

Blue Water Bridge Plaza
(U.S. Customs/Toll Plaza)
(U.S. Plaza)
(American Plaza)
410 Elmwood Street
Port Huron
St. Clair County
Michigan

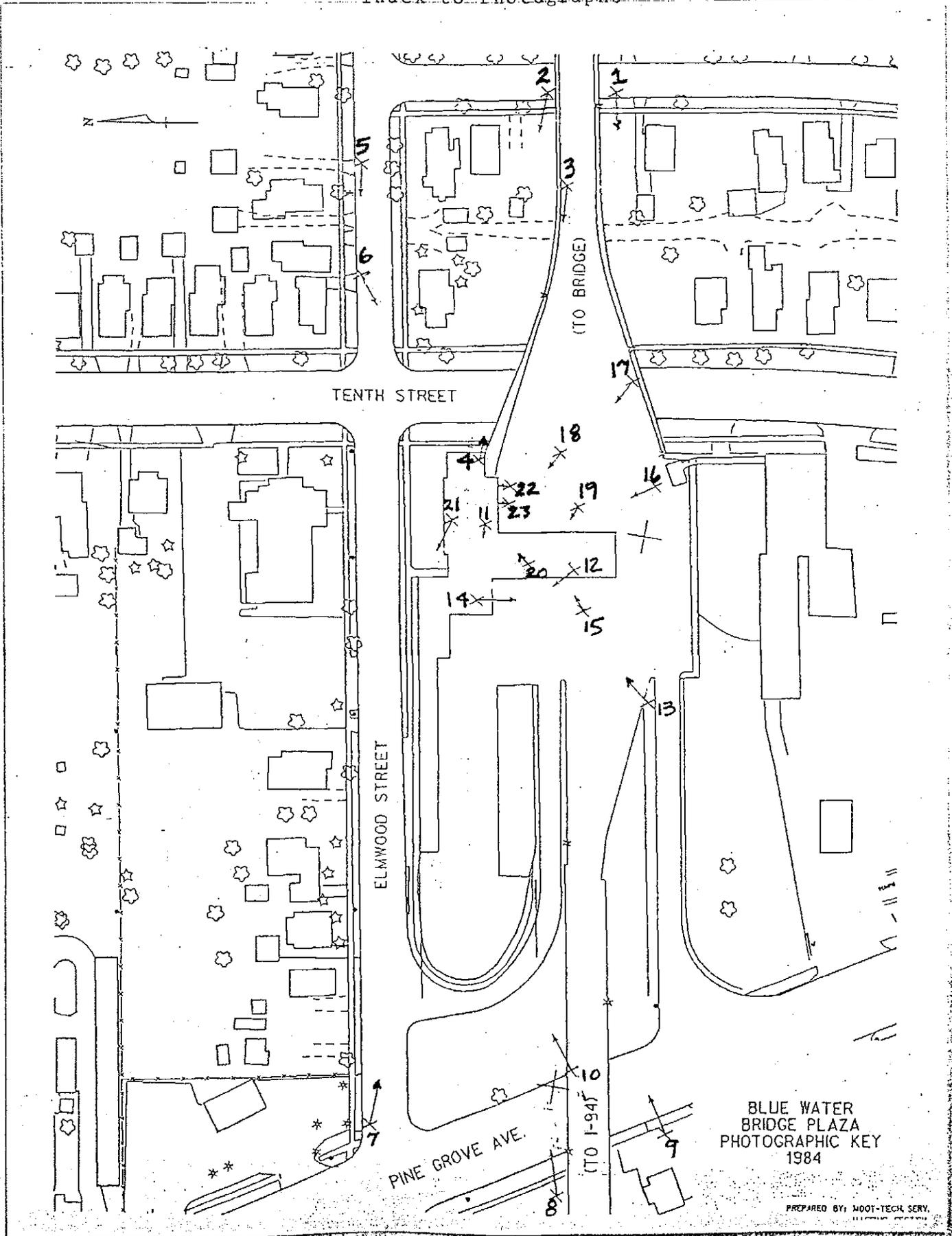
HAER No. MI-16

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

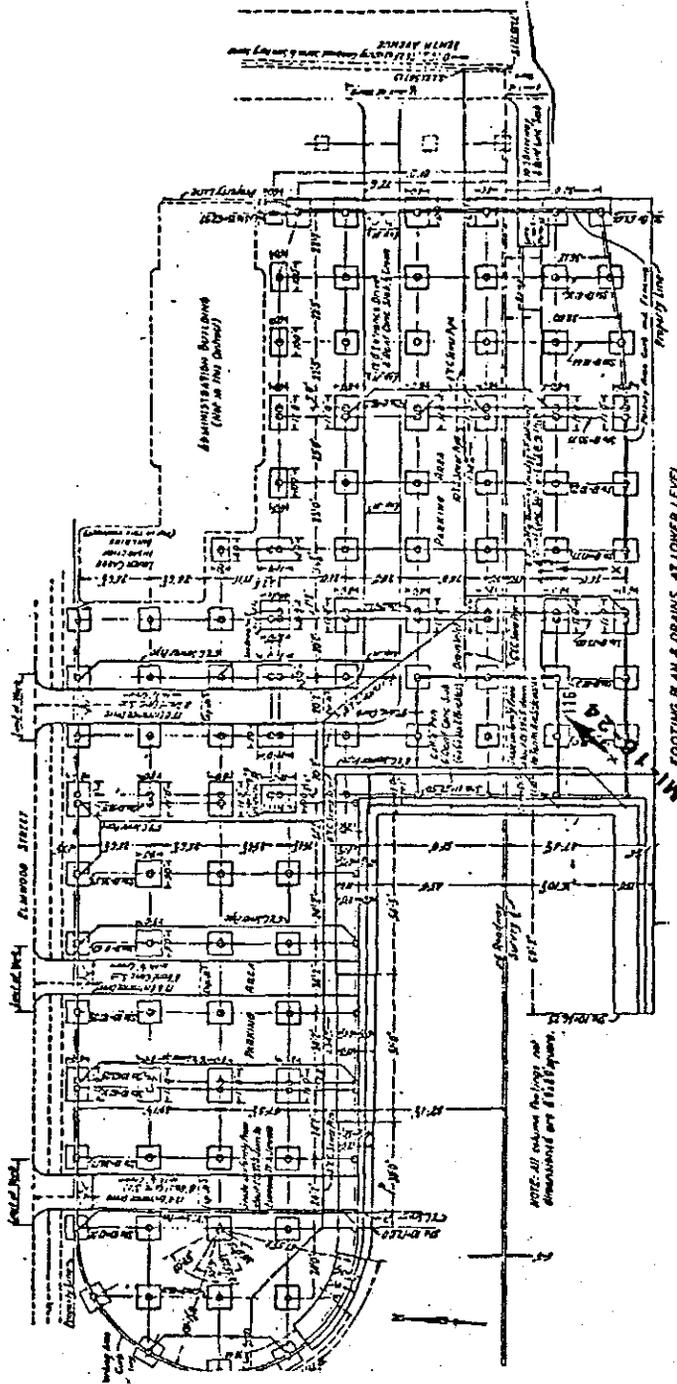
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BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA PHOTOGRAPHIC KEY 1984

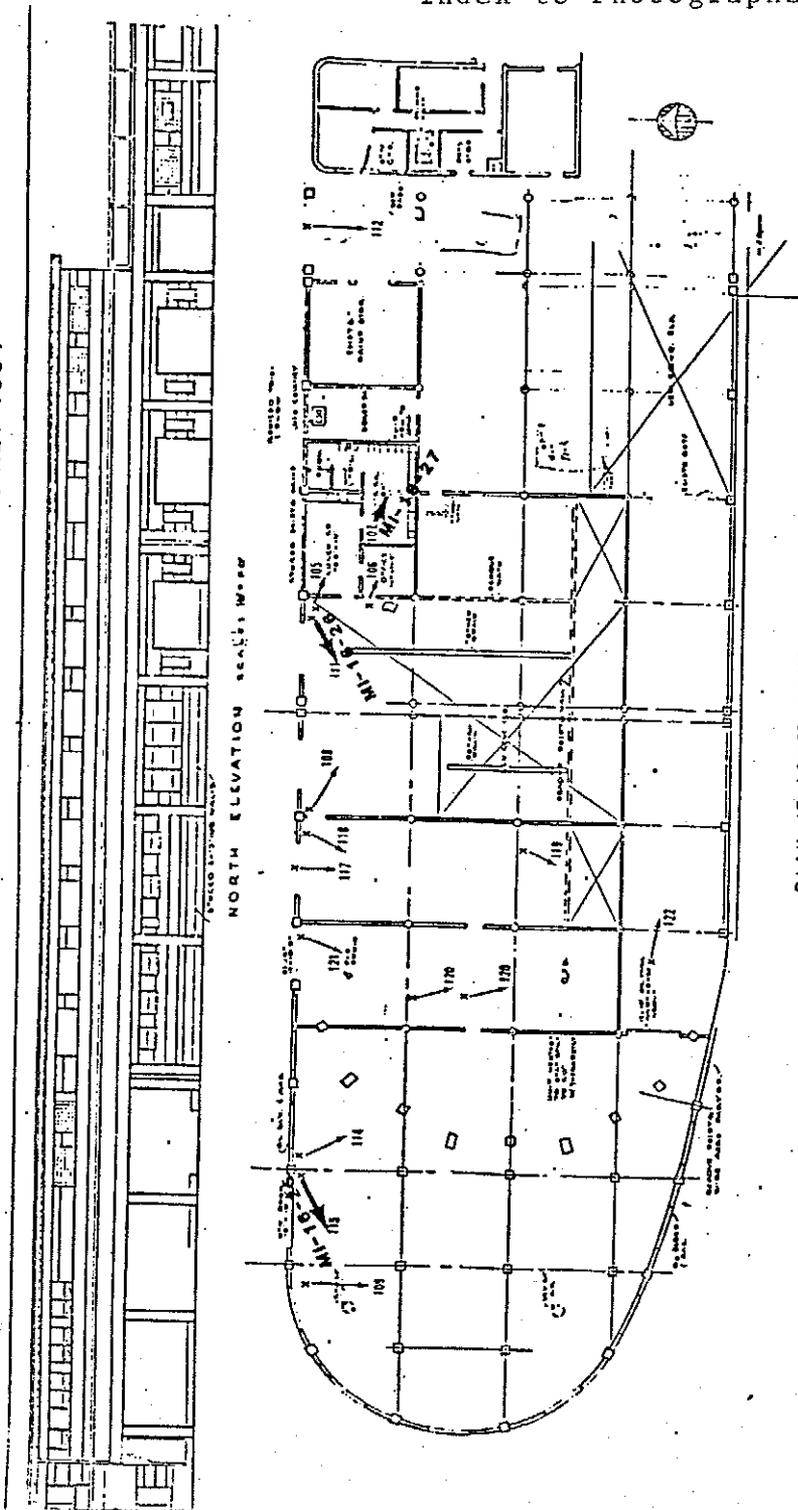
NOTE: In most further conditions
Aerial building may be observed as
indicated on plan
Locations of buildings shown on page 5
Locations of other buildings on page 6



NOTE: All columns, footings, and
drains are 1/4" = 1'-0"

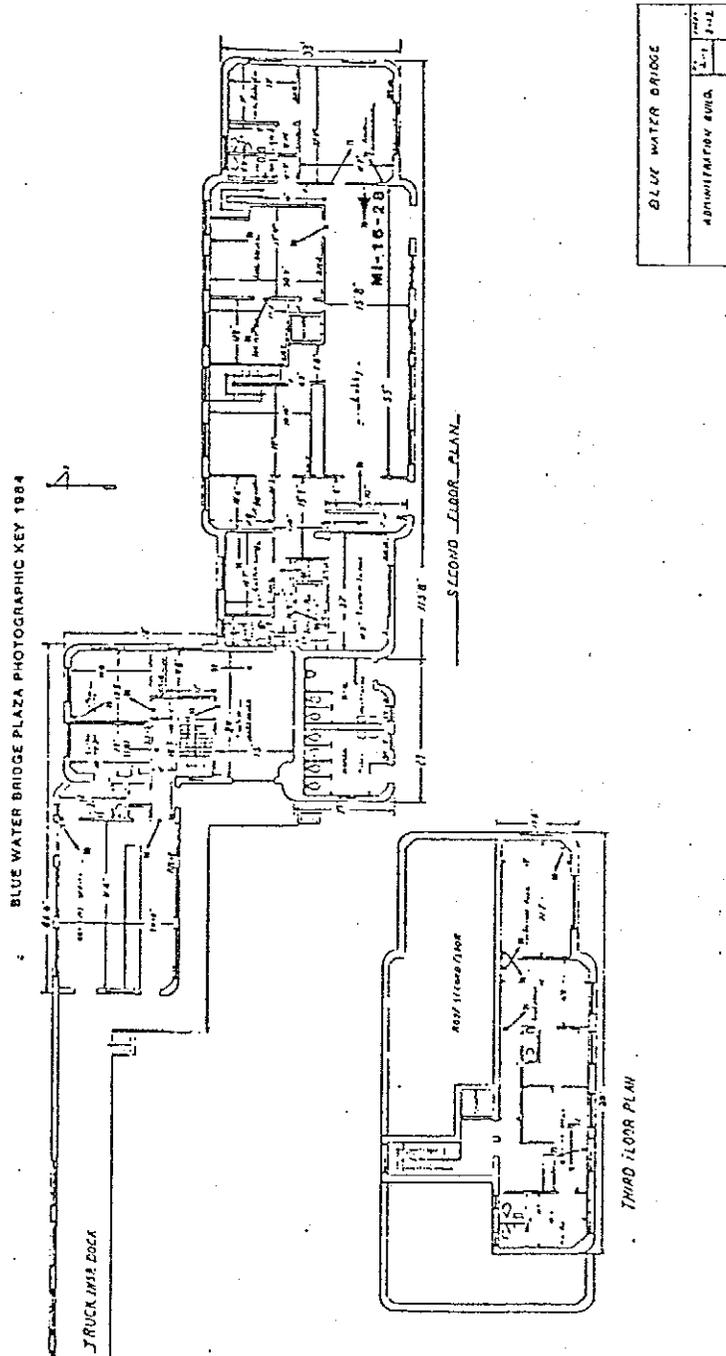
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BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA PHOTOGRAPHIC KEY 1984



STATE BRIDGE COM. OF MICHIGAN
ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS TO
LOWER LEVEL
WYETH & WARDEN INC. ARCHITECTS
MAR 15, 1980 NEW JERSEY

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA HAER No. MI-16
(U.S. Customs/Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)

Location: 410 Elmwood Street
Port Huron
St. Clair County
Michigan

UTM Coordinates: 17.383020.4761520
USGS Quadrangle: Port Huron, Michigan - Ontario

Architects/
Contractor: George L. Harvey and Norman B. Forbes/H.G. Christman Co.

Date of
Construction: 1937 - 1938

Present Owner: Michigan Department of Transportation
425 West Ottawa Street
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Present Use: The Blue Water Bridge Plaza currently serves as the United States terminus of the Blue Water Bridge. The bridge crosses the St. Clair River between Point Edward, Ontario, Canada and Port Huron, Michigan. It presently houses offices of the U.S. Customs Office, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, private customs brokers, and the Michigan Department of Transportation which services this border crossing, and maintains the bridge and plaza. The plaza is currently scheduled for replacement in 1988.

Significance: The bridge and plaza were completed in 1938. They are reflections of Depression-era engineering and architecture. The plaza was designed and built by George L. Harvey and Norman B. Forbes. The building style, Art Moderne, with its streamlined effect of the smooth concrete surface, the rounded corners and the horizontal banding expressed a feeling of modernity sought by Depression-era designers. The plaza has been in continuous use since completion. The vehicle inspection shelters were constructed in 1955, the same year a fifth toll booth was added. Alterations to the plaza have been made through the years under a continuing maintenance and improvement program. These alterations include roof line changes to the booths, full enclosure of the booths, lighting and equipment changes, and resurfacing of the plaza deck. The significance of the Customs/Toll Plaza lies in its architectural style and its transportation association with the bridge.

Project

Information: This documentation was undertaken in 1984-1986 in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement by the Michigan Department of Transportation as a mitigative measure prior to the demolition and replacement of the plaza.

Paul W. McAllister
Staff Archaeologist
Environmental Liaison Section
Transportation Planning Services Division
Bureau of Transportation Planning
Michigan Department of Transportation
Lansing, Michigan

Historical Events and Persons Connected With the Structures

The history of the U.S. Plaza is inextricably connected with the history of the Blue Water Bridge and the crossing at the St. Clair River. The construction of the bridge and plaza in 1938 was the culmination of years of dreams and efforts by many individuals during the 1920s and 30s. However, the history of the bridge and plaza begins most properly in prehistory.

The location of the Blue Water Bridge, because it is near the narrowest width of the St. Clair river, has long been recognized as a site of strategic importance to transportation. During the days of the earliest Great Lakes travel, it was a portage point around the rapids at the beginning of the St. Clair River. Early entrepreneurs recognized the strategic importance of the location at the foot of Lake Huron; in 1836 the Huron Land Company bought land incorporating this area and published a pamphlet to attract potential investors. It stated "the site at the foot of Lake Huron assumes importance. It becomes the central point for various diverging routes by railroad and by water; it will be the first great landing and distributing point for all western emigration; and it seems to be the natural depot for commodities intended for shipment..." (Jenks 1912). When the Grand Trunk Railroad Company was formed in 1859, its head office was located at this site because barges transported train cars across the river at this point. The Grand Trunk was also involved in an important and unique aspect of the study corridor's history. In the early 1800s people who wished to travel across the straits between Port Huron and Sarnia had to rely on a series of unreliable ferries. The same year the Grand Trunk reached Port Huron, 1859, it began operation of a car ferry at the Rapids. This "swing ferry" anchored by cable to the American side, employed the current of the rapids "to swing from Port Huron to Point Edward, about where the piers of the Blue Water International Bridge now rest" (Mitts 1969:146). This swing ferry was only in operation until 1870 when it was replaced by an iron car ferry, but it is noted on maps of the period (Carleton 1859). (Commonwealth Associates, Inc., 1983a)

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In 1891 a railroad tunnel connecting Port Huron and Sarnia was opened for the Grand Trunk Railroad. The first proposal to build a bridge over the St. Clair River came in 1903. Port Huron City Engineer Phelps proposed a rail bridge to connect the Canadian and Michigan branches of the Pere Marquette Railroad. Since the venture failed to gain much support the railroad tunnel presently in use, runs free of direct competition.

In 1927, the idea of a vehicular bridge first received consideration. At that time Joseph A. Bower was promoting a bridge for the Detroit area. Bower stated that if his proposal failed at the foot of the St. Clair River, he would consider bringing it to the mouth region. After that, the idea received increasing support. The following chronology of events details the development, construction and maintenance of the Blue Water Bridge and the U.S. Plaza.

On June 11, 1927, Joseph Strauss, Chicago, a bridge engineer conferred with Port Huron Mayor John J. Bell regarding construction of a bridge between Port Huron and Sarnia. Nothing definite proposed, Mayor Bell reported after the conference.

On June 26, 1927, John Lyle Harrington, Kansas City and New York bridge engineer and promoter, conferred with Sarnia Mayor James F. Newton, W. E. Harris, manager of the Sarnia Chamber of Commerce; Mayor Bell, and the Port Huron city commission, to explain a proposal to build a St. Clair River bridge between Port Huron and Sarnia. He said Congress and the United States War Department would have to approve the plan. He agreed to return to Port Huron in two weeks and asked for support of the two cities.

On June 27, 1927, Maynard D. Smith, Port Huron businessman, conferred with Mayor Bell on a plan to build a Port Huron-Sarnia bridge.

On July 3, 1927, Mr. Harrington again met with Port Huron and Sarnia city officials to discuss his proposal to bridge the St. Clair River.

On July 8, 1927, Joseph B. Strauss, Chicago bridge engineer, now engaged by Maynard D. Smith to prepare a bridge design and construction estimates, arrived in Port Huron.

On July 9, 1927, Mr. Smith and Mr. Strauss discussed their plans with Mayor Bell.

On July 10, 1927, Mr. Harrington again conferred with the Sarnia city council on his plans.

On July 11, 1927, Mr. Harrington and Mr. Smith conferred with the Sarnia council on their competing proposals. Mr. Smith offered the Sarnia council a check for \$1,000, with the promise of a second check of \$25,000 to guarantee he would erect his proposed bridge.

On July 13, 1927, the Sarnia council and Port Huron city commission disregarded the Smith bridge proposal and gave a 90 day endorsement to Mr. Harrington's proposition, asking him to prepare plans and estimates for submission to the two bodies. Fred S. Newton, vice president of the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company, criticized the Port Huron commission for failure to give the ferry company first chance to obtain approval of plans to build a bridge, saying the ferry company was financially able to do so, although he also said the plan was impractical even with three times the traffic then existing between the two cities.

On July 29, 1927, Mr. Harrington began a survey to determine the most feasible location for a bridge across St. Clair River.

On August 9, 1927, John Cawood, Port Huron businessman, in a letter printed in The Times Herald condemned Port Huron officials for favoring Harrington, an outsider, in preference to Mr. Smith "a man we know."

On August 13, 1927, Maynard D. Smith announced completion of a survey of bridge locations.

On September 13, 1927, Maynard O. Smith told Kiwanis Club directors he has assurance of financing for a bridge and was ready to begin work at once. Mayor Bell refused city approval saying Harrington has been endorsed for 90 days.

On September 20, 1927, Mr. Harrington, at a meeting of the Port Huron commission and Sarnia city council, outlined his program and said the bridge would be completed in two years at a cost of \$3,500,000. Said three locations were under consideration, between Black River and Pine Grove Avenue. Sarnia voiced opposition to location of the Canadian end of the bridge in Point Edward.

On October 1, 1927, the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company presents proposal to build bridge and convinces the Port Huron commission to withhold final approval to the Harrington plan.

On October 8, 1927, Mayor Bell states that no decision has been made.

On October 10, 1927, Mr. Harrington wired Mayor Bell from New York that plans were near completion and he would reach Port Huron with them in a few days.

On October 13, 1927, Mr. Smith presented plans for a proposed bridge to the Port Huron commission. Mr. Harrington presented plans to the Sarnia council and Port Huron commission. The commission announced all plans would be studied before definite approval was given anyone.

On October 22, 1927, the Sarnia council declared it would announce its support to one of the bridge proponents by November 4. Stranahan, Harris & Oatis, Toledo investment house, entered the bridge picture and offered the fourth plans to bridge the St. Clair river through their representatives, Cowan, Cowan & Gray, Sarnia solicitors.

On October 25, 1927, Sarnia council said all bridge proposals must be in its hands by October 28.

On October 28, 1927, Stranahan, Harris & Oatis posted \$100,000 bond through their Port Huron attorney, Shirley Stewart, guaranteeing ability to construct bridge and announced willingness to work out a plan whereby the bridge would become toll free after a number of years.

On November 4, 1927, Sarnia delays vote on bridge proposals.

On November 8, 1927, Sarnia laid down a number of conditions for all bridge proponents, including a \$100,000 bond, and locating the Canadian end inside the Sarnia city limits.

On November 14, 1927, the choice was narrowed to Harrington and Smith. Sarnia council and Port Huron commission then voted their approval to Mr. Harrington, who announced he would seek immediate approval of congress and the Canadian parliament. Shirley Stewart, Stranahan, Harris & Oatis attorneys, announced action had been taken to secure Canadian parliament's approval of its plan.

On November 17, 1927, the Port Huron city commission adopted 17 rules of procedure for Mr. Harrington and the next day sent Representative Cramton a copy of the rules, with notice Harrington had been approved by the commission and the Sarnia council. The commission required among other things that the engineer apply to congress and the United States war department for permits to build the authorized bridge in 60 days and must form a company to carry out the erection work inside 30 days.

On November 22, 1927, the Sarnia city council reaffirmed its approval of Harrington. Maynard D. Smith, in Lansing, filed papers incorporating the Port Huron, Sarnia, Point Edward Bridge Company. Port Huron Loyalty committee, of which Fred T. Moore, Port Huron, was chairman protest alleged favoritism to Harrington by Mayor Bell and the city commission, in preference to Mr. Smith. Representative Louis C. Cramton advised Mayor Bell he would not act hastily in recommending to congress approval of any applicant for permission to build a St. Clair River bridge and asked the mayor to have Mr. Harrington furnish a complete report on his plans listing any provision he might have for eventually turning the bridge into a toll-free structure.

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On December 3, 1927, Peabody, Smith & Co., Inc., New York bankers, in letter to Representative Cramton, agreed to furnish Mr. Harrington with money necessary to build his proposed bridge.

On December 20, 1927, Mr. Harrington, by letter, outlined his bridge proposal plans to Representative Cramton and requested him to introduce a bill in congress granting permission for construction of the crossing. Maynard D. Smith, writing to James Mactaggart, secretary-treasurer of the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company, offered to buy ferry line if granted a franchise to build proposed bridge.

On December 28, 1927, the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company, in a full-page advertisement in the Times Herald, announced it was making application to congress and the Canadian parliament for permission to build a bridge between Port Huron and Sarnia and stated the company had been assured of funds to build the bridge by P. W. Chapman & Co., Inc., Chicago and New York investment bankers.

On January 1, 1928, Henry R. Baird, attorney for Mr. Smith, requested Representative Cramton to furnish him with copies of the bills used in granting permission for building of crossings at other American border points.

On January 14, 1928, Henry R. Baird, in letter to Representative Cramton, said the Port Huron city commission and Mayor Bell had not represented public opinion, which favored Maynard D. Smith, when they approved the Harrington proposal, that the ferry company had no intention of building a bridge although pretending to seek permission, and that Mr. Mactaggart had said the bridge was impractical.

On January 17, 1928, Maynard D. Smith appealed to Representative Cramton for support in granting of a franchise to build the proposed bridge.

On January 18, 1928, Congressman Cramton announced in Washington receipt of three bridge proposals from Mr. Harrington, Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company and Maynard Smith and said he would soon introduce legislation in congress giving one of the three a permit to build a bridge and said he would ask the U.S. War Department to study the proposals for him. Mr. Harrington said he would petition Dominion of Canada Parliament at the session opening January 26, for a permit to build bridge.

On January 21, 1928, Mr. Harrington, in letter to Representative Cramton, furnished detailed information on arrangements he had made to finance erection of a bridge and said the Canadian parliament was being asked to incorporate the Canadian-American Bridge Company, to be "the legal entity for the Canadian portion of the work."

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On January 25, 1928, Prosecuting Attorney Jesse P. Wolcott urged Representative Crampton to propose franchise for building a St. Clair River bridge to either Maynard D. Smith or the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company.

On January 28, 1928, the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company filed papers in Ottawa for incorporation of Port Huron-Sarnia Bridge Company.

On February 3, 1928, W. T. Goodison, Sarnia, member of Canadian Parliament was reported ready to present a bill in parliament at Ottawa proposing Canada grant franchise for building bridge to Stranahan, Oatis and Harris, Toledo investment house, who had joined forces with Mr. Smith. Bill proposed incorporation of St. Clair Transit Company with authority to build, maintain and operate a bridge.

On February 4, 1928, Mayor John J. Bell, who favored Mr. Harrington in bridge franchise matter, as did other Port Huron and Sarnia officials, charged bridge matter had become a political football and proposed a city vote to settle question of who should receive franchise.

On February 6, 1928, Mr. Harrington, at meeting of Exchange, Lions and Kiwanis clubs and Port Huron Bar Association, presided over by Dr. J. M. MacVicar, announced receipt of information from his attorneys, Havel and Lebel, Sarnia, that bill proposing to grant Harrington bridge franchise had been offered in parliament at Ottawa. Harrington stated he would begin construction work on bridge in the fall if granted franchise, that soundings had been made and other details worked out during the previous summer. Harrington said Peabody, Smith & Co., New York, were ready to finance structure. Mayor Bell lauded Harrington as able engineer, who had built bridges valued at 150 million dollars.

On February 10, 1928, Commissioners Charles D. Rettie, William Robertson, and C. L. Boynton endorsed the bridge proposals of the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company.

On February 11, 1928, Representative Crampton conferred in Washington with Mr. Smith, James Mactaggart of the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company, and Mr. Harrington, when all presented and discussed their plans for building a bridge. Mr. Crampton announced he would reserve a decision until he had proper opportunity to study the situation.

On February 21, 1928, Henry R. Baird, Smith attorney, told Exchange club members Mr. Smith had dropped Joseph B. Strauss, Chicago, as bridge engineer and engaged Modjeski & Masters. He said Stranahan, Harris & Oatis were ready to finance building of the bridge.

On February 22, 1928, Mr. Smith and Stranahan, Oatis & Harris, Toledo, Ohio, investment brokers, who had been active on the Canadian side in efforts to

obtain a bridge franchise and had joined forces with Mr. Smith, in communication to Representative Cramton assured him they were ready to proceed without delay in matter of building the bridge if given a franchise, that Modjeski & Masters would be engaged as bridge engineers, that Mr. Smith would hold 55 percent of stock in a bridge company to be formed, and Stranahan, Oatis & Harris would hold 45 percent and the bridge company, to be formed, would be willing to purchase the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company at a price not to exceed \$500,000.

On February 24, 1928, Maynard D. Smith and Stranahan, Harris & Oatis, won the first leg of a fight to win congressional approval of their bridge proposal in a three-cornered fight with the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company and Mr. Harrington, when Representative Louis C. Cramton introduced in congress a bill granting Mr. Smith's company, the Port Huron, Sarnia, Point Edward International Bridge Company, a permit to build the proposed crossing.

On February 28, 1928, opposition by the ferry company and Harrington to Goodison's efforts in the Canadian parliament, favoring Smith and Stranahan, Harris & Oatis, began brewing in Ottawa.

On March 1, 1928, W. T. Goodison, Sarnia, M. P., presented a bill to the Private Bills Committee of the House of Commons, proposing incorporation of a St. Clair Transit Company, as requested by Mr. Smith and Stranahan, Harris & Oatis, which would give the company a franchise to build a bridge between Port Huron and Sarnia. Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company and Mr. Harrington requested delay in consideration to prepare presentation of similar franchise requests by them. Action was delayed until March 7 by the committee. Mr. Smith and his attorney, Henry R. Baird, refused an offer by George Worthington House, Detroit, president of the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company, to purchase the company and its proper ties for \$1,000,000.

On March 3, 1928, Representative Cramton said he felt sure the ferry company would be unable to defeat the Goodison proposal favoring Mr. Smith.

On March 5, 1928, the battle lines between three franchise seekers were drawn in Ottawa, with Sarnia bereft of attorneys. Mayor Bell, Port Huron, deplored the bridge fight and said Mr. Harrington should have been given permit as he was endorsed by the Sarnia and Port Huron city governments. Roy M. Norton, President, Sarnia Bridge Company, said if Harrington received permit, his company would supply the bridge steel.

On March 6, 1928, the Sarnia council voted hands off policy in bridge fight after requests for aid by Mr. Harrington.

On March 7, 1928, the House of Commons Private Bills Committee heard arguments of three interested factions and attack by Mr. House on the Smith proposal. United States Department of Agriculture, which embodies Bureau of Public Roads was reported from Washington in favor of the Smith proposal.

On March 8, 1928, the Commons Private Bills Committee approved the Goodison proposal to incorporate a St. Clair Transit Company, meaning approval of Mr. Smith and Stranahan, Harris & Oatis after Mr. Goodison reported that Senator Ferris by telephone from Washington had assured him he favored the Smith interests. Mayor Bell withdrew his opposition saying "let's pull together and get the bridge for Port Huron."

On March 20, 1928, Mr. Harrington withdrew from the fight, saying he hopes for Port Huron's sake the bridge would soon be built. House of Commons began consideration of the Goodison bill.

On March 27, 1928, the Goodison Bill, to grant a franchise to the St. Clair Transit Company, was advanced to third reading in the House of Commons.

On April 11, 1928, the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee favorably reported to the house the bill of Representative Cramton to grant a permit to build a bridge between Port Huron and Sarnia to Maynard Smith's Port Huron, Point Edward, Sarnia International Bridge Company.

On April 24, 1928, Congress passed the bill (P.A. 312 of 20th Congress) granting the permit to the Smith company.

On June 11, 1928, the Dominion of Canada parliament passed an act creating the St. Clair Transit Company with George Newton Galloway, Canadian National railway engineer; John Alexander White, salesman; William Robert Paul, loan company manager; John Morris Tobin, barber; Peter Paton, merchant; James Manford Norwood, Canadian National engineer, and Chester Holdsworth Benton, lumber merchant, all of Sarnia, as incorporators, with two million dollars capital stock, and granting to them a permit to construct, maintain and operate a bridge across St. Clair river and sell or assign the franchise to any American company granted similar powers by the Michigan or United States government.

On February 20, 1929, as Mr. Smith and Stranahan, Harris & Oatis had failed to begin construction of a bridge in the year limit set by a congressional act of March 23, 1906, which also required completion within three years from time of granting of a franchise, Representative Cramton introduced a bill in congress granting them a one year extension.

On July 11, 1929, a public hearing on the Port Huron Bridge in Federal Building, Port Huron was held with Mayor McCoach presiding. F. M. Masters of Modjeski and Masters presents plan and discusses the engineering restraints. The National River and Harbor Board objects to proposed plan. Board of Education objects to proposed location. Various other interests express concern about the approaches and navigation.

In July 1929, Modjeski and Masters submit report detailing the proposed bridge at a location south of its present location.

On April 28, 1930, Representative Cramton, in view of the fact the Port Huron, Sarnia, Point Edward Bridge Company had not started construction in the period required by law, and had forfeited their franchise on Feb. 24, 1930, presented a bill to congress, which created a Great Lakes Bridge Commission consisting of Louis A. Well (later elected chairman by other members of the commission); Frank E. Beard and Edgar W. Kiefer, businessmen, all of Port Huron; Fred W. Moore, St. Clair; and Major David McCoach Jr., United States army engineer, who had been given permission to serve on the commission by the United States War Department. Under terms of the proposal the commission was empowered to build a bridge across St. Clair River or not to build as it saw fit, to purchase any existing ferries, issue necessary revenue bonds to obtain money to pay construction costs and purchase the ferries with understanding the members and the government would incur no liability. The act specified if the commission did not build the authorized bridge in five years "it would be dissolved and cease to exist."

On June 14, 1930, the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee reported the bill with minor changes.

On June 25, 1930, the Congress passed a bill creating the Great Lakes Bridge Commission with broad power previously outlined.

On June 8, 1931, the Michigan legislature passed Act No. 302, introduced by Senator Alex Cowan, Port Huron, authorizing State Highway Department to cooperate with Great Lakes Bridge Commission in construction of international bridge.

On June 27, 1933, a special meeting of the State Administrative Board approves a bridge crossing at Port Huron, but as the state had no money for the project, it did not proceed.

On March 7, 1935, Senator Gordon F. Van Eenenaam, Muskegon, introduced in the state senate a bill drafted by Representative George C. Watson, Port Huron and Capac, which proposed the creation of a State Bridge Commission,

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along lines proposed by Henry R. Baird, Port Huron attorney, which would authorize the commission to build, maintain and operate a bridge between Port Huron and Sarnia and to issue revenue bonds needed to raise finances.

On April 1, 1935, Governor Fitzgerald appointed Henry R. Baird, Port Huron, and Varnum B. Steinbaugh, Deputy State Highway Commissioner, members of the State Bridge Commission of Michigan, subject to passage of provisions of Bridge Commission Bill then before the legislature.

On June 3, 1935, the Bridge Commission Bill was passed by the state legislature.

On June 24, 1935, Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald signed and enacted into law the Bridge Commission Bill (Act 147). The State Bridge Commission was the owner and operator of the bridge and plaza from this date until November 8, 1965. The appointees to this three member commission were with their date of service:

Commissioners: Henry R. Baird (1935 - 1936)
(3 members) Varnum B. Steinbaugh (1935 - 1943)
Oale E. Moffett (1935 - 1951)
Marshall E. Campbell (1936 - 1965)
Carl H. Lahser (1943 - 1949, 1963 - 1965)
Lloyd G. Cassin (1949 - 1957)
Dr. Frank V. Carney (1951 - 1961)
Charles H. Rosetta (1957 - 1959)
Michael O'Boyle (1959 - 1965)
Dr. Earl T. Enright (1961 - 1963)
H. Charles Knill (1965)

On June 25, 1935, the Great Lakes Bridge Commission, created by a congressional act of June 25, 1930, expired by law, which provided the commission would expire in five years if it did not build the bridge authorized in the act.

On August 30, 1935, Congress in a bill, introduced by Representative Jesse P. Wolcott, Port Huron, authorized State Bridge Commission of Michigan to construct a bridge across St. Clair river.

On September 6, 1935, Dale E. Moffett was appointed third member of the bridge commission by Gov. Frank O. Fitzgerald.

On October 23, 1935, the State Bridge Commission of Michigan met in Hotel Olds, Lansing. Henry R. Baird, Port Huron, was elected chairman by V. B. Steinbaugh and Dale E. Moffett. The commission appointed George C. Watson, Port Huron, as attorney.

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On January 29, 1936, V. B. Steinbaugh at a bridge commission meeting in the office of Mr. Baird, Port Huron, reported he had discussed with T. B. McQuestion, Ontario minister of highways, the matter of obtaining provincial financial assistance and had been advised Mr. McQuestion would refer the matter to the Ontario cabinet. The bridge commission voted to accept provisions of the congressional act of Aug. 30, 1935, authorizing construction of the bridge and voted to make application to the United States War Department for permission to build. The commission adopted the foot of State Street, over the St. Clair River rapids, as the bridge site, as this was the narrowest part of the river and therefore least expensive site. Mr. Steinbaugh was appointed to prepare the application to the war department. J. S. Harris, of Stranahan and Harris, investment company, discussed purchase of revenue bonds necessary to build the bridge. The commission discussed, without action, advisability of purchasing the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company.

On February 4, 1936, Mr. Steinbaugh presented to the commission a draft of the application to the War Department for a permit to span St. Clair River. The commission approved the draft.

On February 11, 1936, the commission applied to the War Department for permission to build a St. Clair River crossing.

On February 20, 1936, the Ontario Highway Department officials conferred with Point Edward officials on purchase of land for a bridge site.

On May 5, 1936, William A. Guthrie, Point Edward, Ontario, member of the Ontario legislative assembly, announced T. B. McQuestion, Ontario Minister of Highways, had authorized him to state definitely Ontario would build the Canadian approach to a bridge across the St. Clair River providing there is sufficient "assurance the structure will be constructed."

On May 7, 1936, Henry R. Baird, chairman of the state bridge commission died in John Hopkins hospital, Baltimore.

On May 12, 1936, Governor Fitzgerald appointed Marshall E. Campbell, Port Huron, a member of the State Bridge Commission to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Henry R. Baird.

On May 13, 1936, the bridge commission met in Lansing and elected V. B. Steinbaugh chairman to succeed Mr. Baird. Mr. Watson, commission attorney, advised the commission New York bond attorneys recommended action be taken to establish constitutionality of the Bridge Commission Act and right of commission to issue revenue bonds. The Michigan State Administrative Board announced it was allotting funds to the state highway department for use in bridge construction work. The board authorized acquisition of American approach right of way at the cost of \$119,000 and construction of the

Michigan approach to the bridge at a cost of \$510,000. Murray D. VanWagoner, State Highway Commissioner, announced the State Highway Department would rush completion of a bridge right of way survey and forward it to the Bureau of Public Roads in Washington which controls federal highway expenditures. In Sarnia, Cowan, Cowan and Gray, on behalf of the St. Clair Transit Company, filed plans for a proposed bridge with the Lambton County Registry Office and Ontario Highway Department.

On May 14, 1936, Murray D. VanWagoner went to Washington to speed action on obtaining federal funds for joining Michigan in paying cost of the American approach.

On May 18, 1936, the United States War Department approved bridge plans prepared for the bridge commission by Modjeski and Masters, providing a span between main piers of 851 feet.

On May 21, 1936, Thomas G. McDonald, chief of the United States Bureau of Public Roads, in Washington, assured Chairman Steinbaugh of the bridge commission federal money would be available for joining Michigan on an equal basis in building the American approach to an international bridge here. A Michigan Highway Department crew arrived in Port Huron to make a survey of the bridge approach site.

On May 22, 1936, Avery and Covington, on behalf of William C. Eaves, Port Huron contractor, began a suit in circuit court here to test bridge commission's right to issue revenue bonds.

On May 26, 1936, the Sarnia bridge bill passed the Canadian parliament House of Commons, incorporating the St. Clair Transit Company with authority to construct, maintain and operate a bridge between Port Huron and Sarnia, with the right to issue bonds and collect tolls, with the requirement the bridge be started in two and completed in three years.

On June 1, 1936, Circuit Judge Fred W. George upheld constitutionality of the Bridge Commission Act and its right to issue revenue bonds for bridge construction purposes.

On June 13, 1936, the St. Clair Transit Company, to avoid possibility of voiding its franchise, which would expire June 26 unless construction work was started, announced it would begin work at once on an approach pier on the northern outskirts of Sarnia.

On June 30, 1936, the Michigan Supreme Court upheld the St. Clair circuit court ruling of Judge George that the commission was legally permitted to issue revenue bonds. "This means bridge will be built," George C. Watson, commission attorney announced. He said the commission was making plans for purchase of the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company.

On August 4, 1936, Chairman Steinbaugh of the bridge commission wrote Lt. Col. V. L. Peterson, District Engineer of the United States War Department, in Detroit, that work had been started on the bridge in June to comply with the congressional act of 1906, which requires construction work to begin within a year after issuance of a permit and be completed in three years.

On August 5, 1936, the Michigan Highway Department asked for bids on test borings on main span pier sites.

On August 6, 1936, George C. Watson, commission attorney, announced representatives of the Michigan and Ontario highway departments would meet in a week with the bridge commission to draft an agreement on coordination of construction and maintenance.

On August 7, 1936, the bridge commission asked the United States War Department to amend its permit to build the bridge to allow for an 871-foot span between main piers to avoid the necessity of building piers in St. Clair River.

On August 11, 1936, Sprague and Henwood, Scranton, Pa., were low bidders on test borings for the bridge foundations with a figure of \$5,344. The company agreed to finish the borings in six weeks.

On August 18, 1936, the United States War Department approved extension of main span to 871 feet between piers.

On August 22, 1936, a letter of agreement for engineering services between Modjeski, Masters and Case, Inc. and the State Bridge Commission approved.

On August 25, 1936, Sprague and Henwood began making test borings at the foot of State Street and on the Point Edward shore of St. Clair River.

On August 27, 1936, Thomas H. McDonald, attending a Mississippi Valley Highway Conference at Mackinac Island with V. B. Steinbaugh, said all obstacles to construction of an international bridge had been removed as far as the United States Bureau of Public Roads was concerned. He said the bureau would authorize federal participation in constructing the American approach at a total cost up to \$650,000. He announced the federal government favored completion of a diagonal highway from Chicago to Port Huron via Jackson, Chelsea and Pontiac.

On September 3, 1936, the demolition of buildings on the approach site was begun at Gratiot Avenue and State Street.

On September 4, 1936, at a meeting in the office of George C. Watson, Port Huron, Chairman Steinbaugh reported progress in negotiations with Ontario for building of the Canadian approach to the proposed bridge. The bridge commission engaged Modjeski and Masters as consulting engineers.

On October 2, 1936, the bridge commission, at a meeting in the Fort Shelby hotel, Detroit, set up a trust indenture to manage the financial affairs of the bridge commission and operation of the bridge and other properties that might come under the commission management and engaged the Union Guardian Trust company as trustees of the trust indenture, to be modeled on lines suggested by Masselich and Mitchell, New York bond attorneys.

On October 5, 1936, the Michigan Supreme Court, convening after its summer recess during which it ruled on legality of a commission bond issue, partially explained its ruling. There were doubts as to its meaning and George C. Watson, commission attorney, appealed for clarification.

On October 9, 1936, the test borings on main span sites of proposed bridge revealed rock at depth of 101 feet.

On Oct. 29, 1936, the home of Ernest A. Pierce, 2328 Elk Street, was the first house to be removed from the bridge approach site.

On November 6, 1936, George C. Watson again requested the supreme court to clarify its ruling on the bridge commission act and proposed bridge bond issue, saying bond attorneys demanded this information before approving bonds.

On November 10, 1936, the state supreme court refused Watson's request causing fears the bridge could not be built through inability to obtain a bond issue for main span construction.

On November 29, 1936, Mr. Watson said plans were underway by the bridge commission to build a free bridge if bond sale should be impossible and announced Mr. T. B. McQuestion, Ontario highway department head, had approved such an idea when the bridge proposal was first brought before him.

On December 8, 1936, the Michigan Supreme Court clarified its ruling on the bridge bond matter and bond attorneys announced they were satisfied bonds would be legal, permitting the bridge commission to proceed with plans for issue.

On December 18, 1936, Mr. Watson announced Chairman Steinbaugh of the bridge commission, Governor Fitzgerald and Orville E. Atwood, secretary of state, would go to New York before Jan. 1 to sign the bridge revenue bonds.

On December 28, 1936, the Canadian parliament passed an order-in-council to permit the St. Clair Transit Company to transfer its franchise for building a bridge on Canadian soil to the state bridge commission of Michigan, the last act necessary to permit the commission to go ahead with plans to build the bridge as far as Canada was concerned, as the dominion and Ontario governments had agreed to build the Canadian approach under relief legislation.

On December 29, 30, and 31 of 1936, the bridge commission met in Fort Shelby hotel, Detroit, for its most momentous meeting. It voted to issue \$1,900,000 in revenue bonds, which were signed by Chairman Steinbaugh, Governor Fitzgerald and Secretary of State Atwood. The St. Clair Transit Company turned over all its assets, powers and rights acquired from the Dominion of Canada under acts of 1928, 1930 and 1934 to the commission, which agreed to reimburse Ontario for the cost of obtaining property for the Canadian end of the bridge main span and to return to Ontario all portions of such property after retirement of the bridge bond issue. The commission purchased the Port Huron-Sarnia Ferry Company (for \$650,000), confirmed sale of the revenue bonds to Stranahan and Harris and accepted Modjeski and Masters plans and specifications. George C. Watson was named secretary of the commission. The commission voted to issue the revenue bonds in \$1,000 denominations, with interest of 4 1/4 percent due June 1 and Dec. 1 with June, 1956 as the retirement date.

On January 1, 1937, the bridge commission began operation of Port Huron-Sarnia ferries.

On January 7, 1937, Modjeski and Masters began preparation of bridge foundation specifications to allow taking of construction bids.

On January 15, 1937, Mr. Watson resigned as secretary of the bridge commission. Walter C. Stinson was appointed secretary by the commission at a meeting in the commission offices, 310 Quay Street, Port Huron. Stranahan, Harris & Co., Inc. was paid \$149,000 for its rights to bridge crossing by commission.

On January 29, 1937, the bridge commission hired George L. Harvey and Norman B. Forbes, architects, as coordinators between the Michigan and Ontario highway departments in matter of bridge buildings. Discussed possibility of making bridge toll free after bond retirement.

On February 2, 1937, Governor Frank Murphy reappointed Steinbaugh, Dale E. Moffett and Marshall E. Campbell members of the bridge commission.

On March 5, 1937, the bridge commission engaged Watson & Tappan as its attorneys.

On March 26, 1937, Chairman Steinbaugh of bridge commission announced receipt of plans for main span and approach foundations from Modjeski and Masters.

On April 12, 1937, the bridge commission asked home owners on American approach site to move their buildings by May 20 and established offices in former customs and immigration building on Quay Street.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA (U.S. Customs/
Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)
HAER No. MI-16 (Page 17)

On April 15, 1937, Mr. Steinbaugh conferred with the Bureau of Public Roads in Washington on advertising for bids on bridge foundations.

On April 16, 1937, the Michigan legislature passed bill providing for free bridge after bond retirement.

On April 17, 1937, Mr. Steinbaugh announced bids for bridge foundations would be taken in Port Huron and Toronto, May 17.

On April 19, 1937, Chairman Steinbaugh announced the Michigan and Ontario highway departments had decided to operate bridge toll-free after bonds are retired.

On April 23, 1937, Governor Murphy signed free bridge bill.

On April 25, 1937, the commission released advertisements in engineering journals asking bids for constructing bridge foundation piers.

On May 17, 1937, the Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Works and Kansas City Bridge Company with combined figures of \$217,070 were low bidders on main span piers. E. C. Nolan & Son, Detroit, was low bidder at \$15,810 on American approach piers and Russell Construction Company, Toronto, with \$69,000 figure was low bidder on Canadian approach piers.

On June 3, 1937, the State Administrative Board awarded approach pier contract to E. C. Nolan & Son; Ontario highway department let contract to Russell Construction Company.

On June 4, 1937, the bridge commission selected the name "BLUE WATER" as official name of the span to be built across St. Clair River. Bridge commission awarded main span pier contract to Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Works.

On June 18, 1937, machinery for building the American approach piers arrived on bridge site. Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Works superintendent, H. H. Brandt, conferred with Grand Trunk railway officials on moving tracks along both sides of St. Clair river to permit unhampered operations in building main span piers.

On June 23, 1937, the first shovel of dirt on bridge site was dug by Murray O. Van Wagoner, State Highway Commissioner, as American and Canadian officials joined in ceremonies marking the start of bridge construction work. Spectators carried away dirt for souvenirs.

On June 28, 1937, the equipment for building main span piers arrived at foot of State Street and in Point Edward. Sarnia Bridge Company received contract from Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Works for steel cutting edges to be used on bottom of piers.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA (U.S. Customs/
Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)
HAER No. MI-16 (Page 18)

On June 30, 1937, the Blue Water edition of the Times Herald made first official announcement structure had been named "Blue Water Bridge" by the bridge commission. Canadian National began moving tracks from pier site in Point Edward.

On July 1, 1937, the first concrete in bridge structure was poured on the American approach and first pier footing was completed by E. C. Nolan & Son at State Street and Gratiot Avenue.

On July 14, 1937, the first ground was broken on Canadian approach site in Point Edward as William Guthrie operated crane turning first sod. Canadian and United States officials attended ceremonies. Mr. Steinbaugh announced bids for main span superstructure and approach superstructures were to be taken Aug. 3 in Port Huron and Toronto.

On July 21, 1937, thirty-two of 63 footings on American approach were reported completed.

On July 28, 1937, fifty-six footings were reported finished.

On August 3, 1937, the American Bridge Company was low bidder on main span superstructure with figures of \$767,279.39; Wisconsin Bridge Co. and Hamilton Bridge company were low on Canadian superstructure contract in joint bid of \$514,490.

On August 10, 1937, twenty-four of 63 American approach piers were reported completed.

On August 18, 1937, work on American side anchor piers was begun.

On August 20, 1937, George L. Harvey and Norman B. Forbes were selected by the bridge commission to design and supervise construction of customs, immigration and administration buildings of bridge. Ontario Highway Department approved plans for Canadian customs and immigration buildings.

On September 1, 1937, E. C. Nolan & Son completed pier foundation for American approach.

On September 10, 1937, Jeanette Marie Sophia, 12, died of lockjaw from an injury received when a playmate pushed her into an approach pier excavation near her home on State Street. The Port Huron city commission approved building of bridge approaches over city streets.

On September 12, 1937, H. H. Brandt, Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Works superintendent, announced one of the two Canadian main span piers cylinders had been sunk to its final resting place on rock, 100 feet below ground level.

On September 24, 1937, the Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Works signed contract with state of Michigan for building American approach superstructure.

On October 3, 1937, the second Canadian main span cylinder was sunk to rock. Workmen filled center of first pier with concrete to make a solid shaft. William G. Sheldon, Saginaw, diver, employed in excavation work inside the American main span pier cylinders, was taken to Port Huron General hospital suffering from acute pains of "bends" (caisson disease) caused by failure to properly decompress after working below water under heavy pressure.

On October 5, 1937, workmen began erection of above ground section of main span pier on Canadian side of St. Clair River.

On October 8, 1937, C. W. Doerr and H. B. Van Hook, representatives of American Bridge Company, United States Steel Corporation subsidiary, and main span superstructure contractors, announced they would begin work early in January. Michigan Highway Department completed a survey for a grade separation to connect with the American plaza and to route through traffic over Pine Grove avenue and the nearby Pere Marquette railroad tracks to the proposed Twenty-fourth Street cut-off.

On October 14, 1937, the bridge commission announced sodium-vapor lights would be used on the Blue Water Bridge.

On October 20, 1937, Harry McCoy, Sault Ste. Marie, diver, suffered "bends" after working inside American main span pier cylinder, and was taken to Port Huron General Hospital.

On November 2, 1937, the main span piers in Point Edward and piers for Canadian approach of bridge were completed. Sarnia Bridge Company, Sarnia, Ont. announced it would begin fabricating steel for the Canadian approach superstructure by Nov. 15.

On November 6, 1937, Estle Bailey, diver, suffered "bends" and was taken to hospital.

On November 7, 1937, Arthur Casey, diver, was taken to Port Huron General hospital after being seized by "bends."

On November 20, 1937, the Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Works completed sinking of north cylinder of main span pier on American side of St. Clair River.

On November 24, 1937, workmen won a long battle to straighten the cylinder of American main span pier, which had become tipped after encountering prehistoric logs in heavy clay deposit.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA (U.S. Customs/
Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)
HAER No. MI-16 (Page 20)

On December 3, 1937, Frank M. Master, of Modjeski and Masters, and bridge commission view plaza and building drawings with changes required by Canadian customs and immigration officials. Chairman Steinbaugh of the bridge commission announced "if congress agrees to cancel highway appropriations already agreed on, as requested by President Roosevelt, there will be no money to build the American plaza or the Twenty-fourth Street cut-off.

On December 11, 1937, the National House of Representatives Highway Committee announced it would refuse to consider President Roosevelt's economy proposal.

On December 13, 1937, the steel for Canadian approach superstructure arrived in Sarnia.

On December 14, 1937, the Sarnia Bridge Company workmen placed the first piece of superstructure steel to be erected on the Canadian approach in Point Edward.

On December 16, 1937, the Yeager Bridge & Culvert Works announced contract with American Bridge company to furnish railing for main span.

On December 20, 1937, the south main span pier cylinder was filled with concrete to make solid section.

On December 29, 1937, C. W. Doerr, erection superintendent of American Bridge Company, arrived in Port Huron to supervise start of main span superstructure operations. Erection equipment of the company arrived in Point Edward.

On December 30, 1937, Mr. Doerr announced arrival of nine cars of main span steel in Point Edward and Port Huron, shipped from the Carnegie Illinois Steel Company, United States Steel Corporation subsidiary, Gary, Ind.

On January 5, 1938, the Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Works completed erection of the main span pier at the foot of State Street.

On January 6, 1938, Stephen C. Dobbs, employee of the Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Works, fell from concrete mixer and suffered slight injuries; he was the first man to be injured in bridge construction work.

On January 8, 1938, United States Senator Prentiss M. Brown, in Detroit, announced President Roosevelt might be able to attend ceremonies marking dedication of the Blue Water Bridge as he was planning a trip to Michigan in September, 1938.

On January 10, 1938, the American Bridge Company workmen and cranes began unloading steel on both sides of St. Clair River.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA (U.S. Customs/
Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)
HAER No. MI-16 (Page 21)

On January 11, 1938, the Sarnia Bridge Company announced completion of steel framework of nine of 39 approach superstructure spans. Workmen began laying tracks along Canadian anchor tower piers to allow cranes to begin main span steel erection.

On January 12, 1938, Chairman Steinbaugh of the bridge commission announces approval of revised plaza and building plans by bridge commission and highway department. Left for Washington to secure Bureau of Public Roads approval. Mr. Steinbaugh announced he had talked with James Roosevelt previous to announcement of Senator Brown and received word President Roosevelt probably would take part in bridge dedication exercises.

On January 17, 1938, the American Bridge Company began erection of main span superstructure steel in Point Edward.

On January 19, 1938, Representative Wolcott in Washington introduced a bill in congress to extend time limit for completing the Blue Water Bridge from Aug. 30, 1938, to Aug. 30, 1941.

On January 22, 1938, Arno Michaelis, superintendent of construction on the American approach, arrived in Port Huron.

On January 27, 1938, American Bridge Company completes erection of 120-foot high Canadian anchor tower of main span.

On January 29, 1938, prominent Michigan Democratic party leaders in Detroit announced President Roosevelt was planning to use the presidential yacht "Potomac" for his trip to Michigan.

On February 2, 1938, the first piece of steel on American end of main span was placed on anchor tower piers by American Bridge Company.

On February 4, 1938, Arno Michaelis, Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Co. superintendent, announced American approach would be completed by Sept. 1 at the latest.

On February 7, 1938, V. B. Steinbaugh announced he had received assurance from Washington that President Roosevelt was planning to dedicate the Blue Water Bridge the first week in September. Mr. Steinbaugh announced bids for the American and Canadian plazas and buildings would be taken March 1 in Lansing and Toronto, with work to start by March 15, with completion required before Sept. 1.

On February 10, 1938, Mr. Steinbaugh announced Port Huron-Sarnia ferries would continue in operation after opening of the bridge for foot passengers only as long as service could be maintained without financial hardships.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA (U.S. Customs/
Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)
HAER No. MI-16 (Page 22)

On February 11, 1938, the American Bridge Company moved its huge crane with a 135-foot boom, used to erect first steel on Canadian end of main span, to Port Huron side, to enable American crew to erect anchor tower and end of main span on Port Huron side of St. Clair River.

On February 14, 1938, the Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Co. began erection of steel for American approach at Tenth Avenue near Elmwood Street.

On February 25, 1938, Sarnia citizens ask beautifying of Front Street as route for bridge traffic to Sarnia.

On March 1, 1938, the H. G. Christman-Lansing Company was declared low bidder on American plaza construction with figure of \$236,362.70.

On March 5, 1938, Marshall E. Campbell, member of state bridge commission, announced plans would be made immediately to plan mammoth civic celebration to observe dedication of the Blue Water Bridge in September.

On March 7, 1938, the American Bridge Company completes erection of first two panels of steel on American end of main span.

On March 11, 1938, the Michigan Highway Department awarded contract for Michigan plaza of bridge to H. G. Christman-Lansing Company.

On March 12, 1938, the Sarnia Bridge Company sublets contract for paving Canadian approach to Russell Construction Co., Toronto, for \$50,000.

On March 14, 1938, the Yeager Bridge & Culvert Works announced receipt of contracts to furnish iron railing for Michigan plaza and storm water drainage system for American approach.

On March 17, 1938, the House Interstate Commerce Committee in Washington approved extension of time for completing of bridge from Aug. 30, 1938, to same date in 1940.

On March 18, 1938, the Michigan Highway Department signed contract with H. G. Christman-Lansing Company for construction of American plaza. Peter Quesnelle, Hamilton, Ont., bridgeworker, was injured when he fell 35 feet from main span steel in Point Edward. Injuries were not serious.

On March 22, 1938, Premier Mitchell F. Hepburn of Ontario announced paving by province in western Ontario would be confined largely to routes connecting with the Blue Water Bridge. Murray D. Van Wagoner, State Highway Commissioner, announced \$75,000 will be spent in 1938 by State Highway Department to build bridge across Black River at the foot of Elmwood Street, to be used as part of the Twenty-fourth Street cut-off.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA (U.S. Customs/
Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)
HAER No. MI-16 (Page 23)

On March 25, 1938, the Ontario Highway Department announced it had awarded contract for building Canadian plaza of the bridge to Carter-Halls-Aldinger Company, Toronto, Ont. Estimated amount of contract was placed at \$250,000.

On March 26, 1938, the American Bridge Company began erection of traveling crane on top main span superstructure at foot of State Street, to permit erection of steel to main pier edge of St. Clair River and over the surface of the river.

On March 30, 1938, the State Bridge Commission, through its member, Marshall E. Campbell, asked the Port Huron Chamber of Commerce and Blue Water Carnival Association to assume leadership of plans for civic celebration to mark dedication and opening at the bridge in September.

On April 4, 1938, the House of Representatives passed the Wolcott bill to extend the completion date for the bridge to 1940.

On April 7, 1938, the H. G. Christman-Lansing Company began pouring concrete for footings of American plaza at Tenth Avenue and Elmwood Street. Lewis Elves, Hamilton, Ont., was seriously hurt when he fell 53 feet from the main span pier in Point Edward.

On April 9, 1938, Governor Murphy, Leon D. Case, Secretary of State, and V. B. Steinbaugh, chairman of the State Bridge Commission of Michigan met in Detroit and signed \$450,000 worth of bridge revenue bonds needed to complete construction of the main span.

On April 12, 1938, Port Huron civic leaders met in Chamber of Commerce to begin plans for a civic celebration to observe the completion of the bridge.

On April 14, 1938, the American Bridge Company extended main span steel on Canadian side to main pier at edge of river and began erection of first steel over St. Clair River.

On April 16, 1938, the American Bridge Company extended the American end of the main span to the main pier at the edge of the river.

On April 19, 1938, a fire, believed to have been started by a spark from the traveling crane erecting the Canadian approach, destroyed the Point Edward hockey arena and the home of Thomas Palmer nearby. The Port Huron Chamber of Commerce invited Governor Frank Murphy to attend and take part in the bridge dedication celebration and asked him to issue to President Roosevelt an invitation to officiate at the dedication ceremonies.

On April 22, 1938, the American Bridge Company began erection of steel over St. Clair River.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA (U.S. Customs/
Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)
HAER No. MI-16 (Page 24)

On April 24, 1938, Louis A. Weil, editor of the Times Herald, writing in his column "Between You and Me," described a visit with President Roosevelt in the White House, in which the President expressed a strong desire to attend the bridge dedication.

On April 26, 1938, civic leaders held second meeting to make plans for dedication celebration and selected number of committee workers.

On April 27, 1938, the United States Senate passed the Wolcott bill giving the State Bridge Commission until 1940 to complete erection of the Blue Water Bridge.

On April 29, 1938, plans for a broadcast from the bridge scene by three Detroit area stations, WWJ, W8XWJ, and CKLW, at linking of main span over St. Clair River at the end of May, were announced by the bridge commission.

On May 1, 1938, the Times Herald announced operation of the Blue Water Bridge will increase bridge commission and United States customs and immigration department payrolls \$100,000 annually.

On May 3, 1938, the American Bridge Company completed Canadian cantilever arm of the main span.

On May 4, 1938, Carter-Halls-Aldinger began work on Canadian plaza. American Bridge Company reached the three-fourths mark in erection of main span steel. A Port Huron delegation called on Governor Murphy in Lansing and received his assurance he would do everything possible to bring President Roosevelt to Port Huron for the bridge dedication and that he would otherwise assist in every way possible.

On May 5, 1938, the Sarnia Bridge Company completed 37 of its 38 spans of steel on the Canadian approach.

On May 6, 1938, the E. C. Nolan & Son, Detroit, began pouring concrete for roadway of Michigan approach.

On May 9, 1938, the American cantilever arm of main span, 218 feet over St. Clair river was completed.

On May 10, 1938, Sarnia citizens began plans for bridge opening celebration. Homer J. Lockhardt, Sr., was named general chairman.

On May 11, 1938, an army airplane flew under the uncompleted sections of the main span near the middle of St. Clair River.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA (U.S. Customs/
Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)
HAER No. MI-16 (Page 25)

On May 12, 1938, W. T. Wilson, Port Huron Dodge-Plymouth dealer, and Henry Holth announced the Port Huron Lions Club and Chrysler Corporation had completed arrangements for Major J. Edward Bowes and his radio amateur hour to salute Port Huron, Sarnia, Marysville and the Blue Water Bridge in a nation-wide CBS broadcast on Sept. 1.

On May 13, 1938, Carter-Halls-Aldinger, Canadian plaza builders, poured the first concrete for foundation footings of plaza buildings in Point Edward. Mayor Charles D. Rettie extended R. P. Fohey, secretary of Chrysler Corporation, the thanks of the City of Port Huron for his work in obtaining the Major Bowes program to salute Port Huron, Sarnia and the Blue Water Bridge. V. B. Steinbaugh, chairman of the State Bridge Commission, and G. Donald Kennedy, business manager of the State Highway Department, visited the White House in Washington, after which they predicted the President will visit Michigan in September to dedicate the bridge.

On May 16, 1938, the Russell Construction Company, Toronto, poured first concrete for the roadway of the Canadian approach.

On May 21, 1938, the American and Canadian sections of the main span were 75 feet apart.

On May 24, 1938, the two sections of the main span were joined over St. Clair River at 3:50 p.m.

On May 26, 1938, John L. Horrmann, Paramount News, cameraman, filmed the Blue Water Bridge. Essex County, Ontario, announced appropriation of \$2,500 to advertise Ambassador Bridge, fearing loss of business to Blue Water Bridge.

On May 28, 1938, civic celebration was held at the foot of State Street. Many dignitaries attend and ceremonies are broadcast coast to coast. President Roosevelt does not attend this or any other dedication ceremony.

On May 31, 1938, the American Bridge Company completed joining of main span over center of St. Clair River by pushing open sections of span together through use of hydraulic jacks at ends of the 435-foot suspended span in the center of the structure.

On June 3, 1938, the American Bridge Company completed erection of steelwork on main span and prepared to lay the span floor. Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Co. began erection of its last span on the American approach, a 260-foot truss across Gratiot Avenue. E. C. Nolan & Son, extended roadway of American approach to Walnut Street.

On June 4, 1938, Wesley Hayes, Jeddo youth, parked his bicycle at the end of the main span and walked over the bridge steel to Point Edward. Canadian immigration authorities stopped him at ferry dock in Sarnia as he started

for home. He was released after a reprimand. The Canadian approach was joined to the Canadian end of the main span in Point Edward. The Port Huron city commission approved the paving of Elmwood Street on the north side of the American plaza, as suggested by V. B. Steinbaugh, bridge commission chairman.

On June 6, 1938, the American approach roadway was extended to Maple Street.

On June 7, 1938, Donald S. Brown, 28, of 804 Fifteenth Street, was seriously injured when he fell from a ladder on the American plaza building and was impaled on a rod of reinforced steel. Brown recovered and left Port Huron General Hospital a few weeks later.

On June 8, 1938, the American Bridge Company completed erection of main span steel.

On June 9, 1938, the American Bridge Company dismantled crane used to erect Canadian half of the main span.

On June 14, 1938, the State Administration Board approved \$136,000 appropriation for building the Twenty-fourth Street cut-off.

On June 15, 1938, the State Highway Department advertised for lighting bids.

On June 16, 1938, Byron Matthews, 45, of 1215 Myrtle Street, was killed in a fall from the main span steel, the only man to lose his life in construction work on the bridge.

On June 17, 1938, David Ross, reeve of Point Edward, was named chairman of the Sarnia-Point Edward bridge celebration committee.

On June 20, 1938, Governor Murphy inspected the Blue Water Bridge and praised the structure and its financial plan.

On June 22, 1938, J. H. Baker & Sons, Port Huron, were awarded a state contract for building the new Pine Grove Avenue pavement in front of the American plaza entrance.

On July 1, 1938, the work of laying the roadway from the American plaza to the center of St. Clair River was completed. It was announced that the bridge would be open for traffic about Sept. 1.

On August 27, 1938, a car driven by Hal Faust and containing several dignitaries is the first to cross the bridge.

October 8, 1938, was the official bridge dedication.

On October 10, 1938, normal operations begin.

BLUE WATER BRIDGE PLAZA (U.S. Customs/
Toll Plaza) (U.S. Plaza) (American Plaza)
HAER No. MI-16 (Page 27)

On December 28, 1938, the Art Metal Construction Co. awarded contract to furnish U.S. Plaza for \$4,619. Hoffman company awarded contract to furnish commission offices for \$1,205.64.

On February 8, 1939, the commission approved the crossing of bonded truck carriers.

On July 27, 1939, the Internal Revenue Service submits bill for \$94,750.50 for ferry operating taxes. Commission contests the assessment.

On September 15, 1939, it is reported that aliens are illegally entering U.S. by crawling across the bridge girders and descending via the anchor tower. Commission decides to erect fence around tower.

On October 10, 1939, the commission agreed to pay IRS some money but still contesting assessment. Guards requested for bridge since Canada entered World War II.

On November 9, 1939, the ferries were temporarily out of service for repairs and temporary bus service initiated.

On December 22, 1939, the commission decides to end ferry service and initiate permanent bus service. Bus service started in March 1940.

On September 13, 1940, the commission discussed the poor financial status of bridge since tolls are down due to WWII.

On January 10, 1941, the commission notified that war risk insurance will not be renewed. Half the toll collection employees are laid off.

On June 25, 1941, the commission enacts drastic measures to control costs, including selling the ferries and equipment, selling other excess property, reducing insurance, and limiting payments for services until interest payment is met.

On August 12, 1941, Canadian immigration officials request better lighting at Canadian plaza since bridge lights are turned off at midnight.

On May 29, 1942, war conditions may force bridge to close at night.

On December 23, 1942, Canada decides to allow bonded truck movements.

On March 31, 1943, bus revenue is markedly up but all other revenues are down.

On February 22, 1944, bridge customs agents will no longer work Sundays unless paid overtime due to recent court ruling. Commission agrees to pay overtime under protest. Bill later passed to exempt.

On April 25, 1945, the commission opened bids to refinance bonds. Stranahan, Harris & Co. was low bid at 2.30%.

On February 13, 1946, traffic has increased substantially with the end of WWII.

On July 17, 1946, U.S. Customs refuses to pay rent. This issue later resolved by legislation.

On December 12, 1947, the commission notes that the "Canadian austerity program" is reducing bridge and bus traffic.

On February 28, 1949, the commission passes resolution changing the Trust Indenture to allow capital improvements.

On December 30, 1949, the U.S. is suing commission for back rent paid by customs.

On January 14, 1954, the commission discussed plans for operating the bridge after retirement of bonds including retaining a small toll for maintenance.

On April 11, 1955, the commission discussed bill introduced to allow a toll for maintenance. Passed later in year.

On April 23, 1956, a five-year painting plan instituted.

On June 1, 1961, all bonds are liquidated.

On October 3, 1961, the commission decides to continue to operate until state takes action removing them. Tolls are continued for maintenance.

On February 5, 1962, the commission reads letter from Governor Swanson stating that continuation of tolls is illegal since the participation of federal government in half the cost of the American Approaches (some \$348,940.31) was contingent upon the bridge being toll free once the debt was retired, and that the Federal Bureau of Roads will withhold federal-aid highway funds unless tolls are suspended by March 1, 1962. Commission disagrees based upon Act 145 of 1935 which allows tolls for operations and maintenance, but agree to suspend tolls.

On March 1, 1962, tolls are discontinued.

On May 3, 1962, the Michigan State Highway Department (MSHD) wants the commission to operate for another year on reserved funds. Commission later agrees to continue managing bridge until reserves are completely depleted.

On December 1, 1962, a tentative takeover date for MSHD is set for July 1, 1963. Commission to notify all governments of transfer on May 15, 1963. This date later changed to November 8, 1965.

On March 21, 1963, the commission reduces services and personnel as reserve fund is depleted.

On June 14, 1963, the commission advised Canadians that they will be responsible for funding own maintenance as of October, 1963. Interim budget approved pending funding from legislature.

On April 1, 1964, Canadians assume all responsibilities for operation on Canadian side.

On August 31, 1965, Canadian tolls have been reinstated. Commission decides to reinstate tolls on U.S. side. Last entry in bridge commission minutes.

On November 8, 1965, MSHD assumes control of bridge.

On September 24, 1971, tolls are reinstated for operation and maintenance of the bridge.

Architect/Contractor

The architects for the U.S. Plaza were George L. Harvey and Norman B. Forbes. George L. Harvey (1870-1947) was a noted Port Huron architect during the first half of the twentieth century. His office was located at 201 Huron Street. Norman B. Forbes was Harvey's Sarnia associate. Other structures of note designed by Harvey include the Ladies of the Maccabees Building built in 1906 in Port Huron and the State Public School at Coldwater built in 1931. The Maccabees building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Public School on the State Register.

The primary contractor for the U.S. Plaza was the H. G. Christman Co. of Lansing, Michigan. The plaza was built for a total cost in 1938 of \$236,362.70.

Subcontractors included:

- J. H. Baker & Sons of Port Huron - excavation and paving
- E. B. Basel & Co. of Flint, Michigan - lathing and plastering
- James Ferguson & Son of Port Huron - steel
- Gresley & Co. - heating and plumbing
- Barker-Fowler Electric Co. - electrical wiring and equipment
- J. D. Chandler Roofing Co. of Detroit - roofing, sheet metal & aluminum

- J. F. Gould of Detroit - marblework
- Austin Co. of Flint - painting
- O. Valentine Bros. of Lansing - terrazo and tile
- Grover Co. of Detroit - pneumatic tubes
- Ohio Plate Glass Co. and F. W. Dodge Corp. both of Detroit - glass
- Detroit Steel Products Co. of Detroit - steel sash and screens

Suppliers included:

- Huron Pipe & Supply Co. of Port Huron - boilers, radiators, insulating, plumbing fixtures, Mueller streamline pipe
- F. Yeager Bridge & Culvert Works - bridge and plaza railing, storm water drainage system, steelwork, structural steel
- Overhead Door Sales of Michigan of Lansing - overhead doors
- Architectural Cast Stone of Chicago, Illinois - cast granite for windows and door trim
- Nicholson Material Co. of Detroit, Wm. Click of Avoca, Michelson Ftls. Co. and Kelly Island - fine aggregate
- Peacock Lumber Co. of Port Huron - form lumber
- Inland Lime and Stone Co. of Manistique, Sturgeon Bay Stone, and Thunder Bay Stone - coarse aggregate
- Johns-Manville Co. (J. J. Scales) - insulation
- Armstrong - linoleum
- Art Metal Construction Co. - plaza furnishings
- MacTaggart-Hoffman Co. - commission office furnishings
- Jones & Laughlin, Taylor & Gaskin, and Truscon Steel Co. - reinforcing steel
- Evans Pipe Co. - clay sewer pipe
- Galena Shale Tile & Brick Co. - clay sewer brick
- Lansing Paint & Color Co. - red oil paint
- Brown & Kerr of Detroit - asphalt emulsion
- American Bituminous Co. - asphalt cement
- Peerless - cement

Other architects on subsequent construction included:

- 1940 Bus Garage - George L. Harvey
- 1948 Canopy Repairs - Walter H. Wyeth & Co.
- 1953 Plaza Alterations - Wyeth & Harman Co.
- 1953 Plaza Widening - Modjeski and Masters
- 1953 Toll Booth Remodeling - Wyeth & Harman Co.
- 1954 Detention Area Extension - Modjeski and Masters
- 1955 Approach Surfacing - Modjeski and Masters
- 1957 Toll Booth Alteration - Wyeth & Harman, Inc.
- 1960 Third Floor Addition - Wyeth & Harman, Inc.
- 1964 Approach Resurfacing - Modjeski and Masters

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Other contractors on subsequent construction included:

- 1940 Bus Garage - Clarence H. Phillips (masonry) - \$2,575.00
 - Gresley & Co. (plumbing and heating) - \$1,545.00
 - Ray A. Brazell (electrical wiring) - \$383.00
 - Crawford Door Sales Co. (garage door) - \$454.00
 - Port Huron Equipment Co. (gasoline storage tanks and gas pump) - \$277.95
- 1948 Canopy Repairs - Gus P. Maass - \$10,950.00
- 1950 Livestock Pen Alterations - J. H. Baker & Sons - \$14,967.00
- 1953 Plaza Alterations - Dunn Construction Co. (general) - \$22,768.00
 - Watson Bros. (plumbing and heating) - \$14,680.00
- 1953 Plaza Widening - Walter Toebe & Co. - \$239,047.40
- 1953 Toll Booth Remodeling - Dunn Construction & Engineering Co. (general) - \$24,575.00
 - Watson Bros. (plumbing and heating) - \$3,418.00
- 1954 Detention Area Extension - Walter Toebe & Co. - extension of plaza widening contract
- 1955 Approach Surfacing - Cooke Contracting Co. (general) - \$11,191.00
 - Yeager Bridge & Culvert Co. (raise transverse steel expansion dams) - \$5,700.00
- 1956 Bridge Lighting (U.S.) - Vogel Electric - \$114,447.00
- 1957 Toll Booth Alterations - Collins & Catlin (general and electrical) - \$3,475.00
 - Watson Bros. (plumbing and heating) - \$4,057.00
- 1960 Third Floor Addition
 - Clarence Phillips (general) - \$58,535.00
 - Watson Bros. (mechanical) - \$17,650.00
 - Rutkofske Electric (electrical) - \$5,917.00
- 1964 Approach Resurfacing - Blue Water Asphalt Surfacing Co., Inc. - \$41,900.20
- 1976 Bridge Surfacing
 - R. J. Fox Construction (general) - \$399,725.50
 - Molesworth Contracting Co. (wearing course, markings)
- 1977 Bridge Painting & Concrete Repair - J. Slayter & Son Const. Co. - \$285,160.00
- 1979 Resurfacing - Molesworth Contracting Co. - \$2,500.00
- 1980 Bridge Painting - Donald R. Aaron, Edward R. Boord, and ABco Industrial Painting - \$369,100.00
- 1982 Bridge Painting - Donald R. Aaron, Edward R. Boord, and ABco Industrial Painting - \$164,400.00
- 1983 Booth & Canopy Remodeling - Collins and Catlin, Inc. - \$2B6,000.00

Architectural Information

The U. S. Plaza facility consists of a structural deck and building at 410 Elmwood that serves the U.S. Customs Service and the Michigan Department of Transportation. The plaza includes customs inspection and toll booths and a vehicle inspection area. The original plaza had only four booths to the south and an open vehicle inspection area to the west. Over the life of the plaza, there have been several major expansions of the plaza (see exhibit 1). In 1953, a fifth booth was added and the deck extended beneath it. The next year vehicle inspection shelters were added and this deck area extended west. Beneath the building and plaza is an underground garage for vehicle parking and maintenance facilities. The main building is a white, three-story, poured-in-place concrete structure designed in the Moderne style. Notable architectural features are the smooth concrete surface with rounded corners and horizontal banding. The flat roofed stainless steel canopy with its horizontal banding and the metal windows with their horizontal muntins corresponding to the concrete banding further emphasize the architectural style. The five Customs/Toll Booths extend south from the main building and reflect the same Art Moderne style. Through the years, there have been some modifications to the booths' canopy in order to accommodate large trucks. Also, the booths have been entirely enclosed which they were not originally. Further improvements and modernization of the booths that retain the existing stylistic characteristics was completed in 1983.

Subsequent additions, alterations and repairs:

- 1940 - bus garage, and gas pump added beneath plaza
- 1946 - customs alterations
- 1948 - roof repair to plaza canopies
- 1950 - new public toilets
 - cattle pens
- 1953 - extension of plaza platform for truck detention area including new truck cargo inspection facilities
 - alterations and additions to toll booths
 - broker's office
- 1954 - plaza extension and south truck dock
 - convert machine room to locker room
 - plaza lighting
 - railing and fencing
- 1955 - customs, shop, air conditioning remodeling
 - approach surfacing
 - customs canopy
- 1956 - new lighting, transformers
- 1957 - alterations and addition to toll booths
 - additions and alterations to shop area, and first and second floors

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- 1958 - customs building and truck examination platform additions
 - new customs office on second floor and maintenance facilities in garage area (kitchen)
 - alterations and additions to toll booths
 - plaza building windows
 - stairwells
- 1959 - fencing around bridge towers
 - new paving on Tenth Avenue under bridge
 - third floor added
- 1960 - elevator installed
- 1964 - plaza resurfacing
 - Interstate 94 connected to bridge
- 1965 - deck repairs
- 1970 - pavement replacement on Tenth Avenue under plaza
- 1971 - reconstruction of Tenth Avenue
- 1972 - resurfacing Elmwood Street
- 1974 - freeway lighting, Water Street (I-94) to bridge
 - Can-Am conveyor system (duty free liquor)
- 1976 - freeway lighting
 - auxiliary lighting, emergency generator, shop area
 - cold storage area addition
 - bridge, deck, and approach resurfacing
 - fencing enclosure
 - toll booth roof modifications
- 1977 - bridge painting, concrete repair
 - toll booth roof modification
 - Can-Am building
 - parking under plaza improvements
- 1979 - resurfacing bridge and ramps
 - safety handrail
- 1980 - bridge painting
 - Elmwood Street resurfacing
 - truck scales, Elmwood street
- 1981 - underground gasoline storage tanks and pump
- 1982 - bridge painting
 - barrier free ramps and rest rooms
 - reroof administration building
- 1983 - floor hoist
 - booth and canopy remodeling
 - pier protection

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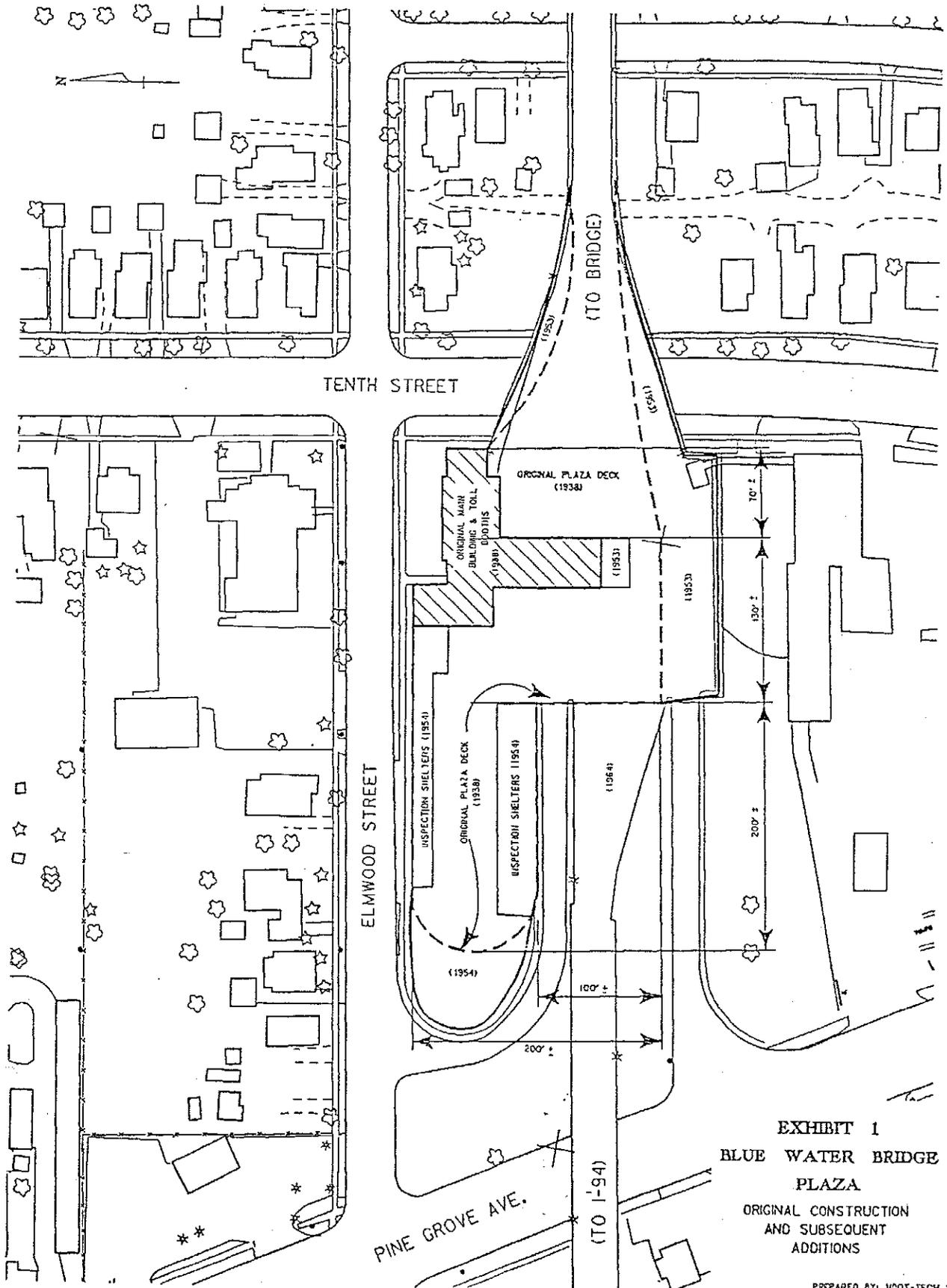


EXHIBIT 1
 BLUE WATER BRIDGE
 PLAZA
 ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION
 AND SUBSEQUENT
 ADDITIONS