

## **Macon County** <sup>[1]</sup>



Average: 4.4 (18 votes)

Macon County



<sup>[2]</sup>

### **MACON COUNTY GOVERNMENT:**

[maconnc.org](http://maconnc.org) <sup>[2]</sup>

**COUNTY SEAT:** Franklin

**FORMED:** 1828

**FORMED FROM:** Haywood

**LAND AREA:** 515.56 square miles

**2020 POPULATION ESTIMATE:** 37,014

White: 95.1%

Black/African American: 1.7%

American Indian: 0.9%

Asian: 1.0%

Pacific Islander: 0.1%


Two or more races: 1.2%

Hispanic/Latino: 7.4% (of any race)

From *State & County QuickFacts*, US Census Bureau, 2020. <sup>[3]</sup>

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:** 11TH

**BIOGRAPHIES FOR**  <sup>[4]</sup>  
[Macon County](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

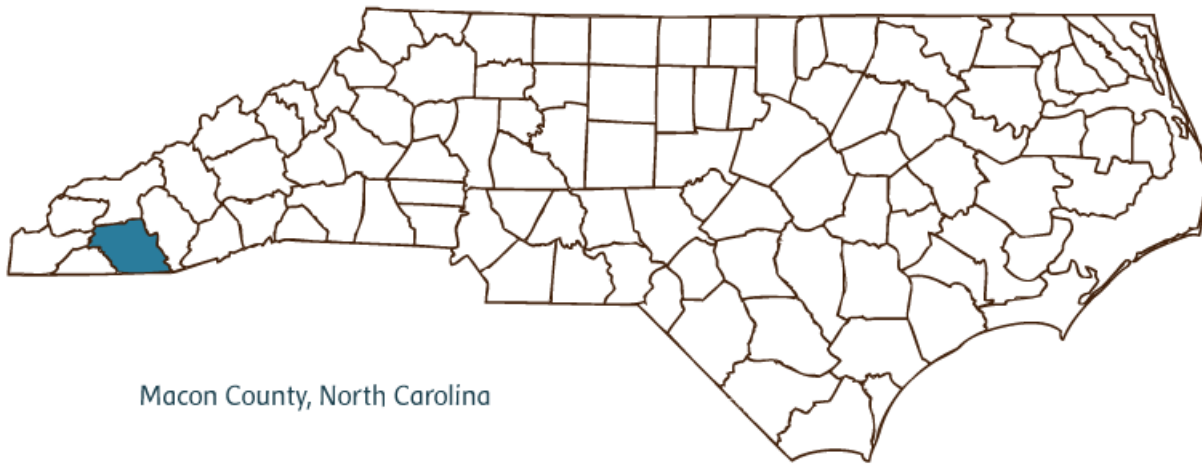
 <sup>[5]</sup> **WILDLIFE PROFILES FOR**  
[Mountain region](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

### **GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

**REGION:** [Mountain](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

**RIVER BASIN:** [Little Tennessee](#) <sup>[7]</sup>, [Savannah](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, [Map](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

**NEIGHBORING COUNTIES:** [Cherokee](#) <sup>[10]</sup>, [Clay](#) <sup>[11]</sup>, [Graham](#) <sup>[12]</sup>, [Jackson](#) <sup>[13]</sup>, [Swain](#) <sup>[14]</sup>



Macon County, North Carolina

See also: [North Carolina Counties](#) <sup>[15]</sup> (to access links to NCpedia articles for all 100 counties)

by Robert Blair Vocci, 2006

Macon County, located in North Carolina's [Mountain](#) <sup>[6]</sup> region, was formed from [Haywood County](#) <sup>[16]</sup> in 1828 and named for [Nathaniel Macon](#) <sup>[17]</sup>, an early nineteenth-century North Carolina political leader who served as both a U.S. senator and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. [Franklin](#) <sup>[18]</sup> (incorporated in 1855) is the county seat, and other communities include Highlands, Gneiss, Cullasaja, Otto, Norton, Rainbow Springs, Aquone, Scaly Mountain, Nantahala, Cartoogechaye, Burningtown, Ellijay, and Cowee.

The area of Macon County, in the southwestern portion of North Carolina above Georgia, traditionally was thought to have been first explored by Spaniards, including Hernando De Soto. Modern scholarship, however, places the explorers in the Catawba Valley. The land was ceded to European settlers in 1819 by the Cherokee, who had previously flourished there. The capital of the Middle Cherokees, Cowee, was in what is now Macon County, and the preserved [Nikwasi Indian Mound](#) <sup>[19]</sup> in Franklin (*Nikwasi* meaning "center of activity") marks what was an important Cherokee ceremonial center.

The [Nantahala National Forest](#) <sup>[20]</sup>, the largest of the state's four national forests, comprises almost half of Macon County, offering an array of outdoor activities, including fishing and whitewater rafting on the Nantahala River and Nantahala Lake and hiking along the [Appalachian Trail](#) <sup>[21]</sup>. The county's land is also rich with minerals and gemstones-including rubies, sapphires, amethyst, moonstone, and garnets-and no fewer than three major gem shows are offered annually, drawing thousands of amateur mineralogists and gem enthusiasts. The natural history of the area has long been studied, from the visit of naturalist William Bartram in the 1770s to the modern establishment of a biological station at Highlands. Macon County's population was estimated to be 31,700 in 2004.

---

## Annotated history of Macon 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/Documents/Detail/the-formation-of-the-north-ca...> <sup>[22]</sup>

Index entry for the county: <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/the-formation-of-the-north-ca...> <sup>[23]</sup>

### References:

*The Heritage of Macon County, North Carolina* (1987-1998).

### Additional resources:

Corbitt, David Leroy. 2000. *The formation of the North Carolina counties, 1663-1943*. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/the-formation-of-the-north-carolina-counties-1663-1943/3692099?item=4553233> <sup>[24]</sup> (accessed June 20, 2017).

Macon County Government: <https://maconnc.org/> <sup>[2]</sup>

Franklin Chamber of Commerce: <https://franklin-chamber.com/> <sup>[25]</sup>

Highlands Chamber of Commerce: <https://www.highlandschamber.org/> <sup>[26]</sup>

DigitalNC, Macon County: <https://www.digitalnc.org/counties/macon-county/> <sup>[27]</sup>

**Image credits:**

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

**Subjects:**

Counties [29]

**From:**

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.[30]

**Authors:**

Vocci, Robert Blair [31]

**Origin - location:**

Macon County [32]

1 January 2006 | Vocci, Robert Blair

---

**Source URL:**<https://ncpedia.org/geography/macon>

**Links**

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/macon> [2] <https://maconnnc.org/> [3] <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/maconcountynorthcarolina/POP010220> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/macon-county/biography> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/wildlife/mountains> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/our-state-geography-snap-mountain> [7] <https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/little-tennessee-river-basin.pdf> [8] [https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/savannah-river\\_basin.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/savannah-river_basin.pdf) [9] <https://ncdenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PublicInformation/index.html?appid=f82f583438e74bf29adcc76247381eee> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/cherokee> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/clay> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/graham> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/jackson> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/swain> [15] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/counties> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/haywood> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/macon-nathaniel-0> [18] <https://www.franklinnc.com/> [19] <https://www.tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/landslide2021/locations/nikwasi.html> [20] <https://ncpedia.org/nantahala-national-forest> [21] <https://ncpedia.org/appalachian-trail> [22] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/the-formation-of-the-north-carolina-counties-1663-1943/3692099?item=4553404> [23] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/the-formation-of-the-north-carolina-counties-1663-1943/3692099?item=4553596> [24] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/the-formation-of-the-north-carolina-counties-1663-1943/3692099?item=4553233> [25] <https://franklin-chamber.com/> [26] <https://www.highlandschamber.org/> [27] <https://www.digitalnc.org/counties/macon-county/> [28] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov> [29] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/counties> [30] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia-> [31] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/vocci-robert-blair> [32] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/mountain-2>