American Indians - Part 1: Introduction **[1]**

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American Indians

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Part i: Introduction

American Indians have populated the region that includes modern-day North Carolina continuously since the Paleo-Indian [8] period (13,000–8000 b.c.). The historical and archaeological record, as interpreted by scholars and by American Indians themselves, has shown that North Carolina was home to many flourishing communities of indigenous peoples before the arrival of European explorers and colonists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After the first arrival of Europeans, however, these native cultures changed decisively as natives interacted—sometimes productively but often violently—with European settlers. Since European contact, the history of American Indians in North Carolina, as elsewhere in the United States, often has been marked by conflict and struggle, not only between Indians and whites but also among and within Indian groups. During the early nineteenth century, North Carolina's government joined the federal government in its official policy of removal of American Indian people to reservations in Oklahoma and elsewhere, and this struck a terrible blow to the state's indigenous population. Nevertheless, communities of American Indians remained in the state, even during the era of removal, and native peoples' cultures and identities have persisted and evolved in the face of complex and often conflicting relationships with their nonnative neighbors. Today, the state is home to two of the largest Indian tribes east of the Mississippi River, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians [9] and the Lumbee Indians, along with a number of smaller recognized tribes and unaffiliated Indian groups. Many American Indians have established themselves as vital participants in the state's social, cultural, economic, and political spheres.

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