

1. SITE I.D. NO										HAER INVENTORY										Historic American Engineering Record Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.									
2 INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION Bridges, Trestles, and Aqueducts										3 PRIORITY 1		4 DANGER OF DEMOLITION? (SPECIFY THREAT) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN																	
CANT: Steel										5 DATE 1906-08		6 GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT OWNER ADMIN																	
8 NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE Columbia River Bridge										7 OWNER/ADMIN Wenatchee Reclamation District																			
9 OWNER'S ADDRESS 900 South Wenatchee Avenue Wenatchee, Washington 98801										10 STATE COUNTY CITY/VICINITY CONG DIST																			
11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO)										12 EXISTING SURVEYS																			
13 SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW)										14 UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE QUAD NAME																			
15 CONDITION										16 INVENTORIED BY																			
17 DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS EX-TANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS ENGINEERS ETC.										18 ORIGINAL USE PRESENT USE ADAPTIVE USE																			
19 REFERENCES - HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS AND/OR OTHER										20 URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE?																			
21 LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT?										21 HCRS REGION																			
22 PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY										23 EDITOR INDEXER																			
24 LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT?										25 DISTRICT I.D. NO																			

In 1909, the legislature authorized the State Highway Board to purchase the highway bridge across the Columbia River at Wenatchee. The 1,060 foot steel pinconnected cantilever structure was completed by the Washington Bridge Company in 1908 to transport automobiles and water to east Wenatchee in order to develop the land for the expanding apple industry. The construction of such a substantial structure by private interests reflected the town's optimism as the focus of a widening trade area, a vision that was born in the 1890's when the Great Northern Railroad made Wenatchee a junction of rail and water lines. The importance of the bridge to the burgeoning growth of the Wenatchee area, as well as to the State, is reflected in the 1909 highway commission biennial report: "The highway commission is of the opinion that the bridge would be of great value to the State, in as much as there is a very heavy traffic over it, and this traffic will rapidly increase as the orchards on the east side of the Columbia come into bearing." (CONT OVER)

When the highway department purchased the bridge for \$182,000, they agreed to acknowledge the contract that had been made between the Washington Bridge Company and the Wenatchee Canal Company "whereby the latter was given a perpetual right to lay two pipelines, each of 36 inches internal diameter, over or suspended from said bridge, for the purpose of carrying water for irrigating lands on the east side of the Columbia River."

The cantilever structure which carried the water pipes consists of two 240 foot pinconnected arms, two 160 foot cantilever arms, one 200 foot pinconnected Pratt truss, and one 60 foot pony truss which was quickly replaced by a 60 foot steel girder span. The truss rests on concrete piers and abutments 45 feet above high water. The bridge also included 565.7 feet of timber trestle at the west approach. The timber decked roadway is 20 feet 6 inches wide, curb to curb, and was originally designed to carry a single-track street railway, ordinary highway traffic, and two water mains of four feet internal diameter supported on brackets outside of the trusses.

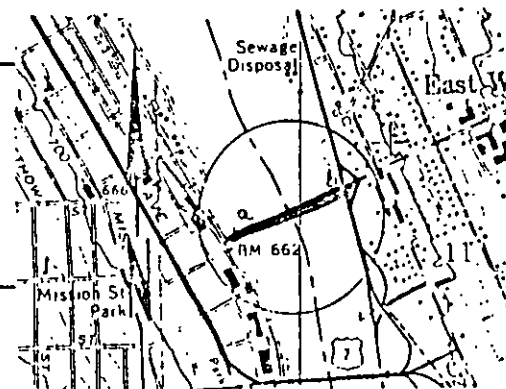
An engineer reported to the State Highway Commissioner in 1909 that from a "superficial examination, the trusses are of a better class than would be required by the state for a bridge of this size and type." However, he continued that one very bad feature of the bridge was the six percent grade of the east cantilever arm. "If the bridge were designed for highway traffic, this was a serious blunder and should be rectified." There is no indication that the grade was ever changed. Another cause for concern by the structural engineers was that after the concrete piers had been erected and the concrete had been set, dynamite was used to drill holes in the sills to set the anchor bolts which "shattered the piers to a degree that was impossible to ascertain." No records have been uncovered which would provide evidence that the piers were rebuilt at any time.

The cantilever bridge remained in service as a highway bridge until a new structure was built in 1950. In 1951 the Wenatchee Reclamation District which manages the irrigation pipeline throughout the city, bought the 43 year old structure from the State Highway Department for \$1.00. The pipes were removed from the brackets outside of the trusses, and a large pipe was constructed through the truss. The pinconnected bridge continues to provide water to the \$20 million fruit industry in East Wenatchee.

The structure is significant not only for its instrumental role in the development of the Wenatchee fruit industry, but also as the first highway bridge to be constructed across the Columbia River marking a new era in transportation. It is the oldest pinconnected structure of such magnitude, and the only pinconnected cantilever existing within the State.

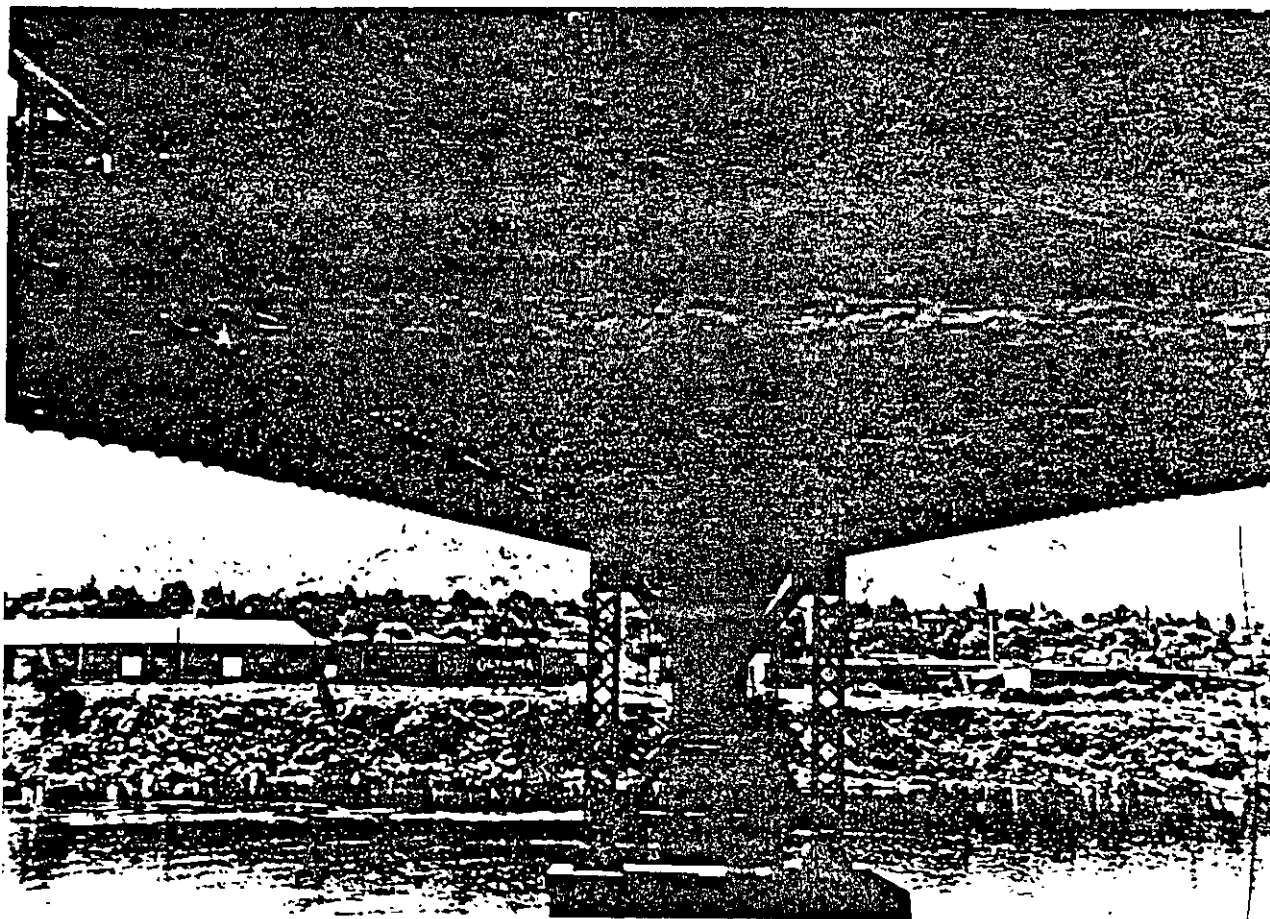
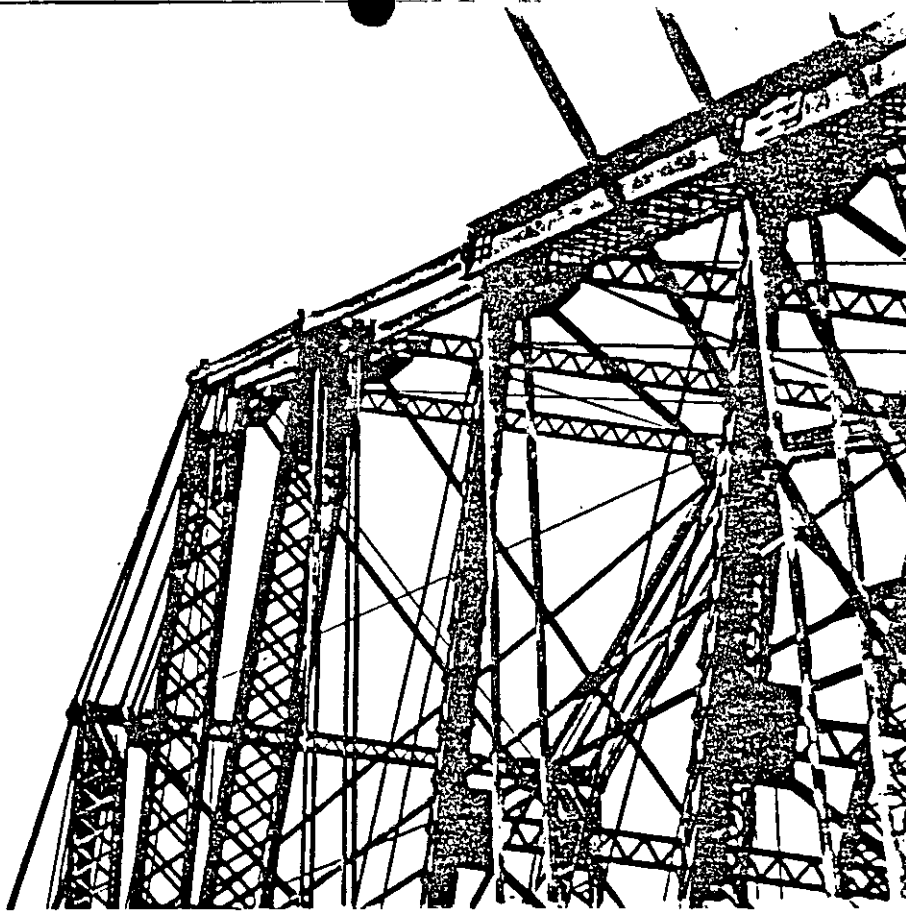
DESCRIPTION (CONTINUED)

REFERENCES (CONTINUED)

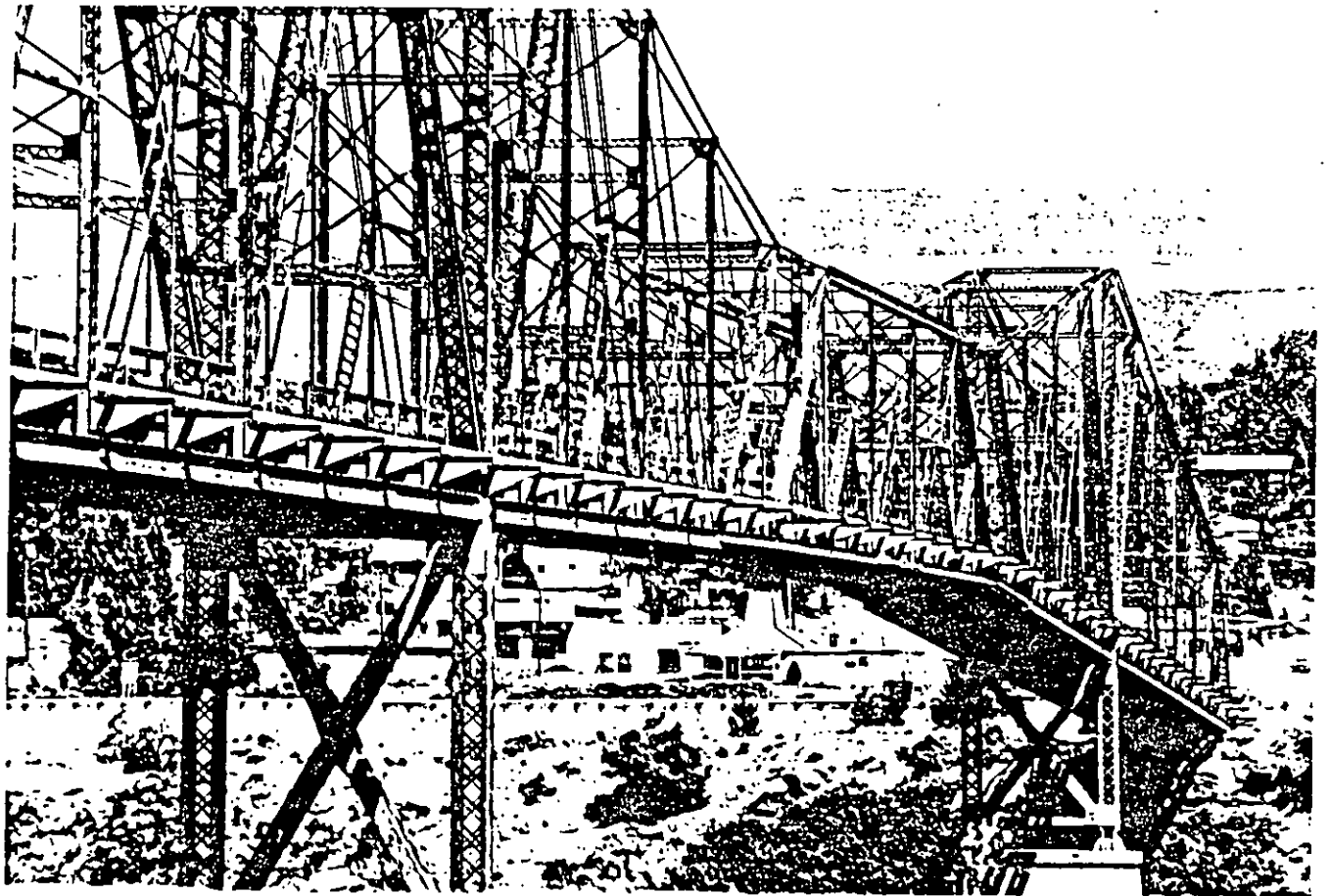
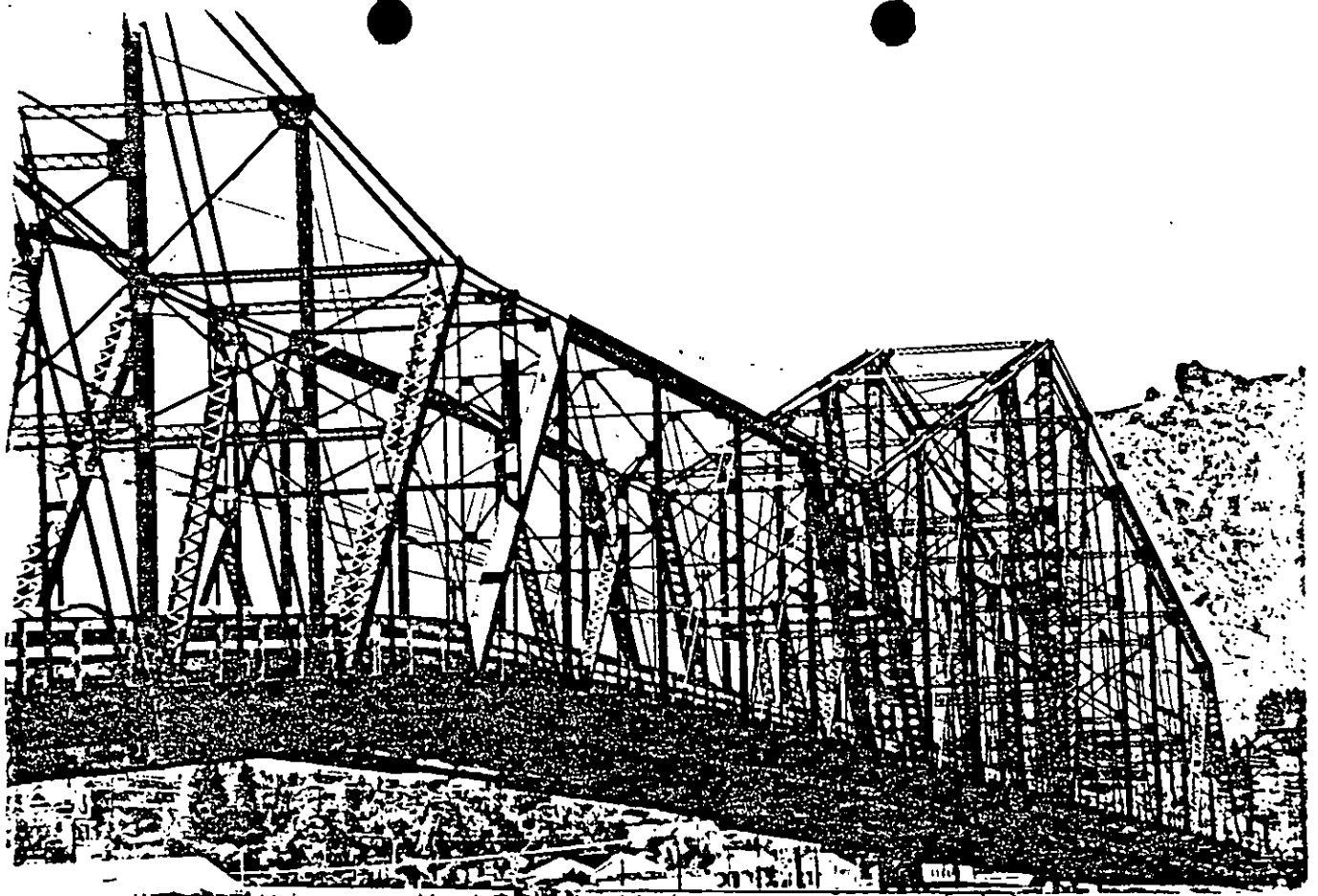


ABSTRACT

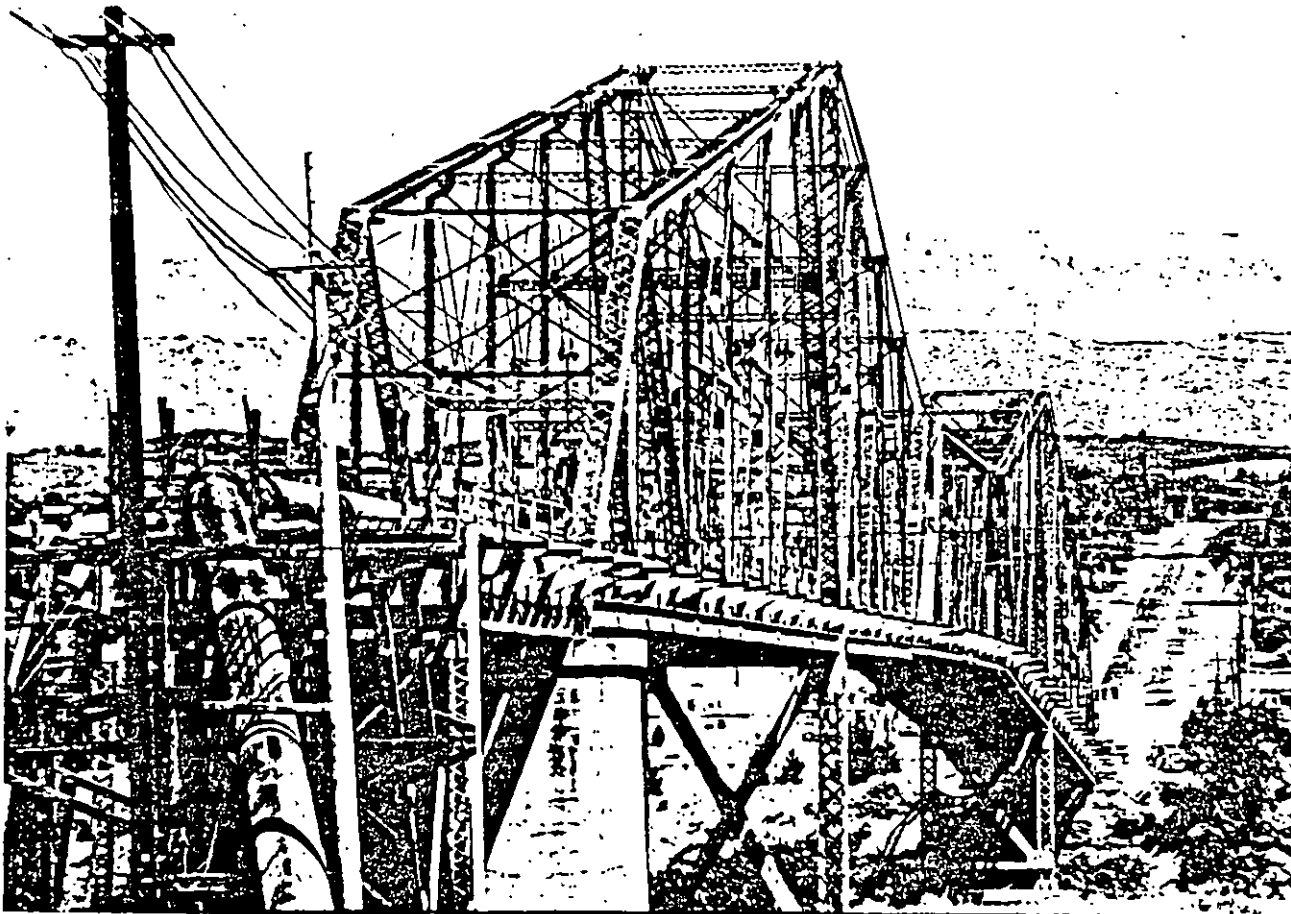
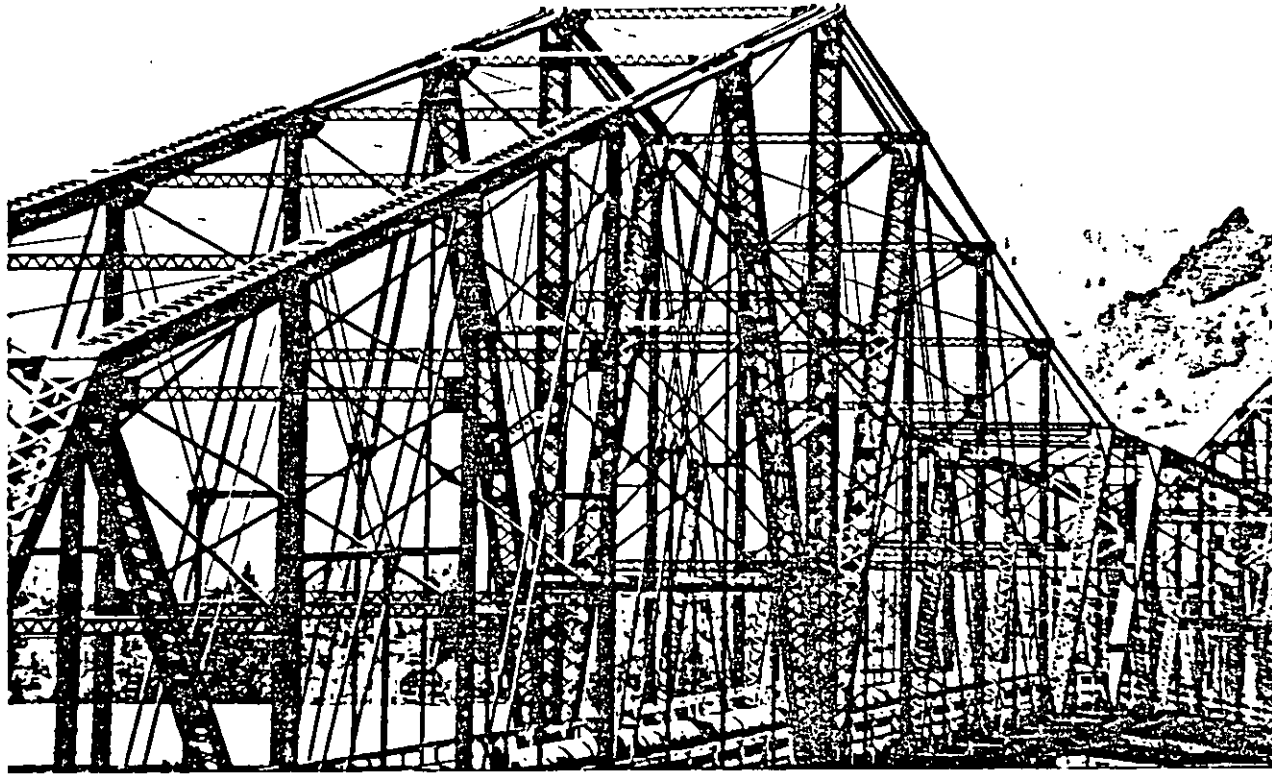
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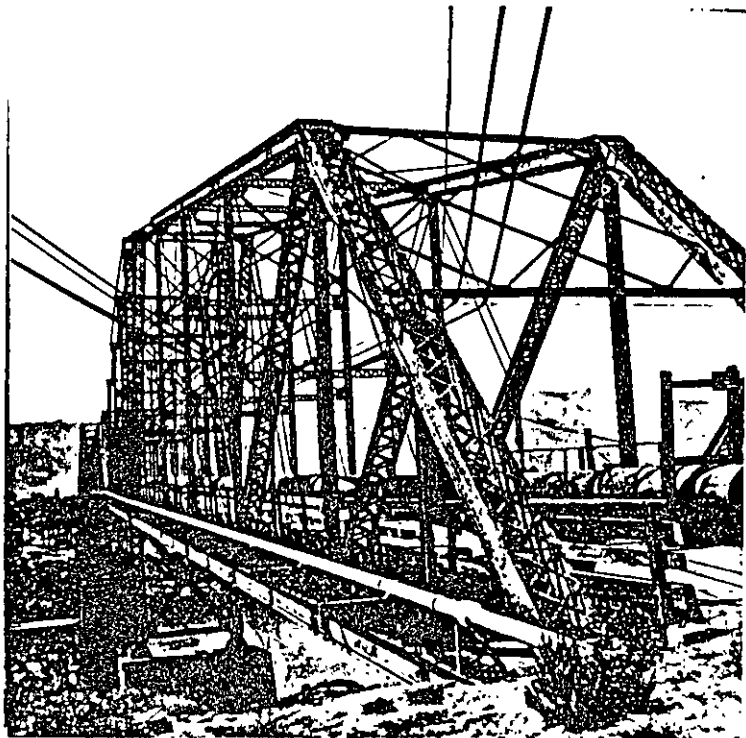
Wenatchee/Columbia River Bridge



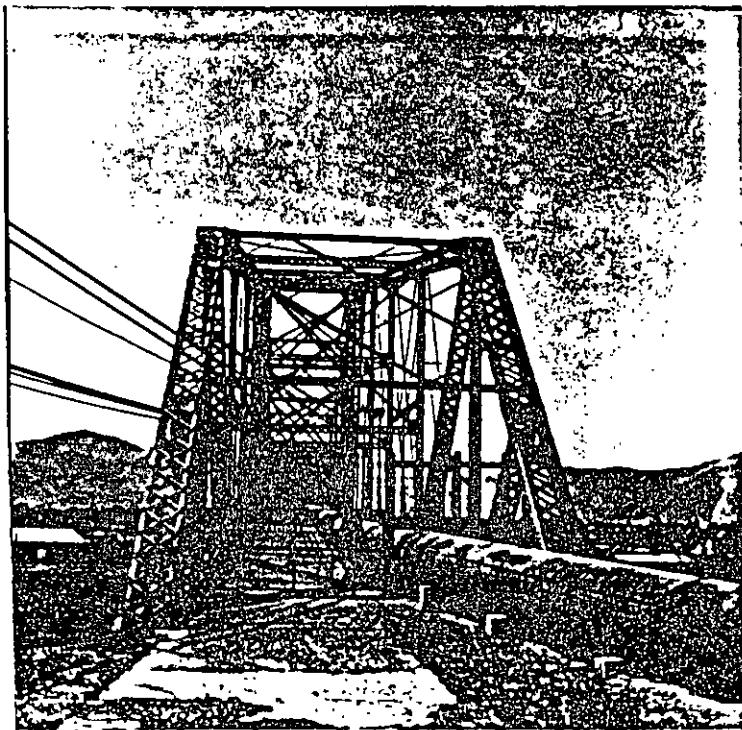
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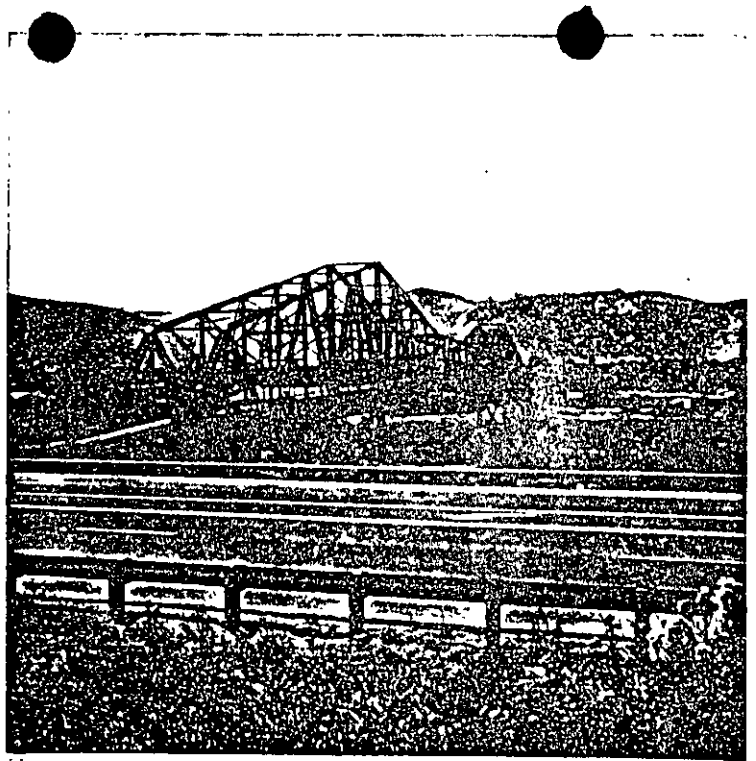
Wenatchee/Columbia River Bridge



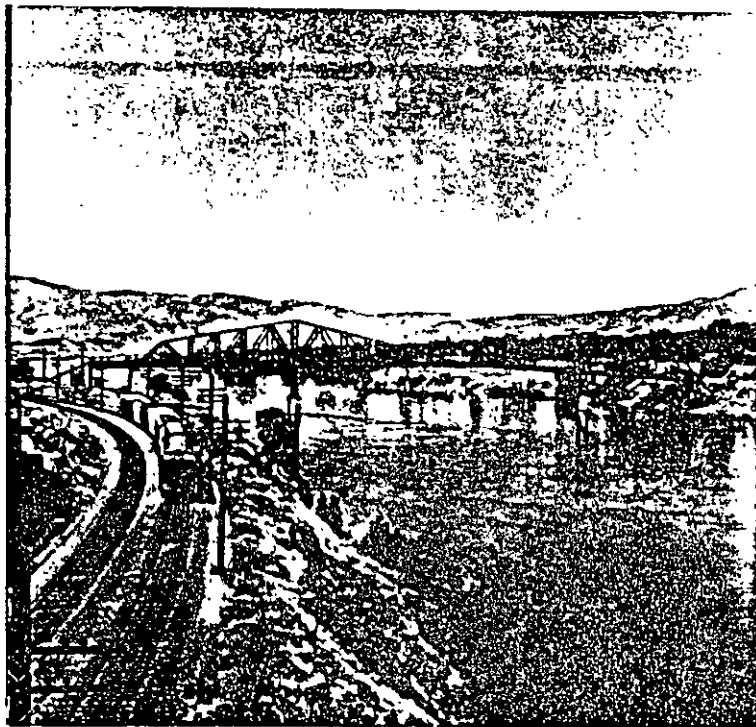
Wenatchee/Columbia River Bridge



Wenatchee/Columbia River Bridge.

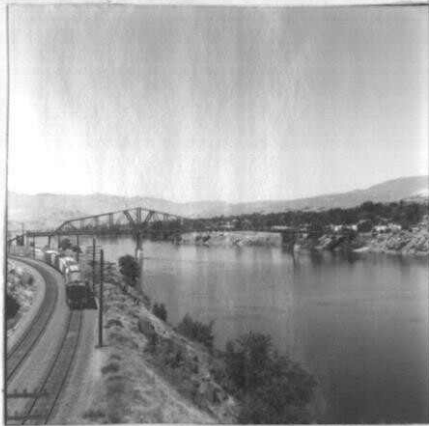


Wenatchee/Columbia River Bridge



Wenatchee/Columbia River Bridge

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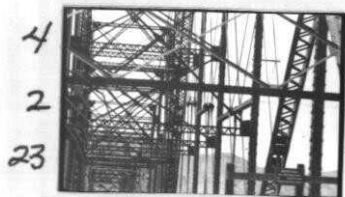
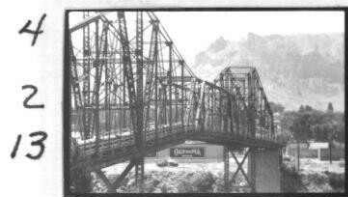


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Historic Register Report

Historic Name: Columbia River Bridge

Address: Spans Columbia River Between
Wenatchee and East Wenatchee

City: Wenatchee

County: Chelan

[Download nomination form](#)

Historic Use: Transportation

Style: None

Built: 1908

Architect:

Builder:

Smithsonian Number: 45CH00295

Date Listed: 7/16/1982

Listing Status: WHR/NR

Classification: STR

Resource Count: 1

Area of Significance: Engineering

Level of Significance: Local

Listing Criteria: A, C

Statement of Significance

Photos
