

WELLS CREEK BOLLMAN BRIDGE
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad
Spanning the CSX tracks on T381
Meyersdale vicinity
Somerset County
Pennsylvania

HAER PA-373

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

WELLS CREEK BOLLMAN BRIDGE
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad
HAER No. PA-373

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Location: On T 381, crossing CSX tracks,
Meyersdale (vic.), Summit Township,
Somerset County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1871

Present Owner: Summit Township

Present Use: Vehicular bridge

Significance: This iron Warren through truss
originally served as a railroad bridge
on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's
Pittsburgh Division. It was designed by
the renowned chief engineer of the B &
O, Wendell Bollman.

Historian: Scott C. Brown, 1991

Project Information: The results of the study of Somerset
County were published in 1994: Gray
Fitzsimons, Ken Rose, and Patricia
Summers (eds), Somerset County,
Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic
Engineering and Industrial Sites
(Washington, D.C.: National Park
Service). The contents of the
publication were transmitted to the
Library of Congress as individual
reports. Research notes, field photos
and copies of historic photos collected
during the project were transmitted to
the AIHP Collection, Special
Collections, Stapleton Library, Indiana
University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA
15705.

The Wells Creek Bollman Bridge employs a Warren truss design, rather than a Bollman truss, with which its designer Wendell Bollman was widely associated. Originally constructed as a railroad bridge, it is presently used as a vehicular bridge. It is 81' long and 13' feet wide. The east abutments are constructed of concrete, while the west are earthen with wood ties. This bridge has a wood deck, and ornate cast-iron end pieces, lacework, and compression members. End posts and tension members are constructed of wrought iron.

Designed by the renowned self-taught engineer Wendell C. Bollman in 1871, this bridge is the last remaining span on the B & O's Pittsburgh Division associated with Bollman. The bridge originally carried the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad over Wills Creek. It was moved about 1910 to the present location after it was no longer able to carry safely the newer and heavier locomotives.

Bollman began his career with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as a carpenter in 1828. By 1840 he was designing bridges, and in 1852 received a patent for his unique design known as the Bollman truss. Wendell Bollman left the B&O and founded W. Bollman and Company in 1858 with his partners John Clark and John H. Tegmeyer. The railroad continued to contract with him for bridge design, this bridge included. Not all his designs used the Bollman truss. W. Bollman and Company dissolved about 1863, but two years later Bollman founded Patapsco Bridge and Iron Works, which lasted until his death in 1884.

Sources:

Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Somerset County Historic Resource Survey. Prepared by Glessner, Lehman, and Kendall, 1986
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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Historic Highway Bridges in Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1986.
Darnell, Victor C. Directory of American Bridge-Building Companies: 1840-1900. Washington, DC: Society for Industrial Archeology, 1984.
National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. W. Bollman & Company Bridge.
Schodek, Daniel L. Landmarks in American Civil Engineering. Boston: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1987.