WATCH EDENTON GROW!
Mother Town of North Carolina
Capital of the Albemarle

THE CHOWAN HERALD

A HOME NEWSPAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF CHOWAN COUNTY

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Much Material Used In New Bridge

ENGINEERING FEAT BY CONTRACTORS; ACTUAL COST OF SPAN ITSELF $1,341,000

Necessary to Transport Many Piles From Pacific Coast Ranging 65 to 105 Feet In Length

Statistical history behind the construction of the Albemarle Sound bridge as furnished freely by both of the large contracting firms responsible for the beauty and safety of the great vehicular span, in no sense minimizes the importance of the crossway as an engineering feat of sterling importance, but they do offer some corrections as to cost and length which have figured so generously and inaccurately in the public prints since the bridge was first started in the late spring of 1937.

It has been so simple for a careless newspaper writing to refer to the bridge as a $2,000,000 structure, thus opening the way for considerable mid-state editorial criticisms, criticisms, by the way, from sections which have rolled and still roll in state highway allotments to the detriment of the entire Albemarle which frankly, has figured meanly in the expenditure of state and federal funds for such improvements. Even totaling in the bridge cost the Albemarle has had but little from the state. Its connecting advantages have had to be centered about the construction of water bridges, and for reasons which must be obvious to those who know this watergirt section of the state.

For instance during the entire life of its existence Edenton has been isolated from the rest of the state until the advent of the Chowan River bridge, also referred to as a "wasteful extravagance," but which has justified itself a thousand fold in increased opportunities for marketing the products of the whole state, for making it possible for tourists to reach the north, south, east and west with greater freedom and ease, and for those who have sought recreation on the ocean front. How, it might be asked, would the famed "Lost Colony" pageant be carried on to fulsome and worthwhile conclusion were it not for this same Chowan River bridge? No, the criticism then was that of self-seekers for the spoils of highway plunder, as is the same criticism being voiced today against the Albemarle Sound over-water-thoroughfare.

But back to costs. The bridge did not cost $2,000,000, actually not much more than one-half that amount—a renewed evidence of journalistic freedom in writing. The official cost expenditures show that North Carolina is spending only around $841,000 for the bridge work, and that an additional amount aggregating $500,000 has been or will be paid the contractors by the Federal government's Bureau of Roads. This makes a total of $1,341,000 for the bridge proper.

Of course the highway terminal approaches are not included in this. Their cost will be around $400,000 more, or a grand total of $1,741,000 for bridge and approaches, which, even so is far below the $2,000,000 exploitation figure.

Another correction, of not so grave an importance, would lessen somewhat the exact length of the bridge. When the bridge was first proposed at the time agitation would have placed it on its present site, opponents of the Sandy Point-Leonard Point location screamed that it would mean a seven mile bridge and that a crossway, a double sort of crossway, over the Roanoke and Cashie rivers into the Bertie marshlands, would be shorter and thus less expensive.

The exact figures released by the Tidewater Construction Corporation, of Norfolk, and T. A. Loving & Company, the general bridge contractors, show the bridge today to be 17,902 feet in length, or actually less than three and one-half miles. This will prove interesting for the general impression has been to say the bridge is four miles long.

The approaches all add to this, of course—totaling around eight miles of highway construction to make connections with trunk line roads.

Magnificent as the bridge appears to those who have used it or will do so few still understand the inherent human story that lies behind and beneath it. Take, for instance, the constructing material. Great wooden piling had to be sunk into the mud of the Sound waters. Except for near shore pilings no suitably lengthed trees could be found in the East of sufficient size and strength to support the bridge. These piling ran from 65 feet to 105 feet in length. To secure the latter was the problem that faced the state highway commission engineers.

The entire United States was canvassed and it was finally decided that the tall fir trees of California, great sister trees to the gigantic redwoods of the Western coast, would be best adaptable to all needs. A whole forest of these was cut down and trained across the country, 3,000 miles, to be sunk into the Albemarle waters.

But before these California firs could be slid into their watery grave they had to be protected against the animal minutae and other water dangers by being creosoted. So before arriving on the Sound they were shunted down to Wilmington and there dipped numerously into the vicious black liquid preservative, afterward coming by train and boat to the scenes of construction on both sides.

Considering the north side end of the bridge first, let it be said the Tidewater folks say that from Sandy Point to the central draw has a length of 7,675 feet, with a clear roadway width of 22 feet, which makes a roadway breadth almost sufficient for three vehicles to pass in ease and safety while abreast.

Of the materials used by the Tidewater people, again up to the draw, were 1,251 creosoted piling 65 to 105 feet in length, 123 of which were under 70 feet and were of native

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MINGLING OF THE OLD AND MODERN MAKES EDENTON IDEAL PLACE TO LIVE

Hard Worker

E. W. SPIRES

But for the persistent efforts of Mr. Spires, early progress in securing the Albemarle bridge might have been abandoned. It was Mr. Spires' fighting disposition and willingness to meet almost unsurmountable odds that the bridge subject was kept in the forefront and eventually realized.

Calm and Security Prevail Which Appeals To Many Who Have Come Here to Live

BY CHARLES AYLETT ASHBY, CACIQUE

It is said that no one can tell the truth about his home town. I shall attempt to tell the truth as to Edenton, though I realize that partiality may show itself, for frankly, I like this town, and do not object to saying so. It has much that commends. Not the big White Lights of some of our larger cities, but enough light to get around in, and there is a calm and security here which appeals. The town has been here for over two hundred years. Some historians say the oldest permanent settlement in North Carolina; others give this palm to Bath. General Benbury fought in the Revolution. His descendants are here now. Badhams have been here almost since the first, and prominent folks too. Augustus Moores lie thick in old St. Paul's Churchyard, four of them, I think it is, judges, lawyers of fame. Augustus Moore is our cotton mill operator today. The A. S. Smith crowd go right back to Westover, through the Blands. Came here years ago. And so I might enumerate many more

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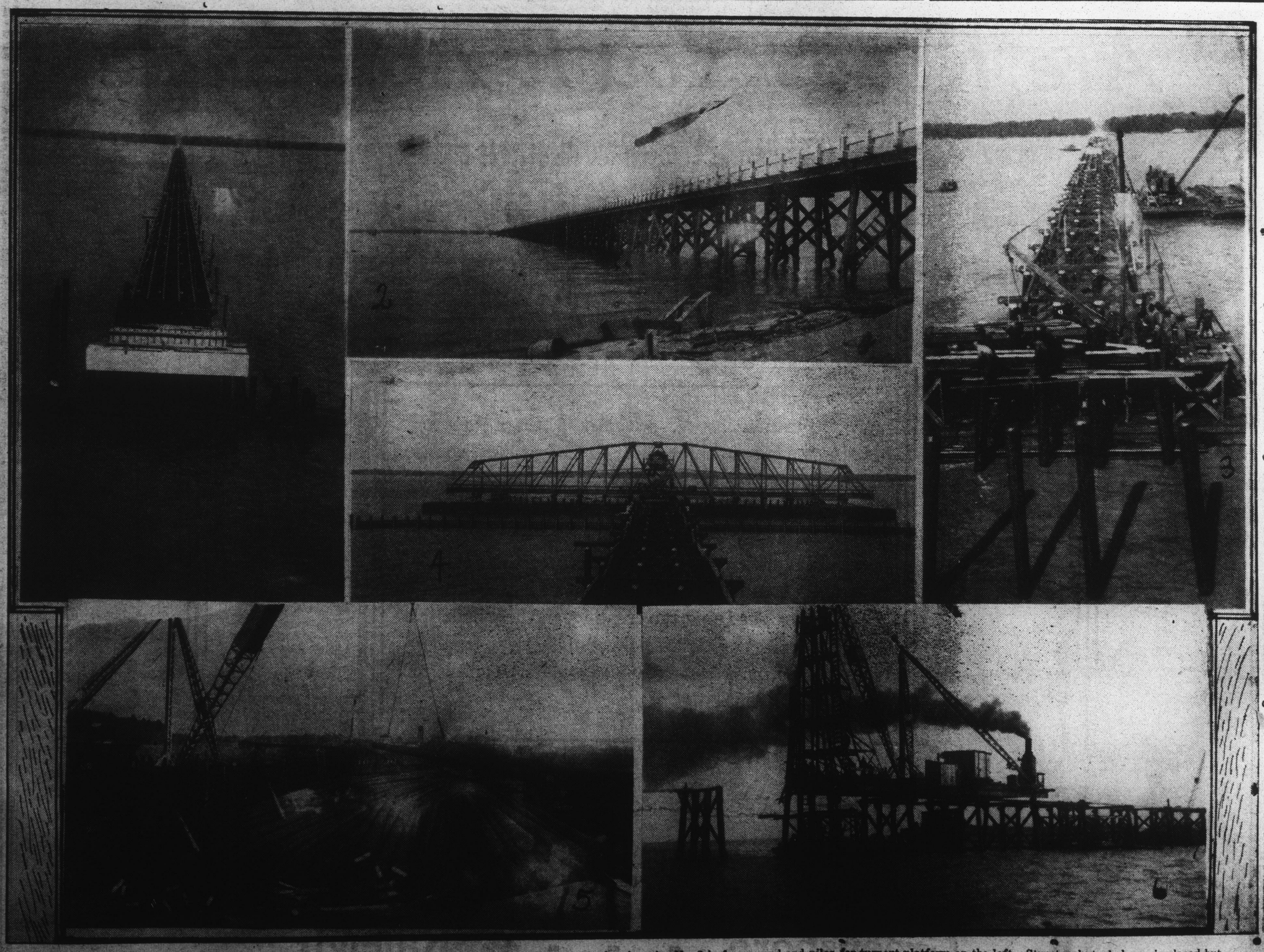
Progress Pictures Showing Construction Of New Bridge



No. 1—Birdseye of Albemarle Sound bridge under construction from the Chowan County side showing pier No. 2 in foreground and piles for turnout platform on the left. Structural steel shown is placed but not in permanent position. No. 2—View of section from south shore of the Sound, showing piles and completed section of hand rail. No. 3—Birdseye view of pile cutting and capping looking north. In background is the approach to the bridge from Chowan County side. No. 4—View of swing span, or draw, 328 feet long, requiring 588,000 tons of structural steel and many tons of concrete, rock, sand and paint. It is turned by hand, electricity and gasoline motor. No. 5—Material yard, showing unloading of piles, a majority coming from the west coast of the United States. None of the required length was obtainable elsewhere. No. 6—Scene showing driving the last pile, March 13, 1938. First pile was placed May 25, 1937, and more than eight miles of piling was used, averaging in length from 40 to 100 feet.