FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received JAN 9 1980
date entered MAR 13 198

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Oregon Railway and Navigation Company Bridge (preferred)

and/or common Southern Pacific Railroad Bridge (Coburg Railroad Bridge)

2. Location

street & number SE of Coburg ___ not for publication

city, town Coburg X vicinity of congressional district fourth

state Oregon code 41 county Lane code 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
X structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	X being considered	X yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	X transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Southern Pacific Transportation Company

street & number 1 Market Plaza

city, town San Francisco ___ vicinity of state California 95113

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lane County Courthouse

street & number 125 East 8th Street

city, town Eugene state Oregon 97405

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title ___ has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes X no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	X unaltered	___ original site
X good	___ ruins	___ altered	X moved date 1907
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Coburg Railroad Bridge spans the McKenzie River adjacent to the Armitage State Park along the Coburg Road between Eugene and Coburg, Oregon. The bridge was fabricated in 1887 (company unknown) for the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company. The OR&N originally erected the bridge over the John Day River in north central Oregon. By 1907 the bridge had become obsolete at the John Day location and was acquired that year by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. The Southern Pacific during this period, 1906-1907, was replacing most of its early wooden bridges with iron structures. The relocation of what was then the John Day Bridge to Coburg was carried out by the American Bridge Company. The iron Coburg Bridge replaced an earlier wooden structure of a significant span, built in 1891 at the same location over the McKenzie.

The overall form of the Coburg Bridge is that of a long trapezoid. The bridge, constructed of rolled iron members, is a double-intersection Pratt through truss structure. It is riveted and pin-connected throughout. The bridge has a single clear span of 405 feet. The large trapezoidal truss consists of 16 panels each 25 feet in length. The overall breadth measures 25 feet and its height measures 44 feet from the top of the rails to the top of the superstructure. The railroad clearances measure 16 feet 8 inches horizontally and 18 feet 7 inches vertically. The entire structure rests on concrete supports; at the eastern bank are two iron-clad concrete piers and at the western bank the bridge is supported by one large rectangular concrete abutment.

The vertical frames of the bridge are braced by a diamond lattice pattern that is riveted in place. The end frames are also braced in this manner and are capped with decorative railings and date plates. All major horizontal, vertical and diagonal members are pin connected.

The bridge has been painted the standard railroad black in past years. It has not seen a fresh coat of paint in many years however and the paint has long since deteriorated on most surfaces and only remains in areas of the bridge protected from the weather. The overall appearance is rusty, but since the bridge is constructed of wrought iron, the rust has stabilized, and the structure is in sound condition otherwise.

The current status of the line which the bridge serves is inactive, and abandonment status is being considered by the Southern Pacific. With the present inactivity of the line there has arisen a community effort to develop the line, including the bridge, into a community recreation corridor for walking, jogging, and bicycling.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion	
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science	
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture	
___ 1600–1699	___ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian	
___ 1700–1799	___ art	X engineering	___ music		
X 1800–1899	X commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater	
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	X transportation	
		___ invention		___ other (specify)	

Specific dates circa 1887 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Coburg Railroad Bridge archieves significance as a rare survival of truss bridge construction. The particular type of construction, the double-intersection Pratt through truss, is noteworthy as it was used in the first all-iron truss bridge ever constructed. That first bridge was erected over the Mississippi River at Glasgow, Missouri in 1879. The bridge pioneered the use of iron and later steel in truss bridge design and construction. The pin-connected truss designs, of which there were several, quickly began to replace the earlier composition, lattice and girder structures in the 1870s. The new designs were to enjoy popularity over the following seventy years. The success of the design was due to at least three significant features: 1) the design reduced material and the number of members to a minimum necessary to carry the load. 2) manufacture and erection were greatly facilitated through the standardization of parts and assembly. 3) the life of the structure was increased while maintenance costs were reduced as a result of the use of iron. These three factors strongly reflect the ideals of industrialization during the Progressive Era of American History. The Coburg Railroad Bridge is one of the few remaining bridges of that era in the Pacific Northwest.

In addition to the construction type, additional details of particular note on the structure include diamond lattice bracing between all vertical frames, decorative head railings and date plates atop both entry frames.

The moving of the bridge in 1907 from the John Day River to the McKenzie River is a significant event. Apparently it was common practice amongst the frugal railroad companies of the time to move bridges rather than erect new ones continually. 1906-1907 saw the replacement of most of the wooden bridges and trestles on the Oregon lines with iron structures; several were moved from other locations both from inside the state and from other states as far away as Utah and Colorado. The covered wooden span that predated the present iron was one of the longest such structures ever built. It measured 380 feet overall and its main span was 260 feet.

The wooden structure built in 1891 was part of a spur line of the Springfield branch of the Southern Pacific which was entended in the early 90's for increased timber and agricultural production in the area. The replacement of the wooden structure in 1907 with the exisiting iron bridge became necessary to handle increased traffic and heavier loads.

The site and surroundings of the Coburg Railroad Bridge are quite significant and supportive in the historical sense. The Coburg Bridge spans the McKenzie River a few hundred feet below the original Spores ferry crossing. It was here that early traffic passing through the upper valley crossed the river. Spores Ferry began operation in 1847 and thereafter became an important factor in wagon train movement north and south. Jacob Spores was the initial operator of the ferry. He was assisted by George Armitage, who built the first boat for the ferry. Both men held land claims adjacent to the bridge site and bot of their original houses are still standing, the Spores house on its original site and the Armitage house a few hundred feet from its original location. George Armitage settled his claim in 1848 and soon married Sarah Jane Stevens, daughter of Harrison Stevens who also held an original land claim next to the bridge site and more importantly was the first settler within the forks of the Willamette River, having arrived in 1847. Sarah Jane Stevens, later Mrs. Armitage, was the first white woman to cross the McKenzie River. She crossed on

9. Major Bibliographical References

Cooper, Theodore. American Railroad Bridges, New York: Engineering New Publishing Co., 1891.
Jackson, Donald. Railroads, Truss Bridges and the Rise of the Civil Engineer, Civil Engineering ASCE, October 1977.
Lane and Douglas County Historical Museums - Railroading Collections

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property 0.6887 acres

Quadrangle name Eugene East **Quadrangle scale** 1:24000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	10	491631510	4181411515
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification Full width of Southern Pacific Railroad right of way at crossing of McKenzie River near Coburg in Lane County, Oregon, being 60 feet, more or less, for overall length of bridge to include abutments (approximately 480 feet) plus ten feet additional at either end, containing in all approximately 30,000 sq. ft., or 0.6887 acres.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marc LaRoche

organization Student, University of Oregon School of Architecture & Allied Arts **date** June 4, 1979

street & number 3150 Portland Street **telephone** 503-344-7442

city or town Eugene **state** Oregon 97405

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national X state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Designee **date** January 2, 1980

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

W. Ray Luce for **Keeper of the National Register** **date** 3/13/80

Attest: **date** 3/10/80

~~Chief of Registration~~

GPO 938 835

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Southern Pacific Railroad Bridge

December 25, 1847 at the site of the present railroad bridge.

Mr. Armitage, a carpenter from New York state, together with Mr. Stevens, built one of the first saw mills in the valley in 1849 at or near what was then Spores ferry.

Over the years the site continued to function as a significant point of crossing of the McKenzie. Spores ferry was first joined by the wooden railroad span, later replaced by the existing iron structure, which was later joined by the immediately adjacent Coburg Road Highway Bridge. Finally, much later, the interstate route 5 highway bridge a few hundred feet upstream was built.

The iron Coburg Railroad Bridge has served that crossing of the McKenzie for 72 years. The area retains much of its original rural and agricultural character. Armitage State Park which bounds the western edge of the property contributes greatly to the maintenance of the character.