

HISTORY OF THE MORROW COUNTY SPRING HOLLOW BRIDGE

If you listen closely, you can hear the native Meadowlarks or Killdeer warning all of your presence. Most of the time this area is silent and these and all species can roam freely next to the Spring Hollow Road and Bridge. Established in 1886, Spring Hollow Road goes from Rhea Creek to Toll Rock Road. The road at one time was a main route of travel, however, it is currently used primarily by tourists and local agricultural users hauling commodities to and from market. Each year, the road is closed from December through April to reduce damage and negative environmental impacts to the road and surrounding area. The Spring Hollow Bridge was constructed in 1909, just seven years after the historic Morrow County Courthouse, both are on historic registries. The Courthouse is on the National Historic Registry and the Spring Hollow Bridge on the State Historic Registry.

The structure before you has been in existence through a lot of history. The earliest findings show that the Spring Hollow Bridge is one of only four steel-through truss bridges remaining in public ownership in the State of Oregon. Due to the fact that tonnages increased dramatically, several individuals requested that the old wooden bridge be replaced. In 1908, the Columbia Bridge Company of Walla Walla, Washington made an offer to the County to submit plans and specifications for a steel-through truss and wood construction bridge for a fee of \$100. This plan was accepted by the County and construction began in March of 1909. The estimated cost of construction was \$2,487.00. The concrete foundation was \$11.00 per cubic yard. The combination wood and steel span work totaled \$2,350.00 with the remainder in concrete work. During the same time period the County surveyor was to secure the deed from H. Scherzinger for the access right-of-way to the new bridge.

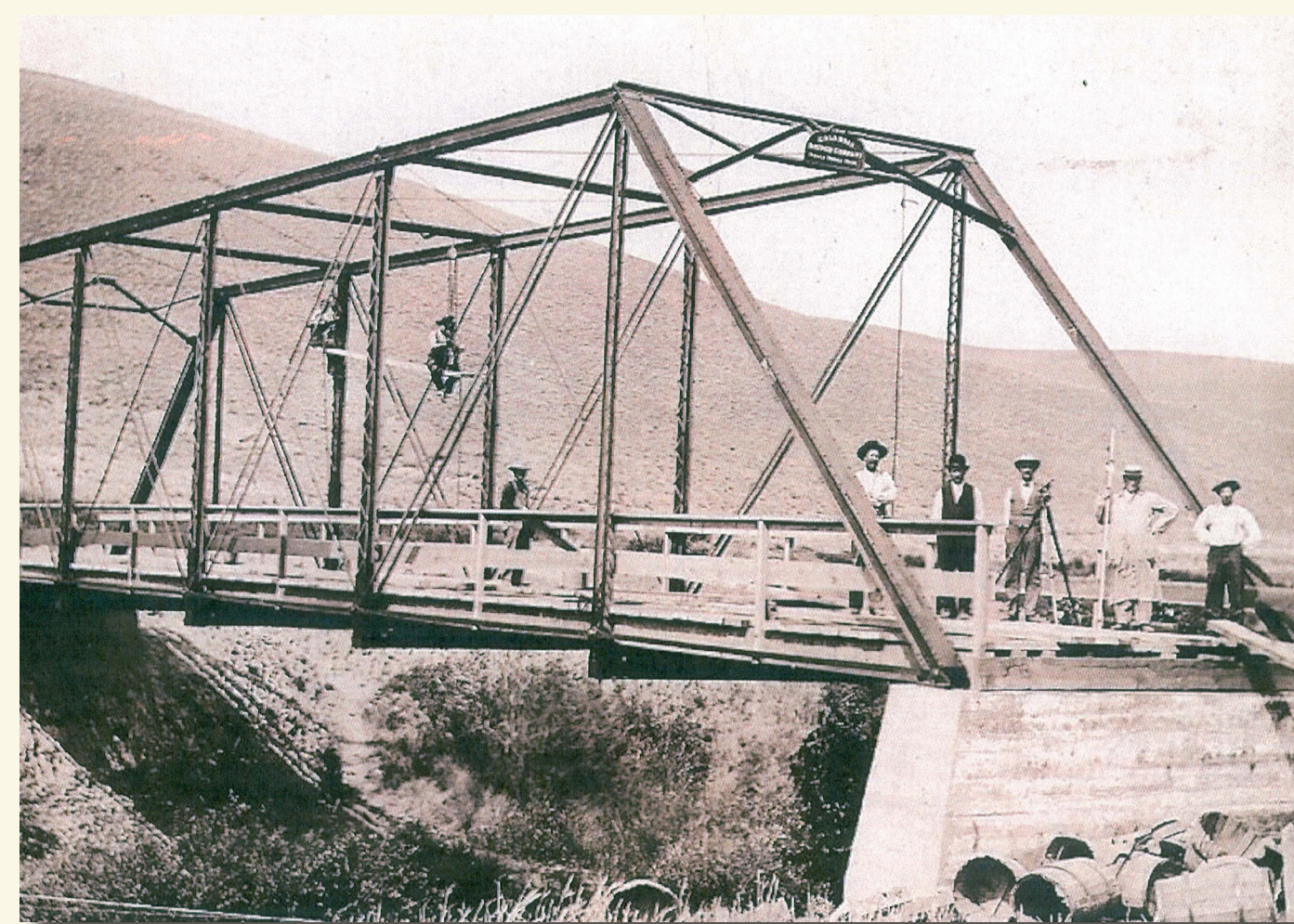
In the ensuing years, the loads began to become larger and heavier and the bridge was weight restricted due to its design limitations. Funding for replacement was applied for through the State and Federal bridge replacement dollars. It was approved during early 1980. The cost, at that time, would have been around \$450,000. However, it was felt that due to its limited use, it would be a politically poor decision to do the replacement and the funding was turned down.

In 1997, the bridge deck had become so unsafe that there was a ten-ton load limit, which made the bridge almost impassable. It was decided by the Public Works Director, Guy Van Arsdale, that the bridge deck and stringers should be replaced. Working 28' above the stream required a crew with an extreme safety-conscious work ethic and safety equipment. The County Road Department Crew undertook the task of removing and replacing them. It took 54 stringers 3" x 18" x 22' long, 114 planks 3" x 12" x 16' long, as well as, 3,100 1/2" x 6" lag bolts to replace the 120' span. The total cost of this project was \$34,084.00, but the bridge was still weight restricted due to its older design.

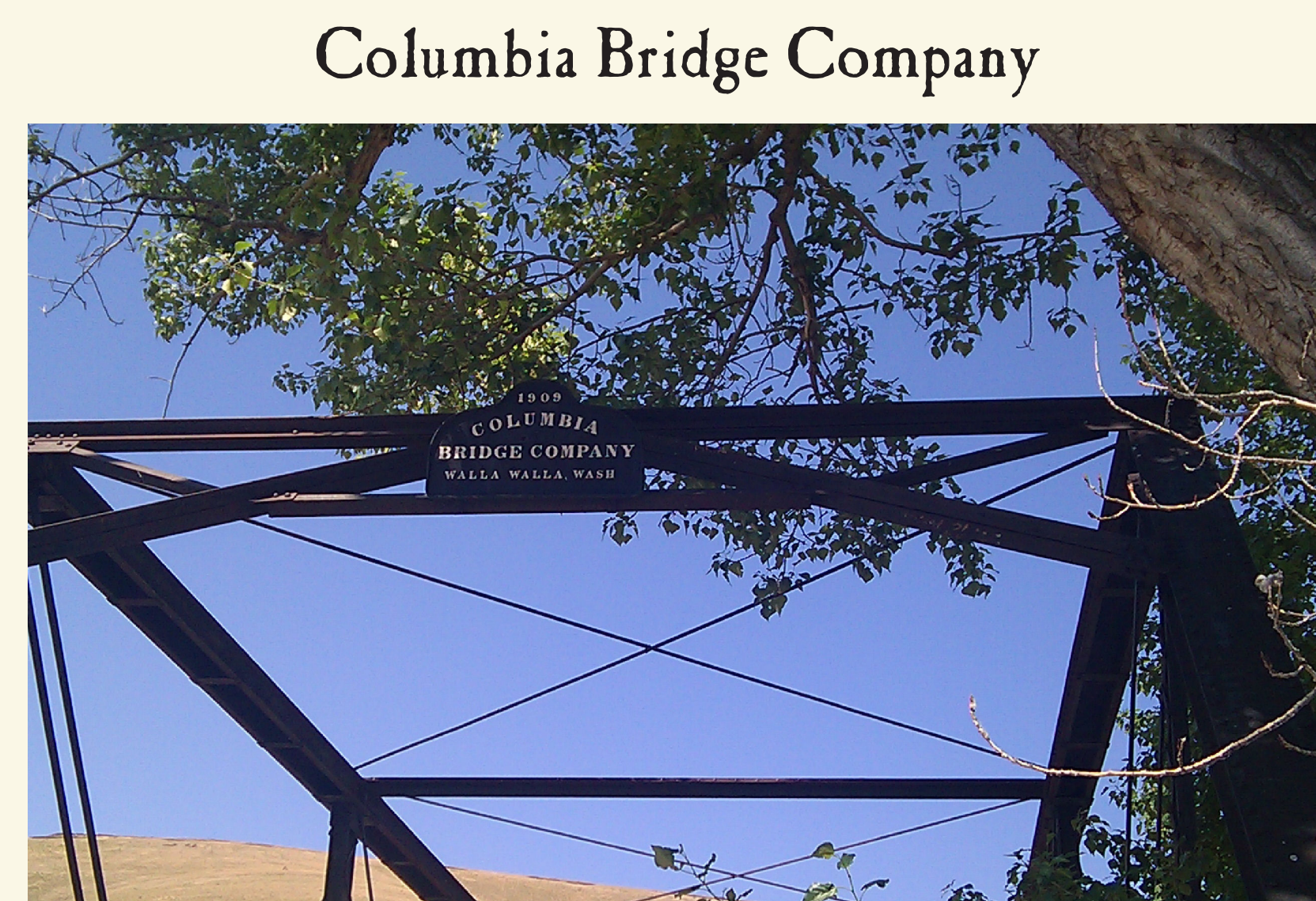
The need to replace the bridge was apparent and the process to secure funding through the State Bridge Replacement Program began again in 2005. The new Public Works Director, Burke O'Brien, began the process of submitting an application. After the new deck was installed, the sufficiency rating was high enough to make it ineligible. In 2008, the Oregon Transportation Investment Act (OTIA) program began. Many State and local bridges were to be replaced through this program. Once again, Spring Hollow failed to be deficient enough. In 2009, a second round of OTIA funding began and yet again Spring Hollow Bridge did not make the cut. Finally, in 2010, a third round of OTIA funding began and Spring Hollow slowly made its way up the list far enough, and its sufficiency rating had gone down far enough, to be funded through excess funds left from over-funded projects. By now, the cost had gone up considerably to \$996,000. If only the funds in the 1980 era had been used, what a savings! In 2010, final designs were completed and a location next to the old Bridge selected. Right-of-way acquisition was begun in 2010 and continued into 2011. Agreements were reached with landowners. One of these agreements was to move the old wooden granary that sat on the newly acquired right-of-way. The new location site was on the old Harnett homestead site just southeast of the old Bridge. New corrals had to be built to replace the old corrals that were removed. Once the clearing and grubbing were completed several thousand yards of rock had to be blasted and removed for the new roadway. A large crane had to be moved to the site to place steel beams for the concrete deck. It required a single 100-ton crane rather than two smaller 50-ton cranes, due to logistics. In order to get a crane to the South side of the bridge project, a trip of over twenty miles from Hardman on the old Spring Hollow road would have had to taken place. This was not a good option due to the width and condition of the old road. With the 100-ton crane, all work could be done from the North side of the project. Lots of fence had to be built to replace two old fences that were removed. It was only after this was completed the actual building of the bridge and approach roads began. The bridge was built and completed in May of 2012 by the Morrow County Road Department Crew. The Engineering Firm in charge of design was Ferguson Surveying and Engineering of Mount Vernon, Oregon.

The final phase of the project began with the process of retrofitting the old Historic Spring Hollow Bridge. New railings and gate, as well as, a kiosk were built for the site. A parking and viewing area were designed and constructed where the old road originally passed. Grass was seeded and final cleanup done to make the bridge as viewer-friendly as possible.

We hope you appreciate and enjoy this bridge and its historically significant nature. We further hope you will enjoy the rest of the County and its many wonders.



Construction 1909



Repairs 1997



Final 2012