

Billy Creek Lift Bridge, Lee County

The Billy Creek Lift Bridge remains one of the few vertical lift bridges in the state. It has been inoperable since 1987. To date, only two other bridges featuring a tower-driven hydraulic lift have been noted in the United States. The St. Petersburg firm of C. T. Felix Construction Company constructed this bridge in 1941 according to designs from the State Road Department. The Joyce-Cridland Company, of Dayton, Ohio, provided the hydraulic equipment.

The structure consists of two concrete girder approach spans and a 32-foot-long steel girder main span. Interestingly, the lift mechanisms for the structure consist of four separate jacking units housed in each of the four lift towers. When the bridge was operable, these jacks hoisted the main span only about five feet. The bridge was raised by the flow of pressurized oil and, as the oil was drained from the unit, gravity lowered the deck.

With a total length just under 120 feet, the Billy Creek Lift is the smallest lift bridge in the state. Perhaps the bridge's most distinctive features are its four hydraulic lift towers, rare elements on vertical lift bridges. The structure never possessed a tender station because local merchants operated the lift on a prearranged schedule.



The Billy Creek Lift Bridge in Lee County is the smallest lift bridge in Florida

FLORIDA'S SIGNIFICANT MOVABLE BRIDGES

Vertical Lift Bridges



Photo 5-51. Billy Creek Lift Bridge, Lee County (No. 120001)

Billy Creek Lift Bridge

Lee County

FDOT #120001, 8LL0705

The Billy Creek Lift Bridge, one of only four surviving bridges of its type in Florida, was built in 1941 by the St. Petersburg firm of C.T. Felix Construction Company according to designs from the State Road Department. The Joyce-Cridland Company of Dayton, Ohio provided the hydraulic equipment. The structure consists of two concrete girder approach spans and a 32-foot long steel girder main span. Interestingly, the lift mechanisms for the structure consist of four separate jacking units housed in each of the four lift towers. Prior to 1987 when the bridge

was operable, these jacks hoisted the main span only about five feet. The bridge was raised by the flow of pressurized oil, and as the oil was drained from the unit, gravity lowered the deck.

With a total length just under 120 feet, the Billy Creek Lift is the smallest lift bridge in Florida. The bridge's most distinctive features are its four hydraulic lift towers, rare elements on vertical lift bridges. The structure never possessed a tender station because local merchants operated the lift on a prearranged schedule. As a result of its technology, its scale and the rarity of this bridge type, the Billy Creek Lift Bridge was determined NRHP-eligible during the 2000 survey under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a rare extant example of a vertical lift bridge.



Photo 5-52. The Billy Creek Lift Bridge in Lee County is the Smallest Lift Bridge in Florida.