Home > Wilkes County

Wilkes County [1]

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Average: 4.5 (25 votes)
Wilkes County

[2]

WILKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT:
https://www.wilkescounty.net/ [3]

COUNTY SEAT: Wilkesboro

FORMED: 1777
FORMED FROM: Surry, District of Washington

LAND AREA: 754.28 square miles

2020 POPULATION ESTIMATE: 65,969
White: 92.7%
Black/African American: 4.7%
American Indian: 0.4%
Asian: 0.6%
Pacific Islander: 0.1%
Two or more races: 1.5%
Hispanic/Latino: 6.9% (of any race)

From *State & County QuickFacts*, US Census Bureau, 2020. [4]

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 5TH

BIOGRAPHIES FOR [5]
Wilkes County [5]

[6]**WILDLIFE PROFILES FOR**
Mountain region [6]

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

REGION: Mountain [7]
RIVER BASIN: Yadkin-Pee Dee [8], Map [9]
NEIGHBORING COUNTIES: Alexander [10], Alleghany [11], Ashe [12], Caldwell [13], Iredell [14], Surry [15], Watauga [16], Yadkin [17]

Wilkes County, North Carolina

See also: North Carolina Counties [18] (to access links to NCpedia articles for all 100 counties)

by Jay Mazzocchi, 2006

See also:"Ballad of Tom Dooley" [19]; MerleFest [20].

Wilkes County, located in the Mountain [7] region of North Carolina, was formed in 1777 from Surry County [15] and named for the English statesman John Wilkes, a member of the Parliament who fought for American independence. Early inhabitants of the area included the Tutelo and Cherokee [21] Indians; the region was later inhabited by German [22] and Scotch-Irish [23] settlers. Wilkesboro [24], the county seat, was incorporated in 1847 and named for the county. Other Wilkes County communities include Ronda, Roaring River, North Wilkesboro [25], Moravian Falls, Boomer, Ferguson, Millers Creek, Mulberry, Wilbar, and Austin. Physical features significant to the county are the Yadkin River and the W. Kerr Scott [26] Reservoir.

"Tom Dooley" [19] of legend and song was hanged in 1868 for the murder of Laura Foster in Ferguson. Wilkes County landmarks and historic sites include the Old Wilkes County Jail, built in 1858; the Robert Cleveland House, built in the late eighteenth century; Claymount Hill, built in 1870; and the Wade Hampton Harris Memorial Bridge, built in 1931. Cultural attractions include the Wilkes Symphony Orchestra, Wilkes Art Gallery [27], Wilkes Playmakers, and the Whippoorwill Academy and Village [28], including the Tom Dooley Art Museum. Natural attractions within the county include Stone Mountain State Park [29] and the Rendezvous Mountain Educational State Forest [30]. The county hosts festivals and annual events such as MerleFest [31], Brushy Mountain Apple Festival, Wilkes Agricultural Fair, Lowe's Balloons over the Blue Ridge, Mountain Bike Ride, and North Wilkesboro Fireworks Celebration.

Wilkes County farms produce such commodities as flue-cured tobacco, apples, poultry [32], and beef cattle; forestry is an important source of revenue in the county as well. Manufactured goods include hardboard siding, tools, milling equipment, glass products, lingerie, furniture [33], shoes, and hosiery. Wilkes County had an estimated population of 67,000 in 2004.

Annotated history of Wilkes County's formation:

For an annotated history of the county's formation, with the laws affecting the county, boundary lines and changes, and other origin information, visit these references in *The Formation of the North Carolina Counties* (Corbitt, 2000), available online at North Carolina Digital Collections (note, there may be additional items of interest for the county not listed here):

County formation history: https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll9/id/290001 [34]

Index entry for the county: https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll9/id/290098 [35]

Additional resources:

Corbitt, David Leroy. 2000. *The formation of the North Carolina counties, 1663-1943.* https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll9/id/290103 [36] (accessed June 20, 2017).

Wilkes County Government: http://www.wilkescounty.net/ [2]

DigitalNC, Wilkes County: https://www.digitalnc.org/counties/wilkes-county/ [37]

North Carolina Digital Collections (explore by place, time period, format): https://digital.ncdcr.gov/ [38]

Image credits:

Rudersdorf, Amy. 2010. "NC County Maps." Government & Heritage Library, State Library of North Carolina.

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Source URL:https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/wilkes?page=1

Links
[1] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/wilkes [2] http://www.wilkescounty.net/ [3] https://www.wilkescounty.net [4] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/wilkescountynorthcarolina/POP010220 [5] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/wilkes-county/biography [6] https://www.ncpedia.org/wildlife/mountains [7] https://www.ncpedia.org/our-state-geography-snap-mountain [8] https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/yadkin-river-basin.pdf [9] https://ncdenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PublicInformation/index.html?appid=f82f583438e74bf29adcc76247381eee [10] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/alexander [11] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/alleghany [12] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/ashe [13] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/caldwell [14] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/iredell [15] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/surry [16] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/watauga [17] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/yadkin [18] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/counties [19] https://www.ncpedia.org/ballad-tom-dooley [20] https://ncpedia.org/merlefest [21] https://www.ncpedia.org/cherokee/overview [22] https://www.ncpedia.org/german-settlers [23] https://www.ncpedia.org/scottish-settlers [24] https://www.wilkesboronc.org/ [25] http://www.north-wilkesboro.com/ [26] https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/scott-william-kerr [27] https://www.wilkesartgallery.org/ [28] http://www.whippoorwillacademy.com/ [29] https://www.ncparks.gov/stone-mountain-state-park/home [30] https://www.ncesf.org/rendezvousMt.html [31] https://www.ncpedia.org/merlefest [32] https://www.ncpedia.org/poultry [33] https://www.ncpedia.org/furniture/overview [34] https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll9/id/290001 [35] https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll9/id/290098 [36] https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll9/id/290103 [37] https://www.digitalnc.org/counties/wilkes-county/ [38] https://digital.ncdcr.gov/ [39] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/counties [40] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia- [41] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/mazzocchi-jay [42] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/mountai-22