

Backcountry ^[1]

Backcountry

by Lindley S. Butler, 2006

Backcountry was the term used during the early settlement and colonial periods for the vast interior of North Carolina, located away from the coastline and including both the modern-day [Piedmont](#) ^[2] and [Mountain](#) ^[3] regions. The backcountry was first explored by [John Lederer](#) ^[4] in 1670 and was penetrated gradually by Virginia Indian traders. Not until the mid-eighteenth century did large numbers of [Scotch-Irish](#) ^[5] and [Germans](#) ^[6] begin to spread across the region, following the "[Great Wagon Road](#)" ^[7] from Pennsylvania down through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The interior population rapidly swelled to become 40 percent of the colony's total, and backcountry settlers' inadequate political representation in the colonial assembly was a factor in the increasing east-west sectional friction that led to the [Regulator Movement](#) ^[8] (1765-71) and other conflicts. The backcountry was the last area of the state to be settled and, consequently, the most volatile region of North Carolina society for many years.

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Additional Resources:

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Authors:

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[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[17]

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