

New River Navigation Company ^[1]

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by Alan D. Watson, 2006

The New River Navigation Company, incorporated by the [General Assembly](#) ^[2] in 1855, superseded several companies whose efforts had been directed mainly at removing an oyster shoal, or obstruction, at the mouth of the [New River](#) ^[3] in [Onslow County](#) ^[4]. In the late 1830s Congress had appropriated moneys to eliminate the barrier, but the attempts had been unsuccessful. When an 1850 petition by Onslow residents resulted in another appropriation to resurvey the lower New River, it was found that the stubborn oyster bed remained. The legislature now directed the New River Navigation Company to clear the river from its mouth to [Sneads Ferry](#) ^[5], obligated the state to purchase as much as \$20,000 worth of stock in the venture, and permitted the company to charge a toll on river traffic to reward its stockholders.

In November 1855 New River Navigation convened its first meeting, at which the president reported that contracts had already been let to hire a surveyor and secure a dredging machine. Work progressed slowly in 1856 due to a paucity of laborers, sickness of the available men, frequent breakdowns of the dredging machine, and the lack of a dumping boat to carry off spoilage. Nevertheless, by May 1857 the company had opened a 25- to 60-foot channel, 7 feet deep at low tide and 1,975 yards in length. Despite the state's infusion of \$20,000 and an attempt by the General Assembly in 1858 to enlarge the powers of the New River Navigation Company, work apparently ceased by 1859, at which time the company's dredge and dumping boat lay on the bottom of the river.

Reference:

Charles C. Weaver, *Internal Improvements in North Carolina Previous to 1860*(1903).

Additional Resources:

North Carolina Digital Collections: Committe on Internal Improvements-[Bill to include the New River Navigation Company](#) ^[6]

[North Carolina Digital Collections](#) ^[7] search results for New River Navigation Company

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

[Onslow County](#) ^[13]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#)^[14]

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