

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME					
address:	Corvallis, Benton County		historic name:	Irish Bend Covered Bridge	
assoc addresses:	SW Campus Way Bike Path, OSU		current/other names:		
location descr:	SW Campus Way Bike Path - OSU Campus, Midge Cramer Path		block/lot/tax lot:		
			twtnshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:		
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS					
resource type:	structure	height (stories):		total elig resources:	1
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant			total inelig resources:	0
prim constr date:	1954	second date:	1989	NR Status:	Individually Listed
				date indiv listed:	03/27/2013
primary orig use:	Road Related (vehicular)		orig use comments:		
second orig use:	Pedestrian Related				
primary style:	Other / Undefined		prim style comments:		
secondary style:			sec style comments:		
primary siding:	Vertical Board		siding comments:		
secondary siding:	Cedar Shake Shingle				
plan type:	Covered Bridge		architect:	Oregon State Highway Department (Plans)	
			builder:		
comments/notes:					
Built in 1954, dismantled in 1988, re-built in 1989; originally delisted on 5/15/1989 Relisted on 3/27/2013					
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS					
Survey/Grouping Included In:		Type of Grouping		Date Listed	Date Compiled
Oregon Covered Bridges (TR)		MPS		11/29/1979	1977
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY					
NR date listed:	03/27/2013	106 Project(s)			Special Assess Project(s):
ILS survey date:		SHPO Case	Date	Agency Effect Eval	None
RLS survey date:		11-1487	10/19/2011	no adverse effect	Federal Tax Project(s):
					None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION					
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>					
<p>Benton County, Oregon constructed the Irish Bend Covered Bridge in 1954. It is based upon standard bridge plans that the Oregon State Highway Department developed in the 1920s. The bridge is a 60-foot-long Howe truss with board-and-batten, painted wood siding, wood decking, and a cedar-shingle gable roof. Benton County originally built the bridge over Willamette Slough on Irish Bend Road, in rural Benton County approximately seven (7) miles northeast of Monroe, Oregon. Construction of a newer span and culverts in 1975 allowed the bridge to be bypassed and it was subsequently dismantled by Benton County in 1988. Due to a community-wide preservation effort in 1989, the Irish Bend Covered Bridge, reassembled by volunteers including off-duty Benton County employees, OSU students and staff, and Covered Bridge Society of Oregon members, now carries the Campus Way bike path over Oak Creek, near the agricultural test barns of Oregon State University (OSU). The bridge currently sits in a pastoral location surrounded by farm fields very similar to the bridge's original setting.</p>					
HISTORY					
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>					
<p>The Irish Bend Covered Bridge is an excellent example of a covered Howe-truss timber bridge, a form the Oregon State Highway Department developed in the 1920's-1930's as a standardized plan that the Department and individual counties used to improve the design and construction quality of their bridges. It is significant under Criterion C for its engineering design, at the state level, as documented in the 1979 Oregon Covered Bridges Thematic Nomination. The 1954 construction date of the bridge is unusual as a late date for this type of bridge construction (a covered truss) and for its use of materials (timber), but remains a good representative example of its type. Today it is one of fifty-six surviving examples of the estimated 450 covered timber truss bridges that once existed in Oregon. Benton County built the Irish Bend Covered Bridge over the Willamette Slough in rural Benton County in 1954. In 1988, thirteen (13) years after a modern structure bypassed the bridge in 1975, the county dismantled the bridge, stored it for one year, and after a lengthy process to find the bridge a new home subsequently reassembled the bridge in Corvallis on the campus of Oregon State University in 1989. The dismantling of the bridge by the County in 1988 initiated its removal from listing in the National Register. The bridge relocation meets Criterion Exception B as the bridge's current bucolic setting is similar to its original setting. The bridge retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, as the bridge reassembly follows the original plan design and utilized the majority of the bridge's original materials. In 1979 the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, with assistance from members of the Covered Bridge Society of Oregon and the Oregon Department of Transportation, documented the fifty-six covered bridges then standing in Oregon and nominated forty-six of them, including this bridge, for inclusion in the National Register under a multiple property submittal, the Oregon Covered Bridges Thematic Nomination. That document recognized the importance of the covered bridge form in the development of Oregon's transportation system during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly after the 1913 establishment of the Oregon State Highway Department. The Howe-truss design of the Irish Bend Covered Bridge is significant as an example of the covered-bridge form used during the twentieth century development of Oregon's transportation system. In 1954, Benton County chose to utilize state-developed, standardized covered-bridge designs to build the Irish Bend Covered Bridge. The Highway Department developed these standardized designs in response to the previously irregular design and construction methods of individual counties and builders. Oregon Counties utilized these free standardized designs so that they could feel confident that they were not overpaying an overzealous contractor or allowing designs to be built that were marginal in their construction. The popularity of the Howe-truss was due to the truss's ability to increase not only the load-bearing capacity, but also the life expectancy of the span. This was due to a construction method that utilizes iron stress rods in tension, which in turn give support to the wooden truss members in compression, and also by the ability to tighten critical bridge joints with these threaded tension rods that have bolts on both ends. Among the forty-six bridges that were listed in the Oregon Covered Bridges Thematic Nomination there are several features that most, if not all, of the bridges share, the first being the pastoral settings that they inhabit. Covered bridges are no longer utilized on the state road system as they are incompatible with modern transportation standards for loading and capacity. Therefore, many covered bridges are bypassed, demolished, or moved to allow for the construction of modern road systems. The bridges that do remain in the state are mostly distinguished by low-volume use on local transportation routes. Because of this, the remaining bridges are in locations away from highly-urbanized areas, the result being that the remaining bridges have been characterized as resources that are found in countryside locations away from the hustle and bustle of modern life. Another salient feature that is shared by the bridges of the Oregon Covered Bridges Thematic Nomination and that continues to be a feature of the Irish Bend Covered Bridge is the reliance on timber-truss construction.</p>					
RESEARCH INFORMATION					

Title Records	Census Records	✓ Property Tax Records	✓ Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	SHPO Files	Interviews
Obituaries	✓ Newspapers	State Archives	Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	

Local Library:	University Library:
Historical Society:	Other Respository:

Bibliography: Adams, Kramer. Covered Bridges of the West-A History and Illustrated Guide. Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1963. Albany [OR] Democrat-Herald. "Uncovering a Way: Albany Group Dreams of Moving Covered Bridge," May 6, 1976. Benton County Public Works. Irish Bend Bridge Relocation Project Plans, 1989. Cockrell, Nick and Bill. Roofs Over Rivers: A Guide to Oregon's Covered Bridges. Beaverton, OR: The Touchstone Press, 1978. Corvallis [OR] Gazette-Times. Misc. issues as cited by date in text. Covered Bridge Society of Oregon (CBSO), "Irish Bend Covered Bridge Preservation Project," summer 1989. Eugene Register-Guard. "White Elephant? Covered Bridge offered as gift, but moving may be too costly," March 21, 1978. Hadlow, Robert W. Elegant Arches, Soaring Spans: C.B. McCullough, Oregon's Master Bridge Builder. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001. Kildow, Fred to Benton County Historical Museum, February 15, 1987. Oregon Historical Society Covered Bridge Vertical File, Portland. Nelson, Lee H. A Century of Oregon Covered Bridges 1851-1952. Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1960. Oregonian. Misc. issues as cited by date in text. Potter, et al. Oregon Covered Bridges Thematic Nomination documentation, 1979. Smith, Dwight A., James B. Norman, Pieter T. Dykman. Historic Highway Bridges of Oregon. Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1989. http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/BRIDGE/docs/covbrdg/oregoncovbrdgs.pdf (August 2011).
