

Peace Bridge

90th Anniversary





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Research, design and production: Mike Cloutier
Materials and research from Peace Bridge Archives and Fort Erie Historical Museum Archives.

A symbol of peace and

The 200-year relationship between Canada and the United States is a global model of friendship, cooperation and a vision of peace and prosperity that can be shared by all nations.

For 90 years, the Peace Bridge has not only symbolized this great alliance, but it has been a vital, physical link that allows this relationship to flourish between two great countries and their local communities.

Since the Peace Bridge was first conceived, the intent was to provide for seamless trade, commerce and travel while accommodating the agencies that ensure the safety and security of our nations.

Annually, more than \$40 billion in goods that trade between our manufacturers and suppliers travels over the Peace Bridge. The value of this critical conduit to personal commerce and employment for our businesses in the Niagara area and beyond is incalculable; to enable the bonds of friendship and family is priceless.

As we enter the 10th decade of bridging the Niagara River, the Buffalo and Fort



Tim Clutterbuck,
Chair



Charles L.
Gurney



Llewellyn J.
Holloway



Kenneth A.
Manning



Anthony M.
Masiello

a model of cooperation

Erie Public Bridge Authority is in the midst of the most extensive upgrades since the steel and concrete were first placed. Approach widenings in both the Fort Erie and Buffalo plazas, new U.S. commercial Customs facilities, and implementation of neighborhood landscaping improvements on both sides of the border have been completed in just the past couple years.



Sam Hoyt,
Vice-Chair

The final phases of our five-year \$185-million capital plan currently underway — which is completely self-funded by bridge operations — totally rehabilitates the bridge and adds improved pedestrian and cyclist access. These improvements ensure continued high-quality service for trade and travel between Canada and the United States and exemplifies the spirit of cooperation that exists between us

On behalf of the Board, it is with unbridled pride that we mark the 90th anniversary of this great civic project so we present this photo book as a memento to celebrate the past and welcome the future.



Isabel
Meharry



Patrick
Robson

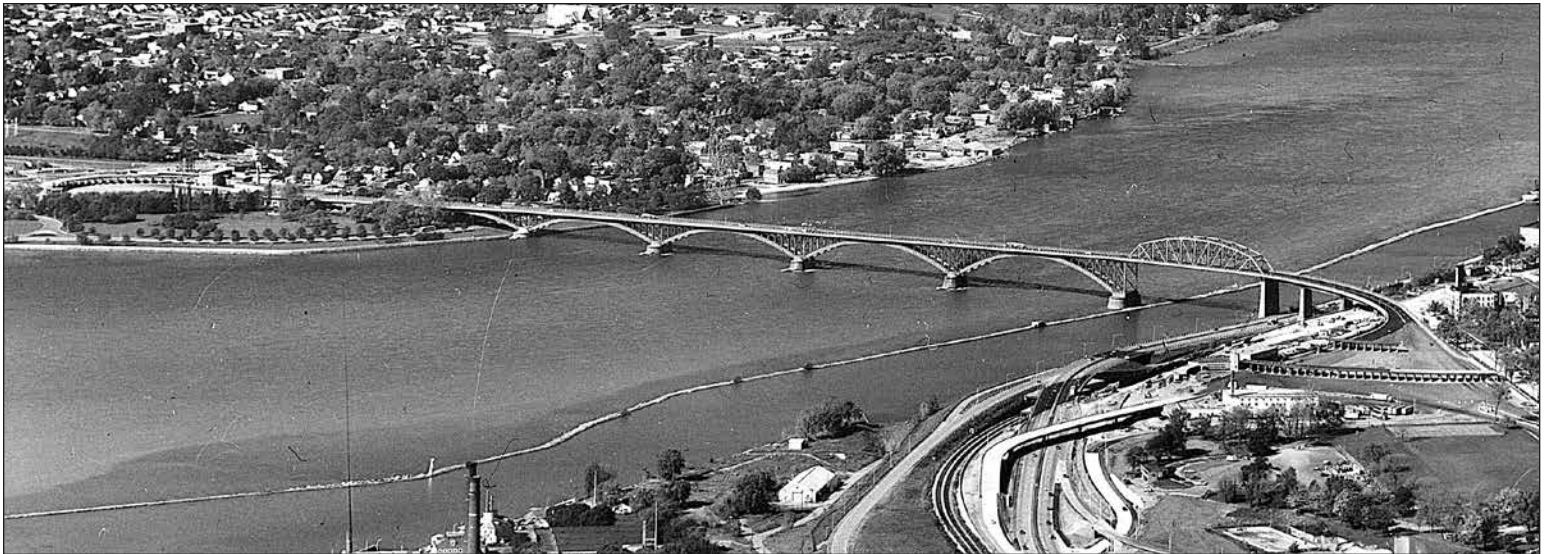


Michael J.
Russo



Debbie
Zimmerman





Before the bridge



Near the headwaters of the Niagara River where the channel is relatively narrow but the water is swift, ferries plied the river since the earliest days of the founding of the United States.

RIDE THE FERRY

50c Saved by an Average Car a Round Trip

ANY SIZE CAR AND DRIVER	15c	•	2	STEAMERS
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10 RIDES
FOR \$1.00
BY
Purchasing
BOOK
OF
TICKETS

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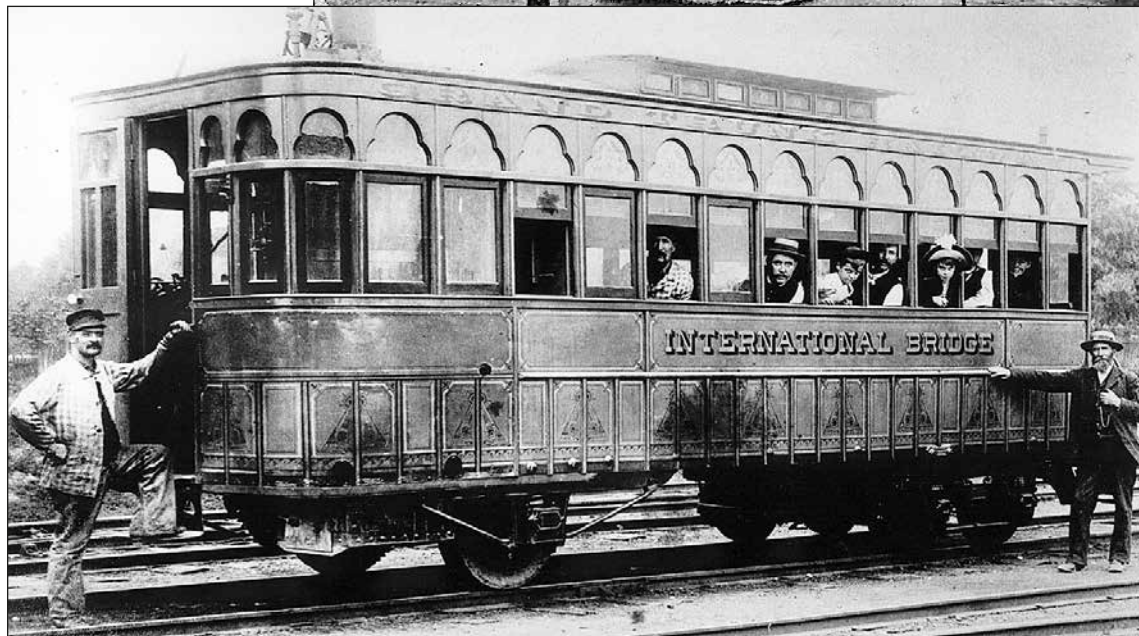
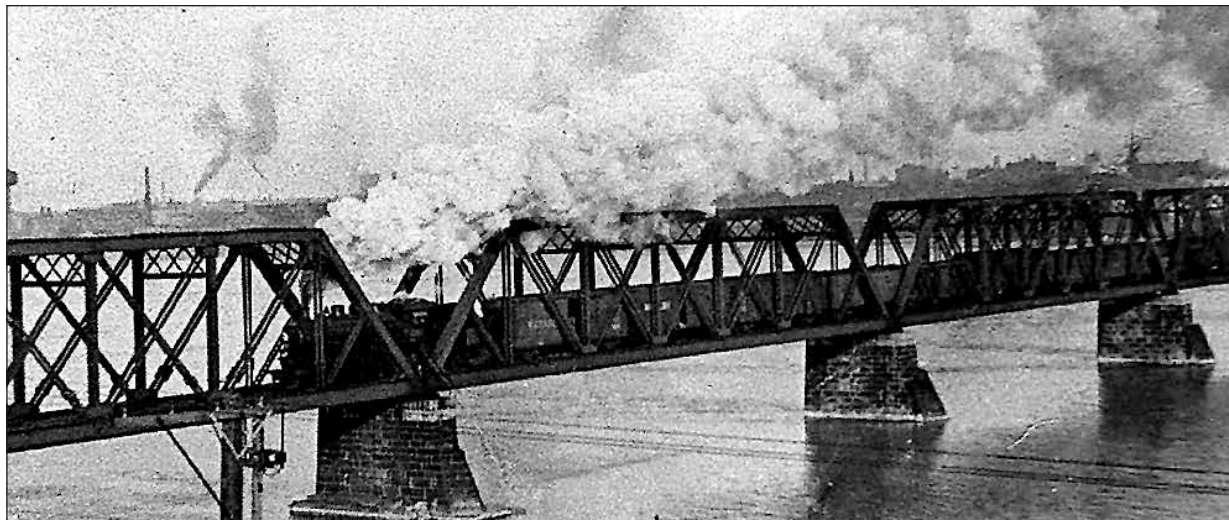
STEAMERS

BUFFALO & FORT ERIE FERRY CO.

Steamers Leave at Foot of Ferry St. Service Every Few Minutes



As railways pushed into the area, even railroad cars were ferried. By 1873, the Grand Trunk Railway constructed the International Bridge about a mile downstream, but ferries maintained regular and frequent local service.



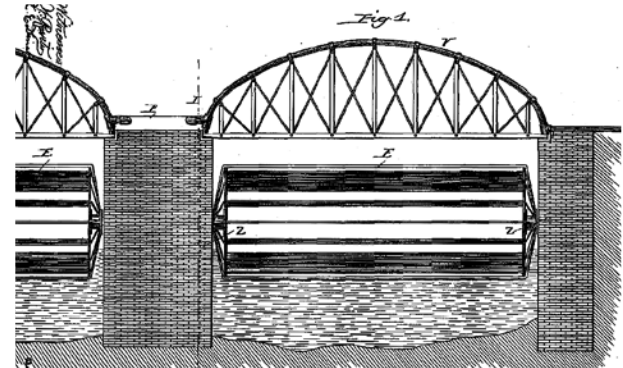
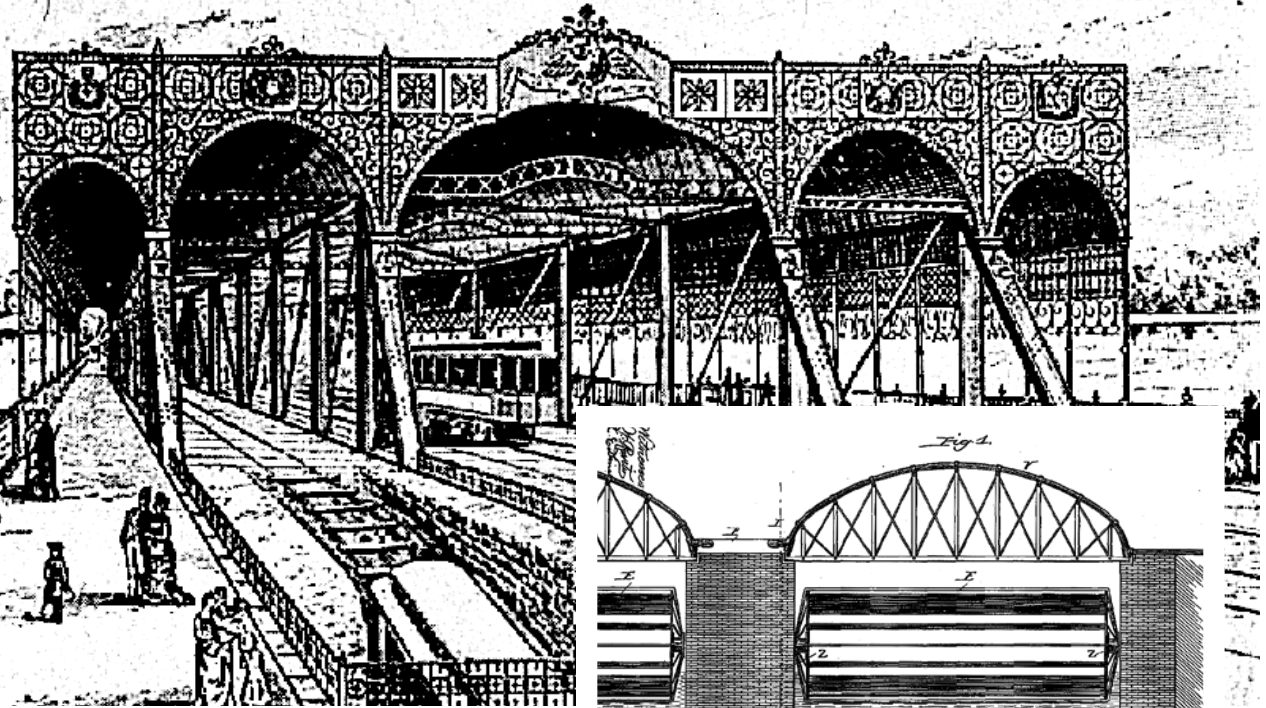
GRAND TRUNK RY. SYS. **CANADIAN NATIONAL RYS.**

TIME TABLE **International Bridge** **Motor Car.**

Effective February 21st. 1926

Lvs. BLACK ROCK	Lvs. BRIDGERBURG
† 6.10 A. M.	† 6.20 A. M.
† 6.30 A. M.	† 7.00 A. M.
† 7.10 A. M.	† 7.30 A. M.
* 7.40 A. M.	* 8.00 A. M.
* 8.10 A. M.	* 8.30 A. M.
* 8.40 A. M.	* 9.00 A. M.
* 9.10 A. M.	* 10.00 A. M.
* 10.10 A. M.	* 11.00 A. M.
* 11.10 A. M.	* 12.00 Noon
* 12.10 P. M.	* 1.00 P. M.
* 1.10 P. M.	* 2.00 P. M.
* 3.50 P. M.	* 4.00 P. M.
* 4.10 P. M.	* 5.00 P. M.
* 5.10 P. M.	* 5.30 P. M.
* 5.40 P. M.	* 6.00 P. M.
* 6.15 P. M.	* 7.00 P. M.
* 7.10 P. M.	* 8.00 P. M.
* 8.10 P. M.	* 9.00 P. M.
* 9.10 P. M.	* 10.00 P. M.
* 10.10 P. M.	* 11.00 P. M.
† 11.10 P. M.	† 11.50 P. M.
† 11.55 P. M.	† 12.00 Midnight

*Daily. †Daily except Sunday.



Mather's river dream

The ambitions of Alonzo C. Mather were based not on the obstacle the Niagara River presented, but on the opportunity to harness the energy of the swift moving water to generate electricity.

He proposed to build a generating station composed of a series of turbines linked together and to use the structure as a bridge between Buffalo and Fort Erie.

He owned land on both sides of the river, including

a key piece at the rapids in Fort Erie where the bridge would ultimately be built.

Originally from Fairfield, NY, Mather earned his fortune when railways opened the American west to settlers and brought resources east. Most notably he designed, manufactured and leased railway cars which better protected livestock — mainly beef cattle — being shipped from the midwest to the stock yards of Buffalo and beyond.

The Niagara Parks Commission erected this monument in 1941 to honor Alonzo Mather. It stands next to the Peace Bridge in a riverside park bearing his name in Fort Erie.



With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1817 and subsequent expansions of the waterway, Buffalo had become one of the great cities of America, the sixth largest in the country, and Mather believed that once the Niagara River could be bridged, Fort Erie would experience the same growth.

In 1899 he formally proposed to build the “Mather Power Bridge,” but his plan met with stiff resistance from business leaders, engineers and politicians.

Opponents were concerned his bridge would impede ship traffic and cause the level of Lake Erie to rise and cause flooding. They also thought his claims about the amount of electricity that could be generated to be fanciful.

By 1903, officials of the U.S. War Department, which had jurisdiction over all waterways in the country, denied Mather his dream and even refused an experimental structure to test his power-generating idea.

Y., SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 8, 1913.

GREATER THAN THAT OF THE SUNDAY EXPRESS

FROM THE COUNTRY ROUND
FT. ERIE THEY GATHER AND
CLAMOR FOR PEACE BRIDGE

Great Enthusiasm Marks Mass Meeting of Citizens of
Welland County and Neighbors Across the Niagara—
Premier Borden and Secretary Bryan to Be Invited to
Attend Great Meeting.

As the 100th anniversary of the end of the War of 1812 approached, enthusiasm grew for a bridge to link the two nations as a monument to peace.

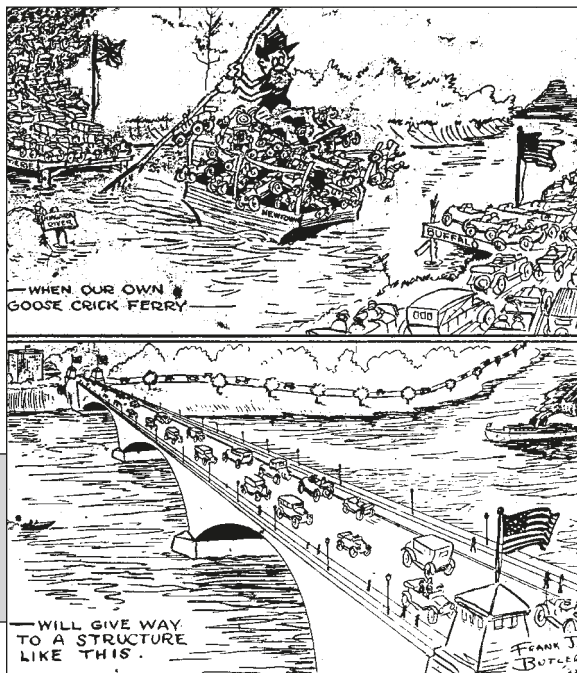


Bridge builders

By 1914, efforts to convince the governments of Canada and the United States to build a bridge between Fort Erie and Buffalo were gaining momentum.

As well as a highly-desired transportation link, it would also be a monument to peace between the two nations which had fought bitterly against each other in the War of 1812.

But the First World War erupted in Europe and it would soon



"Oh speed the day," reads the title of this editorial cartoon in the Buffalo Courier in 1923, "when our own goose crick ferry will give way to a structure like this."

engulf many nations including Canada and the U.S. Thoughts of large civic works were pushed aside.

Shortly after the war ended, business leaders in Buffalo resumed their advocacy for a bridge. Laden with war debts, neither the Canadian nor U.S. governments had an appetite to finance a bridge. So in 1919, advocates set out to do it themselves.

William Eckert, a successful Buffalo businessman, was the main force of the effort. He organized committees from which a brain trust would emerge to undertake the complicated tasks of gaining legal approvals, planning, designing, financing and building a bridge.

A single binational corporation was formed with a mandate to construct a bridge with private funding. Ownership of the bridge would be transferred to the governments after investors were paid back.

Frank Baird was recruited to join the effort as its chairman and president. As a magnate in the Buffalo steel industry, he brought experience in establishing large projects as well as political and personal influence among industrial and business leaders in Buffalo.

William German was the Member of Parliament representing Welland County in which Fort Erie was located. His main role in the early stages was to



promote and shepherd legislation through the Parliament of Canada to establish the legal mandate of the bridge corporation and to ensure a “franchise” for the company. This franchise would give the company exclusive right to build a bridge within six miles of the proposed location. This was important because financing could not be secured if there was the possibility that a competing bridge could be built nearby.

John Van Allen was a prominent Buffalo lawyer experienced in working with governments and was instrumental in establishing the Buffalo airport, air mail service and the first commercial international airline which served Buffalo and Toronto.

The other directors of the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Company when the bridge was completed were: Emanuel Boasberg, John Cowper, Louis Fischer, Carmelo Gugino, Edward Holmes, Allan Holloway, Edgar Joralemon, Floyd Wills, Jacob Siegrist, John Wickser, Frank Winch, Lynn Spencer, Clarke Raymond, Donald McGilvray, Charles Steele, William Douglas, Hiram Greene, William F. Willson, William G. Willson. John Kloefer was director and treasurer until his death June 18, 1927.



Regarding the New Bridge

To the Good People of the Niagara Frontier Greeting:

A group of men have been working on the undertaking for over four years and through your splendid co-operation in creating public spirit in favor of the bridge, the success of the long-hoped-for project is now assured.

Since 1851 a number of efforts have been made to build a bridge from Buffalo to Fort Erie, but governmental requirements regarding navigable rivers were very rigid and as bridge piers were not permitted in the river, the various projects did not succeed.

One of the most recent efforts was made in the spring of 1914 when it was proposed to build a bridge in commemoration of one hundred years of peace between the two countries. The expectation was to secure appropriations from seven governmental sources—

United States
City of Buffalo

Dominion of Canada
Province of Ontario
County of Welland

State of New York
County of Erie

In August of that year the World War started and the bridge effort was discontinued.

Some five years ago the United States Congress, at the request of the City Council of Buffalo, passed a bill appointing twenty-five Buffalo men as a commission to investigate the Niagara River bridge problem. The undersigned was a member of that commission and knows the work its members performed. The commission found that the heavy war debts of both Canada and the United States would prevent those countries from making appropriations for the bridge. A number of alternative plans were suggested and the present plan was adopted.

The governments of Washington, Ottawa and Albany were not willing to grant a franchise for a toll bridge to a private bridge company. The commissions then proposed to form a company that would charge a toll until such time as the securities were paid for and then the bridge company would have no further rights in the property. The American rights will revert to the Legislature of New York and the Canadian rights to the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada. The officers and directors of the bridge company receive no pay for their services and after the bridge is completed, will be required to pay toll each time they cross the bridge, the same as all other patrons of the bridge.

The unusual concessions obtained from the two governments were not for the purpose of allowing anyone to make money, but both governments realized it was a commendable effort of the people of the Niagara Frontier.

The present plan is simply this—the people who use the bridge will pay toll until the bridge is paid for; then the bridge will belong to the public.

The United States government recently constructed a ship canal and locks for vessels and large vessels no longer use the Niagara River at this point so the governments are permitting the bridge company to build bridge piers in the river.

The former prohibition against bridge piers in the river was the great obstacle to all past efforts.

This has been a successful community effort. The directors have been aided by public sympathy, by the press, by Buffalo city officials and by the officials of Fort Erie, our Congressmen and Senators, the Canadian government officials and the officials of the United States War Department have co-operated in such a splendid way that they well deserve the gratitude of the Niagara Frontier.

So far this letter has been merely a sketch of past history with which most of you are familiar. The reason for its publication is as follows:

The bridge company has been financed, the location has been selected and the bridge will be built.

Very shortly, probably tomorrow, the bonds will be sold by a syndicate of prominent bankers and brokers. For several days investors have been placing orders with banks and brokers to enter their subscriptions early in the morning on the day that the sale begins.

The unusual concessions obtained make the securities very attractive as an investment.

The directors of the bridge company in their contract with the underwriters made it a point to have the bonds in denominations of \$1,000, \$500 and \$100, either coupon or registered. This was to give investors in smaller amounts an opportunity to buy some of the bonds, if they wished to do so. This being a community effort, it is desirable that every person is given the opportunity to join in the investment. There should be several thousand subscribers.

My opinion is that the bonds will be not only quickly sold, but will be largely over-subscribed. The chairman of the underwriting committee has, at my request, written to the banks and brokers asking them to favor so far as possible persons subscribing for smaller amounts.

I am not trying to sell bonds; on the contrary, the members of my family and myself have sold some securities, including some government bonds, to enable us to subscribe for \$100,000 debentures and also to buy some of the first mortgage bonds. I asked one of the Buffalo banks to make the purchase for us at the proper time, and Saturday I was told that the bonds are to be allotted among some forty banks and brokers and that I had better divide the order. Monday (today) I will scatter the order among a number of firms. I will not wait until tomorrow, when I think the brokers have arranged to offer the securities.

I am making this personal statement because I am President of the Bridge Company and I do not want any person to be able to say that the bonds were all sold before persons wishing to subscribe for smaller amounts were given an opportunity to do so.

I have the honor to remain,

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

FRANK E. BAIRD.

P. S.—This advertisement is not paid for with bridge money or by the underwriters. I have paid for it personally.

F. E. B.



Frank Baird, president of the bridge company, purchased a newspaper ad in May 1925 to announce that bonds to finance construction of the bridge would be available to the public. They were sold in small denominations so that people of modest means could participate. The project "has been a successful community effort . . . a commendable effort of the people of the Niagara Frontier."

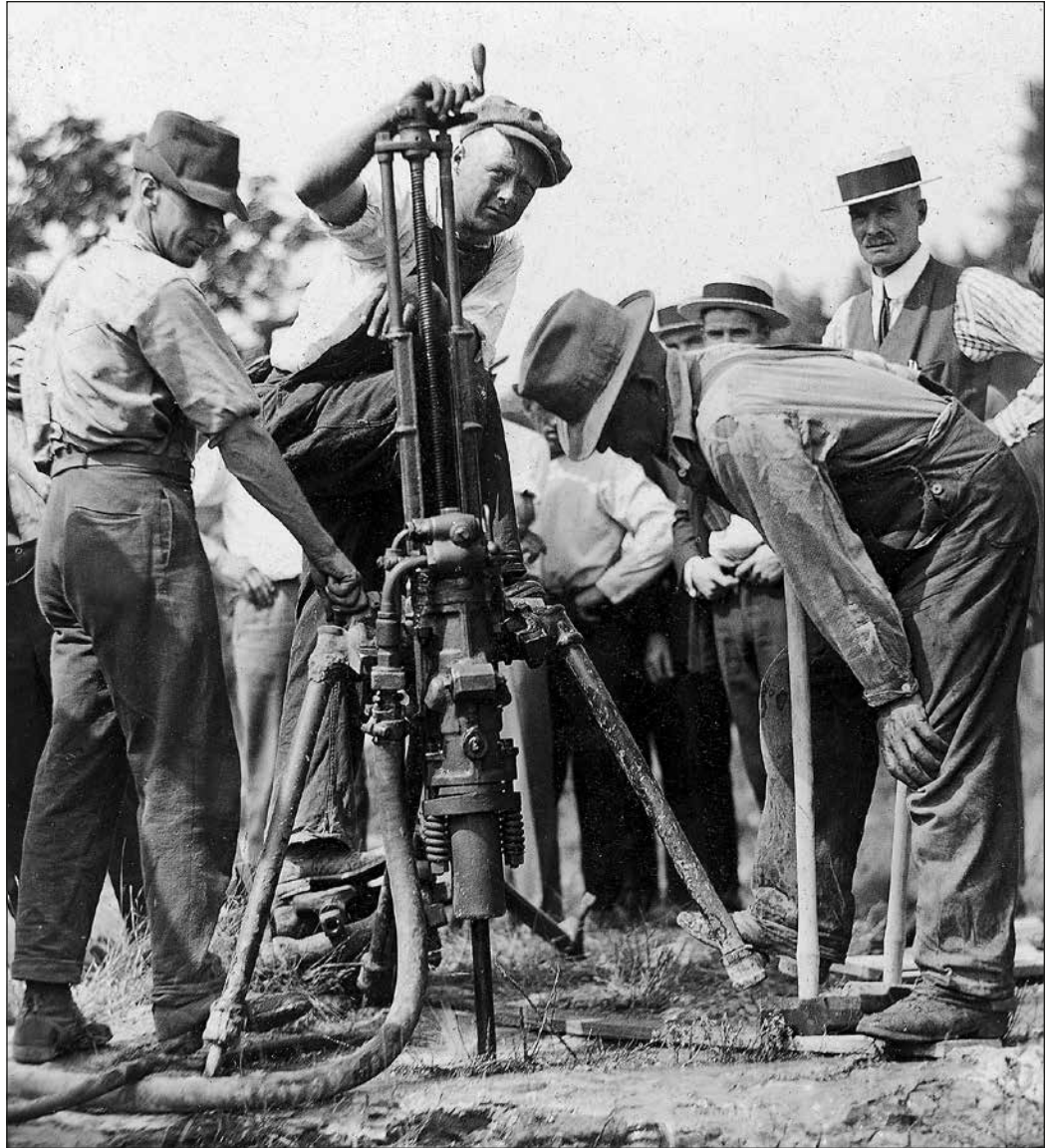


When the International Joint Commission gave its approval — the last government hurdle — William Eckert and William F. Willson trooped out to the building site on Aug. 17, 1925 with silver spades in hand and posed for a photograph to announce the news that construction would begin. A much more grand community celebration was held in Fort Erie on Aug. 26. Bonds valued at \$4.5 million had been issued in June and soon were trading at a premium on the market.

Muscles, machines, steel and concrete

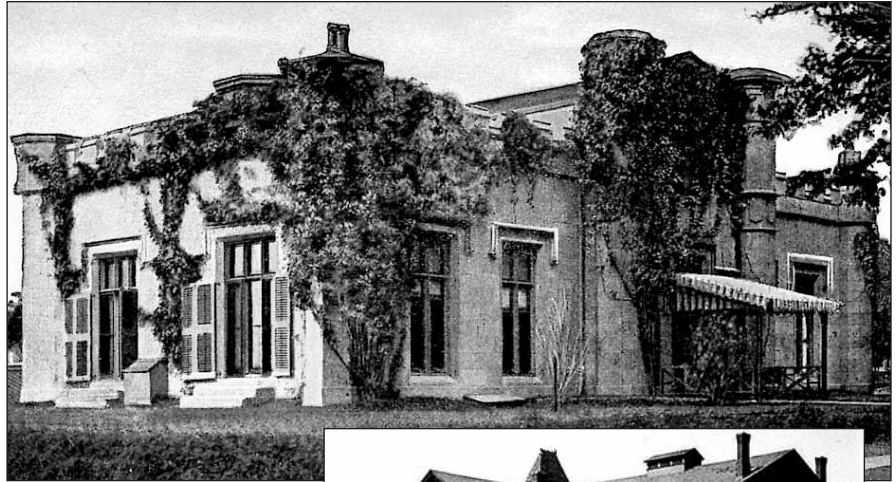
Construction of the Peace Bridge began in August 1925. Edward P. Lupfer was the chief engineer. Bethlehem Steel would assemble the steel supplied from its Lackawanna plant. Porter Bros. of Spokane, WA., would construct the concrete works, including the piers, deck, approaches, sidewalks and balustrades plus the buildings for toll booths, administration and government operations.

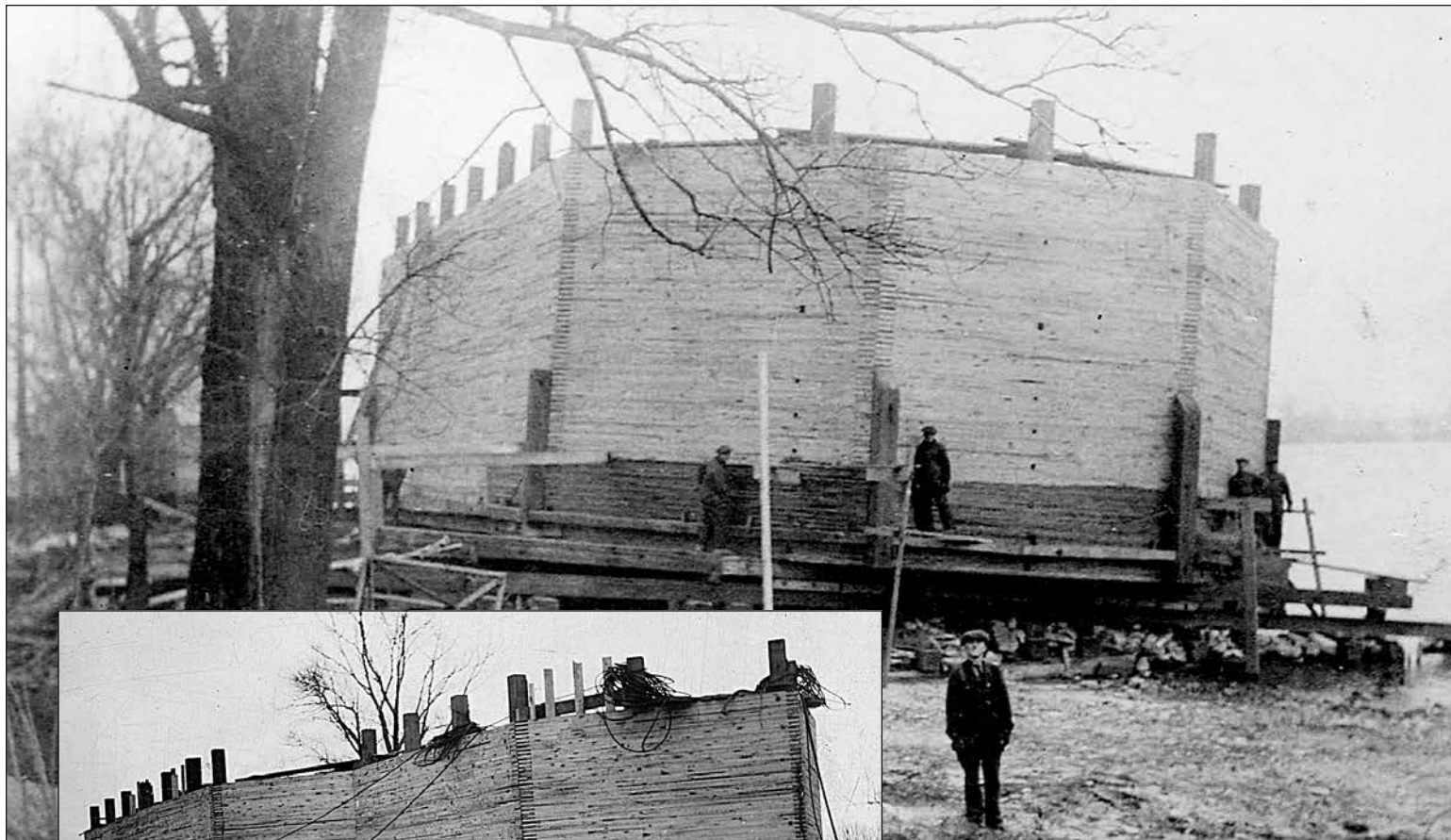
Four construction types would be used for the bridge and approaches — five graceful arch spans, a Parker truss span, beam span and box construction.

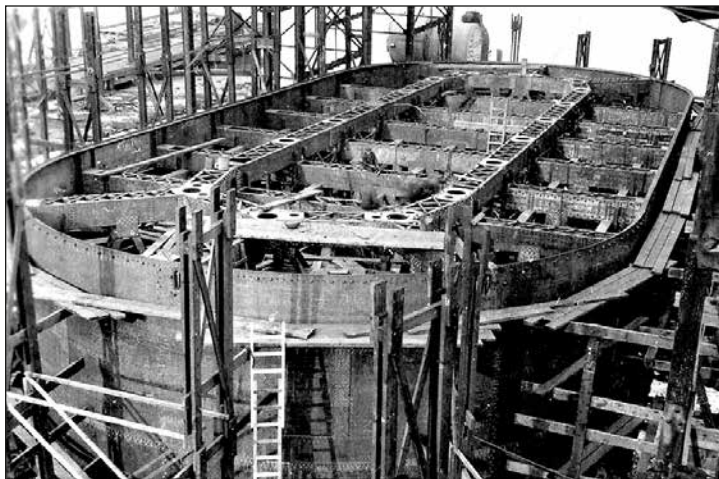


Lupfer estimated the bridge structures would cost nearly \$3.5 million to build, and another \$1 million would be needed to purchase land and pay other expenses.

One of the other expenses was to preserve the “castle” at Fort Porter in Buffalo which was considered an important historic building. It was moved to city-owned parkland known as The Front. The stone block building was the residence of the commanding officer of the U.S. Army unit stationed at Fort Porter and it lay directly in the path of the approach ramp. The army unit was transferred out and the entire garrison marched out in parade formation in 1926, quite literally in the shadow of the partly-constructed bridge.

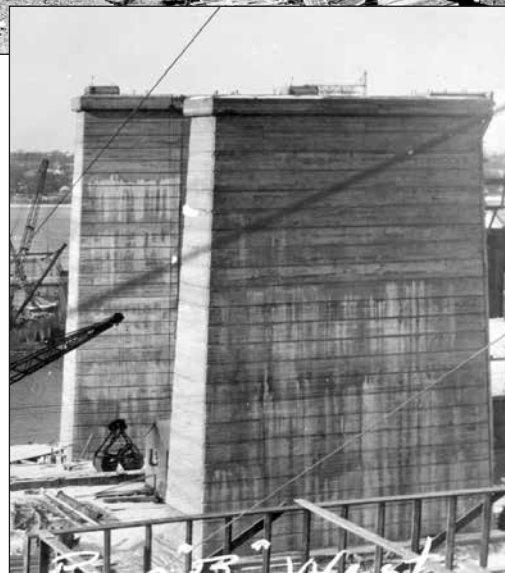
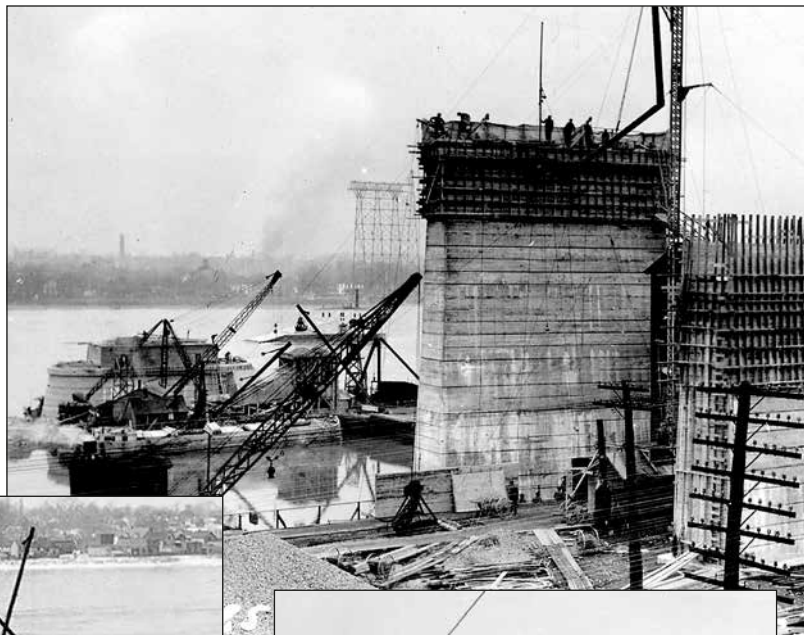
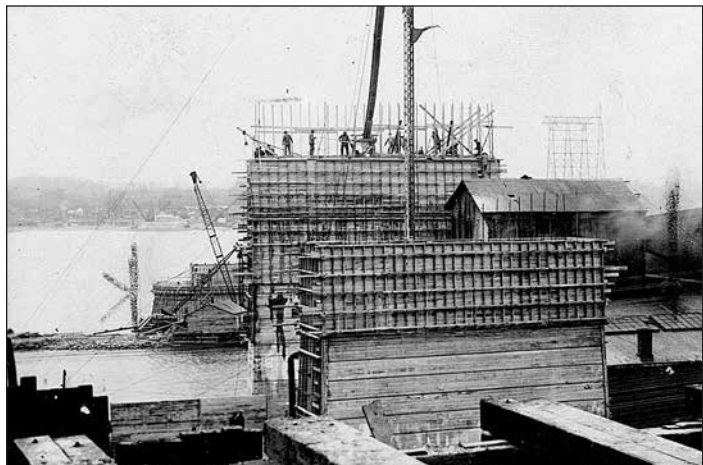




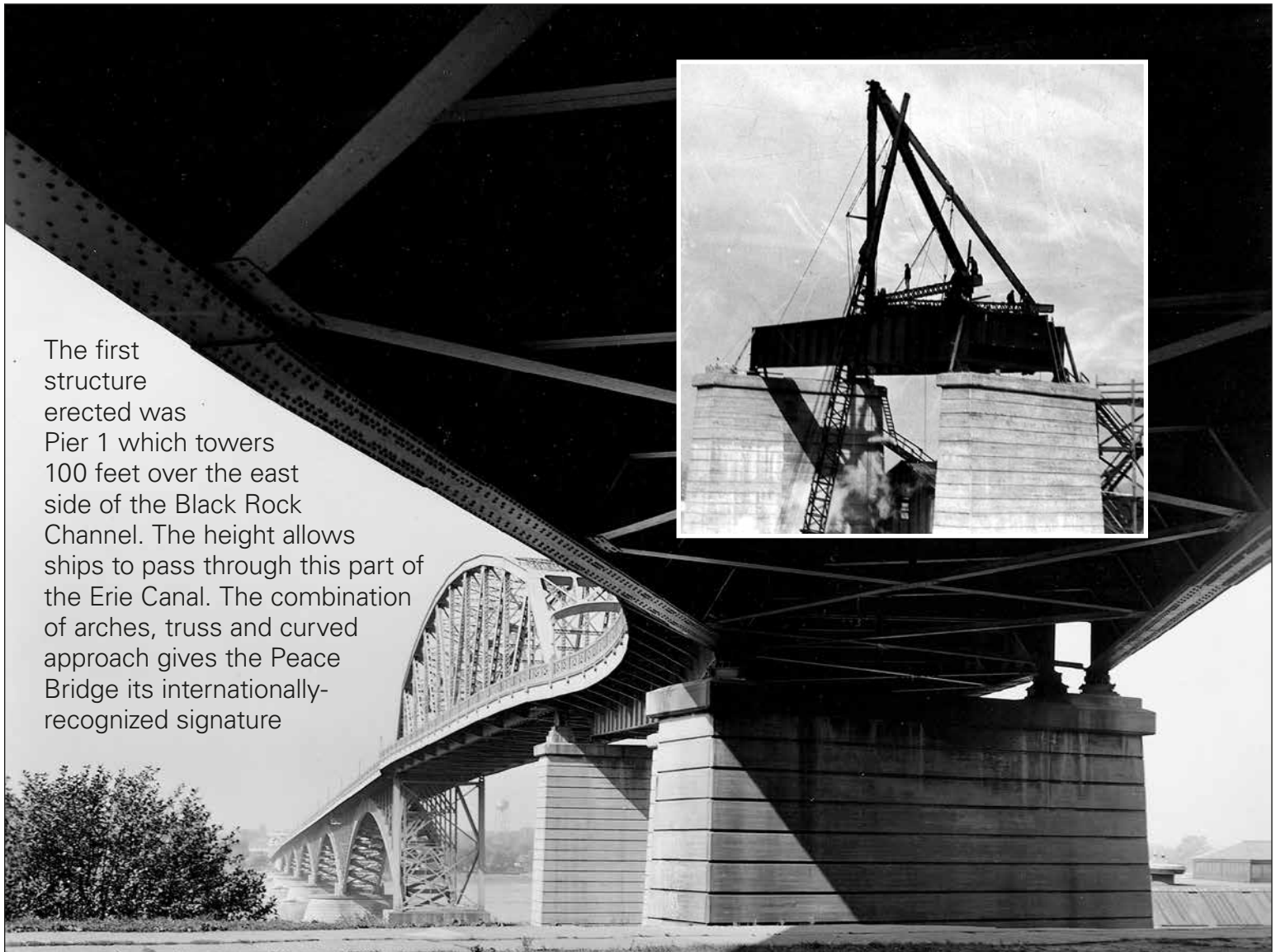
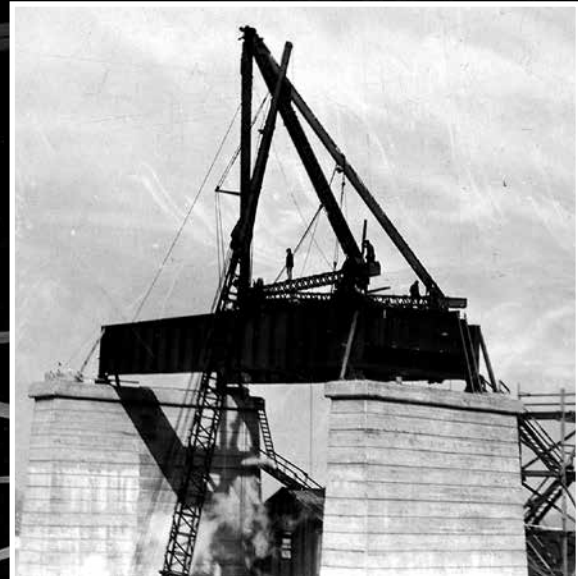


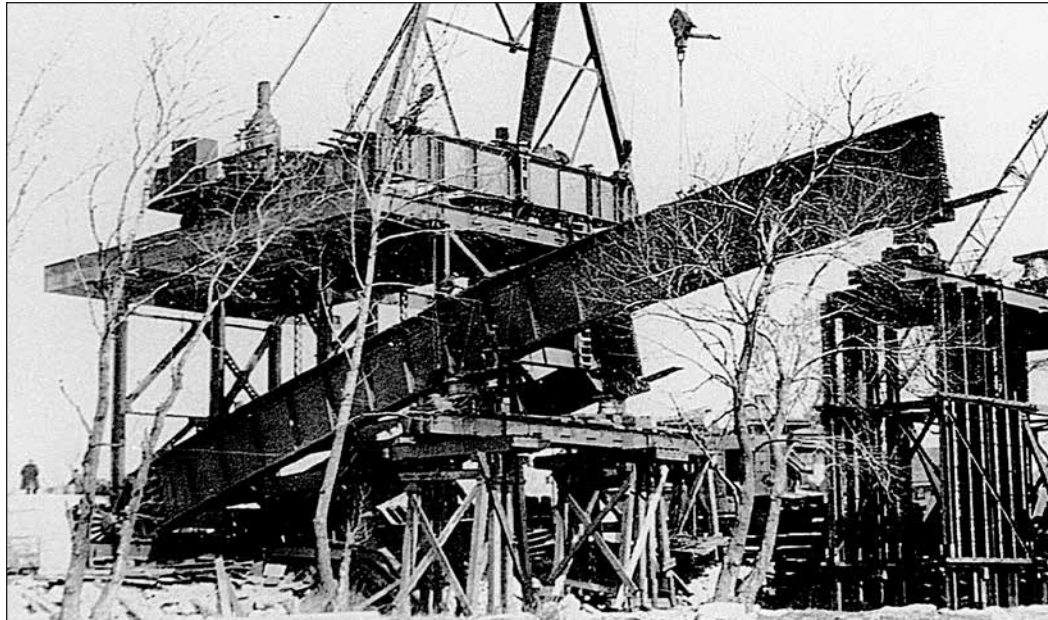
Giant caissons housed the forms to shape the concrete piers that were poured on the bedrock of the river bed. They measured 60 feet wide, 140 feet long and 25 feet high. They were built on land downstream, launched sideways like a ship then filled with concrete ballast blocks to lower them in the water before being tugged into place behind a winding scow. The first river pier was placed before Christmas 1925 and completed the following February.



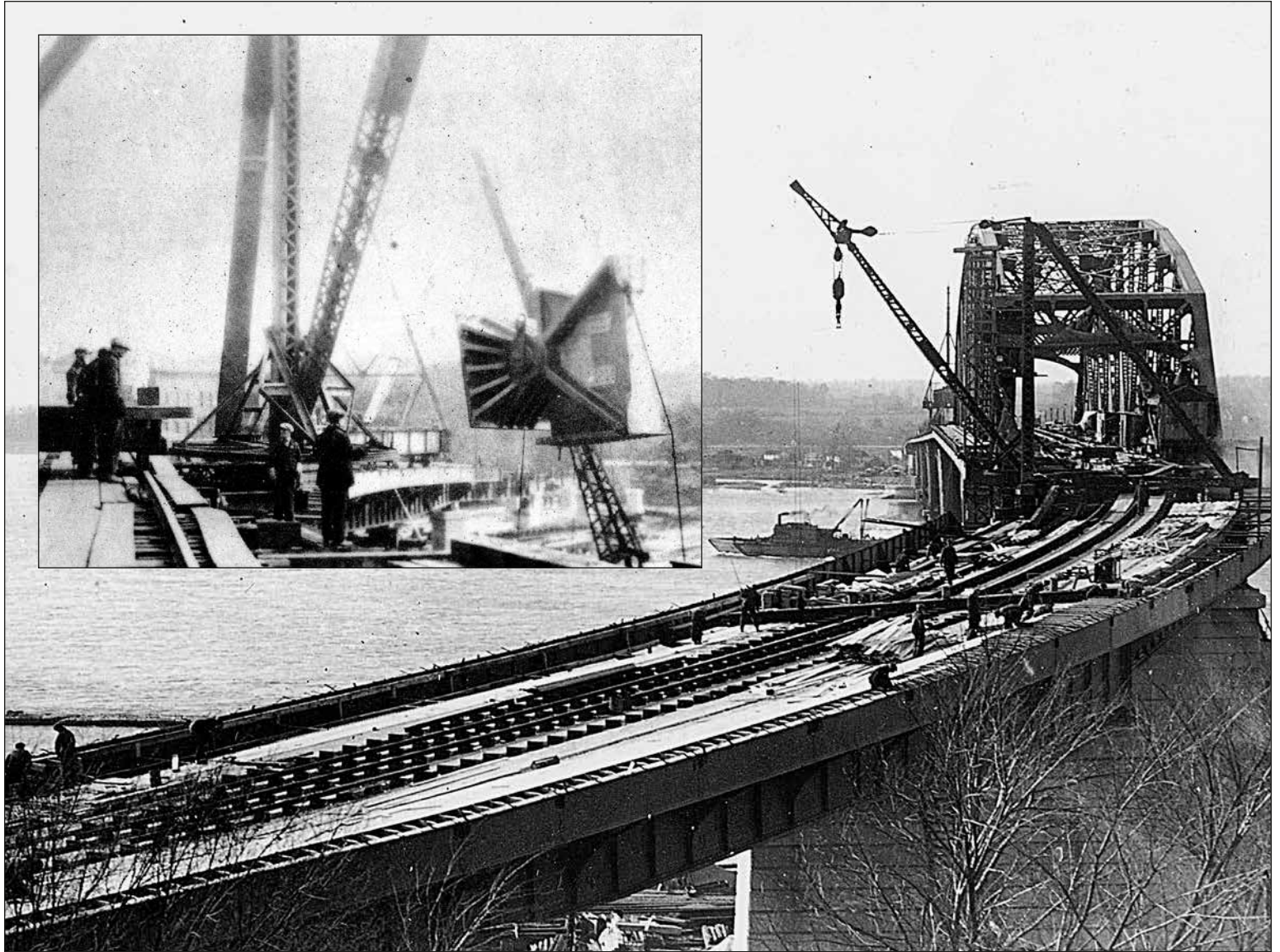


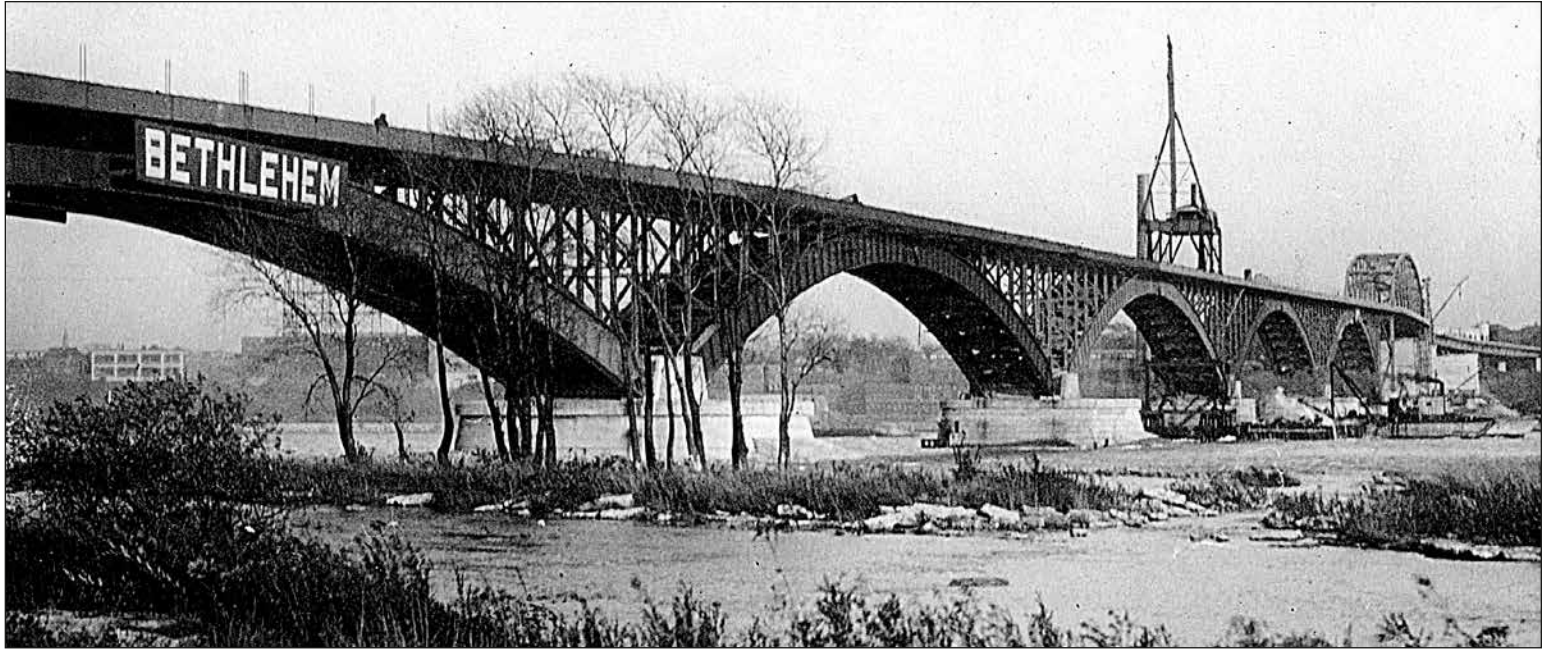
The first structure erected was Pier 1 which towers 100 feet over the east side of the Black Rock Channel. The height allows ships to pass through this part of the Erie Canal. The combination of arches, truss and curved approach gives the Peace Bridge its internationally-recognized signature



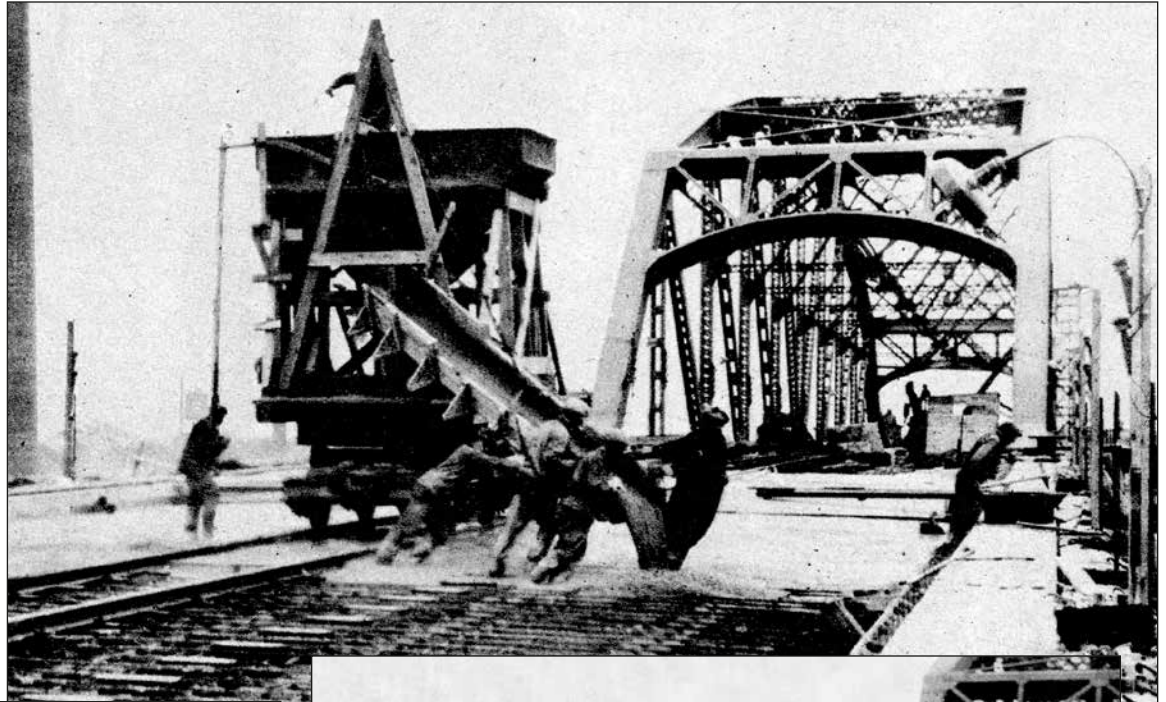


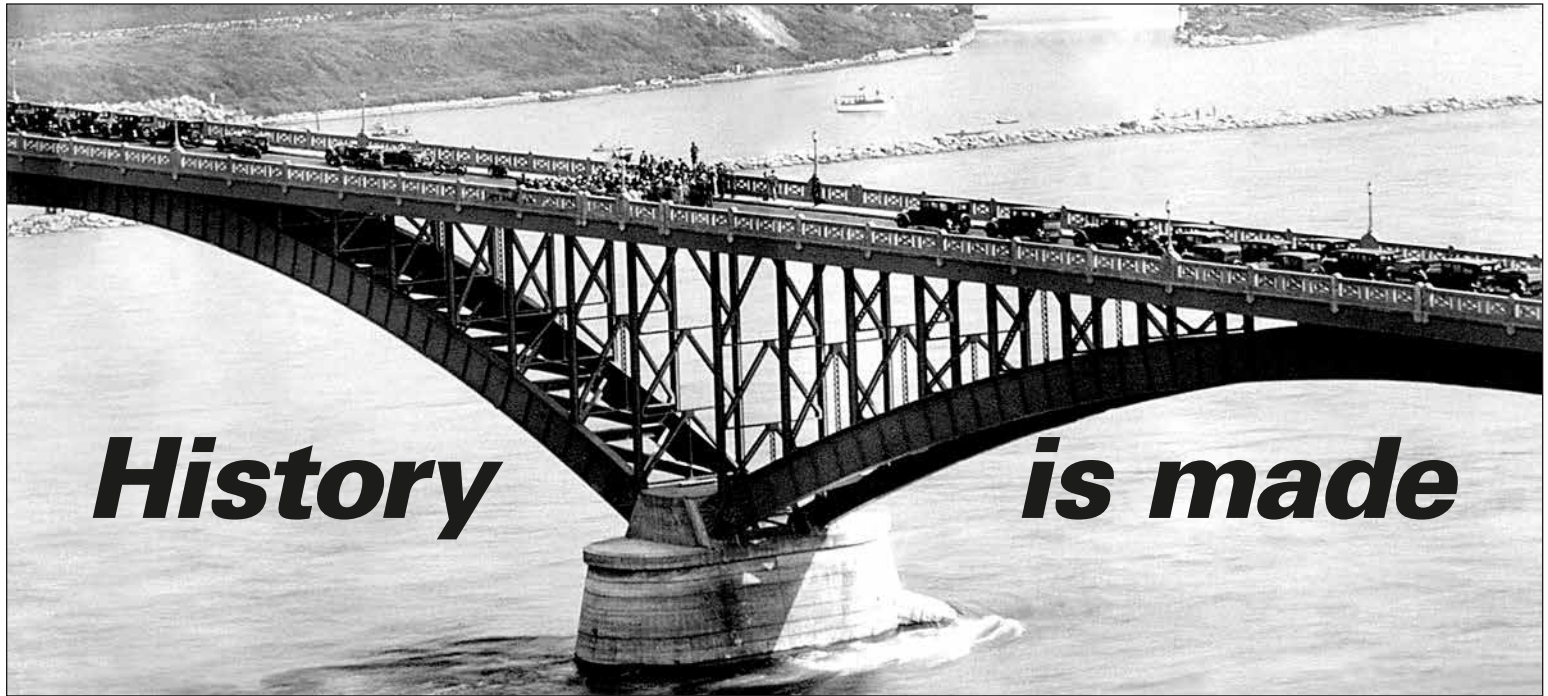
Steel began to arrive at the job site in March 1926 and public excitement grew as the bridge began to reach across the river. The Parker truss started to take shape in May, and when nearly complete in late summer, work on the arches began. A few short months later, the last rivet was driven without ceremony in mid-October. Nearly 10,000 tons of steel and 36,000 cubic yards of concrete were used in construction.





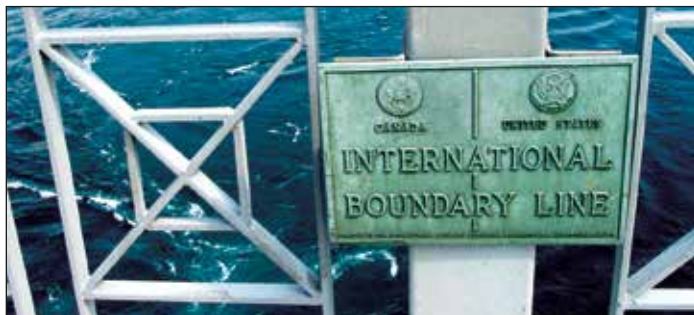
Chief engineer Edward Lupfer and project leader William Eckert were the first people to drive cars from one country to the other on the Peace Bridge. They crossed in two cars from Buffalo to Fort Erie and back on the still-incomplete roadway in March 1927, just a few months before it would open for public use on June 1.





Two future Kings of the British Empire — Edward, the Prince of Wales, (left) and his younger brother Albert, Duke of York — were the guests of honor to cut a ribbon at the international boundary on the Peace Bridge Aug. 7, 1927. The Royal convoy drove the Niagara Parkway from Niagara Falls and were greeted at the gateway to the bridge in Fort Erie. After inspecting troops of the Royal Canadian Regiment, they drove to the international boundary and exchanged greetings with U.S. Vice-President Charles Dawes and other American dignitaries. After cutting the ribbon, they continued their automobile trip to Buffalo to continue the dedication ceremony.







"This bridge which commemorates the peace..."

PEACE BRIDGE

August 7th, 1927

Section 8

Row 17

A crowd estimated to be as large as 30,000 gathered in Buffalo at the entry to the Peace Bridge to witness the dedication ceremony. The voice of Edward, the Prince of Wales, boomed from loud speakers. "It gives me

PEACE BRIDGE

MARCH

Descriptive March for Piano

**by
Emma M. Herold-Haft**

PRICE 20¢

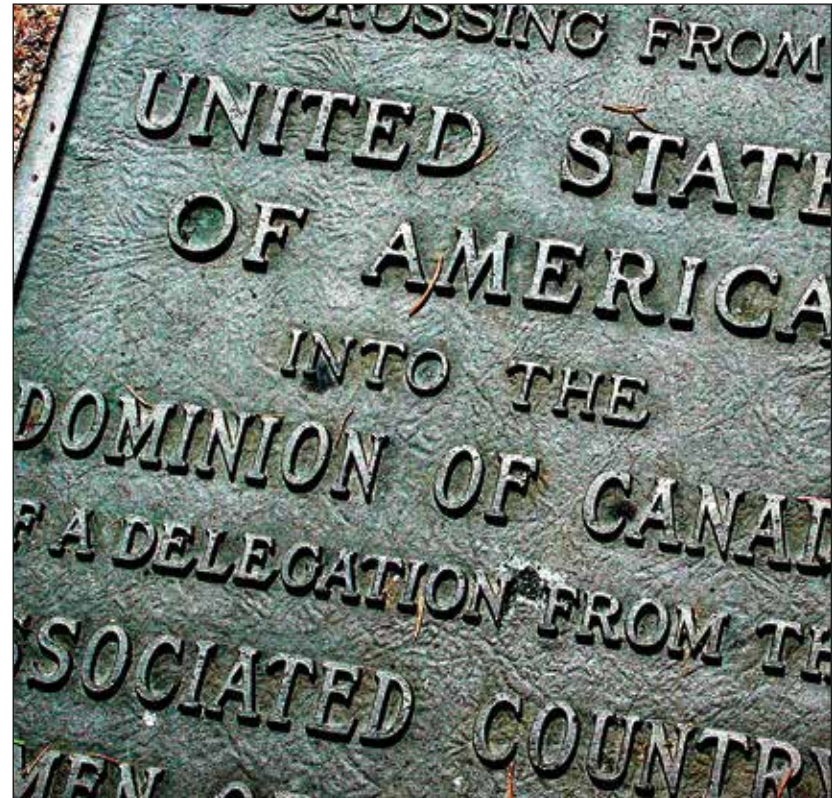
Published by
A. FRANK HAFT & CO.
25 Melrose St. Buffalo, N.Y.

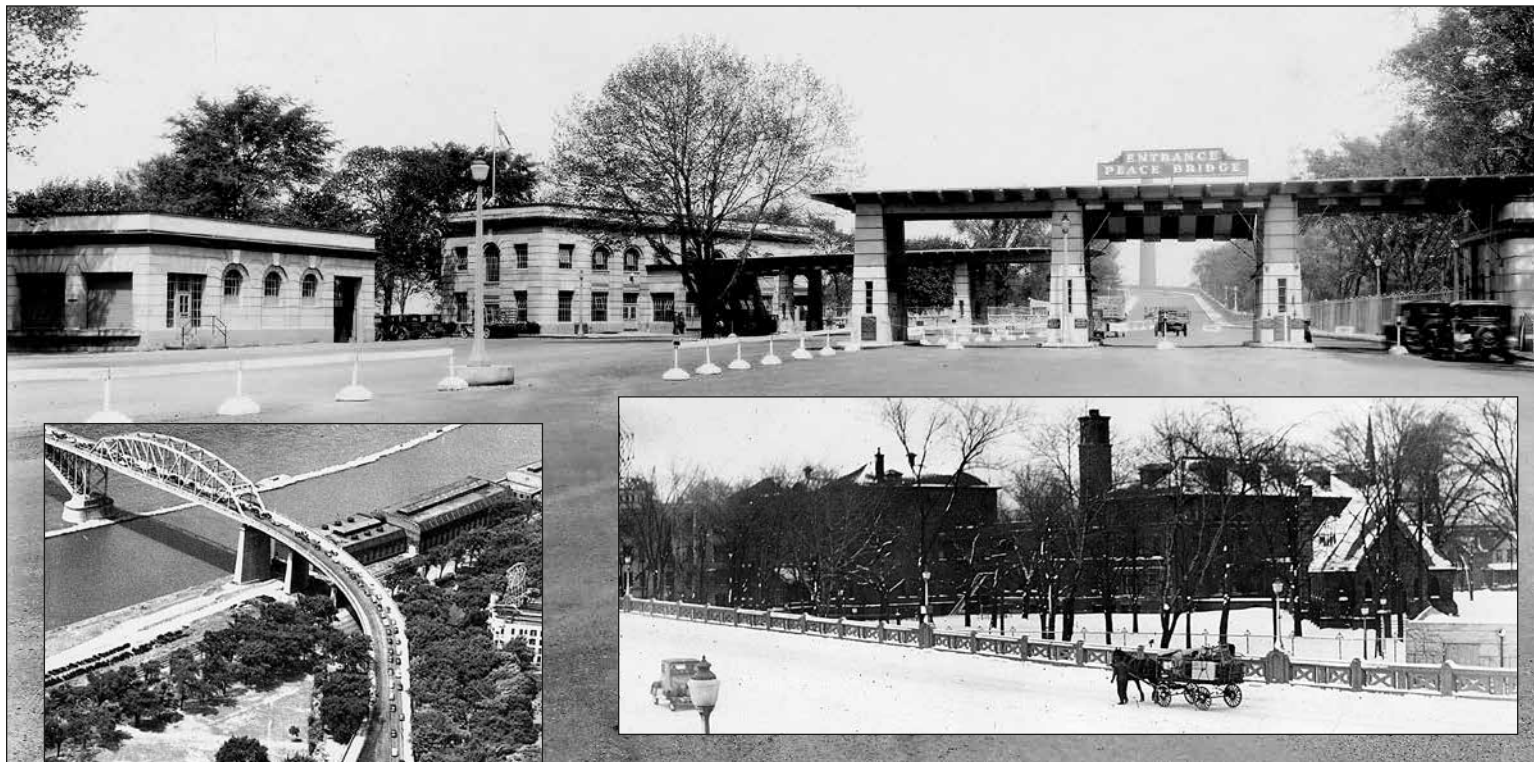


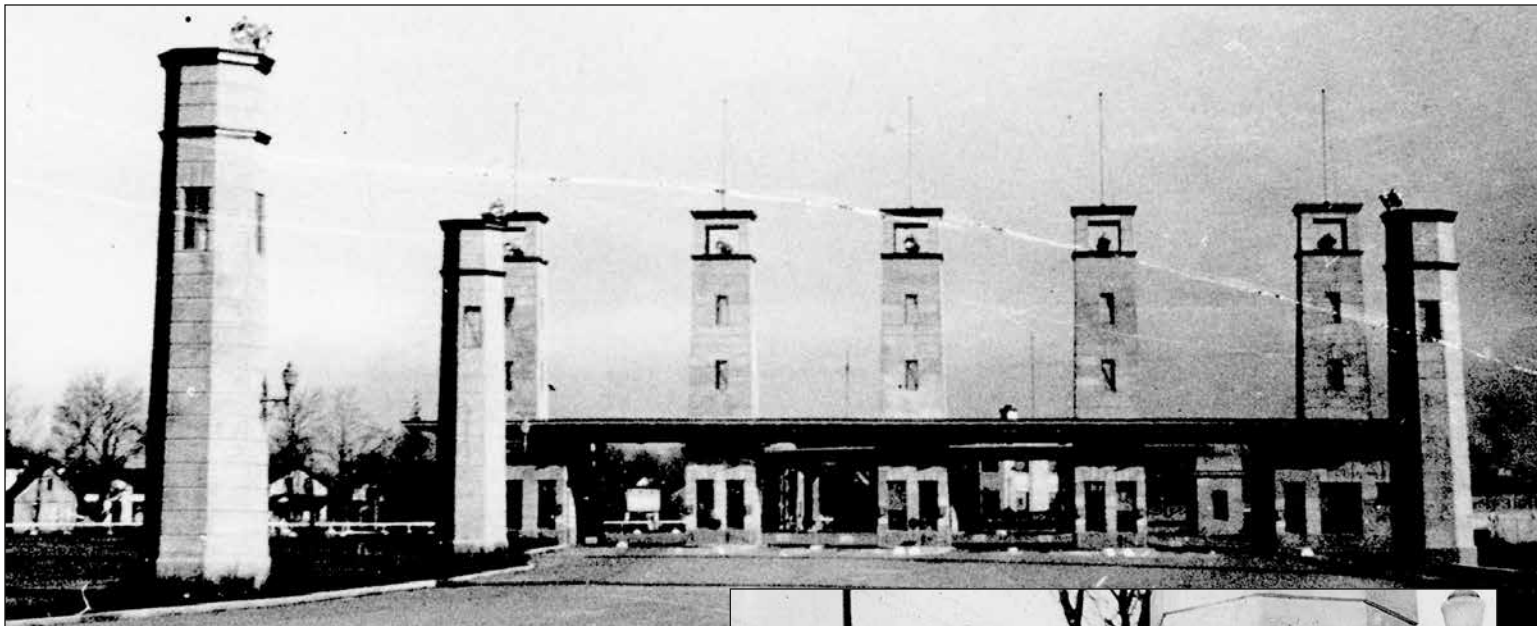


great pleasure to be present on the occasion of the formal dedication of this bridge which commemorates the peace which has happily endured between the British Empire and the United States for more than a century. May this bridge be not only a physical and material link between Canada and the United States, but may it also be symbolic of the maintenance of their friendly contacts by those who live on both sides of the frontier. May it serve also as a continual reminder to those who will use it, and to all of us, that to seek peace, and to ensure it, is the first and highest duty, both of this generation and those which are yet to come."

Frank Baird, president of the Buffalo and Fort Erie Bridge Company, and his wife (standing at opposite ends of the picture) hosted lunch prior to the dedication ceremonies. The guest list included (from left): Labor Secretary James Davis, Secretary of State Frank Kellogg, New York Governor Alfred Smith, and Vice-President Charles Dawes.







Grand columns which served as light standards were erected in the Canadian plaza at the entrance to the bridge in 1931. It marked the first of a long series of investments to improve the esthetics and functionality of the bridge. The columns were taken down in 1938 when the Niagara Parks Commission extended the Niagara Parkway under and past the bridge to its new museum at the old military Fort Erie. Improvements in the U.S. plaza were carried out in 1935, which included expanding the lanes and providing new warehousing and administration facilities for Customs operations.





The Peace Bridge was an immediate success with 5,000 cars crossing from the U.S. into Canada on its first day of operation. Soon it was not unusual to see 20,000 cars per day and even more. Labor Day was historically the busiest day of the year with end-of-summer traffic compounded by a long-weekend holiday in both countries. While the bridge operators asserted that the bridge could easily handle this volume of traffic, it moved only as fast as Customs inspections would allow, often causing congestion on city streets.



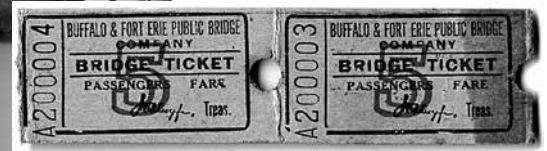
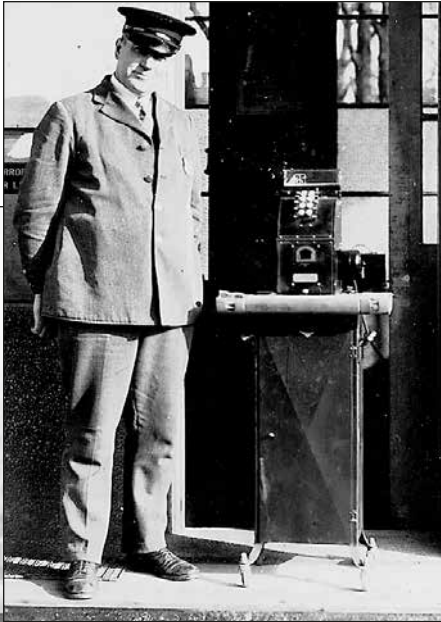






The Peace Bridge underwent some reconstruction in 1964 when the concrete balustrades and railings were replaced with steel fixtures. This would have pleased the original engineer, Edward Lupfer, who felt the concrete detracted from the graceful beauty of the bridge and blocked the view. The new railings saved about 1,000 tons of weight. Another 2,500 tons was trimmed in 1971 when the granite paving stones were replaced with asphalt. This also reduced vibration from traffic to preserve the integrity of the supporting structure.

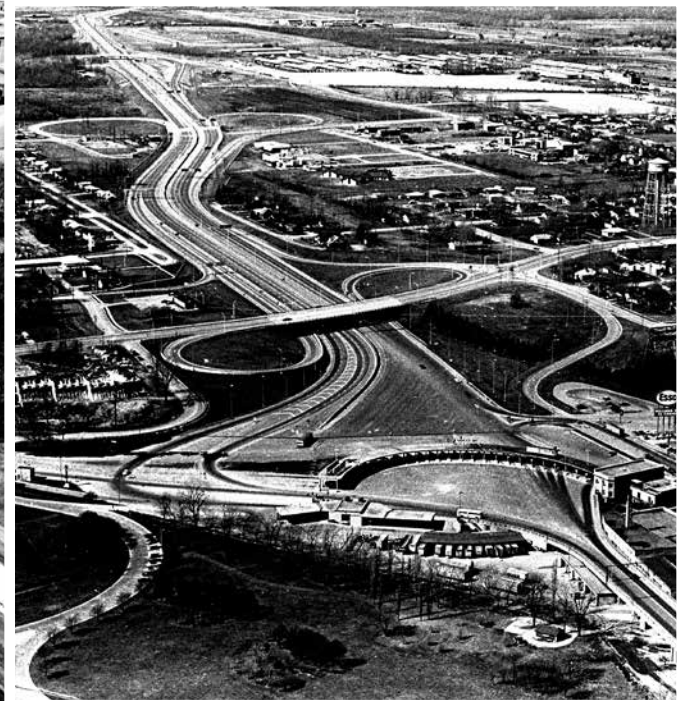




The founders of the Peace Bridge financed construction by selling \$4.5 million in bonds, and they were going to pay it back — with interest — five cents at a time from tolls. They were very explicit that all monies from tolls would fund operations, maintenance and improvements and that remains true today.



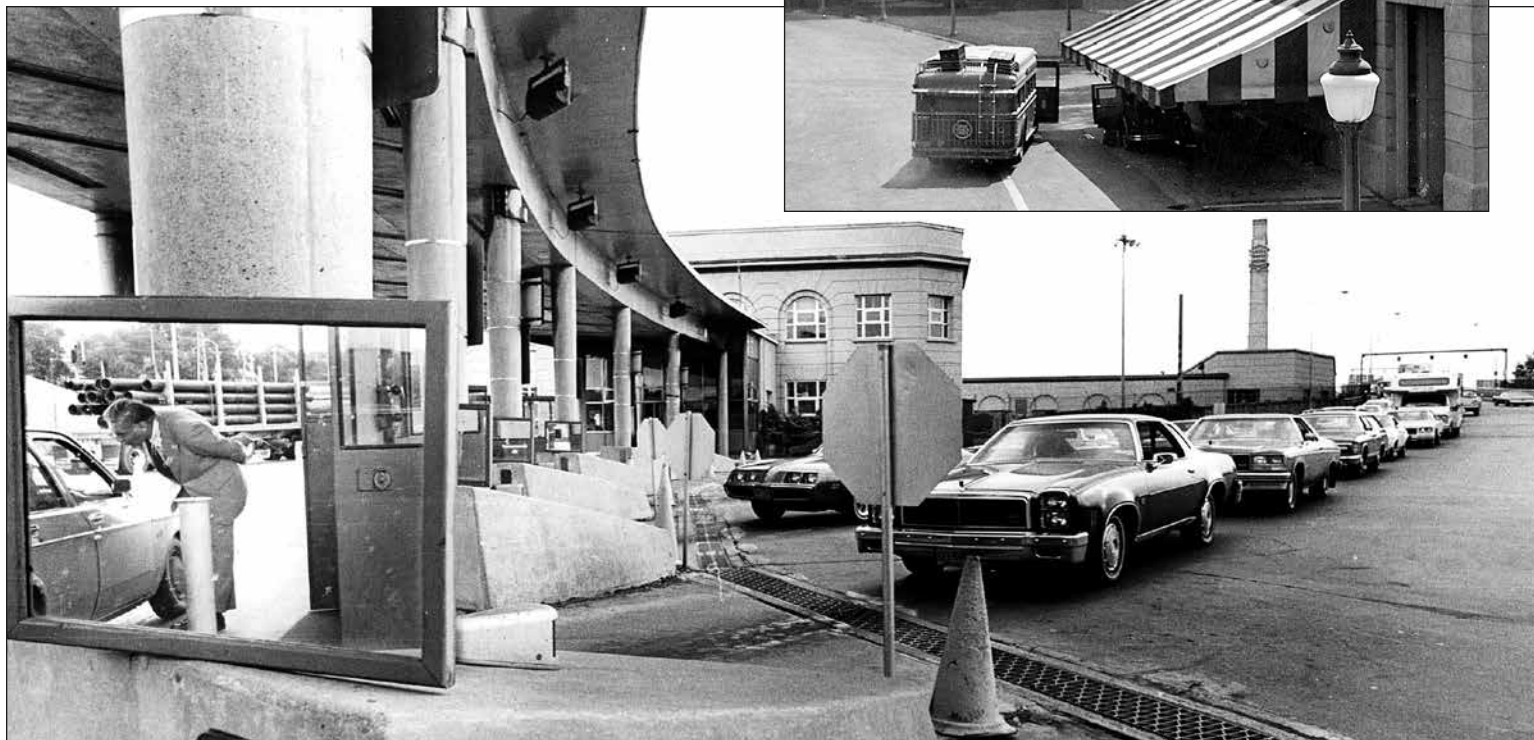
The New York Thruway was extended to Buffalo in 1957 and a ramp to the Peace Bridge was built in 1964. When similar work in Canada for the Queen Elizabeth Way was completed in 1971, the bridge became a direct link between two of the great highway systems of North America.

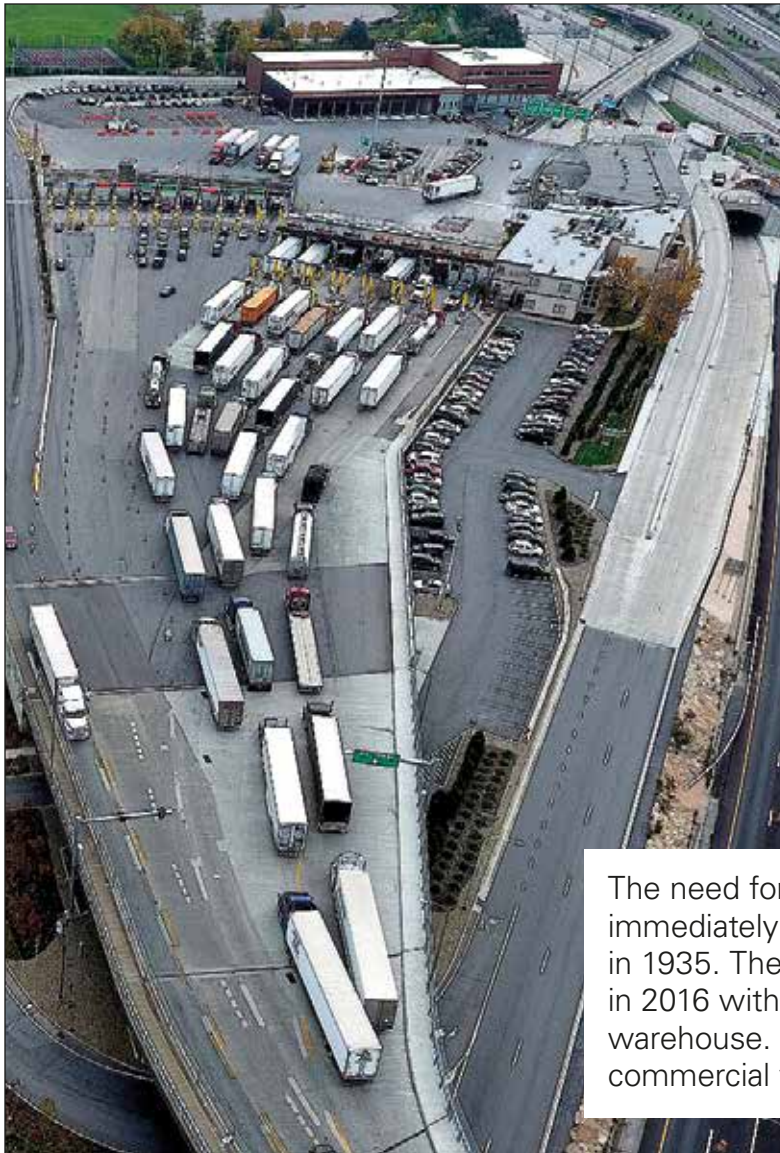




The Customs functions of the governments of both countries have been a primary consideration of the Peace Bridge Authority. Office buildings and inspection booths in the Canadian plaza have been rebuilt numerous times, resulting in today's graceful edifices which were opened in 2007.





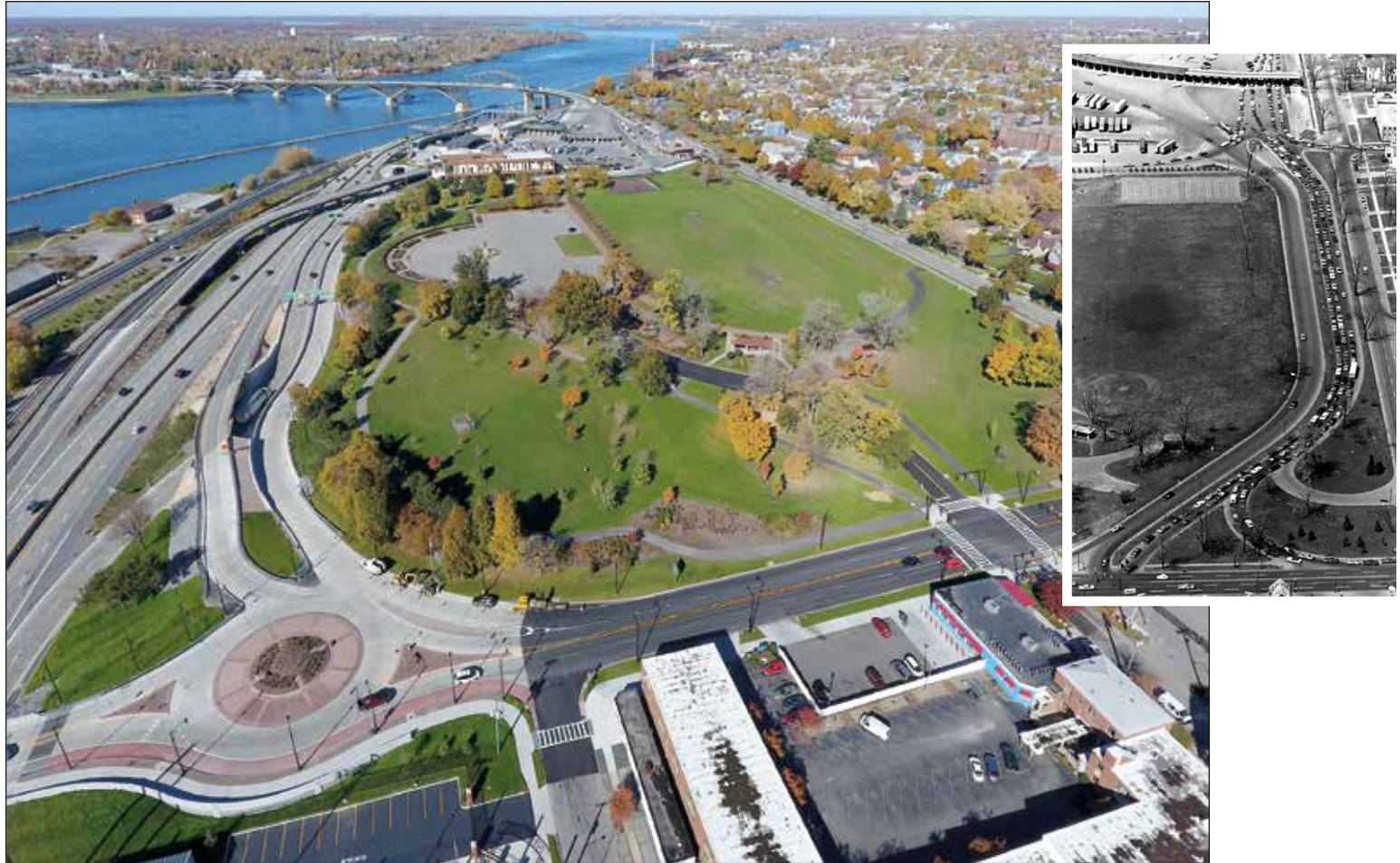


The need for better Customs facilities in Buffalo was noted almost immediately after the Peace Bridge opened. They were enlarged in 1935. The latest project, valued at \$24 million, was completed in 2016 with a renovated and expanded commercial building and warehouse. The approach was widened to accommodate commercial vehicles in 2014 at a cost of \$10 million.

Beginning in the summer of 2016, work began on the biggest improvement since the original construction. This \$100-million project includes complete replacement of the structural slab to widen lanes and provide an overhanging sidewalk/bike path with a scenic overlook platform. Structural steel will be replaced and strengthened, new electrical and fiber-optic infrastructure will be installed along with new traffic control gantries, railings and light posts. One lane at a time will be closed and rebuilt during the winter over three years, ensuring two-way traffic is not disrupted and to accommodate the busy tourist and travel seasons.







Green space was recovered in the Frederick Olmstead-designed Front Park in 2016 when New York State completed construction of ramps to and from Interstate 190 connecting directly to the Peace Bridge. The \$70-million project included the removal of Baird Drive which the Peace Bridge Authority built in the 1950s. This allowed for the installation of a traffic circle on Porter Avenue. The project created a single point of access to the bridge and diverted traffic from residential areas.



The Peace Bridge Authority recently invested \$3 million for landscaping, including neighborhoods near the bridge on both sides of the border. The Authority adopted Buffalo's Pat Sole Park in 2016 with a \$300,000 refurbishment for new play equipment, decorative fencing, paths, trees and ongoing maintenance.



Energy-efficient LED lights illuminate today's Peace Bridge with a palette of colors unimaginable to its founders. The programmable system offers a dynamic display for special occasions, holidays and by request.