

# **Community & Quality of Life**

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## Community / Quality of Life

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### I. PROGRESSIVE ERA, 1900-1929

#### A. Beginnings

An era of reform-minded state leadership began with the rise of Progressive wing of the Democratic Party, around 1900. Progressives were leaders such as Walter Clark, Josephus Daniels, Charles B. Aycock, Robert B. Glenn, William W. Kitchin, and Thomas W. Bickett. The Progressives wanted state government to play a larger role in public welfare and correcting ills of society. They supported public education, prison reform, improved transportation, child labor laws, fair election and tax laws, etc. They advocated government-supported programs that would benefit the public at large. With the Progressive movement, North Carolina's leaders also realized that the state's people were its greatest resource and to neglect them and their welfare was to waste that resource. They grasped that North Carolina and the rest of the former Confederate states were undergoing a transformation that called for new and innovative leadership and an unprecedented role for state government. That transformation has generally been called the rise of the New South. *New* implied a South that left slavery and the old ideas and customs behind, that adopted new leadership in government and embraced modern agriculture, industrialization, urbanization, and progressive reforms and programs. But most were not "progressive" on the issue of race relations. Daniels and Aycock were particularly outspoken in support of white supremacy. African Americans in North Carolina had been disfranchised by the Suffrage Amendment (including the so-called Grandfather Clause) to the state constitution in 1900. Segregation had the backing of federal law with the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)—known as the "separate but equal" ruling. Nevertheless, their racial views aside, the Progressives set in motion a historical trend of calling for enlightened and dedicated leaders that could think and act anew in steering North Carolina through periods of change and challenge.

#### B. Industrialization, Urbanization, and Agricultural Decline

At the turn of the century, the industrial revolution was reaching its full impact in North Carolina. With the support of an extensive railroad network, the state's three major manufacturing industries—textiles, tobacco, and furniture—were flourishing. The new industrialization was transforming the social life of thousands of North Carolinians, who left the countryside and their rural, farming existence to find work in the mills and factories. This new class of workers, many dispossessed of their land by agricultural depression, sought the industrial wages as an alternative to economic hard times on farms where low crop prices, tenancy, share cropping, and the crop-lien system prevailed. The mill village, a new type of restrictive community, became a common feature on the Tar Heel landscape, especially in the Piedmont. Labor in the mills and factories was far from ideal. The work was hard, dangerous, and unhealthy. Hours were long and wages low. Child labor was common. Urbanization followed industrialization, as North Carolinians abandoned rural living and forged a new social environment in towns and cities such as

Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, High Point, Raleigh, Winston-Salem, Gastonia, Concord, and Roanoke Rapids—all with new factories and a new urban middle class of professionals and merchants that grew along with the number of manufactories.

### **C. Public Health**

Prior to the Progressive movement, public health care had been nearly nonexistent. The General Assembly had established the State Board of Health in 1877, but it had little funding and only a part-time director. The county commissioners had the chief responsibility for whatever public health programs that existed. The major diseases afflicting North Carolinians at the turn of the century were hookworm, typhoid fever, small pox, tuberculosis, typhus, malaria, and various childhood maladies. Infant mortality was high. Sanitation remained primitive and unhealthy. The median age for the state's inhabitants at death was twenty-eight. But urged on by the Progressive leaders, the legislature in 1909 appropriated \$10,500 for a full-time director of public health and authorized the counties to establish county health departments. With funds from the state and federal governments and such philanthropic organizations such as the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission, North Carolina improved health conditions and virtually eradicated some diseases such as hookworm.

### **D. World War I**

North Carolina's farms and mills worked at full capacity to meet wartime demands. The federal government established military camps in the state—Camp (later Fort) Bragg, Camp Greene, etc. North Carolinians labored in the Wilmington shipyard to building wartime vessels for troop transport. Eighty-six thousand men and women from North Carolina, including African Americans and Cherokee Indians, served in armed forces. Women served as nurses, Red Cross workers, and in other service organizations. Victory gardens and rationing were a part of everyday life. Red Cross centers appeared throughout the state.

### **E. Labor Strikes (Gastonia in 1929 etc.) and the Great Migration**

Demands for textiles decline after war. Prices dropped. Mill owners used “stretch outs” and laid off workers. Violence occurred between mill workers, owners, and local authorities. The National Guard was called out. In the Great Migration, a large number of African Americans left North Carolina for the industrial North for greater economic opportunity and to escape white supremacy and disfranchisement.

### **F. Farming Declines Further**

Agriculture had done well during World War I because of wartime demands. But in the 1920s the prices of cotton and tobacco dropped as farmers overproduced those crops. The boll weevil also hurt cotton production. In the mid-1920s about half of the state's farmers were tenants or sharecroppers. Cooperative organizations such as the Farmers' Union and the Tri-state Association met with little success.

### **G. Urbanization Continues**

The movement from the countryside continued as families left farms, where income was depressed, to become wage earners in towns and cities. Although North

Carolina would remain mostly rural and agricultural for decades, the migration to cities and towns was building a new social environment in the state.

### **H. Technological Change**

With Ford's Model T, automobiles proliferated, and Cameron Morrison's Good Roads Movement, using state and federal funds, accompanied the growth of towns and cities. Electricity appeared in urban centers, along with the telephone and municipal services. Radio and motion pictures arrived, helping bring the outside world to the state's inhabitants. North Carolinians were on the move, and their communities were connected to each other and the rest of the nation as never before.

### **I. Woman's Suffrage Movement**

Collective action by women had begun with rise of women's clubs and North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs. Attempts to secure voting rights had been made in 1894 when North Carolina Equal Suffrage Association managed to get a bill before the legislature, but the bill failed. Movement persisted with the formation of the Equal Suffrage League in 1913. Its president was Gertrude Weil of Goldsboro, and the league worked throughout the state to have the General Assembly ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving the vote to women. Although the state legislature declined to ratify the amendment, it was nevertheless ratified by the requisite three-fourths of the states and became federal law in 1920. In that year the first woman—Lillian Exum Clement Stafford, an Asheville lawyer—was elected to state house of representatives. Ten years later Gertrude Dills McKee, a teacher, became the first woman elected to the state senate. Women leaders of the period included Jane Simpson McKimmon (first female graduate of NCSU; McKimmon Center is named for her) and Nell Battle Lewis of Raleigh, writer for the *News and Observer*.

### **J. Public Education**

Progressives waged a campaign to have counties raise taxes for schools. They convince they state legislature to increase appropriations. The General Assembly passed laws requiring children to attend school until age fourteen and to authorize rural areas to establish high schools. In 1918 a state constitutional amendment mandated that students attend school at least six months of the year. State income tax began in 1921 to help fund public education.

Although progress was made in public education in the 1920s and 1930s, African Americans did not share equally in the improvement. The philanthropic Julius Rosenwald Fund contributed significantly to the education of African American children in North Carolina. Booker T. Washington, the black president of Tuskegee Institute, and white philanthropist Julius Rosenwald president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, established the fund to build schools and improve education for African Americans throughout the South. Under the agreement with the Rosenwald organization, counties provided matching funds for black schools. Despite state funding and the Rosenwald fund, black schools remained substantially poorer than those of whites. In rural Pamlico County in 1930, for example, the average value of black schools was \$2,940 as compared to \$11,970 for white schools. The county was spending \$29.99 annually per white student but only \$10.97 per black student. Of white children aged seven to thirteen, more than 96

percent were enrolled in school, but only 89 percent of black children of the same age were enrolled—despite the compulsory education law. In 1930, 3.5 percent of Pamlico County’s white population was illiterate, but 14.5 of its black population could neither read nor write.

### **K. Teaching of Evolution**

North Carolinians disagree over the teaching of Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection. Some North Carolina Baptists wanted William L. Poteat, president and biology teacher of Wake Forest College, removed for supporting the teaching of evolution. But their efforts failed. Unlike Tennessee and some other southern states, North Carolina legislature did not pass a law against teaching evolution.

### **L. Prohibition**

Some Progressives—especially Daniels—strongly opposed alcoholic beverages. North Carolina had passed a prohibition law in 1908, but it was soon repealed. Many North Carolina women campaigned against alcohol, believing that many family problems were attributed to drunkenness. The Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WTCU) formed a chapter in North Carolina, and the famous national prohibitionist Carrie Nation spoke in the state against the evils of alcohol and tobacco. In 1919, the Eighteenth Amendment to U.S. Constitution is ratified, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, or consumption of alcoholic beverages. Prohibition as a social experiment fails, however, and the amendment is repealed in 1933. Bootleggers and moonshiners thrived in North Carolina during Prohibition.

### **M. Writers**

North Carolina experienced an intellectual awakening in literature and drama. Short-story writer William Sydney Porter (O. Henry) and novelist Thomas Wolfe become national figures. Playwright Paul Green, whose work reflected a strong concern for the plight of poor whites and blacks, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1927 for his play *In Abraham’s Bosom*. Thomas Dixon’s novels romanticized the Old South, the Confederate cause, and the Ku Klux Klan of Reconstruction. His *The Clansman* became the basis for the motion picture *The Birth of a Nation*, which showed in theaters throughout North Carolina and the nation. James Boyd’s historical novels included episodes set in North Carolina and achieved national popularity. In his writings for his family’s *News and Observer* and subsequently in his novels and other books, Jonathan Worth Daniels displayed a strong social conscience. Both he and Green called for progress in race relations.

## **II. GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II, 1929-1945**

### **A. Economic Crisis**

Crash of New York stock market sets off the Great Depression. Major causes of the Depression included overproduction of goods, inefficient banking system, decline in international trade, and a poorly regulated stock market. Banks and businesses failed,

industry lost profits, agriculture prices plummeted, and unemployment rose to alarming levels. Poverty, hunger, and despair fell on North Carolina and the nation.

### **B. Roosevelt and the New Deal**

Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt is elected with overwhelming majority vote in 1932. Attacks the Depression with his relief program called the New Deal. Includes a number of new and innovative programs created to relieve the nation's distress. These and other agencies had an impact in North Carolina: Emergency Relief Agency (ERA), Agriculture Adjustment Administration (AAA), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Works Progress Administration (WPA), Rural Electrification Administration (REA). Such programs gave food, clothing, shelter, and other assistance to destitute North Carolinians. They provided them with thousands of jobs and brought electricity to rural areas. The Social Security Administration and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation were born out of the New Deal program, which would bring about a lasting expansion of the power of the federal government.

### **C. O. Max Gardner and the Shelby Dynasty**

The first governor to face the problems of the Great Depression was O. Max Gardner from Shelby, who took office in 1929. Gardner's fiscally conservative administration responded to the economic crisis by reducing state expenditures. Road building ceased, state employees' salaries were cut, public schools and the university had their funds slashed. Gardner's "live at home" program did little to help the rural population. In 1932, however, Gardner created the Governor's Office of Relief to process the millions of dollars in farm loans and work relief supplied by the federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation to North Carolina. Drawing upon an efficiency study by the Brookings Institution of Washington, the Gardner administration reorganized state government to make it more centralized and cost effective. It also consolidated North Carolina State College at Raleigh, the North Carolina College for Women at Greensboro, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill into one state university system. The next four governors—J.C.B. Ehringhaus (33-37), Clyde R. Hoey (37-41), J. Melville Broughton (41-45), and R. Gregg Cherry (45-49)—were known as the Shelby Dynasty because they came under Gardner's influence and followed his conservative-to-moderate approach regarding the role of government in the public welfare.

### **D. World War II**

Despite the assistance of the New Deal, that program did not end the Great Depression. It remained for the tremendous wartime demands, which stimulated the economy and put Americans back to work, to pull the nation out of the Depression. German submarines sank shipping off the Tar Heel coast during first months of the war—Torpedo Junction. 362,000 men and women from North Carolina served in armed forces. Military bases—Fort Bragg, Camp Lejeune, Cherry Point, etc. Eighteen prisoner-of-war camps and 10,000 German prisoners. Shipyards. Rationing, war bonds, victory gardens, and scrap drives. Farmers and textile workers operating at full capacity.

### **E. Impact of the New Deal and the War**

Changed forever the relationship between the federal government and the individual states. Beginning during the Depression and continuing through the war, the intervention of the federal government in areas that previously had been left to the states increased substantially. During that era, the states began relying on federal funds and programs to help provide relief for the poor, build schools and improve education, construct highways, regulate labor and agriculture, assist in law enforcement, and provide employment at military bases. In so many ways after World War II, there would be no going back to the past of state and local autonomy for North Carolina and the other southern states.

### **III. 1945 TO THE PRESENT**

#### **A. W. Kerr Scott and the “Branchhead Boys”**

A resurgence of progressive leadership occurred in state government when W. Kerr Scott of Alamance County became governor in 1949. Scott committed his administration to helping North Carolina’s rural population. He developed a “Go Forward Plan,” intended to “get the farmer out of the mud, so farmers could get to church and farm children to school.” Under his leadership the legislature enacted populist and progressive legislation, approved a \$200 million bond issue to pave rural roads, and provided for rural electrification and improved schools and health facilities. Those political leaders who supported Scott’s program for rural North Carolina were called the “Branchhead Boys,” a term referring to farm folk who lived up the branch of a creek.

#### **B. Urbanization and Industrialization**

In the postwar period, the state increasingly became more urbanized as people moved from farms to the towns and cities. The mobility produced by the automobile and good roads made it possible for them to live in the suburbs as they filled new jobs in industry, business, banking, professions, and service occupations in urban centers. The G.I. Bill of Rights (1944) made it possible immediately after the war for veterans to purchase homes in the rising suburban neighborhoods.

New postwar industries in the state included food, printing and publishing, chemicals, rubber and plastics, synthetic textiles, machinery, and eventually the high-tech commodities of the electronic age. To attract new industry, North Carolina, with assistance from the federal government, began improving its transportation facilities. Raleigh, Greensboro, and Charlotte soon had major airports. The new interstate highway system led a number of trucking lines to establish themselves in the state. Cities constructed convention centers and coliseums to attract business meetings and sports and entertainment events. Shopping centers and malls were becoming common by the 1960s and 1970s. Urban renewal funded by the federal government demolished many substandard old buildings and constructed new housing in poor neighborhoods. The growth of cities led to traffic problems as commuters congested the roadways, and cities had to find the resources to build bypasses and beltways. The growth in urban populations also created greater demands for trash and garbage disposal and water and sewer facilities. The growth of suburbs contributed to inner-city decay by pulling affluent middle-class residents away from town centers.

### **C. Low Wages and the Need for New Industry**

In the mid-1950s, North Carolina ranked near the bottom among the states in per capita income. At that time, Governor Luther H. Hodges began an aggressive program to raise the income and standard of living of poor North Carolinians by seeking industry for the state. In the United States and overseas, he promoted North Carolina as an industrial site. He made improvements to the state's ports at Morehead City and Wilmington. He is perhaps best remembered in North Carolina history for establishing the Research Triangle Park. The park connected the three major university towns of Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill. Hodges foresaw that the park, established in 1957 on 5,000 acres of land, would provide an ideal site for the research facilities of major industries and government agencies. Eventually the park would achieve national fame for research and would include such industries as IBM, Northern Telecom, and GlaxoSmithKline and such research operations as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Research Triangle Institute.

All the governors who succeeded Hodges have attempted to attract more industry to North Carolina and promote international trade. All of their efforts produced some success, but North Carolina still faces the difficulty of providing well-paying industrial jobs for its citizens. Today, North Carolina has the lowest average wage for its workers of all the fifty states. Some new industries are attracted by the low wages that they can pay, the assurance that the state has no strong labor unions, and large tax "breaks" or incentives from state government.

Some economic experts predict that the most dramatic impact on the future economy and workforce in North Carolina will be in the life sciences, which are served by the biotechnology industry in the research, production, and marketing of products from processed foods to pharmaceuticals to biomedical equipment. The Research Triangle Park has become a major center for the development of the life science industry, and North Carolina State University's Centennial Campus has begun training a qualified workforce for biotechnology companies at its Biomanufacturing Training and Educational Center. The state's community colleges will increasingly be called upon to supply skilled workers in the life and health sciences.

### **D. Labor Troubles**

Major labor strikes occurred at the Harriet-Henderson textile mill in Henderson in 1958-1959. But the actions failed, and a number of the strikers went to jail. A textile union organized workers at the J.P. Stevens textile mills in Roanoke Rapids in the 1970s, but they gained only a marginal improvement in wages. North Carolina's leaders in business and industry have traditionally fought against labor unions, and they have managed for the most part to secure the backing of the majority of the state's politicians in support of their defiance of unionization. In 2007 the Bureau of Labor Statistics noted that North Carolina had the lowest percentage of unionized workers in the nation. Only 3 percent of its workers belong to unions. The national average is about 12 percent. Even other southern states that have generally opposed unions have more unionized workers than the Tar Heel State. Alabama and Mississippi, for example, have three times the rate of unionization as North Carolina.

Many industries that have come to North Carolina in recent years have been transitory, staying a short time to take advantage of low wages and tax “breaks” and then moving on, leaving unemployment in their wake. Foreign competition from overseas factories that pay their workers even poorer wages has also hurt industrial employment in the state. In the past decade, 260,000 manufacturing jobs have vanished, primarily because of international competition. Because of lower-cost imports from abroad—particularly China and India—the textile industry particularly has suffered. In 1994, for example, 262,500 North Carolinians worked in textiles. A decade later only approximately 100,000 had such employment. Similar decline is taking place in the tobacco and furniture industries. As the textile, furniture, and tobacco industries decline, some state leaders see the biotechnology industry as the economic salvation of the Tar Heel economy. But so far the hope for the biotechnology industry has not been realized. Two-thirds of the state’s workers are now employed in service jobs, which customarily pay low wages.

Agriculture—including equipment, processing, packaging, and distribution—is still North Carolina’s largest industry and constitutes about one-quarter of the state’s economy at approximately \$62 billion. The second largest industry is the military at \$18 billion, and third is tourism at \$12 billion. Employment and profits in the retail, construction, development, real estate, and service industries tend to hold steady or rise, although downturns in the national economy can affect those areas more readily than others.

#### **E. Public and Higher Education**

In order to improve the economic opportunities and salaries of the state’s workers, North Carolina’s governors and other politicians since World War II have promoted the expansion and improvement of public higher education to produce a skilled workforce. In the 1950s the state began establishing technical institutes to train workers for manufacturing; for skilled service work as plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and brick masons; and also for the profession of nursing. Governor Terry Sanford, who assumed office in 1961, created the Department of Community Colleges, which eventually included fifty-eight community colleges and technical institutes. During his term in office, Sanford increased the sales tax in order to raise the level of public education in North Carolina. He started kindergarten programs and created the summer Governor’s School and the School of the Arts in Winston-Salem to serve gifted and talented students. Since Sanford all North Carolina’s governors have called for progress in education. Special emphasis has been put on early childhood education through such plans as James B. Hunt’s Smart Start program.

After World War II, a large number of men who had served in the armed forces entered the state’s colleges and universities. Their education expenses were paid by the federal government under the provisions of the G.I. Bill. In the 1960s, the generation known as the baby boomers was also ready for higher education. In order to prevent duplication of services and make the best use of available funds, the state created a statewide university system called the University of North Carolina. Under that system, all of the state’s sixteen public universities and colleges are controlled by a board of governors. The board of trustees at each institution reports to the board of governors.

## **F. Heated Politics within the Prevailing Party**

In politics the Democratic Party reigned supreme from 1901 until the 1970s. But even within that party, vitriolic disagreement often arose between conservative and liberal members, especially over the issue of race relations. Such conflict became especially vicious during the United States senatorial campaign of 1950, when the white supremacist lawyer and politician Willis Smith defeated incumbent senator and former university president Frank Porter Graham in the Democratic primary. With the aid of his publicist, the future television personality and United States senator Jesse Helms, Smith attacked Graham with mean-spirited denunciations of Graham's beliefs in racial equality and civil and human rights. Through an effective media campaign, Smith and Helms systematically excited racial hatred and fear among white North Carolinians, warning them that they would be ruled by brutish blacks and dangerous Communists if they voted for Graham.

## **G. Desegregation and Civil Rights for African Americans**

Despite the earnest political efforts of segregationists, such as Smith and United States senator Sam Ervin of Burke County, circumstances began to improve for African Americans in North Carolina. In 1954 the United States Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* overturned the old separate-but-equal doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* and declared segregation illegal in public schools. Nevertheless, in a further attempt to prevent the mixing of the races in public schools, North Carolina lawmakers enacted the so-called Pearsall Plan. According to the plan, local school boards, not the state, would be responsible for pupil assignment to schools, and local school boards could abolish schools if whites objected to integration. The scheme also provided for granting state money to whites to enroll their children in private schools, to avoid having them attend school with black children. In 1966 a federal court declared the Pearsall Plan, which had been adopted as a state constitutional amendment, to be unconstitutional. To combat integration, the Ku Klux Klan again became active in North Carolina. To resist desegregation by economic reprisals, middle-class whites formed the White Citizens Council, known as the uptown KKK.

The largest African American organization working to overturn segregation and racism in North Carolina and the nation since the early twentieth century has been the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). However, in the 1950s the Civil Rights movement arose in the country under the charismatic leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Dr. King led the SCLC in major nonviolent demonstrations throughout the South, including the protest movement in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963 and the march on Selma in 1965. During those demonstrations, many of the African American participants were beaten and jailed by police and attacked by white mobs.

Other organizations that formed to work for civil rights in the United States were the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), begun in Chicago in 1942, and the national Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), founded on the campus of Shaw University in Raleigh in 1960.

A national movement to protest segregation in public places began in North Carolina in 1960 when four African American students from North Carolina A and T College in Greensboro sat at an F.W. Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro and asked

for service. Such “sit-ins” spread throughout the state and led to the picketing of stores, restaurants, and theaters. They were followed by “freedom rides,” initiated by CORE, into the Deep South to protest segregation in bus terminals and other public facilities. Protestors were often arrested in North Carolina and other southern states. Adhering to Dr. King’s nonviolent protest tactics, Golden Frinks, secretary of Edenton’s NAACP and field secretary of the SCLC, led civil rights demonstrations in the town of Williamston in Martin County in 1963. The protests and boycotts by blacks led to retaliation by angry whites and the Ku Klux Klan. A number of local African Americans and northern white clergymen who came south to support their cause were jailed. Frinks was arrested and served hard time on a state road gang for three months. Nevertheless, the Williamston Freedom Movement and other protests throughout North Carolina help draw national attention to the cause of civil rights in the South.

In 1964 Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. That law prohibited segregation in all public accommodations and guaranteed federal enforcement of its provisions. Title VI of the act stated that no one could be—on the basis of race, color, creed, or national origin—excluded from any activity that received federal funds. Public schools could therefore lose their funding if they failed to ensure equality in admitting African Americans. The act established the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to ensure compliance with Title VI.

White North Carolinians made a final attempt to avoid school integration in 1965 when the state legislature enacted a freedom-of-choice plan that allowed parents to choose a specific school for their children. But a federal court ruled that freedom of choice to avoid integration was unconstitutional. Desegregation of North Carolina’s public schools was finally completed in the 1970s. In the first year of that decade, in the case *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, a federal court ordered the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education to begin cross-town busing. The court mandated the establishment of “attendance zones” and the “pairing of schools” to accomplish desegregation.

#### **H. Voting Rights and Political Offices for African Americans**

Federal protection for racial equality extended to voting rights. In 1965 Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, which ensured the opportunity for political participation for all African Americans. It empowered the federal government to bring legal action against local election boards if the boards attempted, by arbitrary regulations such as bogus literacy tests, to disqualify blacks from registering to vote. It provided for federal examiners to register black voters in election jurisdictions where African Americans had been denied registration by local authorities. The United States Supreme Court declared the Grandfather Clause unconstitutional, and the Twenty-fourth Amendment to the federal Constitution outlawed poll taxes.

Fully enfranchised, black North Carolinians immediately began to vote in large numbers for officials who supported civil rights and protected their interests. They elected a number of African American town councilmen, mayors, county commissioners, school board members, judges and state legislators. In 1968 voters elected Henry E. Frye of Guilford County to the General Assembly. Frye was the first African American to serve in the legislature in more than seven decades. In 1974 Frederick Douglass

Alexander of Mecklenburg County and John W. Winters of Wake County were elected to the state senate and house respectively.

African Americans continued to fight to ensure that their voting rights were protected and fairly implemented. Julius Chambers, a Charlotte attorney and director of the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, successfully challenged in the United State Supreme Court North Carolina's 1982 redistricting plan for elections to the state legislature. In that same year, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1982, which prohibited any election practices that allowed minorities less opportunity than whites to vote.

From 1970 to 1997, 506 black North Carolinians won elections and served in a large number of political offices. Among them were two members of Congress—Eva Clayton of the First District and Mel Watt of the Twelfth District, the first black North Carolinians to serve in Congress since 1901. During the same period, more than sixty African Americans served in the General Assembly, and 354 were elected to and took office in city and county government. In 1983 Governor James B. Hunt Jr. appointed Henry E. Frye to the North Carolina Supreme Court. Frye won statewide election as an associate justice in 1984 and 1992, and he became chief justice in 1999. Dan Blue of Wake County served as Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives from 1991 to 1994, and Ralph Campbell Jr. was elected as state auditor in 1992 and 1996. During the 1980s and 1990s, a number of black North Carolinians served in state cabinet positions under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

### **I. Racial Problems Persist**

Despite the improvements in civil and political rights for North Carolina's African American population, however, race relations and justice remain far from perfect. Blacks continue to face the problems of poverty and discrimination in much greater numbers than whites. Many feel alienated from society and the "system" of government and employment and educational opportunities. In the mid-1960s riots broke out in black neighborhoods in major U.S. cities such as Los Angeles and Newark. A number of African Americans turned away from cooperation with white society and toward enclaves of black separatism. When a white assassin murdered Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, many African Americans felt bitter and enraged. They became more militant and disenchanted with Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence. Some joined the "black power movement" led by the volatile Stokely Carmichael, and the separatist group known as the Black Panthers. In Wilmington in 1972, black activist Ben Chavis and nine other African Americans were arrested and sent to prison for fire bombing a white grocery store. They were called the Wilmington Ten. In 1986 a federal court overturned their conviction.

In recent years, a number of African Americans have rejected Christianity as the white man's religion and have joined the Black Muslim movement, first begun by Elijah Mohammed in the 1940s and later led by Malcolm X and then Louis Farrakhan. Some among the black Muslims denounce Jews as responsible for the economic problems of African Americans.

### **J. The Cold War and Fears of Communism**

After World War II, the United States engaged in the Korean War (1950-1953) and the Vietnam War (1964-1973) as part of its foreign policy to contain the spread of Communism, the economic and political ideology of the Soviet Union, the world's other

major nuclear power. Tensions and the fear of nuclear war between the two superpowers marked the several decades of the so-called Cold War.

Because it feared Communist infiltration among North Carolina students and faculty, the state legislature passed the Speaker Ban Law in 1963. That law made it illegal for persons suspected of being Communists to speak on state-supported university campuses. In 1968 the United States Supreme Court declared the Speaker Ban Law to be unconstitutional. During the Vietnam War, many young North Carolinians joined the national antiwar movement, which included opposition to the military draft and the adoption of a counterculture characterized by illegal drug use and rebellious behavior. In 1991 North Carolina's military bases supplied many of the troops who fought in the Persian Gulf War with Iraq and subsequently in the conflict in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq following the terrorist bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in 2001.

### **K. Rise of the Republican Party**

Political alignments underwent a major shift in the 1970s in the Tar Heel State. With only the brief interlude of the Populist-Republican Fusion of the 1890s, North Carolina remained primarily a one-party state from the 1870s to the 1970s. The Republican Party was a part of North Carolina politics, but it remained overshadowed by the Democratic Party. Its power was always limited and its supporters always in a minority. But in 1972, that situation changed when the Republicans won a significant number of statewide elections. They secured almost one-third of the seats in the General Assembly, elected Jesse Helms as United States senator, and elected James Holshouser of Boone as the state's first Republican governor since Daniel L. Russell's election in 1896.

The rise of the Republican Party in the state was the result of many white North Carolinians' dissatisfaction with the national Democratic Party's support for racial integration and civil rights for African Americans and social reforms such as President Lyndon B. Johnson's "war on poverty" in the 1960s. Johnson called for federal reforms that would bring about what he called the Great Society, including welfare and food stamps for poor families, as well as health care programs such as Medicare, Head Start education, and VISTA to train the urban poor in skills that would help raise their standard of living. Many of the state's citizens saw these programs as too costly in taxes and too "liberal" and socialistic. Many North Carolinians also blamed the Democratic Party for the violent race riots in some of the nation's large cities and for the antiwar movement that led to often violent demonstrations against the Vietnam War. In response to the Republican Party's promise to restore stability and a respect for capitalism and to eliminate the federal government's emphasis on social programs and return the nation to conservative "traditional American values," North Carolina Democrats and independents began to join the Republican Party.

### **L. Women as State Leaders**

In the second half of the twentieth century, women entered North Carolina politics and the professions in unprecedented numbers. In so doing they had to combat and overcome gender prejudice that often denied them professional positions for which they were qualified.

One of those who earned prominence was Ellen Black Winston of Bryson City. She earned a doctorate at the University of Chicago in 1930, taught at Meredith College,

and then in 1944 became the state commissioner of public welfare. She served as president of the American Welfare Association and National Conference for Social Service in the 1950s and 1960s and was appointed commissioner of public welfare for the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. She also served as a representative to the United Nations International Conference of Ministers of Social Welfare.

Susie Marshall Sharp of Reidsville was the first woman to serve as a justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. Sharp was the only woman in her law class at UNC in the 1920s. Despite some hostility from her male classmates, she served as editor of the *Law Review* and graduated with honors. She was the first female appointed a judge in North Carolina's superior court and then ascended to the supreme court. In 1974 she won election as chief justice of the state's high court, the only woman chief justice in the nation. In 2006 Sarah Parker became chief justice of the state supreme court.

Among other North Carolina women who achieved success was Elizabeth Dole, a native of Salisbury. President Ronald Reagan appointed her federal secretary of transportation in 1983, the first woman to hold that office, and President George H. W. Bush appointed her secretary of labor in 1989. From 1991 to 1998 she served as head of the American Red Cross. In 2002 she was elected to the United States Senate to replace Senator Helms. In 1996 Elaine Marshall of Harnett County, a former state senator, became the first woman elected secretary of state in North Carolina. Former state representative and senator Beverly Perdue, of Craven County, was elected the first female lieutenant governor of North Carolina in 2001. She became the first woman governor in 2009. In that same year, Democrat Kay Hagan replaced Republican Elizabeth Dole in the U.S. Senate. Cherie Berry currently serves as the first female secretary of labor of North Carolina, and Janet Cowell is state treasurer.

In 2007 forty-three women were serving in the legislature, and that number represents about one-quarter of the membership. That was the most in the southern states and eighteenth in the nation. Six of the twelve most powerful committees had either a chairwoman or a co-chairwoman.

By the end of the twentieth century, a large number of women held offices and professional positions as lawyers, physicians, scientists, university presidents and chancellors, government administrators, and corporate executives. Many also worked for women's rights in such organizations as the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). They called for Congress to enact laws beneficial for women and to pass the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution. In North Carolina, women's groups lobbied the legislature to ratify the amendment. The assembly refused to ratify, however, and to date the nation has not done so either.

During this period of progress for women, the journey to achieve equal rights remained especially hard for African American women. The struggle of Pauli Murray, who grew up in Durham during the 1920s, exemplifies the hard-fought achievements and perseverance of black women in the state. Murray graduated from Hunter College in New York in 1933. Five years later she was denied admission to the law school at the University of North Carolina because of her race but subsequently received a law degree from Yale University. She became a powerful and persistent opponent of racial segregation and a strong advocate for women's rights. Her book *States' Laws on Race and Color* stood as a useful source for the preparation of court cases involving civil

rights. Her well-known *Proud Shoes and a Song in a Weary Throat* (1956) portrayed life in Durham during the days of Jim Crow. In 1977 she became the first woman to be ordained a priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church. When she celebrated the Eucharist at the Episcopal Church, Chapel of the Cross, in Chapel Hill, she was the first woman priest to celebrate the Eucharist in North Carolina. Many other African American women have followed Murray's example in overcoming racial and gender discrimination to achieve prominent positions in North Carolina society. Among them in 2006 was Patricia Timmons-Goodson, who became the first African American woman to serve as a justice on the North Carolina Supreme Court.

### **M. Culture and Entertainment**

Cultural activities and entertainment underwent a surge in the postwar period. The North Carolina Symphony, founded in the 1930s, became active in the 1950s as it traveled the state giving concerts in the public schools. In 1956 the state opened the North Carolina Museum of Art in downtown Raleigh. It is now undergoing expansion at its site on Blue Ridge Road. Big-time college sports and car racing began drawing large crowds in the 1950s. Today's major professional teams in the state include the Carolina Panthers in football, the Charlotte Wildcats in Basketball, and the Carolina Hurricanes in ice hockey. Television arrived in most North Carolina homes in the 1950s, including the educational channel WUNC-TV. In the 1990s, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians introduced gambling casinos on their reservation.

In recent years, North Carolina has produced a large number of writers of national reputation. These include Reynolds Price, Doris Betts, John Ehle, Kaye Gibbons, Lee Smith, Clyde Edgerton, Tim McLaurin, Maya Angelou, Randall Kenan, Fred Chappell, and Charles Frazier. Among the nationally known journalists from the state have been Edward R. Murrow, Gerald Johnson, Jonathan Daniels, David Brinkley, Charles Kuralt, and Charlie Rose. Some North Carolinians who have contributed to the field of music are Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, James Taylor, Shirley Caesar, "Doc" and Merle Watson, Arthur Smith, Charlie Poole, and Dr. Billy Taylor. In the theater and entertainment field, Andy Griffith won fame for his film and stage performances and his timeless television series *The Andy Griffith Show*. Today, the motion picture and television industries are using North Carolina as a locale for filming their productions.

### **N. Present Conditions and Future Challenges**

The federal census indicates that North Carolina's population continues to grow faster than the national average. Just recently the urban population has exceeded the rural population for the first time in the state's history. Newcomers to the state, from both other states and other countries, have helped increase the population to more than 8.5 million. Among the foreign immigrants, the largest number are Hispanic, or Latino. The economic "boom years" of the 1990s especially brought a surge in population growth, with Latinos becoming a large part of the workforce. Today they make up about one-fifth of the workers in the state's construction industry. North Carolina's Hispanic population grew to more than 550,000 between 2000 and 2005, a 46 percent increase. Between 2006 and 2007, the Hispanic population surged to 640,000, an additional 7.8 percent increase. Hispanics made up about 7 percent of North Carolina's population in 2007.

The federal census for 2000 indicates that about 100,000 American Indians live in North Carolina. The state recognizes eight distinct tribes. To provide an advocacy agency to serve American Indians, the legislature has created the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs. The membership of that organization includes state officials and nineteen representatives from Indian communities, who are appointed by their tribes or organizations.

The size of suburban, or “bedroom,” communities has continued to grow significantly as more people seek work in urban areas in the Piedmont. In 2001 the counties with the fastest-growing housing were Wake, with a 4.6 percent increase, and Johnston, which grew 3.5 percent in the number of houses constructed. Fifty-five percent of the state’s population now lives in the Triangle, Triad, and Charlotte regions. The three largest counties—Mecklenburg, Guilford, and Wake—account for about 22 percent of the state’s population. From 2000 to 2005, the population of the Raleigh-Cary area alone increased 19 percent to nearly 950,000. In the latter year, the entire Triangle (Johnston, Durham, Wake, Orange, and Chatham Counties) had a total population of 1,273,438, and the median household income was \$45,074.

Hard hit by a decline in agriculture and manufacturing, many eastern counties are experiencing major economic problems as their populations dwindle. For example, Hyde County has lost 8 percent of its population since 2000 and Bertie County has lost 3 percent. Fifteen rural counties lost population between July 2005 and that same month in 2006. In the past three decades, the eastern region has lost half its farms, and three out of four of its workers are now employed in low-paying jobs in the retail industry. The large chain store Wal-Mart is the largest employer in eight eastern counties. In four counties meat-packing plants are the chief employers. The state’s attempt to increase employment and improve economic conditions in the east by building the Global TransPark (including an airfield) near Kinston to attract new industry has failed to produce the anticipated results.

As North Carolina nears the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, it faces many problems. Large tax cuts, beginning in 1995, have reduced the state’s revenue, brought on debt, and made it difficult for the state government to operate. Poverty remains a serious problem. The circumstances of the poor were made worse when the state cut welfare roles by 60 percent in 1995. Today, about 13 percent of North Carolinians live in poverty, a statistic that has not changed in a decade. The state ranks about twenty-ninth in the nation in per capita personal income but forty-sixth in industrial wages. In 2006, 49 percent of North Carolina’s public school children were poor—living below the poverty line.

In the rate of literacy, North Carolina ranks forty-first in the nation. In 2000 more than one million residents could not read or write or perform basic arithmetic. About 15 to 20 percent of the state’s high school students now fail to graduate. The positive impact of early intervention education programs aimed at the poor such as Smart Start and More at Four has been only marginal. An attempt to fund education through a state-sponsored gambling scheme called the Education Lottery also has had limited impact.

Health care in the state remains in a perilous condition, with many North Carolinians having no health insurance as the cost of medical care continues to rise. About 17 percent of the state’s population has no health insurance. The mental health program suffered severely when the state began closing its mental hospitals and

privatizing mental health care. Financial corruption among some of the private-care companies occurred, and much revenue intended for mental health has been lost. Today more than a half-million North Carolinians suffer from some kind of mental illness.

Air and water pollution pose serious threats to the environment. Automobile exhaust at times makes the air dangerous to breath, and the state has to monitor air quality in urban areas to warn residents—especially those with respiratory problems—of its hazards. Acid rain and agricultural runoff of fertilizer and waste from hog and poultry farms are killing trees and plants and fouling streams, rivers, and sounds. Industry has compounded the problem of pollution by releasing harmful chemical and other products into the air and water. Such pollution and the depletion of wetlands by wanton overdevelopment are destroying one of the Old North State’s greatest assets—its natural heritage.

North Carolinians share in other problems that afflict the general population of the United States. Despite the country’s having the most expensive medical care in the world, Tar Heels and Americans generally are not the planet’s healthiest people. They suffer from obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and smoking-related illnesses such as cancer and hypertension. HIV and AIDS are a threat, especially among the poor. Finding health insurance for thousands of North Carolinians remains a major problem. “Urban sprawl,” congested highways and beltways, and long commutes are taking a toll on family life and personal fulfillment. North Carolina’s citizens have more material possessions than ever. But such materialism is frequently accompanied by high credit debt—especially credit-card debt. Furthermore, experts on human behavior have observed that having more “stuff” is not necessarily making the population happy. North Carolinians in significant numbers suffer from stress, anxiety, depression, drug addiction, and alcoholism—even the more affluent members of society.

Whether or not the state will overcome such challenges in the future remains to be seen. But North Carolina’s past history indicates that positive change is possible if Tar Heels are willing to commit themselves to establishing and maintaining the best life possible for all North Carolinians.

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