

# Wild About Trout in the South Mountains



A favorite of fishermen, trout need cold clear mountain streams to survive and spawn (breed). These beauties are fun to catch and they tell us about the health of our waterways.

## Brooks and Rainbows

Brook and rainbow trout are two commonly sought-after trout species in North Carolina. Rainbow trout are native to the Pacific coast and are stocked in the Jacob's Fork River. They have a pink or reddish stripe on their sides and prefer fast currents. Brook trout are the only trout native to North Carolina. They have dark green mottling on their back and tail and provide more of a challenge to anglers.

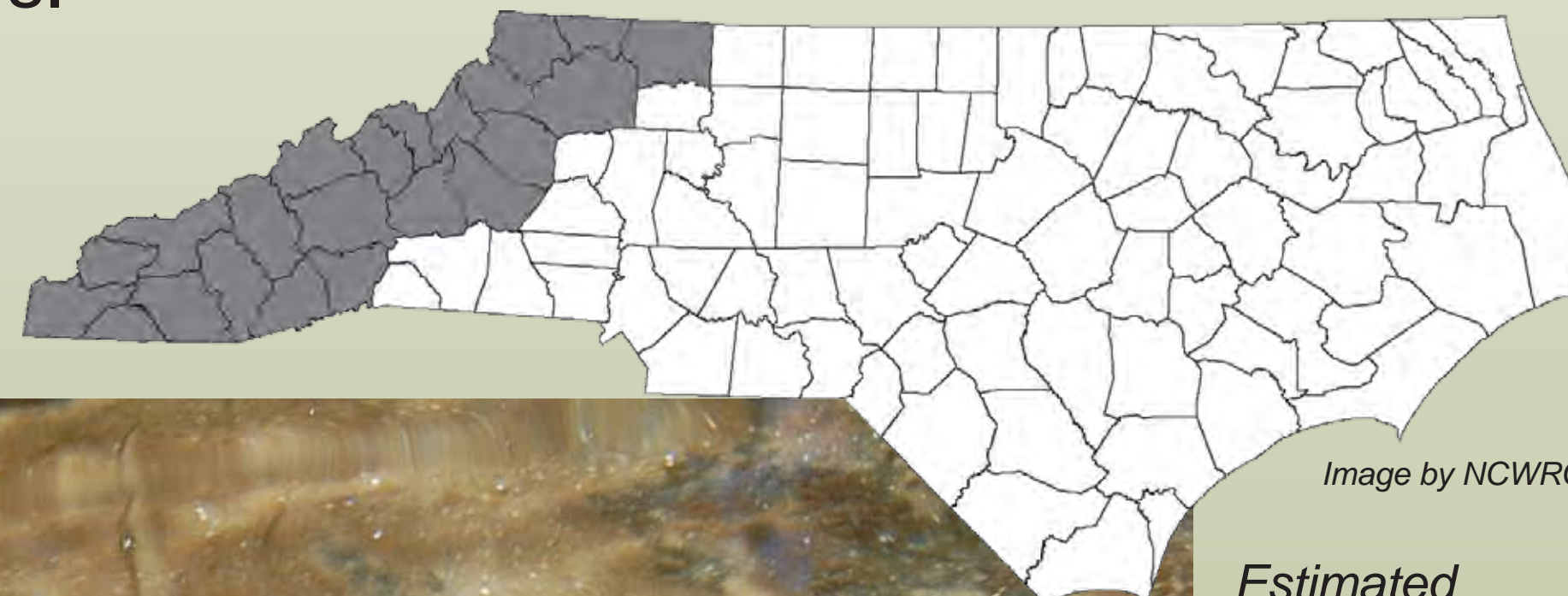


Image by NCWRC

Estimated range of native brook trout in North Carolina.



Photo by Dave Cook, NCDPR

Biologists and park rangers sampling for fish in a stream.



Photo by Ed Farr, NCDPR

A fly fisher enjoying a day of casting.

## The Mountains Before the Mountains

The South Mountains are a small range, separate and 30 miles southeast of the main ridge of the Appalachian Mountains. The park's cold mountain streams are among the furthest southeast where native brook trout still swim in the wild.

## Brook Trout Restoration Initiative

Are there still native brook trout in the streams of the South Mountains? The park and several partner agencies are studying the wild trout populations to find out. This partnership is also restoring trout headwater habitat.



Photo by Joe Mickey, NCDPR

Native brook trout.



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More information online at: [www.blueridgeheritage.com](http://www.blueridgeheritage.com)

# Waldensian Heritage Museum

Liberty, Faith and Honor. The Waldenses, dating from at least the 12th century, were a persecuted people who survived plagues, exiles into barren lands and the edicts of rulers calling for their extinction. These faithful people wanted to read the Bible, preach its Gospel and live out its tenets. The Waldenses joined the Reformation in 1532 and suffered more persecution as Christians were killed or imprisoned. Eventually, they were exiled into the Swiss Alps. In 1689, a contingent of men began the battle back to their valleys in the "Glorious Return." On February 17, 1848, The Edict of Emancipation gave them political and legal rights. Today their traditions live on in this community originally founded by 29 settlers on May 29, 1893. The Waldensian Presbyterian Church stands as a testament to their perseverance, a covenant of hope for all who are still to follow.



The Waldensian homeland lies in the Cottian Alps, near the French border southwest of Turin in northwestern Italy.



Dedication of the Waldensian Presbyterian Church July 4th, 1899, Valdese, NC



The Waldensian Emblem. The Latin words "Lux Lucet In Tenebris" meaning "the light shineth in darkness," surround the lighted candle.

Welcome to the Waldensian Heritage Museum. Come, explore and learn as we retrace the lives of these followers of Christ in Europe to the settling in a new world where liberty and religious freedom were finally realized. See for yourself how their quest for liberty and their journey of faith has left behind a proud heritage of honor for all who follow in their footsteps even unto this day.



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# Hot Springs



Travelers have sojourned in Hot Springs since the mid 1700s when the warm temperatures of the springs drew attention to the real jewel that is still enjoyed today. Based on all the springs had to offer, the elegant Mountain Park Hotel pulled people by rail into this small mountain town. The hotel featured a quarter-mile glassed-in veranda, steam heat, gas lighting, an elevator to serve its three stories, a spacious ballroom and stage, and a skilled French chef. A newspaper article related that the hotel was “first class and the table cannot be surpassed by any in the country.”

The outdoors, rich in rivers and mountains, certainly drew visitors to want to come and explore this far corner of Western North Carolina. Today, history repeats itself as travelers seek opportunities to enjoy all that nature so richly provides.



*The Mountain Park Hotel in its glory days.*



*Rafting on the French Broad River.*

The Appalachian Trail is a much sought after hiking experience, and literally is right at your feet, as the trail markers to your right and left indicate. Take the trail further and head on up to Lovers Leap just across the bridge. Perhaps you want to experience a Class III or IV rapid on the French Broad, and soak in the springs after a day in the great outdoors. This small town on a big trail awaits!



*View of Hot Springs from Lovers' Leap.*



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# Welcome to the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area



A place unlike any other on Earth, where ancient landscapes enchant the eye and age-old traditions warm the heart.

You are now in one of America's most cherished and celebrated natural landscapes, the mountains and foothills of Western North Carolina. The natural heritage of these ancient mountains, some of the oldest in the world, combined with the cultural heritage of the people who have lived here over centuries have created a place so special in our country it has been honored with the designation of "National Heritage Area."



Photo by Bill Lea



Photo by Hugh Morton

From high mountaintops to secluded coves, the natural beauty of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area meets the eye at every turn.

Here, you'll find...

- The highest mountain east of the Mississippi—Mount Mitchell
- The deepest gorge in the Eastern United States—Linville Gorge
- The oldest river in North America—the New River
- The most visited National Park lands in the country—Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway
- Cherokee heritage—more than 10,000 years old
- America's largest home—Biltmore Estate
- Music born and bred in these mountains—bluegrass, old-time, gospel and more that has influenced many styles of American music.
- Handcraft traditions—unmatched anywhere in the country
- Fresh, delicious food from local farms—in restaurants, stores, and farmers markets.

Visit our kiosk inside this Welcome Center to learn more, or go to [www.blueridgeheritage.com](http://www.blueridgeheritage.com).



The music born and bred in these ancient mountains has widely influenced the development of other genres of American music. The region was honored as a National Heritage Area for its rich cultural heritage—the 10,000 year old history of the Cherokee, craft traditions, foodways and farms, and music as well as its natural scenic beauty.

Top, from L to R, photos taken by or courtesy of: Cherokee Historical Association; Robin Dreyer, Penland School of Crafts; Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project; Jerry Nelson Photography, courtesy of the Folk Heritage Committee. Lower photo by Donna Absher.



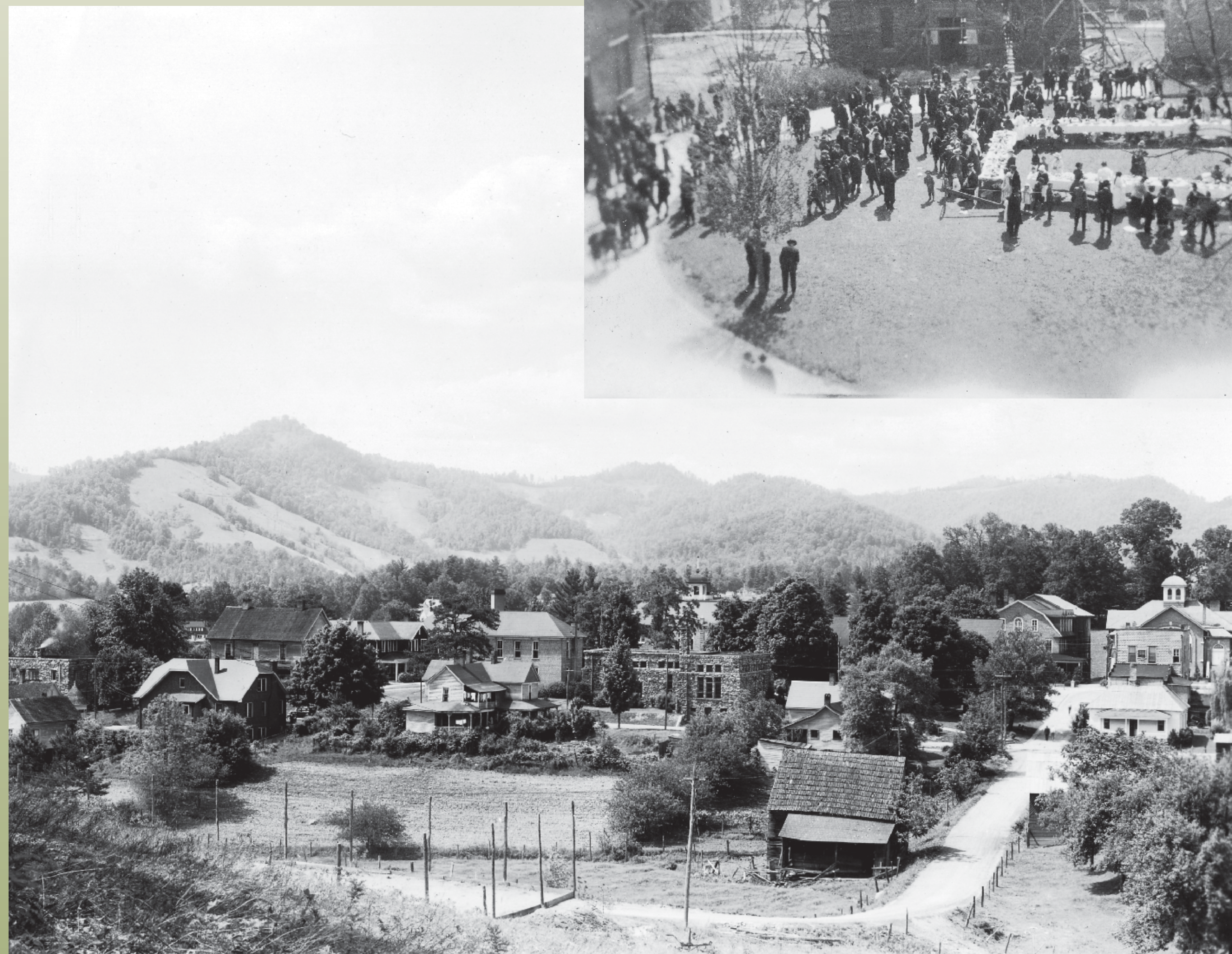
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# Rural Life Museum

The Rural Life Museum facilitates the collection, preservation, exhibition and interpretation of rural life artifacts relevant to the history and culture of the Southern Appalachian region. Through its exhibits and educational program the museum assists students, faculty members, and other patrons in understanding rural heritage.

Right: A campus gathering during construction of the Montague Building.



The Mars Hill campus in the 1930s, with the Montague Building in the center.



Exhibits of Southern Appalachian life.

Originally housing the college library and later, administrative offices for alumni, public information and development, the Montague Building was converted to the Rural Life Museum in 1979. Exhibits were compiled by university historian Richard Dillingham with assistance from the NC Dept. of Archives and History, with reclaimed natural materials used in exhibit construction.



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## Sounds From the Mountains

The hills and valleys before you may seem quiet, rounded with age and blanketed with thick forests. But if you listen closely between the distant sounds of a train whistle, you may hear the sounds of fiddles, banjos and strings bands that still ring throughout the Blue Ridge region.

Here at the Orchard at Altapass, a rich music heritage comes to life from spring through fall when local residents gather to celebrate, play, and share the music of the mountains, a style that is unique and truly American. Today's "mountain music" evolved over time, a blend of styles that arrived in the region with immigrant settlers. The fiddle came from Europe, the banjo from Africa.



Photo by Jerry Nelson Photography, www.JourneysAmerica.org  
Courtesy of the Folk Heritage Committee

*A fiddler plays at Shindig on the Green in Asheville, NC.*



Photo courtesy of the Orchard at Altapass

*Visitors to the historic Orchard at Altapass, located on the Blue Ridge Parkway, enjoy the traditional music of the Blue Ridge region.*

Those who dwelt in isolated rural communities found harmony when they gathered on front porches and in churches to sing, play instruments, dance and enjoy fellowship.

This tradition is alive today and can be enjoyed on festival stages, in town squares, and in places like the Orchard, where you can hear the lively strains of old-time, bluegrass, ballad singing, blues and sacred music that continue to fill the air.



Photo from the Swannanoa Valley Museum

*Swannanoa String Band, ca. 1894. Fiddles, banjos and guitars have long been the backbone of the music played in the North Carolina mountains and foothills.*



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# Historic Carson House



John Hazzard Carson, a native of Ulster, began constructing his home on Buck Creek in 1793. The spacious two-story structure with log walls at its core was named "Pleasant Gardens." Upon Colonel John's death in 1841, his youngest son, Jonathan Logan Carson, oversaw extensive additions that incorporated elements of the Greek Revival style. The renovated three-story structure, with its two-story veranda, stands today as a rare example of an Up-Country plantation house.

The plantation, centered on the 640 acre home tract, was one of the largest and most productive in the region. Prior to the elder Carson's death, sixty-eight African-American slaves worked on the plantation.



The Carsons played prominent roles in politics and society. Colonel Carson was active in the Revolutionary War. Later, he and three of his sons served in the state legislature. One son, Samuel Price, was a four-term United States' Congressman before becoming Secretary of State of the Republic of Texas.

The Carson's "Pleasant Gardens" was the site of the organization of McDowell County in 1843, and for two years functioned as the county courthouse. Besides being a social and political hub, the home was a popular stagecoach inn and tavern for nearly a century.



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# Linville Caverns

For centuries, nature was quietly working to create unique beauty inside Humpback Mountain.

Although the first explorers are not known, the caverns became known to locals that settled in the area around 1830. An article in the National Speleological Society Bulletin mentions Revolutionary War soldiers who spent time within the caves. Official discovery is credited to Henry E. Colton around 1858, when he wrote of noticing native trout swimming in and out of the mountainside. In the late 1800s, Thomas Edison sent mineralogist William Earl Hidden to the area in search of platinum needed in the manufacture of his incandescent lamp. Although he did not find platinum,



*Native trout in underground stream.*



*Signature rock in Linville Caverns.*

Hidden made several mineral discoveries such as the gemstone Hiddenite. He and three others documented their July 21, 1884 exploration of the caverns by carving their names and date into a limestone wall now known as Signature Rock. North Carolina's only commercial limestone caverns opened to the public in 1937.

The cave environment and cave-dwelling organisms are ecologically important and unique due to lack of light, high humidity, fairly constant temperature, and limited food sources inside the caverns. The delicate ecosystem of Linville Caverns is protected and studied by the current management and biospeleologists.



*Pathway into Linville Caverns.*



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# The Mountain Gateway Museum & Heritage Center



The Mountain Gateway Museum and Heritage Center is dedicated to bringing life to the wonderful history of the "Old North State." The museum, open year round, focuses on history from the pioneer era through the early 20th century. A variety of activities, programs, reenactments, and festivals are hosted here, including the annual Pioneer Day festival, held on the last Saturday in April.

Senator Clyde Norton and Mrs. Janet Norton were responsible for creating this park-like venue in 1982. Built by the Works Progress Administration (c. 1937), the museum originally served as a community building. The Nortons valued the



Left: Farm Day - A Second Saturday Event.

Right: Children's program with interactive, educational exhibits.



Photos by Mountain Gateway Museum

Photo Courtesy of McDowell Tourism Authority



Photo by Mountain Gateway Museum

The Friendship Dulcimer Association participates in museum events, festivals and often plays on the front porch on Sunday afternoons.

history of Old Fort and Western North Carolina's culture. They purchased and brought to the grounds two log cabins built in McDowell County, c.1860 -1880.

The Mauney House serves as the museum office, service center and workshop space, providing support to non-profit museums and historical societies in Western North Carolina.

Old Fort is a North Carolina Mountain Heritage Trout Town and the museum acts as the center for that program. The N.C. Wildlife Commission maintains and stocks the creek as a delayed harvest site. It's also included on the N.C. Birding Trail.

Events and lodging details are online at [www.mountaingatewaymuseum.org](http://www.mountaingatewaymuseum.org) and [www.visitoldfort.com](http://www.visitoldfort.com).



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# On the Trail of Gold



Drawn by the gold to be found in our rivers, thousands of fortune seekers kindled a North Carolina Gold Rush to these foothills in the 1820s. Among them was the German jeweler Christopher Bechtler who bought this land in 1830 and began his own – not very successful – search for gold.

A year later, other gold miners urged him to create a market for raw gold by opening a private mint. By 1837, Bechtler had minted \$2.4 million in coins, including the first \$1 gold coin in the U.S.



*German immigrant Christopher Bechtler established a successful private mint on this site in 1831, giving southern miners a much-needed alternative to the far-away U.S. Mint in Philadelphia.*



The Bechtler Mint site is the western anchor on North Carolina's "golden crescent" that extends to the Reed Gold Mine east of Charlotte. Since Bechtler's death in 1842, his land has passed through many hands, once selling to speculators for over \$1 million and once selling at auction for less than \$100. Farmers, loggers and curio-seekers have churned up its soil and erased many features.

The Bechtler site was not protected until 1990 when the Rutherford County Historical Society negotiated its donation to Rutherford County. In 1997, the site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, recognizing that Christopher Bechtler's gold-working skills transformed the economic life of the South.



Photograph courtesy of UNC-TV

*Christopher Bechtler possessed the metal working skills to turn gold into coins and ingots.*

*Development of the Bechtler Mint Site courtesy of Rutherford County, the Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority and the Rutherford County Historical Society.*



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# The N.C. Lincoln Birth Story



Some history records that President Abraham Lincoln was born in a one-room cabin in Kentucky. However, N.C. research historians and generational stories hold that Lincoln was born on Puzzle Creek, near Bostic, North Carolina, and that his father was not Thomas Lincoln, but Abraham Enloe, a farmer who employed Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks.

The plantation of Abraham Enloe was about two miles northeast of this point. The story goes that a young woman, Nancy Hanks, had been bound out to the Enloes by her mother, and in February, 1805, while on the plantation, gave birth to a boy whom she named Abraham.



Left: Interior view of Bostic Lincoln Center museum with period costuming.



Right: Visitation of Lincoln birth site is by appointment only.

Photos by Stewart O'Shields

Enloe arranged for Nancy to marry Thomas Lincoln, an itinerant worker, sealing the deal with cash, a team and wagon. Records show that Nancy and Thomas were married in Kentucky, and the presiding Deacon's account was of the young boy's presence at the ceremony.

The Enloe plantation was prestigious in contrast to the small subsistence farms surrounding it. The rich, watered bottomland provided well for the Enloe family, and the farm offered employment for many others.

Learn more about Lincoln's North Carolina origins here at the Bostic Lincoln Center.



Commemoration of Abraham Lincoln birth site on October 30, 1926 for the publishing of "Abraham Lincoln: A North Carolinian" by J. C. Coggins, Ph.D., LLD.



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