

KIDS' NEWSLETTER

Pillars of the future,
built on the foundations of the past.

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De Pere Bridges

Until 1838 if you wanted to cross from one side of the Fox River to the other you had to take a canoe, boat or pay for a ferry. In 1835 the Fox River Hydraulic Company was formed by Randall Wilcox, John Arndt, Charles Tullar and William Dickenson to build a dam across the river at the *Rapides Des Peres* (French for Rapids of the Fathers). The dam was completed in 1836.

First Bridge

In 1839 a small walking footbridge about 3 feet wide was added to the top of the dam making it the first bridge connecting both sides of Fox River. (no photo of first bridge available)

Second Bridge



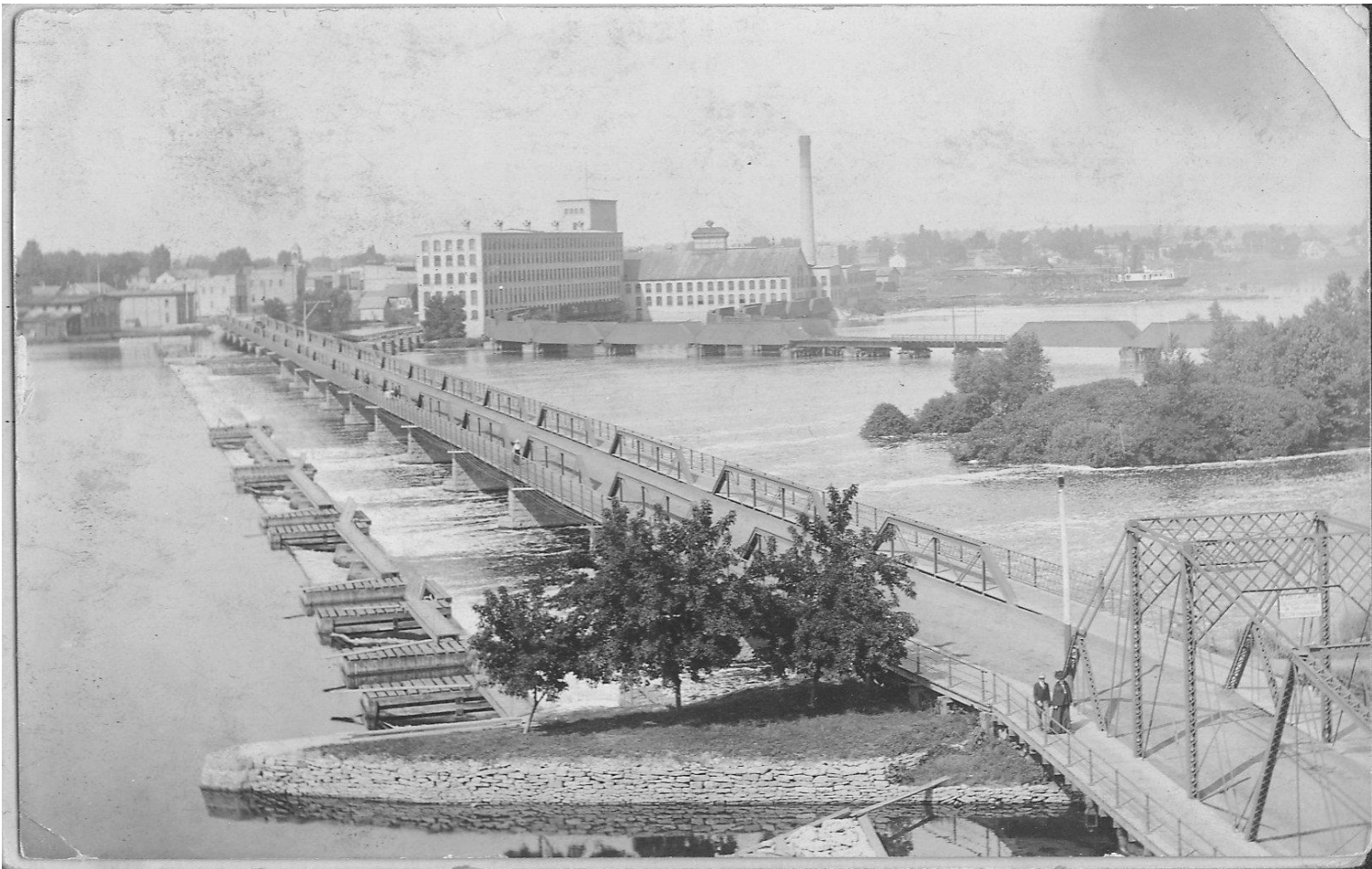
- 1850 – a 2nd bridge, solid enough for teams of horses to cross was completed
- 1852 – a large section of the bridge gets washed away and rebuilt in 1854
- 1861 - the bridge was completely rebuilt (photo)
- 1867 - a swing bridge was added to allow boats to pass.

Third Bridge



1883 – the 3rd bridge was completed; the bridge was about 7 feet above the water with a wood frame & decking; total cost was approximately \$10,000 paid for by the Town of Lawrence (west side of river) and De Pere (east side of river)

Fourth Bridge



1893 – the 4th bridge was completed with an iron frame, wooden deck and a draw bridge allowing boats to pass; the cost was approximately \$40,000

1929 - the current dam system was completed at a cost of \$200,000 replacing the wooden and stone dam seen in this picture; concrete was poured directly on to the rocks at the rivers bottom to support the dam.

Fifth Bridge



1933 – the 5th bridge was built at a cost of \$400,000; the bridge named the “Claude Allouez Memorial Bridge” in honor of Fr. Claude Allouez who established the St Francis Xavier Mission; the mission was located near the east side of the river below the bridge entrance shown in this picture,

1965 – the east end of the bridge was widened

1977 – the bridge was closed for 6 months for complete renovations; during that time De Pere residents had to use one of the bridges in Ashwaubenon, Green Bay or Wrightstown to cross the river.

Sixth Bridge



2007 – the 6th bridge was completed with 4 lanes of traffic and a roundabout; dedication was on October 7, 2007; cost was \$25.3 million.



De Pere Trivia

1. In what year did the Wisconsin legislature put the slogan “*America’s Dairyland*” on to vehicle license plates?
2. In what year did the current De Pere Bridge first open to traffic?
3. What Wisconsin city is home to the first kindergarten in the United States?
4. For how many years has there been a bridge connecting the east side with the west side of the Fox River?

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Trivia Answers: 1. 1940 2. October 7, 2007 3. Watertown 4. 183 years - 1839-2022