



## QUICK FACT FRIDAY



### *Ferry Services*

Transportation to and from Charleston has always been important to the economic growth of Mount Pleasant. The Historical Commission, over the month of August, will reveal how some of our important forms of transportation have evolved over the past 200-plus years. Today, we cover ferry services.

In this day of automobile travel it is hard to imagine how important ferry service was to Mount Pleasant and East of the Cooper prior to the opening of the Grace Memorial Bridge in 1929. Ferry services started in the 1770's and were operated over the years by many different companies. In many cases the vessels themselves were transferred to the succeeding company. They carried thousands of passengers to work and school in Charleston, and brought tourists to recreational places East of the Cooper. During a leisurely 20-minute voyage, passengers got acquainted and transacted business en route. If notified ahead of time, schedules could be adjusted for particular events. The approaching ferry's bells and engines formed part of the Village sounds with an identity all their own. "One ended" ferries needed to turn around to off load the passengers.

There were several docking sites in Mount Pleasant for the various ferry companies. By 1832, Milton's Ferry offered a ferry service to and from Charleston by way of a canal dug through the marsh located near where the Arthur Ravenel, Jr. Bridge stands today. The first ferry operator there was William Mathewes, locally pronounced "Mathis" as in Mathis Ferry Road. Hibben's Ferry operated from the south side of Shem Creek until 1847, followed by others on Hog Island (now Patriots Point), Ferry Street, and Hort's Grove. The Ferry Street Ferry began about 1847 as the Mount Pleasant Ferry Company and was located at the foot of Ferry Street. The Hibben Street Ferry (not to be confused with the similarly named but earlier Hibben's Ferry) was the next company to be formed and it operated from the foot of Hibben Street. In 1898, it was chosen by Dr. J.L. Lawrence and associates to bring tourists to the Isle of Palms resort. Trolleys met the ferries at the wharf and the passengers took a leisurely ride through Mount Pleasant and across trestle bridges to Sullivan's Island and the Isle of Palms. Stops were called stations and Sullivan's Island still uses that designation instead of street names. With the advent of the automobile, the ferries were adapted to transport them as well.

Text and image credits: [List of Historical Markers in Mount Pleasant](#), [Mount Pleasant Historical Marker Map](#), [mountpleasanthistorical.org](http://mountpleasanthistorical.org), and excerpts from *Mount Pleasant: The Victorian Village* by Mary-Julia Royall.

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The Town of Mount Pleasant Historical Commission releases Quick Fact Fridays about the history of Mount Pleasant and about the Commission, its programs and activities. Historical facts are drawn largely from the *Our History* section of the Town's website. Follow the link below to discover what makes Mount Pleasant such a distinctive historical place! To receive Quick Fact Friday messages and other Town notifications, sign up for *Notify Me* alerts [here](#).

## Our History

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