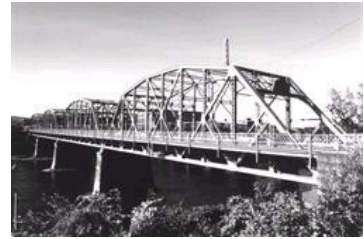


Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CHI.904
Historic Name:	Willimansett - Holyoke Bridge
Common Name:	
Address:	
City/Town:	Chicopee
Village/Neighborhood:	Willimansett
Local No:	78
Year Constructed:	
Architect(s):	Shaw, Edward S.
Architectural Style(s):	
Use(s):	Other Transportation
Significance:	Engineering; Transportation
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on:

Friday, March 07, 2014 at 1:56: AM

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORIC BRIDGE INVENTORYMunicipality: Chicopee/Holyoke District: 2Street name/Rt. #: St 116, Cabot St.Street name/Rt. #: Over Connecticut River, n/f Penn Central RRBridge key #: 900 209 000 101 Photo ##s: 11:24-29Bridge plan #: C-13-12/H-21-30 125:0-7Common/historic name: Willimansett Bridge

Current owner: _____

UTM coordinates: _____ AASHTO rating: 100 (1-17-89)*****
National Register status (insert date) Field rating:

Entered: _____ Potential: _____

Eligible: _____ Non-eligible: _____

Date built (source): 1891 (plaques)

Date(s) rebuilt (source): _____

Builder (source): R.F. Hawkins Iron Works, superot.; Wright, Lyons & Co. subst. (plaques)Designer (source): Edward J. Shaw, cons. eng. (plaques)*****
Structural type/materials: 310

Main spans - 4, 10-panel, riveted steel Pennsylvania through trusses; crossed diagonals in 2 central panels; sub-struts in other panels. 3-slope upper chord. All original web members were built-up. 2 through plate girder approach spans on NW (Holyoke) end of bridge; first is higher than second to provide vertical clearance for former RR.

* See "History" on reverse.

Abutments and cutwater piers are large block, coursed granite.

Overall length: 798' Deck width/layout: 30.3' out-outSkew: 7°Main unit, # spans: 4 lengths: 4 @ 173'Approaches, # spans: 2 lengths: 1 @ 51', 1 @ 53.5'Plaque: 2 location: atop portals of end truss spans

Alterations, unusual features, comments:

Unusual, original latticed guardrail remains largely intact.

1923 plans (Lewis E. Moore, cons. eng.) - much reinforcing of lower chords, members of webs, substituting plates for orig. lacing.

1939 plans - concrete deck replaced timber deck

1954 (C.J. Kray, cons. eng.) most built-up orig. truss diagonals replaced with rolled steel members; most portals, sway frames, and upper laterals replaced; much lacing on verticals replaced with plates; rolled floorbeams in NW approach span post-tensioned, (strands added below lower flanges); built-up floorbeams in other 3 spans get added L stiffeners; new lower chord gusset plates at most panel points

1961 (Mant) - new steel stringers, corrugated steel plank deck.

1984 plans - replace 1 L in sub-vertical of Span 1, 1 L in subvertical of Span 3

new concrete curb/SSS crash barrier added inside trusses ca. 1988-89

Visual quality (bridge and setting): High X Average _____ Low _____Site integrity: Retained _____ Violated X

Describe: Multi-story red brick late-19th/early 20th century mill complexes dominate Holyoke riverbank, with gap-site parking lots and some single-story mid-20th c. buildings mixed in. Chicopee side has 20th century gas stations, and small commercial buildings on Cabot St, with modest, rundown turn-of-the-century residential neighborhoods beyond.

History of bridge and site:

This is the second major Connecticut River crossing in Holyoke, the first being the Holyoke-S. Hadley Falls Bridge (H-21-1/5-18-4), originally built in 1871 and replaced in 1889-90. The S. Hadley Falls Bridge tied the burgeoning industrial city of Holyoke to the smaller, but then-bustling commercial/industrial village of South Hadley Falls; the Willimanoett Bridge linked Holyoke to the thriving industrial community of Chicopee, and provided a more direct link with the region's core city, Springfield.

The Willimanoett Bridge was built just at the hinge point between iron and steel construction. E. S. Shaw's plans for the bridge actually give 2 separate sets of dimensions for all of the bridge's metal members - one if made of wrought iron, the other if made of steel (the proportions for steel being consistently smaller, given steel's greater strength). Lewis E. Moore's measured drawings of the bridge as built (drawings made in 1923) indicate that the bridge was actually built of steel.

Sources:

DH. ✓

RR. E&K 1980

Plans 1890, 91, 1924, 1939, 1954, 1984

Maint ✓

Old DH. ✓

Summary statement of significance:

The oldest of 5 known Pennsylvania through truss bridges in the MDPW data base, and the only one with multiple Pennsylvania truss spans. One of the earliest known steel (as opposed to wrought iron) bridges in the data base. Heavily repaired/reinforced over the years, but retains its essential character.

Designed by a noted Boston consulting engineer, Edward S. Shaw, and built by one of the most prolific late-19th c. Massachusetts bridge-building firms - R.F. Hawkins Iron Works of Springfield.

A visual landmark, and also a civic one, representing Holyoke's rising position in the late 19th century.

Statement prepared by: S.J. RoperDate: 2/14/90

Field survey by: S.J. Roper, MDPW Historic Bridge SpecialistDate: 9/17/849/7/89

MDPW RECOMMENDATION - NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITYMunicipalityStreet onNo.

Bridge: Chicopee/Holyoke ST 116, Cabot St/Connecticut R. C-13-12/H-21-30

Historic evaluation

Significant because:

- 1) Unusual or unique type Pennsylvania through truss
or rare survivor of common type ✓
- 2) Early example of type ✓
- 3) Design - Valuable contribution to bridge technology ✓
- 4) Retains integrity —
- 5) Builder known and important E. Shaw, R.F. Hawkins ✓
- 6) Bridge historically important to area ✓

Not significant because:

- 1) Common type —
- 2) Post-1931 —
- 3) Design - no contribution to bridge technology —
- 4) Integrity ^{lessened} ~~lost~~ because of: a) alterations ✓
b) disintegration ✓
- 5) Builder unimportant or not known —
- 6) No known significance in area —



Potentially eligible



Not eligible

Not eligible individually,
but locatedConditionally not eligible;
review when 50 years oldComments:

A landmark example of an uncommon (in Massachusetts) bridge type; of additional interest as one of the earliest known steel bridges in the state. Heavily repaired/reinforced but still retains its essential character

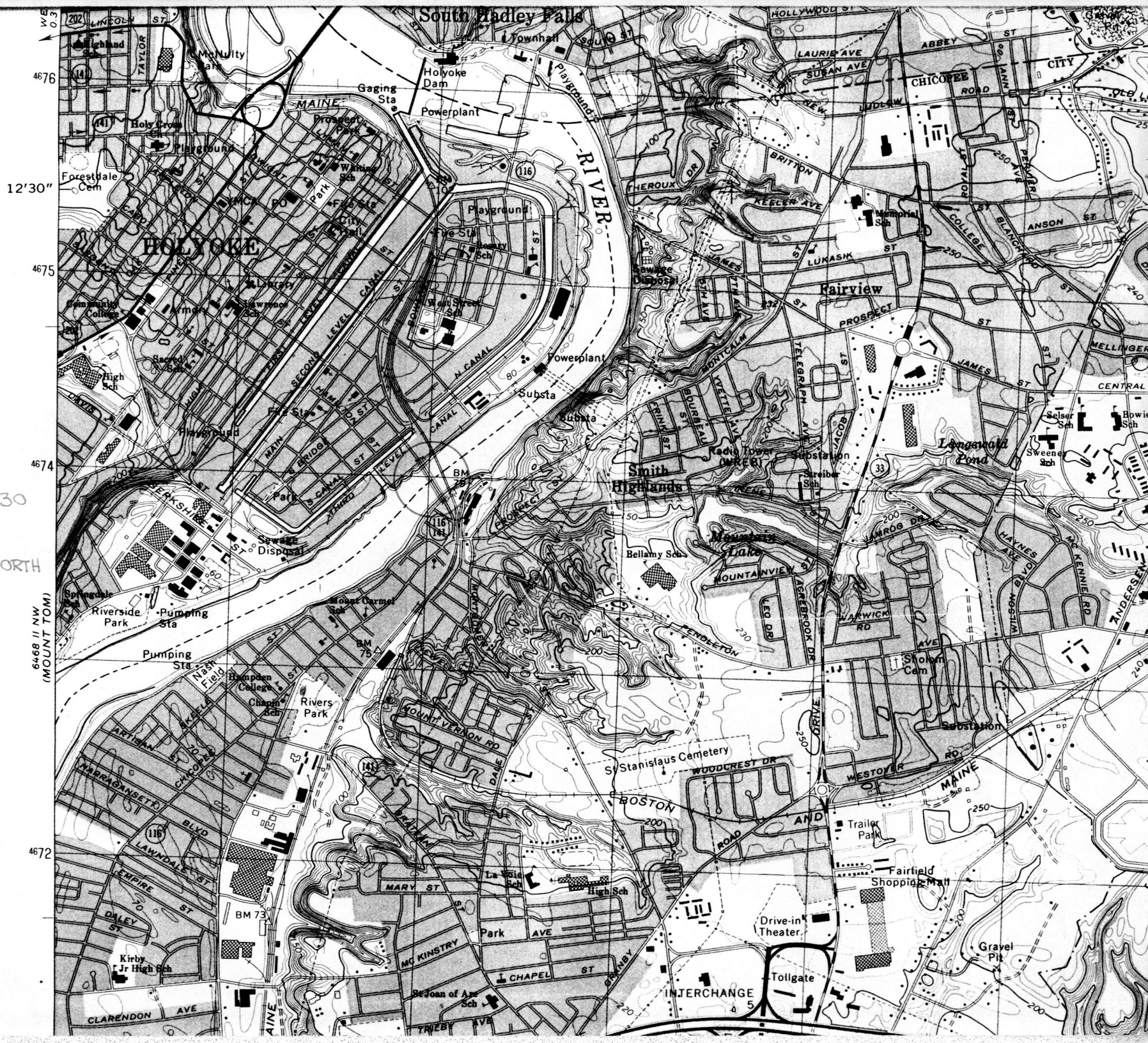
14 Feb. 1990

S.J. Roper MDPW Historic Bridge Specialist

CHI. 904/
HLY. 912

C-13-12/H-21-30

SPRINGFIELD NORTH
QUAD.





FROM S (9-17-84)



FROM NW (9-7-84)



FROM SE (9-17-84)



2 NORTHERN APPROACH SPANS, FROM N (9-7-89)



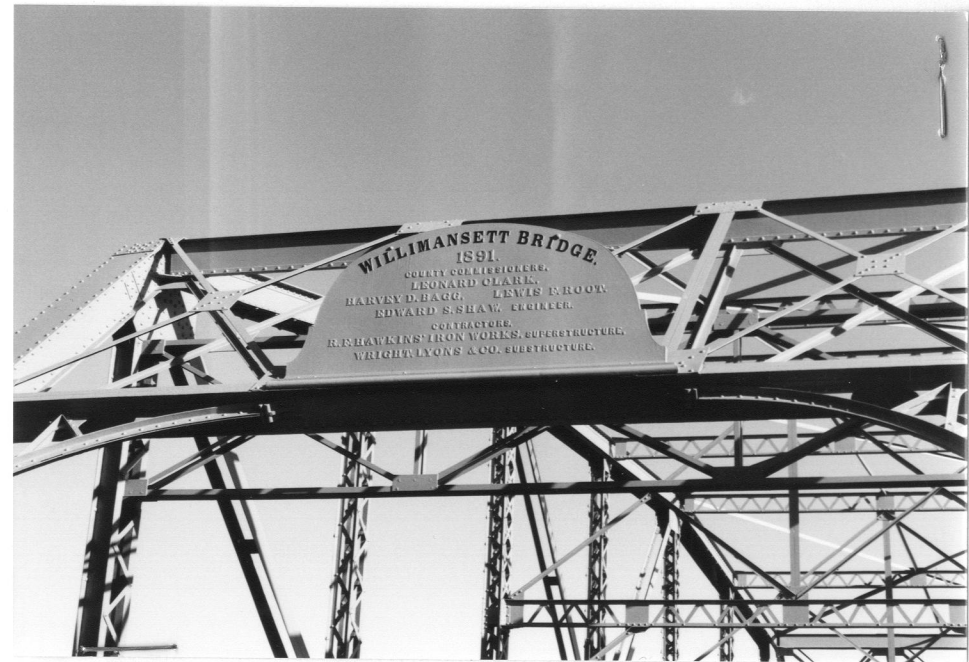
N ABUTMENT FROM SE (9-7-89)



WESTERN GUARDRAIL TRESTLE, SOUTHERN END OF BRIDGE,
 FROM S (9-17-84)



Barrier between northbound traffic lane and sidewalk,
 southern end of bridge, from S (9-17-84)



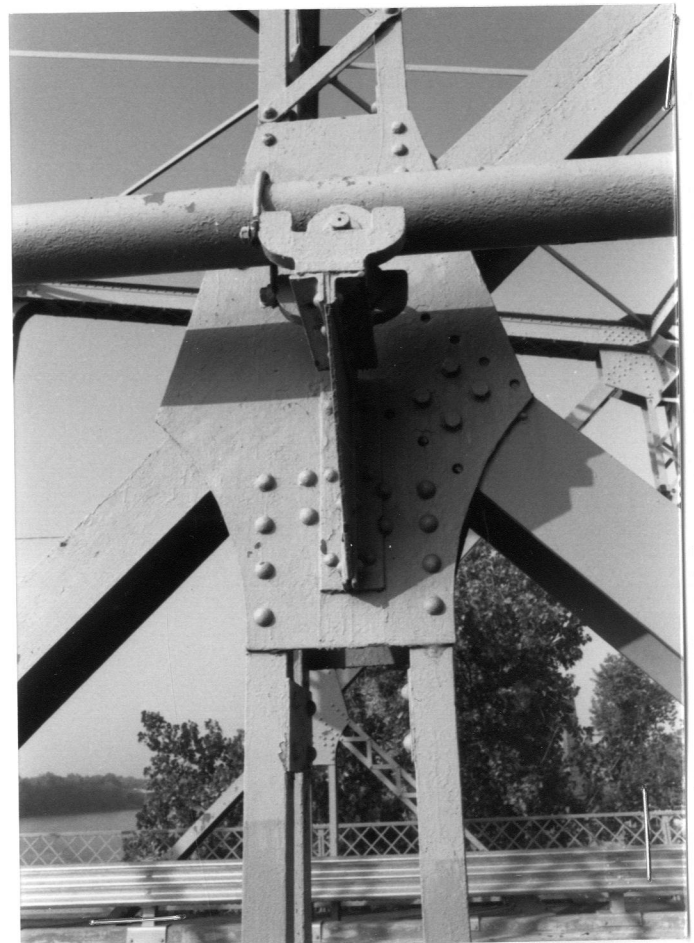
ON NORTHERN PORTAL (9-17-84)



TYPICAL TRUSS WEB REINFORCEMENT, S SPAN, EASTERN TRUSS, NORTHERN END, FROM SE



TYPICAL TRUSS REPLACEMENTS, S SPAN, EASTERN TRUSS, NORTHERN END, FROM SE



TYPICAL REPAIRS/REINFORCEMENT AT GUSSET PLATE

9-7-89



TYPICAL REPLACEMENT OF VERTICAL



TYPICAL REPLACED SUBVERTICAL, 2ND
SPAN FROM N, EASTERN TRUSS,
FROM SE



REPLACED LOWER HALF OF
VERTICAL, N SPAN, EASTERN
TRUSS, FROM SE

(ALL PHOTOS: 9-7-1989)

CHICOPEE, MA
WEEKLY 27,000

(3)

JUN 17 1993
NEW ENGLAND NEWSCLIP AGENCY, INC.

109

LM

Bridge over troubled waters

By ED JASIEWICZ

Connolly

PAGE ONE

CHICOPEE — When a proposal was made in Chicopee in the mid-1880s to build a bridge to connect Chicopee with Holyoke, it was met with strong opposition. The constant bickering did not revolve around the actual building of the bridge itself but instead around the location where it was proposed to be erected.

In an attempt to break the impasse, a bridge association was formed in 1886 to devise architectural plans for the bridge, to assist in site planning evaluation, as well as to solicit funds for its construction.

A brouhaha of major proportions erupted when all parties involved, apparently favoring their self-interests, were unable to reach an amicable agreement. Seemingly unending heated arguments and threats of legal action, disrupted virtually every bridge association

meeting. Legislators and Chicopee and Holyoke officials argued incessantly over the bridge's placement which eventually developed into a "neighbor against neighbor" squabble amongst the anguished Willimansett and Holyoke residents in the impact area.

In 1890, when the town of Chicopee was about to gain its status as a city, a volatile horde of Willimansett residents and several prominent Chicopee business owners were literally at each other's throats. Willimansett homeowners were in favor of the present Cabot Street location while some Chicopee store owners were strongly opposed to that particular site.

Meanwhile, Holyoke residents and city officials favored building the bridge at a location where it connected South Street in Holyoke. Their logical reasoning was that

their proposed route would be more advantageous to those working in the mills.

In 1891, after more than five years of stonewalling tactics, the final obstacle was cleared through the intervention of State Representative E.J. O'Neil who served in that capacity for three one-year terms, from 1890 to 1893. O'Neil was a prominent Chicopee businessman who founded the insurance company, which still bears his name, at 400 Broadway in Chicopee Falls, in 1898. O'Neil also was owner of the Hampden Bleachery and was instrumental in organizing St. Patrick's Church, both of which were located on Sheridan Street in Chicopee Falls.

The bridge was named the Willimansett Bridge but because of the drawn out controversy which centered upon its placement, many disgruntled residents who strongly opposed its location often referred to it as "the bridge over troubled waters."

The Willimansett Bridge was constructed and dedicated in the early 1890s. Due to contradicting information, the exact year that the bridge's construction was concluded and opened to the public is inconclusive. The Massachusetts Historical Commission accepts 1891, the year indicated on the bridge's plaque, as the year of construction. Other sources indicate that the bridge opened to the public in 1892.

The Chicopee Municipal Register makes its first mention of the Willimansett Bridge in 1892. The most prevalent year mentioned for its opening dedication is 1893,



CENTURY OLD CONNECTOR — The Willimansett Bridge is still a vital link between Chicopee and Holyoke. Photo by Lynn Danek.

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1
 which if true, would be celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

But, whatever the case, the Willimansett Bridge is at least a century old and remains to this very day a vital link between Chicopee and Holyoke. In order to pay its share of the costs for the bridge's construction, Chicopee appropriated \$54,000 in 1894.

Over the past century, the Willimansett Bridge has undergone extensive repairs and reinforcement but, according to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, "still retains its essential character, not only as a visual landmark but also as a civic one as it represents Holyoke's rising position in the late 19th century."

According to a study done by the Massachusetts Department of Public Works, the Willimansett Bridge, even though heavily altered, still is "potentially eligible" for inclusion in the National Historical Register.

In 1923, the lower chords of the bridge as well as its web members were extensively reinforced with plates. In 1939, as a result of the damage incurred by the flood of 1938, the bridge's timber deck was replaced by a concrete deck.

In 1954, it underwent a moot build-up by which original truss diagonals were replaced with rolled steel members, moot portals, sway frames, as well as replacement of upper laterals. A significant portion of lacing on the verticals were replaced with plates. Rolled floorbeams in the northwest approach span were fortified with strands added below lower flanges to improve tension. Five of its spans had their floor beams built up. New lower chord gusset plates at most

panel points were added.

In 1961, new steel stringers were added in addition to a corrugated steel plank deck. In 1983, the Willimansett Bridge underwent a complete face lift which resulted in its being closed to traffic for five months.

An \$883,000 contract was awarded for its repair, but that amount swelled to over \$1 million when extensive rust damage was discovered. Traffic was rerouted to the adjacent Veterans Memorial Bridge which opened circa 1981.

In 1984 one L (an extension forming an L with the main structure) was added in the subvertical of span one and span three. In its most recent repair in 1988-89, a new concrete curb and crash barrier were added inside the trusses.

The Willimansett Bridge, which is part of Route 116, runs across the Connecticut River adjacent to the railroad tracks. Prior to the opening of the bridge in the early 1890s, the most readily available access to the mills was via a footwalk which ran alongside the railroad tracks. In order to cross, mill workers were required to pay a toll.

Lengthwise, the Willimansett Bridge runs for 798 feet, with a bridge deck width of 30.3 feet. The bridge's main unit consists of four spans which each measure 173 feet. One approach span measures 51 feet while another is 53.5 feet. The bridge has a skew of seven inches.

The Willimansett Bridge was designed by Edward S. Shaw, a noted Boston consulting engineer, and built by the R.F. Hawkins Iron Works of Springfield, which was one of the most prolific late-19th century Massachusetts bridge building firms.

The Willimansett (also referred to as the Willimansett-Holyoke) Bridge was the second major Connecticut River crossing in Holyoke; the first being the Holyoke-South Hadley Falls Bridge, which was originally built in 1871 and replaced in 1889-1890. The South Hadley Falls Bridge tied the burgeoning industrial city of Holyoke to the smaller but then bustling commercial/industrial village of South Hadley Falls. The Willimansett Bridge linked Holyoke to the thriving industrial community of Chicopee as well as providing a more direct link with the region's core city, Springfield.

The Willimansett Bridge was long-believed to be built just at the hinge point between iron and steel construction. When Shaw designed plans for the bridge, he presented two separate sets of dimensions for all of the bridge's metal members; one if made of wrought iron, the other if made of steel. It should be noted that the architectural blueprints for the steel proportions were consistently smaller, given steel's greater strength. When architect Lewis E. Moore measured drawings of the bridge, which were made in 1923 at an inspection prior to its first major repair, he made a startling discovery. The closely scrutinized drawings clearly indicated that the bridge was

actually built from steel and not of wrought iron as previously believed.

The century-old bridge is one of a unique design. According to a historical evaluation survey study prepared by S.J. Roper, a Massachusetts Department of Public Works historic bridge specialist, the Willimansett Bridge is a landmark example of an uncommon (in Massachusetts) bridge type. Of additional interest is the fact that it is one of the earliest known steel bridges in the state.

According to Roper's historical study, the Willimansett Bridge is the oldest of five known

Continued on Page 3

Bridge over troubled water

Continued from Page 2

Pennsylvania through truss bridges in the MDPW data base, and the only one with multiple Pennsylvania truss spans.

The bridge's main spans consist of four 10-panel riveted steel Pennsylvania through trusses, crossed diagonals in two central panels, sub-struts in other panels as well as a three-slope upper chord. All original web members were built up. It also contains two through plate girder approach spans on the northwest (Holyoke) end of the bridge: in order to heighten and provide more vertical clearance for the former railroad. The bridge's abutment and outwater piers are constructed of large black coursed granite.

Two plaques sit atop portals of end truss spans at each end of the bridge. Unusual original latticed guardrails which remain virtually intact, highlight the bridge's distinctive appearance.

TO: BETSY FRIEDBERGRETURN TO REVIEWER BY _____
(DATE)FROM: WM. SMITHDATE: 12/10/90TOWN: Chicopee / HolyokePROPERTY: C-13-12 / H-21-30 Cabot st (Rt. 116) over Connecticut
(NAME AND ADDRESS) River

1. Does this property meet the criteria for NR eligibility?

☒ YES☐ NO

A. Criteria

- a. events
- b. lives
- c. characteristics
- d. information

B. Local _____ State _____ National _____

2. Statement of Significance: OR Why not eligible?

1891 6 SPANS (4 MAIN & 2 APPROACH) riveted steelPennsylvania through truss

oldest of the 5 known Pennsylvania through trusses
it is one of the earliest known steel bridges
in Massachusetts.

Designed by Edward Shaw & built by R.F. HAWKINS
Iron works.

☐ DOES LETTER WRITTEN --

FILED IN ER FILE --

(DATE)

Concern: The bridge is also less than
 a quarter mile from the Holyoke Canal
 System NR Historic District.

BF 2/6/91

- 1891 Six span steel Pennsylvania through truss. Oldest of the five known Pennsylvania through trusses and is one of the earliest known steel bridges in Massachusetts. Designed by Edward Shaw and built by the R.F. Hawkins iron works.

Dalton

D-1-11

Holiday Road over Wahconah Brook

- 1894 One span Ball Queenpost pony truss. One of only two surviving examples of Charles Ball unique patented pipe truss bridge. Previously reviewed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and determined eligible 10/6/81.

Erving/Montague

E-10-3/M-28-0

Central Vermont Railroad
over Millers River,
Newton Street

- 1905 Five span pin-connected Pratt deck truss. Impressive example of a pin-connected long span deck truss which was favored by American railroads in the 19th century. Bridge is eligible individually and as a contributing element to a potential National Register District.

Framingham

F-7-5

Main Street over Sudbury River

- 1878 Rare wrought iron bowstring arch pony truss. It is the only known surviving bowstring metal arch in the Massachusetts Department of Public Works database. It is one of six surviving metal truss bridges in the MDPW database built prior to 1880.

Holyoke/South Hadley

H-21-1/S-18-4

State 116/Bridge Street
over Connecticut River

- 1889 Ten spans wrought iron lattice through truss. A landmark bridge, which is the oldest metal lattice through truss in Massachusetts. It is the only known truss bridge to have ten spans. Bridge was determined to be eligible for the National Register 1/9/79.

Lancaster

L-2-4

Bolton Road over Nashua River

- 1870 Pinned and bolted wrought iron and cast iron Post's type pony truss. Very early and unique metal truss bridge with national significance entered in the National Register of Historic Places 9/10/79.

Lancaster

L-2-8

Ponakin Road over Nashua River

- 1871 Post truss. This bridge is the only known surviving Post truss in the United States. This nationally significant bridge is located near a potential historic district.

Lowell

L-15-8

Hale Street over B & M Railroad

- 1892 One span pin-connected wrought iron Pennsylvania through truss. Early example of an uncommon bridge type in Massachusetts. Only one of the five Pennsylvania trusses to be pin-connected, virtually unaltered. This bridge is also located near the South Common National Register Historic District.



March 6, 1991

Mr. Anthony J. Fusco
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Transportation Systems Center
55 Broadway - 10th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142

ATTN: Mr. H. Pearlman

RE: Massachusetts Bridges, National Register Eligibility

Dear Mr. Fusco:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission has reviewed the historic bridge inventory forms prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Public Works. The Massachusetts Historical Commission concurs with the preliminary findings of Massachusetts Department of Public Works that the following bridges meet criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Bourne (Bourne Bridge) B-17-4 State 28 over Cape Cod Canal

1934 Three span continuous truss with deck/through riveted steel truss, Warren type truss web. Central span is arched, and highway deck is suspended from its lower chords. Two single intersection Warren deck truss approach spans at each end of the main structure. A landmark, award winning bridge, known internationally for its design and setting.

Bourne (Sagamore Bridge) B-17-5 U.S. 6 over Cape Cod Canal

1935 Three span continuous truss. It is virtually identical to the Bourne Bridge, without the approach spans. The bridge won Honorable Mention in 1935 for its graceful design. Both bridges are elements in a much larger engineering project of significance in its own right, the Cape Cod Canal, a potential National Register Historic District.

Page 1 of 5

Lowell L-15-19 Bridge Street over Merrimack River
1937 Three span cantilever Warren type through truss. This visual landmark is a rare example of a major structural type in Massachusetts. Adjacent to the Locks and Canals Historic District (NR, NHL).

Lowell L-15-21 Textile Avenue over Northern Canal, Merrimack River

1896 Three span pinned steel Pratt deck truss. Oldest example of an uncommon highway bridge type in Massachusetts. It spans over the Northern Canal and Great River Wall of the Locks and Canals National Register Historic District.

Montague M-28-18 Bridge Street over B & M Railroad/ C.V. Railroad

1897 Latticed type through truss designed by Edge Moor Bridge Company of Delaware. It is the only known example of this unique bridge type..

Northfield N-22-2 East Northfield Road over Connecticut River

1901-1903 Three span steel Pennsylvania through truss. Unique variation of an uncommon bridge type. Gracefully designed bridge in an outstanding natural setting. The bridge is designed to function as a continuous truss under live loads and a simple truss with cantilevered ends under dead load.

Stockbridge S-26-3 Butler Road over Housatonic River

1881 Pin connected wrought iron half through Pratt pony truss with Borneman type stone pedestals rising above abutments. A rare and unique bridge design by a world famous bridge designer - George Morison. Bridge has national significance.

Waltham W-4-9 B & M Railroad over State Rte. 60, Linden Street

1894 Steel lattice through truss with quad web system. Intact example of an uncommon bridge type severely skewed. Reviewed and entered in the National Register of Historic Places 9/28/89.

Windsor W-41-11 Windsor Bush Road over Phelps Brook

1893 One span iron and steel Ball Queen post. One of only two surviving examples of Charles Ball unique pipe truss bridge.

The following bridge does not appear to meet National Register criteria at present. However, as this bridge reaches 50 years of age, its National Register eligibility should be reassessed.

CH. 904/
HLY. 912

Boston/Chelsea B-16-17/C-9-6 United States Route 1 over Mystic River

1950 Three span cantilever Warren type web through truss. Double deck bridge is a Boston landmark.

Montgomery/Russell M-30-8/R-13-18 I90 over U.S. Route 20, Westfield River

1957 Eight span, two continuous span riveted steel Pratt deck truss. A landmark bridge and the only Pratt deck truss to be designed with continuous deck truss spans.

The following bridges did not appear to meet National Register criteria for individual listing. However, the bridges are within, or adjacent to an historic district or potentially eligible historic district, and plans for replacement should take into consideration potential impact to adjacent properties.

Fitchburg F-4-12 State Rte. 31/Rollstone Street over North Nashua River, Broad Street

This bridge is located adjacent to lower Rollstone Bridge (1870 Parker pony truss).

Greenfield/Montague G-12-20/M-28-1 Montague City Road over Connecticut River

This bridge stands between East Greenfield and Montague city. Though inventory is incomplete, significant historic resources are in both areas. There is a group of turn of the century cottages on Montague City Road that may be eligible for listing in the National Register.

Lawrence L-4-24 Salem Street over B & M Railroad

This bridge is adjacent to mill building and Victorian Gothic church; however, the level of information on this area is not well documented at this time.

The MHC concurs with the preliminary findings of MDPW that the following bridges do not appear to meet criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Amesbury/Newburyport A-7-16/N-11-17 I-95 over Merrimack River

Boston/Quincy

B-16-368/Q-1-50

Long Island Bridge over Quincy Bay

Conway

C-20-7

Hickory Ridge Road over South River

Erving/Montague

E-10-5/M-28-5

Paper Mill Road over Millers River

Montague

M-28-20

C.V.R.R. over North Leverett Road/
Sawmill River

Northfield

N-22-26

B & M Railroad over Caldwell Road/
Connecticut River

Westfield

W-25-4

United States Route 20 over
Westfield River

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact William Smith of this office.

Sincerely,

Judith B. McDonough

Judith B. McDonough
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission

JBM/WS/kab

cc: Frank Bracaglia, MDPW