

Region of Responsibility

We thought you might like to know—The Museum of the Cape is one of seven museums in the Division of State History Museums. We are one of three regional museums and our exhibits reflect a 20 county region. This series focuses on the history of those counties within our region of responsibility.



The 20 Counties in alphabetical order:

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|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Anson | 11. Moore |
| 2. Bladen | 12. New Hanover |
| 3. Brunswick | 13. Onslow |
| 4. Columbus | 14. Pender |
| 5. Cumberland | 15. Richmond |
| 6. Duplin | 16. Robeson |
| 7. Harnett | 17. Sampson |
| 8. Hoke | 18. Scotland |
| 9. Lee | 19. Stanly |
| 10. Montgomery | 20. Union |

A Brief History of Harnett County

Harnett County was formed in 1855 from Cumberland County. It is named for Revolutionary patriot and delegate to the Continental Congress, Cornelius Harnett. The Native Americans who inhabited the area were Tuscarora and Cheraw. It was heavily settled by Scottish immigrants after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Since its European beginnings, the county has been and continues to remain largely agrarian. Tobacco, cotton, sweet potatoes, soybeans, wheat, and a variety of livestock are the main products.

The early Scottish settlers to the area had taken a loyalty oath to never again fight against England. This became problematic as revolutionary fervor stirred around them. Many tried to take a neutral stance, but they were still taunted by patriots and their desire to have neighbors stand together against the British. The descendants of those Scottish settlers spoke Gaelic into the late 19th century.

The largest non-agricultural industry in Harnett County was in the town of Erwin. In 1943, Erwin Mills, a textile factory, began manufacturing denim. They manufactured so much denim that it became known as the "Denim Capital of the World."

The Battle of Averasboro took place at the Cumberland/Harnett county border in the Township of Averasboro during the Civil War. In March 1865, the Confederate Army, who was managing to stay just ahead of Union troops, turned and fought a delaying action in an attempt to slow the larger and better equipped soldiers under Gen. Sherman. The battle was a Union victory. The Averasboro Battlefield Commission, Inc., began preserving the battlefield and developing the historic site, with a museum, in the late 1990s.

Harnett County is also home to Raven Rock State Park, located west of the county seat—Lillington.



Raven Rock