

Wilkes County ^[1]



Average: 4.5 (25 votes)

Wilkes County



^[2]

WILKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT:

<https://www.wilkescounty.net/> ^[3]

COUNTY SEAT: Wilkesboro

FORMED: 1777

FORMED FROM: Surry, District of Washington

LAND AREA: 754.28 square miles

2020 POPULATION ESTIMATE: 65,969

White: 92.7%

Black/African American: 4.7%

American Indian: 0.4%

Asian: 0.6%

Pacific Islander: 0.1%

Two or more races: 1.5%

Hispanic/Latino: 6.9% (of any race)

From *State & County QuickFacts*, US Census Bureau, 2020. ^[4]

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 5TH

BIOGRAPHIES FOR



^[5]

[Wilkes County](#) ^[5]



^[6]

WILDLIFE PROFILES FOR

[Mountain region](#) ^[6]

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

REGION: [Mountain](#) ^[7]

RIVER BASIN: [Yadkin-Pee Dee](#) ^[8], [Map](#) ^[9]

NEIGHBORING COUNTIES: [Alexander](#) ^[10], [Alleghany](#) ^[11], [Ashe](#) ^[12], [Caldwell](#) ^[13], [Iredell](#) ^[14], [Surry](#) ^[15], [Watauga](#) ^[16], [Yadkin](#) ^[17]



See also: [North Carolina Counties](#) ^[18] (to access links to NCPedia articles for all 100 counties)

by Jay Mazzocchi, 2006

See also: "[Ballad of Tom Dooley](#)" ^[19]; [MerleFest](#) ^[20].

Wilkes County, located in the [Mountain](#) ^[7] region of North Carolina, was formed in 1777 from [Surry County](#) ^[15] and named for the English statesman John Wilkes, a member of the Parliament who fought for American independence. Early inhabitants of the area included the Tutelo and Cherokee ^[21] Indians; the region was later inhabited by [German](#) ^[22] and [Scotch-Irish](#) ^[23] settlers. [Wilkesboro](#) ^[24], the county seat, was incorporated in 1847 and named for the county. Other Wilkes County communities include Ronda, Roaring River, [North Wilkesboro](#) ^[25], Moravian Falls, Boomer, Ferguson, Millers Creek, Mulberry, Wilbar, and Austin. Physical features significant to the county are the Yadkin River and the [W. Kerr Scott](#) ^[26] Reservoir.

"[Tom Dooley](#)" ^[19] of legend and song was hanged in 1868 for the murder of Laura Foster in Ferguson. Wilkes County landmarks and historic sites include the Old Wilkes County Jail, built in 1858; the Robert Cleveland House, built in the late eighteenth century; Claymount Hill, built in 1870; and the Wade Hampton Harris Memorial Bridge, built in 1931. Cultural attractions include the Wilkes Symphony Orchestra, [Wilkes Art Gallery](#) ^[27], Wilkes Playmakers, and the [Whippoorwill Academy and Village](#) ^[28], including the Tom Dooley Art Museum. Natural attractions within the county include [Stone Mountain State Park](#) ^[29] and the [Rendezvous Mountain Educational State Forest](#) ^[30]. The county hosts festivals and annual events such as [MerleFest](#) ^[20], Brushy Mountain Apple Festival, Wilkes Agricultural Fair, Lowe's Balloons over the Blue Ridge, Mountain Bike Ride, and North Wilkesboro Fireworks Celebration.

Wilkes County farms produce such commodities as flue-cured tobacco, apples, [poultry](#) ^[31], and beef cattle; forestry is an important source of revenue in the county as well. Manufactured goods include hardboard siding, tools, milling equipment, glass products, lingerie, [furniture](#) ^[32], shoes, and hosiery. Wilkes County had an estimated population of 67,000 in 2004.

Annotated history of Wilkes 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...> ^[33]

Index entry for the county: <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/the-formation-of-the-north-ca...> ^[34]

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> ^[35] (accessed June 20, 2017).

Wilkes County Government: <http://www.wilkescounty.net/> ^[2]

DigitalNC, Wilkes County: <https://www.digitalnc.org/counties/wilkes-county/> ^[36]

North Carolina Digital Collections (explore by place, time period, format): <https://digital.ncdcr.gov> ^[37]

Image credits:

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

Subjects:

Counties ^[38]

From:

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.^[39]

Authors:

Mazzocchi, Jay ^[40]

Origin - location:

Wilkes County ^[41]

1 January 2006 | Mazzocchi, Jay

Source URL:<https://ncpedia.org/geography/wilkes>

Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/wilkes> [2] <http://www.wilkescounty.net/> [3] <https://www.wilkescounty.net> [4] <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/wilkescountynorthcarolina/POP010220> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/wilkes-county/biography> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/wildlife/mountains> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/our-state-geography-snap-mountain> [8] <https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/yadkin-river-basin.pdf> [9] <https://ncdenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PublicInformation/index.html?appid=f82f583438e74bf29adcc76247381eee> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/alexander> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/alleglhany> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/ashe> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/caldwell> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/iredell> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/surry> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/watauga> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/yadkin> [18] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/counties> [19] <https://ncpedia.org/ballad-tom-dooley> [20] <https://ncpedia.org/merlefest> [21] <https://ncpedia.org/cherokee/overview> [22] <https://ncpedia.org/german-settlers> [23] <https://ncpedia.org/scottish-settlers> [24] <https://www.wilkesboronc.org/> [25] <http://www.north-wilkesboro.com/> [26] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/scott-william-kerr> [27] <https://www.wilkesartgallery.org/> [28] <http://www.whippoorwillacademy.com/> [29] <https://www.ncparks.gov/state-parks/stone-mountain-state-park> [30] <https://www.ncesf.org/rendezvousMt.html> [31] <https://ncpedia.org/poultry> [32] <https://ncpedia.org/furniture/overview> [33] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/the-formation-of-the-north-carolina-counties-1663-1943/3692099?item=4553491> [34] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/the-formation-of-the-north-carolina-counties-1663-1943/3692099?item=4553233> [35] <https://www.digitalnc.org/counties/wilkes-county/> [37] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov> [38] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/counties> [39] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia-> [40] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/mazzocchi-jay> [41] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/mountain-22>