

FACT SHEET

- The Quebec Bridge, called the eighth marvel of the world allowed the city of Quebec to open itself politically and economically to the rest of the world.
- The Bridge at Quebec was designed to be the longest cantilever bridge in the world; to carry two railway tracks spaced 32 feet, 6 inches centre to centre and on the outside of each of these tracks was provided a 5-foot concrete sidewalk.
- On Thursday, August 29, 1907 at 5:37 p.m., the 19,000-ton south half of the bridge, i.e., the cantilever arm and the suspended span, fell as a whole. The fall is reported to have taken no longer than 15 seconds.
- 86 men were working on the bridge at the time of the fall; only 11 of these men survived.
- 75 men lost their lives in the fall. Among these men were 25 Canadians, 17 Americans and 33 Ironworkers from Kahnawake.
- 8 of 33 men were some of the finest Kahnawake Lacrosse Players. **CAUGHNWAGA LACROSSE TEAM, THE MEMBERS OF WHICH WORKED ON THE QUEBEC BRIDGE**—The majority of these were killed in the recent collapse of the south cantilever arm. The names of the players are: **James Goodleaf (killed): James D’Ailleboust (killed): Angus Leaf (killed). Dominick D’Ailleboust (not killed): F.S. Kirby (killed): Alex Beauvais (wounded): Angus Blue (killed). Dominick McComber (who went on strike two hours before the accident, and who was not working at the time of the collapse): Solomon Angus: Veteran of Gen. Gordon’s Nile Relief Expedition, (killed): Thomas Deer (brother of Peter Deer, famous Indian runner, (killed): Peter Stacey (not working when bridge went down). See picture Cultural Center**
- 33 men, ranging in age from 18 years to 44 were killed that day when the bridge fell; the “gang” who were working on the bridge at that time was composed of 36 men. There were other Kahnawakero:non on the ground, either working or cleaning up for the end of the day. The three survivors of the “working gang” were: Thomas Montour, Alexander Beauvais, and John Martin. Montour was uninjured, but he was not able to recollect the accident; Alexander Beauvais suffered a broken leg; and John Martin suffered with a broken hip.
- The names of the men who were working on the bridge but were not on site on that fateful day were Dominic McComber, Dominic D’Ailleboust, Peter Stacey, Joseph Jacobs, Mike Jacobs, and Frank Gordon.
- According to Johnny Beauvais, six Kahnawake men walked off the job one week earlier due to a job dispute.
- A Jerry Diabo (D’Ailleboust) fell the day before and was in the hospital in Quebec City.
- Peter D’Ailleboust, brother to the four D’Ailleboust brothers who died and who changed his name to Horn left the job the day before the collapse. He later remarried Mary Delisle who lost her husband Angus Blue and cousin to Mitchell Delisle on that fateful day. See below*
- Of the 33 men who died, 25 of them were married and therefore, they left 25 widows; whereas eight men were single. The number of children left fatherless was 56.

- At 6:30 p.m. on August 29, 1907, a phone call came to the Kahnawake Post Office (today the home of Remi Giasson), to the Postmaster Mr. Antoine Giasson, informing of the disaster.
- The following morning, August 30th, several men and women from Kahnawake left for Quebec City, to investigate the disaster and to bring home as soon as possible the victims.
- On Sunday morning, September 1st, a train arrived at Adirondack Junction in Kahnawake, carrying the bodies of eight men; all that had been recovered at that time.
- The following morning, Monday, September 2nd, a funeral service was held in Kahnawake for the eight men.
- Four more bodies of the Indian Ironworkers were eventually recovered and returned to Kahnawake for burial. By mid-September 1907, the river had yielded up the bodies of 35 victims five of whom were from Kahnawake. The last body found (3 years later) was Frank Sakokenhiatha Kirby and he was buried September 23, 1910, bringing the total to 18 men whose remains were returned to Kahnawake. Some 40 more bodies would never be recovered (15 from Kahnawake) and their remains are likely still there today, entombed with the twisted steel wreckage of the bridge, deep below the surface of the river.
- A memorial stands in the Catholic Cemetery with the names of 12 men imprinted on the monument whose bodies were never recovered, but in September 1910, the body of Frank Sakokenhiatha Kirby was found. It is not known why four names are not listed.
- Almost every family in Kahnawake was affected by the loss of the men, but the family of Peter Onakarakete D'Ailleboust was especially hard hit. They lost four sons, an uncle, a cousin, and a brother-in-law.
- The four brothers from the D'Ailleboust family who died that day; Angus, Joseph, James, and Louis. Their parents were Pierre Onakarakete D'Ailleboust (deceased in 1904) and Therese Kawennaieri Montour.
- One of the daughters of Pierre and Therese D'Ailleboust, namely Catherine Owennokon, married Napoleon Kahionhakeron Lahache, who died at the Quebec Bridge.
- The Deer family lost two brothers, Louis Tewahennote and Thomas Taiohawi.
- The Mitchell family lost two brothers, James Oniarakenhte and Joseph Katsitsaraken. As the two brothers had no heirs and their siblings were deceased, the family name of Mitchell disappeared in Kahnawake.
- The family name of Lee also disappeared in Kahnawake, when Louis Oserase Lee died in the disaster. He was the only son in a family of four children and even though he is recorded as being married and his wife was expecting a child at the time of the disaster, there is no record of this child having been born.
- The Jocks family lost two sons; Louis Oronhiatakon and Thomas Kanenharoton. One of the Jocks' daughter, namely Agathe Kanatarirhon, lost her husband, Frank Sakokenhiatha Kirby, when the bridge fell.

- Frank Sokokenhiatha Kirby and Angus Tekaneratensere Leaf were actually brothers and were the children of Francois Xavier D'Ailleboust and Therese Goodleaf. The legend is that there were too many D'Ailleboust's (Diabo's) in Kahnawake, so the two brothers changed their family names.
- Angus Kanhonwanron Blue is recorded alias D'Ailleboust. He was the son of John Blue D'Ailleboust and Agnes Montour. His wife Mary Delisle had a child Agnes Blue who married Pete "Beef" Delisle. Mary re-married Peter Horn*
- Thomas K. Bruce's wife MJ Karonhienhawe Jacobs also lost a child in January 1908.
- There were "camps" set up at the site of the construction area; the camps were cared by the wives of the workers, with tents and cook fires.
- One of the conclusions arrived at is that most (if not all) of the 33 men who lost their lives on August 29, 1907 were related, either through blood or by marriage.
- In Kahnawake, as a monument to those who lost their lives at Quebec, pieces of steel were taken from the disaster site, at the direction of Alex Beauvais, and were moulded in the form of crosses, which were placed at either end of the community. As well, the gate and the arch at the entrance to the Catholic Cemetery and a large steel cross in the cemetery were erected (it is not known if the steel came from the disaster site).
- A large wooden cross was commissioned and purchased by the community; it was installed behind the front altar of the Catholic Church in Kahnawake, in the 1930's. It is believed that the collection of monies for the purchase of this cross took place between 1907 and the 1930's.
- "The picture or montage of the 33 men who died at Quebec, hangs in the church museum. It was made by Joseph Curotte, the brother of Elizabeth Curotte's grandfather...if you look closely at the bottom right hand side of the picture, you can see his name."
- The loss would be equal to 106 men today. It was estimated that the loss of the 33 men counted for 1.32% of the total population of Kahnawake at the time.
- In the second attempt to raise the bridge on September 11, 1916, 13 men died. One was P.W. Rice (Unknown if from Kahnawake). Other Kahnawakeronon who worked that day but were not injured were Big Six Jocks, Larry Jackson, Alex Beauvais and others unknown.