

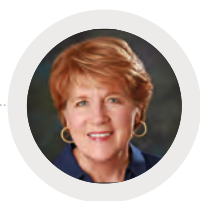
# Welcome to Kinston

I'm excited to introduce you to this pocket of Eastern North Carolina. Be it famous battlefields, or a home to sports legends, or being named one of the culinary capitals of the South – Kinston has always known how to make history.

I've lived in Lenoir County my whole life. As Tourism Director, I have the pleasure of both rediscovering this area and introducing it to visitors like you every day.

If you're looking to taste barbecue voted best in the nation, I know the place. If you want to cool off by taking a two-story drop or slide down a dragon's back, I can give you directions. If you want to shop one-of-a-kind art or stay the night inside a bank vault, I know exactly the people you need to meet. And you'll find those answers and more in this Wonder Guide along with advice and suggestions from other travelers who've been here.

Kinston not only has lots to do, but it has lots of things you can *only* do here. So, prepare your bucket list, grab your car keys, and head this way. It's time to make a little history of your own.



## Jan Parson

Wonder Guide & Executive Director  
Kinston-Lenoir County Travel and Tourism

Meet  
the Locals

Food &  
Drink

History

Outdoors

Sports

Shopping

Art

Places  
to Stay

Day Trips  
& Contacts



# Kinston is known for its historic battles,

*like this morning's throw down for the last cheese biscuit.*



*Tucked away* near the Eastern coast of North Carolina, Kinston is going through a renaissance. Local banks have been transformed into boutique hotels. A celebrity chef has opened doors to a restaurant in the heart of downtown. Three-story sculptures are now casting shadows over the foundations of old tobacco factories. What was once a sleepy Southern town is now awake, welcoming new visitors from far and near.

Kinston has always been at the center of transformation, and this new growth is just the latest

chapter. More than a stopover on the way to the beach or a quick day trip, Kinston is your new weekend getaway. Have a farm-to-table meal in the place that invented farm-to-table meals. Cool off by dropping a kayak in the Neuse River or by screaming down a near-vertical waterslide. Visit a local battlefield to learn about history. Visit a local antique store to take some history home with you. When you get tired, check into a hip motor lodge that offers comfortable beds, a custom putt-putt course, and a chance to travel back in time – popcorn included.







# Get To Know Lenoir County

## By the Numbers

**403**

square miles

**56,350**

population

**4 Towns**

Kinston (County Seat),  
La Grange, Pink Hill, Deep Run

**1791**

year founded

**44**

Historical Markers  
and War Memorials

**7**

BBQ Restaurants

**19**

Professional athletes from  
Lenoir County in NBA,  
WNBA, MLB, NFL, and LPGA

**28' H**

Height of Flue by  
Thomas Sayre

**158' L / 34' W**

Measurements of the CSS Neuse II

## Known for

- > Chef & the Farmer, Chef Vivian Howard
- > BBQ Fest on the Neuse
- > Mother Earth Brewing
- > Social House Vodka
- > Hometown of NBA players Reggie Bullock, Jerry Stackhouse and Brandon Ingram
- > First Battle of Kinston & Battle of Wyse Fork

Within this Wonder Guide, we'll explore all the things that make this area the perfect destination for families, adrenaline junkies, and, of course, foodies. Each section gets you in the know and on the move.

We've included maps to give you a sense of where things are located. We've added quick scans to tours to help you plan your days. We snuck in a few scavenger hunts and factoids to keep you on your toes. We have even included stories from real

visitors who tell you what they loved about this town – honest recommendations from travelers just like you. By the time you reach the final pages, you should be well-versed in all things Kinston.

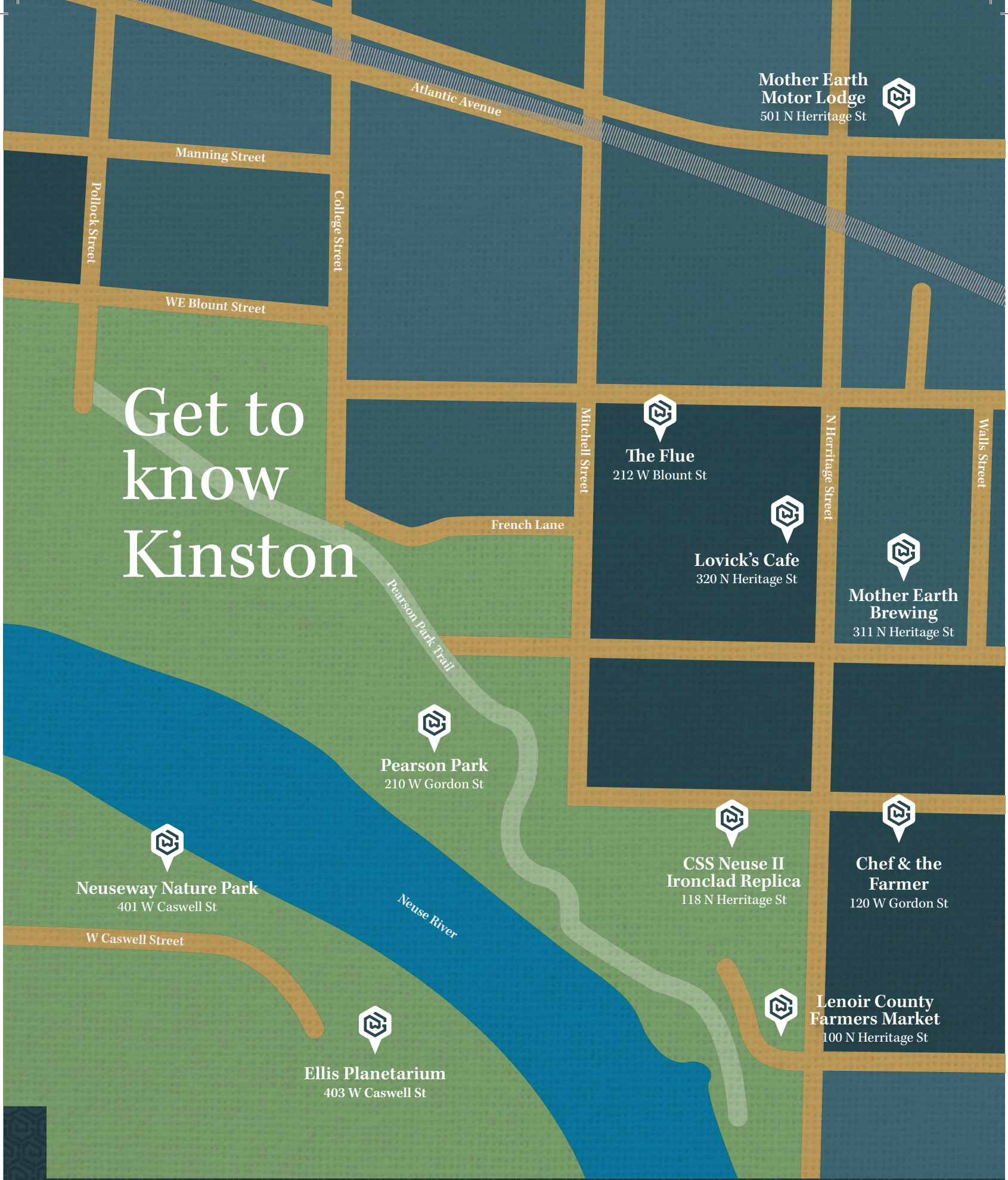
So, set your curiosity to go and we'll save a place at the table for you. NOTE: Cheese biscuits are first come, first serve. *Chef & the Farmer is currently closed. Check online for more information.*

[visitkinston.com](http://visitkinston.com)





# Get to know Kinston



Mother Earth  
Motor Lodge  
501 N Heritage St



Manning Street

Atlantic Avenue

Pollock Street

College Street

WE Blount Street

Mitchell Street

N Heritage Street

Walls Street

The Flue  
212 W Blount St



Lovick's Cafe  
320 N Heritage St



Mother Earth  
Brewing  
311 N Heritage St

French Lane

Pearson Park Trail



Pearson Park  
210 W Gordon St



Neuseway Nature Park  
401 W Caswell St

W Caswell Street

Neuse River



Ellis Planetarium  
403 W Caswell St



CSS Neuse II  
Ironclad Replica  
118 N Heritage St



Chef & the  
Farmer  
120 W Gordon St



Lenoir County  
Farmers Market  
100 N Heritage St



Welcome

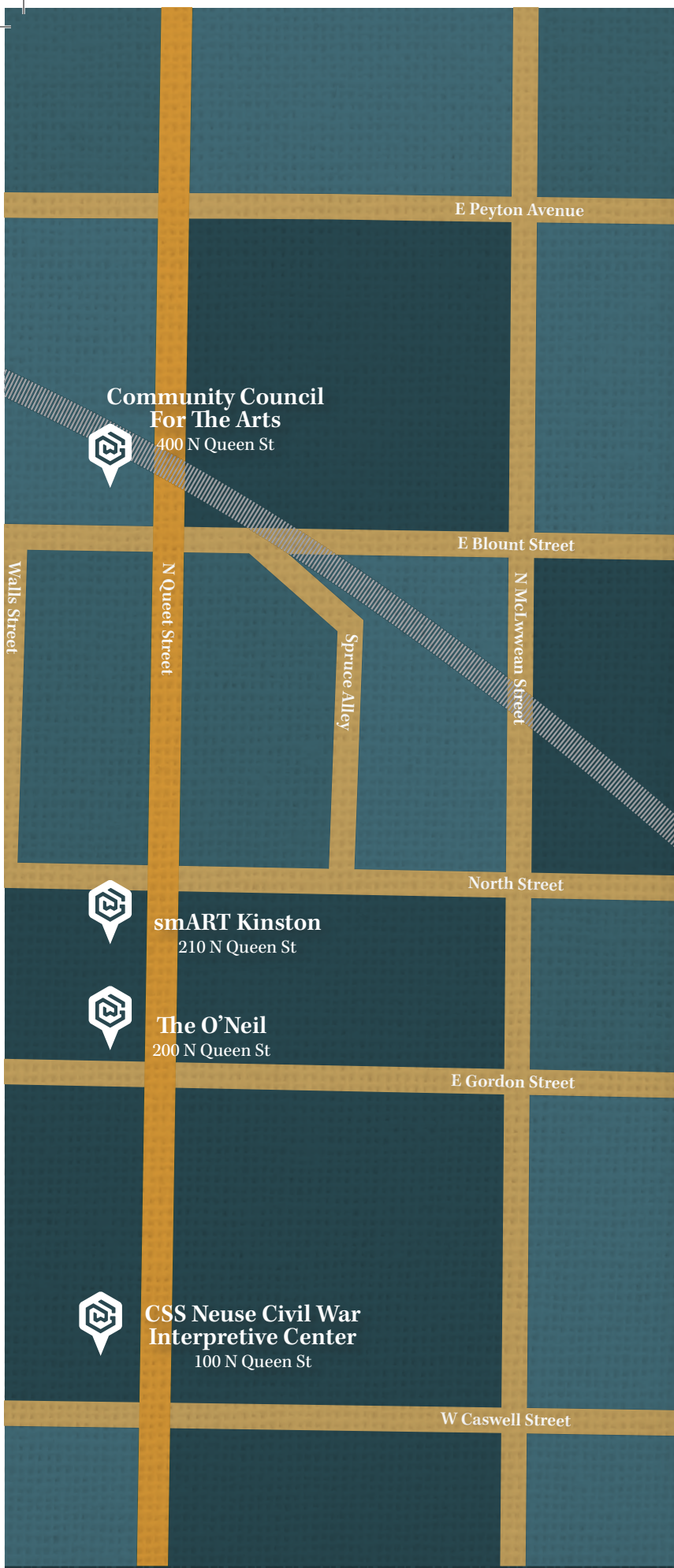
All About  
Kinston

Maps of  
the Area

Annual Events

Top Things to Do





*Attractions*



*Food + Drink*



*Shopping*



*Lodging*

Scan for a full list of local businesses and directions







# Annual Events

*There's always something exciting happening in Kinston*

January/February

March / April

May / June



Soup and a Bowl



CSS Neuse Museum  
Wyse Fork  
Battlefield Tours



BBQ Fest  
on the Neuse



Winterfest



Renaissance Faire



A Jeep Affair



Chitlin' Circuit



JuneTeenth



Welcome

All About  
Kinston

Maps of  
the Area

**Annual Events**

Top Things to Do





*View Complete Event Calendar*

**July / August**

**September / October**

**November / December**



**Deep Run  
Independence Parade**



**Independence  
Celebration**



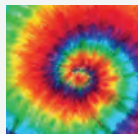
**Tri-Level State  
Tennis Tournament**



**Mother Earth Brewing  
Ironclad Half Marathon**



**Funk Fest**



**Bradfest**



**Harmony Hall  
Christmas Open House**



**Holly Jolly  
Christmas Show**



**Downtown Light Up  
For The Holidays**



**A Queen Street  
Christmas**

Meet  
the Locals

Food &  
Drink

History

Outdoors

Sports

Shopping

Art

Places  
to Stay

Day Trips /  
Contacts



# Top things to do

*Kinston has something for everyone*



## Mother Earth Brewing

311 N Heritage St

*Have the best long weekend that you may or may not remember - 100% sustainable, environmentally friendly and damn good beer.*



## Social House Vodka

906 Atlantic Ave

*Like "Bless your heart" in Vodka form - Pleasant warmth and just a hint of sweetness at the finish, that's a true Southern vodka.*



## Lovick's Cafe

320 N Heritage St

*Where chocolate chips are considered a breakfast food - Delicious comfort food in a classic diner setting. Hope you're hungry!*



## smART KINSTON

210 N Queen St

*Watch an artist create - 14 full-time artists invite the public into their studios in the Arts and Cultural District.*



## Pearson Park / River Walk

210 W Gordon St

*Slide down a Dragon's back - Riverside playground with a 14-foot high dragon slide with rope ladder, among other play structures to conquer.*



## Neuse River Fishing / Neuse Sports Shop

225 E New Bern Rd

*Put some truth behind those fish stories - Rods, reels, and everything you need to catch a fish and look good doing it.*







### Neuseway Nature Park

401 W Caswell St.

*Better than television* - A nature center, planetarium, playground, and with the option to camp, fish, and kayak, this place was meant for a family weekend.



### The Flue

212 W Blount St

*Crane your neck and marvel* - Imagination has a door, seven actually, that are 28 feet high & 40,000 pounds each.



### Lion's Water Adventure

2602 W Vernon Ave

*Have second thoughts after the splashdown* - Families, thrill-seekers, and those who enjoy a good float on a lazy river come here to cool off.



### Down East Wood Ducks

400 E Grainger Ave

*Catch a game, meet baseball's up-and-comers* - Second oldest ballpark in the Carolina League, with a Mother Earth Beer Pavilion for those extra innings.



### Lenoir County Farmers Market

100 North Herritage St

*Buy a tomato so fresh you'll bite into it like an apple* - You want local produce and meat? They got it along with the answers for, "What can I make with this?"



### CSS Neuse Museum

100 N Queen St

*Find out how not to sail a ship down a shallow river* - Come explore the CSS Neuse, one of only four Civil War Ironclads still in existence.

# Meet the people

*who are moving Kinston forward*



## ➤ Tammy Kelly

*Taking local barbecue to the world stage*

There are lots of barbecue festivals in the South. But the largest, whole hog cookoff in the world happens right here in Kinston. That's no small pigs feat. Hundreds of people work together to make this single weekend happen each year. Chief among the barbecue heavy hitters is Tammy Kelly. She has the delicious job of organizing cook teams from across the United States and finding judges with a keen eye and trained palate to pick the winner. Her work helps set the standard for what is considered "great barbecue." Want to see how good she is at her job? Pop over to the BBQ Festival on the Neuse the first weekend of May. We'll have a plate of BBQ waiting, and you can be the judge.

## ➤ Joe Hargitt

*Respecting family traditions and winning national acclaim*

Why eat any old barbecue when you can have best-in-the-nation barbecue? That's the thinking behind every tender pork barbecue plate served up daily at King's Restaurant. Owner Joe Hargitt is the current pitmaster and final say in all things porky. While other restaurants are keen on constantly changing and experimenting with recipes, King's success has come after three generations of hand-chopping and secret sauces. Under Joe's watchful eye, the same old-fashioned flavor perfected in 1936 is what you get today. If the full parking lot is any indication, visitors can't get enough.



## ➤ Vivian Howard

*Pioneering the Farm-to-Table movement*

Some chefs are known for a single dish. Some are known for a style of cooking. Chef Vivian Howard helped create an entire culinary movement and, in the process, made everyone ask, "Where is Kinston?" By working with local farmers to create her seasonal menus, she helped breathe new life into local agriculture and create a truly unique dining experience for foodies near and far.





## Warren Brothers

### *Reestablishing the importance of the local farmer*

When you grow up on a farm, you're taught early on that making a living off the land is all about being flexible and getting in front of problems. Warren Brothers knows this all too well. Forseeing the fall of tobacco, he transitioned his family farm to more traditional crops. Over the last two decades, with the help of Chef Vivian Howard, he's cultivated all natural vegetables, herbs, and flowers that he supplies to restaurants all across Eastern North Carolina. If the food on your plate is fresh, local, and organic — it probably started on Brothers Farm.



## Maximillian Mozingo

### *Painting murals on walls to help tear down barriers*

You've probably seen one of Maximillian Mozingo's murals floating around social media. But more than a slick Instagram background, his art has become iconic to the region and given Kinston's Downtown a true soul. His work addresses social issues like Civil Rights, brings to life cultural icons like Nina Simone, and makes visitors stop and take notice. In a world where few agree, his work is inspiring and uniting visitors and locals. Talk about a career with high job satisfaction.

## Stephen Hill

### *Bringing sustainability to the forefront one glass at a time*

How do you make a good craft beer? In Kinston, we start by making it green. Stephen Hill is the brain-child behind Mother Earth Brewing Company. It's the first brewery in the country to be awarded Gold certification in the LEED program for sustainability. The brewery itself was built reusing 95% of the structure's original brick, wood, and steel. The Tap Room and Beer Garden are 100% solar-powered. The brewery even gives spent grain to local farmers to use as feed. But how does the beer taste? Mother Earth Brewing is consistently ranked one of the top breweries in North Carolina. Raise a glass to that.





Have a farm-to-table  
in the place that  
farm-to-table me



by **Erin Samuels**  
Age 45  
Richmond, Virginia

*I'm a huge foodie. My husband and I travel all over the South taking in new culinary tastes and traditions. So, I made a point to visit Chef & the Farmer in Kinston. It's the restaurant featured on the PBS series A Chef's Life and owned by Vivian Howard who pioneered the farm to table movement. For me, it's a must stop.*

See the video



Welcome

All About  
Kinston

Maps of  
the Area

Annual Events

Top Things to Do



# table meal t invented eals.

*Ah lasagna.* . . creamy ricotta, mozzarella, and smoked gouda blended with roasted sweet potatoes, layered with pulled pork, and a noodle resembling a saltine cracker. Wait, what?

A Southern girl, I love all those things separately. I've yet to meet a pulled pork that I don't like and sweet potatoes are a staple year-round in our kitchen. But together? In a lasagna? Now, that I've never tried. I don't know why it works, but it does. Every savory, sweet bite of it.

And I'd expect no less from Chef & the Farmer. This restaurant, which came to fame on the PBS series, *A Chef's Life*, is all about challenging one's perception of food. That could be the combination of ingredients or even how those ingredients are raised and harvested. This is the restaurant that pioneered the farm-to-table movement thanks to the vision and hard work of Chef Vivian Howard.

After working in New York, Howard moved back to her home in Lenoir County in 2004 with the goal of opening a restaurant like no other. She envisioned it to be a true marriage of farm freshness and culinary mastery. Howard worked with local farmers, the Warren Brothers, to plan crops around her seasonal menus. She reinvented recipes she learned in her grandmother's kitchen and at family tables around the county. Today, that success is served up one perfectly plated meal at a time in downtown Kinston.

Kinston is only three hours south of Richmond where I live. For some, that may be a bit of a drive

for dinner. Not for me. After years of religiously watching *A Chef's Life* on PBS, I could not wait to walk through the doors and taste what the screen could only tease.

We arrive at the restaurant and are taken upstairs to the dining area. The space is stunning. High ceilings, soft lights, big windows in this old warehouse building that's now home to Howard's restaurant. As we approach our table, I take a moment to casually glance over the plates of our fellow diners. I see what looks like fried rabbit stewed in green curry with sweet potato. Flash fried collard chips. I don't know about y'all, but my collards have always come cooked to death with pork fat, not as a crispy, crunchy delight.

The menu at Chef & the Farmer changes seasonally and tonight there are lots of items to choose from. Food decisions have always been difficult for me – looking over this menu, it was next to impossible to pick just one thing. How do you decide between pork belly skewers and country ham flatbread for starters? After about 20 minutes of debate, the answer became obvious: You order both.

As for the entree, after quick negotiations, my husband and I agreed to share the lasagna layered with pulled pork and roasted sweet potatoes as well as the pan seared flounder in marinated cucumber noodle. How was it? Let's just say there are moments in your life where you wish time would slow down. Where you wish you could just enjoy the flavor one second more, take one more bite. This was our experience at Chef & the Farmer.

I could go on and on about the freshness. I could write for hours about the inventiveness, the unexpected presentation of each plate that opened our palettes with flavor combinations beyond our comprehension. But, I won't. Because if I do, it won't be as unexpected. Some things in life you need to experience, not just read about.

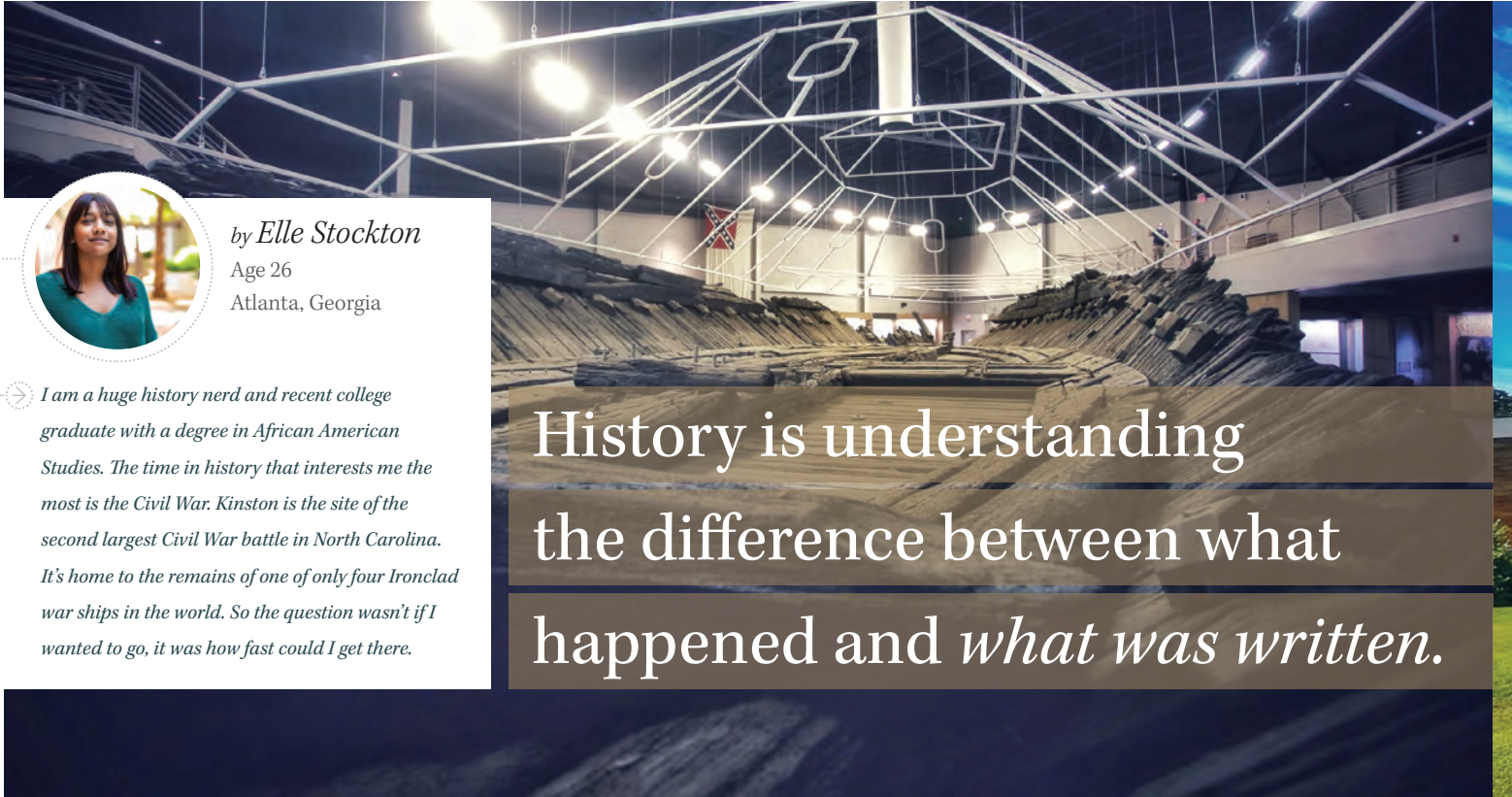
That's true for Chef & the Farmer and Kinston itself. This small town is a hot spot for foodies, chefs, and anyone who wants to explore life one bite at a time. **Chef & the Farmer is currently closed while undergoing its next evolution. To check on the status or to learn more about our other award-winning, local restaurants, visit us online at: [VisitKinston.com](http://VisitKinston.com)**

LET'S JUST SAY  
THERE ARE  
MOMENTS IN YOUR  
LIFE WHERE YOU  
WISH TIME WOULD  
SLOW DOWN.



- Top bites & sips not to miss**
- **Cheese Biscuits**  
*Bryd's Restaurant*
  - **Ribs and Collards**  
*King's Restaurant*
  - **Dough Burger**  
*Lovick's Cafe*
  - **Smothered Pork Chop**  
*Fat Baby's*
  - **Red Velvet Cake**  
*Queen Street Deli*
  - **Endless Summer Kolsh**  
*Mother Earth Brewing*
  - **Craft Vodka**  
*Social House Vodka*
- 





by *Elle Stockton*  
Age 26  
Atlanta, Georgia

*I am a huge history nerd and recent college graduate with a degree in African American Studies. The time in history that interests me the most is the Civil War. Kinston is the site of the second largest Civil War battle in North Carolina. It's home to the remains of one of only four Ironclad war ships in the world. So the question wasn't if I wanted to go, it was how fast could I get there.*

History is understanding  
the difference between what  
happened and *what was written.*

***The Civil War pitted*** North against South, brother against brother, and forever changed what we were to become as a nation. I've studied this war and the reasons behind it. I've read about President Lincoln's motives. I know all the Generals and the main characters of the stories written in history books. What I don't know are the stories of the men and women – black, white, or other – that have been left out of the pages of those history books. Those are the stories I want to learn more about on my trip to Kinston.

After a seven hour drive from Atlanta, I pull into Kinston and decide to check immediately into my hotel. I've reserved a room at the Mother Earth Motor Lodge. From a history lover's perspective, this is the place to stay. It's been renovated to look like it's directly out of the 1960s. I get to study another era. I even get to sleep in another era. I'm already loving this town.

Morning comes and I am off to The CSS Neuse Interpretive Center. This museum is the main reason I came to Kinston. It houses

one of only four Ironclad war ships in the world. As I enter the main exhibit hall, the ship's 158-foot-long hull stands before me. It is a massive wooden skeleton. I walk around the battered timber on the ground floor and then climb the stairs to view it from above.

When built, this ship had more than 100 men assigned to it. It took 20 men to operate each gun. Its steam-powered engine kept the boat at a constant



temperature of 130 degrees. The most enlightening of all these facts? The bathroom was a bucket. Now take a moment to let that register. A bucket. 200 men. 130 degrees.

Today, thankfully, there are no buckets on display in the museum. The deteriorated, but preserved wreckage is all that's left of a Civil War gunship that never quite saw the action for which it was built. The CSS Neuse was called to help take back New Bern. But a half-mile down the river from where it was moored,

the ship ran ashore. It was armed and ready for battle then it got stuck in the mud. Left with fewer defenses, New Bern fell to the Union.

The CSS Neuse did eventually make it back to its moorings in Kinston. It was there it took its final stand in 1865. During the Battle of Wyse Creek, it provided cover for retreating Confederate troops. The crew eventually scuttled the ship to prevent it from falling into Union hands. After that, it sat at the bottom of the Neuse River for nearly 100 years until its remains were exhumed and placed in this museum.

Today, the exhibits around the relic tell the story of the Ironclad. They also tell the story of life in Lenoir County for black people during the Civil War. It's here that I learn how many Southern slaves took advantage of the fog of war to escape towards freedom. Some of these newly freed folks frequently served as scouts and spies for the Union.

Black men were not legally allowed to serve as combat soldiers in the Confederate Army, but they were enlisted as cooks, teamsters, and manual laborers. After the Emancipation, many Southern black men actually took up arms against their



Welcome

All About  
Kinston

Maps of  
the Area

Annual Events

Top Things to Do





Visit the only full size ironclad replica in the world.



former masters on the battlefield. By the time the war was over, black soldiers made up 10% of the Union Army and had suffered more than 10,000 combat casualties, but their sacrifice helped free more than four million people.

Glancing around the museum, I would guess there are about 50 people taking in the exhibits. Of those visitors, I would say about half were African American. It's great to see that more black people, myself included, have become interested in Civil War history. Specifically, piecing together

the stories not printed in history books or taught in classrooms.

I end up spending about four days around Kinston – going to the museums, exploring the battlefields, taking in the stories. For me, the visit is both educational and cathartic. Coming here, I knew the facts as told from history books. Leaving here, I know more about how I am connected to that time. I understand the stories and sacrifices my relatives made to get me to where I am today – an educated, proud, black woman ready to make her own history.



### Kinston Battlefield Park Memorial Site

*The First Battle of Kinston was fought in the dark cold days of December 1862. Visit the Kinston Battlefield Park and discover details that make our history unforgettable.*

**LOCAL & HISTORY TOUR**

2 Days | 17 Stops





by Adam Goodson

Age 33  
Raleigh, NC

I have college friends who live in Greensboro and Wilmington. Kinston is a great meeting point for each of us. We can hop on the River to cool off or kick up some mud on ATVs. It's a little bit of everything with a great craft beer waiting at the end of the day.

*Our thinking:*

*Good things come to those who bait.*

*It's the first morning* of our annual fishing weekend. I walk into the Neuse Sports Shop off Highway 70 in Kinston with my two best friends, Chase and Drew. For the past five years, we've been getting together to have a guys weekend. It's a chance to play outdoors, catch up with each other, and get away from our day to day. In this instance, Drew's t-shirt probably explains it best: "I just want to go fishing and ignore all my adult problems."

Entering the shop, we are surrounded by rows and rows of rods, reels, tackle and tackle boxes, lures, hooks, live bait. It's a fisherman's dream, a striped bass' last rights. We're here to gear up for a day out on the Neuse River. All three of us have been fishing since we were kids. We have our favorite gear out in the truck, but it never hurts to browse around. Especially since the unspoken wager amongst the three of us is "smallest catch buys the first round."

We wander from aisle to aisle, looking, dreaming, and listening to Chase go on and

on about drag systems, gear ratios, ball bearing – all the things that make the perfect reel and future "I told you so" moment. After about an hour, we make it to the check out. Each of us stocks up on live bait and Drew picks up a new tackle box. No new reel for Chase today. But he seems content that he is leaving the store having educated the staff thoroughly.

Most of the Earth is covered in water. They say that it's a fisherman's job to pick out the best parts. That's why our little group heads to Kinston each year. We have our "secret" fishing spot on the Neuse that has provided us hours of friendly competition and endless stories (sometimes outright lies).

We drop in our kayaks at the Highway 70 boat ramp. Without giving away too much, our fishing spot is

an easy two-mile paddle down the river. Today, the river is wide and calm, like an old friend welcoming us back with open arms. It takes about 30 minutes but we eventually drop our lines in the water. That's when the talking stops and the competition begins.



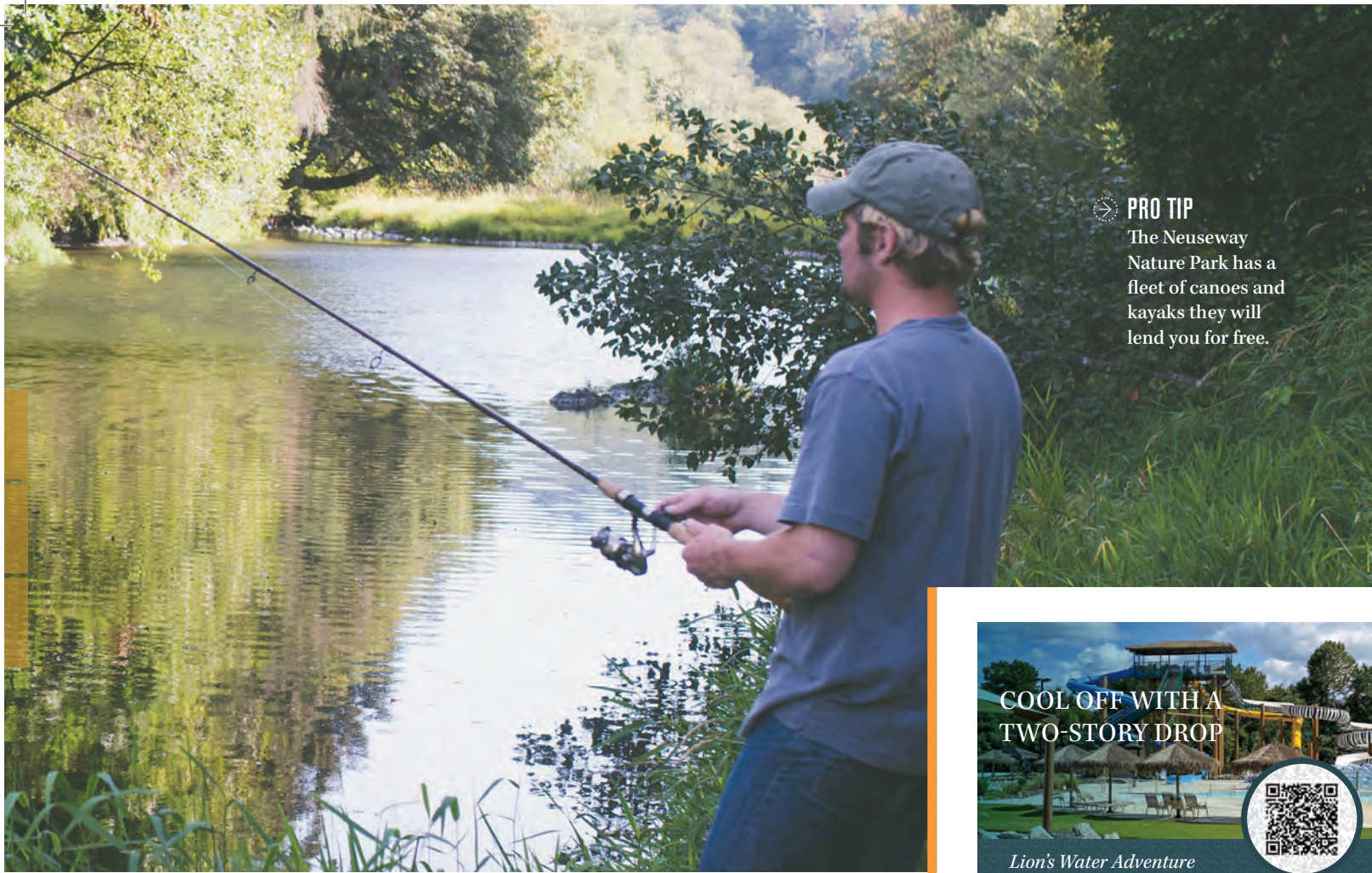
*On the water: Fish, boat, walk*

Every splash of water comes with a quick head turn to see if your buddy has just reeled in a prize. Hours pass and nothing. Nothing but Chase talking about how he should have bought that new reel back at the store. Like that new reel would have made the fish appear and voluntarily hop

in the cooler – an aquatic surrender of sorts. Just when we were about to call it a day, Chase gets a nibble. That nibble turns into a full on bite. After about 15 minutes of struggle, we have our first







**PRO TIP**  
 The Neuseway Nature Park has a fleet of canoes and kayaks they will lend you for free.

and only prize of the trip – a 3-pound striped bass that’s about 18 inches long. Not a bad haul. Drew’s both pleased with his catch and with the fact that he will not be paying for any beers on this trip. And with that, we head off the river and to the brewery.

Within minutes, we are back at the Neuse Sports shop. But this time we are not going inside for part two of Chase’s college-level course on fishing equipment. This time we are heading just to the back of the parking lot where we find The Beer Barn. True to its name, this place is in what appears to be – you guessed it – a big barn with a covered patio.

The parking lot is full. But that just tells us we’re in the right place. We open the door and make our way to the bar. On the wall is a taxidermied deer head that stares down on as we place our orders. Drew decides to order a flight. Because, when you’re not paying, why not. Chase decides to try Smokey Peaches, a 7.3% ABV. I settle on a pint of pale ale and join the guys outside by the lake. This place was built to wander around with a beer. Backing up to a lake filled with geese,

it has a 9-hole disc golf course that includes a basket precariously placed on a small island. The conversation quickly goes from plans to visit the dragstrip tomorrow to talk of a second round at Mother Earth Brewing to how we get the fish mounted on the wall in the bar to wondering how many times someone has hit those geese with a disc. Rocket scientists and men of great thought we are not. But we are good friends who realize that true, lasting friendships are built of conversations and moments just like this.

We settle into an adirondack chair facing the water and each of us becomes quiet. Personally, I’m thinking of getting back to our tents at Glamptopia, cleaning that striped bass, and having dinner around the fire. That’s when we all hear a splash. Instinctively we all sit up and peer out into the lake just as a large fish breaks the water and falls back under – a reminder of what we left out in the river today. As the water ripples out, Chase quickly stands. “You going back for another round?” I ask. “No, man. I gotta go get that reel.” And with that, we’re already starting to plan our return visit.

**COOL OFF WITH A TWO-STORY DROP**

*Lion's Water Adventure*

**LIVE EXTREME TOUR**

2 Days | 14 Stops

**Kinston Drag Strip**

*The smell of burning rubber and gasoline, roaring engines and cheering fans, lights, flags, and some very fast cars going in excess of 300 miles per hour.*





by Alice Manning

Age 43

Raleigh, North Carolina

# Watching Wood Ducks migrate by sliding into home plate

Kinston is close to our home in Raleigh and it has one of the top minor league baseball teams in the state. So, that makes it perfect for a quick weekend getaway for my baseball loving family. I get the kids away from screens for the weekend. My husband and boys get to watch the action along the first baseline as future MLB stars step up to the plate in Grainger Stadium.



About the Park



*It's a warm, July night* as our family crosses the parking lot to the gates of historic Grainger Stadium. The second oldest ballpark in the Carolina League, it's home to the Down East Wood Ducks, an affiliate of the Texas Rangers. Manny Ramirez, Bartolo Colon, Albert Belle – some top MLB players got their start right here in Kinston.

So with the hopes of seeing the next rising superstar this weekend, we traded video games and tablets for the smell of popcorn and the crack of a bat. From all initial reactions, the screen sacrifice seems like a good idea.

Our boys, ages 6 and 8, are wide-eyed and wiggling as we walk past the tall, open gates and emerge directly behind home plate. This is their first time

attending a game in the Carolina League. Both spent the Spring playing baseball on rec leagues and they are all in on baseball.

On the stadium walkway we run into Stanley Sullivan, Air Force war veteran and usher at Grainger Stadium for 30 years. Known by his well-loved leather cowboy hat, Sullivan knows all the things about everyone on and off the field. Facts,





figures, great players – Sullivan knows it all and shares it with gusto. He points us toward our seats, but we're tempted to just hang out with him after he gets to story-telling about baseball in Kinston. We climb to our seats behind the third baseline, but no one sits. The National Anthem plays and we remain standing for the first pitch.

**Play ball!**

Tonight's game pits the Wood Ducks against the Columbia Fireflies. They are on a five game winning streak from the past six games. So, anticipation is high. "This is great," says my husband, beaming like a kid. He lets out an obnoxiously loud, "Oh yeah!" as the Wood Ducks get on base. A few of our fellow fans—a group of teenagers, and what I can only describe as a fully decked out cowboy—turn and chuckle in response. The friendly stadium is packed this Friday night, full of locals smiling and catching up on their way to the concessions.

We absorb the genuine love for this team as we watch the game. We see it in the fans decked out in Woodies gear. We hear it in the cheers. This town is proud, and they should be. In the team's first five years, more than two dozen Woodies rose to the Major League to play with the Texas Rangers.

Down East trailed 1-0 going into the fourth inning. Then Yosy Galan's two-run homer gave Down East a 2-1 lead in the fourth.

In its more than 70 years, Grainger Stadium has hosted several teams including the Kinston Indians, who proudly carried the Carolina League championship five times. The Down East Wood Ducks have been nesting in Grainger Stadium since 2017. That same year, they were declared co-champions of the Carolina League. So, not a bad start.



Galan came through again in the fifth. After Alejandro Osuna's RBI single scored Cameron Cauley, Galan singled to left-center to drive in Osuna for a 4-1 lead.

Dusk turns to dark at the ballpark. We give in to the pleas and finally take the boys to the stadium shop where I, too, get sucked into the merch. We use the seventh inning stretch as an excuse to parade our new hats the short walk down to the Mother Earth Brewing Pavilion on the first baseline. Craft beer

in hand, we pop a squat on the grassy lawn and watch the rest of the game from this angle.

The Wood Ducks get another run in the seventh with a homer by Cameron Cauley.

"There really isn't a bad seat in this whole stadium," comments my husband. Our boys stand on the rail, hopeful a pop fly will find their gloves. Behind them, the water tower, emblazoned with the Woodies logo, lights up the dark sky in the distance.

The Down East Wood Ducks blew open a close game in the middle innings and went on to take a 5-2 victory over the Columbia Fireflies on Saturday at Grainger Stadium. The win was the third straight for the Wood Ducks (45-40) and sixth in the past seven games.

After the game, quiet settles over the car as we pull out of the parking lot.

We pass cheering fans with Woodies t-shirts, still coming down for the high of yet another win. The noise and lights of the ballpark fade in the rearview mirror. From the darkness of the backseat comes a small voice with a big revelation: My older son has decided he wants to be a baseball player when he grows up and he wants to start his career right here in Kinston.

Looks like we'll be cheering for the Woodies again soon. Next time, that rising star might bear the family name.



**Pro Athletes who call Kinston "Home"**

- Cedric Maxwell, 2-time NBA Champion
- Reggie Bullock NBA - Dallas Mavericks
- Jerry Stackhouse 2-time NBA All-Star
- Dwight Clark 2-time Super Bowl Champion
- Brandon Ingram, NBA - Lakers & Pelicans

**The Kid In You Tour**





2 Days | 15 Stops



# Where shopping becomes the ultimate “give it” or “keep it” debate.



by *Josie Roberts*

Age 63

Columbia, South Carolina

*I'm an antique-lover and upcycler. In short, I love the old things found in your grandma's attic and things other people consider junk. I find joy in turning a long lightbox into a mantle or an old door into a leaning shelf. I want my house and the stuff in my house to be as unique as I am. That's why I head to Kinston to do my picking for art, antiques and everything in between. I always find something I didn't even know I needed.*

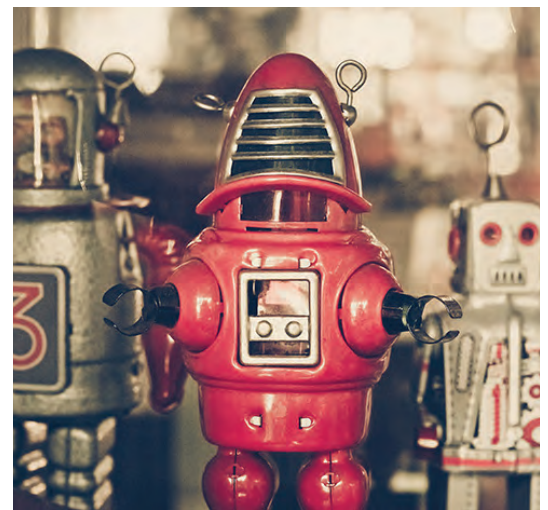
*Some people say,* “Money can't buy you happiness.” I say it can buy you a slightly used canoe that you can turn into a coffee table. That makes me happy. So, isn't it basically the same thing? If you think like me, I suggest you hop in a car and head to Kinston. This little town in Eastern North Carolina has everything an amateur antique picker, shopaholic, and part-time hoarder is looking for.

This weekend, I'm headed to Kinston with Gail, my ride-or-die best friend of 20 years. I'm looking for something to fill that empty wall space in my living room that I've been staring at for two years. Gail is looking for something to fill the empty room her son left behind when he moved

off to college. Stop one on our list is Ironclad Marketplace – a store with a little bit of everything you didn't know you wanted.

On the outside, Ironclad Marketplace looks to be a simple warehouse. On the inside, it's a 12,000 square-foot antique and collectibles market with over 50 vendors. This place sells everything from furniture to handmade crafts and every sort of “somebody's got-to-have-it” you can imagine.

We head inside to begin our treasure hunt. This place is massive. In one booth I see retro modern side tables mingling with country sideboards. In another booth I see quilts falling lazily over perfectly padded rockers. In yet another booth



I see accent pillows in colors that match hand-blown glass vases and plates and paintings. If it was in Grandma's attic, excluding Grandpa, you'll probably find it here.

In mere seconds, Gail hones in on an antique dresser and bolts toward the back of the store. And, just like that, we're off. By the time I get to her she's in full on inspection mode. Drawers are opened and closed. Handles are checked and given the customary jiggle to see if they're loose. She lasers in on the paint job, running her hand over the finish, checking for any subtle scratches and wear. After a few minutes of playing ring around the rosey with the dresser, Gail stands and gives me the thumbs up. Looks like we have our first purchase of the weekend.

As Gail takes her tag to the front of the store to get the item marked as sold, I start to browse around. I'm drawn over to an antique wooden ladder that has been turned into a hanging shelf for storage



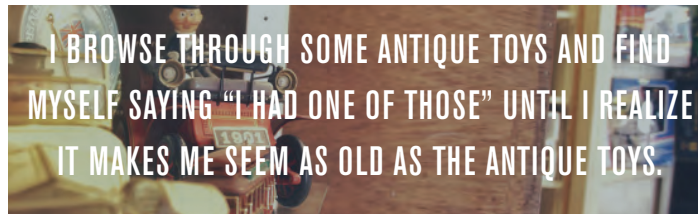


baskets. It's nice, but a little too tall for the wall in my living room. I move from booth to booth to booth. I find an antique Coca-Cola bottle cap that is about 4 ft. round and consider how I can mount it on a wall or turn it into a table. I look through some old Elvis records, because he's Elvis – thank you very much. I browse through some antique toys and find myself saying "I had one of those" until I realize it makes me seem as old as the antique toys.

In my shopping haze, I didn't even notice Gail hadn't made it back to me. I contemplate sending out a search party, then she arrives. It seems the owner of the store knew exactly the right pieces to go with her dresser. So, now she has an antique headboard that was an old grocery store sign, a depression glass lamp, and a side table made out of a wine barrel. She's even picked up two colonial-like paintings of children. I'm all for the bedroom pieces. But those paintings are a little too much on the creepy, "eyes-follow-you-around-the-room" side for me. After a few references to horror movies with us as the unlikely victims, Gail agrees. The paintings go back on the wall to haunt the next unlucky shopper.

At this point, we are three hours into our shopping weekend. Gail has already blown her budget, but she seems content. "Buyers remorse is for amateurs," she says. So, now the focus becomes finding that perfect piece for me.

A framed movie poster from Gremlins 2? Pass. A 1960s baker's rack painted neon pink and yellow? Not



for me. A set of dining plates adorned with various roosters? Cute, but pass again. A full box of LIFE magazines? Now, that's a possibility.

Looking through the box, there are about 30 total magazines in plastic sleeves. They all look like they're in great condition. I spot covers featuring Marilyn Monroe, the moon landing, Elvis (hi again, old friend). I start to picture row upon row of framed LIFE covers lining my wall mixed with pictures from my own life. It will be a virtual history of the world and of me. I love it. I pick up the box and announce that my search is

over. Gail is overjoyed. I think she really likes the idea. I also think she's getting hungry.

I hoist the box on the counter to pay up. That's when the owner tells me if I'm buying the entire box, he'll give me 20% off. "Great shopping and a discount? That just means more to spend tomorrow," I announce. And with that, Gail starts searching through her pocket book like she has lost something. "You okay?" I ask. "Yeah," she says. "I forgot this was only our first day here. I wanted to make sure I had another credit card." She then raises her hand with several cards displayed in a fan. "Charged and ready," she says. "Now, let's go get us some barbecue. I need some energy to make it through the rest of this town tomorrow."

Who is this woman? Is she excited or possessed? And from the corner I see the children in the pictures watching as we exit the store.



### Check out some local shops



- Consigned Designs
- Arts and Cultural District
- Once Again
- Just Add Salt
- Art 105
- Neuse Sports Shop & The Villager
- Community Council for the Arts Gallery
- Southern Heritage Folk Art and Antiques
- Spice Bouquet
- Echoes of Time Emporium
- Ironclad Marketplace



**SHOPPING WEEKEND TOUR**



2 Days | 11 Stops




### Rewards Program

Join Kinston Rewards today. Shop at participating local shops, restaurants, attractions and lodging partners to save 10% on select purchases every time.



# Imagination comes with 7 doors and its own section of town.



by *Molly Darcy*  
Age 36  
Washington DC

*I am an artist and university professor. Thomas Sayre is someone that intrigues me. I've seen his monumental sculptures tower over landscapes around the world. When I heard he raised a piece in Kinston, I knew this would be a stop on my artist bucket list.*



***There are artists*** who work on a canvas as tiny as a pinhead. There are artists who hide their creations, making the act of finding them part of the statement. But Thomas Sayre does neither of those. His artwork is monumental, towering. It's meant to be seen and marveled at for generations. Thomas Sayre is a man intent on making history. That made him the perfect artist to commission for a new sculpture in downtown Kinston.

Located in the coastal plains of North Carolina, Kinston is a city at the center of many historical moments. Be that moment a Civil War battle or surviving hurricanes or building back an entire economy after the collapse of tobacco. The people in Kinston are resilient and creative – taking what they have and figuring out how to move forward.

In 2015, Sayre was enlisted to create a sculpture to anchor the Kinston Art Trail. The work would honor the town's tobacco heritage and demonstrate the city's shift into a cultural arts center. It would be a piece symbolic of the town's resilience, an icon to help funnel their movement upward. So, the idea for Flue was born.

## YOU CAN WALK UP TO IT, TOUCH IT, EXAMINE THE TEXTURES

I first encountered Sayre's work on a visit to Phuket, Thailand. My husband, Neil and I were there on our honeymoon when we saw an ominous structure beckoning to us from the shoreline. Phuket Cheddi stands over five stories tall and is more than 16 feet around – a giant cone

constructed of earthcast concrete with cracks, holes, and empty bottles pierced throughout for local insects to come and go at will. Sayre had my attention. Since that moment, I have made a point to experience as many of his works as I can. Neil calls it my Sayre bucket list.

Lucky for me, I don't have to go far to experience Flue. Kinston is just a few hours south of our home in Washington, D.C. So, we decided to make our visit a long weekend.

As we pull into town, we pass a mural of a giant stork that encompasses an entire block. There are galleries popping up here and there featuring work of local artists. Standing amongst all this creativity and growth is Flue. Like Sayre's other earthcasting work, Flue is stunning. It's a sculpture in seven parts, with each piece crafted







to look like the facade of a tobacco barn. Standing over three stories tall and weighing in at 280 tons, Flue is designed to make a statement.

To form Flue, Sayre cast reinforced concrete directly into molds cut into the earth here in Lenoir County – earth that once grew cotton, then tobacco. In fact, Flue was erected on the block where the Brooks Tobacco Warehouse once stood. When the town was in its golden leaf heyday, the building was a giant barn where rods upon rods of tobacco leaves hung, dried, and awaited processing. Flue is both the embodiment of this town's history and its burgeoning path forward.

Like many of Sayre's other sculptures, Flue invites visitors to interact with it. You can walk up to it, touch it, examine the textures. So I do just that. I enter the first doorway and start to walk in a

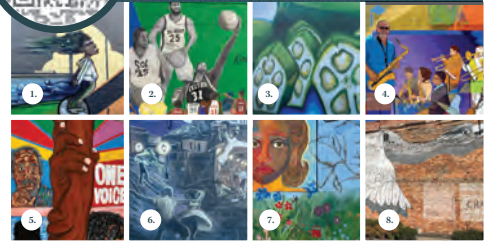
straight line. There are seven doors before me and each offers a different view of the town. As I take a step forward, the vision of that town becomes a little bigger, a little clearer. Until I exit the last doorway and the point of Flue becomes obvious.

Since the sculpture was raised, the town has gone through a bit of a renaissance. There's a motor lodge that has been renovated to look like it's straight out of the 1960s. There's a tap room and beer garden that are 100% solar powered. There's even a community of artists that have come to live and create in Kinston through the smART Kinston program.

All of this is proof that public art, like Flue, brings people together. It gives a town like Kinston a sense of place and attracts visitors like us. Perhaps it's that, and not mere size, that's the most monumental thing about Sayre's work.



## Mural Hunt



- 1. The Journey
- 2. Kinston Strong
- 3. Okra
- 4. Kinston Music Educators
- 5. Adkin High Walkout
- 6. Sugar Hill
- 7. Alice Hannibal
- 8. Blue Heron

## Art Is Everywhere Tour



2 Days | 13 Stops

## Makers Tour



2 Days | 13 Stops



# Book a place to stay

*that's part of the experience*



## Mother Earth Motor Lodge: Spend the night in the 1960s

There's only one place to stay in Kinston if you want to feel like you have traveled back in time. The Mother Earth Motor Lodge is conveniently located in Downtown and has been meticulously renovated to be a time capsule of the 1960s. There are 45 rooms – standard, economy and suites – equipped with a refrigerator, microwave and subtle accents of avocado green. The center courtyard features a three-ring pool, shuffleboard and 9-hole mini golf for outside entertainment. The whole experience is groovy. And, yes, this version of the 60s includes free Wi-Fi.



## The O'Neil: Feel rich just by walking into the lobby.

Should you visit downtown for dinner at Chef and the Farmer, and a nightcap at The Office, or if you want to stroll over to The Laughing Owl, have a beer at Mother Earth Brewing's taproom, there is only one place you can stay that is two blocks away from everything – The O'Neil. This luxury hotel was opened in 2015 in what was once an old bank. There are seven chic and eclectic rooms guests can reserve. Each has a different décor theme that can provide the perfect accommodations for traveling families looking to keep their kids safe behind bars for a night.



## Glamptopia: Glampers, this one's for you.

Welcome to Kinston's luxury campground and world-class outdoor living stay. It's for those who love the outdoors, just not the minimalist, roughing it version. Tent accommodations like you've never seen – raised platforms, electricity, comfy beds, and a full, private bath. There's also fire pits and hot tubs to warm your heart. Tiny cottage homes with kitchens, bathrooms, AC and Wi-Fi. Screened porch platforms, cots, fire pits, grills – camping... minus the tent and bugs. For true tent campers, there are sites with access to a bathhouse & water. Get close to nature without giving up comfort.



### Need more information:

Check out VisitKinston.com for the latest events, themed tours, local stories, and more to plan your next trip. Or reach out to us directly, tell us what you like, and we'll build a custom itinerary.



### Ready to explore:

Scan here for the Kinston Quick Guide, a handy mobile friendly site that gives one-click directions to all our attractions, shops, restaurants, and lodging.







**Welcome**

All About  
Kinston

Maps of  
the Area

Annual Events

Top Things to Do/  
Annual Events



# KINSTON

Lenoir County, North Carolina



Kinston Visitors Center  
101 East New Bern Road  
Kinston, NC 28504

[visitkinston.com](http://visitkinston.com)

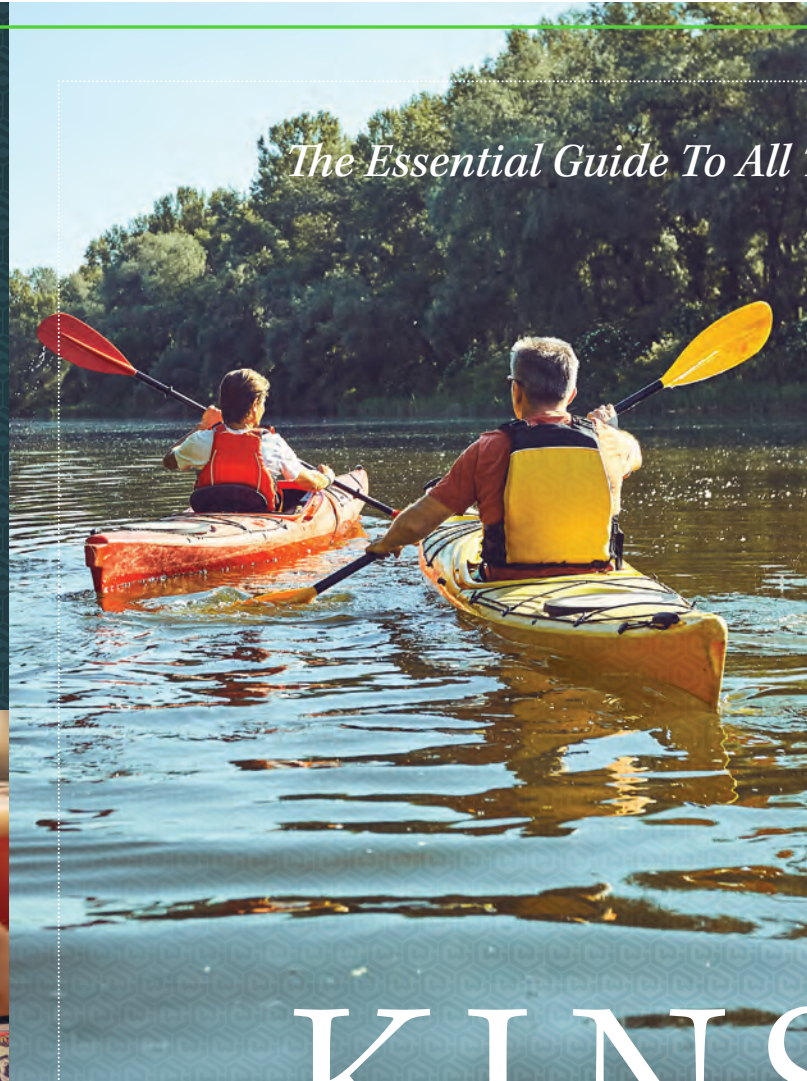
 WONDER GUIDES



*The Essential Guide To  
All Things Southern With A Kick*

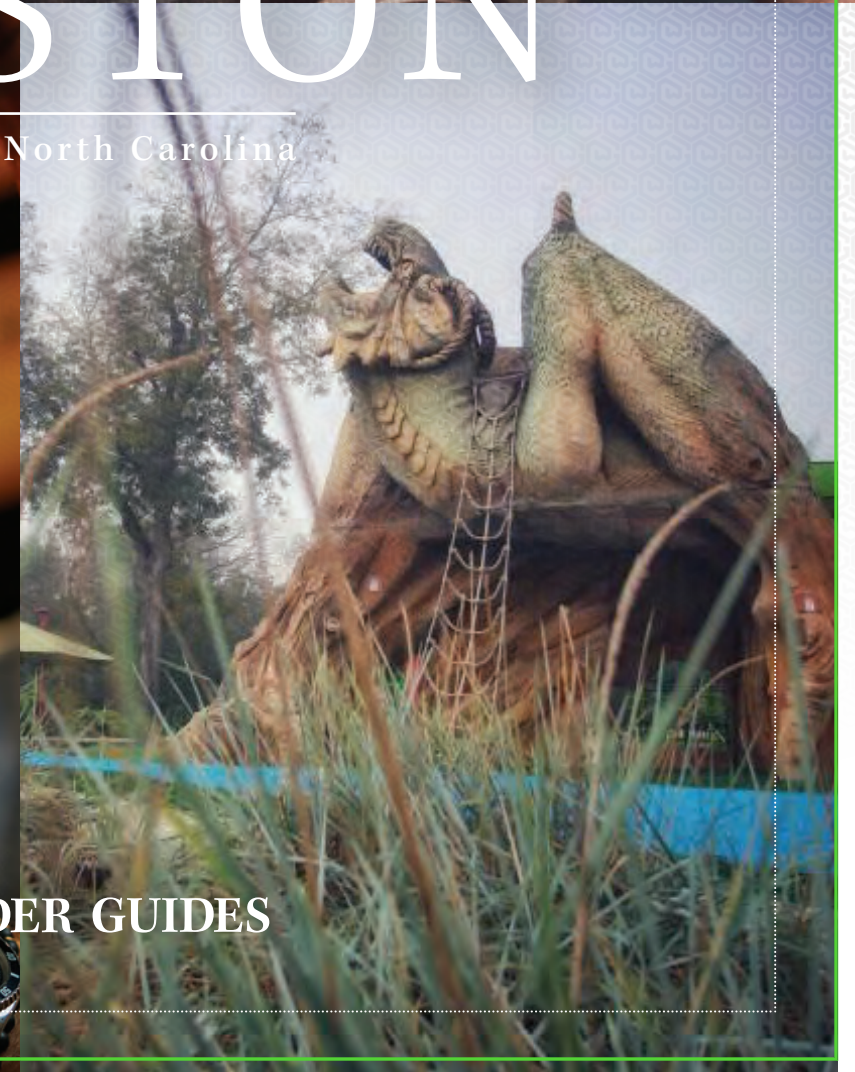
[visitkinston.com](http://visitkinston.com)

*The Essential Guide To All Things Southern With A Kick*



# KINSTON

Lenoir County, North Carolina



 WONDER GUIDES