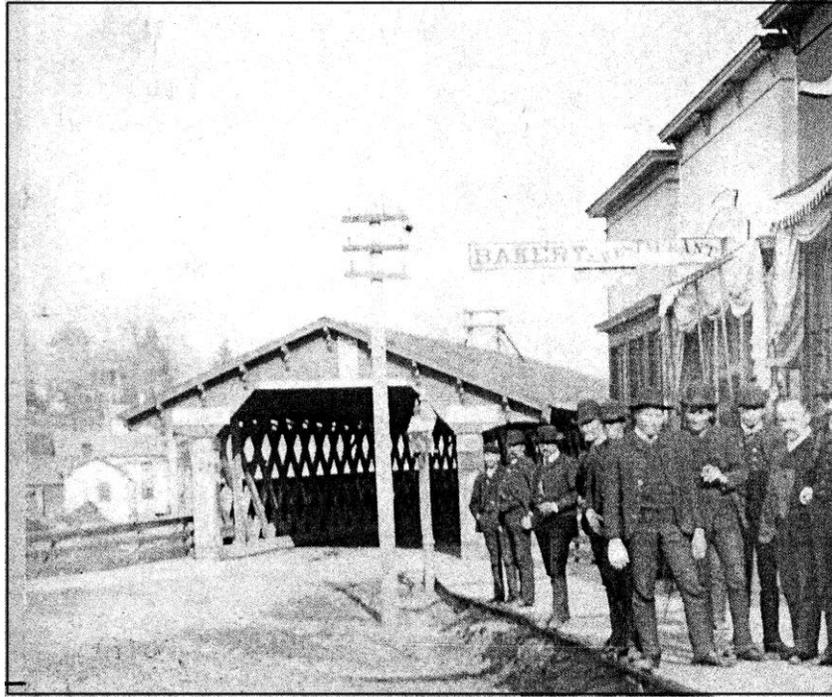


## About the Bridges of Baraboo



Ash-Walnut Street Bridge as viewed from Walnut Street circa 1876

### Baraboo in the late 1840's

Had you visited Baraboo in 1845 you probably would have taken your meals in the basement of the old Baraboo Hotel on the northwest corner of the intersection of South Bridge (Walnut) and Lynn Street. If you wished to cross over the river to your north, you would have wound your way down South Bridge Street where men were probably busy removing stumps from the middle of the wagon path. There was no bridge across the river but it was a good shallow fording spot. The first bridge was constructed at this point in 1846. During that time, the village south of the river was called Baraboo, the Township, Baraboo and the post office Adams. Later the post office was named Baraboo, as there was already an Adams post office in Wisconsin. The census of the Township was taken in 1850

and included the village of Baraboo and altogether the census was about 800 people.

### 1846

In 1846 the Ash Street Bridge, later referred to as the "old red bridge", was constructed over the river. It had log piers with stringers connecting them and covered with planks, the construction type was that of a "crib bridge".

### 1851

The September 11, 1851 issue of the *Sauk County Standard* makes note that "under the efforts of Maxwell & Brier, the bridge across the river is progressing nicely. The bents are all up and the stringers mostly placed."

### 1861

In May of 1861 the Bassett-Pratt Dam of the middle waterpower came close to destruction caused by the rising of the river after heavy spring rains.

### 1866

In the spring of 1866, the lower bridge (Ash Street) was washed away and a new \$2500 bridge replaced it.

### New Ash - Walnut Street Bridge

In July of 1875, the lumber for the new bridge was on the ground waiting for the bridge builder, Jerry Dodd, to go to work. The Wagon Bridge proper (Center portion) would be modeled after the one near the Island Woolen Mills, with two causeways for foot traffic, one on each side and outside of the center enclosure but under the same roof. The bridge was expected to be assembled and set in place by the first of August. The three sections of the bridge were being constructed on the grounds near the freight depot.

The middle waterpower dam above the gristmill was temporarily turned into a roadbed while the bridge was being erected. This move got people to thinking that there should be a permanent bridge there, at least for foot traffic.

The new Ash Street Bridge was of the lattice type, roofed with shingles and sided half way up. The span was 166 feet with no supporting pier in the center as the prior bridge had. The bridge had

a 12 ft. 3 inch center height and the width was 17 feet with a four-foot wide sidewalk.

The structure rested on the same abutments as its predecessor, although widening the bridge seat enlarged these. The planks in the truss were 3 X 10. 83,000 feet of lumber was used in the bridge and 54,000 shingles.

**1878**

In March of 1878, a town meeting was held to promote a new bridge over R. H. Strong's middle waterpower dam for an Oak Street crossing.

**1880**

In April of 1880, Philharmon Pratt asked for subscriptions to help in the construction of a bridge over the middle waterpower dam. Pratt felt that eventually a high bridge would be constructed at that point but that construction had not as yet gained favor with the voting populous. The railroad had created large throngs of pedestrian traffic to that side of town and the Ash Street Bridge was a long way around.

An estimate was made that the bridge would cost in the neighborhood of \$1500 to construct. Messrs. T. Thomson, M. Mould, S. Hofsatter, J. G. Train, A. A. Roberts, G. Wolf and Wm. Power purchased subscriptions in the aggregate of \$800. Pratt agreed to provide the balance.

It was necessary to obtain the right of way on the north side of the bridge from Mr. Strong. This was accomplished by the company agreeing to build a stone wall from the head-gates of the mill race running east for the purpose of holding up the banks, and further, Strong would deed the bridge company 12 feet running east and west by four rods running north and south from the lot north of the bridge.

In regards to the right of way on the south end of the bridge, Mr. Pratt, in consideration of the land on which stood the furnace and foundry of Mr. Wackler, which stood in the way, exchanged with him land sufficient for his operation on the east side of the right of way and agreed to move Wackler's buildings at the company's expense.

By October four carloads of lumber, intended for the new Oak Street Bridge, were in readiness awaiting (railroad) cars. The lumber



Remnants of Pratt Bridge shown under Oak Street (High) Bridge

had been cut at Weaver on the Wisconsin Valley Road and was delayed for lack of transportation. S. F. Amy, who had just constructed a bridge over the Baraboo River at Kirkwood, would build the new bridge here as soon as lumber arrived. In order to locate the south end of the bridge, Wackler's Foundry was moved to a location southeast of the machine shop. At the same time, Wackler planned on raising the machine shop by 2 ft. for further protection against flooding.

By November the substructure of Pratt's bridge was pretty much complete. The bridge consisted of concrete abutments on either shore with intermediate bents of piling, two bents forming a pier, dividing the bridge into six spans, four of fifty feet each in the center of the stream and one each forty feet long attached to each abutment. The superstructure consisted of queen-post trusses, framed with a special view to facilitate repairs.

December 17 was the date the bridge was completed and waiting for the approaches to be finished. Wackler's foundry was yet to be moved to the other side of the street.

## About the Bridges of Baraboo

By the middle of May 1881, Wackler's new Foundry had finally come to rest on a new foundation east of the new Pratt Bridge. It was now connected with the machine shop.

On May 25, 1881, it was announced that the new Pratt Bridge was open for public usage. By the middle of July, "Captain" Pratt and a crew of men were busy lowering the grade from Bench (First) Street to the bridge.

### Old Oak Street Bridge

Mention of the Oak Street Bridge suggests that it would be only simple justice to that sturdy pioneer, that they who now enjoy its many advantages should know something of their indebtedness to Philarmon Pratt. Many years ago he urged the importance of a bridge over the mill dam, but city councils and city wisecracks scouted the idea as posterously impractical. It could not be made to stand. The rushing spring freshets and ice of the irresistible Baraboo River would surely sweep it away. To obtain a public approval of the plan seemed impossible, so one day the writer talking about it with Mr. Pratt, suggested a private subscription bridge and with his consent at once wrote the obligation. This he circulated and secured subscriptions amounting to about \$800, tho this was not all paid.

With this encouragement he went to work and the "Pratt bridge" across the river was in due time a substantial reality, no longer a chimerical dream. It cost about \$1500. The public had its use free and was free to use it, but Pratt took care of it, especially to cut the ice away from the piles on which it was built every season before the spring thaw carried the ice down the river. But spite of all this care and precaution, time came when somebody started the bugaboo, "Pratt's bridge isn't safe." When this reached his ears, those who knew him can easily imagine with what vim and sarcasm he would say "Pratt's bridge isn't safe, is it?" "Well, then you shan't use it. Here, you Jack, Bill or John,' calling to his men, "Go take up the plank, only leave the side-walk."

Obliged to travel again down the old "wind hill" across the Walnut street bridge, after having used Pratt's bridge four or five

years, the great "incredulous public had learned its lesson and so well that the Oak street iron bridge was the result. The day that assured it may well be thought to have been one of the proudest days in this persevering pioneer's eventful life. But how little of what such lives contribute to the welfare of the community can be comprised within the limits of a newspaper article! It would require a good-size book.

---A.A. Roberts (The Baraboo News, 2/7/1906)

\*\*\*\*\*

In December of 1884, planks were removed from both ends of the bridge to protest the city council not negotiating for the purchase of the bridge and right of ways at both ends. Pratt offered the city the bridge, the land on the south end and the right of way on the north end for \$700. The land on the south end, running from the middle of the river to Chandler's corner (the intersection of Vine and Lynn Streets) was valued at \$1000, the city thus receiving the land with the bridge thrown in. The council failed to act upon Pratt's offer as some claimed the bridge to be unsafe.

In June of 1877, petitions were being circulated for the construction of a new iron bridge connecting Oak and Vine.

**1866**

In September of 1886, S. F. Amy was given a contract to raise the Bridge Street (Ash & Walnut) Bridge three feet. Work was to have begun immediately.

**1888**

### Keep Off Pratt's Bridge

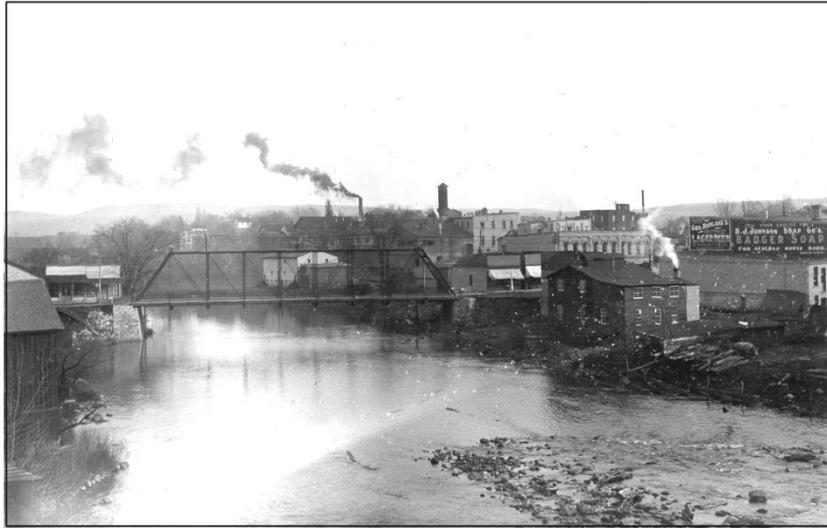
In March of 1888 signs were placed at each end of Pratt's bridge with the following notice:

*"The street ends here  
The Pratt Bridge is unsafe  
Keep off!"*

**1889**

### New Oak Street Bridge

At the council meeting in June of 1889, the bridge committee submitted a report on the location of an iron bridge across the Baraboo River at Broadway, Oak and Bridge streets and the probable cost of the



Ash Street Bridge constructed in 1892

same, also a proposition by P. Pratt in regard to right-of-way over Broadway and Oak Streets,

An informal ballot, which was taken for the location of the new iron bridge, resulted in 6 votes for Oak Street, 2 for Bridge Street and 1 for Broadway. A formal ballot was then taken for the location and Oak Street decided upon, receiving 7 votes, while the Bridge Street and Broadway locations received 1 each. The bridge committee was then authorized to employ a competent engineer for building the bridge on Oak Street.

At the council meeting in June of 1889, the recommendation of the bridge committee was to let the contract for the bridge to the Clinton Bridge and Iron Works of Clinton, Iowa and the contract for the masonry to Pinneo & Willby, said parties being the lowest bidders under the plan adopted by the council. The contract price to be paid to the above named company was \$11,800 and the estimated cost of the masonry and all other work and material necessary for the completion of the bridge was \$2,000, making the estimated total cost \$18,800.

By August 1889, work on the abutments for the bridge was well underway. Pratt owned the property at the south end of the bridge and the Baraboo Milling Co. owned the land at the North end.

The bridge was constructed during the years 1889 and 1890. The council accepted it on April 29th. of 1890 and payment was authorized.

Original Contract.....	\$11,800.00
100 Ft. Trestle extension.....	1,420.00
Raising main bridge four feet....	242.00
Extras as per report of Mr. Conover.....	<u>1,436.48</u>
	\$14,898.48
Credit by Cash paid.....	\$7,000.00
Credit by cash piling lumber.....	<u>8.85</u>
	\$7,008.85
Balance Due.....	\$7,889.63

There was also about \$4,100.00 paid locally for bridge abutments.

The Oak Street bridge and it's approaches of 620 feet, across the Baraboo river and valley, consisted of an open span of 234 feet and one of 102 feet and 296 feet of iron trestle work.

In May of 1890, an ordinance was passed, levying a fine of \$5.00 upon anyone trotting horses over the bridge. Team travel of a walking speed was to be maintained.

#### **Oak Street Bridge**

As early as 1919 there was talk of constructing a new concrete bridge. The present one was getting old and insecure for traffic. This would require a single pier, which would probably be near or in the center of the river. The question then arose as to how that would affect the McArthur dam. The city council felt that a new dam should be built in conjunction with and as an integral part of the bridge and both would then be owned by the city.

There was a suggestion that the bridge be built as a memorial to the Sauk County soldiers who fought and died in World War I, and that it be so named. It was further suggested that it be made the

## About the Bridges of Baraboo

gateway to the new Warner Road to Devils Lake and that it be so named.

In 1920, a public notice was posted as follows. "The City of Baraboo has on hand a quantity of old planks taken from the Oak Street Bridge and now stored beneath the bridge, and the same are suitable for kindling purposes. The street committee will receive bids for disposal of these planks, the purchaser to haul same from the premises. Bids shall be received by the city clerk up to Wednesday, April 7, 1920.

At a session of the county board in January of 1926 a petition from the city of Baraboo for a new Oak Street bridge over the Baraboo River was received and granted. A resolution was passed to petition the state Highway Commission for the bridge. The state had already estimated the costs of different types of construction for two different bridges. One bridge would be at the present floor level and one would be a high bridge over the railroad tracks at the south end. Estimates were as follows.

### **1350 Feet Overhead Bridge**

Arch Type	\$650,000
Girder Type	\$590,000
Steel Type	\$500,000

### **475 Feet Bridge at present floor level**

Arch Type	\$285,000
Girder Type	\$240,000
Steel Type	\$210,000

Many meetings of the citizens of Baraboo were held during February of 1926. Always, the consensus was to go with the low bridge. The North Western Railroad advised the city council that they would contribute \$25,000 towards a high bridge. By this time the county had taken the initiative in getting the bridge built. The state would share much more of the cost with the county than it would with the city.

At a County Board meeting on February 26, the vote was 25 to 10 in favor of the low bridge. This was also the consensus at many



New Ash Street Bridge as viewed from under the Oak Street Bridge circa 1926 - 1929

mass meetings of the citizens of Baraboo. However, the state of Wisconsin had the last say as to which bridge was to be constructed.

The state was also taking into consideration the building of a Broadway bridge. This would necessitate going under the Northwestern tracks on the west side of the hill and through "Dutch Hollow" and joining the Warner Road at the south end of Vine Street. It was understood that the state would not pay for any portion of any city bridge that was less than 500 feet in length. A Broadway bridge would be about that length. In case the Broadway Bridge was constructed, there would be no Oak Street Bridge.

Eventually the state decided to go with the thoughts of the majority of the citizens of Baraboo and to proceed with the plans and surveys.

Now, all of this hoopla over a new bridge had been due to the fact that a lot of traffic, sometimes 5000 autos a day crossed this bridge. This was all primary traffic to and from Devils Lake. Highway 123 to the lake was an extension of the south end of Vine Street. About the time the Oak Street bridge question was settled, some citizens came

forward with a desire to extend highway 123 to South Broadway and to join the North and South portions of Broadway by virtue of a Broadway Bridge. At this point the state, put everything on hold pending Baraboo's final decision. This would do away with the dangerous rail crossing of Vine Street and the blocking of traffic by the trains.

On the sixth day of April 1926, an advisory ballot was held and the vote was 696 for a low Oak Street bridge and 306 for a high Oak Street bridge. The second question on the ballot concerned abandoning the Oak Street bridge concept and building instead a Broadway bridge. The vote was 351 for and 587 against. One of the reasons for the Oak Street Bridge was the fact that it was the shortest route for foot traffic to and from the depot.

#### **Ash/Walnut Street Bridge**

A contract with the Milwaukee Bridge Company, for two bridges over the Baraboo River was completed and signed on May 11, 1892. The contract price for the Ash Street Bridge was \$4,100 and for the Second Avenue bridge \$3,700.

By December 15, 1892, the new iron bridge, which spanned the Baraboo River at Bridge Street (Ash/Walnut), was open to the public. It was 152 feet long; had a driveway 20 feet wide in the clear; and each side had a foot walk, six feet wide in the clear. The cost was \$4,100 plus \$2,000 to \$3,000 for the sub-structure.

In August of 1892, the city had received bids on the old bridges. \$76.00 for the Second Avenue Street bridge from J. A. McFetridge and \$100 for the Ash Street structure from J. N. Vanderveer. Bids were accepted.

#### **1914 New Race Bridge**

In August of 1914 a new concrete bridge was completed beneath the high bridge on the north side of the river. The new bridge crossed over the millrace on Water Street.

### **1925**

#### **Second Avenue Bridge**

By August 15th of 1925 preparations for the new Second Avenue bridge was progressing rapidly. A footbridge had been constructed and vehicle traffic had been closed. The iron braces and railings on the side were down. The steel girders overhead were being torched and removed. The planking and steel girders would be gone by the end of the month. This bridge was the fourth bridge at this location.

The first bridge at this location had two spans with a log pier in the middle. It was not as long as more recent bridges as the abutments on each side, which were held in place with heavy timbers, protruded over the stream from the banks.

Next the old covered plank bridge that was removed about 1892 to make room for the steel structured bridge which was removed in 1925.

### **8/20/1925**

#### **New Ash Street Bridge**

Plans for both an arch design and a girder designed structure were submitted to the members of the city solons at their regular meeting in the city to start work on a new bridge over the Baraboo river from Ash street to Walnut street early next spring.

According to the plans of Mr. French the new bridge would cost in the neighborhood of \$96,000. The bridge proposed by the city engineer would be 40 ft. wide, containing sidewalks of 5-12 feet in width on each side.

### **1926**

In January of 1926, Max Feinberg purchased the old Ash Street Bridge, the consideration being \$125.00. By the middle of May, 1926, the new \$40,000 Ash Street Bridge was nearly completed. Also the city had re-graded the hill between Water and First Street and cut off the corner of the Noyes property making the ascent by autos much easier.

## About the Bridges of Baraboo

It was said that one would have to make a several trips over the new street to become familiar with the change, the abrupt turns no longer being required.

**1927**

By February of 1927, thoughts of a Broadway bridge were being taken seriously. It would cost about \$130,000 less than the Oak Street Bridge and the State Road Commission preferred it. The final estimate by the state placed the cost of a Broadway bridge at \$225,000. Of that the city's share would be \$45,000, a big savings over an Oak Street bridge.

By August of 1927, the Broadway bridge project was under way. The deadline for finishing the bridge was Jan. 1, 1928 with the exception of the railings, which because of cold weather had a deadline of June 1, 1928. The new bridge was dedicated on August 2, 1928.

Another report in August of 1927 by the Milwaukee Bridge Company engineers stated that the Oak Street Bridge would require a \$26,000 expenditure to make the bridge safe for traffic. It was determined that the bridge "as it stands" was not safe for foot or pedestrian travel. On August 26<sup>th</sup>, the city council closed the bridge permanently. No vehicles, no pedestrians. By the end of June, 1929, the bridge was gone.

### **New Broadway Bridge**

The long awaited opening of Baraboo's new highways 12, 123 and 13 into the city via the new Broadway Bridge took place in September of 1928. Coincidence with the opening of the new highway was the opening of Ritz Oil Company on the "Y" of the junction of the highways. Many who drove over the highway expressed great surprise at the changes made, including the Ritz Station, the Hotel Rialto of Louis Roach on Lynn Avenue, the splendid wide bridge, and the new approach to the railroad station and the new route to Devil's Lake via the Warner Memorial Road. This bridge was replaced by a new bridge in 2004.



New Broadway Bridge      circa 1928

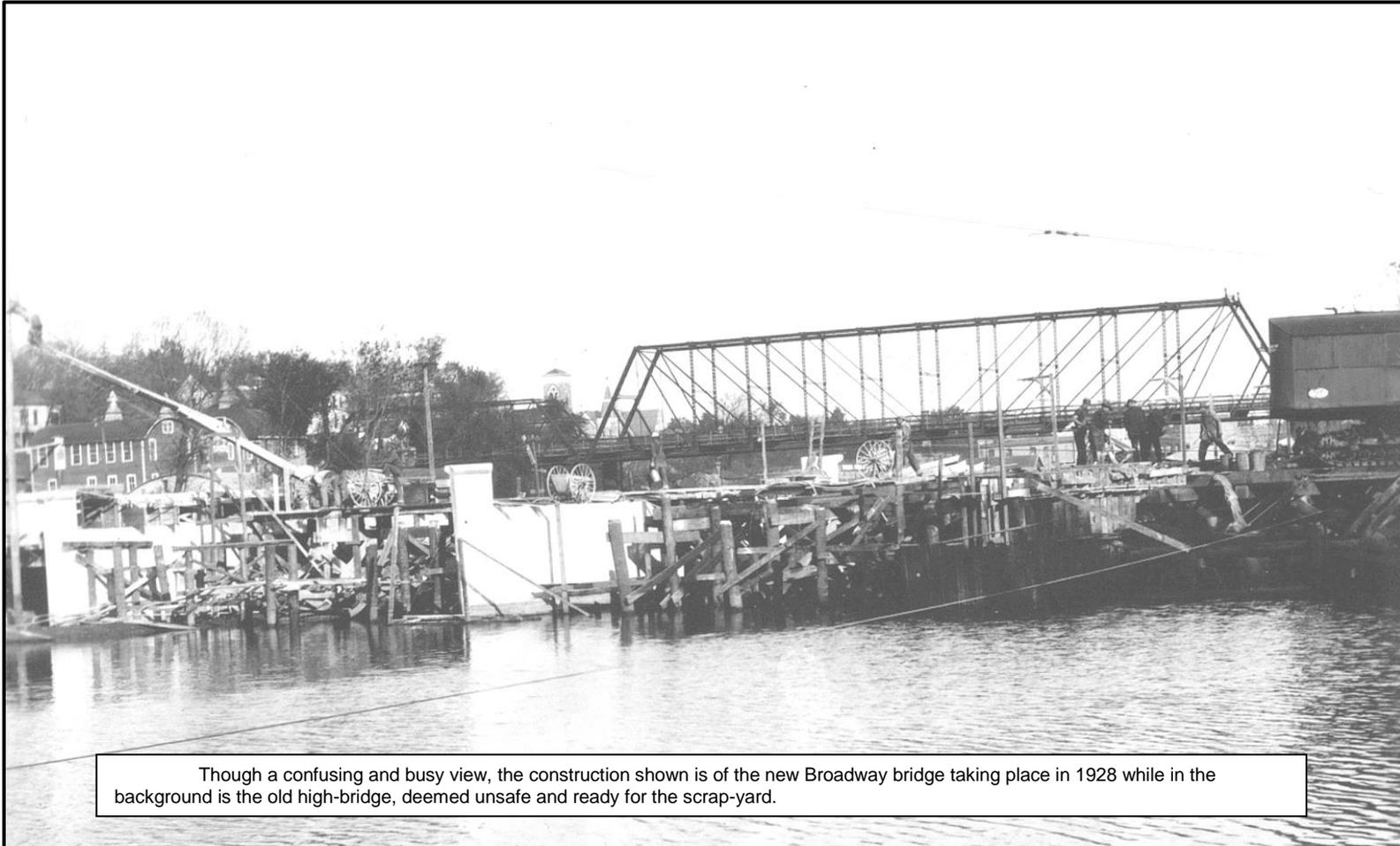
**1929**

In June of 1929, the razing of the old Oak Street Bridge began. The Donaghey Construction Company of Madison started the actual work of tearing down the old iron bridge in June of 1929. At the end of the first week in June, most of the railing was down and the crew was at work pulling up the planks of the sidewalk. The company received \$2500 plus the salvage.

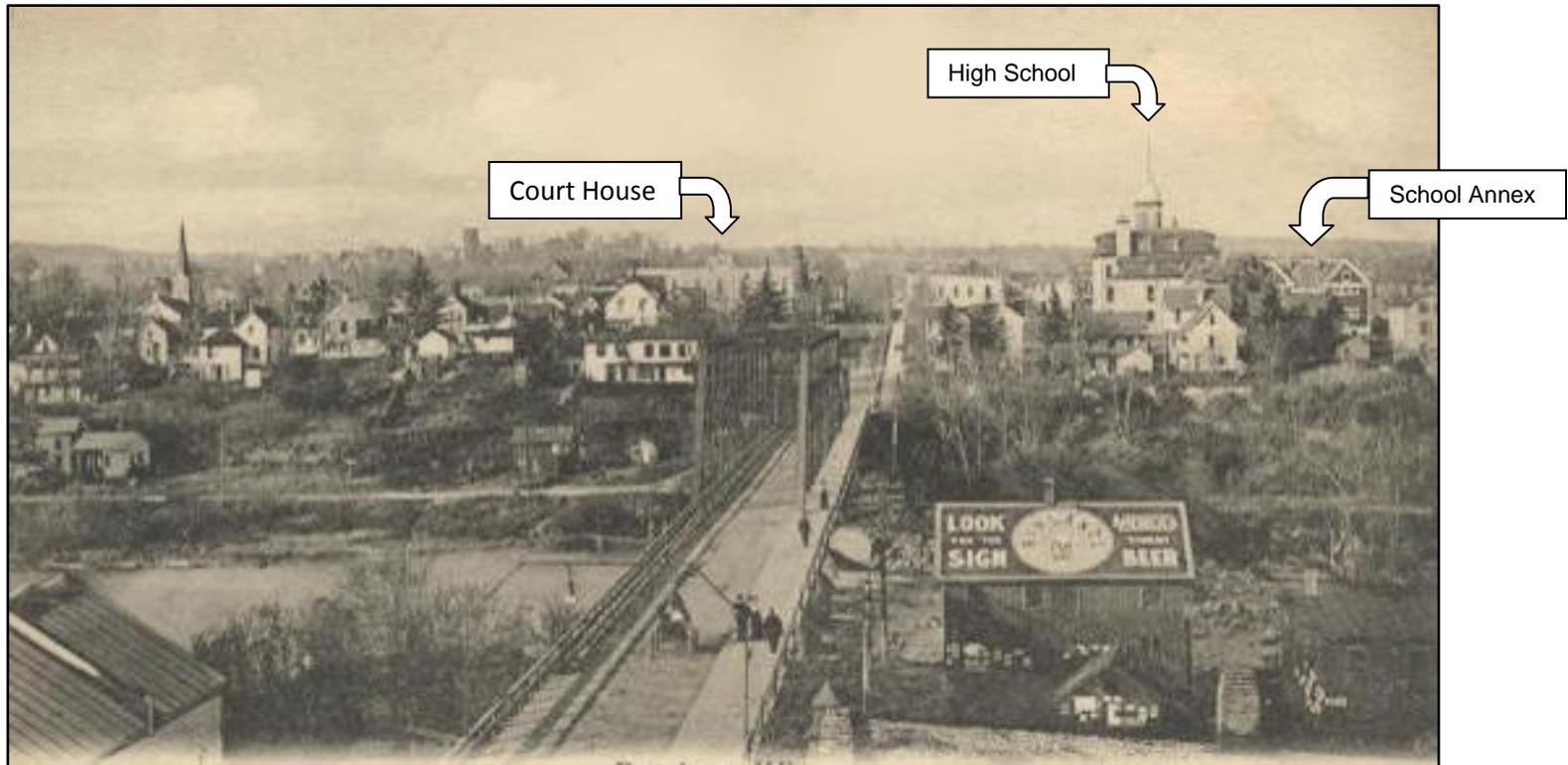
**1983**

After four months of construction, the new Moore Street Bridge on Baraboo's west side was opened in 1983. The bridge cost \$244,239 and was 80% federally funded. Local funding was Baraboo..10%, county..5% and Town of Baraboo 5%.

## The Old and The New



## About The Bridges of Baraboo



High bridge connecting Vine Street and Oak Street, View is looking north. c1909

**104 Broadway Service Station & Bridge**



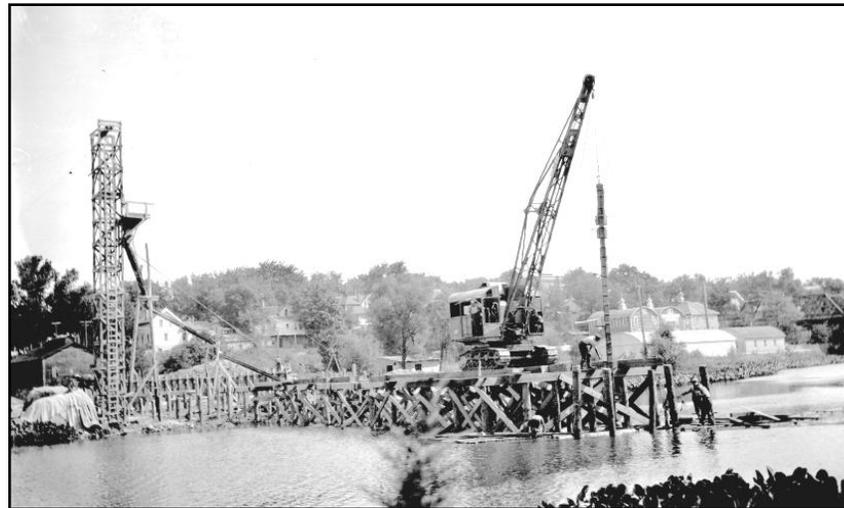
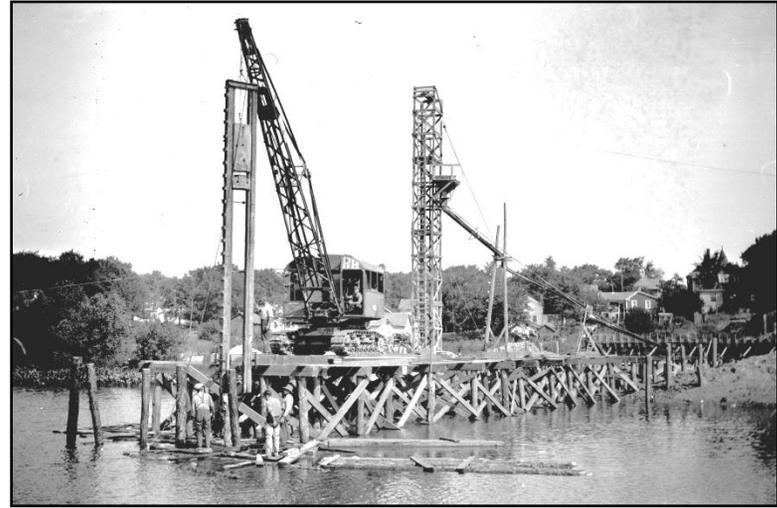
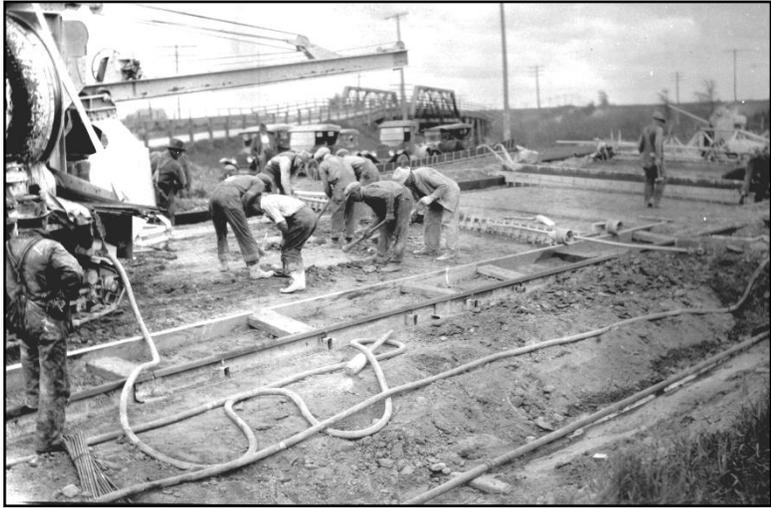
*Looking south over the original Broadway bridge  
Broadway Service Station on left circa 1928*

**104 Broadway Canning Factory & New Broadway Bridge**

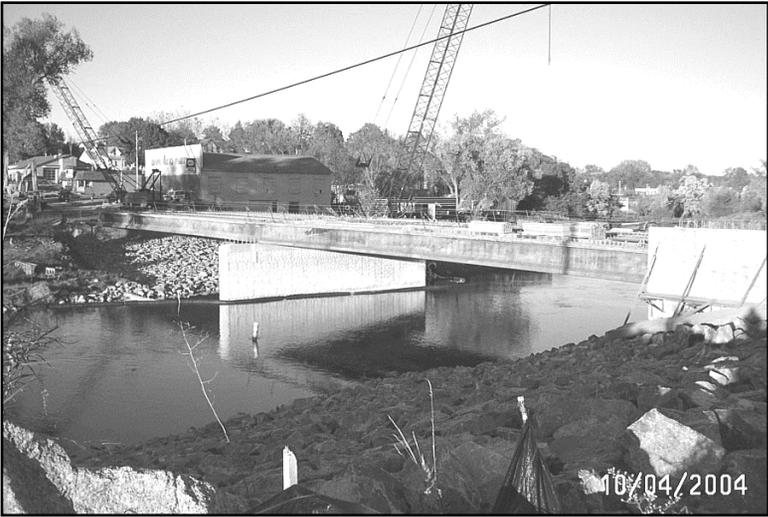


New Broadway bridge with canning factory and car shops in the background circa 1928

# The Building of the Broadway Bridge circa 1927-1928



**The Building of the Broadway Bridge circa 2004**



New Broadway Bridge.....Constructed 2004



**Moore Street Bridge      Constructed 1983**



## Old and New Manchester Bridge over Baraboo River



Bridge on upper left was constructed in 1884 over the Baraboo River in the village of Manchester just east of and adjoining the then village of Baraboo. This bridge was deemed unsafe in the 1980's and moved to the west side of Baraboo where it now connects lower Ochsner Park with Attridge Park.

Bridge on lower right replaced old Manchester bridge.



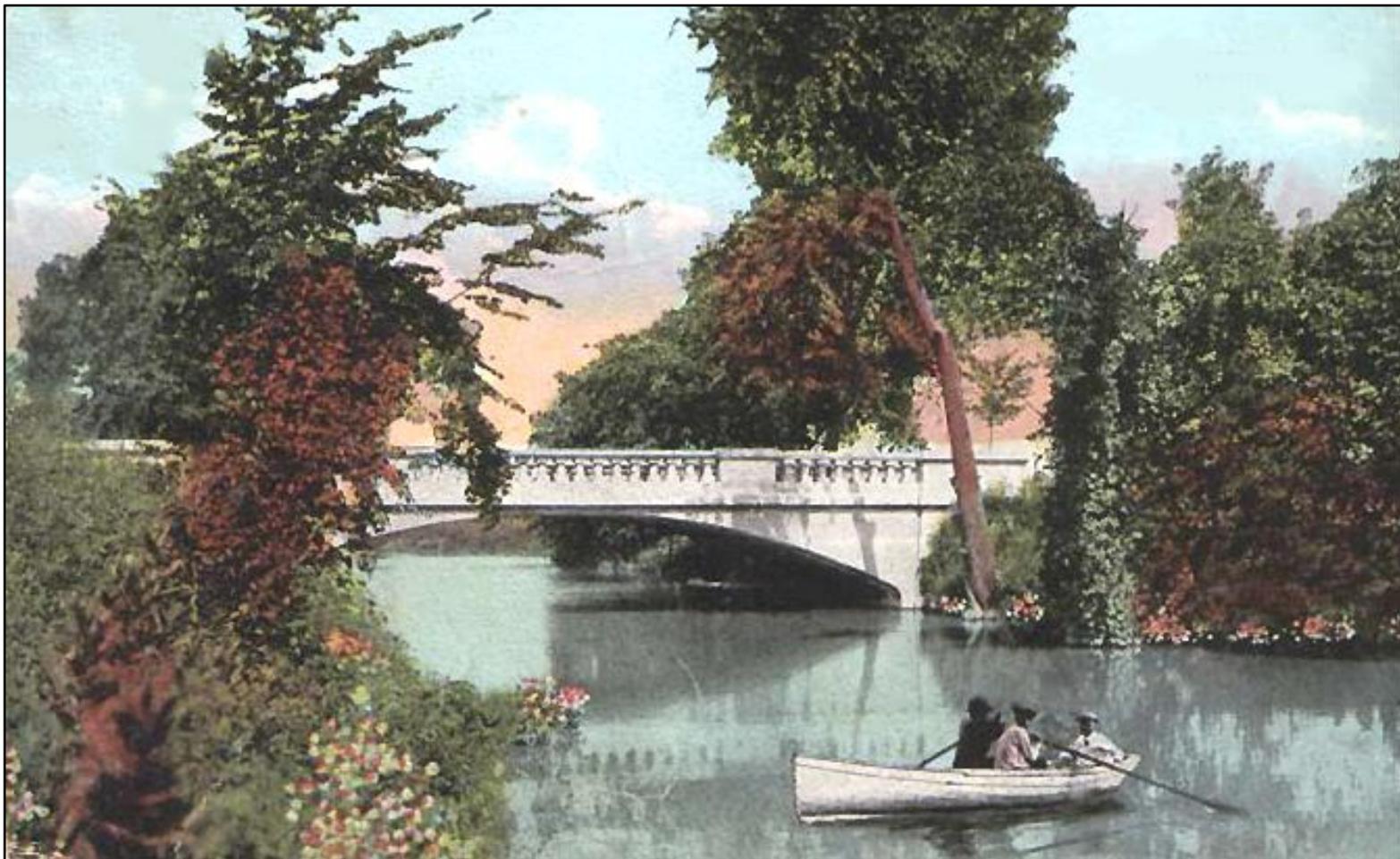
## Second Avenue Bridge



Top left view..looking west, view of old Second Avenue bridge .  
Bottom right view..looking south, view of new Second Avenue bridge. Constructed c1980 (?)



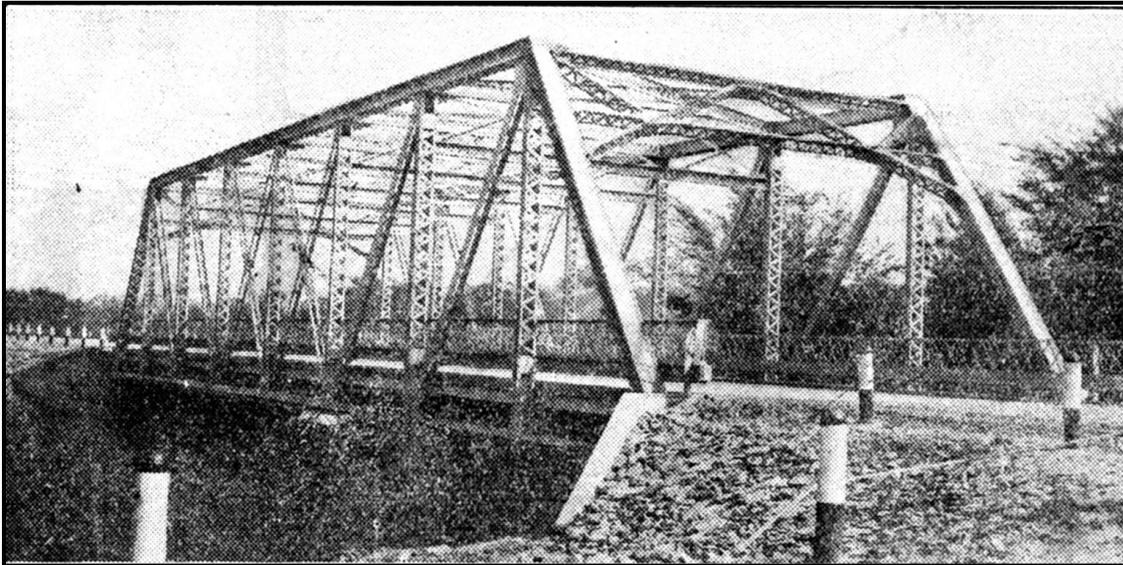
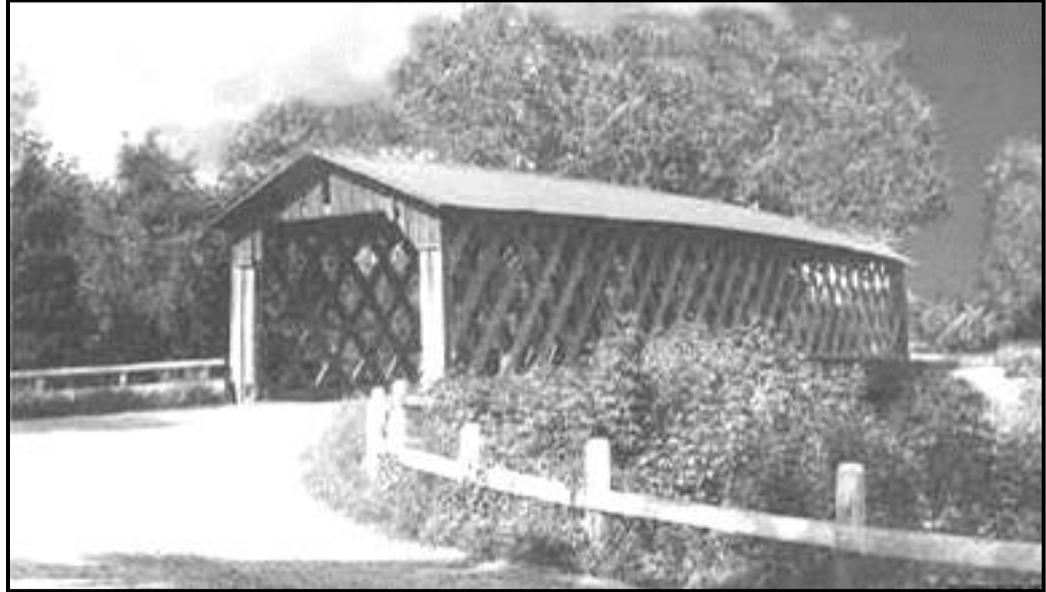
## Woolen Mill Lagoon Bridge



## Butterfield Bridge

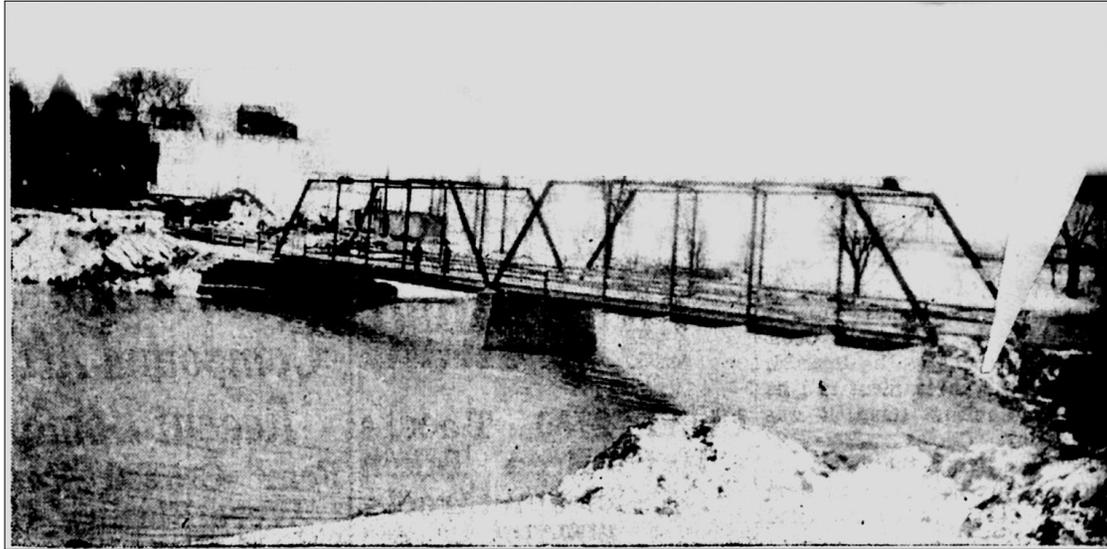
The covered Butterfield Bridge, that crossed the Baraboo River at the Lower Narrows in the town of Fairfield, was a very common type of bridge used in the latter half of the 1800's and was constructed by Jared (Jerry) Dodd between 1873 and 1877. It was predicted in 1924 that this bridge would soon be removed leaving only one bridge over the Narrow's Creek. The reverse of the prediction was true as the Narrows Creek Bridge collapsed in the latter part of November 1930 under the weight of a gravel truck.

It was then that the new bridge, shown below, was constructed. The location of the new bridge took a new route as traffic had to take a sharp turn prior to the crossing the old covered bridge causing many accidents including a large motor-bus crash on July 3, 1926 which injured 33 people. The covered bridge was purchased by S. H. Burton.



Note: Jerry Dodd also constructed the bridge over the Baraboo River to the north of Ableman, one over the Baraboo River near the railway station in Ableman, one over the Narrows Creek a mile west of Ableman, one over the Baraboo River near the Island Woolen Mill and one over the Baraboo River connecting Ash and Walnut Streets in Baraboo.

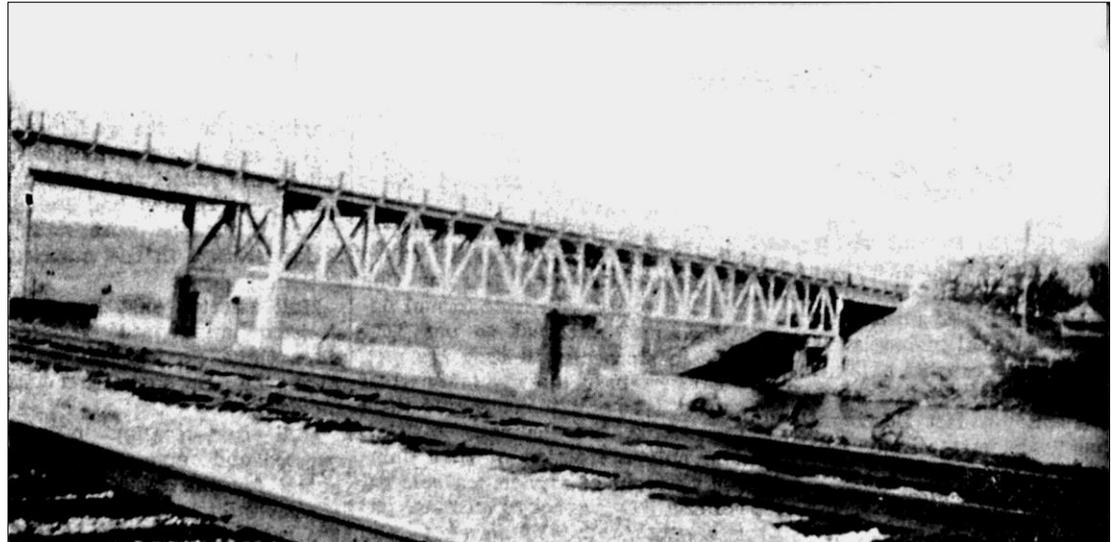
## Highway 12 Bridge



The photo at left was taken prior to its razing to make way for the new bridge shown at the lower right. Old timers comment that that this red-painted bridge, constructed in 1937, and connected the north river bank to the south river bank of Lyons, was impassable in wet or snowy weather and in its later years would sway gently to the rhythm of vehicles passing over it.

The new Lyon's overpass and bridge shown at the right was a great improvement. It was erected at a cost of \$108,000.

This bridge was replaced in 1985..see illustration #12



## Highway 12 Bridge

