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Town History & Information

Wilkes County, pop. 69,340 (county seat Wilkesboro, pop. 3,044)

Formed in 1777 from parts of Surry County NC and what was then Washington District (now Washington County, TN). It was named for English political radical John Wilkes, who supported the Colonies during the Revolution. Major activities include fishing/boating at W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, and hiking/camping at Stone Mountain State Park. Wilkesboro is home of one of the largest Americana music festivals in the nation, Merlefest. North Wilkesboro is home of one of the largest one day festivals on the East Coast, Brushy Mountain Apple Festival.

Ashe County, pop. 27,281 (county seat Jefferson, pop. 1,422)

Originally considered a part of the "State of Franklin," and became a part of NC in 1785 and an official county in 1799, named for Governor (1795-1798) Samuel Ashe. Major attractions include the E. B. Jefferies Park on the Blue Ridge Parkway, New River State Park, the New River National Scenic River, second oldest river in the world. West Jefferson is home of Ashe County Cheese Factory. The area has numerous Christmas tree farms.

Watauga County, pop. 51,079, (county seat Boone, pop. 17,122)

Formed in 1849 out of the southwest part of Ashe County and parts of Wilkes, Caldwell, and Yancey Counties. It was named for the Watauga River, an Indian name usually interpreted as "beautiful water." Major attractions include The Blowing Rock (oldest attraction in NC), Moses Cone and Julian Price Parks on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Horn in the West historical drama, Appalachian Ski Mountain, Tweetsie Railroad, and Appalachian State University."

Alleghany County, pop. 11,155, (county seat Sparta, pop. 1,817)

Formed from eastern Ashe County in 1859, and was named for the Alleghany Mountains. Major attractions include the Blue Ridge Parkway and mountain music venues.

Mitchell County, pop. 15,579, (county seat Bakersville, pop. 464)

Was formed in 1861 from parts of five surrounding counties. It was named for Dr. Elisha Mitchell, professor of mathematics, chemistry, geology, and mineralogy at the University of North Carolina, who was the first scientist to advocate a mountain in the Black Mountain range, which now bears his name, as the highest in the Eastern US. Major attractions include the Historic Orchard at Altapass and Museum of Minerals on the Blue Ridge Parkway, and access to Mount Mitchell State Park.

Avery County, pop. 17,797, (county seat Newland, pop. 698)

The last to be created in NC, was formed in 1911 from parts of Mitchell, Caldwell, and Watauga Counties. It is named for Waightstill Avery, a colonel during the Revolution and first Attorney General of NC. Major attractions include Grandfather Mountain (an international biosphere), the Linville Gorge Wilderness Area and Linville Falls (the highest falls on the east coast), Sugar Mountain and Beech Mountain Ski areas, and Linville Caverns (the only show caverns in NC).

Daniel Boone (1734 – 1820)

The famous American frontiersman, was born in a Quaker settlement in Pennsylvania. His family moved to the Yadkin Valley area of what is now Davie County, NC, near Mocksville, in 1750. Boone became a "long hunter," and frequented the High Country on his hunting expeditions through the 1750's until his first trip to the Kentucky area in 1767. An area north of Boone is called "Meat Camp" after his hunting camp. His wife and children continued to live in NC until their permanent move to Boone's Station, KY in 1779. His extended family continued to live in NC and left many descendants in the High Country area.



FAST FACTS & ACCOLADES

1 BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

The High Country is home to over 120 miles of this national park and features the most photographed and most visited spots on this amazing drive.

2 BANNER ELK

is home of the Woolly Worm Festival, named one of the top American Festivals by *National Geographic*.

3 BEECH MOUNTAIN

is the highest town in Eastern America with an elevation of 5,506 feet where temperatures rarely exceed 72 degrees.

Best Year Round Recreation title was given to Beech Mountain for its biking and skiing by *travelchannel.com*.

4 BLOWING ROCK

was voted "One of America's Prettiest Winter Towns" by *Travel & Leisure*.

Charity Horse Show was designated a heritage competition by the US Equestrian Federation.

Blue Ridge Wine & Food Festival was named a Southeast Tourism Society Top 20 Event.

5 BOONE

has a county population of over 50,000 and ranked fourth on *Forbes* list of "America's Fastest Growing Towns."

Rocky Knob Park has over 8 miles of biking trails and made the *Velo News* list of Ultimate Ride Hotspots."

6 LINVILLE

is home of Grandfather Mountain, an international biosphere reserve, featuring over 73 rare or endangered species.

The Orchard at Altapass located along the Blue Ridge Parkway can trace its history back to the Cherokee tribes.

7 WEST JEFFERSON

won the NC Small Town Main Street Award for its efforts in making the town an attractive destination for tourists.

Ashe County Cheese Factory, the Carolina's oldest cheese plant, is located in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

8 WILKESBORO

is known worldwide for MerleFest, a diverse roots-music festival that brings in a crowd of over 80,000.

The Brushy Mountain Apple Festival is one of the largest one-day arts & crafts festivals in the Southeast and features over 400 craft vendors & 100 food vendors.

