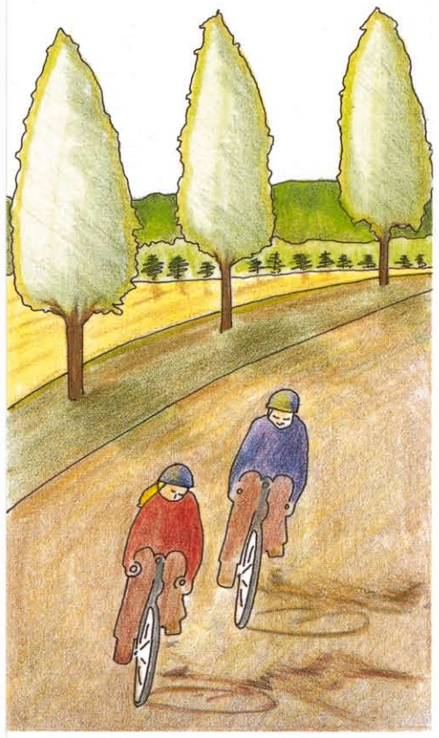
ALAMANCE COUNTY
Bicycle Routes



A History of Alamance County

Early Settlements

The rich bottom lands of the Haw River and its tributaries have, for centuries, attracted human settlement and sustained Native American and European populations. The Indian Trading Path, described by early explorers and traders, extended from Virginia to South Carolina; entering Alamance County in the northeast, near what is now the town of Mebane, and crossing the Haw River near Swepsonville. At Swepsonville, where Great Alamance Creek and the Haw River meet, the Path forked. Both trails continued west, one traveling down through the Cane Creek Mountains, and one crossing through the fertile bottom lands between Great Alamance creek and Stinking Quarter creek. The trail was used both by Native Americans and Virginia traders who traveled south to trade with the Catawba Nation.

The largest of the Native American settlements, the Sissipahaw, farmed the fertile lands but relied mainly on wild game for food. Plentiful deer, quail, rabbit, turkey, and an occasional buffalo sustained these early Native American settlements between the Haw and Eno Rivers.

Native Americans had migrated out of the area by the 1720's when the first permanent European settlers began to arrive, attracted by cheap, fertile land, and an absence of hostile tribes. Linked by religion, proximity, and ethnicity, small groups of families began settling in the Cane Creek Valley in 1750. The Quakers who established themselves at Snow Camp in the Cane Creek Valley were Irish and English in origin. The Hawfields area in eastern Alamance County attracted Scotch Irish Presbyterians, who developed their own community. German families of the Lutheran or Reformed faiths settled along the Stinking Quarter and Alamance creeks in the western tributaries of the Haw River.

Early Immigrants

Many of the pioneers who arrived in the 1700's were newly arrived immigrants traveling south down the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania. Turning east off the Wagon Road into the Carolina back country, families found rich lands waiting to be farmed.

But settlers to the area found that although the lands they had found were fertile and cheap, local representatives of the owners in England were corrupt, inefficient and distant. Taxes were high, and it was difficult to secure land titles. In the Spring of 1771 William Tryon, the Royal Governor, was forced to raise an army to fight what became The War of Regulation. Small groups of angry colonial farmers organized to join the Regulator cause against eastern aristocratic colonial administrators who represented the interests of England. Although the Regulators were defeated at the Battle of Alamance, it illustrated that colonial settlers were capable of armed conflict with the local and provincial governments. When the present day county boundaries were established in 1849, the name Alamance was chosen for the new county to commemorate the Battle of Alamance.

Today visitors can see the preserved battleground and learn more about the area's history at the **Alamance Battleground and Museum** off Highway 62, on bicycle Route 74.

The American Revolution became a partisan battle with loyalties divided locally between the Whigs and Tories, fought fiercely by both sides across the county. When Lord Cornwallis and his armies entered North Carolina in the Fall of 1780 to recruit loyalists soldiers, he was able to raise three or four hundred men for his army but faced skirmish after skirmish with local militia. Following his success at the Battle of Guilford County, Cornwallis and his forces were forced to retreat south through Snow Camp toward Wilmington.

In the four-hour Battle of Lindley's Mill Whig and Tory armies left 150 dead and wounded for the Quaker community of Cane Creek to bury as the Revolution dragged on.

Early Communities

With the end of the Revolution and years of civil and partisan warfare, the families of the area were able to finally concentrate on developing communities and cultivating their farmlands. Cotton, grains, tobacco, pork and beef were raised for local consumption as transportation barriers made large scale production and regional distribution of these goods difficult.

Whereas the rich bottom lands along the Haw River and its tributaries attracted the area's first permanent settlers, the rolling terrain along the river and its tributaries provided ample dam sites for water power necessary for the construction of saw mills and grist mills as communities grew.

The population of the area continued to grow in the 1800's, and in 1849 the new county of Alamance was created. Local officials were elected and 75 acres were purchased to begin building a courthouse and jail for the new county seat. In January of 1851 Graham became the first incorporated town in Alamance county.

Today the Graham Historic District, centered around the original courthouse square, includes interesting examples of the town's antebellum buildings and well-preserved residences from the late 19th century.

The Early Textile Industry

The first cotton mill was built in 1832 by John Trollinger on the site of his grandfather's grist mill on the Haw River, and the family began selling coarse yarn to local weavers. By 1837 the Holt mill was built on Alamance Creek, a tributary of the Haw. By 1847 the mill was producing cotton cloth. In 1853 the mill began producing commercially dyed cotton plaids after a destitute but skilled Frenchman arrived in the area. For room and board plus one hundred dollars, the Frenchman taught Thomas Holt, future governor of North Carolina, how to dye cotton yarn.

The present day textile industry of North Carolina, still the backbone of local economies, continued to grow in the years before the Civil War as textile families added new technologies, merged, expanded and continued to build new mills.

Today's bicycle routes pass a number of mill village sites on the National Register of Historic Places, including Altamahaw Mill Office, Glencoe Historic District, and Bellemont Historic District. All are shown as Points of Interest on the Alamance County bicycle map.

The Railroad Years

The building of a railroad between Charlotte and Goldsboro in 1855 bisected Alamance county east to west. Burlington, now the county's largest city, was built on land west of the town of Graham by the railroad for company housing and railroad maintenance operations. The extensive building program for what was originally call Company Shops included roads and houses, a foundry, a dry kiln and blacksmith shop, and a carpenter shop; all designed to be part of a new self contained community for employees, typical of company towns in the 19th century.

The restored Southern Railway Passenger Depot, now maintained by the Burlington Recreation Department, continues to offer visitors a reminder of the important role railroads played in the development of the area.

Bicycling into the 20th Century

Will Holt, son of the textile mill family of Holts, was known better as an avid sports enthusiast than as heir to the family's booming textile businesses. In 1891 he had brought the first "safety" bicycle to Graham, which he rode far and wide across the countryside. Later that year he pedaled his new bicycle eighty miles between Graham and Fayetteville, on the Old Plank Road. His enthusiasm later led him to ride to Philadelphia and New York city.

Truly Alamance County's first bicyclist, Will Holt and his bicycle foreshadowed a future in which cyclists are able to spends many pleasurable hours pedaling the back roads of the county, experiencing the rural beauty of piedmont, North Carolina.

Welcome to Alamance County

Alamance County, located in the central piedmont of North Carolina, sits an equal distance between the gracious old mountains of the Appalachian Range, and the wide sandy beaches of the Atlantic coast. The 428 square miles of gently rolling hills between the Stoney Creek and Cane Creek "mountains" cradle the quiet farm lands of the Haw River and stand guard over the historical remnants of Native American and colonial settlements along its tributaries. Meandering and crisscrossing the fertile green bottom lands of the county by bicycle is an historical journey through some of the South's most beautiful landscapes.

Alamance County is easily accessible by car today from all directions via Interstates 85 and 40. Two airports are within 45 minutes drive. Accommodations are plentiful in the major towns. Country stores in more rural areas are indicated on these maps.

Alamance County enjoys a mild climate year round, yet has four distinct seasons. Fall and Spring are the most scenic times to tour these back roads, although bicycling is a year-round sport in these parts. Fall is the driest season of the year, with clear, warm days and cool evenings extending into November. After November a pattern of passing storms followed by colder winter temperatures dominates the weather. July is normally the hottest and the wettest month of the year with an average maximum temperature of 87 degrees, although temperatures in the upper 90's are not uncommon. Hot, humid days punctuated by occasional afternoon thunderstorms can be expected in July and August.

An abundance of lightly travelled state maintained roads has made the creation of these 150 miles of bicycle routes possible, while some of the most scenic vistas of back country North Carolina make the adventure an opportunity not to be missed.

Illustration by **Mark Smith**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Alamance County
Recreation and Parks Department
217 College St.
Graham, NC 27253
(919) 570-6760

City of Burlington
Recreation and Parks Department
1333 Overbrook Drive
Burlington, NC
(919) 222-5130

The Burlington/Alamance
County Convention and Visitors Bureau
P.O. Box 519
Burlington, NC 27216-0519
(919) 570-1444, (919) 570-1444

Alamance
Battleground State Historic Site
Hwy. 62 South
(919) 227-4785

Sword of Peace Outdoor Drama
Snow Camp, NC
Hwy. 87 South
(919) 376-6948

Alamance County
Historical Museum
L. Banks Holt House
Hwy. 62 South
(919) 226-8254

The Southern Railway Depot
and Amphitheater
200 S. Main St.
Burlington, NC (919) 222-5137

Bicycle Laws and Safety Tips

The bicycle has been legally considered a vehicle in North Carolina since 1937. Thus the bicyclists have full rights and responsibilities on the roadway and are subject to the regulations governing the operation of a motor vehicle, where applicable. North Carolina traffic laws require the rider of a bicycle to:

- Ride on the right, in the same direction as other moving traffic
- Obey all traffic signs and signals, including stop and yield signs and one-way directional signs
- Use signals to communicate intended movements
- Yield to pedestrians and emergency vehicles
- Equip the bicycle with a front lamp visible from 300 feet and a rear reflector which is visible from a distance of 200 feet at night

To insure a safe trip along the roads of Alamance County, follow the tips listed below:

- Always wear a bicycle helmet
- Use a backpack or bicycle bag to carry goods
- Avoid biking at night
- When riding with a group, ride single file
- Wear bright clothing to increase visibility
- Be sure your bicycle is the right size for you and keep it in good repair, checking for loose or worn parts regularly

Remember, the bicyclist always loses in a conflict with a motor vehicle. Ride defensively and in a predictable manner to avoid accidents. Be courterous to other drivers. Keep traffic flowing by helping motorists pass you in a safe manner.

Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
North Carolina Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 25201
Raleigh, North Carolina
(919) 733-2804

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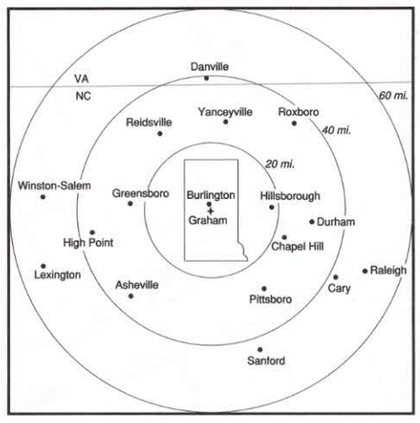
About the Routes

Today, getting around by bicycle is relatively easy compared to the undertakings of Will Holt. Smooth paved roads connect communities and points of interest throughout the county, and Alamance County's gently rolling terrain and scenic vistas across rural farmlands invite exploration by bicycle.

Tying together the tobacco farms of the north, the dairy lands of the south, the historic mill villages along the Haw River and the growing communities of the central urbanized area, these routes provide a wonderful back roads glimpse of the beauty of Alamance County.

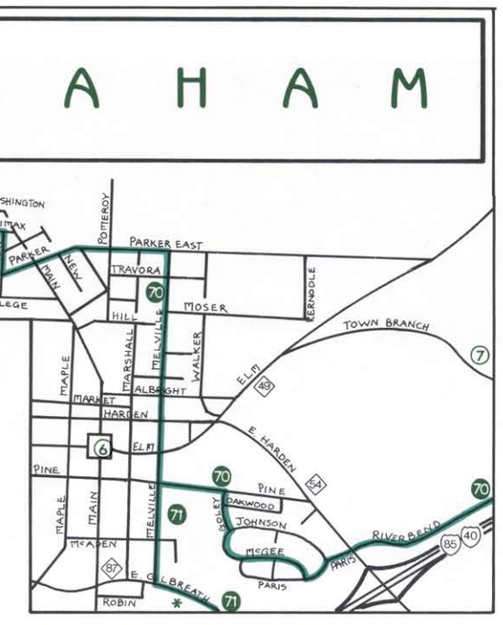
The maps and information in this brochure provide everything you need to know to plan your trip. Included on these maps are the highlighted routes, locations of major points of interest such as recreational areas and historic sites, and the locations of country stores and camping areas. In addition, busier portions of the routes where special care should be taken are indicated with asterisks. Communities where additional services such as restaurants and grocery stores are indicated with a star. Enlargements are provided to help you find your way through the more urbanized areas. A chart showing the distances between towns and major points of interest, via the routes, is also provided.

The six bicycle routes, which cover more than 150 miles of the county are marked with green and white numbered bike route signs, as shown above. "Share the Road" signs have also been placed in areas where motor vehicle traffic is heavier than desirable. These warning signs are meant to alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists and to remind drivers that bicyclists have a legal right to ride on the road. Cyclists should remember to be courteous to drivers and not to block the road by riding side by side along these routes.



For information on local bicycle activities contact:
Burlington Bicycle Advisory Commission
C/O Burlington Planning Department
P.O. Box 1358
Burlington, NC 27216
(919) 222-5110

For safety information and detailed maps of these and other cross-state, local and regional bicycle routes contact:
North Carolina Department of Transportation
Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
P.O. Box 25201
Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 733-2804



Points of Interest

Elon College Historic District

(1) The historic core of Elon College campus contains some of the oldest remaining campus buildings from 1923-1927. The district contains brick constructed college buildings of Colonial and Georgian Revival design. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Burlington Historic District

(2) The architecture of the West Davis Street-Fountain Place District is a superb display of the variety of building types and styles that characterize Burlington's residential neighborhoods from the late 19th century through the 1930's. The approximately 160 primary structures in the district range from traditional vernacular one-story frame cottages to some of the town's finest examples of Queen Anne and early period revival styles through a strong collection of bungalows and "period houses."

Downtown Burlington Historic District

(3) This area encompasses what is the historical nucleus of Burlington's central business district since the town's founding as a railroad repair depot and planned community at the end of the 19th century. The oldest building dates from 1885. The district is anchored to the north by the **Southern Railway Passenger Station**, built in 1892. In the south the district includes the Rath Hosiery Mill, a remaining example of the town's once prolific textile mills and evidence of the town's rise as one of the preeminent textile producing communities in the country.

The Historic District provides examples of vernacular architecture styles common to the central business districts of North Carolina communities like Burlington. Building styles include Neo-Gothic Revival, Classical Revival, Art Deco, and Moderne.

Burlington City Park

(4) This fifty-six acre city park includes athletic fields, pool, miniature train, picnic shelter, concessions and historic carousel. The Dentzel Menagerie Carousel is the park's centerpiece. The Carousel has 46 hand-carved animals, and no two are alike. Now on the National Register of Historic Places, it is only one of four remaining carousels of its kind in the world. Hours vary. For more information call the Burlington Recreation and Parks office at (919) 222-5030.

Southern Railway Depot

(5) The Southern Railway Passenger Depot, now operated by the Burlington Recreation and Parks Department, remains a reminder of the important role the railroads played in the development of the area. The Depot is now operated as an art gallery and civic center. Call (919) 222-5132 for more information.

Graham Historic District

(6) This historic district reflects the origins and development of the town of Graham as a courthouse town of the mid-19th century. The square includes a Neoclassical courthouse built in the 1920's, on the site of the original 1848 brick courthouse. Graham's courthouse square is ringed by late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings characterized by their ornamental brickwork. A small number of antebellum domestic buildings and elaborately adorned residences date from the late 19th century. To the west of the district center is an intact area of well-preserved, 19th century houses, along W. Elm St.

Graham Municipal Park

(7) This park provides athletic fields, picnic shelters, a playground, a basketball court, tennis courts, log cabin and a walking trail. Call (919) 227-9109 or 228-8362 for information.

L. Banks Holt House

Points of Interest

Alamance Battleground and Museum

① This point of interest is the site of the May 16, 1771 Battle of Alamance between provincial government troops and back country farmers in The War of Regulation. Although the Regulators were defeated in their war on provincial administrators, this important battled signaled the beginning of armed resistance to the colonial government. The Alamance battleground has been preserved as a State Historical Site and a museum on the site provides visitors with a history of the famous battle. Days and hours of operation vary seasonally. For more information call (919) 227-4785.

L. Banks Holt House

② This historic structure houses the Alamance County Historical Museum in the family home of one of the areas most prominent mill owners of the 19th century. The Holt family home has been preserved as it was furnished, and the museum includes displays of local history. The house is open to the public and guided tours are available. No admission fee is charged. Call (919) 226-8254 for more information.

Bellemont Historic District

③ This 19th century textile mill village is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built on the banks of Great Alamance Creek by the E.M. Holt family in 1879.

Cedarock Park

④ Operated by the Alamance County Recreation and Parks Department, this major county park has picnic areas, hiking and nature trails, two regulation frisbee golf courses, fishing and tent camping, and historical structures. Cedarock Park encompasses over 400 acres of rolling woodlands and open fields along Rock Creek and its tributaries. Rock walls, scattered millstones, and a massive rock dam are remaining evidences of the earliest German immigrants that settled the area in the 1700's. Cedarock Historical Farm has been restored and preserved as a working period farm, with historical homestead and outbuildings.

The Park is open daily year-round, from dawn to dusk. Cedarock Farm is open Wednesday - Friday from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm., Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm. No entrance fee is charged. For more information call (919) 570-6759 or (919) 570-6760.

Sword of Peace

⑤ This point of interest includes historic buildings from the original Quaker settlers, an outdoor repertory theater, picnic area, and seasonal historical productions. The outdoor drama, "Sword of Peace" is featured by the Snow Camp Historical Society during the summer months. This outdoor drama tells the story of local Quaker families caught during the Revolutionary War in a struggle between patriotism and the community's religious convictions against war. An admission fee is charged for the outdoor drama. For more information call (919) 376-6948.

Spring Friends Meeting House

⑥ This early Quaker meeting house dates from the 1750's and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Graham-Mebane Lake

⑦ This newly enlarged lake offers water skiing, fishing, picnicking and boat rentals. Call (919) 227-0439 for more information.

Cross Roads Church

⑧ Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Cross Roads Presbyterian Church is part of the early history of Presbyterianism in North Carolina. The church, organized in 1783, was known as the birthplace of "The Great Awakening", an evangelical movement of the early 1800's, that spread across North Carolina. The present church was constructed in 1876 and continues to serve an active congregation.

Lake Cammack Marina and Park

⑨ This Alamance County Recreation Area includes boat launch facilities, water skiing, fishing, a playground, picnicking and boat rentals. $1.00 entry fee. (919) 421-3872.

Glencoe Historic District

⑩ This 19th century textile mill village was built by the E.M. Holt family for mill operations and housing. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Altamahaw Mill Office

⑪ Historic buildings of the original Hub Mill are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Lake Mackintosh

⑫ This newly opened recreational lake southwest of Burlington offers small boating and fishing, picnicking, paddle boat and sailboat rental. It is open dawn to dusk, but is closed some weekdays during the winter. Operated by the Burlington Parks and Recreation Department, call (919) 222-5030 for information.

Joe C. Davidson Park

⑬ This new park, operated by the Burlington Recreation and Parks Department, includes soccer and baseball fields, tennis and sand volleyball courts, a walking track, a shelter and a picnic area. Its playground is equipped for the handicapped. For more information call (919) 584-3316.

Route Descriptions

Although there are no paved shoulders or special facilities provided for bicyclists along these routes, care has been taken to select roadways where traffic is light. Where necessary, short sections of more heavily travelled roads have been used as connectors in some areas.

ROUTE 70

This route traverses the urbanized center of the county and offers an alternative to busy US highway 70. The 24-mile route connects Mebane, Haw River, Graham, Burlington, Elon College and Gibsonville. Points of interest on or near the route include the Graham Historic District, the Southern Railway Passenger Depot, Burlington Historic District and City Park, and Elon College Historic District.

ROUTE 71

This 20-mile route is a north/south link from Route 70 in Graham to Route 2 in Snow Camp, passing near Swepsonville and the historic Indian Trading Path dating from the early 1700's. Historic buildings and a picnic area at Sword of Peace in historic Snow Camp make an interesting destination. Route 71 intersects with Route 72, providing access from the urbanized area to several points of interest.

ROUTE 72

This route forms a 20-mile east/west connector from Saxapahaw to Cedarock Park and the Alamance County Historical Museum, passing south of the village of Alamance. The route connects at either end with Route 74.

ROUTE 73

This route bisects northern Alamance County, connecting Route 70 in Burlington, with Route 74 at Union Ridge. The 10 mile route passes through Glencoe, a typical example of a late 19th century textile mill village, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

ROUTE 74

Route 74 intersects with Route 2 on the western border of the county at Kimesville. It then circles clockwise for 59 miles to reconnect with Route 2 east of Saxapahaw. Short portions are in Guilford and Orange Counties to provide for safer bicycling. The route connects the communities of Gibsonville, Ossipee, Altamahaw, Union Ridge, and Mebane. Places of interest include the Alamance Battleground State Historic Site, Lake Mackintosh, Lake Cammack, and Graham-Mebane Lake.

ROUTE 2

Route 2, the Mountains to Sea Route, crosses 19 miles of southern Alamance County. It connects the rural communities of Kimesville, Snow Camp, and Eli Whitney for some of North Carolina's most scenic bicycling. From Murphy in far western North Carolina, to Manteo on the coast, the 700-mile Mountains to Sea route forms the backbone of the State's Bicycling Highways system.

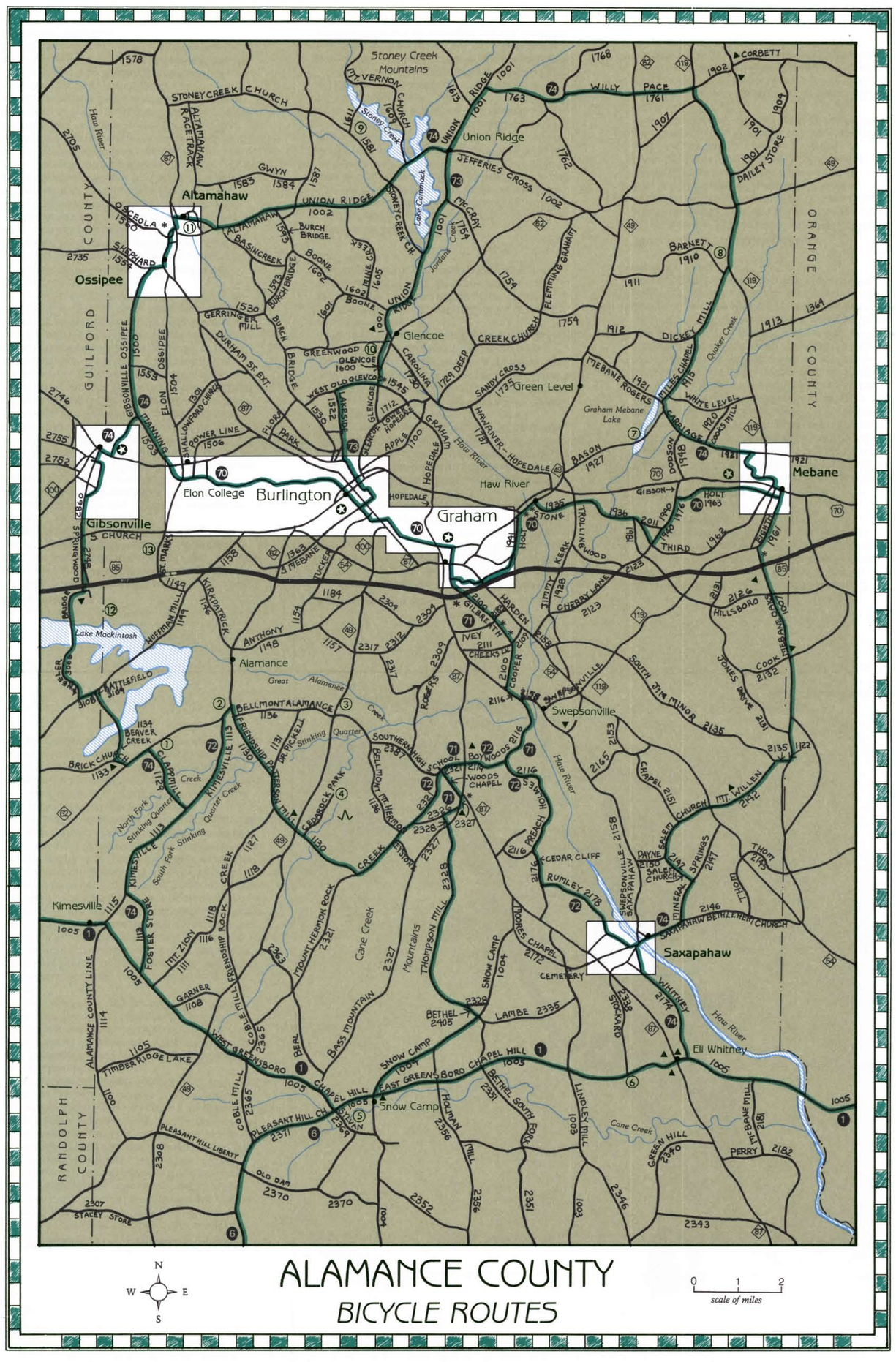
ROUTE 6

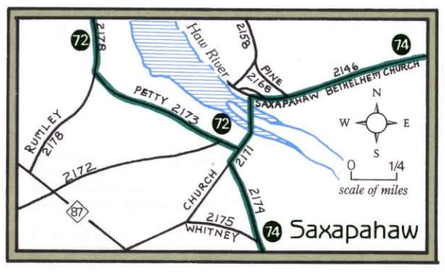
Route 6, a segment of the Piedmont Spur, intersects the Mountains to Sea Route 2 west of Snow Camp, where it originates. It exits Alamance County after only 4.8 miles, continuing into Chatham County. This 200 mile route heads west from Snow Camp, past the North Carolina zoo, the Uwharrie National Forest, and Morrow Mountain State Park. It skirts the city of Charlotte to the north, then continues to Morganton to rejoin Route 2.

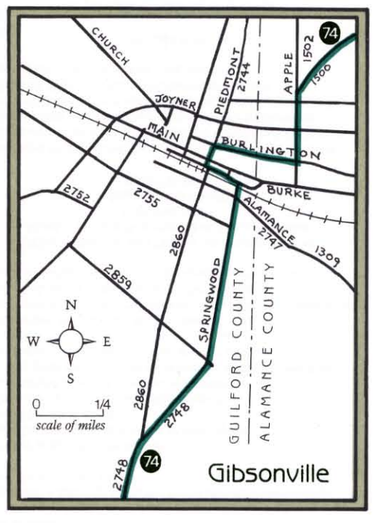
	Ala. Battleground	Altamahaw	Burlington	Cedar Rock Park	Elon College	Gibsonville	Graham	Haw River	Kimesville	Mebane	Ossipee	Saxapahaw	Snow Camp	Union Ridge
Ala. Battleground	X	16	18	9	13	10	15	20	5	33	15	22	14	28
Altamahaw	16	X	13	25	7	6	16	21	21	26	1	14	29	7
Burlington	18	13	X	16	6	9	3	8	24	15	12	16	22	10
Cedar Rock Park	9	25	16	X	22	19	13	18	12	25	24	13	13	26
Elon College	13	7	6	22	X	3	9	14	18	21	5	22	26	14
Gibsonville	10	6	9	19	3	X	12	17	15	24	5	25	23	13
Graham	15	16	3	13	9	12	X	5	24	12	15	13	19	13
Haw River	20	21	8	18	14	17	5	X	29	7	20	18	24	18
Kimesville	5	21	24	12	18	15	24	29	X	36	20	18	8	28
Mebane	33	26	15	25	21	24	12	7	36	X	27	14	24	19
Ossipee	15	1	12	24	5	5	15	20	20	27	X	13	28	8
Saxapahaw	22	14	16	13	22	25	13	18	18	14	13	X	10	26
Snow Camp	14	29	22	13	26	23	19	24	8	24	28	10	X	32
Union Ridge	28	7	10	26	14	13	13	18	28	19	8	26	32	X

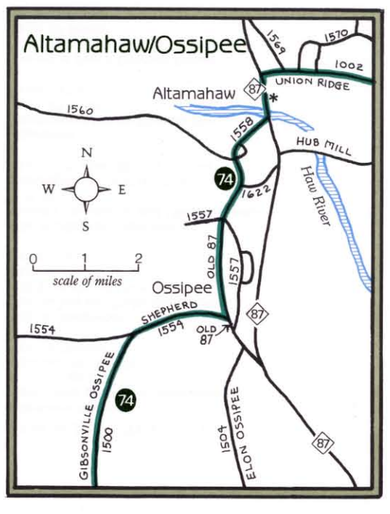
Mileage Between Points

The matrix above shows distances between cities, towns and major points of interest in Alamance County. Distances shown are via the recommended bicycle routes and not necessarily the shortest connectors between points.









LEGEND

- Bicycle Route
- ⑭ Point of Interest
- ▲ Country Store
- ✪ Full Services
- * Busy Road
- ⚺ Camping

Please be aware:

Although every effort was made initially to choose routes on less traveled roads, some areas of this map may have experienced significant growing. In these locations some of the selected bicycle routes could have increased traffic volumes. The NC Department of Transportation and the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation assume no liability for the increase use of any road on this map. We ask you to, as much as you are able, make yourself aware of the roads you intend to travel on, prior to your trip. To do so you may consider contacting the local government, bike shops or clubs in the area, for advise.

A Note of Caution

The highlighted bicycle routes shown on this map follow roads of the North Carolina highway system. These roads do not include any special accommodations for bicycles such as paved shoulders or designated bike lanes. Care has been taken to select more lightly traveled roads. In a few places, however, short sections of busier roads are used to make connections where no other options exist. These areas are marked with "Share the Road" signs, like the one shown here, to alert motorist to the presence of cyclists on the road. The bike routes are not intended for use by children, as their ability to judge traffic conditions and driver actions is not well developed.

Be predictable, be courteous, and obey all traffic laws, while traveling by bicycle.