



Chicago River Bridges

Patrick T. McBriarty

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Chicago River Bridges presents the untold history and development of Chicago's iconic bridges, from the first wood footbridge built by a tavern owner in 1832 to the fantastic marvels of steel, concrete, and machinery of today. It is the story of Chicago as seen through its bridges, for it has been the bridges that proved critical in connecting and reconnecting the people, industry, and neighborhoods of a city that is constantly remaking itself. In this book, author Patrick T. McBriarty shows how generations of Chicagoans built (and rebuilt) the thriving city trisected by the Chicago River and linked by its many crossings.

This comprehensive guidebook chronicles more than 175 bridges spanning 55 locations along the Main Channel, South Branch, and North Branch of the Chicago River. With new full-color photography of existing bridges and more than one hundred black and white images of bridges past, the book unearths the rich history of Chicago's downtown bridges from the Michigan Avenue Bridge to the often forgotten bridges that once connected thoroughfares such as Rush, Erie, Taylor, and Polk Streets.

Throughout, McBriarty delivers new research into the bridges' architectural designs, engineering innovations, and their impact on Chicagoans' daily lives, explaining how the dominance of the "Chicago-style" bascule drawbridge influenced the style and mechanics of bridges worldwide. Interspersed throughout are the human dramas that played out on and around the bridges, such as the floods of 1849 and 1992, the cattle crossing collapse of the Rush Street Bridge, or Vincent "The Schemer" Drucci's Michigan Avenue Bridge jump. A confluence of Chicago history, urban design, and engineering lore, Chicago River Bridges illustrates Chicago's significant contribution to drawbridge innovation and the city's emergence as the drawbridge capital of the world.

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