

Section 4

North Carolina Acts to Preserve Its Resources

This section will help you meet the following objectives:

8.9.01 Describe contemporary issues at the state and local levels and evaluate their impact.

8.9.03 Describe opportunities for and benefits of civic participation.

As you read, look for:

- steps taken by the state to preserve its history and culture
- the effects of development and hurricanes on the state's resources
- vocabulary terms **historic preservation, cultural renewal, ridge law, global warming**



Above: This wood sculpture of Sequoyah stands in front of the Museum of the Cherokee Indian in Cherokee.

The many changes and innovations that occurred

after World War II put a great strain upon the resources of the state. Both natural and manmade objects that had been around the state since its founding became scarce or disappeared. In some cases, North Carolinians acted too late. Other times, natural disasters like hurricanes put people and places in jeopardy. As much as possible, state citizens worked together to preserve, repair, and put to new uses many of its treasures. The preservation movement was able to take advantage of growing prosperity and increased awareness during the 1970s and 1980s.

Tourism and Attractions

As Americans came to have more money after World War II, they traveled more often to see North Carolina's sights. An early attraction was the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which quickly became one of the most visited places in the nation. During the 1950s, citizens across the state contributed to building a replica of Tryon Palace. In 1961, Hugh Morton, the owner of Grandfather Mountain, led an effort to salvage (rescue from being broken up) the U.S.S. *North Carolina*, a World War II battleship. The battleship was brought up the Cape Fear River to Wilmington and moored on the island across from Wilmington. Thousands have visited it every year since. In the 1960s,

the owners of the Biltmore Estate in Asheville opened their mansion to the public. During the same period, the Cherokee Reservation expanded its interpretation of Native America heritage and opened the Museum of the Cherokee Indian.

One of North Carolina's most unusual attractions is the outdoor drama. The first play, written by Paul Green of the Carolina Playmakers, was *The Lost Colony*. The production was first done in Manteo in 1937; it has been performed there every summer since. The idea of the outdoor drama spread statewide after the 1940s. *Unto These Hills* at Cherokee celebrates the Cherokee experience. *Horn in the West* at Boone tells the story of Daniel Boone, the mountains settlers, and the Overmountain Men. The legend of Henry Berry Lowry is explored in *Strike at the Wind* at Pembroke. All of these plays help keep alive stories North Carolinians want to remember.

Historic Preservation and Cultural Renewal

As prosperity spread across the state, and urban renewal tore down whole neighborhoods, much of the state's heritage was on the verge of being lost. In the 1960s, the state supported the creation of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, which provided access to open beaches for generations to come. When, in the 1970s, the New River valley in Ashe County was going to be lost to a lake created by a power dam in Virginia, North Carolina pushed the federal government to pass a law protecting scenic rivers. The New River then became one of the best preserved areas in the mountains and continues to be a popular rafting stream for thousands of tourists.

Did You Know?

Since 1937, over four million visitors have seen *The Lost Colony*. More than five million have seen *Unto These Hills*.



Below: The New River was made a National Scenic River in 1976. The designation was one of the first environmental victories in the state.





Top and above: The 1767 Chowan County Courthouse in Edenton was restored by historic preservationists in the 1990s.

During the 1970s, old colonial communities like Edenton, New Bern, and Salisbury worked hard to save and restore their landmark buildings, those structures that helped tell their local histories. This movement became known as **historic preservation**, an effort to use what buildings and other structures are left to make a community more appealing and interesting. Communities across the state were soon helped by Preservation North Carolina, a foundation that raised money privately to buy and repair endangered structures. North Carolina became a model for saving old buildings with the idea of the “revolving fund.” Such a fund is used to buy up an old building in danger of being lost, then selling the building later to someone interested in fixing it up. The money is then revolved (used again) to buy another building. More than one hundred buildings in Salisbury have been saved in this way.

North Carolina also became notable for the way it collected and saved smaller objects of the state’s heritage. At Chapel Hill, the North Carolina Collection put together almost all the books, magazines, pamphlets, and videos ever done on the state or its people. Few other states in the country had anything like it. The state archives in Raleigh also collected public and private records,



from letters to newspapers to photographs. The state even sent photographers out across the state to take pictures of quilts made by farm women, to keep a record of their handiwork.

Collecting quilts is an example of **cultural renewal**, where people try to find out the best things they can about their past and continue to use them. (This book is an example of cultural renewal.) Since the 1920s, organizations like the Penland School near Spruce Pine have been trying to do that for the Mountains culture. Asheville each year holds the Mountain Folk Festival, which focuses on dancing and music. In the Uwharries, admirers of pottery made there since the 1800s helped build the North Carolina Pottery Center at Seagrove. Almost every community has an example, from the Strawberry Festival in Chadbourn to the Fourth of July Parade in Faith.

Cultural renewal also meant expanding the awareness of North Carolinians about art and music. Festivals celebrating classical music have gone on each summer for decades at Brevard and Greensboro. Since the 1960s, the state has worked to expand the North Carolina Museum of Art, located just north of the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. Its collection has introduced many North Carolinians to types of art they had before only seen in books. Ben Long, who grew up in Statesville, introduced the state to an old European art form, the fresco, where painting is done on fresh plaster on a wall. Long painted frescoes in churches in Glendale Springs and West Jefferson, in Ashe County, which became world famous. Later, a fresco was put in the lobby of the Bank of America building at the square in Charlotte.

Above: Thousands of people from around the world have made pilgrimages to see the fresco “The Last Supper” at a church in Glendale Springs in Ashe County. The artist, Ben Long, is a Statesville native.

Did You Know?

In 2002, Ben Long received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from UNC-Chapel Hill, his alma mater.

CAROLINA PLACES

Seagrove

Since North Carolina has always been a farming state, it has always needed a lot of pots. Ceramic containers have been part of the state's industry since the settlement of the backcountry in the mid-1700s. Backcountry families used them to cool milk and make butter, preserve fruit and drink whiskey, and carry out household waste. A typical farm had as many as a dozen large crocks, and at least a dozen more small ones.

There are two pottery traditions in the state. In one, the potter throws the pot on a wheel, trims it to the desired shape, and fires it in a kiln (a special furnace that hardens the clay with high heat). During the firing, an alkaline compound is thrown on the pot to give it a brownish, everyday-

looking glaze. In the second tradition, the potter fires the pot and glazes it with a salt compound. This tends to give the pot a number of bright colors, depending on what is mixed with the salts. The alkaline tradition has been practiced for two hundred years on the South Fork of the Catawba River; the salt-glaze tradition is practiced in the southern section of the Uwharries in Randolph and Moore counties. Today, the center of the industry is the village of Seagrove.

Below: Ben Owen, Sr., became one of the chief potters at Jugtown near Seagrove in the Uwharrie Mountains. Owen's work brought bright new colors to the traditional jugs and pots.





Above: Ben Owen, Jr., is standing next to the kiln with a selection of his pots. **Right:** Dan Triece is another Seagrove potter. Here he is throwing a pot at his Dirtworks studio.

The first Uwharrie potters were the Craven, Owen, and Cole families. Even though North Carolina was very poorly developed after the War for Independence, the dozen families made enough money peddling their wares in wagons up and down the roads of the state. The plank road built from Fayetteville to High Point in the 1850s made it easier for them to get their pots to market. After the Civil War, pottery factories in northern cities, which had closer connections to the railroads, put many of these families out of business. A few potters continued to fire their kilns for neighborhood sales.

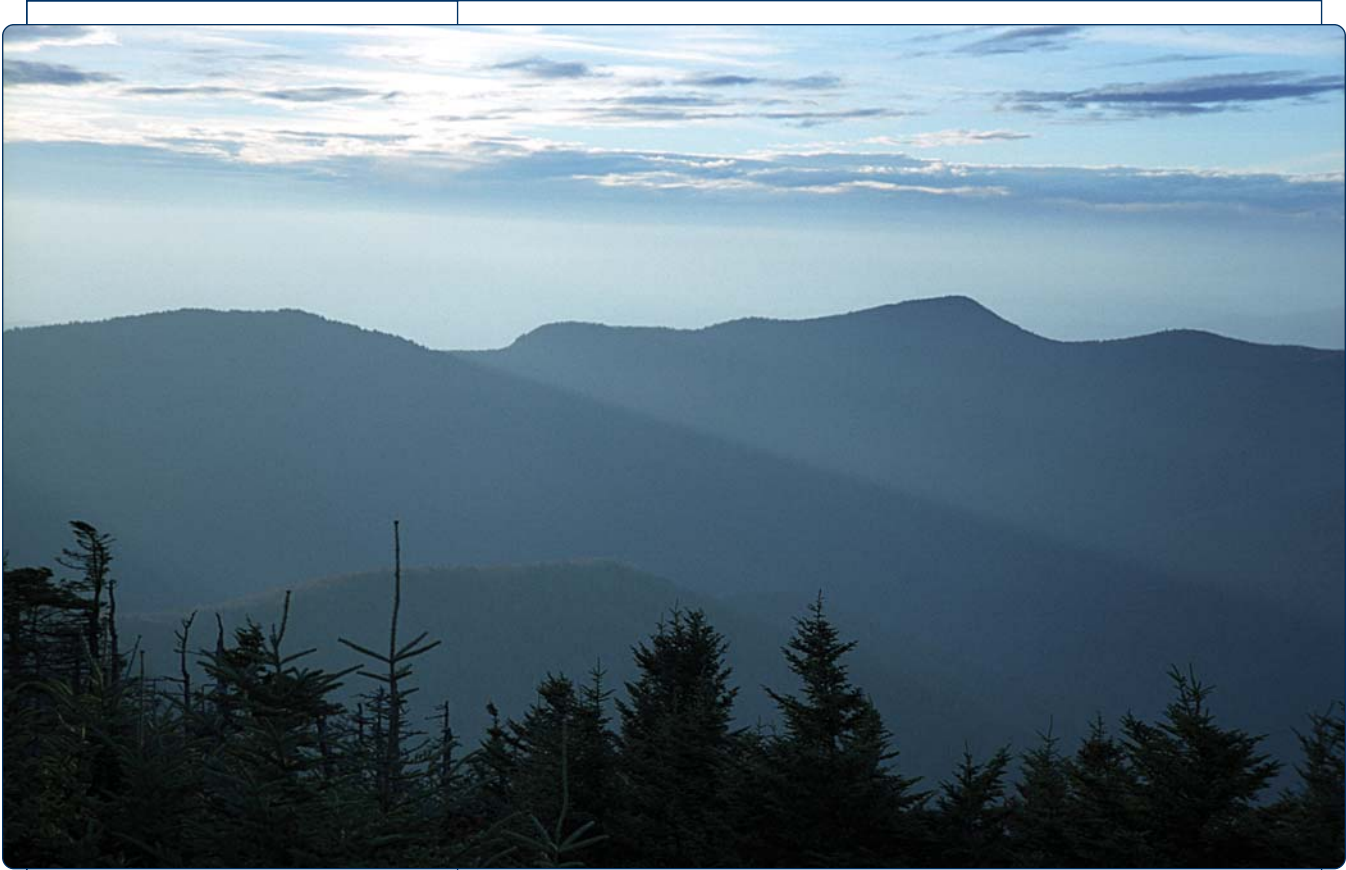
The Seagrove salt-glaze method was revived in the 1920s when a Raleigh couple, Jacques and Juliana Busbee, starting selling the Seagrove pottery at a tearoom they started in New York City. They then established Jugtown Pottery

southeast of Seagrove to encourage the original descendants of the potters to revive their skills. There they introduced the idea of making the pots in a variety of bright colors using the traditional method. They also encouraged new ideas, like the Chinese blue glaze and color developed by Ben Owen, Sr., which went on finely shaped vases. The pottery became internationally famous. Since World War II, pottery production has grown year by year in the Seagrove area. The opening of the nearby state zoo in the 1970s brought rapid growth and interest.

Three generations of the Ben Owen family continue to make pottery. They and other local families were joined by more than one hundred other potters in the latter years of the twentieth century. Many of the newer potters have experimented with an art form that is ceramic, using the brightly colored traditional approach.

In the 1990s, the state of North Carolina opened the North Carolina Pottery Center in the heart of the Seagrove village to promote the craft for all interested citizens. The local potters also sponsor one of the best community festivals in the state each summer. In some cases, it is the second and third generation of customers who come to Seagrove to buy another pot.





Above: North Carolinians acted in the 1970s to protect the scenic beauty of their Mountains region with a ridge law that regulated development.

Environmental Concerns

The controversy over the New River being dammed in the 1970s awakened many North Carolinians to an environmental crisis. The state's timber, water, soil, and basic beauty seemed to be at stake. Since the 1970s, many state residents have worked hard to keep the many resources that the state has had since the Roanoke explorers came to "the goodliest land."

When real estate developers began to crowd into the mountains with larger and larger buildings, the state passed a **ridge law**. This meant that no building could mar the basic shape of the top of a mountain. State leaders argued that "the very view" that a tourist saw from the tops of places like Blowing Rock or Mt. Mitchell belonged to the whole state and could not be taken away by an individual.

Development continued during the 1980s, picking up after thousands of World War II veterans from across the nation began to retire to the North Carolina mountains. North Carolinians argued over plans that either helped development or pushed preservation. For example, highway officials wanted to cut through the mountain next to Asheville to put an interstate into the downtown area. The road was built despite opposition.

In the Piedmont, the principal concern in the later years of the century was the level of ozone in the atmosphere. The exhaust from vehicles contributes to the ozone level. Ozone is a major component of smog, which can become stagnant in very hot weather. By the late 1990s, public officials in the Triangle, Triad, and the Charlotte area all issued

ozone warnings on bad days. Less seen, but just as important, was water pollution, which began to threaten water supplies for people in Piedmont cities. In the Catawba River valley, erosion has been a problem. With fewer trees to hold the soil (due to the many new subdivisions and shopping centers), water runs off and takes the soil with it. This has hurt the quality of the drinking water and threatened to fill in the lakes built by the Duke Power Company in the earlier part of the century.

On the Coastal Plain, the growth of the hog industry, where large-scale pork farms raise pigs in a factory setting, has led to many complaints. Because hog waste is both smelly and polluting, pork raisers were eventually forced to set up hog lagoons, large cesspools where the waste was treated. Since these were open to the air, some areas of the east began to smell bad. This became a more serious problem when the many hurricanes of the 1990s flooded the lagoons.

Many North Carolinians in the 1990s became very concerned about the quality of the water in the coastal sounds. The sounds became filled with silt and manmade pollutants carried down the Coastal Plain rivers like the Tar, Neuse, and Roanoke. Because the inlets to the sea are small, many of these damaging materials drifted to the bottom of the sounds. This wetlands pollution threatened the wildlife that depend on the sounds for breeding and growing, including the shrimp that provide many state fishermen with a living.

Of equal importance was the loss of sand in some places along the Outer Banks. One long-term effect of the New Deal turned out to be the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC fenced in the middle of the barrier islands, which allowed the islands to catch sand and build up dunes. This action stopped the natural pattern of the barrier islands. For centuries, the islands had lost sand on the beach side and gained sand on the sound side. What resulted was beach erosion in many places, since the sand no longer moved in its natural pattern. The problem was made worse, some scientists from Duke University and East Carolina University said during the 1990s, by too many people building too many houses right on the beach. Some scientists have predicted that **global warming**—the gradual rise of temperatures on Earth—will mean that the Atlantic Ocean will cover the Outer Banks and at least some of the sounds will become bays to the sea.



Above: New beach houses, like these on Hatteras Island, have resulted in crowded conditions along parts of the state's coastline.

Did You Know?

Many scientists claim that global warming will cause glaciers to melt, sea levels to rise, land surface boundaries to change, and the world's ecosystems to change.

GROWING UP...

On a Shrimper

Shrimp boats are a familiar sight up and down the North Carolina coast. The boats have a distinctive appearance, with the sway of their deck and the roundness of their pilot house. Most of all, nylon nets extend out and back of the boats from a frame called an outrigger.

Shrimping for a living is more than a century old on the Tar Heel coast. Hundreds of families from Wanchese to Calabash have male members who spend as much as half of the year on the shrimpers. They troll the waters off the state's coast for several months in the summer, then head south all the way to Florida as winter approaches. Some stay in Florida, coming home only for the Christmas holidays. At the start of the twenty-first century, almost a thousand coastal families still made their living as “bug-hunters,” the joking nickname of shrimpers. Bradley Styron of Cedar Island started trawling as a teenager in Core and Pamlico sounds.

Commercial shrimping began in the state in the early 1900s. By the 1930s, shrimping had become a way of life around Morehead City and Beaufort. Fishermen at Harkers Island developed the efficient trawling method of “channel netting” during that period. As Americans began to increase the variety of their food after World War II, the market for both frozen and fresh shrimp grew. By the 1960s and 1970s, shrimper families often had a family member who would take a refrigerated truckload to retailers in the Piedmont. During the summer, some even set up their own temporary shops by the side of major highways.

North Carolinians catch three types of shrimp: brown, pink, and white. Each has a particular habitat in and around



the marshlands of the sounds and the mouth of the Cape Fear River. A shrimper has to know when and where to look for each type of shrimp. For example, brown shrimp swim out into the ocean at night, usually in the fall.

Shrimpers learn by doing. Often, a whole family is involved, particularly in the endless repair of nets. The captain of a shrimper will hire relatives and friends to help on the boat. The deck hands' main responsibilities are to reel in the nets once shrimp are collected. The hands then throw out the “trash” (which may include other fish) and put the shrimp into the hold of the boat. There a fresh

pile of ice keeps the shrimp as cold as possible. In 1985, Bradley Styron “caught 1,500 pounds of shrimp in one night in Pamlico Sound,” almost three times the average.

Very few North Carolina women have been shrimpers. However, female members of a shrimper family do the deheading of the shrimp once they are brought into port. The shrimp are dumped onto a long table, and the girls and older women quickly slice off the inedible part of the animal. The shrimp are then sold fresh to a dealer or frozen for future marketing.

Some of the most important members of the shrimper community are the boat builders. The Varnum family of Holden Beach in Brunswick County built shrimp boats throughout the twentieth century.

Above: Shrimp nets hang to dry along the pier.

Opposite page: Three Beaufort shrimp boat skippers.

Left to right, they are Chad Holdridge (on his boat), Jeff Pittman, and Jimmy Hunt.





Above: This is an aerial view of the flooding in Princeville after Hurricane Floyd.

The Impact of Recent Hurricanes

Hurricanes have been part of North Carolina history since the days of Roanoke. For example, the inlet used by the Lost Colonists was later closed by a storm. Until the 1980s, not enough people lived on the coast to have a widespread impact. However, development changed all that. More and more citizens built homes along the beaches. In addition, the hurricanes seemed to get larger and to come more often. Their strength, according to some scientists, was another indicator of global warming, as the warmer ocean water churned up more often.

Hurricanes hit North Carolina repeatedly in the later part of the twentieth century, causing much damage. In 1989, Hurricane Hugo came ashore at Charleston, South Carolina, leveled that area, then pushed north toward Charlotte. It went straight for the North Carolina foothills. Hugo's winds blew down thousands of trees that took years to clean up. In 1996, Hurricane Fran smacked into the Cape Fear and headed into the Tidewater. It particularly did damage to the estuaries in the wetlands on the sounds.

The worst weather year in the history of the state was 1999. First, a drought hurt crops on the Coastal Plain. Then, three hurricanes in a row damaged the state. The worst, by far, was Hurricane Floyd. In September, it stalled over the Coastal Plain and created the biggest recorded flood

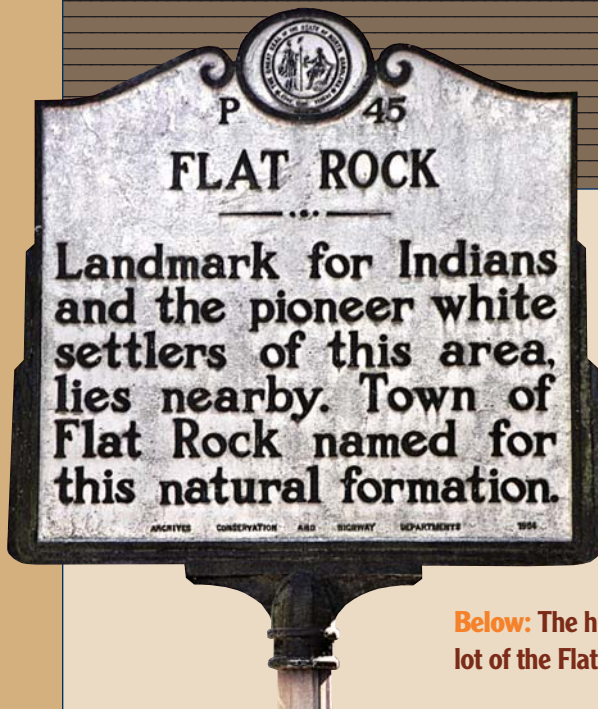
since the settlement of Roanoke. Dozens of North Carolinians were killed, and thousands of animals drowned. Many farmers lost their entire herds of cattle and hogs. The damage ran to the billions of dollars, and most of the towns in the east were under water for more than a week.

The worst hit town was Princeville, across the Tar River from Tarboro. Princeville had been settled in 1865 by freedmen who established the first independent African American community in the state. Just before the hurricane hit, Princeville had begun to work on historic preservation of its buildings and other valuable items. Every house was either lost or had significant damage done to it. Of the six churches in town, only Mt. Zion, whose sanctuary dated to 1895, was saved. People from across the state gathered resources to help the residents of Princeville begin to restore their lives.

It's Your Turn

1. What does Preservation North Carolina try to preserve?
2. Give one example of cultural renewal.
3. How have the state's sounds been endangered?

HISTORY BY THE HIGHWAY



Flat Rock

The town of Flat Rock grew up near the famous Indian landmark. Wealthy citizens from Charleston, South Carolina, began to build summer “cottages” there during the 1830s. Some of the most prominent planters of South Carolina made their homes there by the time of the Civil War. In the twentieth century, several religious denominations set up summer camps in the area. Since 1952, a summer theater put on by the Vagabond Players has been conducted at a house near the rock. It was made the State Theatre of North Carolina in 1961 and expanded its range of presentations during the 1970s.

Below: The huge rock that gives Flat Rock its name now forms part of the parking lot of the Flat Rock Playhouse, the state theatre of North Carolina.

