

Dynamite Blasts Marks End Of Old Ferry 'Contra Costa'

The first of a series of dynamite blasts Friday destroyed part of the hulk of the old "Contra Costa," 460-foot ferry which formerly ran between Morrow Cove and Contra Costa county, and which was abandoned after its purpose had been usurped by the construction of Carquinez bridge which opened in 1927. This is the first of a series of blast experiments on the hulk ordered by Capt. Claude B. Mayo, academy superintendent. Carrying out his orders, Lt. George W. Myers, maintenance engineer at the Academy, supervised work of demolition experts who inserted charges of stick dynamite in the ferry, with the purpose of blasting the ship's remains into sections. These sections will be dragged to shore with safety and greater facility, and then disposed of, probably through burning.

The old Contra Costa ferry remains are one of three hulks ordered eradicated by Captain Mayo, primarily in the interests of safety, following the recent drowning of a little girl who had slipped through the boundary fence of the Academy grounds, and fell unnoticed from one of the hulks on which she was playing. Remains of the other two ships have been burned to the water line and are now barely visible.

HISTORY OF FERRY

Of interest to many Vallejoans who used to travel regularly on the old ferry is this short history of the "Contra Costa," compiled yesterday by Captain Mayo, and released simultaneously with the start of the ship's destruction:

"Fast disappearing into the pages of history are two familiar landmarks at the California Maritime Academy—the old sailing ship Bangor, and another more familiar to Solano and Contra Costa county residents, the car ferry, 'Contra Costa,' now being burned, and wrecked to clear up the shoreline of the Academy.

"Little is known locally of the history of the Bangor. However, the Contra Costa is well known to many as the car ferry that ran between Benicia and Port Costa for many years. The State Department of Architecture asked for bids from local contractors for the removal of these hulks when it was decided that the California Maritime Academy was to be established at its present location, back in 1943.

FATE DETERMINED

"However, because of the urgency of wartime work, and the possibility of costly delays which might be encountered by the contractors, bids were determined at such a high figure that it was decided to let the old hulks stay as they were. Recently, the personnel at the Academy decided that the old hulks should go.

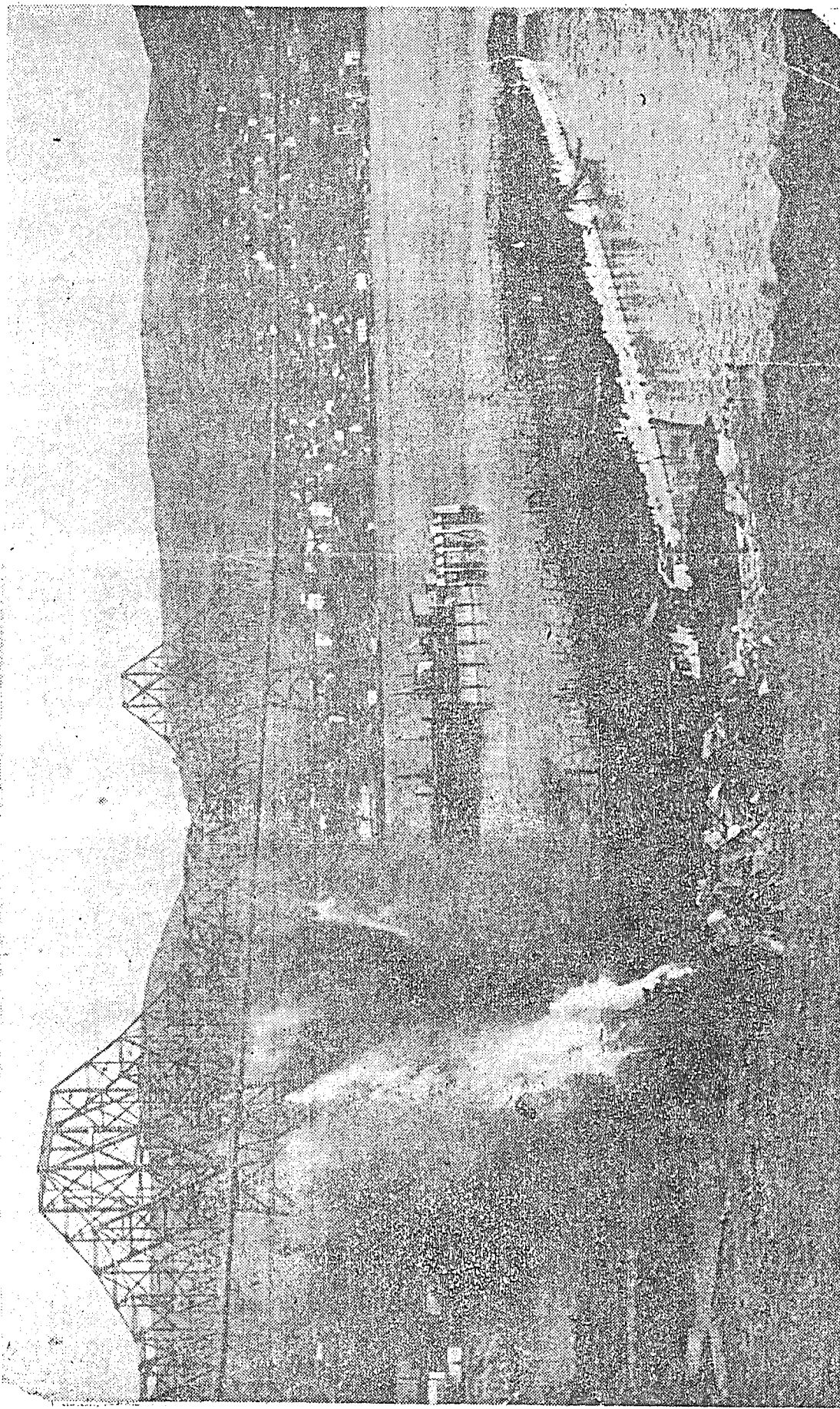
"The job was started by first burning them down to the water line last month. Now the Healy-Tibbetts Construction Company, demolition experts, are conducting preliminary experiments toward blasting.

"Final disposal will be accomplished by dynamiting at advantageous points; afterwards dragging the pieces up to a spot on the shoreline and burning them."

The history of the Contra Costa was given to the Maritime Academy by an old Vallejo resident, Carl Z. Kimball, formerly a switch-engine engineer with the Southern Pacific, and who, in the old days, pushed cars on and off the "Contra Costa" before the first World War. Kimball, or "Pop," as he is better known to

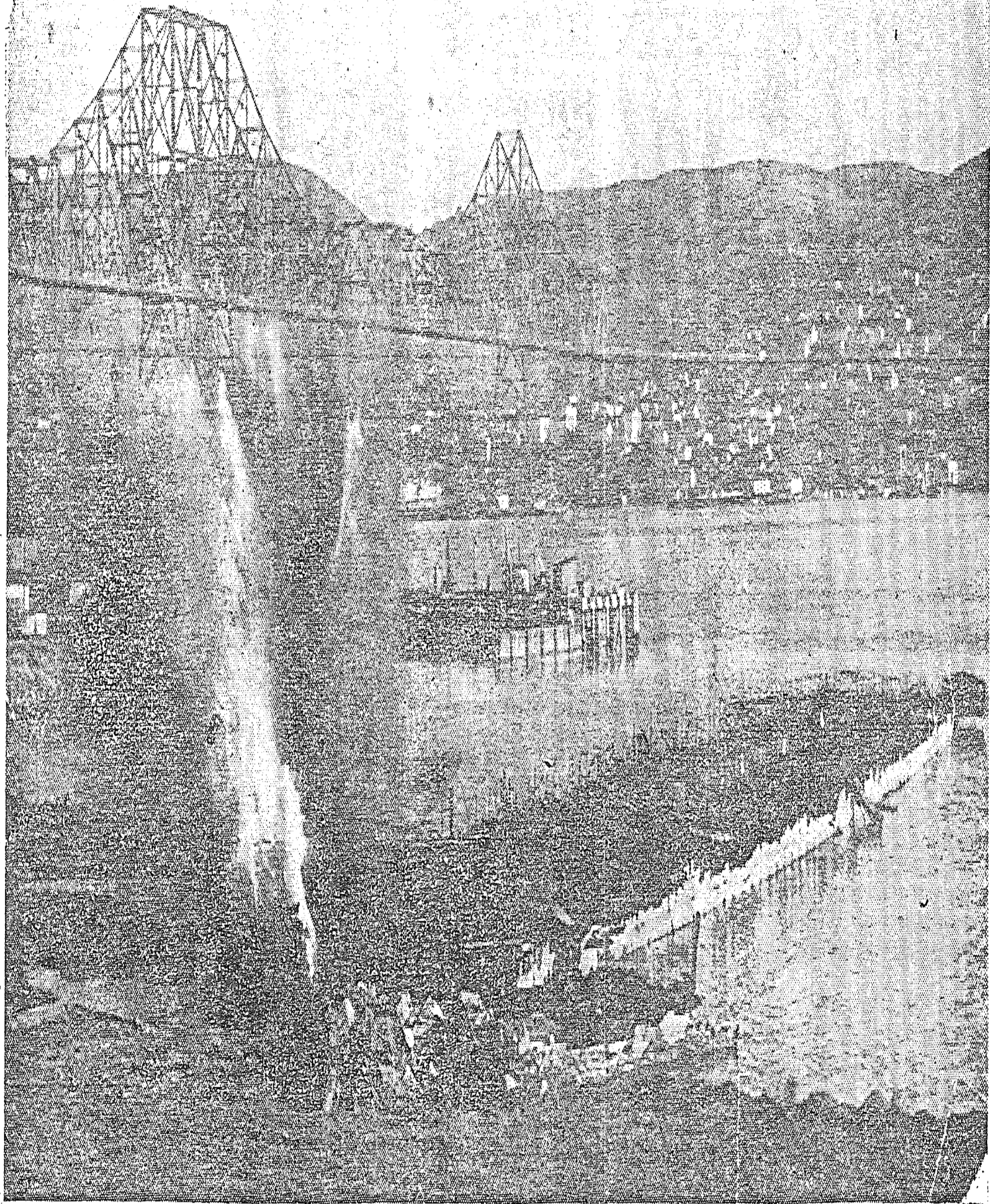
all officers and cadet midshipmen of the Academy, is 69 years of age. He first came to Vallejo in 1919, after serving a year and eight months with the 31st Engineers of the Rainbow division in France.

"Pop's" war service includes also a hitch in Company F, of the Sixth California Volunteers in the Spanish-American War. His home is now at 1250 Tuolumne street, where he has lived since 1929.



ordered by Capt. Claude B. Mayo, superintendent of the Academy, by which the hulk, an eyesore on the waterfront since 1928, will be removed. Above is shown the old craft before and during the blasting operations Friday. (Photo by Times-Herald.)

BEGINNING OF THE END for the old train-ferry—nearly 500 feet in length, and one of the longest in the world—started this week for the old hulk resting on the mud of Carquinez Straits offshore from the California Maritime Academy at Morrow Cove. The remains of the old ferry is the subject for a series of dynamite-blasting experiments



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