



# Ferry Boat



museum & workshop

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## What were these boats used for?

A ferry boat is a watercraft that carries passengers, vehicles, and cargo across bodies of water. There are many different types and designs of ferries depending on the length of the route, the passenger or vehicle capacity required, the speed requirements, and the water conditions that the craft must manage.<sup>1</sup> Historically, ferries were developed as a means to transport people, livestock, goods, and vehicles across bodies of water where there were no fixed bridges or accessible crossings. This served as a vital link between communities and facilitated trade, commerce, and travel. Today, the ferry boat plays a similar, and significant role in maritime transportation.<sup>2</sup>

## Who used these boats and where?

Ferry boats are used almost everywhere in the world. Today, ferries and services are used by people for their daily commute to and from work. Tourists and residents use ferries as a means to explore a new scene or to conduct their daily lives. Ferry boats are commonly used for the transportation of vehicles and cargo. In some instances, like natural disasters, ferries are vital to emergency services for evacuating people or transporting necessary supplies.<sup>3</sup>

## When were these boats used?

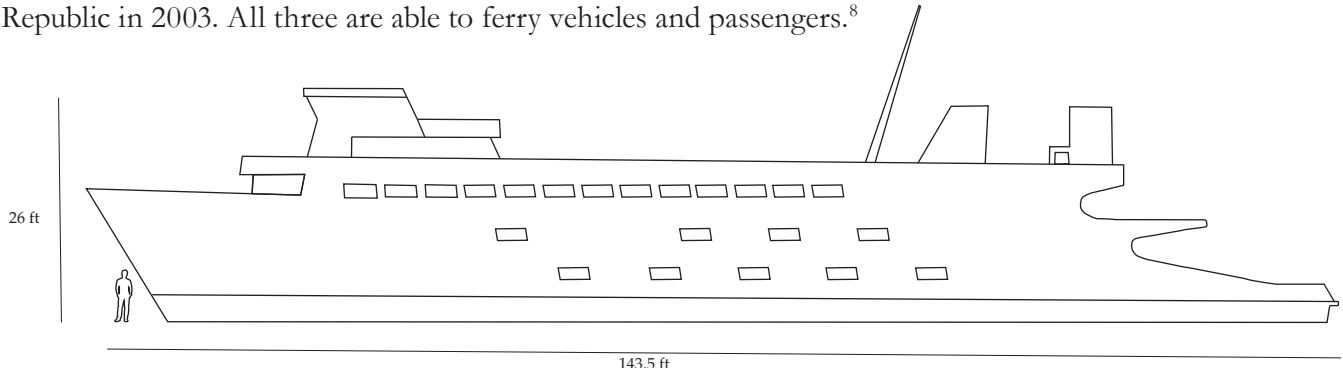
The earliest recorded ferry use in Connecticut dates back to the colonial period when the Hartford Ferry was established in 1640, operating between Hartford and East Hartford. By 1700, Connecticut had 11 well-used ferry crossings. These were located on the Connecticut River at Windsor, Hartford, Wethersfield, Haddam, and Old Saybrook; the Housatonic in Stratford; the Quinnipiac in New Haven; the Niantic in East Lyme; and the Thames River at Norwich and New London.<sup>4</sup> Although these earlier forms of ferries were rowed or sailed, over time, the transportation, trade, and communication demand in Connecticut pushed the ferry boat system to employ much larger boats that were powered by steam, and by the mid-1900's, by internal combustion engines.<sup>5</sup>

## How were these boats made?

Ferry boats are typically constructed in a shipyard and are almost entirely made from welded steel by builders called shipwrights who are trained in naval engineering.<sup>6</sup>

## Where to Visit:

There are a number of active ferry services that are in Connecticut. Three individual ferries operate under the Bridgeport-Port Jefferson Ferry service.<sup>7</sup> The oldest is the Park City built in 1986, followed by the PT Barnum in 1998, and the Grand Republic in 2003. All three are able to ferry vehicles and passengers.<sup>8</sup>



1. <https://www.britannica.com/technology/ferryboat>
- 2, 4. <https://connecticuthistory.org/ferry-boats-a-way-of-life-in-early-connecticut/>
3. <https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/marchapril-2014/where-water-meets-road>
5. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/transportation-and-communication-systems-new-nation>
6. <https://www.freightlink.co.uk/knowledge/articles/shipbuilding-making-worlds-ferries>
7. <https://www.88844ferry.com/about-us/a-look-at-the-fleet/>
8. <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Frequent-floaters-commute-at-speed-of-Sound-4215396.php>