

Colonial Populations and Settlement Patterns

Coastal Plain

Population	Description
Tuscarora	The Tuscarora were the largest Indian tribe in eastern North Carolina. They were related by language to the Cherokee in western North Carolina. Following their defeat by the English and other Indian tribes in the Tuscarora War (1711–1713), some remained on a reservation in Bertie County. Most moved to New York to live with the Iroquois.
Other Indian tribes	The Chowanoc, Hatteras, Machapunga, Meherrin, and Waccamaw were among the tribes living in the Coastal Plain at the time of early European exploration. By the end of the colonial period, many of these groups no longer occupied their original lands. Many had died from diseases brought by Europeans. Remnant groups were absorbed into other tribes.
English	English settlers came to North Carolina in search of cheap, fertile land, freedom from religious and political restraint, and new opportunities.
Welsh	A number of people of Welsh origin moved to the lower Cape Fear from Pennsylvania between 1730 and 1734.
Highland Scots	The Highland Scots came to North Carolina to escape political and economic persecution after being defeated by the English in 1746. They settled in the Cape Fear Valley. Most continued to speak their native Gaelic, but had sworn allegiance to the king of England.
Swiss and Germans	A group of Swiss and German refugees, who faced religious persecution in their own countries, settled New Bern in 1710.
Africans	Most Africans, brought to the colonies from their homeland and the West Indies, came to North Carolina as slaves or were purchased at slave auctions in other colonies. Some free African Americans lived in the colony.

Piedmont

Population	Description
Catawba	The Catawba, the largest of the Siouan tribes in the Piedmont, sustained heavy losses from disease after contact with Europeans. Still, they aided the English in the French and Indian War. In 1764 a reservation provided on the North and South Carolina border allowed the Catawba to maintain their land.
Other Indian tribes	The Waxhaw, Keyauwee, Eno, Saura, Tutelo, and Saponi tribes saw their numbers reduced by European contact. These tribes moved to different areas and often joined other tribes to maintain their strength and numbers.
Scots-Irish	In the early seventeenth century, Lowland Scots settled in Ireland. Later, some moved to the American colonies to seek a better life and greater individual freedom. Between 1735 and 1775, many traveled south down the Great Wagon Road to settle in North Carolina.
Germans	After a series of wars, Germany faced devastated lands and a ruined economy. Germans seeking religious freedom and a safe and stable community life left for the New World. Groups of German Moravians from Pennsylvania moved to North Carolina in the mid-1750s to establish new towns in the backcountry.
English	Coming mostly from the coastal region, English settlers moved into the backcountry of the Piedmont, often establishing small farms.
Africans	Some settlers brought their slaves with them as they moved into the Piedmont region.

Mountains

Population	Description
Cherokee	The Cherokee were the largest tribe in North Carolina. Their population decreased greatly because of disease and war. By 1776 the Cherokee had lost approximately half of their lands to European settlement.
Europeans	Toward the end of the colonial period, a few hardy settlers were exploring and moving into the rugged Mountain region. Scots-Irish frontiersmen came first, followed by English and German settlers. Few slaves were brought to the region at this time.

Excerpted from the background material of the North Carolina Museum of History's Colonial North Carolina History-in-a-Box kit.