenton argued this position in 1794. His dissent against the rest of the Supreme Court helped pave the way for the passage of the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution. It restrained the Supreme Court from taking over cases brought by a citizen of one state against another state.

During the 1790s, the Federalists who wrote the Constitution continued to run the new nation. Only a few North Carolinians had a role in running the government. In addition to James Iredell on the Supreme Court, John Steele of Salisbury became the comptroller of the treasury, which meant that he made sure the accounts were accurate and honest. William R. Davie became ambassador to France in 1799.

North Carolinians tried as hard as they could to follow Federalist policies, but state leaders often disagreed with what was going on in the nation. Some congressmen objected to plans to pay off all the war debts of the various states. They did not want poor North Carolinians to help pay off other states' debts.

*We the People*

UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

## Amendment X

BILL OF RIGHTS

*The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.*



## Fort Macon

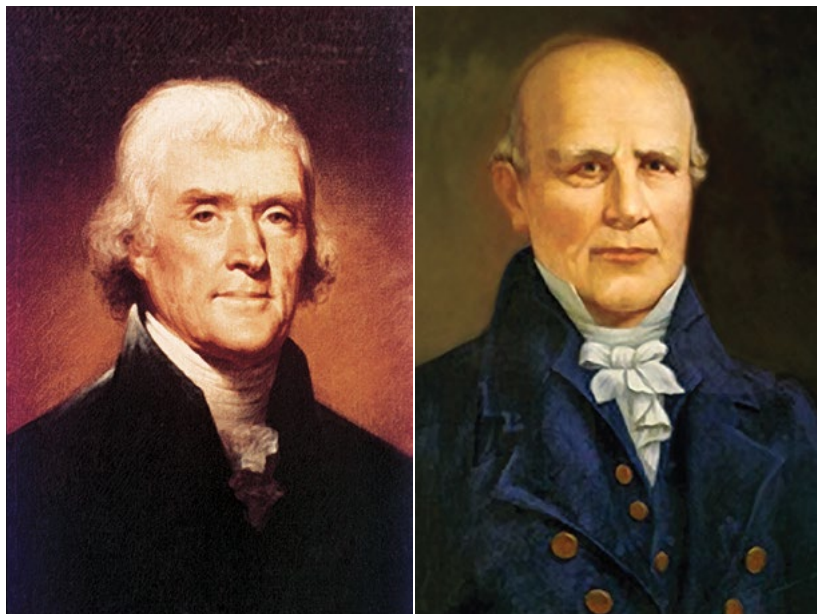
When the French Revolution caused France and England to go to war in 1794, President Washington declared the United States to be *neutral* (not taking sides) in the conflict. North Carolinians, however, still resented the British for what they had done during the Regulation and Revolution. Many openly sided with the French. French ships were even supplied in ports like Beaufort and New Bern.

Many North Carolinians condemned the Federalists when Jay's Treaty was approved in 1795. One part of that treaty restricted the size of cargoes shipped to British islands in the Caribbean. Since much of the profit gained from North Carolina products came from such islands, this hurt the state. As a result, in the 1796 presidential election, North Carolinians voted for Antifederalists, who had begun to call themselves Democratic-Republicans, led by Thomas Jefferson. Only in 1798, when France threatened the United States with war because Jay's Treaty helped the British, did the state vote for Federalists.

## North Carolinians Become Jeffersonians

Americans who came to distrust the Federalists rallied to the leadership of Thomas Jefferson. The Virginian author of the Declaration of Independence believed the Constitution did not give the Federalists the power to do all the things they wanted to do. Many Antifederalists in North Carolina agreed, and their leaders soon controlled the state. William R. Davie, the state's leading Federalist, was so disheartened by this attitude that he moved to South Carolina. A Jeffersonian, Nathaniel Macon, replaced him as the state's most influential leader.

Macon lived in Warren County in a small house on a large farm near the Roanoke River. He had fought at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, attended Princeton University, and served as an Antifederalist congressman through the 1790s. From 1801 to 1807, during Jefferson's presidency, Macon served as Speaker of the House of Representatives in Washington, one of the most powerful positions in the nation. Macon stayed in Congress, in the House or Senate, for more than twenty years.



**Right:** One of the most important elections in the early history of our nation came in 1800, when North Carolinians helped Thomas Jefferson become president of the United States. **Far Right:** Nathaniel Macon's views reflected North Carolina's strict Republican values.

Macon became North Carolina's leading spokesman for **republican simplicity**. The phrase meant something very particular to him and many of his fellow North Carolinians. The best citizens in a republic lived as simply and independently as possible, in the country if possible. They believed Americans should be self-sustaining farmers, who depended upon themselves, their family, and their neighbors—in that order—to provide for their needs. Government was to stay out of the way, except to provide defense and other matters essential to the nation's survival. Education and religion, especially, were family matters. The best government was to be local, where people knew one another and could work out what needed to be done.

Macon was very *frugal* (cautious with money). Although he was a prosperous man, he lived his adult life in a two-room house with a nearby kitchen. When he died, he ordered his family not to put a tombstone above his grave. Buying a tombstone went against his ideas about simple living. Instead, he asked his neighbors to each bring a rock from their farm and cover his grave.

Macon was as consistent in his politics as he was in his habits. When President Jefferson doubled the size of the nation with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Macon did not support him. He feared that such a "loose" use of the powers of government, where the president could do things that were not specifically listed in the Constitution, would make the federal government too powerful. Most Americans, however, thought it was more important to have access to the Mississippi River basin for its good soils and closeness to the port of New Orleans.

## DID YOU KNOW...

While in Congress, Nathaniel Macon was so opposed to government spending that he voted against the government paying for furniture in the White House. He believed each president should be responsible for his own furnishings.

### Map 7.1

#### The Mississippi River Basin

**Map Skill:** Which river would North Carolinians most likely use to reach the Mississippi River?





Ncpedia:  
Otway Burns



**Above:** The tomb of Otway Burns at the Old Burying Ground in Beaufort.

**Below:** This 1873 painting by William Henry Powell depicts the Battle of Lake Erie, one of the greatest American victories in the War of 1812. It hangs in the Senate Wing of the U.S. Capitol.



Macon was flexible, though, when it came to the issue of national security. When President James Madison, Jefferson's friend and ally, continued to oppose the British attempts to control American development, Macon helped sponsor some of the bills in Congress that led to the War of 1812.

## North Carolina in the War of 1812

In the **War of 1812**, Americans fought the British to ensure that Americans could settle the West and be safe from interference on the high seas. Ever since the end of the War for Independence, citizens who moved across the Appalachians had been at risk of Indian attacks. Often, British officials in Canada and Florida had supplied the native nations with arms. Travel across the Atlantic was also dangerous, especially during periods when the British stopped American ships to see if deserters from their navy were aboard. Sometimes the wrong people were “impressed”—that is, taken back into British service—even though they were Americans. The War of 1812 had a *marginal* (minor) effect on North Carolina itself. The British did land at Portsmouth but decided that the state was too unimportant to invade. More than 10,000 North Carolina men were called into militia service during the three-year conflict. Some were sent to Canada to fight with an invading American army. Most went to the Outer Banks or the Cape Fear to guard the state's coastline. Others were sent to fight Native Americans in Georgia but arrived just “in time to look on” as the campaign ended.

Some North Carolinians played a part in winning the war outside the state. Benjamin Forsyth served in the U.S. Army. He rose to be a lieutenant colonel before being killed in action in 1814 in Canada. Forsyth County was later named for him. Johnston Blakeley was a captain in the U.S. Navy. He won a number of sea battles against British warships and boldly disrupted traffic in the English Channel. In 1814, his ship disappeared at sea. Congress awarded Blakeley's family a gold medal for his service. Congress commissioned Otway Burns of Beaufort to be a privateer, granting him the right to capture enemy merchant ships to damage their supply lines. Burns sailed back and forth from Canada to Brazil and took so many enemy ships and cargo that he became one of North Carolina's wealthiest men. Later, the mountain town of Burnsville was named for him.

Two former residents of the state became national heroes. When the British invaded Maryland in 1814 and threatened to take Washington, DC, First Lady Dolley Payne Madison, a Guilford County native, remained in the Executive Mansion as long as she could to protect important documents. When she finally had to flee, she refused to leave until a famous portrait of George Washington was stripped from its frame, with help from slaves, and taken along.

## The Art of Politics



During the War of 1812, the British invaded and set fire to Washington, DC. This British cartoon titled “The Fall of Washington or Maddy in full flight” shows President James Madison and probably John Armstrong, his secretary of war, with bundles of papers, fleeing from Washington, with burning buildings behind them.

Waxhaw native Andrew Jackson became the leading military figure of the war. After the War for Independence, Jackson studied law in Salisbury, then moved to the area that became the state of Tennessee. He became powerful as a political and military leader. In 1814, he commanded the army that defeated the Native Americans in what are today the states of Alabama and Tennessee. He then kept the British from capturing New Orleans in 1815, an act that secured national growth west of the mountains.

### It's Your Turn

1. What did the term “republican simplicity” mean to many North Carolinians?
2. How did Nathaniel Macon’s views of government align with the national political parties and leaders?
3. How did events during the War of 1812 help the career of Andrew Jackson?

**DID YOU KNOW...**

The War of 1812 has been called America’s “second war for independence.”

## Section 2

## The Rip Van Winkle State



Internal  
Improvements of  
Archibald Murphey



Rip Van Winkle



### As you read, look for

- ▶ how Rip Van Winkle came to represent the poor conditions in North Carolina after the War of 1812;
- ▶ Archibald Murphey's proposals for improving transportation and education;
- ▶ why water transportation was unsuccessful in North Carolina;
- ▶ obstacles that delayed the accomplishment of Murphey's proposals;
- ▶ terms: **Rip Van Winkle state, subsistence farming, clubbing, recession, internal improvements, canal, common school, Literary Fund.**

a-z  
GLOSSARY

One of the most popular stories told in the early years of the 1800s concerned Rip Van Winkle, a fictional character in a village along the Hudson River in New York. He was said to have gone hunting, fallen asleep for twenty years, and—when he awoke—been amazed at the changes that had occurred all around him.

In the twenty years after the War of 1812, many Americans thought North Carolinians resembled “Old Rip.” At a time when the nation was growing and changing, the leaders of our state seemed to be asleep to improving conditions. We were being called a **Rip Van Winkle state**. By that time, for example, three generations of farmers had plowed the best land over and over. Because little was done to preserve the land, the topsoil eroded away in heavy rains. Over time, the size of harvests went down. Soil washed into nearby streams, clogging them and increasing the chance of flooding. There was a major flood in the western part of the state in 1816. Down east, the sediment carried by the Roanoke, Tar, and Neuse Rivers gradually flowed into the sounds, making them even shallower and harder to navigate. Over time, it became more difficult to make a living in many parts of the state.

**Below:** This depiction of the Rip Van Winkle story, displayed at the public library in Statesville, shows the young “Rip” ready to go hunting from his hometown of Sleepy Hollow. In the story, he falls asleep, awakens after twenty years, and finds that the world had changed. The story inspired North Carolina’s nickname as it fell behind the times.



## Subsistence Farming

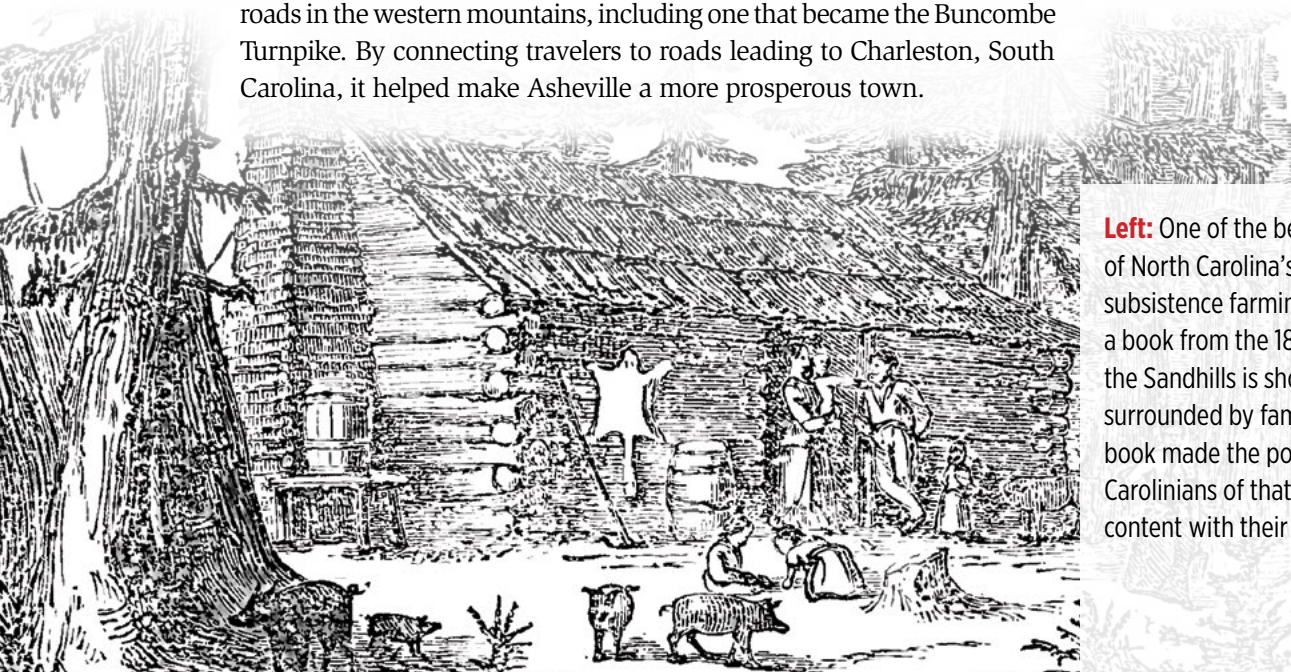
Most families, therefore, had to practice **subsistence farming**, where they grew first what they needed to feed themselves and their livestock. Only then could they sell their surplus, often to their neighbors. A farmer might pay for the repair of his wagon by helping the wagon maker harvest his corn. A farm wife might pay for a barrel of molasses by sending a son to chop firewood for a period of time. Such bartering (trading one item for another) was very important because most North Carolinians lacked a lot of cash. As a Beaver Dam resident recalled, with such a system “the people were not rich, but they were independent of want or care.”

Neighbors also cooperated in long-distance marketing. Most farmers did not grow enough to go to Charleston or Wilmington by themselves. (The horses would eat up all the profits if the wagon was half full!) So neighborhoods practiced **clubbing**, where they combined their surplus crops into one large load and trusted their friends and neighbors to go to market for them. One of the best returns on farming was the sale of livestock. They were cheap to raise because the animals had the run of the woods to look for food.

## The State Struggles

The state did little to help. Most of the legislators were followers of Nathaniel Macon, who continued to argue that most problems could be solved without government direction. North Carolinians elected representatives who would not raise the already low tax rate. Most years, the state barely had enough money to pay the salaries of state officials. Sometimes sheriffs did not even bother to send tax collections to Raleigh. Many of the academies founded in the state closed when students could not keep up payments. In 1826, a governor observed that it had been easier to be educated in North Carolina before the Revolution than it was after 1815.

There were only a few hopeful developments. The state continued to hold stock in banks it had chartered in Wilmington and New Bern before the War of 1812. Several partners started a cotton mill at Lincolnton to make yarn. Otway Burns used some of his wartime profits to run a steamboat from Wilmington to Fayetteville. The state also started building roads in the western mountains, including one that became the Buncombe Turnpike. By connecting travelers to roads leading to Charleston, South Carolina, it helped make Asheville a more prosperous town.



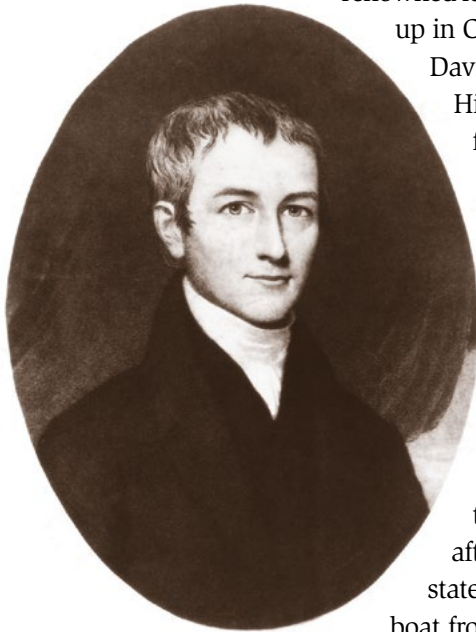
**Left:** One of the best illustrations of North Carolina’s devotion to subsistence farming appeared in a book from the 1850s. A father in the Sandhills is shown lazing away, surrounded by family members. The book made the point that many North Carolinians of that period seemed content with their traditions.

A national **recession** (economic slowdown) in 1819 put many farmers in debt. Land values in the state fell by one-third in five years. Only Wilmington shipped more than \$1 million in goods during the period.

Frustrated North Carolinians left their state. They headed across the Appalachians to the newer states on the Mississippi River. In 1837, a legislator estimated that more than 200,000 natives had left in the previous twenty years. Some who left were among the most talented leaders of the new nation, like future presidents Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk. Five of the early governors of Tennessee were born in North Carolina, as were three of the first governors of Alabama. Levi Coffin, one of the founders of the Underground Railroad, left Guilford County for Indiana and later Ohio.

### Murphey's Proposals

Some prominent North Carolinians tried to make the state better. Their leader after the War of 1812 was Archibald D. Murphey, one of the more renowned leaders in the history of North Carolina. Murphey grew

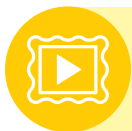


up in Caswell County near the Virginia border. He attended David Caldwell's academy, then the University in Chapel Hill. He became a lawyer and judge and started a large farm west of Hillsborough. Murphey's allies in a program of reforms included William Gaston, a New Bern lawyer; Charles Fisher, a Salisbury newspaper editor; and Joseph Caldwell, the president of the University.

Murphey's group eventually presented a series of ideas to the legislature for funding. The two principal plans focused on internal improvements and public education.

**Internal improvements**, a phrase popular at the time, referred mostly to transportation. For Americans after the War of 1812, that meant water-borne travel. In states like Tennessee or New York, a resident could take a boat from one end of the state to the other. This was not so in North Carolina, where residents in the backcountry continued to be separated from the coast by their rivers. And eastern residents increasingly were hemmed in by clogged sounds.

Murphey's proposals attacked both problems. He recommended the state deepen channels through the inlets and sounds to enable ports like Edenton, Beaufort, and New Bern to receive larger ships. In the west, the state would remove all the rocks that made navigation of the Catawba and Yadkin Rivers difficult. Then, Murphey proposed two **canals**, man-made water channels that allowed a horse or mule to pull flatboats with one-fourth the effort needed on the roads. One canal would connect the Roanoke, Tar, and Neuse Rivers with the channel that went out at Beaufort. The other would connect the backcountry to the one sizable river in the state, the Cape Fear. The backcountry canal was to be dug from the Charlotte area to Fayetteville, opening the Catawba from Morganton and the Yadkin from Wilkesboro all the way to Wilmington.



Archibald Murphey  
marker

**Above:** Archibald D. Murphey was the leading voice of reform in the state. His broad program for internal improvements gave the state a blueprint for the future.

The second part of the plan dealt with public education. Murphey, Caldwell, and others urged the state to fund in every county at least one **common school**, a school where even the most “common” family could send children to learn “the rudiments of education.” Statewide taxes were to help pay the teachers. Students would pay according to their family’s income. In addition, academies would be built across the state for the better students to continue their education. The brightest students would be allowed to go to the academies with a scholarship. Finally, the brightest graduates of the academies would be sent on to the University. If a student from a poor family got that far, he could attend at reduced cost. In this way, the educational reformers hoped to keep the smartest students in the state to provide the leaders for the next generation. Schooling was to be for white children; slave children would not be in the plan. However, among white children, the plan was to be offered on an equal basis to “the rich and poor, the dull and the sprightly,” Murphey argued.

The leaders of North Carolina were still under the control of the frugal Maconites of the east. As a result, they were very slow to fund the Murphey proposals. A national recession after 1819 made it hard for the state to pay its bills for a number of years. In 1825, however, the state legislature set up a **Literary Fund**, where revenues from stocks the state held in banks and canals could be used to help build schools. Little money was raised, however, because the state was so poor. Plus, the state kept borrowing from the fund, which stopped the growth of schools. The same course was taken with the Board of Internal Improvements. It scattered what little money it had for minor projects in different places in the state, to little effect. Despite Murphey’s efforts, North Carolina had fewer canals than almost any other state. The state had learned that the terrain was too rough for canals to be built at a reasonable cost.

Murphey himself did not live to see the fulfillment of his plan. He died in 1832, broke but not forgotten by his admirers, the very year that North Carolina began to take steps in the right direction.



### It's Your Turn

1. What made North Carolina a “Rip Van Winkle state”?
2. How did subsistence farming and clubbing match the ideal of “republican simplicity”?
3. How did Archibald Murphey’s policies attempt to “wake up” the Rip Van Winkle state?

**Above:** The New Bern Academy, incorporated in 1766, was one of the earliest private schools in the new state. By the time this building was erected in the early 1800s, dozens of private academies had been built across North Carolina.

## Section 3

# North Carolina Awakens



Rip Van Winkle No Longer



Constitution of 1835:  
Steps Forward  
and Back

**DID YOU KNOW...**



The statue that burned in 1831 depicted George Washington as a Roman general. He was shown writing the first words of his Farewell Address on a tablet. Ironically, some people wanted to put the statue on rollers so it could be moved quickly for safekeeping, but that idea was rejected as lacking dignity. Today you can see copies of the statue, created from the original sculptor's plaster model, in the rotunda of the State Capitol and in the Museum of History in Raleigh.

## As you read, look for

- ▶ double disasters that led to the construction of a new Capitol building in Raleigh;
- ▶ more balanced representation between east and west with the constitutional reforms of 1835;
- ▶ gains and losses in suffrage and political leadership by different groups after 1835;
- ▶ accomplishments and controversies of President Andrew Jackson;
- ▶ terms: **suffrage, Democratic Party, Whig Party.**



a-z

GLOSSARY

In 1831, the Capitol building in Raleigh burned down. The fire destroyed almost all the contents of the 1795 structure, including a statue of George Washington. People were so discouraged that some suggested it was not worth keeping Raleigh as the capital. Residents of Fayetteville encouraged such talk, for they argued that moving the capital to their busy town would help everyone. Then, much of Fayetteville burned down. That was the last time Fayetteville had a chance to become the state capital. Instead, the state laid a cornerstone for a new Capitol in Raleigh in 1833, and workers roofed it in 1840. The handsome granite building, with its copper dome, is still the North Carolina State Capitol.



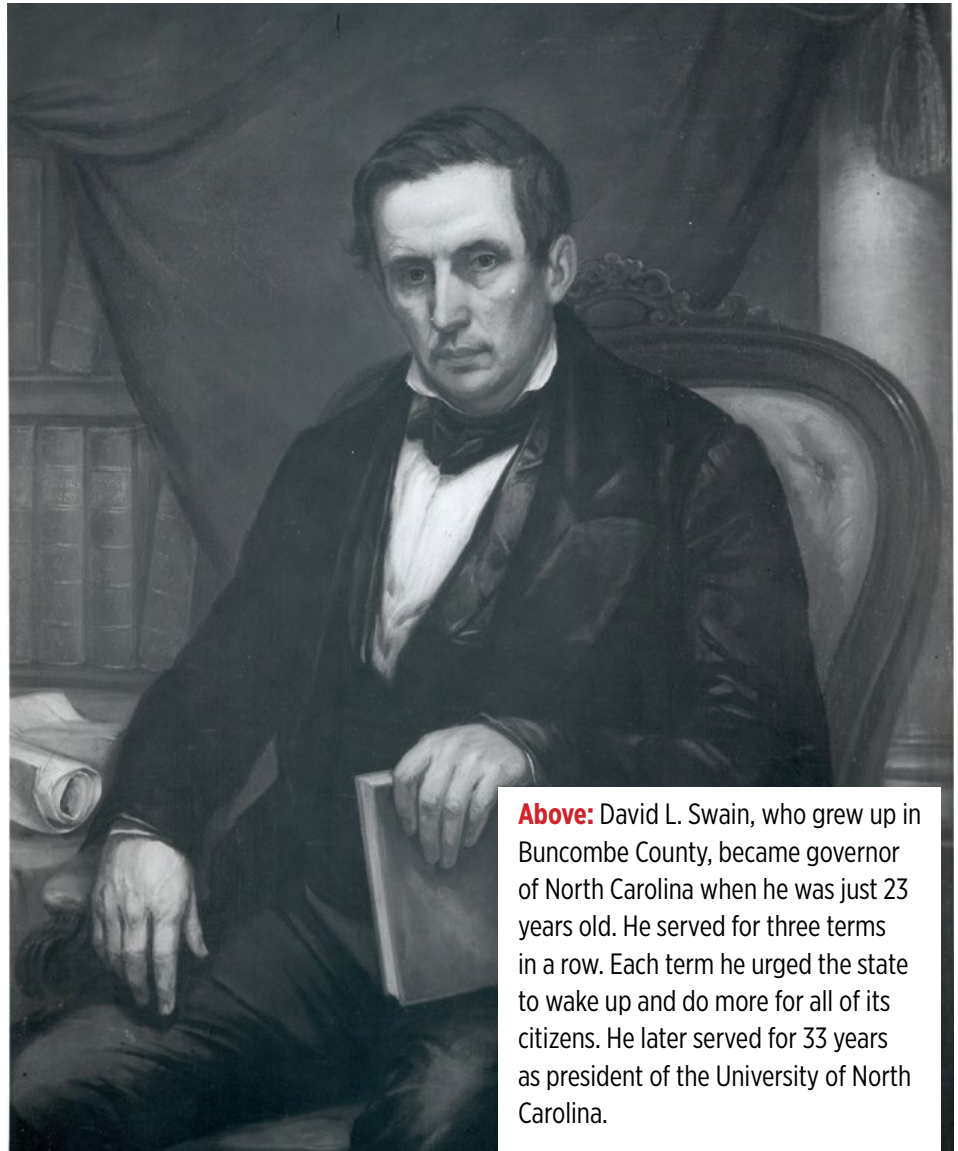
## East versus West

The double disasters caused many state leaders to rethink North Carolina's situation. Citizens were leaving because of lack of opportunity and disgust with state leadership. The old 1776 constitution set up representation by county, regardless of its size or population. Because the east had always had more counties, it had more votes in the legislature. What's more, only men who owned at least fifty acres of land could vote for the candidates for state Senate. In some counties, the land ownership provision eliminated one-third of the voters. Because the governor was elected by the legislature, he had little power.

The east wanted to keep the control it had gained during the Regulation period. Its citizens were more prosperous because they lived closer to markets on the coast. They liked low taxes and made fun of efforts by western leaders like Murphey to get the state to do more. This continued even after the census of 1830 showed that the east had fewer people than the west but many more representatives in the legislature. Sectionalism still mattered more than state to many North Carolina leaders. It was no wonder that little was accomplished.

Legislator David L. Swain argued that the state needed "a radical change in the form of representation." Swain was so powerful a voice for change that the legislature elected him governor three years in a row, quite an accomplishment for someone barely above the age of thirty who was from the west.

After more than a half dozen attempts to get the legislature to call for constitutional change, the west rebelled. As Charles Fisher of Salisbury promised, "We of the west" would follow the example of the State of Franklin and create another state. Fisher gained allies in some eastern counties when the free black men there began to vote in larger numbers. Black voters sometimes were the margin of victory in places like New Bern and Halifax. Tidewater leaders, specifically, wanted to change that particular loophole in the old form of government.



**Above:** David L. Swain, who grew up in Buncombe County, became governor of North Carolina when he was just 23 years old. He served for three terms in a row. Each term he urged the state to wake up and do more for all of its citizens. He later served for 33 years as president of the University of North Carolina.

## The Constitutional Convention of 1835

The state's voters went to the polls in 1835 to decide whether to hold a constitutional convention that would address the problems. Almost to a voter, the west said yes, and almost to a voter, the east said no. In fact, the votes changed dramatically from one side of the Fall Line to the other. However, since the west by that time had more people, the "ayes" had it.

The best leaders from both east and west came to Raleigh in 1835 to amend the 1776 constitution. They honored the aging Nathaniel Macon by making him chairman. However, the real leaders of the constitutional convention were westerner David Swain and easterner William Gaston. Swain was from Asheville, and Gaston was from New Bern.

The greatest need was to make representation fair across the state. After long debate, the delegates compromised. Each county would still have at least one representative in the House, but more populous counties would have multiple representatives. The more people a county had, the more legislators it sent to Raleigh. This immediately cheered the west. In return, the west agreed that the state Senate would be apportioned by wealth. In other words, the wealthier a county was, the more senators it got. The east was happy with this because the east contained most of the expensive land and the majority of the slaves. The compromise set up a balance of power between the two sections of the state for the first time.

As for the governor, the new amendments allowed the voters to elect him directly, instead of letting the legislature choose him. The governor was to serve a two-year term and could only be reelected once during a six-year period. Gaston and others argued that the governor would become more of a voice of the people at large, bringing them closer to state government.

Not all of the reforms, however, resulted in more people getting to vote. Because the writers of the 1776 constitution never considered that free black men might vote, such men of color had been able to go to the polls. This was forbidden in the 1835 amendments. **Suffrage** (the right to vote) was also taken away from Native Americans such as the Lumbee. Because the Senate continued to be set up according to wealth, the fifty-acre provision for voting was kept.

The convention did open up political leadership to more religious groups. The 1776 constitution had allowed only Protestant Christians to hold office. The new amendments removed the restriction from Catholics

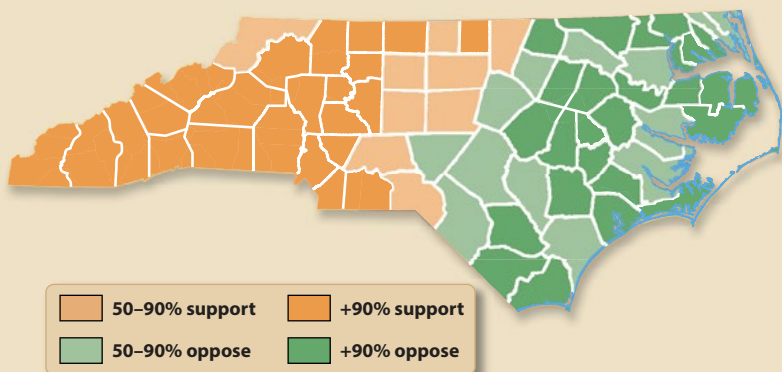
but still denied Jews and *atheists* (those who do not believe in God) the right to hold office.

The new amendments were submitted to the state's voters for approval. They passed by a vote of 26,771 to 21,606. The vote continued to follow sectional lines. Only 2,327 easterners supported the changes; only 3,280 westerners opposed them. Because the balance of population had shifted more to the west, the amendments were approved. With the 1836 election, North Carolina was governed in the new way.

### Map 7.2

#### The Vote on the 1835 Amendments

**Map Skill:** Did your county support or oppose the 1835 amendments?



## Reform and the Nation

The reforms passed in North Carolina were part of a broader national movement to change how government worked. State after state in the 1830s tried different ways to better the lives of more of its citizens. So did the federal government in Washington, DC. The policies of former North Carolinian Andrew Jackson made as many enemies as friends. Jackson built up the **Democratic Party** during his terms as president from 1829 to 1837. Those who disliked Jackson—who often called him “King Andrew” because he was so assertive as president—formed the **Whig Party** to oppose him.

Andrew Jackson strongly supported families who moved west to farm. For example, he made it easier for families to buy federal lands and he worked to lower their federal taxes. He also used federal money to help establish banks in western states, so families would have an easier time borrowing money to get started on a new life. One of the reasons some people disliked him was his tendency to veto any law passed by Congress that he thought was not in the interest of “the common man.” The most famous was his veto of the Bank of the United States, the first attempt in the nation to have a centralized monetary system. Like Nathaniel Macon, Jackson thought the state, not the nation, should decide where there should be banks.



Andrew Jackson

## The Art of Politics

This political cartoon of “King Andrew” reflects the belief that Andrew Jackson was arrogant and uncompromising in his actions as president.



## It's Your Turn

1. Which leader's powerful voice helped to push for a vote on whether to change the North Carolina constitution in 1835?
2. In what ways was the original North Carolina constitution unfair to North Carolinians in 1835?
3. What significant changes were made to voting rights in North Carolina in 1835? Who was positively or negatively impacted by these changes?
4. How did President Jackson encourage people to move to western states?

# special Feature

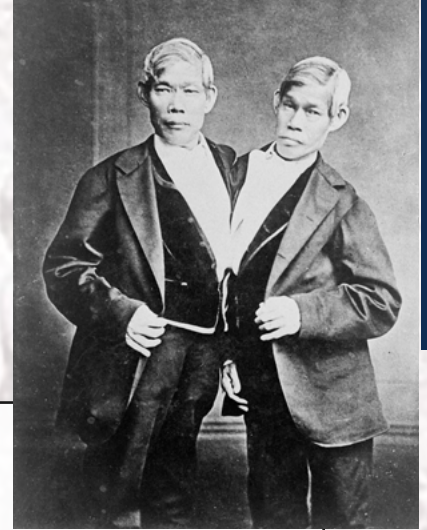
## Carolina People The Original Siamese Twins

Two men who lived out their lives in the North Carolina foothills were the originators of a famous medical term: Siamese twins. Eng and Chang Bunker were not the first twins to be born conjoined at some part of their bodies, but they were the first to become famous for it. In the case of the Bunkers, the connection was at the navel, a rare event.

Eng and Chang were born in 1811, the sons of a Chinese father and a Malay mother. Because they grew up in Siam (today's Thailand), they gained the "Siamese" nickname. When born, their condition left them looking at each other face to face. Their mother insisted that doctors work to stretch the tissue that connected them. It eventually grew to be about five inches long. By the time they were teenagers, they could stand at a 45-degree angle to one another. This allowed them to walk in concert and get around very steadily. They could even swim. Because surgery could only be done experimentally, the twins did not allow anyone to cut into them for fear they would die during the operation.

When Eng and Chang were seventeen, an American promoter took them to Boston. They immediately became sensations in America and Europe and toured for a number of years. The twins enjoyed their celebrity but found out their promoter had grown rich at their expense. In 1832, the twins switched to the P. T. Barnum Circus, at that time the most famous in the United States. They toured for another decade. Then, after visiting the rural backwoods of North Carolina, they decided to retire near Wilkesboro, in sight of the Blue Ridge.





The twins fell in love not just with North Carolina, but also with two pretty North Carolinians. The Bunkers stayed at an inn run by the father of Adelaide and Sarah Yates. Soon, Adelaide became interested in Chang and Sarah in Eng. To the horror of the people of Wilkesboro, each couple decided to get married. At first, the four shared a house near Trap Hill in Wilkes County. The couples eventually moved to two farms near Mt. Airy. There they followed a strict schedule, alternately living with one wife for three days, then the other for three more. Chang and

Adelaide had eleven children; Eng and Sarah ten. Several times, the wives delivered their babies within days of each other.

The brothers lived off the savings they had gained from touring. When times were hard on the farm, they resumed touring. They even went all the way to California to take advantage of the gold rush there. Over time, the strain of the odd relationship had an adverse

effect on the health of the four Bunkers. In addition, the Civil War ruined their fortunes. The two brothers died within hours of each other in 1874. There was a plan to separate them once one of them died, but a doctor was not present at the time of death. A later autopsy suggested that one died of a blood clot, the other of the shock of losing his other half.

Hundreds of descendants of the Bunkers live in the western half of the state today. None have had a second set of conjoined twins.



## Section 4



The Railroad in  
North Carolina

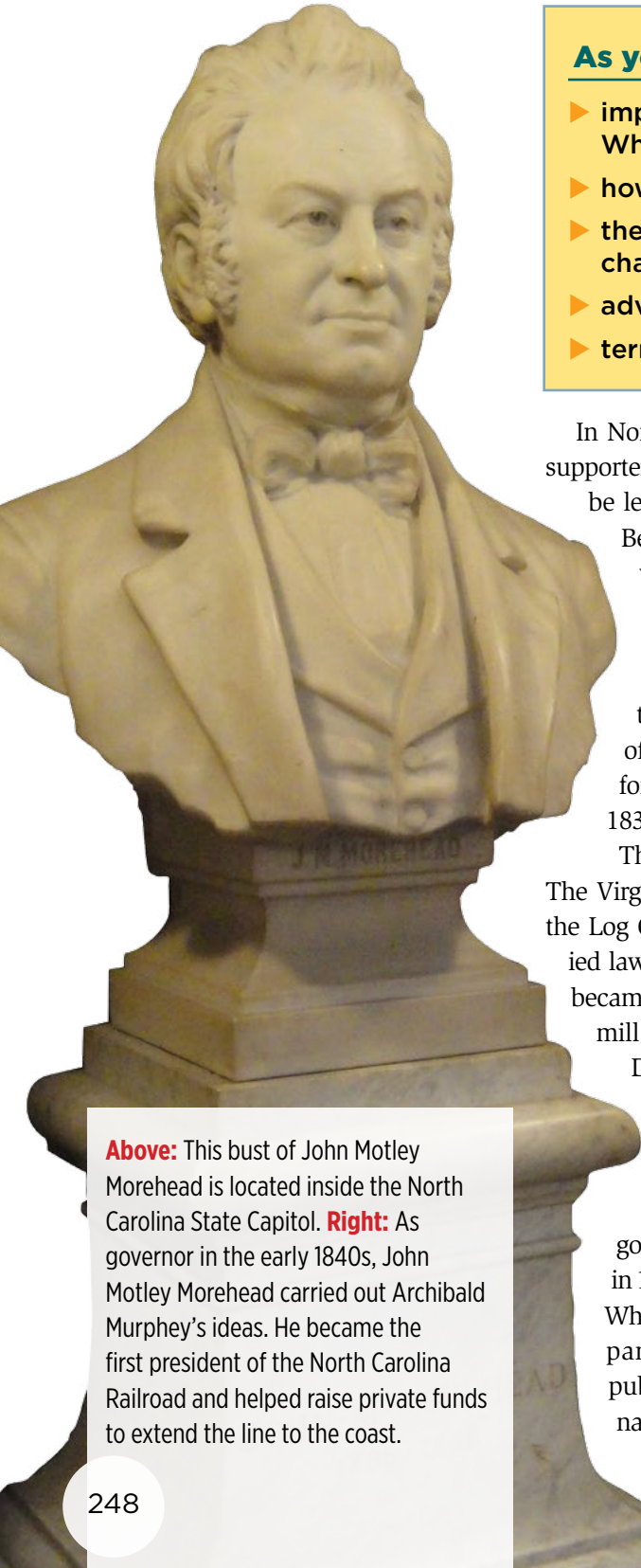
# Whigs Support Development

## As you read, look for

- ▶ improvements to public education under Whig leadership;
- ▶ how the coming of the railroads changed the state;
- ▶ the growth of welfare institutions and the chartering of private academies and colleges;
- ▶ advances in industry and mining;
- ▶ terms: **curriculum**, **literate**, **plank road**.

Setting a  
Purpose

a-z  
GLOSSARY



**Above:** This bust of John Motley Morehead is located inside the North Carolina State Capitol. **Right:** As governor in the early 1840s, John Motley Morehead carried out Archibald Murphey's ideas. He became the first president of the North Carolina Railroad and helped raise private funds to extend the line to the coast.

In North Carolina, Nathaniel Macon and his allies had been strong supporters of President Jackson because they wanted farm families to be left alone to make their own opportunities whenever possible.

Because Macon had the support of the east, that section mostly voted Democratic in the 1830s and 1840s. In contrast, those who opposed Macon became Whigs because they wanted to use government money and other financial resources to build up the state. The followers of Archibald Murphey soon formed the North Carolina Whig Party. Because they had the support of the west (and parts of the Tidewater that liked Murphey's call for dredging the sounds), the Whigs controlled the state in the 1830s and 1840s.

The first Whig leader in the state was John Motley Morehead. The Virginia native had been one of David Caldwell's last students at the Log College. After graduating from the University, Morehead studied law with Murphey. He then became a planter and a cotton mill owner in Spray, on the Dan River where the town of Eden is today. Morehead helped with the constitutional reforms of 1835. He was elected governor in 1840 and again in 1842. Morehead and other Whigs pushed forward both parts of Murphey's plan: public education and internal improvements.



## Improvements in Education and Literacy

In 1839, the Whigs created the state's first public school system. The plan called for each county to hold an election to decide if it wanted to tax itself to build common schools that any white child—girl or boy—could attend free. If local taxes were raised, the state would supplement the plan with money from a *rejuvenated* (restored) Literary Fund. Once a county provided the funds, each neighborhood was to get a school. The plan to build academies was never enacted, but the slack was taken up by the denominations (branches of Christianity), which by the 1830s had institutions for both boys and girls.

Rockingham County opened the first common school in 1840. This was Governor Morehead's home county. By the 1850s, every county developed common schools. In addition, the state had developed a school system to make sure as many white children as possible received a decent education. In 1852, Calvin H. Wiley of Guilford County became the first superintendent of public instruction. Wiley introduced standards for teachers and published a magazine to help teachers improve their skills. He also wrote the first textbook on North Carolina history. By then, North Carolina had the most extensive school system of any place in the South during the antebellum era.

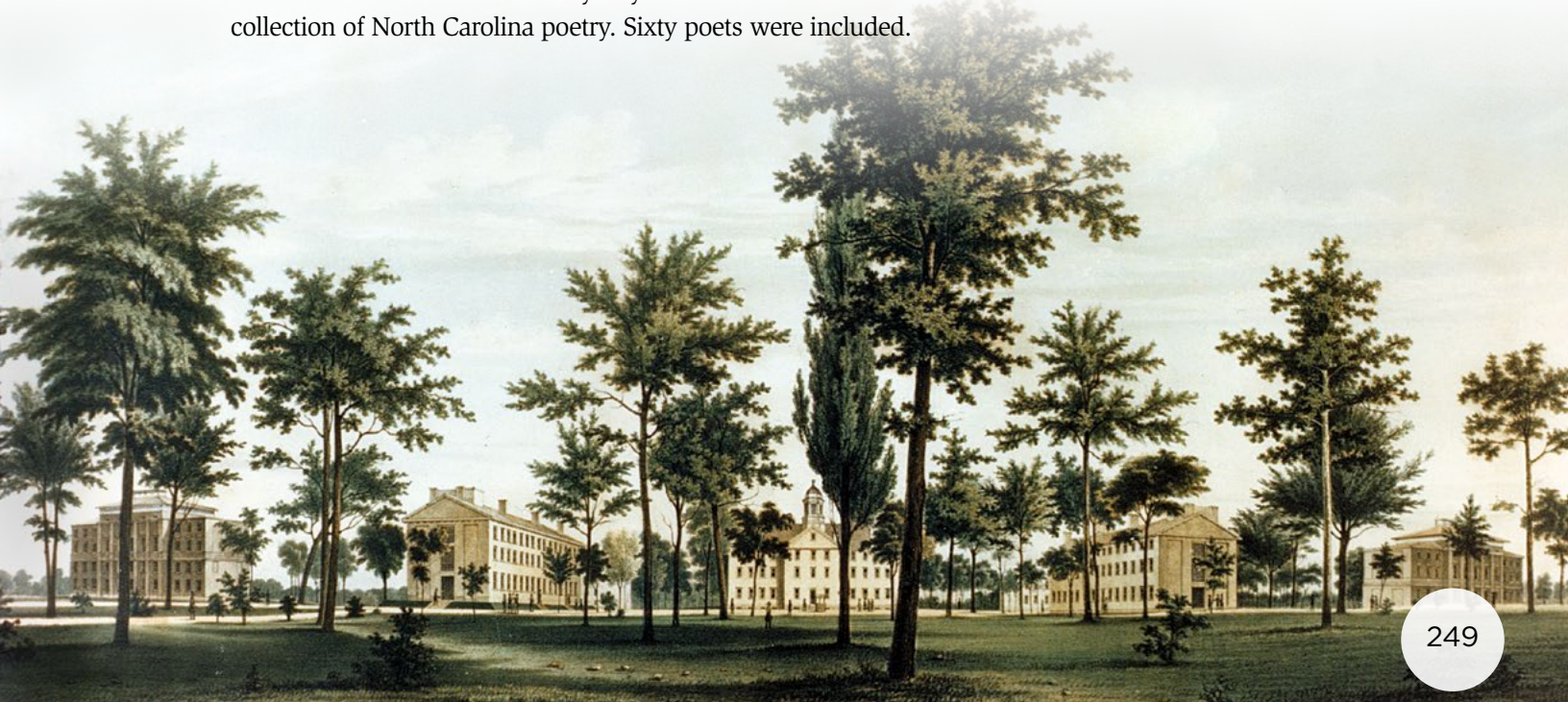
During the same period, the University in Chapel Hill also grew. Former Governor David Swain became its president, and enrollment tripled under his leadership. Swain also broadened the **curriculum** (the courses offered) to include the study of law and agricultural chemistry, two subjects with great practical benefit for a farming state.

By the 1850s, more North Carolinians were **literate** (able to read and write) than ever before, and they had more of their own literature to read. Many of the early books printed in the state had a religious theme. They were either collections of sermons or a short history of a particular denomination. One of the most popular was a biography of the acclaimed educator, the Reverend David Caldwell. Calvin H. Wiley, the superintendent of public instruction, published novels with the well-known titles of *Alamance* and *Roanoke*. Mary Bayard Clarke in 1854 edited the first collection of North Carolina poetry. Sixty poets were included.

### DID YOU KNOW...

Children ranging in age from six to twenty-six could attend the common schools. School terms were held after fall harvest and generally lasted two months.

**Below:** The campus of the University in Chapel Hill more than doubled in size during the time of reform. The five principal buildings (from left to right) were New East, Old East, South Building, Old West, and New West. All continue to be used in some capacity today.



## The Coming of the Railroads

In the 1830s, the invention of the railroad became one of the most important things ever to happen to the state. A railroad could be built almost anywhere. At last, North Carolina had a way to easily ship its goods to the rest of the world. Railroads, however, were very expensive to build, especially in a poor state. Eager to revive the state, both Whigs and Democrats in the legislature during the reform period voted to use public money to invest in the new technology.

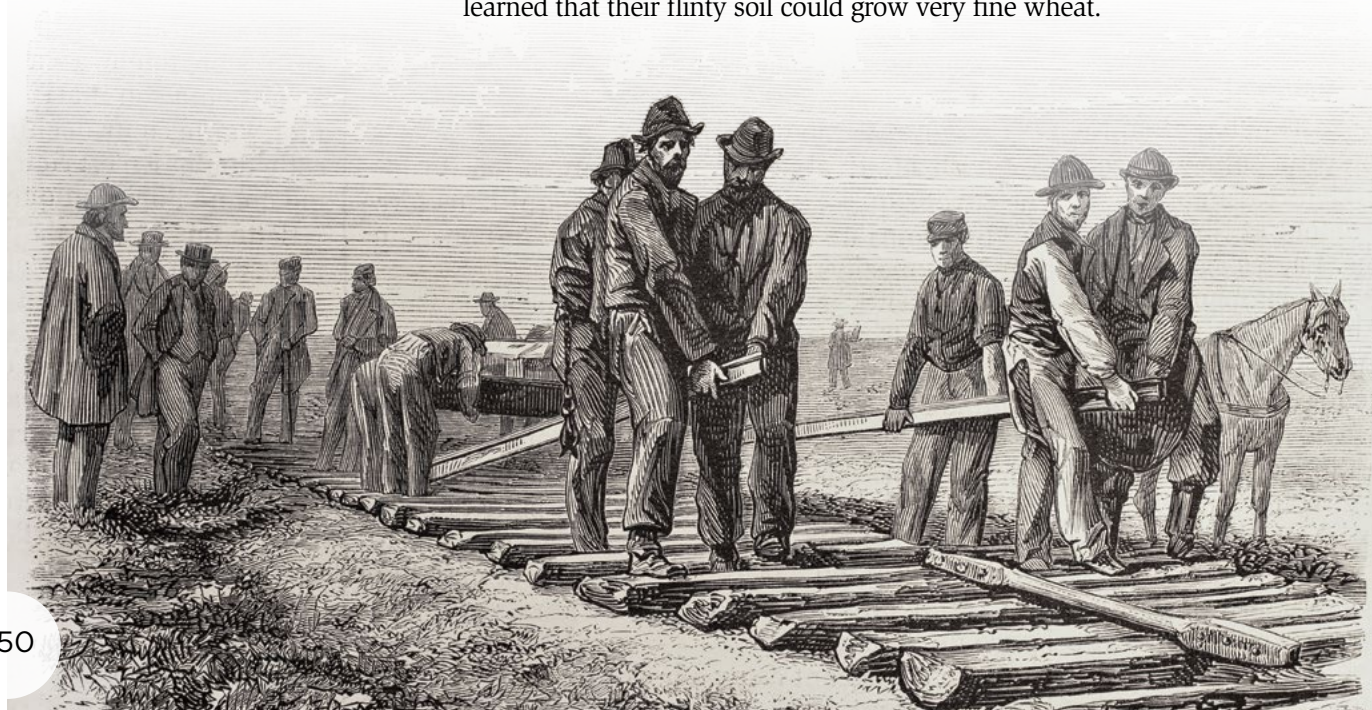
The first railroad, which connected the state capital to the Roanoke River area, failed to make money, but the second, the Wilmington & Weldon, was the biggest success in state history. It ran through the heart of the Coastal Plain and allowed farmers there to lower the costs of shipping.

The state's first railroads helped only the east. Western leaders convinced the legislature to establish the North Carolina Railroad (NCRR). The NCRR was routed from Goldsboro to Charlotte, through Raleigh, Greensboro, and Salisbury. The state put up two-thirds of the needed funds. Former Governor Morehead, the largest private investor, became its president. He also headed a private effort to extend the line from Goldsboro to Beaufort. The new community at the end of the line was called Morehead City. About that time, a western line was built from Salisbury to Morganton, and another was laid from Wilmington to Charlotte.

What a change the railroads brought! For the first time since the settlement of Roanoke, North Carolina was on the map, gaining the attention of the whole world. When they were new, first the Wilmington & Weldon (at 161 miles), then the NCRR (at 223 miles), were the longest railroads in the world. North Carolinians believed that they had finally caught up with progress elsewhere. As one supporter argued, the rest of the country would “come to see and appreciate the enterprise and talents of Old Rip!”

The impact of the railroads could be seen in the fields. Planters on the Coastal Plain tripled the amount of cotton they grew. Tobacco farms multiplied in counties along the Virginia line, especially when a railroad reached Danville. Caswell County grew so much tobacco during the 1850s that it became the richest county in the state. In the Uwharries, farmers learned that their flinty soil could grow very fine wheat.

**Below:** Railroad lines were being laid up and down our nation's east coast when North Carolina first supported the construction of the Wilmington & Weldon line in the 1830s. These workers, shown in a drawing from the 1840s, would have included recent Irish immigrants.



The railroads had an impact on the development of towns in the state. Goldsboro, High Point, and Hickory grew up around important railroad *sidings* (stretches of track used for storage or slow passing trains). Company Shops, the community that developed around the NCRR repair yards, was soon surrounded by what became the town of Burlington. The largest town not to get a railroad, Fayetteville, resorted to a cheaper innovation. It supported the construction of **plank roads**, often called “farmer railroads,” made out of planks laid out like a deck across the roadbed. The plank road enabled farmers to keep their wagons above the mud and ruts that had slowed travel in the past. Plank roads extended from Fayetteville across the Uwharries all the way to Taylorsville. The longest one connected Fayetteville with Salem, crossing the NCRR at High Point. These toll roads worked well for a few years, but high maintenance costs, due to rain and rot, led to their abandonment.

### Map 7.3

#### Early North Carolina Railroads

**Map Skill:** Which two lines met at Goldsboro?



### Social Improvements

The spirit of development spread across the state and had an impact on most citizens. To care for North Carolina's impaired citizens, the state set up several welfare institutions. Governor Morehead convinced the legislature to set up a school for the deaf and blind. What would later be called the Governor Morehead School was opened in Raleigh during the 1840s for citizens from across the state. In 1849, after a special plea from Dorothea Dix of Massachusetts (a pioneer in the proper care of people suffering from mental illness), the state established the Hospital for the Insane in west Raleigh. The site was opened in 1853. It soon came to be called Dix Hill, to honor Miss Dix.



Wilmington and Weldon Railroad map

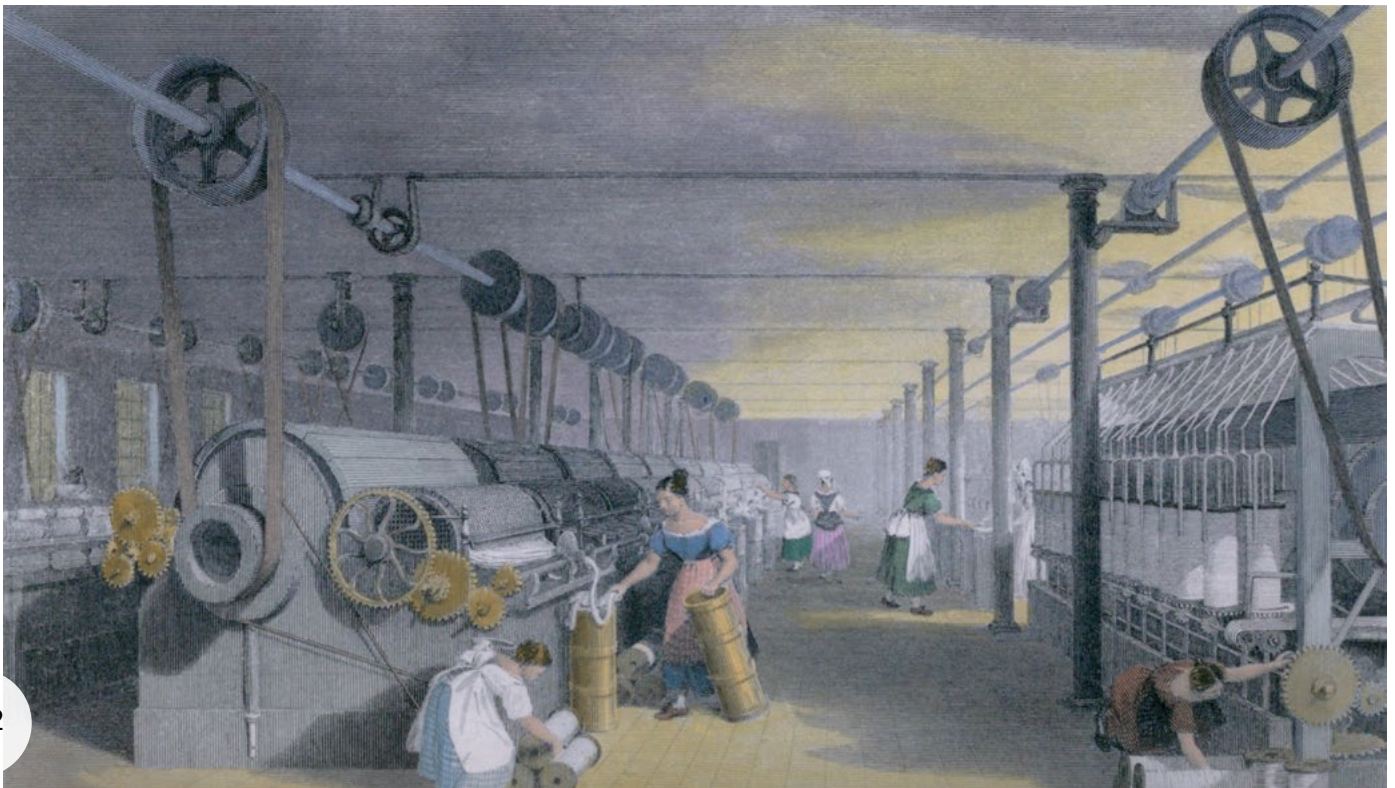
The Whig legislature also encouraged the chartering of private academies and colleges. The principal Christian denominations in the state during the 1830s established schools to train their young men to be ministers and lay leaders. In 1834, the Baptist Literary Institute was opened twenty miles north of Raleigh. It later became Wake Forest College. (The college did not move to Winston-Salem until the 1950s.) Quakers opened New Garden Boarding School in 1837. A half-century later, it grew into Guilford College. Presbyterians north of Charlotte set up Davidson College in 1837, naming it for the fallen hero of the Battle of Cowan's Ford. In 1838, Methodists established a small school to train teachers in the village of Trinity in Randolph County. Originally called the Normal Institute, it was later reorganized as Trinity College. (In 1885 it was moved to Durham and later grew into Duke University.)

Support for educating women became more widespread once the trains brought prosperity. The Moravians had started Salem Female Academy in 1802. That school offered the best higher education for women in the state for decades. During the 1840s, each of the major denominations also set up schools for young women: Greensboro Female College for Methodists; St. Mary's in Raleigh for Episcopalians; and Chowan Baptist Female Institute in Murfreesboro. (All three still exist but have changed through the years.)

## Industrial Beginnings

The Whigs also chartered cotton mills, setting the stage for the later growth of that industry in the state. There had been a few mills before the 1830s reforms, most notably the cotton mills on the South Fork of the Catawba River near Lincolnton and at the falls of the Tar River, where the town of Rocky Mount was established. A dozen more factories were set up in the 1840s. Most were located on tributaries of the Cape Fear River since marketing of the cloth was easily done in Fayetteville. The largest was at Rockfish, near the site of today's town of Hope Mills.

**Below:** The majority of early textile mills in the United States were located in New England, as shown in this painting. Most of the mills, including North Carolina mills of the 1830s and 1840s, used machinery made in northern states. Most of the workers in the first years were women.



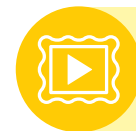
Edwin M. Holt ran the best-known mill, the Alamance Factory near the site of the Regulator battlefield. The Holts produced the first dyed cloth in the state in 1852. They called their product “Alamance Plaid.” Soon other factories made their own brands of plaid.

As Alamance Plaid became North Carolina’s first famous product, the state itself was becoming well known for moving ahead in many social and economic areas. The telegraph was first installed in the state in 1848, which helped North Carolinians communicate more closely with the rest of the nation. The number of people who lived in towns doubled. Between 1835 and 1850, the number of newspapers published in the state more than doubled. Raleigh and Fayetteville had daily newspapers. By that time, there was much more to read about, for North Carolinians had begun to move forward in their daily lives.

They began to brag that “the Old North State” was no longer asleep. They had the “first state university in the nation,” the “most elegant state capitol in the country,” a “plentiful and varied” soil; and a “steady, sober, industrious population.” Mary Bayard Clarke, one of the first poets in the state, extolled, “Old Rip is awakening...his years of slumber, at last have gone by, and the rainbow of promise illuminates the sky.”

## Mining

North Carolina had been known as a gold-producing state ever since the John Reed family opened the nation’s first significant gold mine in Cabarrus County in the early 1800s. Prospectors rushed to the area to pan for gold in Uwharrie streams. By the 1830s, mine owners were sinking shafts deep into the ground. At one time, fifty mines were in operation. Several mines were dug under the town of Charlotte. So much gold was found in the central part of the state that the federal government established a branch of the United States Mint there in 1837. West of Charlotte, so much gold was found in streams that Christopher Bechtler, and later his son and his nephew, ran a private mint near Rutherfordton from 1831 to 1849.



Alamance Plaid

**DID YOU  
KNOW...**



A mint is a place where coins are made. The Charlotte Mint produced coins until the state seceded from the Union in 1861.



# special Feature



## Carolina Places Reed Gold Mine

In the early 1800s, when most North Carolinians struggled to get by, a few state residents got rich. None of them were richer than the Reeds of Cabarrus County. They literally found gold in their own backyard.

John Reed had been a Hessian soldier in Cornwallis's army during the Revolution. He deserted and came to live with other Germans on Dutch Buffalo Creek. Reed was said to be "honest, but unlearned" and something of "a primitive character." He was soon married to Sarah Kiser. For twenty years, they eked out a living on meager soil, just like most folks in the backcountry.

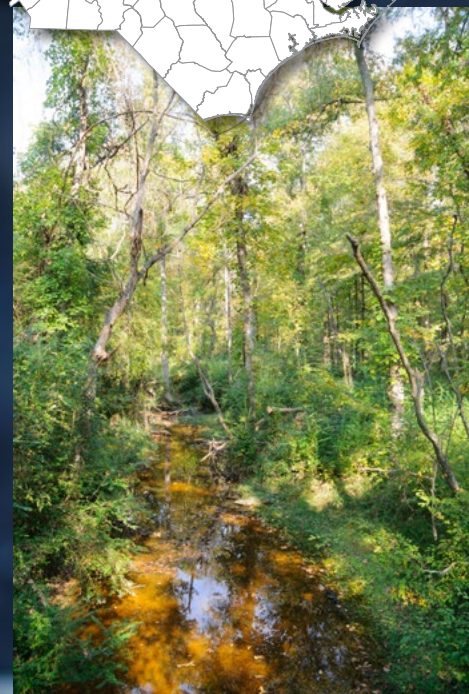
One Sunday in 1799, John's son Conrad spied a shiny rock in Little Meadow Creek and pulled it out. It was unusually yellow. The Reeds, unaware it was gold, decided to use it as their front door stop. It lay on the front porch for two years.

Like most farmers in the state, John Reed went to market every fall. In 1802, he went to Fayetteville. While there, he showed the rock to a silversmith. The craftsman knew it was gold. He also knew that he had a country bumpkin before him, so he shrewdly asked Reed to name his price for the rock. Reed asked for \$3.50, the most money he had ever gotten for any one thing in his life. The Reed children later recalled that their excited father splurged and bought coffee for the first time in his life. Meanwhile, the silversmith sold the 17-pound gold nugget for \$3,600.

Word soon got back to the Reeds that they had been cheated. They and some neighbors went looking for more gold. In 1803, Peter Love, a neighbor's slave, dug down six inches into the stream and came up with a 28-pound nugget! The Reeds sent the nugget to the federal mint in Philadelphia and made a big profit.



Reed Gold Mine



**Top Right:** Conrad Reed made the first discovery of gold in North Carolina in Little Meadow Creek. **Right:** One of several shafts that lead underground to the Reed Gold Mine.



For the next several years, the Reeds, their slaves, and their neighbors continued to dig holes up and down Little Meadow Creek. They found that most of the gold



was about four feet deep, level with the nearby streambed. Sometimes they “dug up gold like potatoes,” finding as much as 20 pounds in a day. When they did not turn up nuggets, they sifted the soil with “rockers” to separate the heavier gold from the lighter dirt.

The Reeds and their partners expanded from creek mining to underground mining in 1831. By this time, more than fifty mines had been started in that area of the backcountry. Farmers looked for gold from Greensboro all the way south to Charlotte.

During this time, John Reed continued to live like the typical North Carolinian. His house was larger than that of his neighbors, but he still farmed his own fields. Reed even forbade his sons from digging holes for gold in planted fields.

When John Reed died in 1845, the family’s fortunes began to change. His children agreed to share what they would find in the mine. However, the family began to argue about how much each would get. The mine was closed down for a decade, as family members sued one another. Eventually, the mine was sold, first in 1846, then again in 1853. Although the new owners sank deep shafts into the ground and tried to use new technology to extract

more gold, they did not make a profit. The Reed Mine passed from owner to owner after the Civil War. The last real nugget was found in 1896. The mine was closed during the first half of the twentieth century. Its last private owner donated the land to the state in 1962, and the state made it a historic site in 1976. Since that time, it has been one of the most visited places in the state.



**Top Left:** Entrance to the Reed Gold Mine State Historic Site. **Above:** The 10-stamp mill is a machine that crushes material by pounding rather than grinding for extraction of the metallic ore. **Right:** A mine cart used for moving ore and materials.





The most famous mine site became Gold Hill, started in 1842 at the edge of the Uwharries in Rowan County. At the height of activities during the 1850s, Gold Hill had fifteen mines in the space of a square mile. Shafts were dug down eight hundred feet. More than three thousand people worked the mines in rotating shifts. The gold was processed out of the ore using seven steam engines. Many of the miners were immigrants from Europe, including experienced miners from Cornwall, England.

North Carolinians tried to mine other valuable products. Iron ore was taken out of the Cranberry Mine, located in the mountains, west of the present town of Spruce Pine. Several iron furnaces were operated near the “Ore Bank” on the South Fork of the Catawba River.

These furnaces produced iron plugs that blacksmiths could use to make tools and household items. The largest operation was at the Vesuvius Furnace in Lincoln County. North Carolina’s first coal mine opened in 1855 at Cumnock, in what became Lee County. The Egypt Mine, as it was called, operated through the Civil War.

**Above:** This drawing from an 1833 publication shows how the first mining was done in North Carolina. Local farmers often prospected in their fields and streams, in this case digging holes in places likely to have gold nuggets. Eventually more than fifty mines were started this way in the area around Charlotte and Concord. **Below:** A cluster of small buildings and a plant at the Cranberry Mine.

## It's Your Turn

1. In what ways did railroads show that North Carolina was no longer a Rip Van Winkle state?
2. How did the Whig party and Governor Morehead improve the lives of young North Carolinians?
3. How was the growth of cotton mills a sign of “Old Rip” awakening?



## Section 5

# Racial Issues in the Time of Reform

### As you read, look for

- ▶ how Andrew Jackson's policy of Indian removal led to the Cherokee Removal and the Trail of Tears;
- ▶ plantation life as experienced by owners and slaves;
- ▶ restrictions on slaves and on free people of color;
- ▶ **terms: Trail of Tears, plantation, staple crop, yeoman farmer, artisan, emancipation, slave code, quarters, free black.**

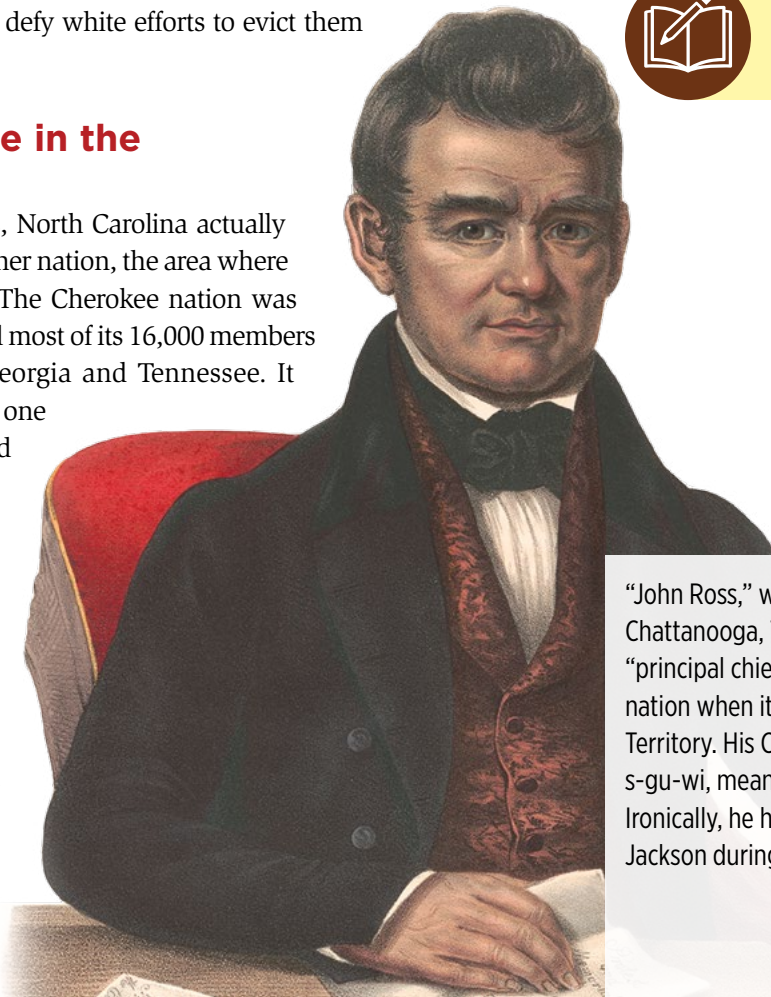


a-z  
GLOSSARY

In the antebellum era, the rights of minority groups were restricted by the actions of the white majority in the state. Legislators passed laws that allowed them to more easily control the lives of slaves and put new restrictions on the privileges previously enjoyed by what were called “free people of color.” In the case of Native Americans, many had to bravely defy white efforts to evict them from their homes.

## The Cherokee in the Southeast

In the early 1800s, North Carolina actually included part of another nation, the area where the Cherokee lived. The Cherokee nation was based in Georgia, and most of its 16,000 members lived in northern Georgia and Tennessee. It was considered to be one of the most civilized of the Five Civilized Tribes—having developed its own government, and even its own *syl-labary* (a form of alphabet) that allowed its people to write in their Cherokee language.



Geography Meets Slavery

“John Ross,” who helped found Chattanooga, Tennessee, was the “principal chief” of the Cherokee nation when it was removed to Indian Territory. His Cherokee name, Koo-wi-s-gu-wi, meant “Little White Bird.” Ironically, he had fought under Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812.

DID YOU  
**KNOW...**



The Five Civilized Tribes were the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek (Muscogee), and Seminole.

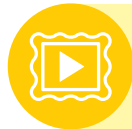
In addition to the Georgia and Tennessee inhabitants, around 4,000 Cherokee still lived in North Carolina. Despite the destruction of its villages during the War for Independence, the Cherokee were still the largest Native American group in the state. North Carolina Cherokee lived in the deepest part of the mountains and kept many of the old traditions of hunting, gathering, and village life. These Cherokee also claimed to be citizens of North Carolina. In 1817 and 1819, the state had signed treaties with them, and they had given up large tracts of their land in return for reservations.

## Cherokee Removal and the Trail of Tears

Beginning in the 1820s, southern whites began to harass the Cherokee and other Native American groups to give up their property so that whites could use their rich lands to grow cotton and other crops. Many whites argued that all Native Americans should be moved across the Mississippi River, away from white settlement. In the 1830s, President Andrew Jackson convinced some Cherokee to sign a treaty calling for their removal to the West. This forcible “Cherokee removal” began in 1838 after Jackson was out of office.

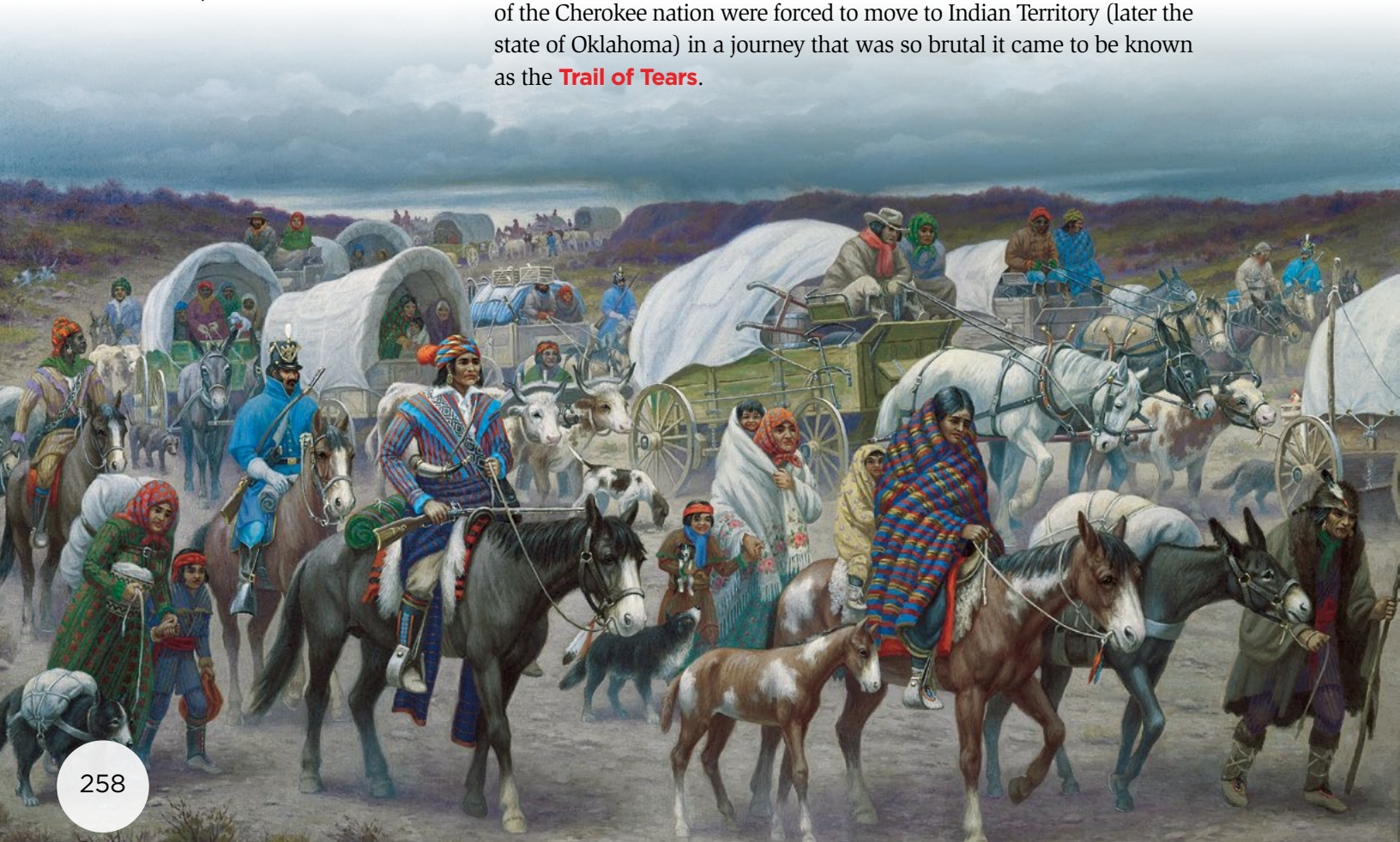
Living deep in the mountains, many North Carolina Cherokee were able to hide in caves and elude the soldiers who came to round them up. These Cherokee suffered greatly. The wife and children of Yonaguska, the chief, starved to death on the Nantahala mountainside.

Despite Cherokee claims that the treaties with North Carolina allowed them to stay in the state, federal soldiers continued to corral the Cherokee they could find into wooden *stockades* (enclosures for prisoners) on the Little Tennessee River. During 1838 and 1839, more than 15,000 members of the Cherokee nation were forced to move to Indian Territory (later the state of Oklahoma) in a journey that was so brutal it came to be known as the **Trail of Tears**.



### Trail of Tears

**Below:** This painting of the Cherokee exodus to Indian Territory in 1838 was painted 100 years after the event. It has become the first famous view of this infamous episode.





In the midst of the removal, however, an incident occurred that helped some of the mountain Cherokee stay in their traditional homes. A Cherokee named Tsali and his sons escaped and hid in the mountains. But while escaping, they killed a soldier and mortally wounded another. The general in charge of the removal decided that continuing to search for so many Cherokee was not working. Instead, he proposed a compromise. The soldiers would stop looking if Tsali and his sons would surrender and admit to committing murder. Other Cherokee who wanted to stay in the mountains actually brought Tsali to the soldiers. One tradition among the Cherokee is that Tsali willingly gave himself up to allow his people to stay in their homes. Tsali and all of his sons, except one who was very young, were executed by their fellow Cherokee.

With the help of William H. Thomas, a white who had been adopted into the Cherokee nation, about 1,000 Cherokee were allowed to remain in North Carolina. Because North Carolina refused to recognize the Cherokee as citizens, Thomas spent both federal and personal funds to buy land for them. Thomas continued to hold the property in his name to protect the Native Americans from whites who wanted the land. He became the chief of the settlement along the Oconaluftee River, at the edge of the Smoky Mountains. The principal Cherokee community there was the Qualla village. Later in the 1800s, this became the basis for the establishment of the Eastern Cherokee nation.

## Map 7.4

### The Trail of Tears

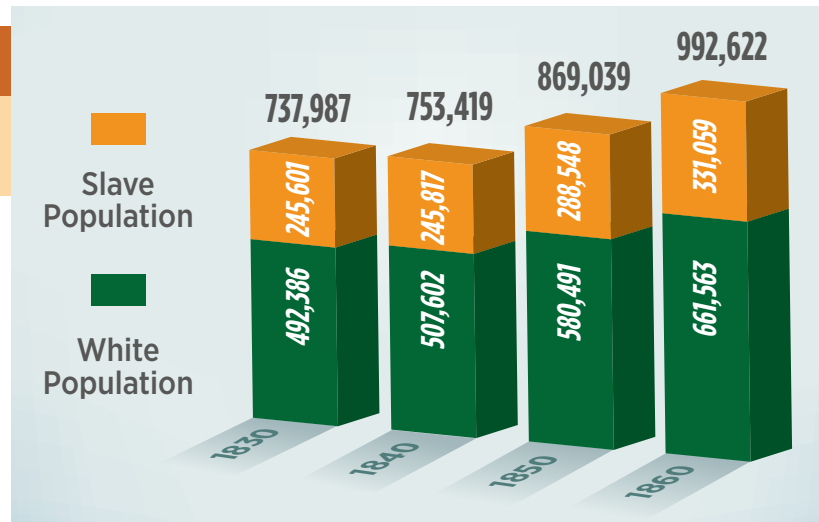
**Map Skill:** Through which states did the Cherokee have to travel to reach their new home? In which states did the Cherokee nation originate?

## Masters and Slaves

North Carolina was a slave state, but compared to other places in the South, slavery did not seem as dominant. During the first half of the nineteenth century, in any given year, about one in four North Carolina families owned slaves. About one-fourth of the population was slave. In contrast, in Virginia, one in three families owned slaves; in South Carolina, one in two. In addition, those North Carolinians who actually owned slaves most often owned only one, another indication of how hard it was for white families just to survive. Yet, at all times, slavery made a significant impact on North Carolina's economy and its society.

**Figure 7.2**

North Carolina  
Population, 1830-1860

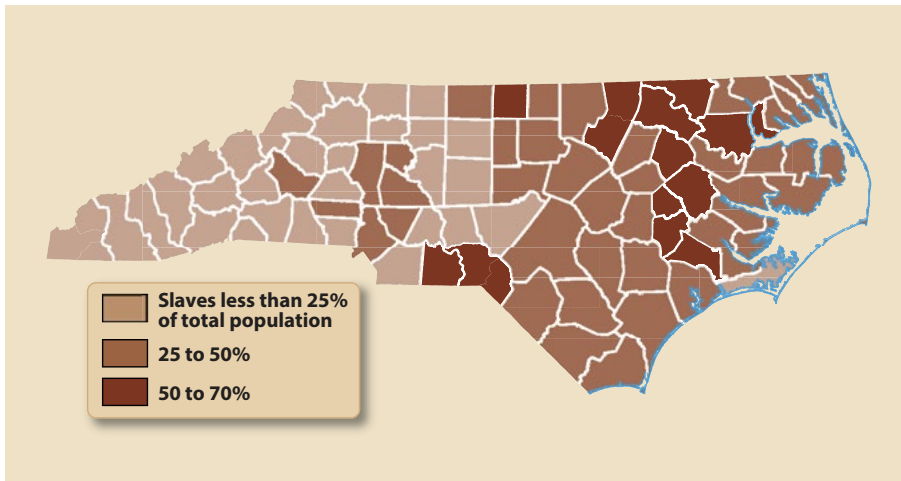


Slaves were found in every North Carolina county. Even mountain counties, where poor soil and remote location hindered any kind of economic growth, had slaves as part of their population. Some areas, however, had many more slaves than others.

The greatest concentration of slaves was along the belt of counties where the Tidewater met the Coastal Plain, from Hertford south through Pitt and Wayne Counties. These counties had two factors that promoted the growth of slavery. First, the soil just above the level of swamps was some of the best in the state. Second, the good lands were located close enough to ports to make marketing cost very little. The old Albemarle Sound counties, for example, had large numbers of slaves because the Dismal Swamp Canal allowed the cheap transportation of a variety of goods.

Back of the tidal line, only a few counties had large numbers of slaves. The largest concentration was along the Roanoke River. Here the sandy soil, in places like Warren or Caswell, allowed a variety of crops to be grown. In a similar way, the counties along the South Carolina line, which were close to markets like Cheraw and Camden, combined the same two factors found on the tidal line.

Otherwise, slaves were scattered across the landscape, one or two in small areas where the soil was above average in its fertility. For example, only a minority of families owned slaves in Davidson County, but most families in the small neighborhood of Cotton Grove were slave owners. So were most farmers at Poplar Tent in Cabarrus County.



Although most slave-owning North Carolinians owned only one or two slaves, a significant number of slaves lived on **plantations** (farms large enough to be strictly organized to produce both enough food for subsistence and large amounts of surplus staple crops that earned money for the owners). **Staple crops** were primarily tobacco and cotton, but sometimes they included grains like corn, wheat, and even rice or tar on the Cape Fear River. In each case, much more of the crop was grown than could be consumed on the farm. Less than one in ten farmers in the state ever owned a plantation. Those who did, however, reaped the rewards of slavery.

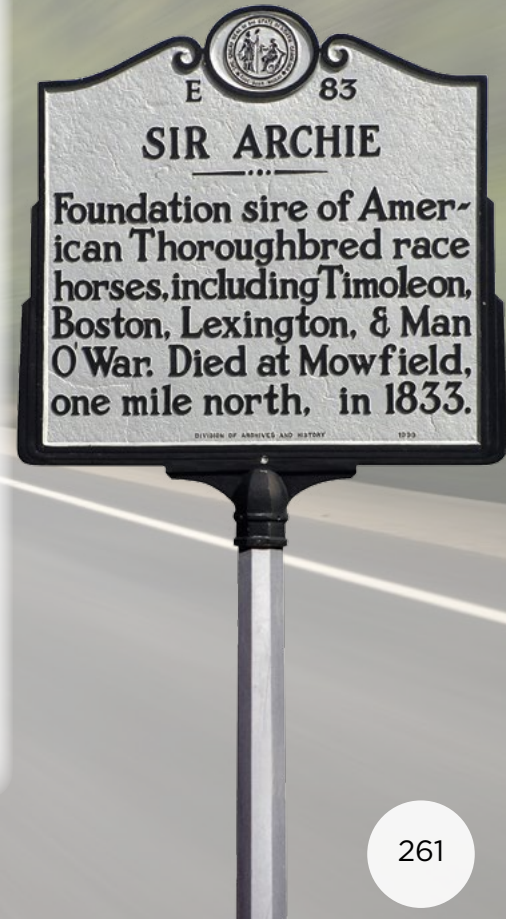
## History by the Highway

### Sir Archie

One resident in the early 1800s said the Roanoke River was “the race-horse region of America.” It rivaled Virginia and Maryland in enthusiasm. Warrenton, Halifax, and Hillsborough all had well-attended races each fall and spring.

During the 1820s, Sir Archie became the first “thoroughbred” horse in the country. Sir Archie won many races but eventually was retired because he had little competition. He was hired out to breed other race horses. For that, he made his owner, William Amis of Halifax, very

wealthy. Sir Archie’s descendant, Man o’ War, is considered the greatest racer of all time.





Somerset Place map

## IN OTHER WORDS

A *cobbler* makes shoes, a *weaver* makes cloth, a *cooper* makes barrels, and a *blacksmith* makes goods from iron.

This is one of the first depictions of American slaves that shows what they did with their own time, when they were not working for their masters. It was painted about 1800.

## Life and Labor on a Plantation

Usually a white family with more than twenty slaves operated a plantation. About one in one hundred North Carolina families owned more than fifty slaves, enough to make them among the richest people in the entire nation. Nathaniel Macon, for example, owned about seventy slaves and farmed two thousand acres. In comparison, the average **yeoman farmer** (a farmer who tilled the land he or some family member owned) had about two hundred acres. Although the objective of a planter was similar to that of a yeoman farmer—to feed his big family and to earn a profit from what was left over—a plantation differed dramatically in scale from the typical farm, in several ways.

First, a plantation used its slave labor to clear off and cultivate huge areas of land and graze large numbers of livestock. One Onslow County plantation was said to have cornfields a half mile long and a quarter mile wide. That one field could *yield* (produce) more than one thousand bushels of hulled, dried corn. Large plantations regularly produced enough corn and wheat to feed all the people on site and still send surplus amounts to market.

Second, a plantation that wisely used its slaves taught some of them to be artisans. An **artisan** is a skilled craftsperson, such as a carpenter or blacksmith. Slave Haywood Dixon, a carpenter, was so valued by his Greene County owners that he and his family were buried in the white cemetery on the plantation. A large plantation might have a cobbler, a weaver, a cooper, or a blacksmith on the plantation itself. That way, the planter cut his costs of operation, since he did not have to pay slaves as he would his white neighbors.



Third, planters often organized gang work to cultivate and harvest the fields. Twenty-two slaves were once seen working together in a twenty-five-acre potato patch, which meant that each was to clear an acre in a day. Slaves were sent into the fields early in the morning, and their work was regulated all through the day. This made most plantations more efficient. Even in winter months, most slaves had assigned tasks that they were to do together in groups.

A plantation, or two or three plantations within sight of one another, could be a neighborhood unto itself. At Locust Hill in Caswell County, more than a dozen planters lived within walking distance of Jacob Brown's Store. Even a gristmill or schools for the family's children could be located within the range of the plantation. A few of the largest planters even kept a doctor on call for all its families, both white and black. The Pettigrew family, who had a plantation in the pocosin south of the Albemarle Sound, kept a store where its slaves could buy items with money that they earned by working harder than was expected.

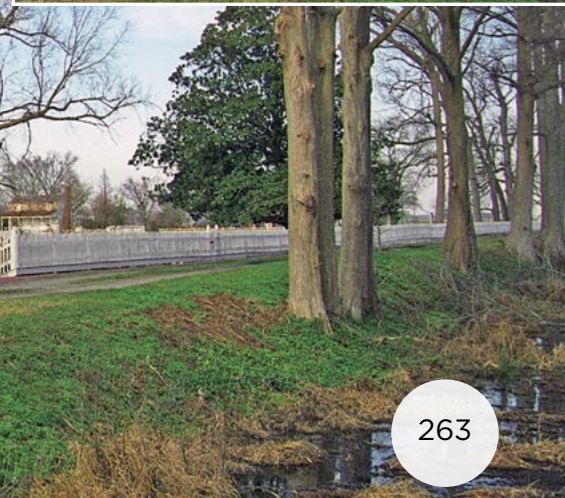
### Prominent Plantations

Plantations stood out in what was often described as a dull North Carolina landscape of log cabins and zigzag fences. Two of the most notable were built in the early 1800s, Somerset Place in Washington County in the Tidewater and Fairintosh in Durham County.

Somerset Place, close to the Pettigrew farms, was carved out of a pocosin by slaves brought directly from Africa. The Collins family of Edenton—headed successively by Josiah Collins I, II, and III—prospered at the site for a half century. The first Josiah had a private canal cut into the Albemarle Sound, which linked him by water to the Dismal Swamp Canal. This allowed him to take his own barges all the way to markets in Norfolk, Virginia. The Collinses became so wealthy growing corn that they could spend part of the year in the northern states, to escape the heat.



**Somerset Place State Historic Site?** Located in Creswell, Washington County, Somerset Place was, between 1785 and 1854, one of the Upper South's largest plantations. After the Civil War, its owners departed and the site was neglected for 70 years. In 1939, 8 of its surviving 50 original buildings, including the Collins Home and some outbuildings (pictured below), were incorporated into a state park and later named a state historic site. Today it offers an interpretive tour that explores the lives of the plantation's owners, slaves, employed whites, and free blacks.





The Collins Home at Somerset had 14 rooms. Pictured here are the drawing room, a bedroom, and the dining room where Josiah and Mary Collins entertained.



Slave Community at  
Somerset Place

Fairtosh was actually a cluster of six distinct farms. Each butted up against another and totaled about 20,000 acres. The farms were all owned by the Cameron family, who were descendants of some of the early merchants in nearby Hillsborough. First Duncan Cameron, then his son Paul, ran the operations. They had their own chapel and school on the grounds. One of their slaves ran a gristmill that was kept busy with just their grain. They sent wagon trains of goods to markets like Petersburg, Virginia, each fall.

### The Condition of African Americans

What made a person a slave in early North Carolina? In the colonial era, there was a period when Native Americans were enslaved. But after the War for Independence, almost all slaves had an African heritage. Two conditions could make a person a slave. He or she had to be at least partially African American, and his or her mother had to have been a slave. Without a visible act of **emancipation** (where a slave was legally freed by a master), a slave was a slave for life.



### The Slave Code

The **slave code** defined the social, economic, and physical place of slaves in North Carolina. Many things that white Americans took as their natural right were denied slaves.

First, they lacked freedom of movement. They could not just go where they wished, unless their master gave permission. When a slave was sighted on a road, a white person could ask to see the slave's pass, a written note that allowed such travel. Slaves did have some free time. They could attend church on Sunday and go to muster day, or even court week. But they could only do so if the master gave permission.

Second, a slave was denied most forms of advancement. A slave could learn counting, which was a skill needed on the plantation, but could not legally learn to read or write. A slave could not marry under state law, either to another slave or to a free person. The law also prohibited marriage between a white and a black person. Slaves did have their own ceremonies of marriage when they decided to live together, but the arrangements were not legally recognized. Quite often, a "married" slave man and woman might live on different plantations. They could only see each other after chores were done on Saturdays, and they had to be back at work on Monday morning.

Sometimes, slaves could earn money on their own, during the hours when they were not assigned tasks by their master. One plantation in the Cape Fear was said to provide slaves "5 or 6 acres each, for rice, corn, potatoes, tobacco &c., for their own use and profit." Quite a number of slaves kept their own gardens and their own livestock. Some of the smarter masters allowed slaves to sell the produce of their own labor, which eased in some ways the poverty that went with slavery.

### IN OTHER WORDS

*Muster day* was a spring and fall event where able-bodied men who were expected to defend the state came together for training. *Court week* took place four times a year when justices of the peace came to a county seat to conduct jury trials and to put their seal on legal documents. These gatherings turned into festive social occasions.

**Above:** The Great Barn at Historic Stagville was constructed in 1860 by slave labor. Built to house mules, it was the largest agricultural building in the state. Slave craftsmen cut and hand carved its beams.

# special Feature

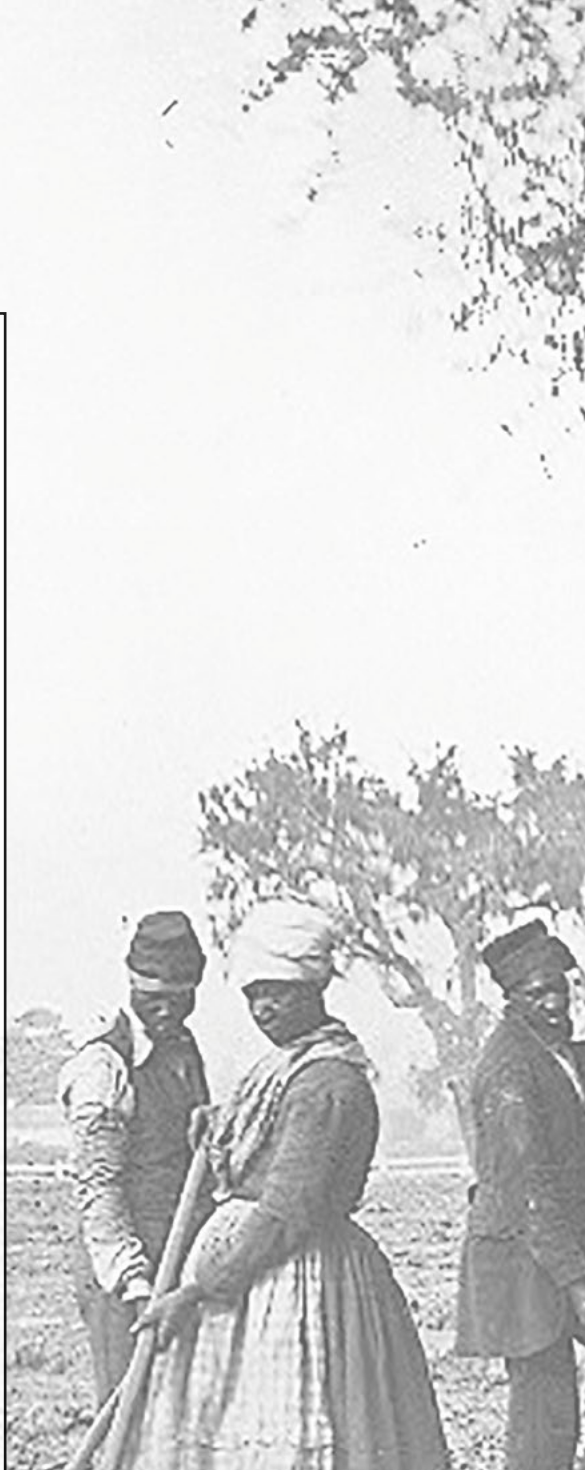
## Growing Up...

### A Slave

A slave was a slave because of the status of his or her mother. Slave women gave birth to slave children. Since the vast majority of slave women in North Carolina lived on plantations and farms, most children grew up expecting to work in the fields for the rest of their lives. A notable exception was Harriet Jacobs, who later wrote a memoir about her struggle to survive and escape bondage. Jacobs recalled that her father, a skilled carpenter in Edenton, paid his mistress an annual fee from his wages and managed his own affairs. "I was born a slave," Jacobs said, "but I never knew it until six years of happy childhood had disappeared. I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise." She was even taught to read.

The idea that a slave was "merchandise" was true of any child in bondage. He or she could be bought or sold depending on the needs of the master. More than once in the state's slave records is a note that a mother "together with her increase" was to be sold like an investment. The very first known slave family in the Albemarle Sound area, "Manuell and Frank his wife," had five children. All were divided among the children of their owner when he died in 1709. Harriet Jacobs, orphaned at a young age, was sold to a master who abused her. After a comfortable town life during her teen years, she was sent to work in the fields at a nearby plantation. Her young children stayed behind.

Most slave children did not have the same privileges enjoyed by Harriet Jacobs in her early years. Only a fraction were ever taught to read or write because state law did not allow that. State law also forbade marriage, although many black couples lived in what would have been called "common law arrangements" had they been white. That meant that the couple had proven their devotion and duty to one another over such a long period that they were almost as good as married. But it also meant that almost all slave children were illegitimate, by law.



A slave family could be, and often was, broken apart when the slaves were sold.



At Somerset Place, some of the slaves lived in one-room apartments.

Slave children grew up in crowded conditions. On larger plantations, like Somerset Place in Washington County and Stagville in Orange County, slave children were raised in the first “apartments” built in the state. Josiah Collins, master at Somerset, built a row of two-storied cottages near his plantation. More than one hundred slaves lived in the ten rooms he built, meaning that as many as ten people shared one of the 20-by-20-foot rooms. Young children on plantations like Somerset often played and helped grandparents around the slave quarters while their parents worked in the fields. At Somerset, children might hoe the family garden plots, tend the chickens, or help with carrying items in and out of the farm buildings.

On almost every plantation, black children were used for minor tasks. Sarah, an Orange County slave, told her family about being a “house maid” as a child. “I was kept at the big house to wait on Miz Polly,” one of the master’s young daughters. Sarah’s “dresses and aprons was starched stiff. I had a clean apron every day.” It was common for slave children assigned to white children to sleep in the bedroom of the white child, most often on the floor so that they would be at beck and call all night.

Once slave children reached their teens, they were put to work pretty much as if they were adults. Most became field hands. Louisa, a slave from Richmond County, recalled later that work started “at the time the chicken crowed, and we went to work just as soon as we could see how to make a lick with the hoe.” It was “just work, and work, and work,” remembered Sarah, who grew up in Buncombe County. “In any kind of weather, rain or snow, it never mattered.” Boys were soon made into men as full-time workers. Young women too worked in the fields. “Women plowed and done other work as the men did,” recalled Jacob, who grew up in Warren County. Pregnancy reduced a woman’s load somewhat, but it was not unusual for a slave woman to give birth on the same day she was in the fields. She was expected to return soon after, leaving the baby in the care of older women in the quarters.



## DID YOU KNOW...

Slaves were not allowed to keep or use drums in religious ceremonies. Slave owners were afraid that the drums could be used to send messages or to signal a slave uprising.

## HAVE YOU VISITED...

Historic Stagville State Historic Site? Located in Durham, it comprises the remains of the state's largest antebellum plantation. By 1860, its owners, the Bennehan-Cameron family, had almost 30,000 acres and 900 slaves. Today, Stagville consists of 71 acres on 3 tracts, the Bennehan House, 4 slave houses, a pre-Revolutionary War farmer's house, a barn, and the family cemetery. Visitors can guide themselves around its grounds and look into the past, especially into the lives of Stagville's African American community.

## Life in the Slave Quarters

A slave's material condition in the antebellum era varied considerably, depending upon the attitude of the master. Only a few plantations, like Fairntosh or Panola in Edgecombe County, had really solid housing. Most slave homes were made of logs or poles, and the slaves had to fill in the cracks to keep out the cold air. Each family unit made do with a one-room space containing all the cooking equipment, beds, and any other furniture. In back of the cabin, there was usually a small garden plot, where slaves worked on their own time to supplement the basic food given them by the masters. Often slaves received from the master roughly the equivalent of two hamburger patties and a half loaf of bread a day.

Slaves generally formed close bonds in the **quarters**, the area where their housing was located. Slaves often had their own religious services in the quarters or in a nearby barn. Sometimes they would dance and sing in ways that reminded them of their African heritage. These rituals helped slaves work together to survive the rigors of bondage.

At Fairntosh, the Camerons scattered their slaves around their plantations and let them be in charge of the daily work chores. Mr. Cameron made the rounds each week. If he met a slave on the road and did not recognize him, he would demand to know which quarters he lived in and why he was out and about.

All slaves faced two horrors. They could be beaten, even for a minor infraction against a white, and they or members of their families could be sold and sent away. Slaves were often separated when the master died, and some slaves had to be sold to pay off debts on the plantation.

Although only a minority of slaves were ever beaten or sold, no slave ever escaped the threat of that happening. Beatings occurred most often when a slave tried to escape, especially if it happened more than once. Those who ran away faced the possibility of being declared outlaws. That meant that they could be shot on sight by a white person.





## Free People of Color

A few blacks in North Carolina were free, but they still suffered from prejudice and ill treatment. In towns like Fayetteville, **free blacks** wore a label on their sleeve that identified their condition. Most worked as day laborers for whites on farms, or, quite often, became tradesmen in towns.

“Elder” Ralf Freeman, a freed slave, became one of the more notable preachers in the Uwharries during the 1820s. When the state passed laws in the 1830s to restrict how much blacks could preach, almost one hundred whites came to Freeman’s support to allow him to continue.

(The state legislature turned them down.) John Chavis, born free in Halifax County, became a noted schoolteacher of wealthy young white men. He also conducted a school for free black children in Raleigh.

Almost two hundred free blacks owned slaves. In many cases, the slaves were relatives bought to keep them from being owned by whites.

John C. Stanly, a New Bern barber, skillfully invested in land and became a planter. His family owned more than twenty slaves.

In New Bern, Wilmington, and Halifax, the free black community was sizable during the early 1800s. A few free blacks in towns became prosperous, but few attained the respected status enjoyed by Thomas Day in Milton.

## DID YOU KNOW...

Just before the Civil War, there were 30,463 free blacks living in North Carolina.

## It’s Your Turn

1. How did Tsalis’s actions help some of the mountain Cherokee avoid the Trail of Tears?
2. What conditions made a person a slave? How could a slave be freed?
3. Explain how a plantation differed from a farm. Which plantations were the state’s largest?
4. How were antebellum-era slaves kept from exercising the same democratic rights as whites living in North Carolina?

**Top Left:** Although a portrait of Thomas Day has not come down to us, state officials included this handsome depiction when they built the State Museum of History in Raleigh. This “Mr. Day” greets visitors as they approach the main entrance.

# Chapter Review

## Chapter Summary

### Section 1: The State That Moved Like a Turtle

- North Carolinians were proponents of states' rights and favored the ratification of the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution.
- In the 1796 presidential election, North Carolinians voted for the unsuccessful Antifederalist (Democratic-Republican) candidate, Thomas Jefferson.
- Nathaniel Macon was the state's most influential leader during this period and was a spokesman for republican simplicity.
- The United States and Great Britain fought each other once again in the War of 1812. The war had little impact on the state, although some North Carolinians became heroes.

### Section 2: The Rip Van Winkle State

- Conditions in the state grew worse after the War of 1812, and large numbers of residents left North Carolina to begin a new life elsewhere.
- Archibald Murphey tried to improve the state through internal improvements and increased funding of education.
- Murphey's ideas included building canals and encouraging the state to fund common schools. His proposals went unfunded for the most part.

### Section 3: North Carolina Awakens

- The state's constitution was amended in 1835 to address the unequal representation in the legislature. It also denied suffrage to free blacks and Native Americans, while allowing Catholics to hold public office.

- National politics was changing under President Andrew Jackson, who headed a strong Democratic Party. The Whig Party was created to oppose Jackson's policies.

### Section 4: Whigs Support Development

- The Whigs, who controlled the state in the 1830s, supported improvements in public education, railroads, and social reforms. These kinds of developments made North Carolinians believe they had caught up with the rest of the nation.
- The chartering of cotton mills and North Carolina's own "gold rush" also contributed to growth in the mid-1800s.

### Section 5: Racial Issues in the Time of Reform

- The Cherokee nation suffered forced removal in 1838, but around 1,000 North Carolina Cherokee were allowed to remain after an incident involving a Cherokee named Tsali.
- Compared to Virginia and South Carolina, North Carolina was not a large slave-holding state, but it still had a significant slave population. Around one in four families in the state owned slaves during the antebellum period.
- Slave codes helped regulate the movement, advancement, and education of slaves, among other things. A sizable free black community in the eastern part of the state suffered from prejudice and ill treatment, just as slaves did.

## Activities for Learning

### Reviewing People, Places, and Things



Match the following with the correct description that follows.

**antebellum era**  
**republican simplicity**

**internal improvements**  
**common schools**

**Literary Fund**  
**emancipation**

**suffrage**  
**slave code**

- ideas suggested by Archibald Murphey such as building canals
- the right to vote
- the act of setting a slave free
- the idea of being self-sufficient farmers who relied mainly on themselves and their neighbors
- the time period before the Civil War
- set up by the legislature to help build schools
- schools to be created for each county where students paid according to family income
- rules that defined the social, economic, and physical place of slaves in North Carolina

### Understanding the Facts



- Which two constitutional amendments dealt with states' rights?
- Who did North Carolinians support in the presidential election of 1796?
- What high government office did Nathaniel Macon hold?
- How did the War of 1812 impact North Carolina?
- What were farming conditions like in North Carolina after the War of 1812?
- Why was it difficult to build canals in North Carolina?
- What nickname was given to the state in the mid-1800s?
- How did the constitutional changes in 1835 make North Carolina less democratic?

- What form of transportation drastically helped the growth of North Carolina in the mid-1800s?
- What were some problems with plank roads?
- About how many Cherokee remained in North Carolina after 1838?
- What types of jobs did free blacks have?

### Developing Critical Thinking



- How did the policy of republican simplicity hurt North Carolina residents after the War of 1812?
- The text indicated that the British decided that the state was too unimportant to invade during the War of 1812 because they did not see much of value. If the situation occurred today, what might the enemy see as being of great value?
- Based on which you have learned about antebellum North Carolina society and economics in this chapter, do you think most North Carolinians will support or oppose the separation of southern states during the Civil War? Why or why not? Explain your prediction in a well-developed paragraph.

### Exploring Technology



- North Carolinians were very happy to see the adoption of the Tenth Amendment. Use a credible search engine to find the exact wording of the amendment. Then rewrite the amendment in common and easy-to-understand language.
- Nathaniel Macon was the only speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives to have come from North Carolina. Use a credible search engine to find five facts about his life that were not presented in the text.

### Encountering Diversity



Pick one way in which the actions of the people of North Carolina set them apart from the other states. Describe the reasons the people of North Carolina decided to engage in this action and how they felt it benefited them. How did it hurt them?



Chapter Review