

75th ANNIVERSARY

CROSSING PATHS  BUILDING FUTURES
THE PEACE BRIDGE

1927 - 2002

CANADA • UNITED STATES



❖ The Peace Bridge ❖

Groundbreaking Ceremony: August 26, 1925

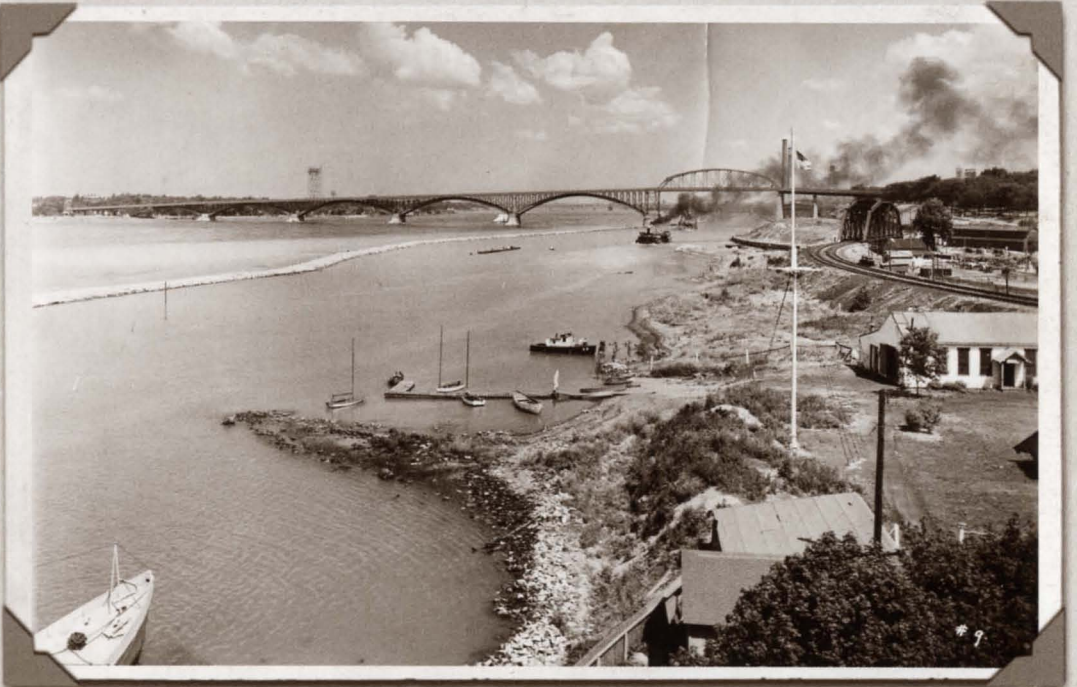
Opening Ceremonies: August 7, 1927

from "Engineering News Record", Vol. 98, No. 1,
April 21, 1927: pages 638-640

"Building the Peace bridge, the new highway bridge across the Niagara River between Buffalo and Fort Erie, involved the construction of three piers in the strong rapids of the Niagara River opposite Buffalo. Piers 3, 4, and 5 are in water 14 to 15 feet deep, flowing normally at 8 to 10 feet per second, which during southwest wind storms increases to 10 to 12 feet per second."



The bridge's first steel "stringers" are placed on top of concrete piers near the Black Rock Canal. The NYS Thruway now runs between these two piers.



Shown here is the Buffalo shoreline south of the new Peace Bridge possibly during the 1930's when boats powered by steam would often be seen navigating the Black Rock Canal.

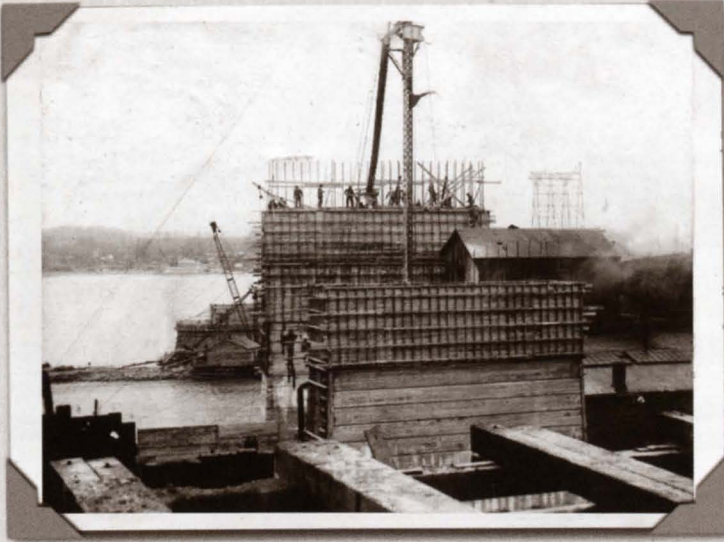
Wooden formwork for land-based piers on the US approach can be glimpsed in this photo. After completion of Peace Bridge facilities in 1927, the company went on to construct New York City's Empire State Building in the early 1930s. Over seventy-five years later, the Turner Construction Company is still an active participant in major construction projects worldwide.



Concrete for foundations is placed by hand with wheelbarrows near the entry to the current US Plaza area in 1925. To the right, abandoned Fort Porter buildings include "The Castle" in the background.

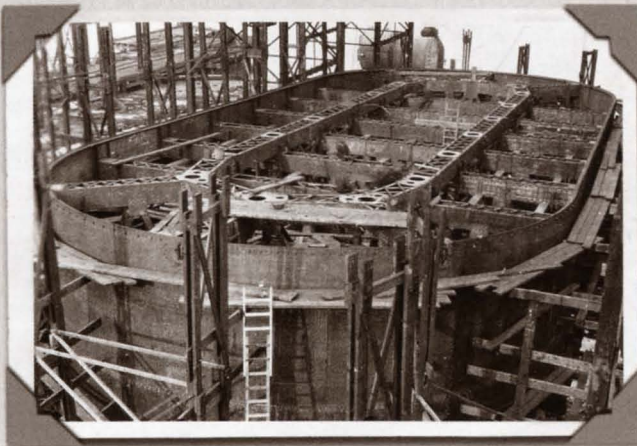
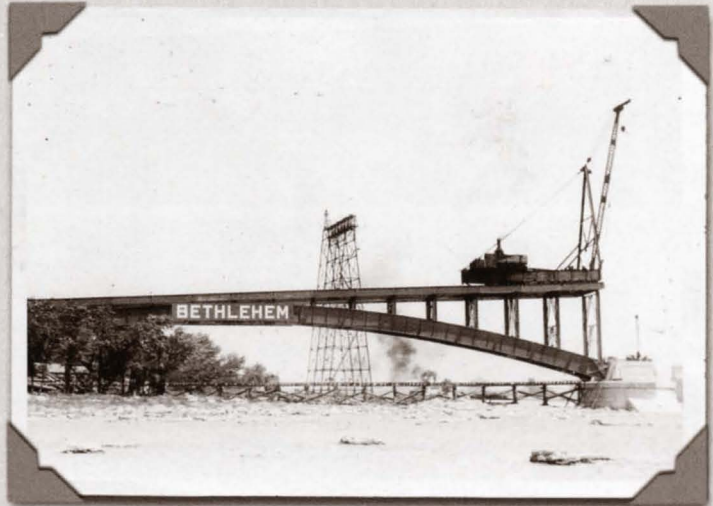
An engineering challenge to bridge construction was erection of concrete piers in the Niagara River's swift current. Here, steel crib work is raised in the Black Rock Canal to enable the construction of one of the bridge's largest piers.





Workmen continue to construct wooden forms by hand on Pier 1 in advance of the next concrete pour.

Bethlehem Steel provided steel for the Peace Bridge's superstructure shown here in the first Canadian arch to be constructed. Niagara Parkway now runs under this arch. As illustrated on the right, bridge construction advances across the Niagara River using cranes placing the next steel "stringers" to support the roadbed.

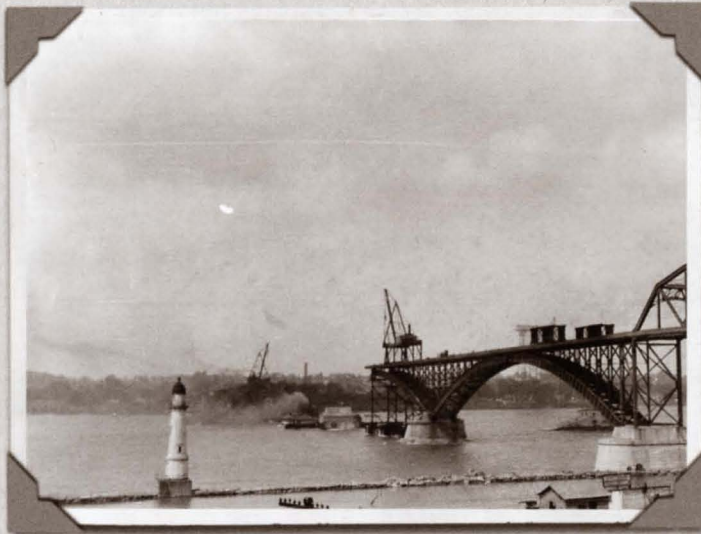


Details of an open wooden caisson or "formwork". This wooden configuration allows for construction of concrete piers below water level.



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Construction of a wooden caisson along the Fort Erie shoreline in October 1925.



Nearing completion of the steel superstructure, steel erection meets near Pier 4 to complete the steel supports. The lighthouse on the Bird Island Pier, also designed by Peace Bridge Chief Engineer, Edward Luffler, was removed not long after the bridge was opened to traffic.

Earth moving technology has certainly changed over the past 75 years. In the winter of 1926-27 while the roadbed was being topped off with granite blocks in the background, an early steam shovel loads horse and wagon teams with excavated soil to provide suitable grading on the Canadian approach. Houses shown along the river's edge no longer exist and this area is now Niagara Parks Commission parkland. A 2002 view from the same location shows the entry to the CVPC and the Peace Bridge lined with commercial vehicles





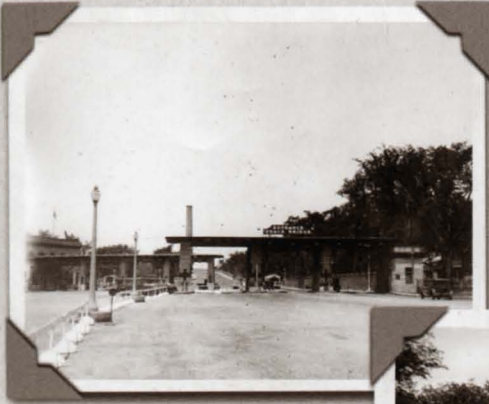
An aerial of Fort Erie's lower Walnut and Queen Streets in the late 1920's looks considerably different now. Gone are the homes and the American Legion Hall (right foreground), Peace Bridge Brokers, the Canadian truck yard and the Peace Bridge Commercial Centre at 18 Queen Street occupy most of this landscape now.

The current site of 68 Walnut Street in Fort Erie now houses Canada Customs and Immigration agencies. The area used to be known as Kinsey Plaza named after the realty company in Buffalo's Ellicott Square building that was attempting to sell building lots next to the new Peace Bridge.



A view of the eastbound Canadian Plaza area circa 1938.

US toll plaza entry to the
Peace Bridge circa 1938



Seven US toll booths in
1928 were configured to
collect toll payments
from either a vehicle's
passenger or driver.



Westbound vehicles exiting the
Canadian gateway in the 1940's
for Main Street Fort Erie
before the Queen Elizabeth
Highway was constructed and
linked to the gateway. Note the
Esso sign. The area shown is now
a parking lot for 68 Walnut
Street, and was formerly known
as the "Esso Lot".

Crossing the border became
easier for travelers when the
NYS Thruway constructed
ramps leading directly to the
Peace Bridge in the early
1960's. Here, Sheridan Terrace
is under construction during
the Summer of 1964. It
became the northbound off
ramp behind the R. F. Willson
Administration Building leading
to the US Plaza, Niagara
Street and Busti Avenue.



Printed in USA