

Clarendon Bridge Company ^[1]

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by Jean B. Anderson, 2006

The Clarendon Bridge Company of [Cumberland County](#) ^[2] was established in 1818 by legislative act for the purpose of building and maintaining a bridge across the [Cape Fear River](#) ^[3] near [Fayetteville](#) ^[4] (the company name came from an early name of the river). The [General Assembly](#) ^[5] granted the power and authority for these operations to James Seawell and his associates (not named in the act) and further authorized them to collect tolls for passage over the bridge. As it did for ferries, inns, and taverns, the General Assembly set the rates. The highest toll was 75¢ for a four-wheeled pleasure carriage and the lowest 2.5¢ per head for hogs and sheep.

The Clarendon Bridge Company issued shares to finance the building of the bridge, which was completed in 1820. The largest shareholder, with 53 of the total 74 shares, was [Ithiel Town](#) ^[6], the illustrious New England engineer and architect, who used his original lattice truss plan (patented in 1820) to build the suspension bridge. Town is better known in North Carolina, however, as senior partner of the pioneer New York [architectural firm of Town and Davis](#) ^[7], whose work on the [North Carolina State Capitol](#) ^[8], completed in 1840, helped to create a neoclassical masterpiece.

The Clarendon Bridge, and presumably the company, survived until March 1865, when Gen. William J. Hardee's wing of the [Confederate](#) ^[9] army burned the bridge to delay pursuing Union forces led by [Gen. William T. Sherman](#) ^[10].

Reference:

John A. Oates, *The Story of Fayetteville and the Upper Cape Fear* (1972).

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

[Fayetteville](#) ^[16]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[17]

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