NORTH CAROLINA

THE TAR HEEL STATE *Became a state November 21, 1789 (12th)*

North Carolina runs from the highest mountains in the East to a string of sandy islands in the Atlantic Ocean. In between lie busy cities and rolling farmland.



Why the Tar Heel State?

North Carolina's pine forests once made it the country's leading source of tar. Workers heated pine wood slowly to make the sticky black goo, which kept water out of wooden ships and their ropes. No one is sure how the name Tar Heel began. In the Civil War other soldiers used it to tease North Carolina troops, who came to wear it with pride.



Twelve Seconds at Kitty Hawk

Wilbur and Orville Wright needed steady wind and soft sand to test their flying machines. They found both near Kitty Hawk, on North Carolina's coast. On December 17, 1903, Orville flew their airplane for 12 seconds and 120 feet. The brothers flew three more times that day. On the last flight, Wilbur stayed up for 59 seconds.



The Doorstop Made of Gold

In 1799 Conrad Reed, a farmer's son, found a heavy yellow rock in the creek on his family's farm. It weighed 17 pounds. For three years the family used it as a doorstop. Then a jeweler saw that it was gold and bought it for $3.50. It was worth about $3,600. The country's first gold rush followed.



A House with 250 Rooms

George Vanderbilt wanted a mountain home near Asheville. Builders worked from 1889 to 1895 on a house modeled on French castles. Biltmore has 250 rooms, with 43 bathrooms and 65 fireplaces. In the basement are a bowling alley and a heated indoor swimming pool. It is the largest privately owned house in the country.



The Lighthouse That Moved

The sandbars off Cape Hatteras are always shifting. So many ships have wrecked there that these waters are called the Graveyard of the Atlantic. A striped lighthouse about 200 feet tall has warned sailors since 1870. By 1999 the ocean had worn the beach to little more than 100 feet from it. Workers moved the whole tower 2,900 feet to safer ground.



A Plant That Counts

The Venus flytrap grows wild in only one small part of the world, the boggy land within about 60 miles of Wilmington. Each trap has trigger hairs inside. One touch does nothing. If a second touch comes within about 20 seconds, the trap snaps shut. Waiting for two touches keeps it from closing on raindrops.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 11 million (9th most)
Size	About 53,800 square miles (28th largest)
Highest point	Mount Mitchell, 6,684 feet
Counties	100
Neighbors	Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina

DID YOU KNOW?

- About 115 English settlers landed on Roanoke Island in 1587. By 1590 they had vanished, leaving the word CROATOAN carved on a post.
- High Point has a building shaped like a giant chest of drawers. Two six-foot socks hang from one drawer.
- Mount Mitchell is the highest mountain in the United States east of the Mississippi River.
- The pirate Blackbeard fought his last sea battle at Ocracoke Inlet, on the North Carolina coast, in 1718.

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. Which city is the largest in North Carolina?
2. Which city is closest to the USS North Carolina?
3. How many rooms does Biltmore Estate have?

Answers: 1. Charlotte 2. Wilmington 3. 250