



An American Tour: 11



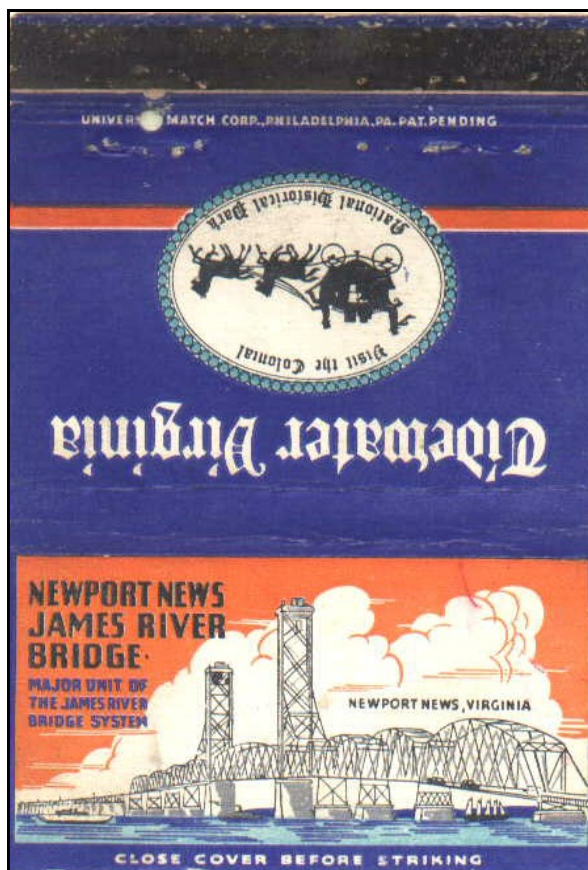
Newport News's James River Bridge

The old bridge was a low-level trestle about 100 feet north of the new bridge. It was completely separate from the new bridge, and it was completely demolished after the new bridge opened, except for the 1/2-mile section from the Newport News shore which remains as a fishing pier.

The first fixed link across Hampton Roads was the two-lane US-17 James River Bridge that was completed in 1928. When completed, it was the longest bridge in the world over water. It was narrow, with a 20-foot roadway from curb to curb. The new four-lane bridge was completed in stages from 1975 to 1982. The bridge also carries US-258 and VA-32.

The whole new bridge cost \$75 million, a lot of money for that era back then, and the desire was to build the bridge with road user taxes and without toll revenue bonds. The James River Bridge was a toll facility from its opening in 1928 to 1975 when it became toll-free. Most state DOTs were experiencing funding limitations during that era. For these reasons, it was built in stages.

The bridge in the 1930's



The shipping channel is crossed by a 415-foot long vertical lift span that has 60 feet of vertical clearance when closed. There are no naval installations upstream of this bridge, although there are civilian port facilities in Hopewell and Richmond. The James River Bridge is 4.5 miles long.

[http://www.roadstothefuture.com/US17_JRB.html]

The Bridge in 1983 - photo by Scott Kozel

