



# United States Department of the Interior

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

The attached property, the Grave Creek Bridge in Josephine County, OREGON, reference number 79002077 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: *Paul J. Smith*  
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

*2-2-2010*  
Date

THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION  
OF OREGON COVERED BRIDGES

Bridge Name and Number Grave Creek Bridge, Index No. 16

County Josephine

Stream or River Grave Creek

Location SunnyValley-Placer County Road, off Interstate Highway 5, ca. 15 miles  
NE $\frac{1}{4}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 11, T.34S., R.6W., W. M. N of Grants Pass

Zone 10 E469155 N4720300 Glendale Quadrangle

Acreage 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 7500 square feet.

Present Owner Josephine County Board of Commissioners

Josephine County Courthouse

Grants Pass, OR 97526

Date of Construction 1920

Description of Bridge

Length of span	105 feet
Truss type	Howe truss
Cladding	Board and batten, vertical side walls
Roofing	Metal-clad gable roof (originally shingled)
Decking	Wood

Other salient features Flat portal arches (originally semi-elliptical).  
Housed buttresses flank portals at either end. Six regularly-spaced openings in either  
side wall have truncated triangular arch heads. False beams exposed at gable ends.  
Concrete piers. Trestled approaches. Based on Oregon State Highway Commission stand-  
ardized design.

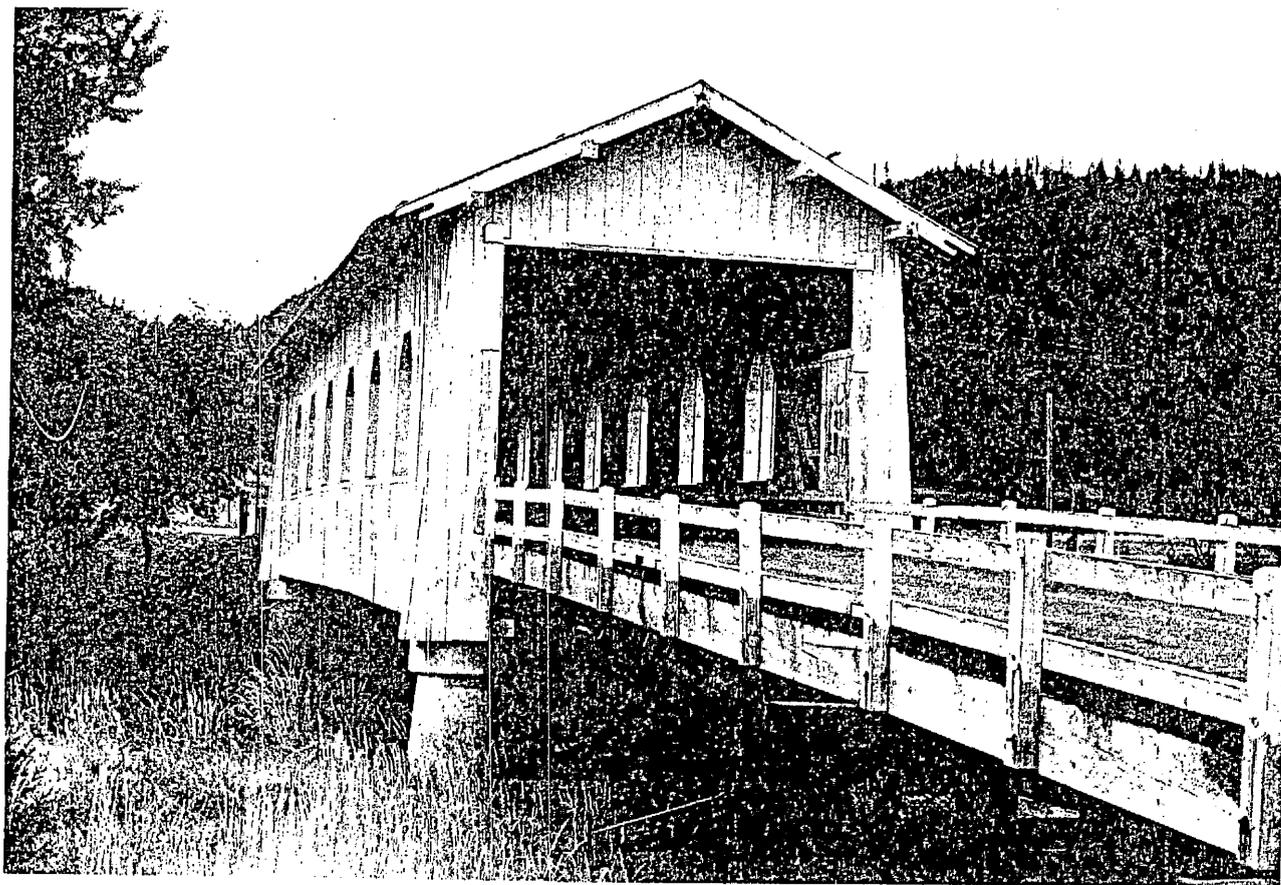
Bridge and creek are named for nearby grave of Leland Crowley, a 14-year old member of  
the first Applegate Trail emigrant wagon train, who died at this location in 1846 en  
route to the Willamette Valley. Construction contract was awarded to J. Elmer Nelson.  
A. A. Clausen, State Highway Department Resident Engineer, was in charge of design and  
construction. The bridge was a feature on the Pacific Highway, a main trunk of the  
Legal description is included in the appropriate County Road Department (continued)  
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.

early State Highway System, until the latter was relocated in 1945.

Bridge Index No. 16  
Grave Creek Covered Bridge  
Vicinity of SunnyValley  
Josephine Co., Oregon  
South Elevation

Stephen Dow Beckham Photo, 1976  
History Department  
Lewis and Clark College  
615 SW Palantine Hill Road  
Portland, OR 97219

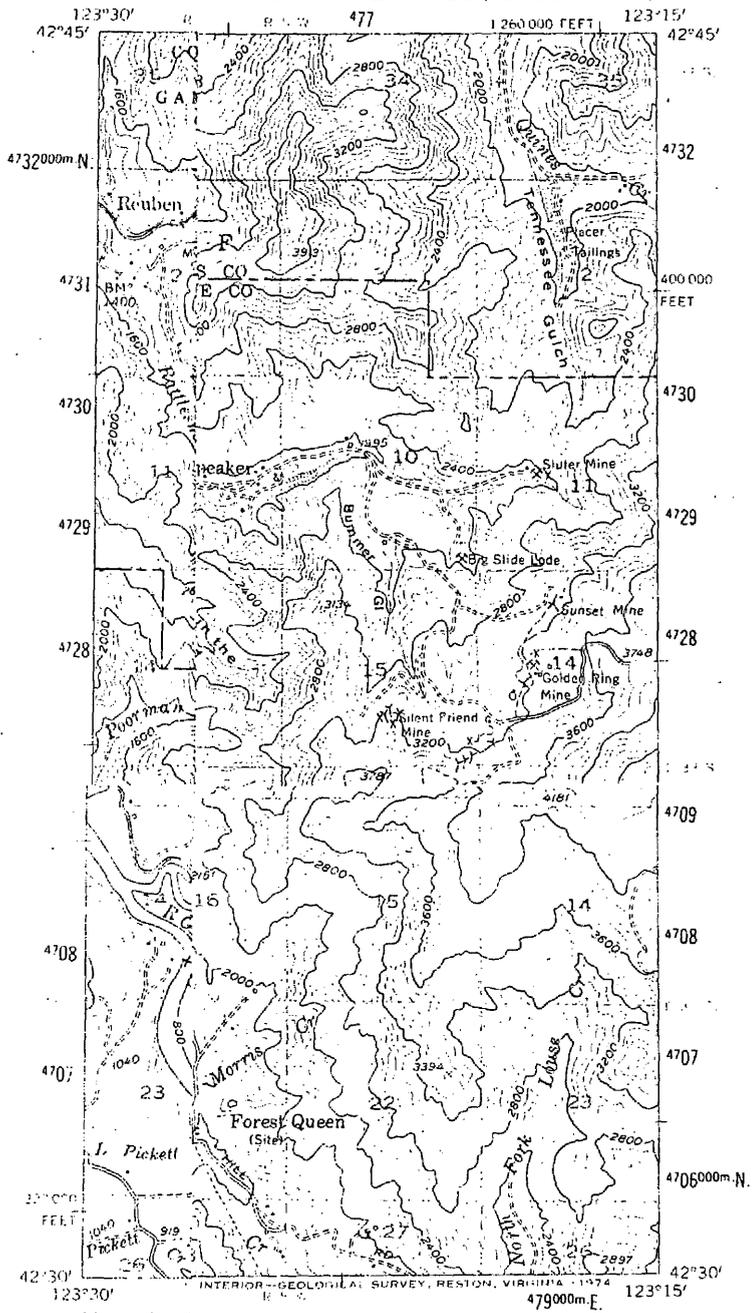


(D) TCHMAN BUTTE  
1369 I

1369 I  
(DAYS CREEK)

DEPART  
GE  
15 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

GLENDALE QUADRANGLE  
OREGON



(S) LMA  
1368 I

(G) LD HILL  
1368 I

Mapped, edited  
Control by USGS  
Topography from  
Aerial photographs  
Polyconic projection  
10,000-foot scale  
Dashed land lines  
Unchecked elevations  
1000-meter UTM  
zone 10 shown

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty - - - - -  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt - - - - -

U.S. Route

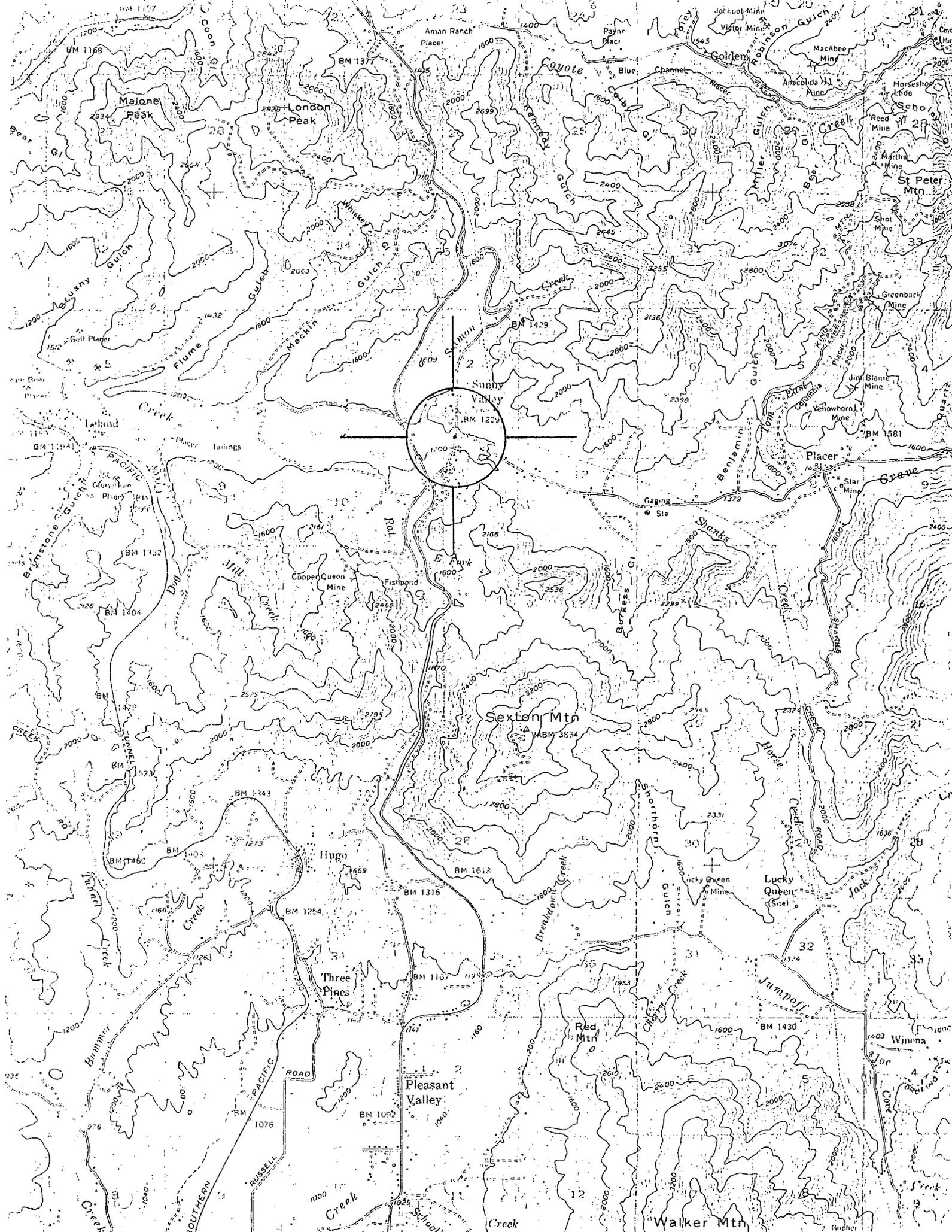
GRAVE CREEK COVERED BRIDGE # 16

GLENDALE, OREG.  
N4230-W12315/15

1954

AMS 1369 III-SERIES V792

10/469155/4720300



Grave Creek Bridge  
Stream: Grave Creek  
Built: 1920  
World Guide No.: 37-17-01

T34S R6W S11  
Length: 105 feet  
Truss: Howe

#16

The Grave Creek covered span at Sunny Valley can be seen by motorists from Interstate 5, about 15 miles north of Grants Pass. Features of the wooden structure include a metal roof, six gothic-style windows on either side, concrete abutments, a Howe truss, square portals, and a coat of white paint. The old wooden river crossing is the last covered bridge on the north-south Pacific Highway system.

Existing records on the Grave Creek bridge state that contract number 263 was awarded by the Oregon State Highway Department to J. Elmer Nelson on April 27, 1920. Just four months later, August 31, traffic passed through its portals. A. A. Clausen, resident engineer in Josephine County, was in charge of design and construction. He reported that the 105 foot Howe truss was supported by "dumb bell" concrete piers with 114 feet of timbered frame trestle approach spans. Total cost of the construction, including the engineering fee of \$1,722.70, is listed at \$21, 128.65.

To get there: From Grants Pass, travel 15 miles north on Interstate 5 to the Sunny Valley exit. Travel east on the exit road, then travel north for about 1 mile to the bridge.

Caption: interior

Windows along each side of the structure not only aid in illuminating the bridge interior, but alleviate damaging wind pressure. Strategically placed, these windows daylight the inside of the structure while keeping the truss members dry.

Caption: exterior

The metal covered roof, squared portal shape, and rerouted traffic are the changes noted at the bridge near Sunny Valley. Once the site of Indian wars and pioneering activity, the area encompassing the Grave Creek Bridge sits just a short distance from the north-south Interstate 5.

### Caption for the Grave Creek Bridge

When the Grave Creek Bridge was constructed in 1920, State Highway Commission plans for covered bridges called for standard Howe trusses, whitewashed bridge interiors, laminated flooring, strategically placed windows for daylighting, and rounded portals. In later years, larger trucks and busses caused county and state engineers to reconsider the portal shape and size, and most bridge portals reflected the change to a square design.

When this photograph recorded the Grave Creek Bridge, the roadway passing through the interior was the State's only major north-south route. In addition, the portals had not yet been reshaped, and cedar shingles still were the covering for the bridge roof. The rerouting of traffic allowed the old wooden bridge to accept the changes in stride. Josephines County's only covered bridge can be seen by motorists travelling along Interstate 5.

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Photograph: Oregon Historical Society

Covered Bridge  
Inventory

# 16

Name: Snows Creek Covered Bridge

Location: off I-5 10-12 miles n. of Siskiyou Pass

Nearest Town: Sunny Valley

Ownership: Josephine County

Road and Stream: Snows Creek  
Sunny Valley - Blaine Co. RD.

Dimensions: 105' long approx. 22' wide

Type Howe

Year Built and Builder: 1920

Rebuilt 1925

## Existing Setting:

Hills to the east - wooded few scattered homes

west rd to rd 5

Graves Creek

Visible from rd 5

## Description of Bridge:

concrete piers - square portals - square decorations at  
portal corners + part way down on each side - portal doors  
wooden supp. beams + stringers

6 inset windows each side - tin roof

False beams above portals

white painted

Condition: Excellent

Status: In use

marker - Geo. Co. Hist. Soc.

History - n. of bridge covered by roadway

is grave of 14 yr. old Martha Ireland Crowley

member of 1st wagon train to enter Ore. by

Applegate Trail - 1846

5 Indians also buried here - killed in 1853

n.w. of bridge graves of soldiers killed in 1855 and battle  
of Hungry Hill

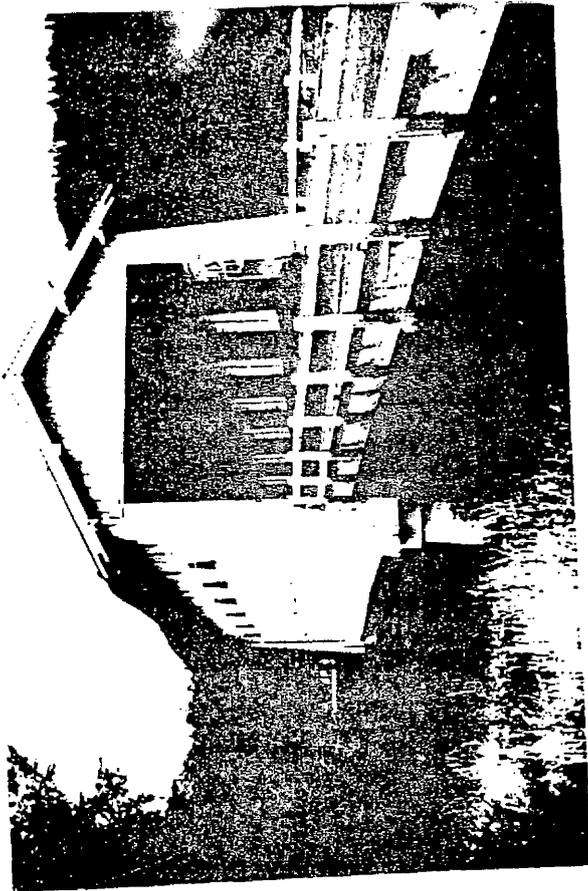
Historical Significance:

Other covered Bridges in the County:

## Bibliography

## Contacts

ISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Oregon State Parks, Salem, 97310



JUL 76

County Josephine #14

Theme S-A

Name  
(Common) Grave Creek Covered Bridge

(Historic) (same)

Address Old Highway 99 at Grave Creek  
Sunny Valley, Oregon

Present Owner Josephine County

(Address) Grants Pass, Oregon

Original Use Covered Bridge

Date of Construction 1920

property and statement of historical significance:

The Grave Creek Covered Bridge is a span of <sup>105</sup>120 feet which crosses Grave Creek at the crossing of the old Applegate Trail or Southern Emigrant Route. The bridge has a gable roof covered with corrugated sheet metal and an exterior of vertical boards and battens. The bridge has six portals for lighting on its east and west elevations. The exterior flares at the base at the north and south ends of the bridge.

This bridge, constructed in 1920, is the last, remaining covered bridge on the Pacific Highway--the main road between Oregon and California in the early twentieth century. It is also the last such bridge in Josephine County. Nearby stands the Grave Creek Covered Bridge landmark (see file sheet).

The truss arrangement is as follows:

Continue back if necess

Recorded by Stephen Dow Beckham Date 9 July 1976 Sources Consulted:

For Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

"Potts, Senator Morse at Dedication," Courier  
(Grants Pass), Oct. 21, 1968, p. 1,

Please enclose map Township 34 <sup>N</sup> <sub>S</sub> Range 6 <sup>E</sup> <sub>W</sub> Section 11 photo.  
(Over)

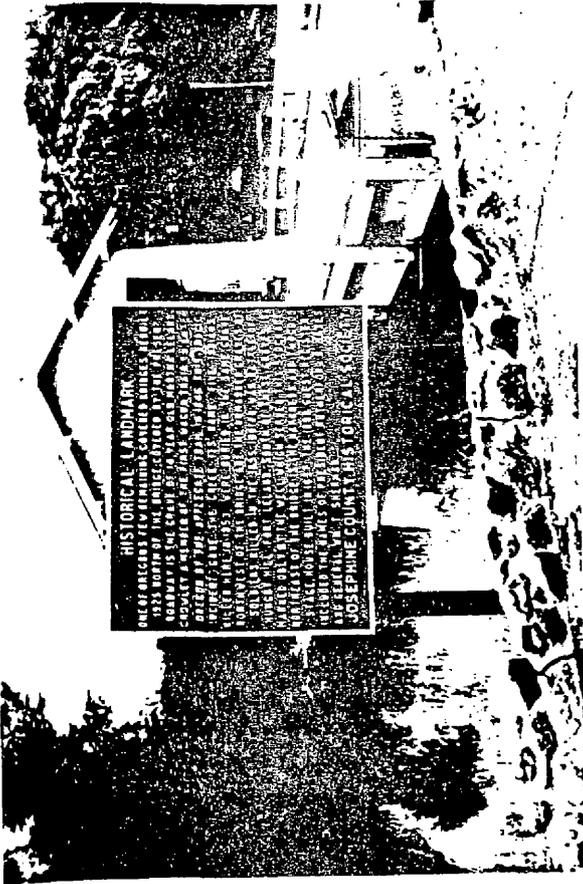
Sources:

"Oregon Covered Bridges," MS Typescript, Oregon State Highway Division,  
Salem, Ore., April, 1973.

Barber, Lawrence. "Oregon's Ancient, Recent Covered Bridges Begin to Fade,"  
Oregonian, July 7, 1963, p. 26, photo.

McCune, Evelyn. "Remnant over Grave Creek," Oregonian, Nov. 17, 1968, NW  
Magazine section, photo.

STATE OF OREGON DEPARTMENT OF  
HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Oregon State Parks, Salem, 97310



County Josephine

Theme 4-2

Name  
(Common) Grave Creek Covered Bridge Land

(Historic) mark

Address Grave Creek, Sunny Valley, Ore

Present Owner Josephine County

(Address) Grants Pass, Ore.

Original Use Landmark

Date of Construction \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of historical significance:

The Grave Creek Covered Bridge Historical Landmark is a wood plaque mounted on two wood posts. It stands on the south side of Grave Creek on old Highway 99 in Sunny Valley, Oregon. The sign reads:

"Historical Landmark. One of Oregon's few remaining covered bridges, rebuilt 1925. North of the bridge, covered by the present roadway, is the grave of 14 year old Martha Leland Crowley, a member of the first wagon train to enter Oregon by the Applegate Trail in 1846. This tragic incident gave the Creek its name. Five Indians, killed here in 1853, were buried in the same grave. Northwest of the bridge are the unmarked graves of soldiers killed in the 1855 Indian war Battle of Hungry Hill. Fort Leland, south of these graves, is marked only by the well which served this stockade. Northeast of the bridge is the Harkness and Twogood stage house built in 1857. The 1880 guest register included the names of President Rutherford B. Hayes and General Wm. T. Sherman. Josephine County Historical Society."

Continue back if necessary

Recorded by Stephen Dow Beckham Date 8 July 1976 Sources Consulted:

For Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

Please enclose map Township 34 <sup>N</sup> <sub>S</sub> Range 6 <sup>E</sup> <sub>W</sub> Section 11

"Potts, Senator Morse at Dedication," Courier  
(Grants Pass, Ore.), Oct. 21, 1968, p.  
photo.