

ONE MAN'S MONUMENT.

HOW WILLIAM K. REYNOLDS BUILT THE SUSPENSION BRIDGE.

He Had Faith Enough in Himself to Assume the Burden of the Whole Undertaking—Extraordinary Propositions That Had Found Favor Before His Plan Was Made.

There was a time in the history of this continent when there were no falls at the mouth of the river St. John. The water had another outlet.

That was in a prehistoric age. It was beyond the time to which the oldest of the Indian traditions reach. It was in the ancient days of "this old world we call the new."

Long before the European races heard of America the red men of this part of the continent looked upon the falls with reverence and awe. A great tree which seemed anchored in the midst of the whirlpool was worshipped by them as the

formed an arch. Incredible as it may seem, the citizens believed in him and his plan. He obtained all the money and credit he wanted. Then he began to place his deals and spike them down. The further he built the more weight was required to hold the ends down. When the structure had stretched out for 100 feet, the builder began to discover that he had made a mistake. Despite of all his ballast and bolts, the structure began to topple. He left St. John. He had tried his experiment and the public paid the bills.

One stormy Saturday night in the winter of 1849, a man was rowed across the harbor of St. John. He had driven from Lepreau, and being too late for the regular ferry was obliged to leave his horse in Carleton. He was an American, or a "Yankee," as the people of his nationality were rather contemptuously termed in those days. A few years before he had come from Maine and purchased the Lepreau

river. When he reached the falls, he stopped and exclaimed: "This is the place for a bridge, and with the help of God I will build one."

From that moment the work was a reality in his mind. He formed his plans at once, without a doubt that he would succeed. And he did succeed. The bridge is his monument today.

How he succeeded were too long a story for the present purpose. Almost a stranger, coming from a people who were looked upon with suspicion as tricksters and speculators, he had uphill work from first to last. People had no faith in him. He, however, had faith in himself.

A charter was obtained and a company was formed. Those who signed for stock did so on the condition that they were to pay no money until the bridge was completed, tested and opened to the public. Mr. REYNOLDS assumed the whole burden of the undertaking.

had not been turned. What is now the New Brunswick railway was not even thought of at that time. The only piece of railway in the province was one which had been started from St. Andrews, with the idea of going to Quebec, but which actually went nowhere. The United States mails came by stage coach from St. Stephen, while the Fredericton mails came by the way of the Nerepis valley. The suspension bridge was then one of the great outlets and inlets of the city.

Today it is simply a local convenience. With the march of years railroads have grown and become the great carriers of commerce. The two great systems unite the maritime provinces with all parts of America, and the completion of the cantilever was the joining of them to make a long and unbroken line of soil. It is the connecting link in a vitally important chain.

The cantilever was built by the St. John

as near as possible to the Suspension bridge was chosen.

The cantilever principle is suited for just such a spot. The river there is about 450 feet wide and 120 feet deep. This, with the extraordinary currents, made a pier bridge impossible. The only way to cross the gorge was by a single span. Until very recent years a railroad bridge, other than suspension, with a clear span of more than 300 feet, was not believed practical, but modern engineers having proved to the contrary, the St. John cantilever became a reality. It is 477 feet clear span, or nine feet longer than the railroad bridge at Niagara. It is constructed almost entirely of steel.

The old suspension bridge is 630 feet long and 70 feet above high water.

Both bridges are handsome structures, but far more important than their appearance is the story they tell of the city's material growth and progress. They tell a story and a most instructive one.

THE OLD LANDMARKS

HAVE GIVEN PLACE TO MORE BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURES.

Changes in King Street and the Square, in the Last Half-Century—Mr. Fenety's Public-spirited Efforts—That Remarkable Fountain—Other Features.

The wisdom of the founders of St. John in giving King street a width of 100 feet should never be forgotten. Not only did they establish for all time a spacious and attractive thoroughfare, but builded wiser than they knew in another respect. Had the street been of ordinary width, no one can tell how far the fire might have spread to the north on that terrible June day in 1877. All to the south was burned. All to the north was saved.

King street has made wonderful strides in improvement within half a century. It has a most substantial and attractive appearance to-day, but the old landmarks



KING STREET, FROM GERMAIN TO PRINCE WILLIAM.



KING STREET, FROM KING SQUARE.

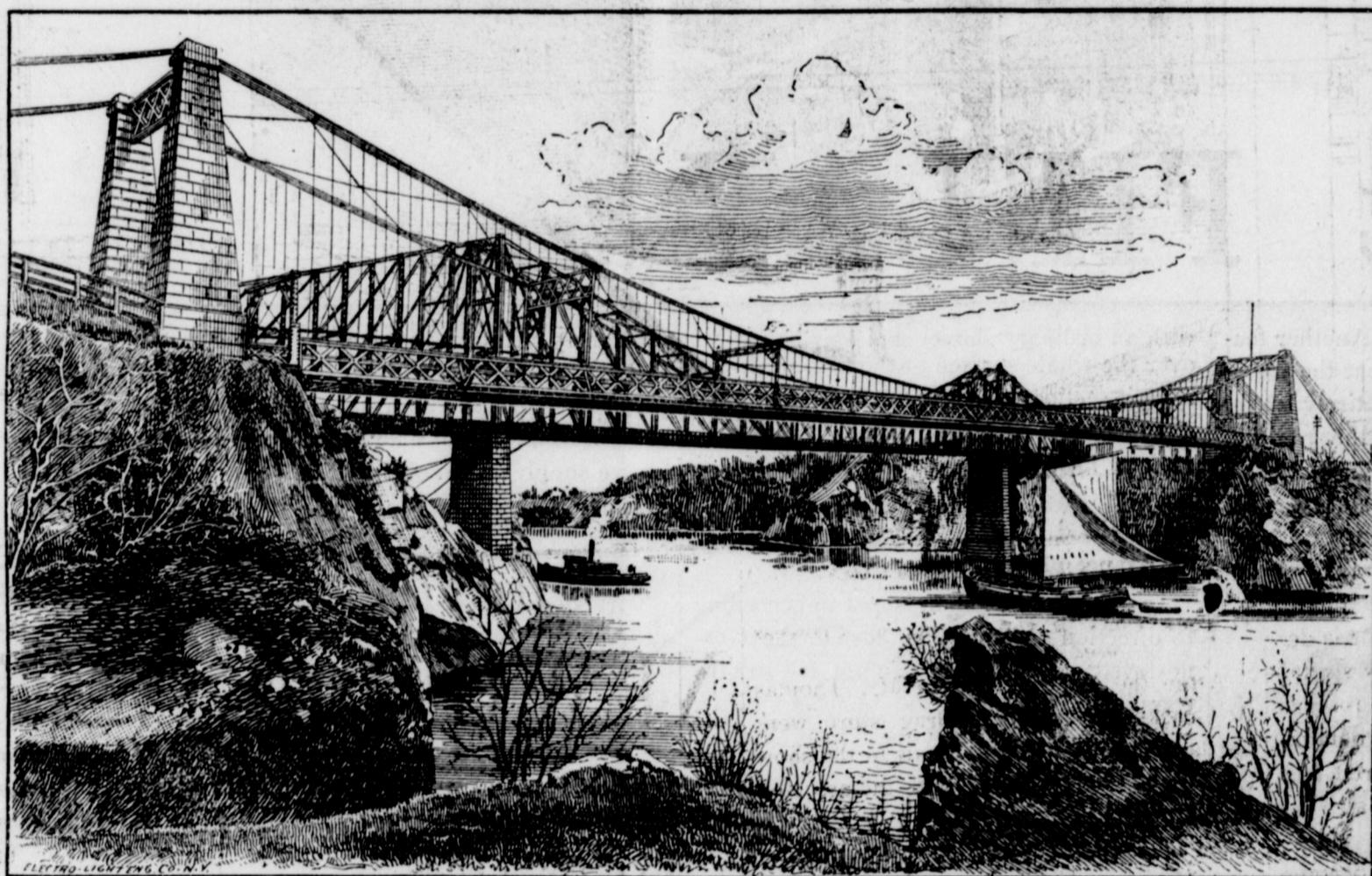
spirit of the waters. In their simple way they paid it homage. Tributes of furs were offered to propitiate its favor. The rocky gorge was to them "a temple not made with hands."

The river St. John has its source amid the forests of northern Maine. For nearly 500 miles it gathers strength on its way to the sea. Rivers of no small volume are its tributaries. At times it expands to more than a mile in width. It is an immense body of water, and yet ere it reaches the sea it must pass through this narrow channel between the cliffs.

In the effort of the great river to pour its waters through a gorge no more than 400 feet in width, a fall of fifteen feet is made when it is low tide in the harbor. When the tide, in its turn, rushes through the chasm, another fall of equal height is made. It is only at half-tide that the waters are moderately tranquil.

In the olden time no one deemed it possible that a bridge could be thrown from cliff to cliff. Yet it was thought that the river might be spanned at a lower point, and in 1835 a company was formed for that purpose. The leading men of the day were interested in the work, and a site was chosen about a quarter of a mile below the present Suspension Bridge. Work was begun early in 1837. The bridge was of wooden truss work. To aid the work, chains were stretched from shore to shore, on which the stagings were placed.

The work progressed. On the morning of August 7th, 1837, the day when Victoria was officially proclaimed in St. John as queen, one of the chains broke, and the entire structure fell. The noise of the



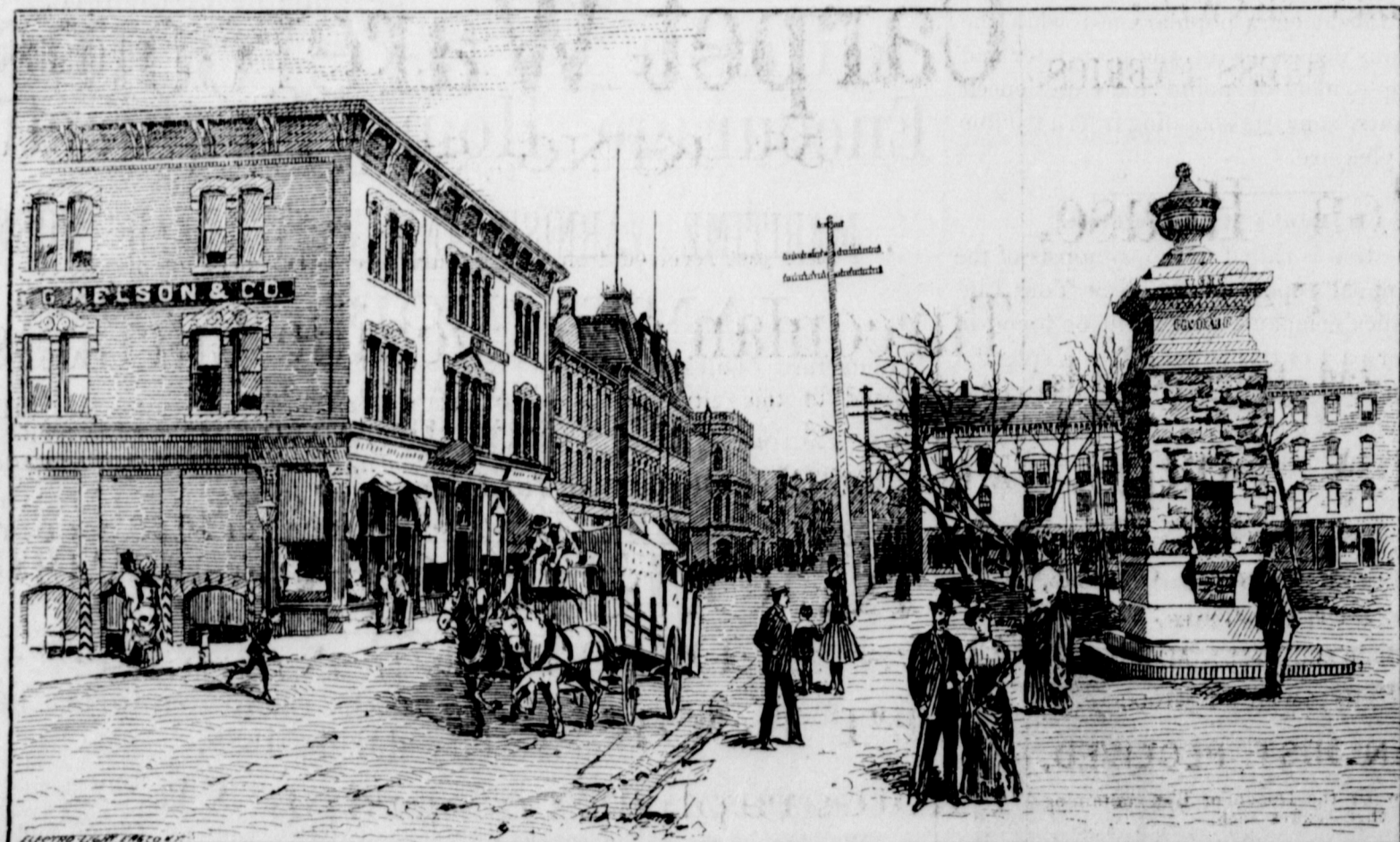
SUSPENSION AND CANTILEVER BRIDGES.

are gone. Taking the south side: At the head used to stand the old St. John hotel, built for a Masonic hall, and the great hostelry of the city in former times; and at the foot was Cody's coffee house, a more ancient and even more famous resort. Where John Vassie & Co. have their big store now was the house once occupied by Benedict Arnold. Across the street, on the ground where the Royal Hotel is now, once stood the building in which the first New Brunswick parliament met, in 1786. At the head of the street, on the north side, was, not so many years ago, the Commercial hotel, another well-known house of entertainment. At the foot of the street, on the market square, stood the city hall and court house. The King square was far from being the ornamental plot that it is to-day.

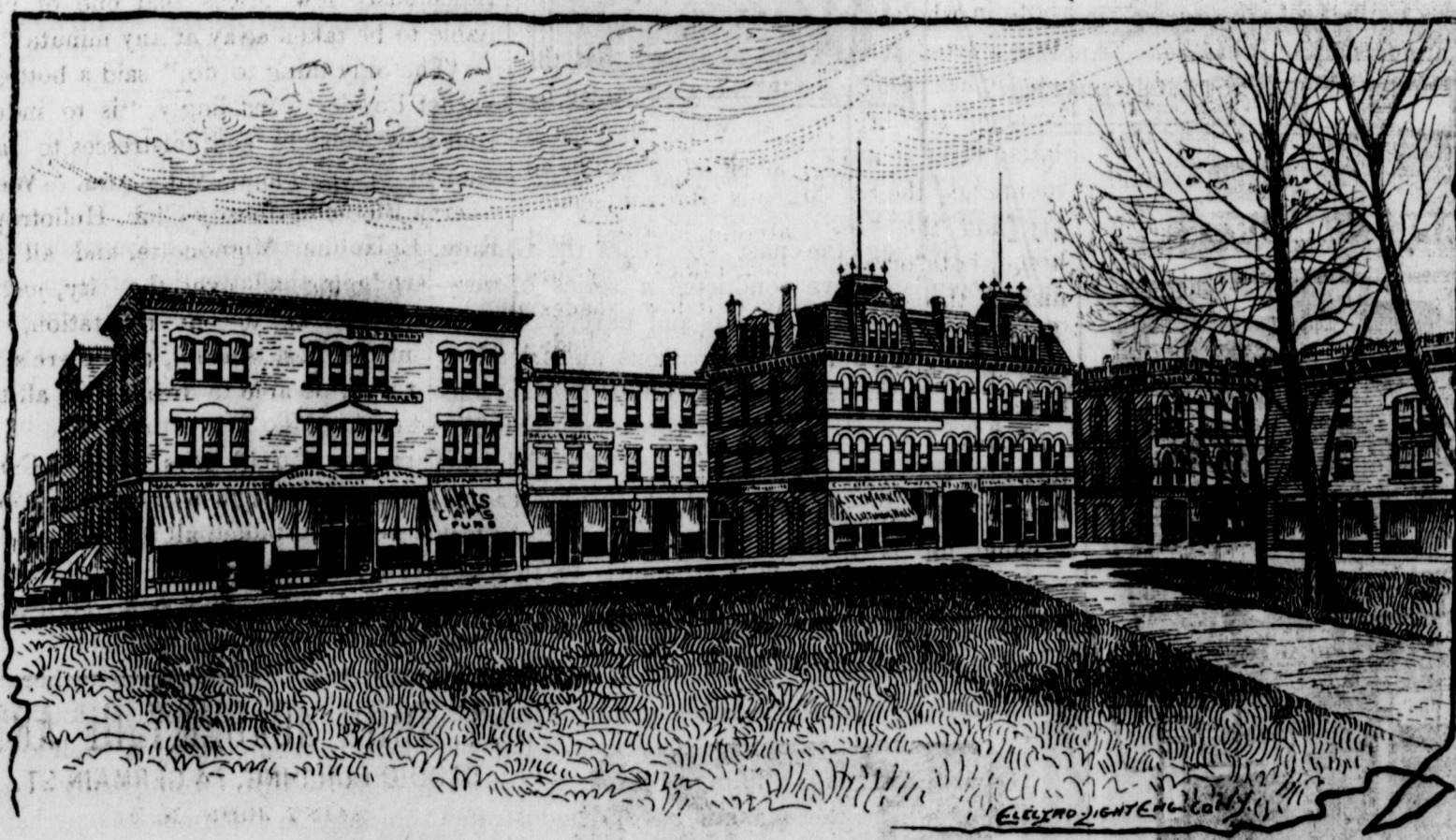
It was simply a rough, rocky and uneven patch of ground, with a dirty pond in the centre. Half a century ago a rough wooden building stood on it, reaching from near Charlotte street to well up toward the fountain. It was not until GEORGE E. FENETY began a crusade with the old Morning News that steps were taken to give the square a respectable look. Mr. FENETY, personally, pushed the improvements, and it is to him that the citizens are indebted for the trees which beautify this part of the city.

The surroundings of the square were very different 40 or 50 years ago from what they are now. The court house, the Hazen house, the St. John hotel, St. Stephen's hall and the National school, were the only buildings of any note. Of these, the court house still stands, a trespasser on 20 feet of the highway. The Hazen house has been remodelled into the Hotel Dufferin.

The stranger who looks at some of the views of King square will see a strange looking object in the foreground. He will wonder what it is. It is a mistake. Some well-meaning ladies of this city sought to honor the memory of the Loyalist women of 1783 by erecting it as a memorial. It



CHARLOTTE STREET.



CHARLOTTE STREET, FROM KING SQUARE.

crash was heard a mile away. Seven men were instantly killed and a number of others were badly injured. The bridge was totally destroyed.

This was the end of the undertaking. Work was never resumed. The people were wholly discouraged.

Eleven or twelve years later, a plausible adventurer came along with a new and extraordinary scheme. He proposed to build a bridge of deals, each layer overlapping the preceding one for a distance of four feet, the work to be pushed from each side until the deals met in the middle and

mill property. He lived in St. John and went to and from his mill every week. His name was WILLIAM K. REYNOLDS.

It was not the first time that he had been thus put to the inconvenience of crossing the harbor in a small boat, but it was the first time that he began to think of a way out of the difficulty. Was it not possible to build a bridge? He would see.

He observed the Sabbath as usual, but early on Monday morning, his horse having been sent from Carleton, he drove through Portland and up the Strait Shore. As he went, he carefully examined the

The bridge was opened on January 1st, 1853. On July 1st, 1875, the provincial government purchased it from the stockholders and made it free to the public.

A third of a century after the suspension bridge began to span the falls, one of those wonderful modern railway structures, a cantilever, was placed by its side. The two each a splendid specimen of its kind, have widely different missions. When the suspension bridge was opened, the queen's highway was the only means of land communication in the province. The first sod of what is now the Intercolonial railway,

Bridge company, of which Hon. THOMAS R. JONES was president. GILMOR BROWN was resident engineer, and PETER S. ARCHIBALD, chief engineer. Prior to its construction a gap of two miles lay between the Intercolonial and New Brunswick railways. This made it necessary that all railroad business between the United States and the provinces should be transferred. The average expense of this was \$6 a car for freight and 30 cents a head for passengers. This made the bridge an absolute necessity, and though another site across the harbor was advocated by some, a point

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would perhaps not be idolatry for people to worship it, for it is the likeness of nothing on the heavens above or on the earth beneath. It is to St. John what the gifts of the generous Dr. Coggeswell are to some of the cities of the United States. It is called a fountain, but no water is found anywhere near it. No one will worship it. Some day the donors may remove it and put something in its place. Almost anything, except a hole in the ground, will look better than it does. Judging from the way in which it obtrudes itself in the views, strangers might think PROGRESS made it prominent on purpose, and because the citizens are proud of it. They are not. Not by a large majority.