

Quitrents ^[1]

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by Joanne G. Carpenter, 2006

See also: [Rent Rolls](#); ^[2] [Arrears](#) ^[3]; [Receiver General](#) ^[4]; [State Taxes](#) ^[5]

[Quitrents](#) ^[6] were small annual fees paid by a landowner in [colonial](#) ^[7] North Carolina to the proprietor (or grantor) who had conferred the holding. Rooted in the feudal system, quitrents were more closely related to a tithe than a tax since they released the subject from any further obligation of service to the proprietor. The privilege to collect quitrents—paid to the king in the case of a royal colony—was established in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia as well as in North Carolina. The fee was not based on the value of the land or the ability of the holder to pay but rather on the acreage in the land grant. Although established by charter, the fee could be set aside or manipulated at the will of the receiver. In North Carolina, quitrents originally had to be paid in cash rather than in crops or products. In a society with little ready money, this fee, as well as taxes in general, was always considered odious. Consequently, quitrents were often inefficiently collected.

References:

Beverley W. Bond Jr., *The Quit-rent System in the American Colonies* (1965).

William S. Powell, James K. Huhta, and Thomas J. Farnham, eds., *The Regulators in North Carolina: A Documentary History, 1759-1776* (1971).

Additional Resources:

[William Byrd's histories of the dividing line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina](#) ^[8] by William Byrd (1674-1744), N.C. Office of Archives and History, Dept. of Cultural Resources.

Quit-rents and currency in North Carolina 1663-1776 .. (1902) by Kennedy, Edwin Wexler:
<https://archive.org/details/quitrentscurrenc00kennrich> ^[9]

Land Ownership and Labor in Carolina. ANCHOR: <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/land-ownership-and-labor> ^[10]

Subjects:

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From:

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

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