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North Carolina

North Carolina is located on the central Atlantic Coast of the United States. North Carolina is surrounded by four other states: Virginia to the north; Tennessee to the west; and Georgia and South Carolina to the south. The Outer Banks islands are off the Atlantic Coast and are the first areas of North Carolina to be affected by hurricanes. Florida and Louisiana are the only states that experience more hurricanes than North Carolina.

Early History

Before the arrival of European explorers in the early 1500s CE, the coastal land of present-day North Carolina was occupied by six groups of Native Americans: Weapoemeoc, Chowan, Hatteras, Pamlico, Nottoway, and Woccon. At least six more groups inhabited central North Carolina, including the Tuscarora, while the Cherokee people lived in the Appalachian Mountains in the west.

In 1524 Verrazano, an Italian sailor traveling under the French flag arrived on the coast of North Carolina. Hernando de Soto reached North Carolina fifteen years later, but neither claimed the area for their country.

Sir Walter Raleigh of England planned to establish a colony in present-day North Carolina in 1585. The first colony on Roanoke Island failed and a second was attempted in 1587. However, when a British ship arrived in 1590 to bring supplies, the colonists had disappeared. It is now referred to as the Lost Colony.

Attempts at colonization ceased until the 1650s when settlers moved south from Virginia into the area around Albemarle Sound. Interest in colonizing the North Carolina area continued in England when, in 1663, King Charles II of England deeded the land of Carolina to eight noblemen, called the Lords Proprietors. The deeded land was divided into three pieces: Albemarle County in the north; Clarendon County near Cape Fear; and Craven County in the south. By 1712, Craven County had become a separate colony, eventually called South Carolina.

In the early years of the colony different European groups settled in the Carolinas. These included Huguenots, French people of Protestant faith; Quakers from England; and German, Irish, and Swiss immigrants. Many of these settlers not only took lands belonging to the Tuscarora people but also kidnapped Tuscarora and sold them as slaves. Also many of the native people were dying from diseases,

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like smallpox, that the Europeans had brought to North America. In 1711, Tuscarora warriors began systematically attacking European settlements and killing all the residents. The colonial governors of North and South Carolina joined together to form militia and the Tuscarora War, as it is called, ended in 1715.

Towards Statehood

Great Britain purchased North Carolina from the Lords Proprietors in 1729 and North Carolina was officially one of the thirteen British colonies in North America. At this time, North Carolina had two distinct cultures. Near the coast were large plantations where wealthy landowners used slave labor to raise tobacco and rice. Further west, families worked small farms far from the legislature that controlled taxes and laws. Western farmers banded together in a group known as Regulators who tried to influence the legislature. Finally in 1771, the colonial governor sent troops against the Regulators and they were defeated in the Battle of Alamance.

North Carolina joined the other colonies in forming the First Continental Congress in 1774, the first non-British government uniting the colonies. The Revolutionary War between the colonies and Great Britain began in 1775. In April 1776, representatives from around North Carolina met in Halifax and wrote the Halifax Resolves. In these Resolves, North Carolina was the first colony to declare that it wanted independence from Great Britain. The Declaration of Independence issued by all thirteen colonies was signed several months later, on July 4, 1776.

After the Revolutionary War, the former colonies were governed by the Articles of Confederation which leaders quickly realized were inadequate. In 1787, representatives again met in Philadelphia and wrote the Constitution of the United States which continues to be the governing document for the country. However, representatives from North Carolina were amongst those who determined that the Constitution as written gave too much power to the federal government.

North Carolina refused to adopt (ratify) the Constitution until the Bill of Rights was added. The Bill of Rights guarantees certain basic freedoms to citizens of the United States. North Carolina became the twelfth state when it adopted the Constitution in late 1789.

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Circle True or False after analyzing each of the following statements.

1. True False The three states that experience the most hurricanes are Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina, in that order.
2. True False Western North Carolina and the Appalachian Mountains are the traditional home of the Cherokee Indians.
3. True False The Lost Colony was given that name because it was nestled between Albemarle Sound and Roanoke Island.
4. True False Sir Francis Drake, an English explorer, sailed off the coast of North Carolina and claimed the area for England.
5. True False In the early years of the North Carolina colony settlers included French Huguenots; Quakers from England; and German, Irish, and Swiss immigrants.
6. True False The Tuscarora War was a major conflict between Native Americans and colonists in North Carolina.
7. True False In the early 1700s, the citizens of North Carolina were divided into two major classes: wealthy plantation owners who used slave labor and family farmers who worked small plots of land.
8. True False The North Carolina Regulators are famous because they protested British taxes on tea and other commodities.
9. True False In the Hatteras Resolves, North Carolina was the first colony to declare it wanted independence from Great Britain.
10. True False North Carolina refused to ratify the U.S. Constitution until the Bill of Rights was added.

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Answers

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. True
7. True
8. False
9. False
10. True