

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

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Durham County



<sup>[2]</sup>

### **DURHAM COUNTY GOVERNMENT:**

<https://www.dconcc.gov/> <sup>[2]</sup>

**COUNTY SEAT:** Durham

**FORMED:** 1881

**FORMED FROM:** Orange, Wake

**LAND AREA:** 285.98 square miles

**2018 POPULATION ESTIMATE:** 316,739

White: 53.7%

Black/African American: 37.3%

American Indian: 0.9%

Asian: 5.5%

Pacific Islander: 0.1%

Two or more races: 2.5%

Hispanic/Latino: 13.7% (of any race)

From *State & County QuickFacts*, US Census Bureau, 2018. <sup>[3]</sup>

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:** 1ST, 4TH

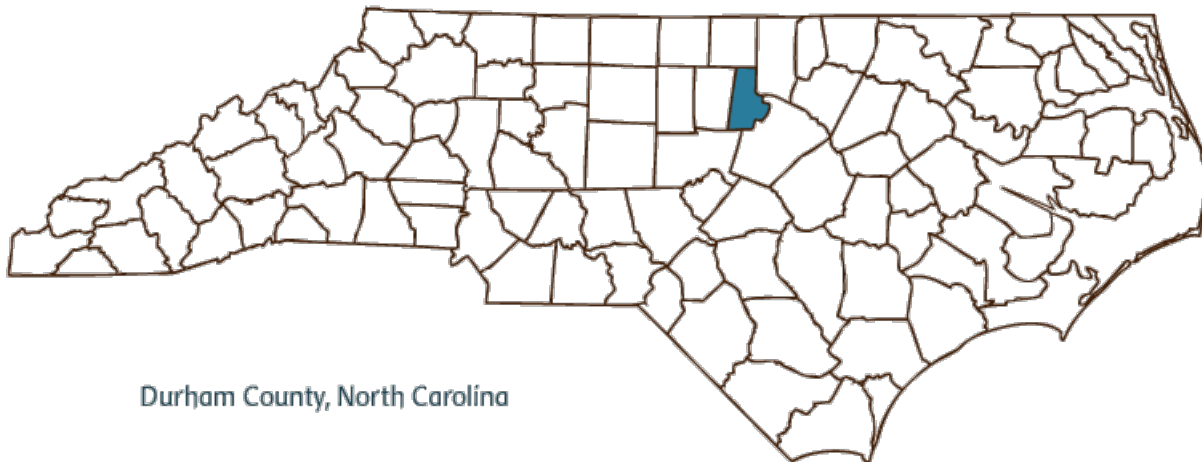
**BIOGRAPHIES FOR**  <sup>[4]</sup>  
[Durham County](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**REGION:** Piedmont <sup>[6]</sup>

**RIVER BASIN:** Cape Fear <sup>[7]</sup>, Neuse <sup>[8]</sup>, Map <sup>[9]</sup>

**NEIGHBORING COUNTIES:** Chatham <sup>[10]</sup>, Granville <sup>[11]</sup>, Orange <sup>[12]</sup>, Person <sup>[13]</sup>, Wake <sup>[14]</sup>



See also: North Carolina Counties <sup>[15]</sup> (to access links to NCpedia articles for all 100 counties); Bennett Place <sup>[16]</sup>; Duke Homestead <sup>[17]</sup>; Duke University <sup>[18]</sup>; Festival for the Eno <sup>[19]</sup>; Research Triangle Park <sup>[20]</sup>; Stagville <sup>[21]</sup>.

by William S. Powell <sup>[22]</sup>, 2006

Durham County, located in the Piedmont <sup>[6]</sup> region of central North Carolina, was formed in 1881 from Orange <sup>[12]</sup> and Wake <sup>[14]</sup> Counties and was named after the town of Durham <sup>[25]</sup>, which had already been established in the area. The early inhabitants of the region included the Occaneechi <sup>[26]</sup> and Eno <sup>[27]</sup> Indians, followed by English, Scotch-Irish <sup>[28]</sup>, and German <sup>[29]</sup> settlers. Durham, the county seat, was incorporated in 1869. Other communities in Durham County include Bahama and Rougemont (and parts of Chapel Hill spill over from neighboring Orange County <sup>[12]</sup>). Notable physical features include the Eno and Neuse <sup>[30]</sup> Rivers, New Hope and Mountain Creeks, and Lake Michie.

Several landmarks and historic sites are situated in Durham County, including Bennett Place <sup>[16]</sup>, scene of Confederate general Joseph E. Johnston's surrender to Union general William T. Sherman at the close of the Civil War; the Duke Homestead <sup>[17]</sup>; Historic Stagville Plantation (1857); downtown Durham's Carolina Theatre <sup>[31]</sup>; and West Point on the Eno <sup>[32]</sup>, a popular 388-acre park. Duke University <sup>[18]</sup>, established in Randolph County <sup>[33]</sup> as Trinity College <sup>[34]</sup>, moved to Durham in 1892; it is one of the nation's premier institutions of higher learning and a cultural and economic force within Durham County. Parrish Street in downtown Durham was the site of African American entrepreneurial activity ca. 1900 and the focal point of what became known as "Black Wall Street." North Carolina Central University <sup>[35]</sup> (1909) is also located in the city of Durham. Other cultural institutions in the county include the Durham Arts Council <sup>[36]</sup>, the Durham Symphony <sup>[37]</sup>, Duke Art Museum <sup>[38]</sup>, the Hayti Heritage Center <sup>[39]</sup>, and the North Carolina Museum of Life and Science <sup>[40]</sup>. Durham County hosts many annual festivals and events such as the American Dance Festival <sup>[41]</sup>, the Festival for the Eno <sup>[19]</sup>, the Bull City Blues Festival <sup>[42]</sup>, the North Carolina International Jazz Festival, the North Carolina Gay and Lesbian Film Festival <sup>[43]</sup>, and the Durham Festival of Trees.

The Research Triangle Park <sup>[20]</sup>, home to many high-tech businesses and institutions, is located in southern Durham County and northern Wake County <sup>[14]</sup>. The county produces agricultural goods such as tobacco <sup>[44]</sup>, corn, soybeans, hay, wheat, barley, oats, strawberries, beef and dairy cattle, chickens, and swine <sup>[45]</sup>, and its manufactured products include telecommunications equipment, electronic integrated circuits, fiber optics, drapes, bedspreads, and surgical instruments.

The county also produces minerals such as petrified wood, hematite, pyrite, and hornblende. Durham County's population was estimated to be just under 239,000 in 2004.

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## **Annotated history of Durham 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: <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll9/id/289868> <sup>[46]</sup>

Index entry for the county: <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll9/id/290080> <sup>[47]</sup>

### **References:**

Jean Bradley Anderson, *Durham County: A History of Durham County, North Carolina* (1990).

### **Additional resources:**

Corbitt, David Leroy. 2000. *The formation of the North Carolina counties, 1663-1943*. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll9/id/290103> <sup>[48]</sup> (accessed June 20, 2017).

Durham County Government: <https://www.dconc.gov/> <sup>[2]</sup>

Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce: <https://durhamchamber.org/> <sup>[49]</sup>

DigitalNC, Durham County: <https://www.digitalnc.org/counties/durham-county/> <sup>[50]</sup>

Digital Durham, Duke University: <http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/> <sup>[51]</sup>

North Carolina Digital Collections (explore by place, time period, format): <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/> <sup>[52]</sup>

### **Image credits:**

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

### **Subjects:**

Counties <sup>[53]</sup>

UNC Press <sup>[54]</sup>

### **From:**

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press. <sup>[55]</sup>

### **Authors:**

Powell, William S. <sup>[56]</sup>

### **Origin - location:**

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

**Links**

- [1] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/durham>
- [2] <https://www.dconnc.gov/>
- [3] <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/durhamcountynorthcarolina,NC/PST045218>
- [4] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/durham-county/biography>
- [5] <https://ncpedia.org/wildlife/piedmont>
- [6] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/region/piedmont>
- [7] <https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/cape-fear-river-basin.pdf>
- [8] <https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/neuse.pdf>
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- [13] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/person>
- [14] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/wake>
- [15] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/counties>
- [16] <https://ncpedia.org/bennett-place>
- [17] <https://ncpedia.org/duke-homestead>
- [18] <https://ncpedia.org/duke-university>
- [19] <https://ncpedia.org/festival-eno>
- [20] <https://ncpedia.org/research-triangle-park>
- [21] <https://ncpedia.org/stagville>
- [22] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/powell-william>
- [23] <https://ncpedia.org/durham>
- [24] <https://ncpedia.org/north-carolina-central-university>
- [25] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/durham-city>
- [26] <https://ncpedia.org/occaneechi-indians>
- [27] <https://ncpedia.org/eno-indians>
- [28] <https://ncpedia.org/scottish-settlers>
- [29] <https://ncpedia.org/german-settlers>
- [30] <https://ncpedia.org/rivers/neuse>
- [31] <http://www.carolinatheatre.org/>
- [32] <https://www.enoriver.org/what-we-protect/parks/west-point-on-the-eno/>
- [33] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/randolph>
- [34] <https://ncpedia.org/trinity-college>
- [35] <https://www.nccu.edu/>
- [36] <https://durhamarts.org/>
- [37] <https://durhamsymphony.org/>
- [38] <http://nasher.duke.edu/>
- [39] <https://hayti.org/>
- [40] <https://www.lifeandscience.org/>
- [41] <https://ncpedia.org/american-dance-festival>
- [42] <https://www.discoverdurham.com/things-to-do/>
- [43] <http://www.carolinatheatre.org/films/festivals/outsouth>
- [44] <https://ncpedia.org/tobacco>
- [45] <https://ncpedia.org/hog-farming>
- [46] <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll9/id/289868>
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- [49] <https://durhamchamber.org/>
- [50] <https://www.digitalnc.org/counties/durham-county/>
- [51] <http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/>
- [52] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/>
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- [57] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont/d>