

Drawbridges ^[1]

Drawbridges



Beaufort Channel Drawbridge. Image courtesy by Harry L. Thompson, 2006 of Flickr user Susan Smith. ^[2]

Drawbridges ^[3] were built in North Carolina prior to the American Revolution ^[4] for the purpose of crossing large rivers. At that time, ferries enabled colonial travelers and tourists to traverse deep water instead of traveling many miles inland looking for a shallow ford, and a floating bridge or barge—which could be swung aside to allow the passage of ships to plantations ^[5] above—could be used on narrow streams. Larger rivers, though, presented a greater problem.

The state's first drawbridge was built by Benjamin Herron ^[3] across the Cape Fear River ^[6] at Wilmington ^[7]. In 1774 a second bridge was constructed across the Cashie River at Windsor in Bertie County ^[8]. Drawbridges of that era were typically made of cypress timber, with the drawing mechanism consisting of "3 large iron hinges on each side"; the bridge was opened by "four iron chains and weights with iron sheaves and rollers at the heads of the posts." A few modern navigable waterways in North Carolina, notably the Intracoastal Waterway, are spanned at some point by a drawbridge.

Reference:

Alan D. Watson, *Bertie County: A Brief History* (1982).

Additional Resources:

Early Drawbridge ^[3], NC Historical Marker D-22, NC Office of Archives & History

NCDOT: North Carolina Drawbridges: <http://www.ncdot.gov/travel/drawbridges/> ^[9]

Image Credit:

Beaufort Channel Drawbridge. Image courtesy of Flickr user Susan Smith. Available from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cellphonesusie/5937860941/> ^[2] (accessed August 22, 2012)

Subjects:

Architecture ^[10]

Inland water transportation ^[11]

Roads ^[12]

Authors:

Thompson, Harry L. ^[13]

Origin - location:

Beaufort County ^[14]

Carteret County ^[15]

New Hanover County ^[16]

Pasquotank County ^[17]

Pender County ^[18]

Perquimans County ^[19]

Pitt County ^[20]

Tyrrell County ^[21]

From:

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press. ^[22]

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