



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

The attached property, the McKee Bridge in Jackson County, OREGON, reference number 79002074, and part of the Oregon Covered Bridges Thematic Resource, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register on 11/29/1979, as evidenced by the FEDERAL REGISTER/WEEKLY LIST Vol. 45 number 54, notice of Tuesday, March 18, 1980, page 17475. The attached nomination form is a copy of the original documentation provided to the Keeper at the time of listing.

*For the Keeper: Ruth Zwick*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

*2-2-2010*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*R. P. [Signature]*

THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION  
OF UNCOVERED BRIDGES

Bridge Name and Number McKee Bridge, Index No. 15

County Jackson

Stream or River Applegate River

Location Little Applegate Road, 8 miles S of Ruch

NE $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 5, T.40S., R.3W., W.M.

Zone 10 E494053 N4663580 Ruch Quadrangle

Acreeage and Boundary Description Full width of road right-of-way  
for the distance between abutments and ten feet additional  
at either end, containing in all approximately 7920 square feet.

Present Owner Jackson County Board of Commissioners

Jackson County Courthouse

Medford, OR 97501

Date of Construction 1917

Description of Bridge

Length of span	112 feet
Truss type	Howe truss
Cladding	Vertical boards, vertical side walls
Roofing	Shingled gable roof
Decking	Wood

Other salient features Truncated rectangular portal arches. Five irregularly-spaced openings in south side wall above deck. Ribbon openings under eaves and exposed cantilevered buttresses either side wall. Width of roadway: 15'2".

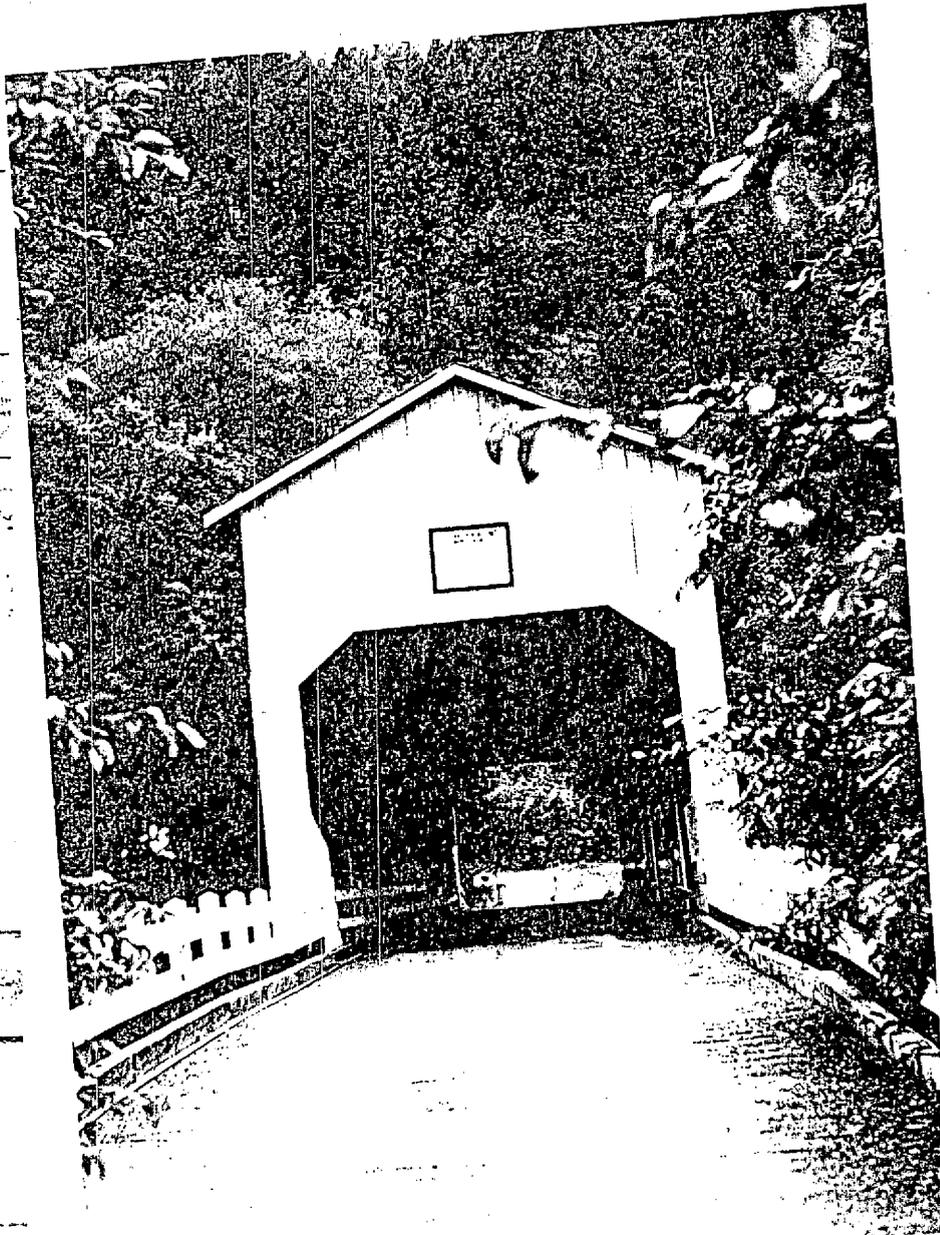
The bridge was closed to traffic in 1956 and restored for pedestrian use in 1965. It overlooks McKee Picnic Ground, a U.S. Forest Service facility. Original contractor was Jason Hartman of Jacksonville. Built on land donated by stage station operator Adelbert McKee, the bridge is among the five oldest covered spans in the state today. It was a half-way point between Jacksonville, to the north, and the Blue Ledge Copper Mine to the south. Relief horses were kept at this location for hauling ore until 1919.

Legal description is included in the appropriate County Road Department right-of-way files and County Deed Records.

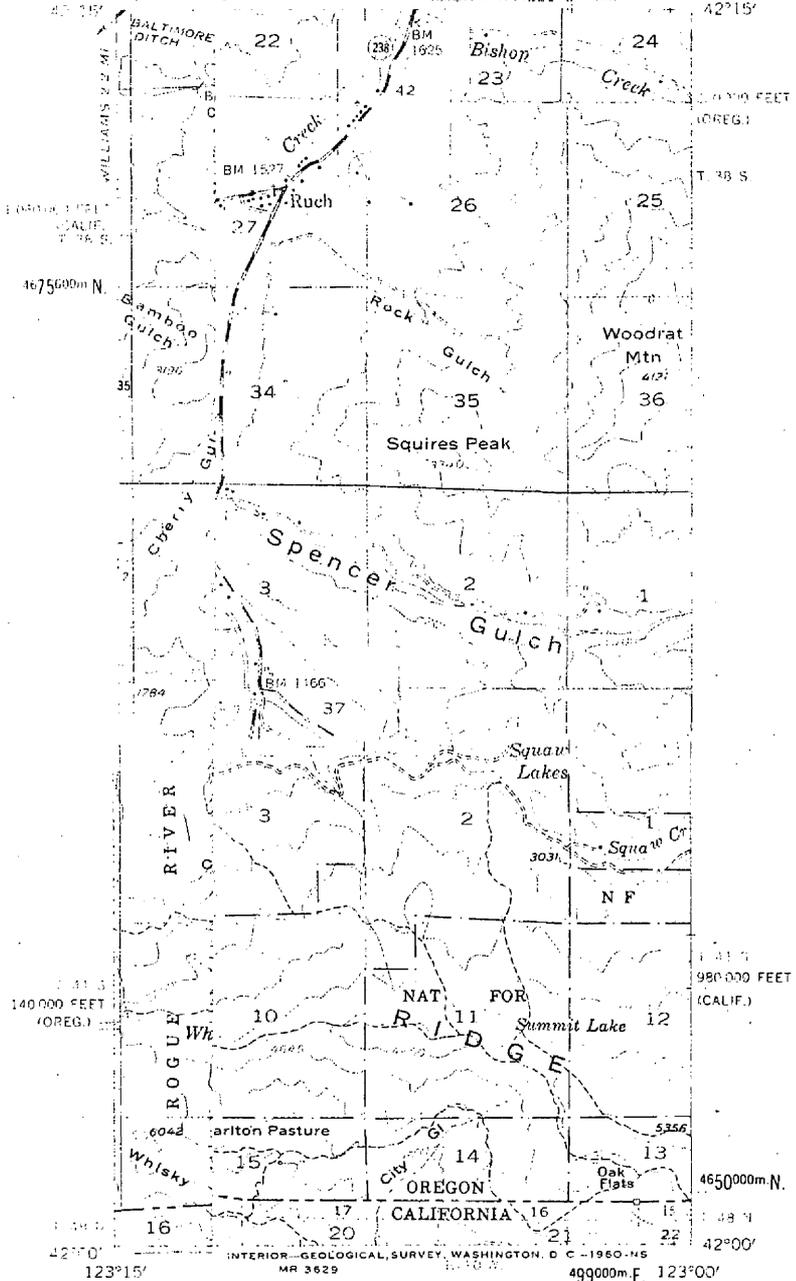
Information based on following sources: Statewide Inventory Form prepared by Stephen Dow Beckham, 1976. Typescript on Oregon Covered Bridges by Nick and Bill Cockrell, 1977.

Bridge Index No. 15  
McKee Covered Bridge  
Vicinity of Ruch  
Jackson County, Oregon  
West Elevation

Nick and Bill Cockrell Photo, 1976  
751 Piedmont NW  
Salem, OR 97304



RUCH QUADRANGLE  
OREGON—CALIFORNIA  
15 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Mapped, etc.  
 Control by US  
 Topography fr  
 Aerial photog  
 Polyconic pro  
 10,000-foot g  
 and California  
 1000-meter l  
 zone 10, sho  
 Dashed land  
 Unchecked e

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Medium-duty ——— Light-duty  
 Unimproved dirt

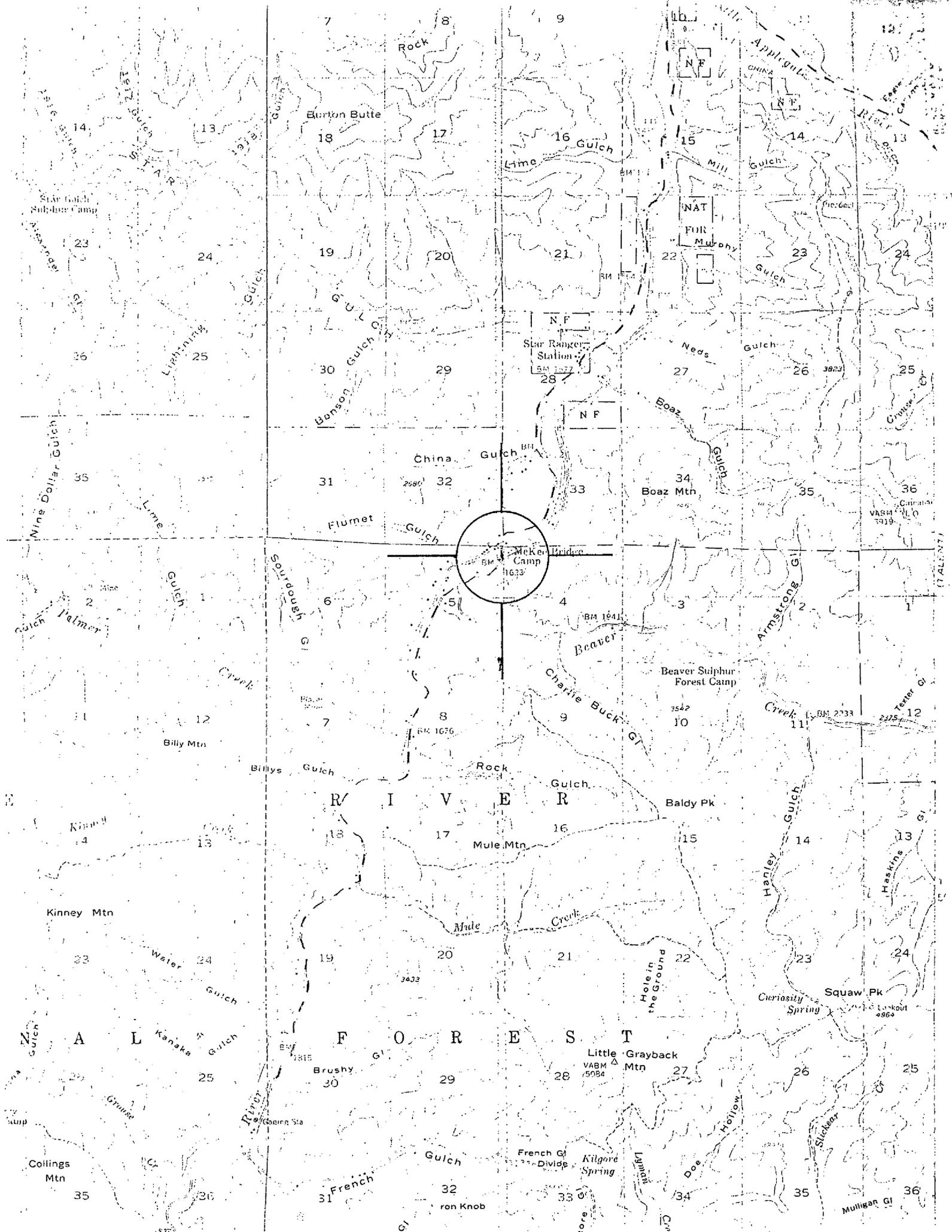
State Route

## MCKEE COVERED BRIDGE # 15

RUCH, OREG.—CALIF.  
N 4200—W 12300/15

1954

# 10/494053/4663580



McKee Bridge  
Stream: Applegate R.  
Built: 1917  
World Guide No.: 37-15-06

T40S R. S.  
Truss: Howe  
Length: 112 feet

# 15

The rustic, well-known covered bridge spanning the Applegate River just eight miles from the California border was built in 1917 by contractor, Jason Hartman on land donated by Adelbert "Deb" McKee. The bridge was used from 1917 to 1956, originally serving the mining and logging traffic.

Lindsay Applegate, for whom the stream is named prospected the area on the way to the mines in California. The discovery of prosperous mines caused a north-south route to be developed in the area. The covered bridge, being half-way between Jacksonville to the north and the Blue Ledge Copper Mine to the south, was used as a rest stop. Relief horses were kept there for hauling ore from the mine until 1919.

In 1956, the bridge was declared unsafe for vehicular traffic. A sign posted on the end of the bridge hails the combined efforts of the Talisman Lodge, Knights of Pythias, the Upper Applegate Grange, and the Jackson County Court in restoration of the roof in 1965, retaining the structure for pedestrian use. The covered span overlooks a park, and visitors can peer through the five windows on the south side.

Features of the McKee Bridge include a Howe truss design, shortened portal weather boarding, flying buttresses, open slit windows at the top of each side, and a shingle roof. To get there: From Medford, travel east on Highway 238 through Jacksonville to Ruch. At Ruch, travel south approximately eight miles on Little Applegate Road to the bridge site.

77.15  
Covered Bridge  
Inventory

26. August 1976  
Dwight Smith

Name: McKee Covered Bridge

Location: The bridge is located 8.6 miles south of Highway 235 at Ruch. It is within Rogue River National Forest and just off of FAS 15-112.

Nearest Town: Ruch

Ownership: Jackson County  
(Bridge No. 471)

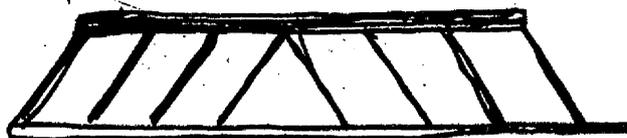
Road and Stream: The bridge spans the Applegate River. Bridge is used for pedestrians only.

Dimensions: The bridge lies in an east-west direction.

- a) About 110 feet long
- b) " 20 feet wide (outside edge to outside edge)
- c) " 20 feet high (floor to peak of roof)

Type

Howe Truss



Year Built and Builder:

Built 1917. Opened to traffic in 1918.

Contractor - J. Hartman

**Existing Setting:** The bridge enjoys a very beautiful setting. The Applegate River runs wide and clear under the bridge. The ~~east~~<sup>west</sup> end of the bridge has a long approach and a few deciduous trees frame the entrance (this is the public entrance side). A steep hillside is on the east end of the bridge. No approach on the east side. Near the bridge is the McKeen Picnic Area Ground, owned and maintained by the Rogue River National Forest (U.S.F.S.) The bridge and the river serve as focal points for the picnic ground.

### Description of Bridge:

The bridge is long and graceful. The end portals are diamond-shaped.



Only the portal ends of the bridge are freshly-painted (white). The sides of the bridge are weathered-grey boards. Exposed buttresses extend from the sides of the bridge. There are no window openings on the north side of the bridge. On the south side are five window openings, yet these are not evenly spaced. One gets the impression they were cut out after the bridge was designed and built. There is a two-foot high opening under the eaves on both the north and south sides. A new roof (shake shingles) has been added recently.

## Condition:

Several boards are missing from the south side of the bridge. Users have defaced the bridge somewhat by writing/carving names and initials. Bridge needs painting on north and south sides. Condition is fair, overall. As mentioned previously, pedestrian use only. Banquette prevents autos from driving across the bridge.

Status: Preserved by County.

Signing on west portal of bridge:

McKee Bridge

County Bridge #471

Built 1917. Contractor J. Hartman

Open to traffic 1918

1956 declared unsafe for traffic, but retained for pedestrian use for the benefit of residents to the adjacent park.

The roof was restored in 1965 by Talisman Lodge, Knights of Pythias, the Upper Applegate Grange and the Jackson County Court.

Dedicated October 17, 1965

## Historical Significance:

In the center of the entrance to the western approach, is a new plaque on a river stone pedestal:

### McKee Bridge

This bridge was built in 1917 by Jason Hartman of Jacksonville. The site was donated by Adelbert "Deb" McKee, a ranch owner to the south, whose home had served as a stage station and halfway point between Jacksonville and the Blue Ledge Copper mine which operated between 1906 and 1919. Relief horses were kept there for the six and eight horse teams hauling ore from the mine, and lodging and board were provided travelers.

The bridge, declared unsafe in 1956, has been maintained by community groups, and left for its historic value and use by pedestrians.

Applegate Valley Bicentennial Committee and Southern Oregon  
Historical Society

Other covered Bridges in the County:

Sibliography

Contacts