

Wilmington history

- 1663.** William Hilton and his companions entered the Cape Fear River and explored in the area of what is now Wilmington.
- 1729.** New Hanover Precinct formed from Craven County.
- 1730.** A few Quakers settled in the Cape Fear area. Little is known about them because all records were lost.
- 1731.** Governor George Burrington, who counted the Brunswick clique among his many enemies, asked the General Assembly to pass an act for building a town on the Cape Fear and appointing commissioners for that purpose.
- 1733.** Present site of Wilmington called New Carthage, then New Liverpool, then Newton or New Town.
- 1735.** In March, the inhabitants in and around Newton petitioned the governor's council to designate their home as a town. On May 13, Royal Governor Gabriel Johnston announced his intention to open a land office and ordered the council and court to meet in Newton.
- 1736.** Market Street, Front Street, Dock Street, Mulberry Street, Chestnut Street, Red Cross Street, King Street, Queen Street and Nun Street were listed in existence. In October, a bill that failed to win legislative approval was introduced to establish the town of Wilmington "at a place called Newton."
- 1737.** Richard Eagles granted land now called Eagles' Island, present site of the Battleship North Carolina. Shipbuilding existed by this year when Michael Dyer operated a shipyard between Church and Castle streets.
- 1739.** On February 20, Colonel William Bartram of Bladen County introduced a bill into the General Assembly for the establishment of the town and township of Wilmington. The bill passed into law and the village of Newton was incorporated as the town of Wilmington, named in honor of Spencer Compton, Earl of Wilmington and patron of Royal Governor Gabriel Johnston.
- 1743.** Jeremiah Vail was employed to resurvey the town and draft a plan.

- 1747.** On June 23, Town commissioners ordered that all the male inhabitants in the town were to meet at the courthouse on Monday, June 29th by 6 a.m. with proper tools to work on the streets and bridges for 6 days, provided the work would take that long.
- 1748.** The alarm sounded in Wilmington when Spanish war ships dropped anchor down the Cape Fear River and invaded Brunswick town.
- 1754.** Jeremiah Vail's plan of Wilmington was accepted as official by a final Wilmington Act, and with slight changes and allowances for increase of territory, remains the official plan for the present city.
- 1756.** Wilmington suffered a major fire during this year.
- 1759.** One water engine or fire engine with hose was bought by Captain Benjamin Heron through his brother in England.
- 1760.** Wilmington was a town under commissioners elected by the freeholders until this year. By royal charter under the provincial seal, dated Brunswick, February 25, and signed by Arthur Dobbs, Wilmington was erected into a borough. John Sampson became the first mayor of Wilmington, followed by Frederick Gregg and Moses John deRosset, each dubbed "His Worhipfulness."