

# 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 New Hanover County

Arguably, New Hanover County is one of the most historic counties in North Carolina. Formed in 1729 from Craven County, (the county where New Bern is located), it is named for the House of Hanover of which England's King George I belonged and who had died in 1727. It's native inhabitants at the time of European contact include Cape Fear, Waccamaw, and Siouan tribes. European settlers were English, Welsh, Irish, French Huguenot, and Highland Scots.

It's a popular tourist destination because it is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east, and the Cape Fear River to the west. At its very tip is Cape Fear.\* From the cape is Frying Pan Shoals, which made it dangerous for sea-going vessels. Despite that, much needed supplies needed by the colony in the early 18th century managed to make it up the river to the colonial Port of Brunswick. After much dredging, Wilmington, the county seat, is one of only two ports in the state.

Major historic events that occurred in the county include the Battle at Fort Fisher, which closed the port of Wilmington and perpetuated the fall of the Confederacy. Prior to that, in 1862, Wilmington dealt with a major Yellow Fever epidemic.

Sadly, New Hanover County was the site of the only successful coup d'état to occur in the United States. On November 10, 1898, 2000 white men marched around Wilmington meeting up with groups of Black citizens. Shots rang out and several black men were killed. In the end, local government officials, elected by the people, are forced to resign. The municipal government is overthrown.



\*A cape is a "point or extension of land jutting out into water as a peninsula or as a projecting point."  
([merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cape](http://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cape))