

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Carteret	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Gibbs House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
903 Front Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Beaufort (Third Congressional District, The Hon. David N. Henderson)

STATE: North Carolina      CODE: 37      COUNTY: Carteret      CODE: 031

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
Comments: _____ _____ _____			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Miss Lessie Arrington

STREET AND NUMBER:  
903 Front Street

CITY OR TOWN: Beaufort      STATE: North Carolina      CODE: 37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Carteret County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: Beaufort      STATE: North Carolina      CODE: 37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gibbs House is a handsome Greek Revival dwelling overlooking the wide Taylor's Creek waterfront. Like so many Beaufort buildings, it is a frame house dominated by a two-tier porch, but it is distinguished from its neighbors by its more sophisticated proportions and detail.

The house, five bays wide and four deep, is roughly square in configuration, with its boxlike appearance emphasized by the very shallow hip roof and unusually wide eaves. The eaves are boxed below a molded cornice, and the roof is pierced by two interior chimneys with molded caps. The house rests on a low foundation of stuccoed brick. Protecting the three central bays of the five-bay main (south) facade is a two-tier porch with four paneled posts, square in section and terminating in molded caps, at each level. Between the posts on each floor runs a balustrade with bulbous turned balusters beneath a heavy rail. The balusters flanking the steps and those at the second level, however, are cut in half vertically: their outer faces appear turned, but their backs are flat. The second-story porch roof--and presumably the posts that support it--are said by the present owner, who is now in her eighties, to have been added by her grandmother. A sketch of the waterfront area published in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, May 31, 1884, shows only a gallery at the second level of the porch.

The central entrance contains a wide single door flanked by sidelights beneath a five-light transom; the whole is enframed by a molded architrave. The door has three long vertical flat panels above three shorter ones, all outlined by very heavy molding. The second-level and rear doors are similar but have no sidelights or transoms. The windows, which are quite large, are set in molded frames above plain sills. Those at the first level contain nine-over-nine sash; those at the second, nine-over-six--a pattern that continues around the house. The first-floor front door and the windows are fitted with louvered shutters. The windows on the sides occur in two pairs. A one-story hip roof porch extends across the rear facade, and there is a circa 1900 one-story kitchen wing at the northeast corner.

The interior of the house is precisely what is suggested by the exterior. It follows a center-hall plan, two rooms deep, and the spaciousness of the rooms is enhanced by the size of the windows, which are nearly floor-length. The walls are plastered above rather wide two-part baseboards. The doors have four flat panels with broad moldings. The architraves are unusual but resemble others of the period found in Beaufort; they have plain corner blocks, but the frames are three-part molded ones rather than being symmetrically molded as is typical of the style. The mantel in the south-east parlor is the most ornate in the house. It is of cast iron, with a round-arched opening beneath a scrolled console keystone with foliated ornament, below a slightly molded shelf. The opening is filled with an elaborate grate cover with scroll and leaf design. The mantels in the other rooms in the house are simple wooden ones of typical Greek Revival form, with pilasters supporting a plain frieze beneath a molded shelf.

The hall is divided by a transverse arch that springs from flat-paneled pilasters. The soffit is also flat-paneled, and the keystone is fully molded. The stair in the rear hall ascends in one long flight and one short

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one with an intervening transverse landing. Slender balusters, square in section, and a heavy chamfered newel with rounded cap support the heavy rounded handrail. Each tread is adorned with a simple scroll bracket, one of which occurs on the short fascia of the landing. Along the fascia of the small landing at the top of the second flight of stairs is a band with incised wave-pattern ornament.

The plan and finish of the second floor are like the first, except that the architraves are two-part rather than three-part.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Because of Beaufort's isolation, national architectural fashions had little effect on most of the coastal town's buildings; the basic style used for dwellings was arrived at rather early in its history and was used for generations. The Gibbs House, an important element of the waterfront, is a notable exception because of its emphatic Greek Revival proportions and detail. Its significance is enhanced by its direct orientation to the water and its nearly unaltered condition. In addition, the use of the house in the late nineteenth century by the Johns Hopkins marine scientists (one room used as a small laboratory-dark room survives) makes it quite significant in the development of the town as a marine biology center. Much of the history of marine biology in the United States can be traced directly to the work accomplished in Beaufort from the 1860s--and in this house during the 1880s.

The house was built by Seth Gibbs about 1851 on part of lots 13 and 14, New Town. Gibbs later moved to Middleton, Hyde County, North Carolina, and a sales notice in the July 1, 1857, Beaufort Journal, listed a dwelling house and other buildings on the lot. It noted further that "Its position renders it very desirable especially in the summer season and it commands a beautiful view of the ocean immediately in front." At that time and until well into the twentieth century the house was located directly overlooking the water, and the street in front of the house was not constructed until the 1930s. The line of the original waterfront can be clearly seen in the front yard.

The structure was owned or occupied by various tenants until 1880 when it was rented for use by the Johns Hopkins Seaside Laboratory. The Johns Hopkins work had begun two years before in the Chesapeake Bay near Baltimore. Beaufort was at the time already famous as a resort for persons interested in marine biology. Zoologists Gill and Stimson had visited there in 1860, and Coues and Yarrow had visited in 1871-1872. In an article in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper for November 20, 1880, it was reported that the Johns Hopkins scientists proposed to

resume the work at Beaufort next Summer, and it is not impossible that a permanent laboratory may be there erected if the location is found, upon thorough trial, to be well adapted for that purpose. At present a large dwelling-house, situated at the water's edge, is made use of for a laboratory. This mansion enjoys no little celebrity from neighbors, and from the fact, often reiterated by inhabitants of

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Beaufort--that it is built of cypress wood and copper nails.

The American Naturalist, Vol. XXXIV, No. 401, noted in 1900 that "A large house near the extreme eastern end of the town was rented continuously, and an excellent equipment, including a 47-foot sloop and a steam launch was provided."

The Johns Hopkins Seaside Laboratory operated here for some ten years, probably the first school of marine biology in the United States. Its existence in the Gibbs House and the work done there was instrumental in the establishment by the United States Government of the Bureau of Fisheries. Professor Baird and others connected with the bureau "investigated the fishes of the region within the first decade of the Bureau's existence, but it was not until June 1, 1899, that a fisheries laboratory was established."

That laboratory, at Beaufort, and the one at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, were established in the same year. Both owe their existence to the pioneer work accomplished by the Johns Hopkins Seaside Laboratory in the Gibbs House.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research by Tony P. Wrenn, consultant; architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, survey specialist.  
Beaufort Journal, July 1, 1857.  
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, November 20, 1880.  
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, May 31, 1884.  
 Wilson, H. V. "Marine Biology At Beaufort," reprinted from The American Naturalist, Vol. XXXIV, No. 401, Boston, Ginn & Company, 1900.  
The Bureau of Fisheries and its Biological Station at Beaufort N.C., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1916.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		34°	43'	01"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		76°	39'	22"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than an acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Survey and Planning Unit Staff

ORGANIZATION: State Department of Archives and History

DATE: 31 August 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh

STATE: North Carolina

CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name H. G. Jones

Title Director, State Department of Archives and History

Date 31 August 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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9.

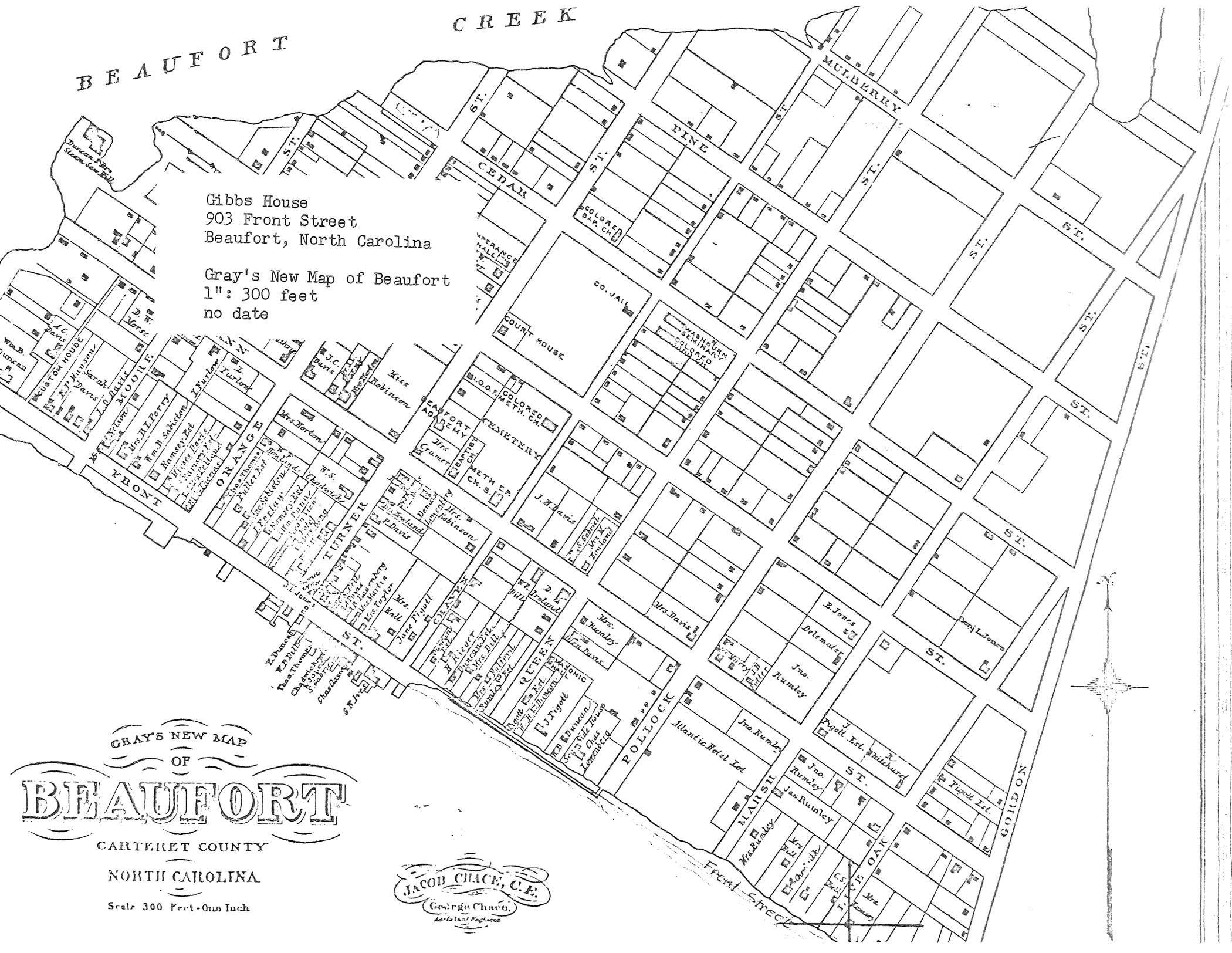
Hildebrand, Dr. Samuel F., Director, "The Bureau of Fisheries and its Biological Station at Beaufort, N.C.," United States Department of Commerce Bureau of Fisheries, Economic Circular, Number 72, July, 1930.  
Coker, R. E. "Laboratory Work and Marine Biology at the University of North Carolina," Elisha Mitchell Society, 84(2).  
Carteret County Records, Carteret County Courthouse, Beaufort, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).  
Carteret County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

# BEAUFORT

# CREEK

Gibbs House  
 903 Front Street  
 Beaufort, North Carolina

Gray's New Map of Beaufort  
 1" : 300 feet  
 no date



GRAY'S NEW MAP

OF

# BEAUFORT

CARTERET COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

Scale 300 Feet - One Inch

JACOB CHACE, C.E.  
 George Chace,  
 Assistant Engineer

