

LINN COUNTY INVENTORY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic name Railroad Bridge

Inventory number 509A

Address crosses North Santiam River

City Mill City

Township 9S Range 3E Section 30

Theme Transportation

Present use Pedestrian river crossing

Present owner State of Oregon

Recorded by Elaine C. Smith

Date March 28, 1984

Date of Construction: c. 1905

Style:

Condition: ☒ Excellent to Fair ☐ Deteriorated

Description: Approximately 100 foot steel truss span with concrete cylindrical piers.

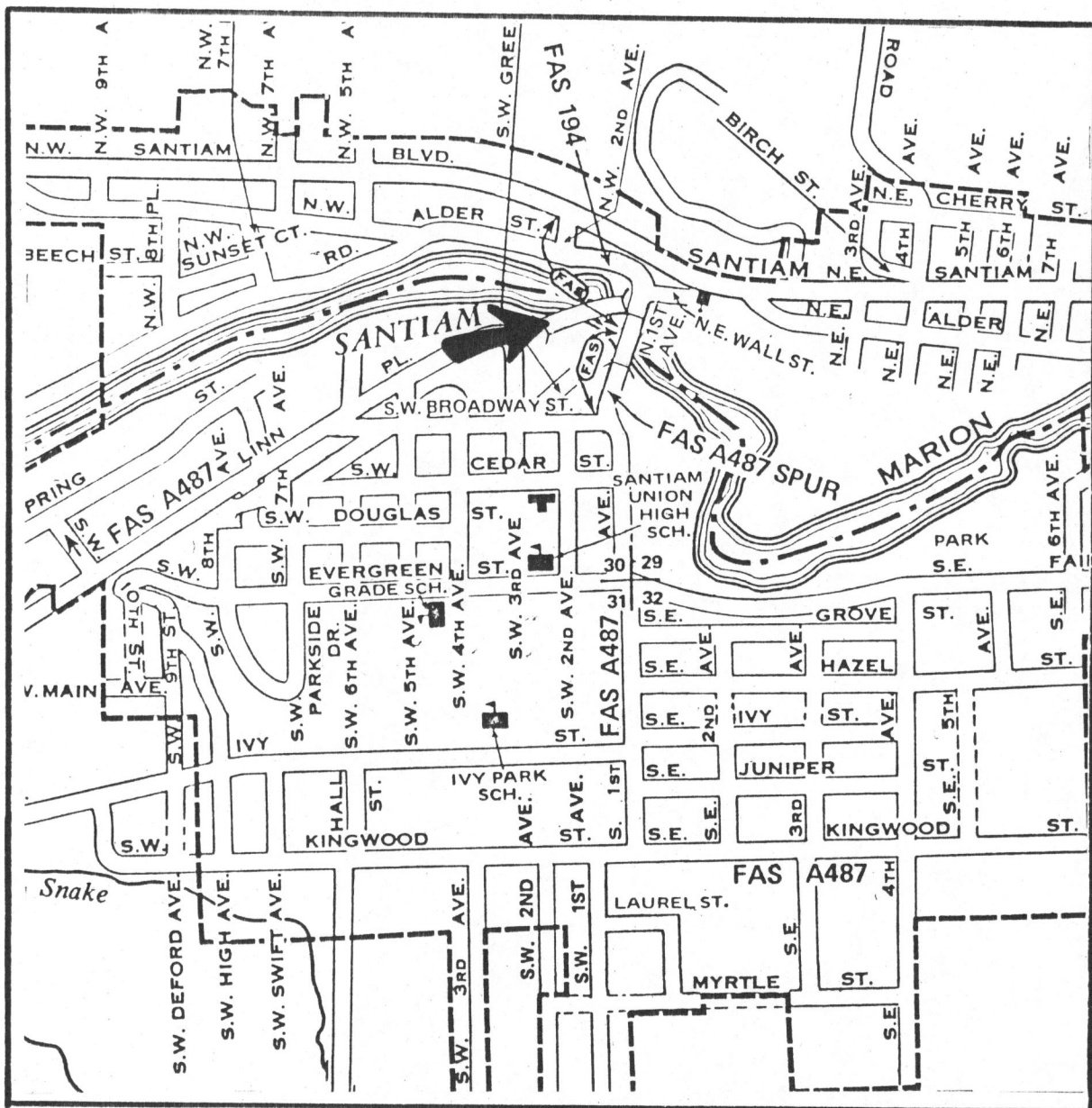
Historic Significance: The Oregon Pacific Railroad was organized in 1880 by Colonel Egerton Hogg for the purpose of constructing a west-east rail line from Yaquina Bay to Boise City. The line from Yaquina to Corvallis was completed in 1885 and it reached Albany in 1887. After 1887, building of the tracks eastward continued and reached Mill City and Idanha in 1891. The Oregon Pacific succumbed to financial problems, however, and building east of Idanha never occurred. The Oregon Central and Eastern Railway was incorporated by A. B. Hammond, Edwin Stone, and Charles Clark and took over the Oregon Pacific line in 1895. The Corvallis and Eastern Railroad, incorporated by Hammond, took over the line in 1897. In 1907, the Yaquina to Idanha line was taken over by Southern Pacific Railroad.

This line from Mill City to Idanha was abandoned in 1967 and the bridge is now used as a pedestrian river crossing.

Sources:

- Jelly, Charles. Telephone conversation, September 24, 1982.
- Mullen, Floyd. Land of Linn, Lebanon: Dalton's Printing, 1972, pp. 65 and 129-30.
- Works Project Administration. History of Linn County, L. M. Wheeler, 1982, pp. 61-62.

Railroad Bridge



Mill City
City

LINN COUNTY INVENTORY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

696

STAFF REPORT

APRIL 3, 1989

SHPO 696

RE: HR-14-88/89; Railroad bridge located across the North Santiam River in Mill City, T9S, R3E, Section 30. Current owner: State of Oregon.

LOCATION AND SETTING: This former Southern Pacific Railroad bridge crosses the North Santiam River Mill City. The bridge is located adjacent to and just to the west of the highway bridge and is sited at a point where the river canyon is relatively narrow. The bridge is one of the most important visual aspects of Mill City.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: The former Southern Pacific Railroad bridge at Mill City is a 120 foot pin connected, through Pratt Truss fabricated with wrought iron Phoenix columns. Phoenix columns are used to take compressive loads and are formed from equal, flanged sections of rolled wrought iron which are riveted together at the flanges. The bridge is supported by two concrete piers. Information concerning the history of the bridge is found on the concrete pier on the Linn County side of the river.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The Willamette Valley and Coast Railroad was organized by Egerton Hogg in ca. 1874 for the purpose of building a railroad from Corvallis to Yaquina Bay on the Oregon coast. Eventually, this line was reorganized as the Oregon Pacific Railroad with the ultimate goal of extending the line east into Idaho and thus making the connection with the transcontinental railroad. In 1885, the route between Corvallis and the Yaquina Bay was completed. In 1887, the line was extended eastward to Albany. Contracts were let in 1887 and 1888 to continue building tracks up the North Santiam River Canyon. Mill City and Lyons were both platted because of the railroad which served to open this portion of the county to development. Because of financial difficulties, the tracks never reached beyond Idanha on the western slopes of the Cascades. The railroad went into receivership and in 1895 a new company, the Oregon and Central Railway was incorporated by A.B. Hammon, Edwin Stone and Charles Clark. In 1897, A.B. Hammond took over the line, then known as the Corvallis and Eastern Railroad, and in 1907 ownership was transferred to Southern Pacific. Instead of a transcontinental link, this line served the timber industry for many years. In 1953, the tracks between Gates and Idanha were removed and in the following decade, the tracks between Mill City and Gates were removed. Prior to the placement of the current bridge in 1919, the railroad had both an open and a covered timber truss in this location at various times.

The current bridge was fabricated by the Phoenix Iron Works in Pennsylvania in 1888. It was first located on the Coast Line in California crossing Ciendga Creek near San Jose. At about the turn of the century, the bridge was reinforced and moved to Southern Pacific's Lake Oswego Line where it was used to cross the Tualitan River. In 1919, Southern Pacific moved the bridge to its current location in Mill City. The bridge, which was originally 180 feet long was cut down to the current 120 feet. This bridge served as a railroad bridge until ca. 1967 when Southern Pacific abandoned the line. It is currently used as a pedestrian crossing.