

York River Ferry

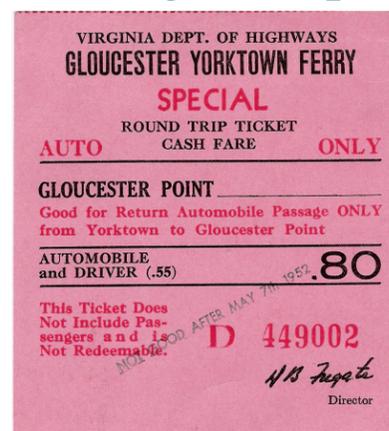
Records indicate that regular ferry service began here as early as 1647 to cross the river between Yorktown and Gloucester Point. Ferries were licensed by the Virginia House of Burgesses and tolls, equipment, and services were regulated by colonial and later state government.

Two women, Janet Mitchell and Mary Gibbons of Yorktown, managed the ferry business in 1774. They advised “Gentlemen who cross to pay their Ferriages at the Swan Tavern” and they also assured customers reading the April 1 issue of the Virginia Gazette that “the Ferry shall be kept inferiour to none in the Colony.”

The first ferries were powered by men using oars. Later, a cable was used to pull boats across. The invention of the internal combustion engine meant boats could motor across the channel. When the George P. Coleman Bridge opened in 1952, the Virginia Department of Transportation discontinued ferry service in this location.



*Last day of service of the York River Ferry, May 7, 1952.
Photo courtesy of the Watermen's Museum.*



*Image courtesy of
Bonnie and Jerry Karwac, Jr.*

