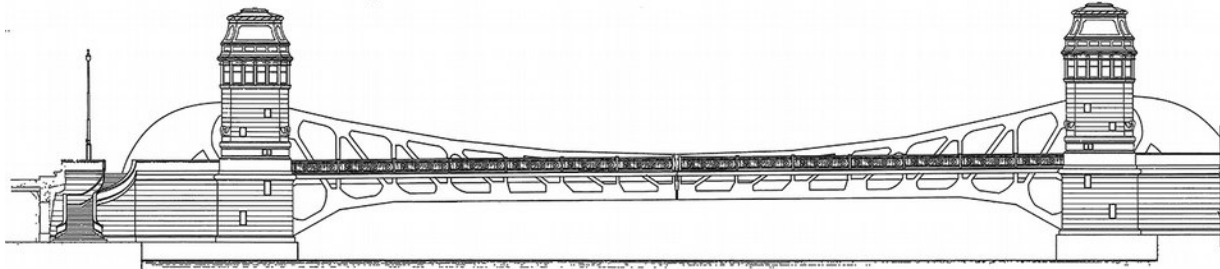


N. LA SALLE ST. BRIDGE 85TH ANNIVERSARY DECEMBER 20, 2013



EAST ELEVATION

Elevation Drawing of the N. La Salle St. Bridge (adapted from a 1926 engineering drawing provided by CDOT, Division of Engineering)

The La Salle Street bridge was opened to much fanfare 85 years ago on December 20, 1928. According to a Chicago Daily Tribune story, festivities included a parade from Grant Park to the bridge, a ribbon cutting ceremony at the bridge led by Mayor William Hale Thompson with about 1,000 spectators in attendance. The celebration ended with a luncheon at the Hotel La Salle.

La Salle St. was considered to be an important piece of the solution to Chicago's downtown traffic flow problems in the early 1900's. Feasibility studies for a bridge began around 1914. The Chicago Plan Commission began studies to widen La Salle St. from Washington St. to Lincoln Park in 1920. Bridge construction began in late 1924.

The bridgehouse plaque credits Donald Becker as the engineer of bridge design. The consulting architectural firm for the Chicago Plan Commission, Bennett, Parsons, and Frost, was responsible for the design of the bridge houses. The substructure was built by Central Dredging Company while the bridge superstructure was the responsibility of Strobel Steel Construction Company. Kelly-Atkinson Construction Company built the bridge houses.

This bridge makes quite a statement, with its sweeping pony trusses, and four Beaux Arts style bridge houses. Ornamentation on these houses is second only to the houses at the DuSable bridge. During this era of movable bridges, only two houses were functionally necessary (one for each leaf). The remaining houses are solely ornamental. Four house bridges were reserved for "gateway" locations in the city. La Salle St. bridge is the gateway into the financial district.

The current bridge is the second river crossing here. A roadway tunnel with pedestrian sidewalks was opened here on July 4, 1871. This tunnel provided an important escape route during the Great Fire in early October of that same year. The original tunnel fell into disuse and was replaced in 1912 by a streetcar tunnel. The Dearborn St. subway (now the Blue Line) cut through the La Salle St. tunnel in the early 1940's. The last vestige of the tunnel crossing, the north portal, was removed in mid 1950's.



As with a number of other downtown bridges, this bridge is named in honor of an important Chicagoan. In 1999, this bridge was christened the Marshall Suloway Bridge. Mr. Suloway, a Chicago native educated at IIT, started his civil engineering career in 1950 with the Illinois Highway Department. He joined the Chicago Department of Public Works in 1964, serving as Chief Engineer beginning in 1967. In 1974, Suloway was appointed as Acting Commissioner of Public Works. He was selected as the Man of the Year in 1976 by the American Public Works Association and served as Commissioner of Public Works until 1979. Marshall Suloway passed away in 2012.

For more information, contact Jim Phillips at 312-540-0696 or visit www.chicagoloopbridges.com