



# Men of Steel: How Mohawks Built New York

By Lucie Levine

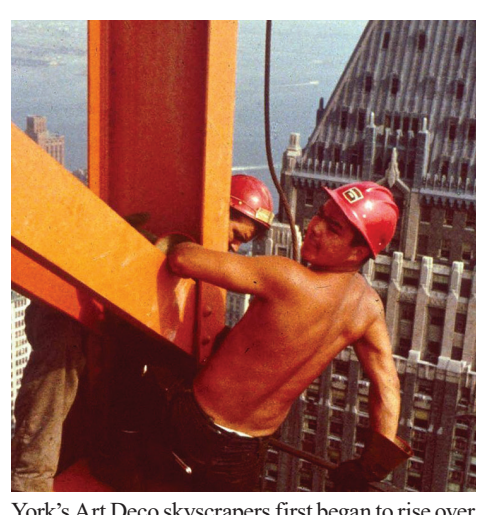
The Empire State Building. The George Washington Bridge. The United Nations. The Woolworth Building. Thirty Rock. The Seagram Building. Lincoln Center. The Waldorf Astoria. Virtually all of New York's most iconic structures were raised in part by Mohawk Native American ironworkers. Since 1916, when Mohawk men made their way to New York to work on the Hell Gate Bridge, ironworkers from two native communities, Akwesasne (which straddles Ontario, Quebec, and New York State) and Kahnawake (near Montreal), have been "walking iron" across the city.

In 2012, Kaniehtakeron "Geggs" Martin, a fourth-generation Mohawk ironworker, stood twenty-seven stories above 55th Street, striding across a two-inch-wide steel beam and swaying a support column into place. What was open sky, soon became a steel-and-glass skyscraper. "I'm a connector," Martin told WNYC. "In the raising gang, it's my job to climb the steel, and erect the iron. It's my job to put the building up."

The tradition of "Mohawks in High Steel" began in 1886, when Mohawk people were hired to build the Victoria Bridge for the Canadian Pacific Railroad, across the Saint Lawrence River, onto Mohawk land. The Dominion Bridge Company, the construction firm responsible for the bridge, intended to hire Mohawks as day-laborers unloading materials, but Mohawk bridgemen were more interested in riveting work, which was the most dangerous, and the highest paid. Of riveting, a DBC official once explained, "men who want to do it are rare, and men who can do it are even rarer."

Mohawk ironworkers have preserved that rare skill for generations. Kyle Karonhiaktatie Beauvais, a sixth-generation Mohawk ironworker, told the Smithsonian in 2002, "A lot of people think Mohawks aren't afraid of heights; that's not true. We have as much fear as the next guy. The difference is that we deal with it better. We also have the experience of the old timers to follow and the responsibility to lead the younger guys. There's pride in walking iron."

In the 1920s, New York City became the place for walking iron, as the lean skeletons of New



York's Art Deco skyscrapers first began to rise over Manhattan. But, then as now, the US Immigration Service followed ill-advised policies that were detrimental to the nation. In this case, immigration officials tried to deport a number of Mohawk

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**Replacement of Twelve Escalators**  
MTA Construction and Development Contract No. E-30436  
Bid Date: June 30, 2021

**Description of project:**  
The work to be performed under this contract consists of the replacement of twelve (12) existing escalators at various locations. The locations include the following: 53rd Street/Lexington Avenue Station; Intervale Avenue Station; Roosevelt Island Station; Bowling Green Station; High Street Station.

**Many bidding opportunities are available:** electrical, communications, escalators, concrete, doors, hollow metal work, hardware, exterior wall panels, miscellaneous metals, structural steel, concrete repair, spall and crack repair, plumbing, mechanical, HVAC, sprinkler, hatches, cleaning, CPM, rodent control, lead paint removal, painting, PCB removal, hazardous remediation, tile, gypsum wall board, metal ceiling panel, architectural panels, concrete topping, anti-graffiti coating.

If you are interested in bidding on this project, please contact Skanska's Outreach Coordinator: [Rosemary.Nagle@skanska.com](mailto:Rosemary.Nagle@skanska.com) • EOE/M/F/Vet/Disabled

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**IS CURRENTLY SOLICITING COST PROPOSALS FROM QUALIFIED AND CERTIFIED M/WBE AND SDVOB SUBCONTRACTORS, VENDORS, SERVICE PROVIDERS**

**Newark Liberty International Airport—Terminal A Redevelopment Program—Airside Utilities and Paving North—Partial Deconstruction of Terminal A Project in New Jersey**  
Port Authority of NY and NJ Contract No: EWR-154.384  
Bid Date: July 7, 2021

**ALL QUOTATIONS ARE DUE BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS Friday, July 2, 2021.**  
For further information concerning subcontracting and/or purchasing opportunities, and to register as a subcontractor or vendor, please respond to solicitations@tutorperini.com or contact Jackie Cotto at 914-739-1908. Come and join our team!

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**Portal North Bridge Project in Hudson City, New Jersey**  
NJ TRANSIT Contract No: 20-083X  
Bid Date: August 12, 2021

**ALL QUOTATIONS ARE DUE BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS Friday, August 6, 2021.**  
For further information concerning subcontracting and/or purchasing opportunities, and to register as a subcontractor or vendor, please respond to [portalbridge@tutorperini.com](mailto:portalbridge@tutorperini.com) or contact Jackie Cotto at 914-739-1908. Come and join our team!

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**Portal North Bridge Project**  
NJ TRANSIT/Amtrak Contract  
Bid Date: August 12, 2021

**Description of project:**  
NJ TRANSIT, with the assistance of Amtrak, will construct, operate, and maintain a new Portal North Bridge and 2.44 miles of related railroad infrastructure. The project will address critical issues that have long plagued the Portal Bridge and provide the following benefits to the busiest section of railroad in North America by:

1. Eliminating the moveable span
2. Improving reliability
3. Increasing train speeds
4. Removing conflicts with maritime traffic

The project, a two-track replacement bridge—Portal North—will replace the existing, century-old Portal Bridge with a modern, high-level fixed span that does not open or close, eliminating the movable components and risk of malfunction. The new bridge will rise more than 50 feet over the river and, including the approaches, will span nearly 2.5 miles of the Northeast Corridor.

**Many DBE bidding opportunities are available:**  
Portable toilets, cleaning, survey, trailers, construction materials and supplies—PPE, small tools, lumber, traffic control, geotextile, hazardous and non-hazardous material, soil testing and sampling, testing, treatment and disposal of contaminated water, prefabricated vertical drains, demolition, clearing and grubbing, steel sheeting, cofferdams, marine work, soil erosion and sediment control, gabion walls, excavation, filling, compacting and grading, trucking, containers and dumpsters, haul and dispose, excavating, instrumentation and monitoring, steel H-piles, steel pipe piles, directional drilling, drilled shaft foundations, micropiles, vibration monitoring, trackwork, utilities (water/telephone/storm/electric), aerial structures drainage system, asphalt paving, concrete paving, site improvements, security fence, chain link fence, modular unit walls, asbestos abatement, beam guide rail, lead paint management, traffic signs, pavement stripes and markings, landscaping, topsoiling, fertilizing and seeding, concrete and rebar, cellular concrete fill, concrete repairs, steel—fabricate/furnish/install strip seal expansion joint assembly, elastomeric bearings, disc bearings, metal fabrications, metal stairs, cable railing system, handrails, steel grating, timber decking, composite decking, bridge fender system, fiberglass reinforced polymer walkway, waterproofing systems, painting of structural steel, bridge traveler platforms, standpipe system, electrical (conduits/ductbanks/switchgear/transformers/bridge and fender lighting system/cathodic protection/traction power identification/overhead transmission system installation/transmission monopole structures/fire detection and suppression/signal power distribution system).

If you are interested in bidding on this project, please contact Skanska's Outreach Coordinator: [Rosemary.Nagle@skanska.com](mailto:Rosemary.Nagle@skanska.com) • EOE/M/F/Vet/Disabled

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can market your services or goods to the federal government? Register on line at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/how-to-sell-to-the-federal-government-tickets-21790713611> SBA helps to ensure small businesses get fair opportunities to share federal government prime contracts. Topics will include: How to Register, Small Business Certifications, Finding Opportunities, Marketing Your Firm, Federal Supply Schedules, Getting Paid, Tips to Prepare Your Offer, How to Seek Additional Assistance. All training sessions are held via Microsoft Teams Meeting. Participants must ensure Microsoft Teams is functioning correctly prior to attending the scheduled class.

**SBA and SOS Small Business Seminar**  
Thursday, July 1, 2021, 9:00 am–11:00 am  
Online  
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration, New Hampshire Secretary of State Corporation Division  
Contact: Miguel Moralez, 603-225-1601, [miguel.moralez@sba.gov](mailto:miguel.moralez@sba.gov)  
Fee: Free; registration required

Starting a new business? Looking for capital and finance options? Looking for general advice on starting or maintaining your business? Hear from representatives from the local SBA office and the New Hampshire Secretary of State Corporation Division. This workshop (currently held online during the pandemic) is offered on the first Thursday of every month. To join this free webinar, copy and paste the link below into your browser, then register for tickets for the date of your choice to receive the access code. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/monthly-workshop-on-sba-programs-resources-at-sos-tickets-138501643143>

**PPP Forgiveness Webinar**  
Tuesday, June 22, 2021, 11:30 am–12:30 pm  
Online  
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration  
Contact: SBA Connecticut District Office, 860-240-4700, [maraima.gutierrez@sba.gov](mailto:maraima.gutierrez@sba.gov)  
Fee: Free; registration required

The SBA Connecticut District Office hosts a free weekly webinar from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm Tuesdays to discuss Paycheck Protection Program forgiveness. Do you wonder when you need to apply for forgiveness on your PPP first draw loan? What are hold codes and how do I fix them? Why haven't I heard from my lender? Learn about the PPP Forgiveness process, eligible payroll and non-payroll expenses, forms and instructions, the forgiveness timeline, and more. To join this free webinar, copy and paste the link below into your browser, then register. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/paycheck-protection-program-forgiveness-webinars-tickets-156006665135>

**Selling to the Federal Government Webinar**  
Thursday, June 24, 2021, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm  
Online  
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration  
Contact: George Tapia, 610-382-3086, [george.tapia@sba.gov](mailto:george.tapia@sba.gov)  
Fee: Free; registration required

Did you know that the federal government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world? Interested in learning how your business