



City of Wilmington History

Wilmington was named in honor of Spencer Compton, the Earl of Wilmington, who was Prime Minister under George II. Incorporated in 1739, Wilmington became a city in 1866. In 1840 it was the largest town in the state and remained so through the early 1900s, thanks to the thriving ports along the Cape Fear River and the arrival of the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad (renamed the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad in 1854). When the railroad was completed in 1840, it was the largest continuous railroad track in the world. Wilmington now has a population of approximately 120,000 people and is one of the most popular destination spots in the state.

Creative writing prompt:

Imagine you're the Earl of Wilmington and have time traveled from the 1700s (when Wilmington became incorporated) to 2020. Write about your experience and how different Wilmington is.