

Points of Interest

Chatham County Courthouse ★ Built in 1881, is located in the traffic circle at the intersection of U.S. 64 and U.S. 13-501 in Hillsboro, off Route 3. The 1170 date painted above the entry marks the year a bill creating the county was introduced to the Colonial Assembly. Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, the building was returned to its original grandeur appearance created in 1907, thanks in part to the courthouse, and inside is the Chatham Historical Museum, open on Fridays from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. (no fee).

Deep River Camelback Truss Bridge ★ Is located along S.R. 2133 on Route 4, east of Gulf, and spans the Deep River. After its construction in 1908, the bridge underwent many reconstructions and renovations until finally decommissioned in 1992. Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is a prime example of a truss bridge. The landmark provides a great scenic view and ideal spot for a picnic.



Farrington Village Farm ★ Located on U.S. 13-501 one mile south of Route 3, is famous for its "Hides" or the Bledsoe-Galloway cow, imported from Scotland and a rare breed in the U.S. The 946-acre farm was established in 1868 and is now a working farm. It has a history of raising and processing. It later became a poultry and dairy farm, with a prize milk operation. Today it is part of a large housing community with shops and restaurants.

★ Indicates point of interest

Goddson Commercial Historic District ★ (1890-1935) is located near Routes 3 and 4 in Goddson, which was once the hubbub, railway and trading center of the county. The historical district, along U.S. 421, includes 15 buildings of typical "boom town" commercial architecture and a small park.

Jordan Lake State Recreation Area ★ Commemoration of the B. Everett Jordan Lake, named for the former Senator from N.C., began in 1967. The 46,798-acre lake provides the water supply for surrounding cities, flood and water quality control and fish and wildlife preservation. The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation operates nine recreation areas at Jordan Lake that offer a variety of facilities. See the markers on reverse side for facility information. Shelters are available at no charge. Reservoirs and 9/8 boat launch are also recommended due to the shallow depth.

Fishing is permitted with a valid North Carolina fishing license. Bass, crappie, catfish and pan fish are plentiful from March to June and during the fall months. A private concession offering boat rentals is located at Crosswind Marina ★. Contact the Jordan Lake State Recreation Area office at (919) 352-0286 for additional information on rules and regulations.

Jordan Lake is one of the largest summertime homes to the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States. The eagles congregate at the north end of the lake during early morning and early evening hours. The best views are from the N.C. 751 bridge, which crosses Wildlife Reopens Commission Wildlife Observation Deck ★, also located on N.C. 751, five miles north of 1-40 or six-and-a-half miles north of U.S. 64.

Mr. Vernon Springs ★ is located on S.R. 1134 along Route 4 and was once an active health spa. Between 1881 and 1920, a hotel with 50 rooms operated here as a popular winter resort. Healing and "Health" and "Beauty" were the words used to describe the spa. When discovered by Chatham's first settlers in the 1730s, later, the mineral water was bottled and shipped around the country. Today, drinkable water still flows from two adjacent pipes.

Chatham History

Chatham County's first settlers were Quakers who arrived in the 1740s. Later settlers traveled up the Cape Fear River from coastal North Carolina or overland from Virginia and later from the West. The early settlers were British, Scotch-Irish, and German, which made a turbulent mixture during and after the Revolutionary War. The county was formed in 1771 from the southern part of Orange County by the Colonial Assembly, while the county seat, Hillsboro, was formed in 1784. The first European settler in Chatham (1708-1778) and defender of American rights was the served as Prime Minister of England. Pinckson was named after his son William Pitt, the Younger. Siler City, the largest town in Chatham County, began to flourish after 1884 with the coming of the railroad. It is named for Samuel Siler, who donated the land for a rail depot.

From its earliest days, Chatham's economy was based on agriculture, first by self-sufficient yeoman farmers and later with cash crops such as cotton. After the boll weevil destroyed the cotton industry, local poultry and livestock industries provided the majority of Chatham's agricultural income.

An early industry in Chatham County was grinding corn. Rivers and streams also powered numerous small grist mills. The first grist mill in Chatham County was built in 1742, shortly after the arrival of the railroad and other industries were based on localized natural resources. Iron and coal deposits along the Deep River and at Ore Hill were exploited when war made this economically feasible. Clay deposits led to brick-making, and Chatham was dubbed the "bricks and mortar capital" of the South. The county also had a large iron and shipped to Boston and other northern cities for their distinctive brownstone buildings.

The healthy climate of the Piedmont attracted wealthy planters from the coastal plain, many of whom converted farms to plantations and around Hillsboro. The healing waters of Mr. Vernon Springs attracted many northern visitors in the late 1800s.

Today, the county is home to many artisans who practice their trades. Tracked along the back roads are potteries, woodshops, and other crafts people. Locations of craft studios are shown on the map. Contact the Chatham County Arts Council for more information.

While industry prospered in the area, Chatham County's share of the Civil War was small. Since the creation of Jordan Lake, it has once again become a mecca for recreational enthusiasts. The mild climate makes year-round outdoor activities possible. The ideal seasons for bicycling are spring and fall when average daytime temperatures are in the 70s.

Stories of Chatham

Don't Go There or Night
The Devils Tampering ground is a circular path worn by the Devil as he walks in a circle at night plotting the destruction of the world. The hills in the area are so steep that other speculations on the origin of this circular path where no grass grows include: a salt lick frequented by deer; a path worn by hoes of burden as they turned a mill or a fire encircling an Indian shrine.

Rabbits, Rabbits and More Rabbits!
Chatham was known as the "rabbit county" from around 1880 to 1910. The hills in the area were so steep that rabbits, after hunting and selling them, became big business. Train shipments carried thousands of rabbits from Siler City to points as far away as New York, where restaurants advertised "Chatham Rabbit" as a specialty.

Mermaid Point
Ocean fishermen and seamen who were tired of the Atlantic Ocean, would swim up the Cape Fear River to relax on the white sands at the fork of the Haw River and the Deep River, two miles south of Moore. Travelers swear they have heard the mermaids singing at night as they washed the sea salt from their hair.

Prehistoric Discovery
In 1967, archeologists from Princeton uncovered the fossil remains of four prehistoric animals near Gulf. The physicist, a team leader, equate the dinosaur fossil called a pterosaurs and fossil fish remains. The most important find, however, was a 180 million-year-old Theropod, a 2.5 foot long dinosaur resembling the infamous Tyrannosaurus Rex. Before this discovery, Theropods were thought to have existed no further east than Arizona.

Silk Hope
Henry Luterich, whose shipping interests took him to the Orient in the early 1880s, thought silk was the future of Chatham. He built a silk rearing facility in the hills above the town. Though his attempts were unsuccessful, he did manage to import Italian mulberry trees. Local business men imported cocoons and local farmers spun silk, the hope of a silk industry local. Today Silk Hope remains a thriving agricultural community.

James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor
Garland B. Carter, Jr., Secretary of Transportation
David D. King, Deputy Secretary for
Transport, Rail and Aviation

Safety Tips

The bicycle legally has been considered a vehicle in North Carolina on the road and are subject to regulations governing the operation of a motor vehicle. 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 bicycles with front lamps visible from 300 feet and rear reflectors visible from a distance of 200 feet at night.
- Remember, bicyclists always lose 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 in a safe manner.
- Always wear a bicycle helmet.
- Use a backpack or bicycle bag to carry goods.
- Avoid drinking at night.
- Wear bright clothing to increase visibility.
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Resources

Chatham County Arts Council
PO Box 235
Siler City, NC 27586
(919) 742-2886

Chatham County Parks and Recreation Department
802-C East St.
Hillsboro, NC 27531
(919) 742-8252

Chatham County Land Management Service, Inc.
1099 E. 11th St.
Siler City, NC 27586
(919) 742-3333

Conowoods Marina
Jordan Lake Boat Rentals
3001 Farrington Rd.
Hillsboro, NC 27531
(919) 362-8153

Jordan Lake State Recreation Area
Rt. 2, Box 199
Ayer's, NC 27502
(919) 362-0886

Contact for maps of cross-state, regional and local bicyclist routes, additional information on laws and safety tips, an annual calendar of bicycle events and listings of North Carolina bicyclist shops and clubs.
(919) 752-8889

For detailed copies of this map were printed on recycled paper at \$35 a copy and are distributed free of charge. Illustrations by Kersti Hansson

CHATHAM COUNTY Bicycle Map

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

