Guide to the Bollman Truss Bridge Collection

NMAH.AC.1064

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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Bollman Truss Bridge Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.1064
Date: 1852-1986
Extent: 3 Cubic feet (4 boxes and 1 map-folder)
Creator: Vogel, Robert M.
Engineering and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI.
Bollman, Wendell, 1814-1884
Language: English
Summary: Collection documents various aspects of the development, implementation and research value of the Bollman truss bridge design.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Collection assembled by Robert M. Vogel, curator, for the National Museum of American History, Division of Civil Engineering reference files.

Ownership and Custodial History
Robert Vogel assembled the collection from a number of sources, including historical societies, bridge enthusiasts, and descendants of Wendel Bollman. It was transferred from the Division of Engineering (now the Division of Work and Industry) to the Archives Center in 2007.

Processing Information
Collection is unprocessed.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions on Access
Collection is open for research. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction
Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.
Biographical Note

Wendel Bollman (1814-1884) was a self-educated engineer who began working for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as a carpenter and devised a bridge-trussing system that was a series of independently supported floor beams, each carried by a double pair of eye-bar ties. He patented the system in 1852 and it became known as the "Bollman Truss". The Bollman truss was used on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, its subsidiaries, and several roads. It was the first bridge trussing system which all principal elements were made of iron. Bollman trusses were built until about 1875 and retained in service until about 1890.

Scope and Contents

Papers documenting various aspects of the development, implementation and research value of the Bollman truss bridge design. The collection includes correspondence, photographs, articles and clippings, schematics, diagrams, maps, and other printed materials. Also includes records of government agencies associated with Bollman truss structures, such as meeting minutes, and surveys receipts.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- Bridges -- Maryland
- Civil engineers
- Patents
- Periodicals
- Railroad engineers
- Railroads -- United States
- Trusses

Types of Materials:
- Advertisements
- Blueprints
- Clippings
- Correspondence
- Diagrams
- Maps
- Minutes
- Photographs -- 19th century
- Photographs -- 20th century
- Specifications
Names:
Engineering and Industry, Division of, NMAH, SI.
## Container Listing

| Box 1, Folder 1-2 | Background information |
| Box 1, Folder 3-4 | Miscellaneous notes |
| Box 1, Folder 5; Map-folder 1 | Savage Bridge restoration, 1966-1967 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Savage truss, 1966-1985 |
| Box 2, Folder 1 | Historic American Engineering Survey files, 1966, 1970 |
| Box 2, Folder 2 | Vogel, Robert. "Speculations on the History and Original Appearance of the Last Bollman Truss" (manuscript), 1966, 1969-1970 |
| Box 2, Folder 3; Map-folder 1 | Lomabrd Street Bridge, Baltimore, Maryland, 1974-1987 |
| Box 2, Folder 4 | Bollman truss advertisements (photocopies), 1855-1860 |
| Box 2, Folder 5 | Lang, P.G. "Various Types of Railroad Bridges", 1921 |
| Box 2, Folder 6 | Bollman truss articles (photocopies), 1855-1869 |
| Box 3, Folder 1 | Valley Railroad of Virginia (Bollman trusses), 1923 |
| Box 3, Folder 2 | Illinois Central Railroad Bridge, Kankakee River, Kankakee, Illinois, 1955, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 3; Map-folder 1 | Baltimore and Ohio Railroad |
| Box 3, Folder 4 | Bollman Bridge, Union Mills, Maryland, 1968-1984 |
| Box 3, Folder 5 | Bollman Bridge, Hughes Run Road, Carroll County, Maryland, 1975-1979 |
| Box 4, Folder 1 | Bollman Bridge, Central Ohio Railroad, Muskingham River, Zanesville, Ohio |
| Box 4, Folder 2 | Patents and correspondence, 1852-1879 |
| Box 4, Folder 3 | Quincy Bay Bridge, Mississippi River |
Box 4, Folder 4  Cape Fear River Bridge, Wilmington, North Carolina, 1966-1967
Box 4, Folder 5  Bollman truss research
Box 4, Folder 6  Illustrations and photographs of Bollman trusses