

# Memories of the old Jamestown Bridge

**Linnea C. Petersen,  
Jamestown**

My Father worked third shift at Pratt & Whitney in Connecticut. Shortly after he left for work on Sept. 6, 1946 at 10 p.m., my mother went into labor with me. In those days, there was no way she could contact my father so she called Dr. Ceppi, and he told her the point at which she should call him for a ride to South County Hospital. She called Dr. Ceppi at that point and he picked her up at our house on Howland Avenue. Dr. Ceppi instructed the toll collector at the Jamestown Bridge that he was bringing my mother to the hospital to deliver me and to tell my father on his return from work to come directly to South County Hospital. I was born at 2:30 a.m. the next morning. All went well and Dr. Ceppi returned to Jamestown shortly thereafter and updated the toll collector to tell my father he had a daughter and he should turn around and head there. My father learned of my birth from the toll collector!

**Anne Barrett,  
Westwood, Mass.**

Picture this: Our family was driving down to Jamestown for our vacation from our home in Massachusetts in two cars. The first car, a station wagon loaded with suitcases, food, etc., was driven by my husband, with our son riding with him. I was driving the second car, a bright red AMX (from now-defunct American Motors) sports car that had been won in a contest by my daughter, who was riding with me. We knew that it was the last day of tolls on the bridge and that at 12:00 noon the tolls were to be taken off. As we approached the bridge it was almost 12:00, so we slowed down, as we watched my husband drive smartly on, apparently oblivious of the time. This was amazing to us because he is known in the family as being quite parsimonious. The perfect ending to our story is that my husband drove the last car to pay a toll on the bridge, and I drove the first one over without paying. We were disappointed that there was no acknowledgment of our being the first "toll-free" car — no fanfare, no horns blowing, no dignitaries shaking my hand — but the satisfaction of telling this story time and time again, to the chagrin of my husband, has more than made up for the lack of recognition that day.

**Frank P. Mendes,  
Jamestown**

About 25 years ago, my nephew, Luiz, then five years old, would visit from California with his mother, Cindy Ozorio. After picking them up at T.F. Green Airport, we would start the drive back to Jamestown. As we approached the Jamestown Bridge, my father, Joseph Mendez, would say, "Luiz we are going to cross the Dragon Bridge." Once on the bridge, my father would say, "Luiz, we are now on his tail! And now we are going up on his back!" Then as the car's tires would roll over the steel grate and make that distinctive sound, my dad would say, "Luiz, the dragon is mad, can you hear him roar?" I will never forget my little nephew's wide eyes and big smile as my dad would say, "Quick, we must get down the

dragon's neck before he eats us!" Once off the bridge and safely on the island, my little nephew would laugh and say, "That was fun, Grandpa. Let's do it again!" Luiz, not 30 years old, still remembers the fun he had on the Dragon Bridge with his grandfather.

**Carlton T. "Pede" Manchester,  
Jamestown**

During World War II, we lived in Newport, having moved there from Westport Point, Mass. After the war, my dad came home from the Navy and got a job at Quonset Point. He had ways to get from Newport to Quonset in car pools and on a boat, but as he drove through Jamestown he decided that with the Jamestown Bridge he would move his family to Jamestown, as he had become very fond of the island. So with the Jamestown Bridge connecting him with the mainland we always felt that it was the bridge that brought Dad and Mom, myself, Bill and Sam to Jamestown. Later, two other siblings joined us. I will always be thankful for the chain of events that brought me here.

**Anna Templeton-Cotill,  
Jamestown**

In about 1947, as a member of the Brown Flying Club, I was in a Cessna with my instructor, Pat, returning from a trip to Jamestown. In those days, the aircraft carriers would release their planes as they approached the bay. The planes would fly straight to Quonset while the carrier went up the East Passage and around the north end of the Jamestown.

We could hear a group coming and their chatter over our receiver: "Look at that little fellow," they said. "Let's get him!" They dove at us with much noise and

laughter — vroom, vroom, vroom. Pat circled down lower. "OK, we missed him," came over the receiver as they looped around. This time Pat went under the bridge. They sped away over the top and left us shaken but in peace.

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