

# **SELF GUIDED TOUR OF THE NAVIGABLE PORTION OF THE CASHIE RIVER**

## **Joe Huff**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Cashie is probably an Indian name, whose meaning has been lost to history. I would like to think it means slow moving, beautiful river. It is pronounced ca-shy, and has sometimes been spelled Kesiah or Cashy.

Paleo-Indians and their descendents have been living on and using the Cashie for a long time, 8,000 to 10,000 years, maybe longer.

A little geology: it is located on the Talbot Terrace which was formed between two old beach front scarps, the Surry which is older and on the west side of the terrace and the Suffock on the east side, about 800,000 years ago during the Yarmouth Interglacial Event. At some point not long after that, drainage systems began to develop on the terrace. One of them may have been the Cashie.

Total river length is about 55 miles, all within Bertie County. Approximately 25 miles are navigable. It empties into the Albemarle Sound next to the Roanoke River Delta.

There are excellent opportunities for viewing wildlife all along the river, keep your binoculars handy.

### **START: HOGGARD'S MILL BRIDGE aka GREEN'S CROSS BRIDGE**

#### **6500 B.C. – 1600 A.D.**

Several Indian fish camps have been found near here. No signs of permanent dwellings have been found so it is speculated that the sites were just occupied for the spring runs of herring and shad.

#### **Mid 1700's**

This area was called Cashy and was the end of navigable waters. The wide area below the bridge was a turning basin used to turn cargo ships around for the trip back down river. Several of these are located on the river between here and Windsor. There was also a loop channel cut here to accomplish the same task, the upper end has silted in but you'll pass the lower end on your right. There were public and private warehouses located on the loop channel. The first Bertie County courthouse was located near here.

#### **1864**

The planks were removed from an earlier bridge by Union infantry in a three pronged raid designed to trap Confederate calvary that were in Windsor to oversee a local election. A brief skirmish ensued complete with an exchange of artillery fire. The rebs got away by the skin of their teeth.

#### **2008**

SR 1301 bridge was completed in the fall of 2008. The previous bridge was built in the 1930's. The earliest bridge built here was constructed about 1712.

### **MILE POST 1**

#### **2008**

The twin Highway 17 Bridges you just paddled under were also completed in 2008. This is the first bridge to be located at this crossing.

### **MILE POST 2**

This oxbow was straightened, maybe naturally. If you were going downstream and went right, you got the scenic tour.

### **1930's**

Two canals were dug to facilitate drainage in Windsor. This is the western one and will take you to South York Street in Windsor. There is a walkway along the canal and a boardwalk that crosses through the swamp to the eastern canal and back to South York Street.

### **2008**

Alligator weed a non-native invasive weed is found growing in this section. Plans are in place to control it in 2009.

## **MILE POST 3 THROUGH 4: WINDSOR**

### **1580's**

The English explorers were in the Albemarle Sound and probably rowed up the Cashie a ways, maybe to present day Windsor.

### **Mid to Late 1650's**

Virginia colonists begin settling in Bertie County, some no doubt along the Cashie.

### **1750's**

The upper Cashie was becoming a center for commerce and trade. Several landings with wharfs and road connections were busy shipping tar, pitch, turpentine, staves, salt pork, salt fish and tobacco. They included Whitmel's, Blackman's and Gray's Landings. Pilings and brick along the shore line are the remains of a once thriving port town. The wide spot in the river was dug out to facilitate turning passenger and cargo sailing ships.

### **1768**

Gray's Landing becomes Windsor by charter from the Colonial Assembly.

### **~1774**

The second drawbridge in North Carolina was built over the Cashie at Windsor, near the present day Highway 17 Bridge.

### **1775**

Ferry service crossing the Cashie at Windsor ended.

### **1777**

William Gray builds a shipyard on the site next to the Roanoke Cashie River Center. Many years later the steamer Bertie was built there.

### **1818**

Steamboats begin regular service between Plymouth and Edenton. No doubt they were soon making port calls to Windsor.

### **1864**

A Union cannon ball found near by was the only one fired from one of the Union gunboats during a combined Union infantry and naval raid designed to trap Confederate cavalry sent to Windsor to oversee a local election.

### **1898**

The Wellington & Powellville, a narrow gauge railroad, laid rails from dockside warehouses to Ahoskie. The W & P was often called the "Walk & Push" railroad because that was what passengers had to do sometimes. The last run was in 1962.

### **1939**

Regular scheduled water traffic on the Cashie ended, supplanted by truck and rail transportation.

**1999**

Hurricanes Floyd and Dennis dump 26 inches of rain in the Cashie headwaters. The water level in Windsor rises 12 feet and floods downtown homes and businesses. The 1940 flood put about 15 feet of water in Windsor.

**MILE POST 4 ½**

**1930's**

US Army Corps of Engineers straightens the river out by cutting across three oxbows located here, at the 7 mile mark and at the 7 1/2 mile mark. They also cut across one in Windsor.

**MILE POST 5**

You just passed the Bertie County Jail and the Sheriffs' Association shooting range. They don't shoot towards the river so don't worry if you hear some shots fired.

**MILE POST 7**

Bald Eagles have been seen on this part of the river.

**MILE POST 7 ¾**

Roquist (Tuscarora word for turtle) Creek joins the Cashie from the southwest.

**MILE POST 9 ¾**

**1880**

Greenleaf & Johnson Lumber Co., a Pennsylvania company built a super modern (for the time) steam powered sawmill at this site, now referred to as Johnson's Mill. It was a double cut band mill with cutting teeth on both edges of the band so that boards could be cut every time the log passed by the saw. They had a railroad that brought logs directly from the woods to the mill and wharfs to ship lumber by steamship to northern cities. The mill was moved to Norfolk in 1912. Foreman-Blades Lumber Co. bought the G & J land and set up portable mills and continued to ship lumber to their mill in Elizabeth City for further processing. Foreman-Blades finished harvesting their tracts in the 1930's.

Wading Place Creek flows into the Cashie from the northeast.

**MILE POST 13 ¼**

**1864**

Union gunboats unloaded Union infantry here at Cooper's Landing. They marched up Cooper Hill Road to the Edenton Road (now Hwy 17) where they divided their forces. Half marched west towards Windsor and the other half went on to Hoggards Mill Bridge where they removed the bridge planks to block the Confederate Calvary from escaping. See mile post 1.

**1940's**

Cooper's sand pit, on the north side of the river, has a river entrance because sand was initially moved by barge.

**MILE POST 13 ¾**

**2003**

Lost Boat camping platform is on the south side of the river back in the swamp.

**MILE POST 17 ½**

**1 A.D. – 1600 A.D.**

Tandequemuc, a large Tuscarora Indian village was located on the south side of the river in the area now in farm fields.

**1720's**

Tomlinson's Ferry was established here, at what is now called now Sans Souci Ferry.

### **Early 1800's**

A post office was set up at this ferry landing. When the Postal Service asked the land owner what he wanted to call the post office, he replied, "I don't care", so they named it Sans Souci, which of course is French for "without a care".

### **1930's**

The new Sans Souci Ferry goes into service, diesel powered and cable guided with a capacity of two cars.

### **1930's**

During prohibition a large, illegal still operated in the swamp on the north side of the river. It operated 3 shifts a day and had a steam whistle which was blown at shift changes. The moonshine was smuggled north to New York City where it was known as Sans Souci whisky and was much in demand.

### **MILE POST 18 $\frac{3}{4}$**

The Thoroughfare connector between the Cashie and the Roanoke enters from the south.

### **MILE POST 20**

### **1777**

A prominent Loyalist landowner William Brimage took part in a plot along with John Llewelyn and about 30 other conspirators to assassinate several Whig leaders and to capture Governor Caswell and the state armory in Halifax. The conspiracy was discovered before it could be carried out and Brimage was forced into exile in England. His plantation on the north side of the river was confiscated by North Carolina and sold.

### **MILE POST 23**

Broad Creek enters from the south, Otter camping platform is at the head of the creek.

### **MILE POST 23 $\frac{1}{2}$**

Grennell Creek enters from the south.

### **MILE POST 24**

Middle River enters from the south.

### **1968**

Highway 45/308 Bridge is built over the Cashie, Middle and Roanoke Rivers.

### **MILE POST 25**

Cashoke Creek enters from the west.

One of these islands on the south side of the Cashie may have buried Confederate gold.

### **MILE POST 25 $\frac{1}{2}$**

Terrapin Point is on the north side, Albemarle Sound is dead ahead.

### **1587**

Did Walter Raleigh's Lost Colony pass by here?

### **1717**

Blackbeard sailed by here on his way to visit Governor Eden who lived a few miles north of here.

### **References:**

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