

# Hundreds retrace Cleveland history

## East-west subway opened to public

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*Plain Dealer Reporter*

One of Cleveland's most well-known secrets remained underground yesterday even as hundreds swarmed through it.

The dormant subway that connects the city's east and west sides was reopened for six hours, allowing many to retrace the trolleys' course on foot.

The greatest stretch of it is a deck slung beneath the Detroit-Superior (Veterans Memorial)

the way.

Most of the visitors were too young to remember the streetcars, but they had heard about the bridge's lower deck and connecting tunnels.

Ken Smith, 48, of Parma Heights, said he had heard about it all his life but saw it for the first time only last year.

Albert Tekautz, however, remembered the ride quite well, and for several reasons.

Sometimes the streetcar took him and his wife, Irene, to the old Aragon Ballroom on West 25th Street.

One trolley ride across that bridge was part of his journey to

the West Coast for service with the Navy in the Pacific during World War II. He survived the sinking of his aircraft carrier to come home and become a Cleveland police officer, a job from which he retired in 1980.

Bob Horley has railroading in his blood and remembers the subway, too. His uncle was the stationmaster at the old Union Terminal under what is now Tower City. He and his dad and brother worked there too, he said.

"I remember the squeaking wheels," Horley said.

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## About the bridge

88

Years the bridge has been standing

196

Total height, in feet

3,112

Bridge length in feet

Source: Encyclopedia of Cleveland History;  
Plain Dealer research

# SUBWAY

FROM B1

## Hundreds walk dormant subway path

He said the wheels squeaked because the city transit system "had sharp bends in their tracks."

He also remembered one of the more common, and graphic, images of the river crossing: "Riding over the suspension portion and looking straight down" into the Cuyahoga River.

The central section of the bridge is steel truss and the portions on each bank are steel-reinforced concrete.

Klaiber said the steel trusses provide a challenge because of the need to paint them to stave off rust. The concrete can be a problem because the freeze-thaw weather cycle and invasive moisture can damage the concrete.

He said the Detroit-Superior Bridge is a historic landmark, so that is one reason it is repaired instead of replaced. The other reason is cost. In 1917, \$5 million was spent to erect it, and in the 1990s, \$50 million was the price of rehabilitation. Replacement would be much more.

But restoration of the lifestyle that went with the old streetcar system appears more elusive.

Sharon Sternberger of Shaker Heights appeared too young for such memories. But she said she and her mother used the trolley lines to come downtown to shop before her mother learned to drive.

The six department stores and countless other destinations are gone.

But Klaiber promises to reopen the subway for tours again around next Memorial Day.

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