

## ROCKINGHAM

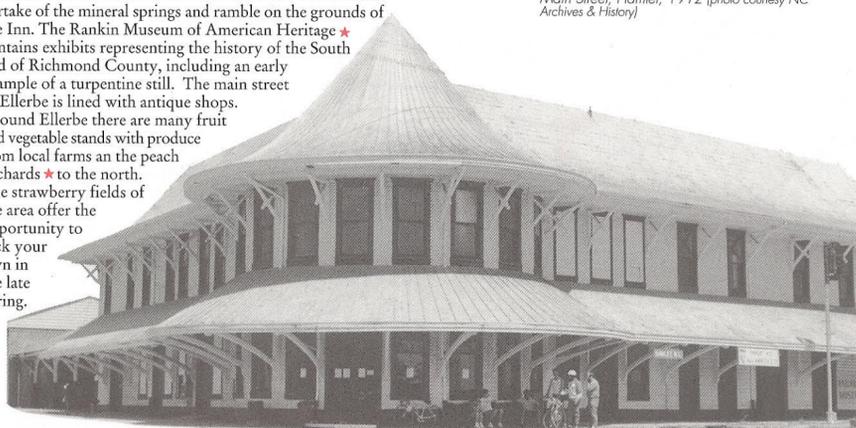
Rockingham, the county seat, boasts of many buildings on the National Register of Historic Places including the Richmond County Courthouse (1922) ★ and the U.S. Federal Building (1935). Also included is the Fayetteville Road Historic District ★ with many restored late nineteenth and early twentieth century homes.



County Courthouse, Rockingham

## ELLERBE

The Ellerbe Springs Inn was built shortly after the Civil War on the site of a hunting lodge and health spa established about 1850 by Colonel W. T. Ellerbe to promote the miraculous healing powers of the water from the spring on the property. The historic inn still operates as a hotel and restaurant and hosts a marathon run in March. One can still partake of the mineral springs and ramble on the grounds of the Inn. The Rankin Museum of American Heritage ★ contains exhibits representing the history of the South and of Richmond County, including an early example of a turpentine still. The main street of Ellerbe is lined with antique shops. Around Ellerbe there are many fruit and vegetable stands with produce from local farms and the peach orchards ★ to the north. The strawberry fields of the area offer the opportunity to pick your own in the late spring.

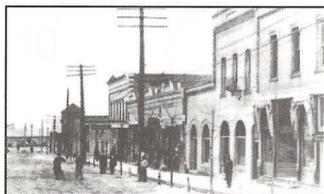


Seaboard Railway Depot and National Railroad Museum, Hamlet

★ refers to designated points of interest on the map

## HAMLET

Hamlet developed as the major rail hub in the region. Artifacts and displays in the National Railroad Museum ★ detail the history of the railroad and its impact on the area. The downtown block of old Main Street ★ has several buildings under restoration. The annual Seaboard Festival, held in late October, features crafts, food, entertainment and a competitive run. The Hamlet City Lake ★ provides a restful picnic area. Visible from the lakeside park is an interesting Art Deco railroad overpass. In the park there is a memorial to the victims of the 1992 fire at the Imperial Foods plant.



Main Street, Hamlet, 1912 (photo courtesy NC Archives & History)

## HISTORIC COUNTRY CHURCHES

The churches scattered throughout Richmond County not only offer a resting place for weary bicyclists under the shade of a big oak tree, but also tell of the rich history of the region.

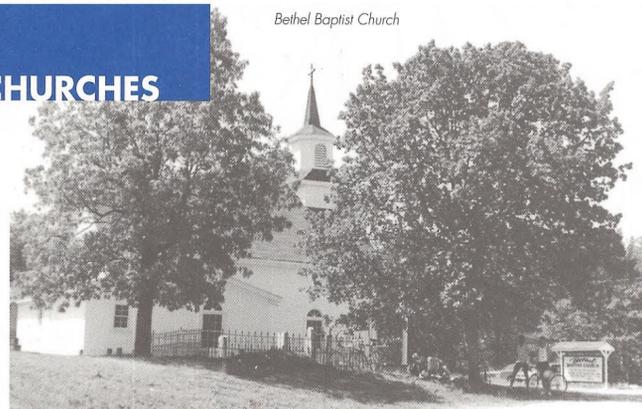
The pioneer residents of Richmond County were a courageous and independent lot who developed their own codes of moral conduct in their isolated environment. The Meeting House, a stabilizing force for law and order in this early wilderness, had a most profound influence on the lives of the settlers. Early congregations, many of them interdenominational, met first in settler's homes or in brush arbors—lattice-work pavilions made from branches and covered with crawling shrubs and vines. Later, they built log meeting houses on these same sites. These buildings often served as the community meeting hall and the school building. Several notable historic churches are on the bicycle routes.

**Bethel Baptist Church** ★ (Outer Loop #21, state road 1148) Organized in 1775 as Bethel Methodist Church to serve Grassy Island, the oldest farming community of the county, the church sits on a hill high above the Pee Dee River five miles west of Ellerbe. The original building was constructed of hand hewn lumber and wooden pegs. The present structure, erected in 1845, shows evidence of several more recent additions. Members of many pioneer families are buried in the cemetery.

**Cartledge Creek Baptist Church** ★ (Outer Loop #21, state road 1143) In 1774, a group of Baptists came to the area from Virginia to escape religious persecution. In 1779, Col. Thomas Dockery, Sr. invited his friends and neighbors to use his home as a meeting place, which came to be called Dockery's Baptist Meeting House. The group organized a congregation that would eventually become known as Cartledge Creek Church, named after Edmund Cartledge, a local landowner. In 1826, the members voted to build a new structure made of hand hewn



Cartledge Creek Baptist Church



and planed lumber. In 1833, the Church was host to the Baptist State Convention, where the charter was issued for Wake Forest Institute, which later became Wake Forest University. The original materials from the 1826 building, salvaged when the church was torn down, were used to build the present structure in 1869. In the cemetery on the hillside near the church, the original crude headstones remain, along with a recent memorial that lists the early settlers who are buried there.



Pee Dee Church



Greenleaf United Methodist Church

**Zion Methodist Church** ★ (Outer Loop #21, state road 1109) In 1829, William Covington deeded land in the Zion Community for the use of the Methodist Society in establishing a Camp Meeting Ground and Zion Meeting House. The present building, started in 1847, contained a gallery for slaves and a barrier down the center of the church to provide separate seating for men and women.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**The History of Richmond County**, by James E. and Ida C. Huneacutt, Rockingham, NC 1976 (1980)

**The Natural Gardens of North Carolina**, by B.W. Walls, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC 1967

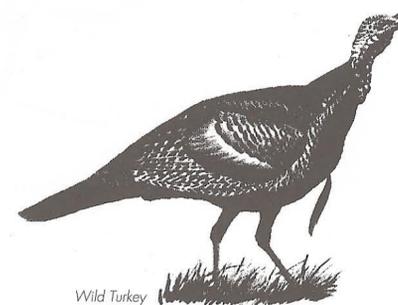
**Birds of the Carolinas** by **Eloise F. Potter**, James F. Parnell and Robert F. Teulings, UNC Press, Chapel Hill, NC 1980

## FLORA AND FAUNA

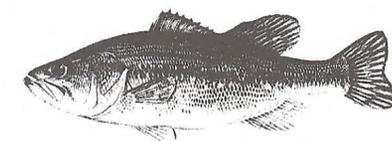
Richmond County has an abundance of wildlife, roadside wildflowers and fields and forests full of diverse vegetation. Over 3,000 acres of the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge ★ provide protected feeding grounds for migratory birds. Birdwatchers should be on the lookout for the belted kingfishers perched on telephone wires, and the great blue heron and the little green heron near marshes, ponds or streams. Also, be sure to watch for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, bluebirds, the red-tailed hawk, the turkey vulture and an occasional American bald eagle.

The 57,000-acre Sandhills Wildlife Management Area ★ abounds in deer, dove, quail and other game. Red foxes, bobcats, beavers and otters can still be spotted. Although hunting has diminished the wild turkey population, they can still be seen spreading their wings, running across the roads that pass through the wooded areas.

Unused fields lie throughout the county in all states of regeneration. In the first stage of natural succession, the crabgrass, ragweed and the ochre-colored broom sedge protect the overused fields from erosion. The loblolly pines begin to peep above the heavy crops of broom sedge to eventually form thick stands. They give way to the oak-hickory forests, which finally yield to the beeches and maples, reclaiming the old fields to their natural state of 300 years ago. Wildflowers and weeds blossom throughout the year along roadsides. The toad flax makes many fields cerulean blue in the early spring. March and April are the peak months for the blossoming dogwoods and redbuds seen throughout the county and for the peach orchards in the north. The fields of broom sedge flower in the fall months.



Wild Turkey



## MCKINNEY LAKE NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY

The Hatchery, ★ established in 1937, produces more than three million fish annually for stocking purposes. Visitors can view production pools full of striped bass, bluegills, catfish, and large mouth bass. The best times to visit are May through June and October through December when the striped bass are in the holding tanks. Bring binoculars and cameras to watch and photograph the resident Canadian goose flock, great blue herons, spotted sandpipers and other resident animals. There is a picnic area on the grounds of the hatchery.

## RESOURCES

Richmond County Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 86  
Rockingham, N.C. 28379  
919-895-9058

MCKinney Lake National Fish Hatchery  
Hoffman, N.C. 28347  
919-895-5330

Facilities open year-round  
Hatchery Office open  
Mon.-Fri. 7:30a.m.- 4p.m.

National Railroad Museum  
2 Main St.  
Hamlet, N.C. 28345  
free admission  
Sat. 10a.m.- 5p.m., Sun. 1p.m.- 5p.m.

Rankin Museum of American Heritage  
West Church St.  
P.O. Box 499  
Ellerbe, N.C. 28338  
919-652-6378  
Tues.-Fri. 10a.m.- 4p.m., Sat. & Sun.  
2p.m.- 5p.m.  
Adults \$2.00, Students \$1.00,  
Groups of 10+ \$.50  
Senior Citizens \$1.00  
Richmond County  
Bicycle Club  
110 Carroll St.  
Hamlet, NC 28345

## BICYCLE ROUTES

On the map, three routes are highlighted. The Outer Loop covers 88.4 miles and circles the county along its outer edges. The 25.8 mile North-South Route connects with the Outer Loop at Derby in the north and runs through Ellerbe and Rockingham to its connection with the Outer Loop at Hamlet in the South. The East-West Route takes the cyclist from the Outer Loop at the McKinney Lake Fish Hatchery in the East through Ellerbe to rejoin the Outer Loop 1.5 miles west of the Lentzton community, a total journey of 13.8 miles. Routes can be combined to make longer or shorter rides. A connection to the Moore County Bike Route system can be made in the north-east portion of the county along state road 1471. Although there are no paved shoulders or special facilities provided for bicyclists along these routes, most of the roadways have light traffic. Where necessary, short sections of more heavily traveled roads have been used as connectors in some areas. These sections are marked with "Share the Road" signs to alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists. Note on the map the remote portions of the routes, which offer no facilities: be sure to carry drinking water.



Richmond County Bicycle Club on S.R. 1148

to Hamlet, is primarily farmland and natural wooded areas.

The historic Cartledge Creek Church ★ and cemetery are just off State Road 1005 on State Road 1143. The route continues on State Roads 1005 and 1139 to a short section of U. S. Highway 74 on the outskirts of Rockingham, then south on State Road 1109 past the Zion Methodist Church. ★ After continuing through the town of Cordoba and crossing U.S. 1, it passes through pine forests on State Road 1104 and enters the sandhills between Osborne and Hamlet.

The southeastern section of the Outer Loop begins at the Seaboard Railroad Depot and Museum ★ in Hamlet, passes the City Lake Park ★, then follows tree-lined roads through the sandy pine forest land with its pastoral vistas and opportunities for occasional sightings of wild turkey and deer. At the busy intersection of N.C. 177 and U.S. 1, the route passes the North Carolina Motor Speedway ★, then follows State Roads 1486 and 1475 to the McKinney Lake Fish Hatchery ★, which exhibits various fish in tanks and wooded areas inhabited by an abundance of wildlife.

The northeastern section of the Outer Loop, from the Fish Hatchery ★ to Derby, borders the Sandhills Game Land ★ before and after passing through the Hoffman community. The Loop continues along a pleasant sycamore-lined stretch of State Road 1466 past a campground before joining the North-South Route at the community of Derby, named for the man who planted the first peach trees in the county.

## OUTER LOOP 21

The northwestern portion of the Outer Loop, from Derby to the intersection with the East-West Route near Lentzton, covers the most scenic rural area of the county. It passes the peach orchards ★ near Norman, then travels through farm land and wooded, rolling hills. At the Little River, there are pleasant foot trails along the riverbank. The route continues south on State Road 1148 and follows the Pee Dee River for about six miles before turning east to join the East-West Route. Interesting sights along the way include the charming Pee Dee Church ★, beautiful horse farms and hunting club lands, and striking views of the hills. The Bethel Baptist Church ★, built in 1845, has an interesting cemetery with graves of early residents of the county.

The southwestern section of the Outer Loop, from the intersection with the East-West Route at State Road 1005



Enjoying the view crossing Mountain Creek

Typical 19th century farmhouse in rural Richmond County



## EAST-WEST ROUTE 22

From the McKinney Lake Fish Hatchery ★, the East-West Route goes through the Sandhills Game Land ★ and travels along pleasant wooded roads to Ellerbe. After passing the antique shops in the town center and crossing the North-South Route near the Ellerbe Springs Inn and the Rankin Museum ★, the route continues west on State Roads 1309 and 1148, joining the Outer Loop 1.5 miles beyond the community of Lentzton.

## NORTH-SOUTH ROUTE 23

From Derby, the North-South Route passes through rather flat farmland, peach orchards ★, poultry farms and occasional marshes to Ellerbe. After crossing the East-West Route in town near the Rankin Museum ★ and the grounds of the Ellerbe Springs Inn, it continues through farmland to the pleasant residential community of Roberdel. The route goes through the historic residential district ★ and bustling town center of Rockingham, then follows busy sections of Rockingham Road and State Roads 1650, 1624 and 1640 into the shaded neighborhoods and historic main street of Hamlet ★, intersecting with the Outer Loop at the Seaboard Railroad Depot and Museum. ★

★ refers to designated points of interest on the map

## WELCOME TO RICHMOND COUNTY

Richmond County is defined by the Pee Dee River and the edge of the Uwharrie Mountains on the west, the Sandhills on the east, South Carolina on the south and the fruit producing region along the Moore County line to the north. Situated at the foot of the Uwharrie Mountains, the county is characterized by both rolling hills and expanses of flat terrain. With 477 square miles, the county is 38th in size of the 100 counties in North Carolina.

The climate is moderate. The best times for bicycling are the spring and fall months, when the daytime temperature averages around 70 degrees.

Richmond County was created in 1779 when the North Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation to divide Anson County. The new county was named in honor of Charles Lennox, Third Duke of Richmond, who in 1778 had initiated a debate in the British Parliament calling for removal of troops from America. On April 19, 1784, a county seat was established, named Rockingham for another strong friend of the colonies, Charles Watson Wentworth, the Marquis of Rockingham and British Prime Minister in 1765 and 1782.

Several early residents of the county were instrumental in the development of the textile industry in North Carolina. General Henry William Harrington was a leader in cultivation and commercialization of cotton. Alfred Dockery was one of the officers of the Richmond Manufacturing Company, chartered in 1833 to build a cotton mill in Rockingham. The mill, along with the woolen mill built by John Shortridge in 1860, was burned by Union troops in March of 1865. Richmond Mill was rebuilt in 1869 as Great Falls Mill, which continued in operation until 1930 and was a major force in the development of the textile industry that dominated the economy of the county for some 75 years. In the early part of the twentieth century, there was a thriving lumber industry and the beginnings of fruit production around the towns of Norman and Derby. By 1951, diversification had reduced the importance of cotton in the county and increased the size of the peach orchards to more than a million trees.

Evidence of the industrial and commercial history of the county is visible along the bicycle routes. There are still 10 operating textile mills in the county, as well as many older abandoned mill buildings. Important agricultural products that can be seen along the routes are corn, tobacco, peaches, small grains, soybeans, vegetables and poultry.

## BICYCLE LAWS

The bicycle has been legally considered a vehicle in North Carolina since 1937. Bicyclists have full rights and responsibilities on the roadway and are subject to the regulations governing the operation of a motor vehicle, where applicable. North Carolina traffic laws require bicyclists to:

- Ride on the right with traffic
- Obey all traffic signs and signals
- Use signals to communicate intended movements
- Yield to pedestrians and emergency vehicles
- Equip the bicycle with a front lamp visible from 300 feet and a rear reflector which is visible from a distance of 200 feet at night

## SAFETY TIPS

- Always wear a bicycle helmet
- Use a backpack or bicycle bag to carry goods
- Avoid biking at night
- When riding in a group, ride single file
- Wear bright clothing to increase visibility

Remember, the bicyclist always loses in a conflict with a motor vehicle. Ride defensively and in a predictable manner to avoid accidents. Be courteous to other drivers. Keep traffic flowing by helping motorists pass you in a safe manner.

**James B. Hunt, Jr.**  
Governor  
**Sam Hunt**  
Secretary of Transportation  
**David King**  
Deputy Secretary for Transit, Rail and Aviation

For more information contact:  
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Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation  
1552 Mail Service Center  
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## RICHMOND COUNTY BICYCLE MAP



North Carolina  
Department of Transportation



Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian  
Transportation