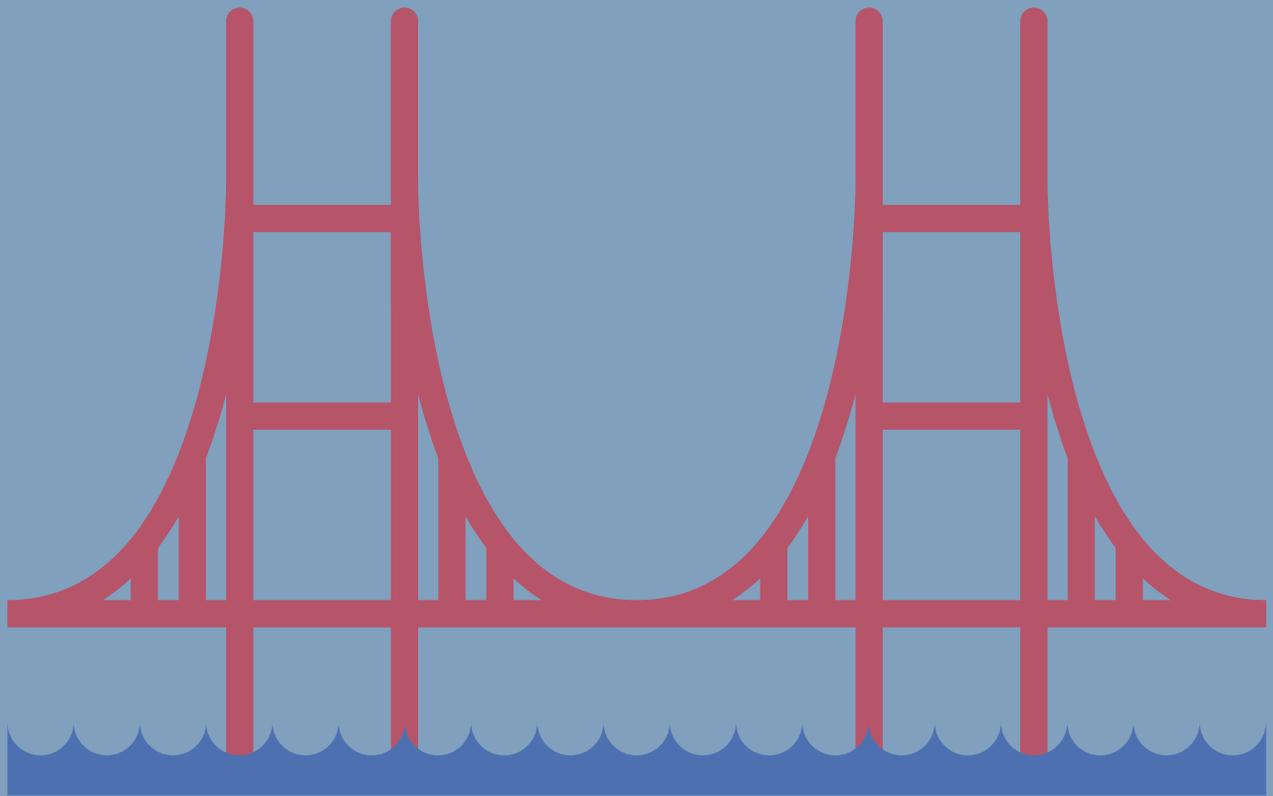


BRIDGING THE GAP

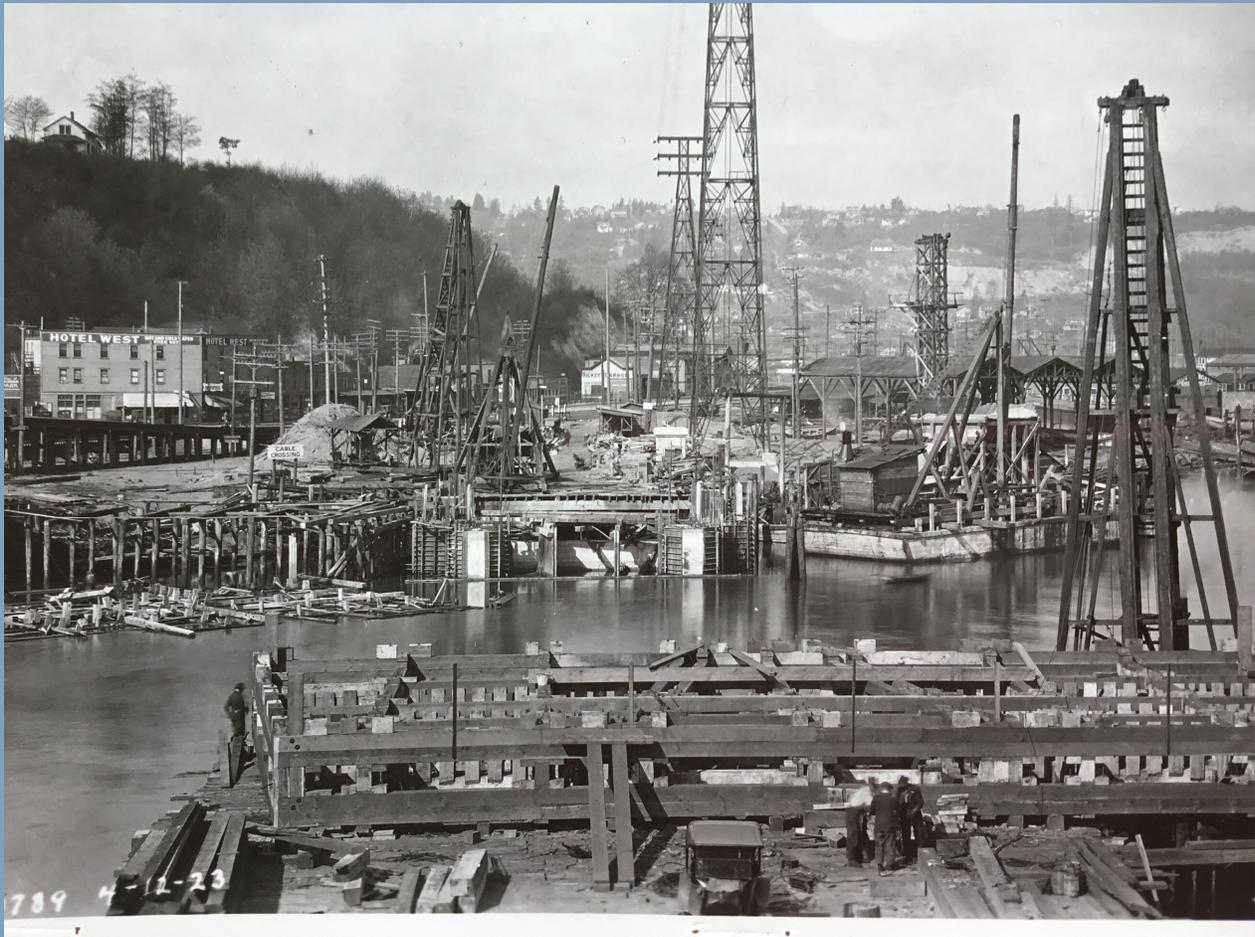


Southwest Seattle
Historical Society



2005.10.39

Clearing 28 feet, the new 1918 Spokane Street swing bridge replaced a lower temporary bridge over the Duwamish River. Per the 1913 City Engineers Annual Report, the previous 1911 low bridge was *"constantly making traffic over Spokane Avenue more dangerous and subject to greater delays and interference"* because it opened for all marine traffic. Swing bridges open horizontally as opposed to Seattle's more common bascule bridges that rise.



Courtesy of Robert Carney

Looking west during the construction of the Spokane Street bascule bridge #1 in April of 1923. Pigeon Hill is visible on the upper left, with the Riverside community below it.



Courtesy of Robert Carney

The newly completed Spokane Street bascule bridge #1 and the wooden swing bridge circa 1925. That same year the West Seattle Herald stated "*The completion of the new bridge has removed some of the greatest difficulties, and no residence district in greater Seattle can surpass this district in any of the features that make living enjoyable.*"



Courtesy of Robert Carney

Traffic on the Spokane Street bascule bridge #1 in the mid-1920's. Note the westbound streetcar having to dodge the eastbound traffic as it leaves the bridge.



Courtesy of Robert Carney

Looking east on Spokane Street during the construction of the bascule bridge #2 in March of 1930.



Courtesy of Robert Carney

The almost completed Spokane Street bascule bridge #2 in 1930. This bridge handled all of the eastbound traffic until 1978.



2005.32.340

The spans of the twin Spokane Street bridges stand nearly on end to permit a large freighter to pass through in 1972. As ships became bigger, maneuverability around the old bridges became much more difficult.



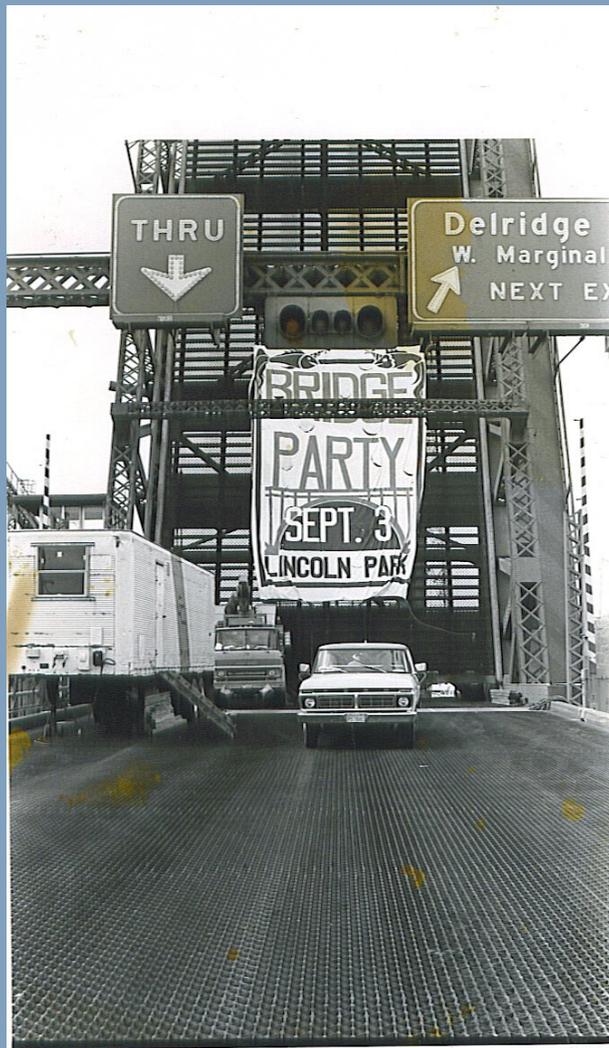
2003.20.1

Holding signs that read "Vote Yes West Seattle Bridge", enthusiastic residents staged a flotilla of rowboats rented from a local boathouse in support of the West Seattle Bridge Referendum, which was approved in March of 1974. New bridge proposals in the early 1970s sprang from increased traffic congestion on S.W. Spokane Street, the second-busiest roadway in the state by 1972.



2005.32.341

When the "Antonio Chavez" struck the northern Spokane Street Bridge on June 11th of 1978, the damage was extensive. Structural steel that helped to bind the span to the structure was ripped out of the concrete piers, steel girders were buckled and twisted, the counterweight pivot bent, and the driving gears and motors used to raise the bridge were pushed out of alignment.



2005.32.343

A banner on the defunct bridge advertises the "bridge party" for the new bridge held in Lincoln Park on September 3, 1978. Despite the rain, over 1000 people showed up for the "Bashed Bridge Bash" to celebrate funding obtained to build a new bridge. U.S. senator Warren G. Magnuson, guest of honor, was a key sponsor of the appropriations bill. Sports celebrities, live music, and the Seafair Clowns added to the festivities



2005.32.414

An eastward view of the West Seattle Bridge construction circa 1982. Traffic on Spokane Street using the remaining bridge for traveling in both directions could back up in an instant, and often did.



2006.27.34

Looking northwest from the West Seattle Bridge project in July 1983. The City Council had stated that the bridge design would "more effectively serve the needs of the city by improving traffic flow, providing access to West Seattle and Harbor island, improving safety on the bridge, and even reducing air pollution by cutting down on idling time as a result of the 'uninterrupted flow of traffic'."



2005.32.438

Concrete, cranes, and re-bar abound at the west end of the of the new bridge in 1983. Detours were often challenging, and residents learned to be tolerant while maneuvering through the chaos.



2005.32.437

A female construction worker hauling material for the West Seattle Bridge project in 1983. New rules had recently been put into place that required contractors maintain a workforce of 20% women.



2005.32.402

The much anticipated West Seattle Bridge nears completion as drivers negotiate a myriad of detours and temporary routes along the corridor of the future high-level bridge. Construction began in 1980, and the two ends were joined in the middle on July 13, 1983. Four lanes were opened on November 10, 1983, and all eight lanes were completed in July of 1984.



2005.32.440

Seattle Mayor Charles Royer and City Council member Jeanette Williams view a scale model of the lower-level Spokane Street Bridge in March of 1984. Williams chaired the transportation committee and played a key role in getting the high-level West Seattle Bridge built. Various agencies raised \$172 million to fund the bridge. In recognition of Williams's efforts, the high-level bridge was also named the Jeanette Williams Memorial Bridge in 2009.



2014.11.1

Mayor Charles Royer, City Council member Jeanette Williams, and Dick Kennedy from the West Seattle Chamber of Commerce cut the ribbon to formally open the westbound lanes of the new high-level bridge on July 14th, 1984.



2006.27.4

City officials pose during the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the first vehicle to use the westbound lanes of the new bridge on July 14th, 1984.

Special Thanks to:

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