

SPALDING BRIDGE
(Old US-41 Bridge)
Spanning the Big Cedar River
Spalding
Menominee County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-114

HAER
MICH
55-SPALD,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Great Lakes Systems Office
Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102-2571

HAER
MICH
55-SPALD,
1-

Spalding Bridge
HAER No. MI-114
Page 1

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
SPALDING BRIDGE(Old US-41 Bridge)

Location: Old Highway US-41 spanning the Big Cedar River, Spalding,
Michigan 49886

Date of Construction: 1918

Significance: The Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer has determined that this bridge is an unusual riveted Pratt Pony Truss structure. It is all the more unusual because of its attached pedestrian walkway.

Present Owner: Menominee County Road Commission
W5416 Belgiumtown Road
Stephenson, Michigan 49858

Present Use: Vehicular and pedestrian bridge to be replaced by a new bridge. The entire bridge will be moved to Chassell Township, Chassell, Michigan to be used as a pedestrian bridge across the Pike River within Section 5 of Township 53 North and Range 33 West, approximately 1.5 miles south of Chassell and on US-41. The bridge will be moved in the spring of 1997.

Prepared By: John P. St. Juliana, Menominee County Road Commission

Description of Structure:

The structure is a riveted steel pony truss bridge with longitudinal steel stringers and transverse wood plank deck. A walkway was attached to the north side of the bridge but was removed in 1988 [4].

Dates of Construction and Alterations:

According to the Michigan Department of Transportation Structural Inventory Report the bridge was built in 1918. A vertical member of the truss was damaged and repaired by welding a gusset over the damaged connection point. A steel beam guardrail was attached to the vertical side truss members. The dates of both of these alterations are unknown.

Engineers:

Engineers are unknown. The bridge ownership was transferred to the Menominee County Road Commission in 1936[1] as it was and without documents.

Present Owner:

Menominee County Road Commission
W5416 Belgiumtown Road
Stephenson, Michigan 49858

Present Use:

Vehicular and pedestrian bridge to be replaced by a new bridge. The entire bridge will be moved to Chassell Township, Chassell, Michigan to be used as pedestrian bridge across the Pike River approximately 1.5 miles south of Chassell and on US-41. The bridge will be moved in the spring of 1997.

Significance:

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer has determined that this bridge is an unusual riveted Pratt Pony Truss structure. It is all the more unusual because of its attached pedestrian walkway.

Historical significance of the site to the State, Region, or Nation:

The site was a typical river crossing for vehicular traffic on federal highway US-41 during the years prior to 1933. The site was unusual in that it was also the only bridge access to the Spalding Township School for the people living on the east side of the Big Cedar River. The walkway was placed on the bridge to separate the vehicular and pedestrians using the bridge during the period when this road was a federal highway^[2]. According to construction plans on file at the office of the Menominee County Road Commission, the intersection of US-2 with US-41 was relocated in 1933. The status of Old US-41 was down graded to local road and correspondingly the traffic volume was reduced. A new school was built at a different site along US-2 between 1951 and 1953. The old school was demolished^[3] some time later. The need for the walkway diminished after that and eventually maintenance on it ceased. The walkway was removed from the bridge in 1988^[4] due to lack of use and its unsafe condition.

BRIDGE DETAIL

Number and length of spans:

The bridge is a single span with an overall length of 62 feet. It has a clear roadway width of 19.9 feet and the truss height is 9.25 feet.

General dimensions:

The bridge is 62 feet long with a clear roadway width of 19.9 feet. The truss is 19.25 feet high measured from its top plate to the bottom of the floor beam mounting bracket.

General design elements and materials:

Truss elements are riveted together. The steel floor beams are bolted to each truss using a flat steel plate, ("see photo number 9"). The walkway beams were made of riveted, double angle iron, and were attached to the truss at the same point as the main floor beams. The railing was made of angle iron attached to the double angle iron beam. There were angle iron stringers placed parallel to the road centerline. The wood deck planks on the bridge extended over to the walkway to serve as the walkway surface.

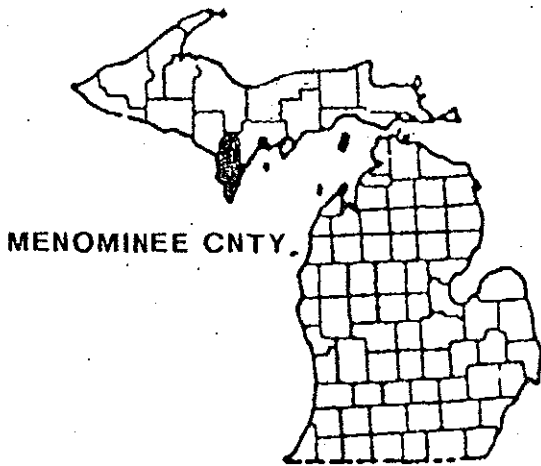
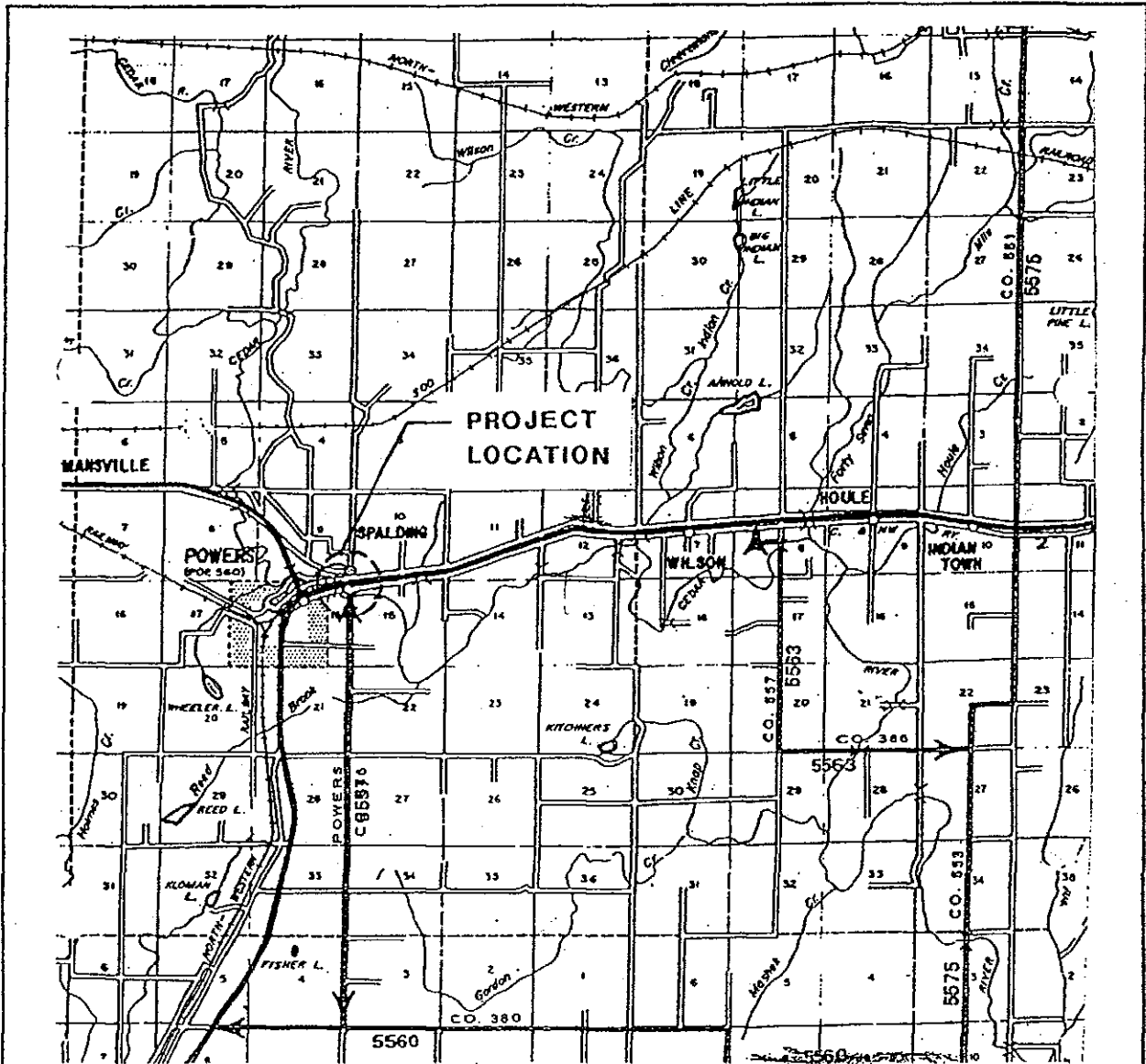
Role of the bridge in the local or regional transportation system:

The bridge carried US-41 vehicular traffic over the Big Cedar river from the time it was built until US-41 was relocated further west and south in 1934. The local businesses were located along the original route of US-41 thus making the route similar to a main street, in fact part of US-41 in the Village of Powers was also Main Street. After US-41 was relocated, businesses developed along the new

location of US-41. Some of the old buildings along Old US-41 still exist although most have relocated [5]. At that time the bridge and section of road were taken over by the Menominee County Road Commission and the road became a local road. Vehicular traffic diminished after that but pedestrian traffic still used the walkway as access to the school. The school was later relocated along the new location of US-41. Maintenance and pedestrian use of the bridge diminished and the walkway fell into disrepair and was eventually removed.

NOTES:

1. Menominee County Road Commission Annual Mileage and Expenditures Report to the Michigan Dept. Of Transportation for the year 1936.
2. Information obtained from an interview with Walter Peterson an elderly resident and former user of the walkway.
3. Information obtained from an interview with Francis Gagne a younger man and as an elementary school student was one of the last classes to use the bridge walkway to get to school.
4. Menominee County Road Commission Construction Records.
5. Menominee County Road Commission Archive of Old Plans.



SITE LOCATION MAP
SPALDING TWP.
FIGURE 1