Stone, Steel, Stories

THE CUT RIVER BRIDGE & THE FORT ROUGE GATEWAY PROJECTS
Cut River Bridge

MASONRY & STEEL REHABILITATION
Cut River Bridge

- Opened to traffic 1948
- 1 of 2 Cantilevered deck truss bridges in MI
- Similar to I-35 in Minn.
- Deck replacement 2008
- Masonry restoration 2014-15
- Steel repair 2017 – 2018
- Full paint 2018

June 17, 1948; photo courtesy MDOT Photo Lab
Masonry Restoration

2005
Before
After April 1, 2015
Before
After

Sept 16, 2014
Working...
Steel Repairs

- Interior Face of Gusset Plate (TYP)
- Exterior Face of Gusset Plate (TYP)
- L6' NT/SP & L6' NT/NP - Interior & Exterior Gusset Plate Repairs
- L4' NT/SP - Interior Gusset Plate and Lower Lateral Bracing Repairs

North Fascia Truss looking West
Fort-Rouge Gateway

PUBLIC BENEFIT FROM EXCESS RIGHT-OF-WAY
Fort Street Bascule Bridge

- Opened to traffic in 1923
- Closed July 2013
- New bridge opened late 2015
- Historic, based on association 1932 Ford Hunger March
Ford Hunger March

On March 7, 1932, in the midst of the Depression, unemployed autoworkers, their families and union organizers braved bitter cold temperatures and gathered at this bridge, intent on marching to the Ford Rouge Plant and presenting a list of demands to Henry Ford. Some three thousand “hunger marchers” paraded down Miller Road. At the city limit, Dearborn Police blocked their path and hurled tear gas; the marchers responded with rocks and frozen mud. Near Gate No. 3 the demonstrators were bombarded by water from fire hoses and a barrage of bullets. In the end, five marchers were killed, nineteen wounded by gunfire and numerous others by stones, bricks and clubs. Newspapers alleged the marchers were communists, but they were in fact people of all political, racial and ethnic backgrounds.
The FORD HUNGER MARCH
March 7, 1932

Approximately 3,000 unemployed workers and labor activists braved bitterly cold weather and mobilized in Oakwood on March 7, 1932, for the first Ford Hunger March.

The men and women crossed the old Fort Street drawbridge chanting and singing, and began the march up Miller Road. The primary mission was to deliver a list of demands to Henry Ford for jobs, food, fuel for heat, and help with rent and mortgages. The marchers also carried banners calling for greater public relief, freedom for the Scottsboro Boys, and other urgent causes. The march was peaceful until crossing into Dearborn, where police fired tear-gas into the crowd. Near Gate Three, fire hoses were turned on the marchers, who responded by throwing cloths of frozen dirt, rocks, and brickbats. At this point, gunfire came from the police line. Four marchers died from gunshot wounds that day and a fifth died a few weeks later; several others were injured. Although the march was organized primarily by communists, its participants were politically, ethnically, and racially diverse. The tragedy was a pivotal moment in the formation of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union, which was formally chartered in May 1935.

Several thousand took part in a procession that carried the dead - Joseph York, Joseph Deflaso, Joseph Russell, and Kalman Leny - to Woodmere Cemetery, where they were buried in an unmarked grave in view of the Rouge colossus. Curtis Williams, an unemployed African-American and the fifth fatality of the march who died on Aug. 7, 1932, was denied a grave at Woodmere; his remains were reportedly scattered over the Rouge plant from a rented airplane.

The headstones for four of the marchers - Levy, York, Bussell, and DeFlaso - were laid in 1979; the stone for Williams was installed on March 15, 1992, in a ceremony to mark the 60th anniversary of the march. A historical marker was installed on the bridge that same day.

For more information on the Hunger March go to: http://region1a.uaw.org/local1600/. And be sure to visit the Fort Street Bridge Park, just across this bridge.
The new bridge, nearing completion
Bryans’ Bridge Cafe
Fort-Rouge Gateway Coalition
Marathon Gardens

- New office bld
- Habitat restoration
- Urban gardening
- Traditional park setting
- Remaining residential
- Tie in with Fort-Rouge Gateway
Fort St Bridge Park

- Entryway
- Seating wall
- Public Art
- Interpretive signage
- Stormwater educational feature
- Native vegetation
Phase 2

- Boardwalk
- Bioswale/raingarden
- Barrier Free Kayak launch
- “Welcome Center” ?
MDOT’s Role

- Land – excess right-of-way
- Salvaged materials
- Advice / expertise
- Plan review & approval
FRoG challenges

- Funds to build & maintain
- Permits (MDOT, City of Detroit)
- Maintenance & Repair Plan
- Longevity & Evolution
Thank You!

Lloyd Baldwin
Historian
Michigan Department of Transportation

baldwinl3@michigan.gov
517-241-2702