

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Healdsburg Memorial Bridge  
 other names/site number Redwood Highway Bridge, Russian River Bridge #20C-65

## 2. Location

street & number Healdsburg Avenue, junction of Front Street

N/A
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 not for publication  
 city or town Healdsburg

N/A
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 vicinity  
 state CA code CA county Sonoma code 097 zip code 95448

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
 I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
 In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
 \_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Healdsburg Memorial Bridge

Sonoma County,  
California  
County and State

Name of Property

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1		<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

MPD -- Historic Highway Bridges of California

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation

Bridge

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Pennsylvania through-truss

foundation: Concrete

walls: Steel

roof: Steel

other:

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

Healdsburg Memorial Bridge, built in 1921 across the Russian River, is rare among American steel truss bridges. Its intricate Pennsylvania through-truss design, using extra diagonal bracings to relieve stress, is a throwback to an evolutionary era of steel truss bridges when engineers needed stronger structures to accommodate wide crossings and heavy loads at affordable cost. With 20 pin-connected panels spread across two spans, the Healdsburg Memorial Bridge is a striking example of the type, now fast disappearing from the American landscape.

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### **Narrative Description**

Healdsburg Memorial Bridge, 438 feet long, carries mostly local traffic now but once was a landmark on the historic Redwood Highway, linking San Francisco with Oregon. The two-lane bridge handles 7,400 vehicles a day and accommodates pedestrians and bicyclists on outer pathways.

Once believed to have numbered in the hundreds, bridges of the Pennsylvania through-truss design are down to a relative handful. Healdsburg Memorial Bridge may be one of only 13 of its type still open to vehicles in the United States and just two in California, according to one authority, Bridgehunter.com, a Web site that inventories more than 30,000 historic American bridges. According to the California Department of Transportation, there are eight Pennsylvania truss roadway bridges remaining in the state.

In the latter part of the 19th Century, truss bridges were well established on rail lines and roads. But as the weight of trains grew, railroads needed crossings to withstand heavier loads. Thus came the Pennsylvania truss type, so named because of its origins in the design laboratories of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The design sprang from existing Pratt and Parker truss types, which placed full-length diagonal members in panels for the first time, and added bracing to the diagonal pieces.

The Pennsylvania truss introduced half-length struts for the bottom parts of panels or half-length ties for upper portions, and sometimes both. Both spans of the Healdsburg Memorial Bridge contain two stress-relieving ties, each positioned between full-length diagonal members on opposite sides of the center panels and the bridge's polygonal top chord. Each tie, as well as other diagonal members, is attached with pins, instead of rivets, to enable "give" as the bridge flexes and moves. The bridge gets much of its architectural flair from the sloping top chord, common to Pennsylvania and Parker truss designs. The varied height helps the bridge resist bending as weight builds near the center.

The Pennsylvania type, like other steel truss bridges, faded in use after 1930. In some design circles, especially among a group of urbanists of the time, truss types were seen as gaudy, an irony given the cookie-cutter blandness of many concrete crossings that took the place of truss bridges.

Memorial Bridge is largely unmodified since its construction. Decorative lights were removed in the 1950s, while roadside curbs and outer chain-link fences have been added for safety.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Transportation

**Period of Significance**

Architecture--1921

Transportation--1921-1960

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

J.C. Lewis, architect

American Bridge Co., builder

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The construction of Healdsburg Memorial Bridge in 1921 characterized an era beginning in the 1870s and ending in the 1930s in which steel-truss bridges morphed as the need for heavier and longer spans grew. Its construction also helped open automobile travel in Northern California and aided development of recreation in the Russian River area.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

With its sturdy, complex look, Healdsburg Memorial Bridge embodies an adventuresome era in bridge building and stands as a classic example of a style of construction that met the challenges of the nation's growing infrastructure. The bridge is also historically significant for its role in the development of the road system of Northern California and its place in the recreational appeal of the Russian River region.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Healdsburg Memorial Bridge is more than a vehicle crossing of rare stature. It is integral to the town of Healdsburg, located in the center of Sonoma County wine country, and for decades supported the recreational pleasures of the region.

Memorial Bridge, designed locally and built under the direction of the American Bridge Co., was the first steel structure over the Russian River, which is popular among bathers, kayakers and anglers for steelhead trout. The bridge stands at a wide crossing established in the 1850s by early Sonoma County settlers who forded the river at a low point on the south bank.

In addition to holding up under 90 years of traffic, including heavy timber trucks, the bridge has survived at least five major floods that brought water up to its deck. A 2008 report by the California Department of Transportation said the bridge, resting in mid-river on a single concrete pier, still met all structural requirements.

The bridge helped deliver droves of tourists to Healdsburg resorts that flourished for decades and became a link to a vacation paradise that stretched from the San Francisco area all the way to the Oregon border on the Redwood Highway.

"Along the Redwood Highway, there lies within easy access a most marvelous paradise wonderland of forest, river, mountain, lake and marine scenery," the Los Angeles Times wrote in 1928. "For either a quiet, restful vacation, or an active one, or for a most unusually interesting tour, you will find the Redwood Highway Empire the 'land where dreams come true.'"

The bridge itself became a focal point of summer fun. The community each year built a temporary dam just below the bridge to create a small lake for bathing and for events ranging from Amateur Athletic Union-sanctioned swimming meets and wine barrel races to holiday parades of festively decorated watercraft. Scores of spectators typically gathered on Memorial Bridge to watch the festivities.

The Healdsburg region is still a major tourist destination, although now due largely to the growth of the wine industry and the attraction of Michelin-starred restaurants. And while the bridge has been supplanted by nearby U.S. 101 as the main approach for tourist traffic, it remains Healdsburg's abiding structural symbol. Memorial Bridge is clearly visible from Highway 101 as visitors approach, a greeting from the community's past.

Memorial Bridge, along with 71 other California truss bridges dating back to the 1850s, was declared eligible in 1985 for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the Register. The designation was ratified in 2004 under a Multiple Property Documentation form approved by the Keeper of the National Register.

The bridge meets the registration requirements of the Historic Bridges in California Multiple Property Submission because it illustrates the special skills of California bridge designers and builders in adapting steel-truss spans to differing road-construction challenges. In the case of Healdsburg Memorial Bridge, the Pennsylvania truss style represents a design that filled a particular need, beginning in the 19th Century, for bridges that could span broad crossings and stand up under strong loads. Memorial Bridge stands among the last of its kind still in vehicle use.

The bridge is thus worthy of listing under Criterion C, as a distinctive example of type, period and method of construction, with a period of significance of 1921. It is also deserving of listing under Criterion A, as an important element in the growth

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of the Northern California highway system and its contribution to the development of Healdsburg and the surrounding Russian River area as a tourist destination, with a period of significance from 1921 to 1960.

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Bentley, Wilder. *Antique and Unusual Bridges of the Redwood Empire*. Self-published. 1999.
- California Department of Transportation. *Historic Highway Bridges of California*. CDOT. 1990.
- Comp, T. Allen and Jackson, Donald C. *Bridge Truss Types*. American Association for State and Local History. 1977.
- Finley, Ernest L. *History of Sonoma County*. Santa Rosa Press Democrat Publishing Co. 1937.
- "Healdsburg Enterprise." June 11, 1921; June 19, 1921; Dec. 22, 1921; Aug. 12, 1965; Oct. 8, 1993.
- Jackson, Donald C. *Great American Bridges and Dams*. John Wiley & Sons. 1988.
- Ketchum, Milo S. *The Design of Highway Bridges*. Engineering News Publishing Co., 1908.
- "North Bay Business Journal." January, 2008.
- "Los Angeles Times." June 27, 1928.
- "Russian River Recorder." Articles on Healdsburg history. 2004.
- County of Sonoma Transportation Department. "The Bridges of Sonoma County." 2009.
- State of California. Historic Resources Inventory. "Healdsburg Memorial Bridge." 1985.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: **Calif. Historical Resources Commission**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

5448-0144

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 10 512260 4273660  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

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Zone Easting Northing

Zone Easting

Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is located within the city limits of Healdsburg. It carries Healdsburg Avenue over the Russian River and is bordered on the north side by Front Street and on the south side by Healdsburg Memorial Beach. The bridge is located at latitude 38 36 14 N and longitude 122 51 36 W

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

N/A

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title David Dietz

organization Friends of Healdsburg Memorial Bridge

date May 22, 2010

street & number P.O. Box 1328

telephone 707-433-6240

city or town Healdsburg

state CA

zip code 95448

e-mail Davidd4331@aol.com

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State: CA

Photographer:

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Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of \_\_\_\_.

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Healdsburg

street & number 401 Grove Street

telephone 707-431-3317

city or town Healdsburg

state CA

zip code 95448

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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**Photograph**

Healdsburg Memorial Bridge--Healdsburg  
Sonoma County, California  
Photographer: Unknown, property of Healdsburg Museum  
Date Photographed: August, 1946  
View: Wine barrel race, looking north toward Memorial Bridge



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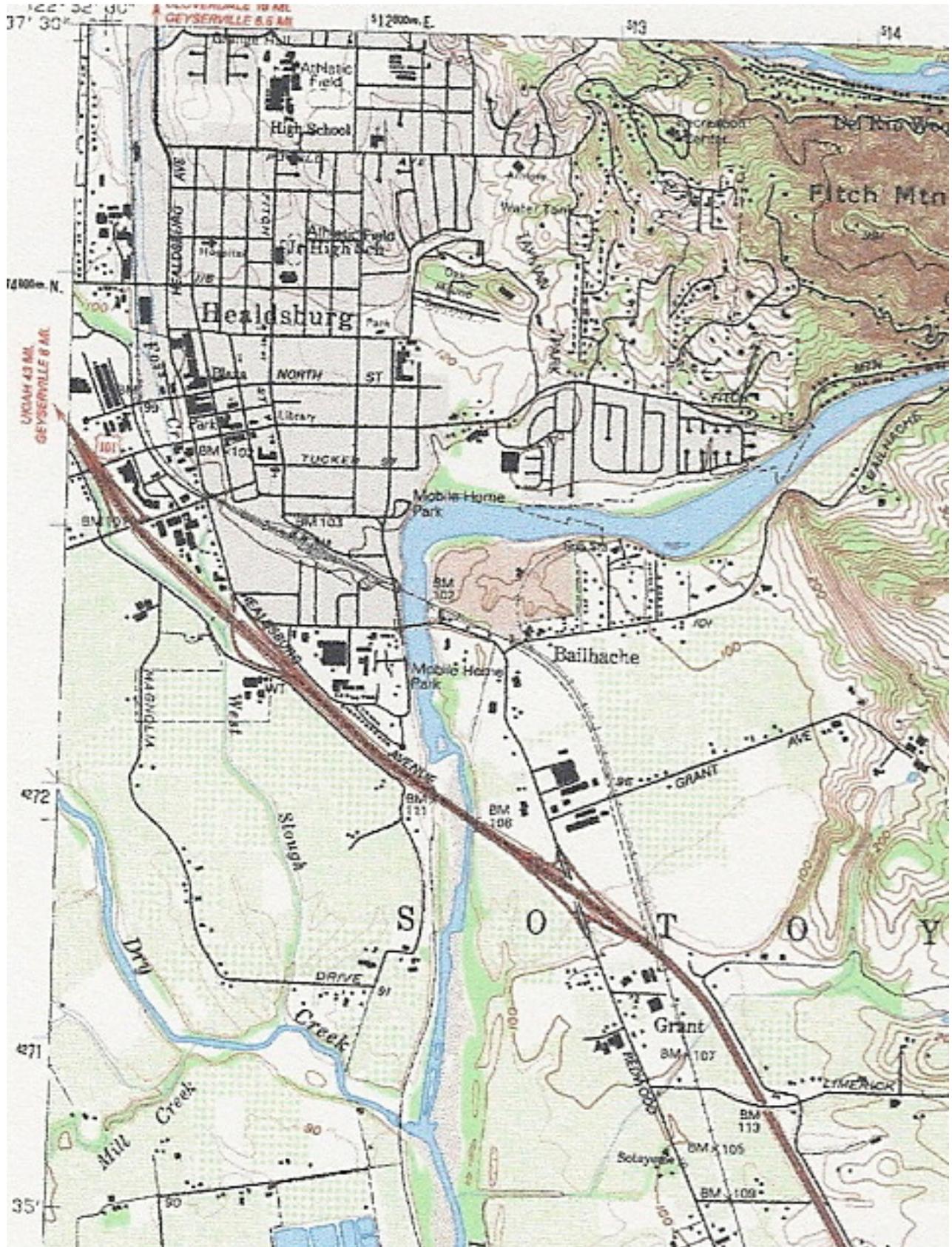
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**Photograph**

Healdsburg Memorial Bridge--Healdsburg  
Sonoma County, California  
Photographer: Elizabeth Cosin  
Date Photographed: 2010  
View: Looking West, from Healdsburg Memorial Beach

