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News Release



NORTH CAROLINA
MUSEUM OF HISTORY

A Smithsonian Affiliate

**North Carolina Museum of History Will Open
River Bridge: Sunken Secrets Traveling Exhibit on April 16**



RALEIGH, NC – March 14, 2022– The exhibition *River Bridge: Sunken Secrets* examines the history of a trade port called River Bridge on the Pasquotank River north of Elizabeth City. In use for hundreds of years by Indigenous people, the name of the site, River Bridge, comes from a bridge built before the Revolutionary War that allowed for easier travel in the twisting backwaters of eastern North Carolina. The site also featured customshouses and warehouses, where workers loaded and unloaded cargo, people shopped for goods, and news circulated from both sides of the Atlantic.

Today, the only reminders of this once-important center of commerce are a few support pilings and several vessels submerged just below the river’s surface, as well as a large collection of artifacts, many of which are spotlighted in this exhibit.

“This unique exhibition shows how archaeology can provide an interesting view into the history of a location that was used for more than 350 years as a center for trade and even visited by George Washington on his southern tour,” Director Ken Howard said.

Visitors will explore the world of River Bridge through over 250 objects that have been excavated from the riverbed. They will see objects that tell the story of the people, goods, and ideas that circulated around the waterways of eastern North Carolina and will gain insight into daily life: what people ate, how they decorated their homes, the trades they worked in, and how they navigated the world around them. They also will learn about the fascinating world of underwater archaeology.

“Can’t Miss” List

1. **Awash in artifacts**—Visitors will see a variety of objects—some of which have been buried underwater for over 400 years!
2. **Imagine global networks**—Explore a map showing some of the objects found at River Bridge and how far they traveled to get there. Do you have any objects from far away?
3. **Touch table**—Visitors can touch and learn about some of the many kinds of pottery found at the site, ranging from fine Chinese porcelain to rough clay vessels.
4. **Listen to the water’s song**—Climb into a replica 400-year-old canoe to imagine what your life would be like if you relied on the water for travel, trade, and food.
5. **Step back in time**—Visitors can immerse themselves in environmental vignettes that re-create a warehouse and showcase shingle production.

[*River Bridge*](#) will be on display at the North Carolina Museum of History from April 16 through September 2, 2022.

River Bridge is a traveling exhibit that resulted from a collaboration between the Underwater Archaeology Branch of the NC Office of State Archaeology and the Museum of the Albemarle.

This traveling exhibit will be open to visitors during normal museum hours. For more information regarding visiting the museum, please refer to <https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/about/plan-your-visit>.

For images, follow this **Dropbox link**.

Image: Barrel hoops

Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: Chinese export porcelain fragments

Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: Creamware teapot

Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: Delftware bowl, 18th century

Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: Earthenware pitcher

Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: Handled porringer
Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: River Bridge Graphic
Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: Snuff bottle
Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: Soda bottle
Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: Stoneware crock
Credit: NC Museum of History

Image: Yellow Ware creamer
Credit: NC Museum of History

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For information about the NC Museum of History, a Smithsonian Affiliate museum, call 919-814-7000 or access ncmuseumofhistory.org or follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), or [YouTube](#).

About the NC Museum of History

The North Carolina Museum of History, a Smithsonian Affiliate, fosters a passion for North Carolina history. This museum collects and preserves artifacts of state history and educates the public on the history of the state and the nation through exhibits and educational programs. **Admission is free.** Before the COVID-19 public closure, more than 465,000 people visited the museum to see some of the 150,000 artifacts in the museum collection. The Museum of History, within the Division of State History Museums, is part of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

About the Smithsonian Affiliations Network

Since 2006, the North Carolina Museum of History has been a Smithsonian Affiliate, part of a select group of museums and cultural, educational, and arts organizations that share Smithsonian resources with the nation. The Smithsonian Affiliations network is a national outreach program that develops long-term collaborative partnerships with museums and other educational and cultural organizations to enrich communities with Smithsonian resources. More information is available at affiliations.si.edu.

About the Museum of the Albemarle

The Museum of the Albemarle is located at 501 S. Water Street, Elizabeth City, NC. Call 252-335-1453 or access museumofthealbemarle.com for information. Also, find the museum on Facebook. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. The museum is closed Sundays and state holidays.

Serving Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington Counties, the museum is the northeast regional history museum of the North Carolina Division of State History Museums within the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, the state agency with the mission to enrich lives and communities and the vision to harness the state's cultural resources to build North Carolina's social, cultural, and economic future. Information is available at DNCR.nc.gov

About the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational, and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR's mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries, and natural assets in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, two science museums, three aquariums, and Jennette's Pier, as well as 39 state parks and recreation areas, the North Carolina Zoo, the nation's first state-supported symphonic orchestra, the State Library of North Carolina, the State Archives of North Carolina, the North Carolina Arts Council, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, and the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, along with the state Division of Land and Water Stewardship. For more information, call 919-814-6800 or visit DNCR.nc.gov.

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