North Carolina History

North Carolina is a U.S. state located in the southeastern region of the United States. North Carolina is the 28th largest and 9th-most populous of the 50 United States. It is bordered by Virginia to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Georgia and South Carolina to the south, and Tennessee to the west. Raleigh is the state's capital and Charlotte is its largest city. The Charlotte metropolitan area, with an estimated population of 2,569,213, is the most populous metropolitan area in North Carolina. The Raleigh metropolitan area is the second-largest metropolitan area in the state and is home to the largest research park in the United States, Research Triangle Park.

North Carolina was established as a royal colony in 1729 and is one of the original Thirteen Colonies. North Carolina is named in honor of King Charles I of England who first formed the English colony, with Carolus being Latin for "Charles". On November 21, 1789, North Carolina became the 12th state to ratify the United States Constitution. In the run-up to the American Civil War, North Carolina declared its secession from the Union on May 20, 1861, becoming the last of eleven states to join the Confederate States. Following the Civil War, the state was restored to the Union on June 25, 1868. On December 17, 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright successfully piloted the world's first controlled, sustained flight of a powered, heavier-than-air aircraft at Kill Devil Hills in North Carolina's Outer Banks.

North Carolina is defined by a wide range of elevations and landscapes. From west to east, North Carolina's elevation descends from the Appalachian Mountains to the Piedmont and Atlantic coastal plain. North Carolina's Mount Mitchell at 6,684 feet is the highest point in North America east of the Mississippi River. Most of the state falls in the humid subtropical climate zone; however, the western, mountainous part of the state has a subtropical highland climate.