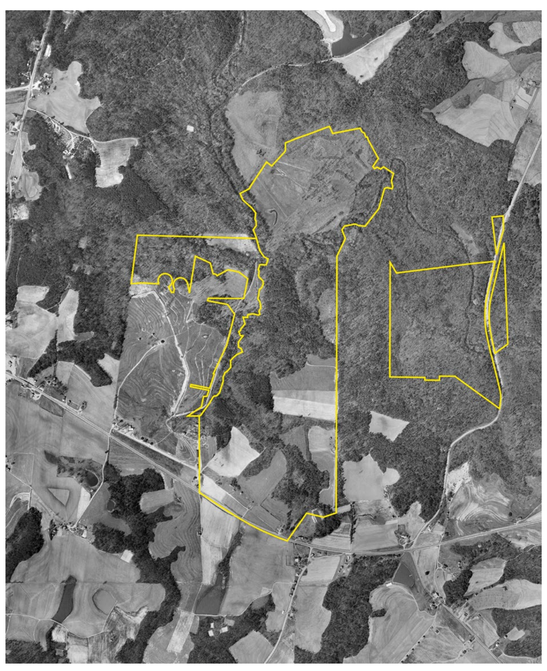
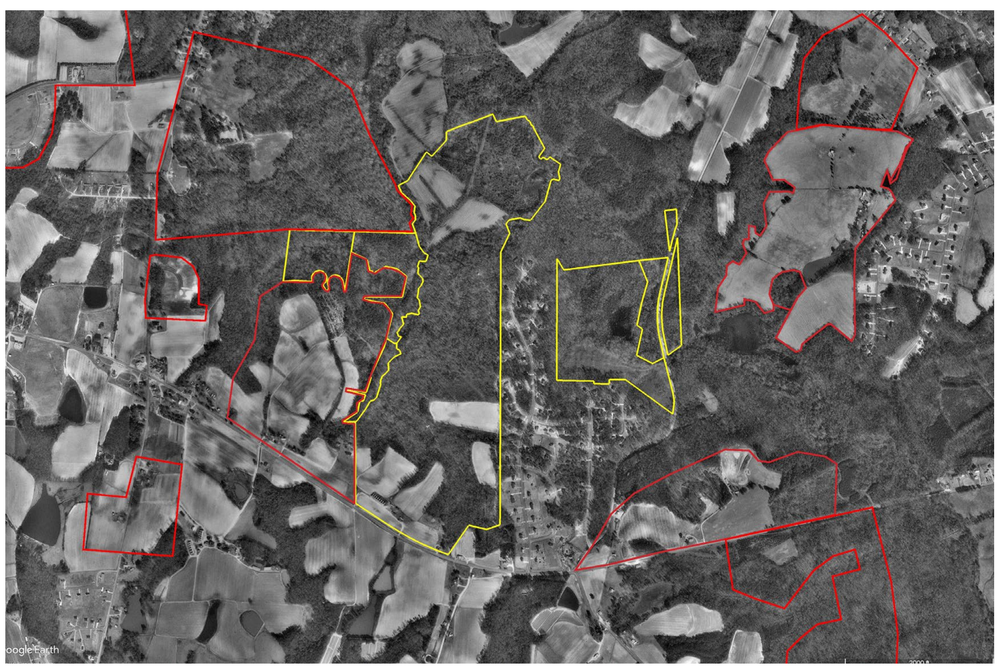
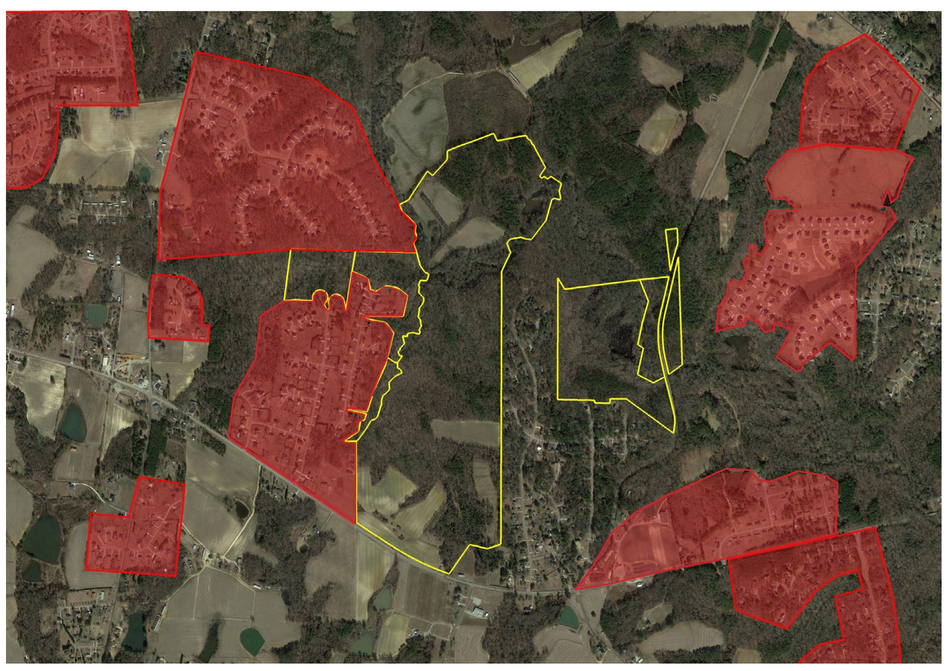
History of Development



1959



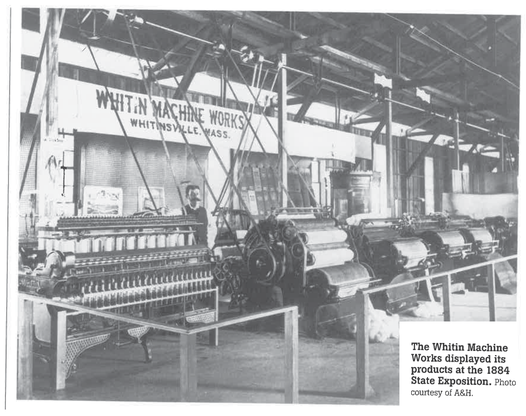
1994



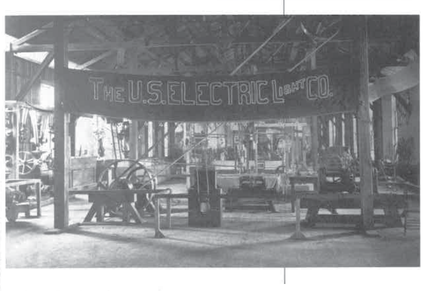
2018

History Agriculture and Manufacturing

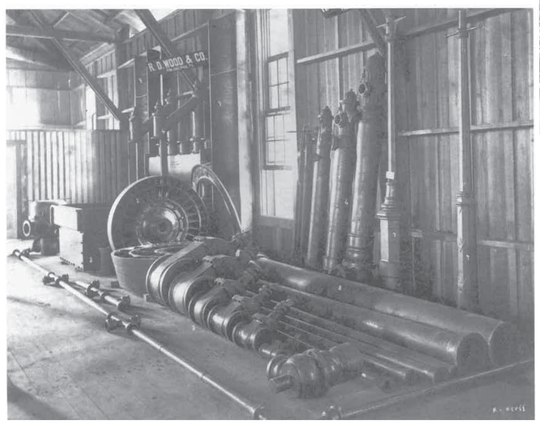
The North Carolina State Fair
The First 150 Years
Melton A. McLaurin
Illustrations selected by Paul Blankinship



The Whitin Machine Works displayed its products at the 1884 State Exposition. Photo courtesy of A&H.



Above: A variety of retailers relied upon the fair to sell their products. The U.S. Electric Light Company, Raleigh's first retailer of electric lighting equipment, gave fairgoers a glimpse of the future at its exhibit at the 1884 State Exposition. Photo courtesy of A&H.

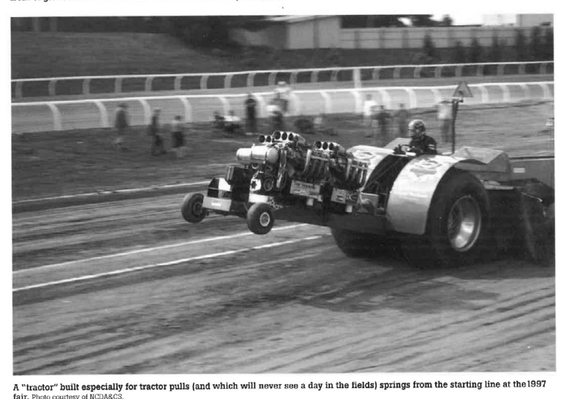


Left: R. D. Wood & Company, suppliers of valves and hydrants, displayed its wares at the 1884 State Exposition. Photo courtesy of A&H.

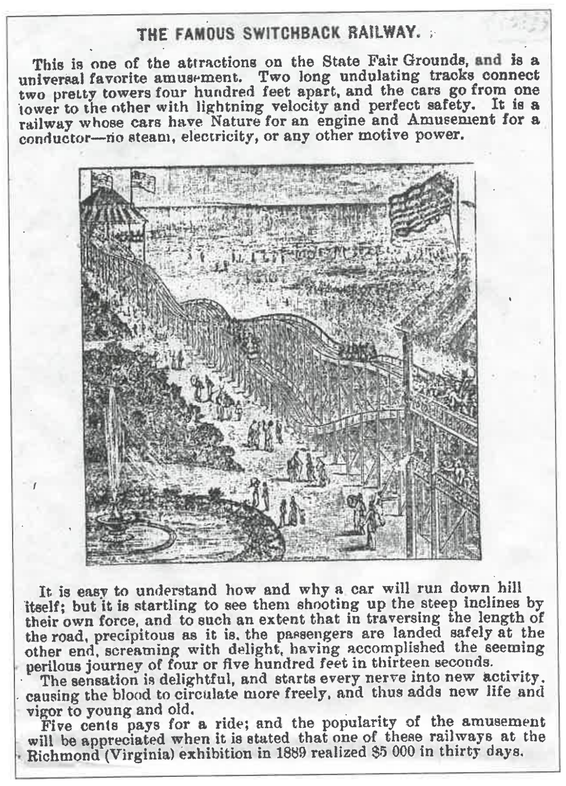
The state's fledgling furniture industry relied upon wood produced by steam-powered sawmills that by the end of the nineteenth century dotted the pine forests of the Coastal Plain and the hardwood stands of the Piedmont and Mountain sections of the state. This steam-powered sawmill, restored to running condition for the 2002 fair, was employed in North Carolina forests during the late 1880s and early 1900s. Photo courtesy of Blankinship.

Left: Pine products remained a major North Carolina industry in the late nineteenth century. The state Department of Agriculture demonstrated the use of a turpentine still at the 1884 State Exposition. Photo courtesy of A&H.

The tractor pull, at which custom-designed vehicles compete for prizes, remains one of the few vestiges of the once-proud displays of tractors and other agricultural motorized equipment seen at the state fair. In this photo, a slightly modified tractor competes in front of grandstand crowds at the 1982 fair. Photo courtesy of NCDA&CS.



A "tractor" built especially for tractor pulls (and which will never see a day in the fields) springs from the starting line at the 1997 fair. Photo courtesy of NCDA&CS.



THE FAMOUS SWITCHBACK RAILWAY.

This is one of the attractions on the State Fair Grounds, and is a universal favorite amusement. Two long undulating tracks connect two pretty towers four hundred feet apart, and the cars go from one tower to the other with lightning velocity and perfect safety. It is a railway whose cars have Nature for an engine and Amusement for a conductor—no steam, electricity, or any other motive power.

It is easy to understand how and why a car will run down hill itself; but it is startling to see them shooting up the steep inclines by their own force, and to such an extent that in traversing the length of the road, precipitous as it is, the passengers are landed safely at the other end, screaming with delight, having accomplished the seeming perilous journey of four or five hundred feet in thirteen seconds.

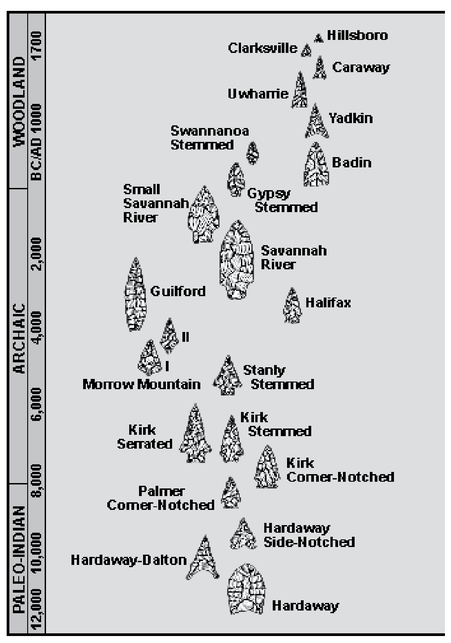
The sensation is delightful, and starts every nerve into new activity, causing the blood to circulate more freely, and thus adds new life and vigor to young and old.

Five cents pays for a ride; and the popularity of the amusement will be appreciated when it is stated that one of these railways at the Richmond (Virginia) exhibition in 1889 realized $5 000 in thirty days.

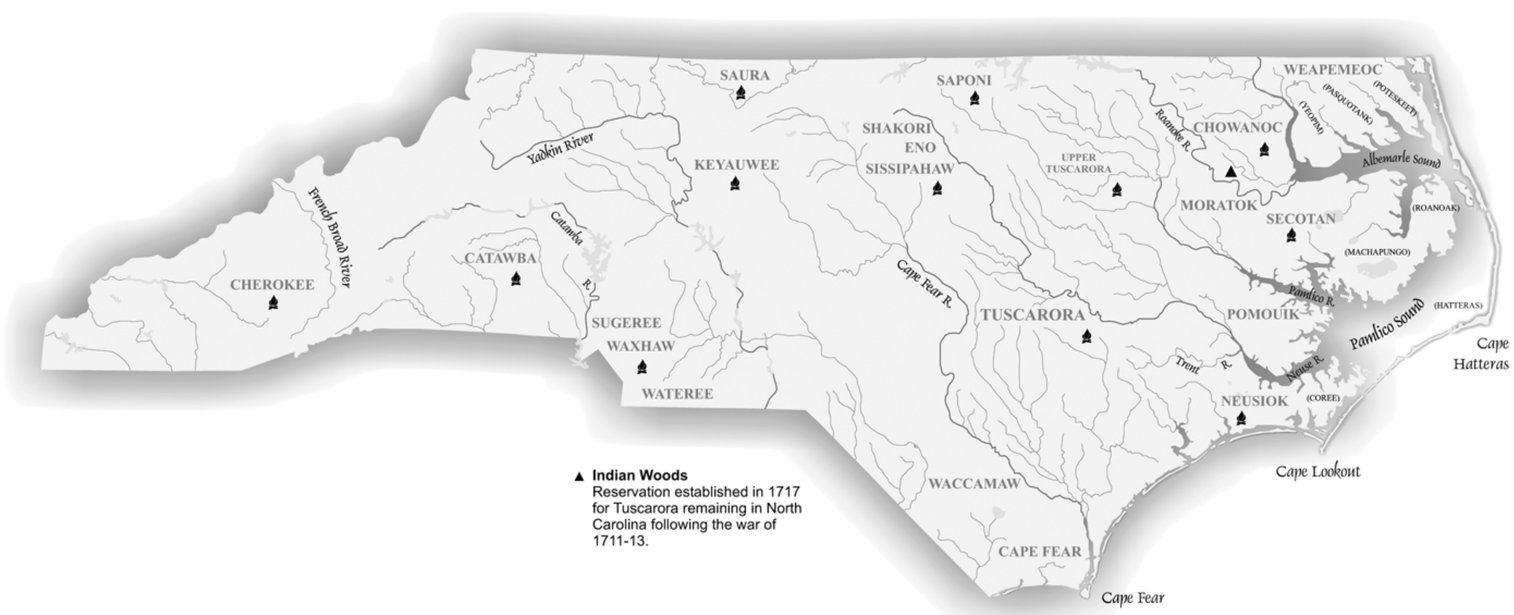
During the 1930s, Lucky Teter transformed the barnstorming auto thrill show into a tightly choreographed display of precision driving stunts. Here Teter performs a barrel roll at the 1938 fair. Photo courtesy of *N&O*.

Teter was famed for his ramp-to-ramp jumps of other vehicles. At the 1941 fair, his last, Teter leaps a bus. Photo courtesy of *N&O*.

Archaeological History



From: A Review of Archaeology in the North Carolina
Change, by H. Trawick Ward. In The Prehistory of Nc
logical Symposium, edited by Mark A. Mathis and Jef
of Archives and History, Raleigh. 1983



Principal American Indian tribes at the time of the Tuscarora War. Map by Mark Anderson Moore, courtesy North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.